

No official move from India yet  
Dhaka says on Saarc

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday said it has not received any official communication whatsoever about India's reported willingness to hold the stalled Saarc summit in Dhaka in April.

A Bangla daily in Dhaka yesterday published a report quoting unnamed officials of the Indian External Affairs Ministry that New Delhi is interested to have the postponed summit in the first week of April.

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HABIGANJ CARNAGE  
Detectives quizz AL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intelligence men are quizzing an Awami League (AL) union unit leader picked up Monday in connection with the January 27 Habiganj carnage.

Sources said Zahedur Rahman Zahid, general secretary of No. 10

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Prayer Timing		
February 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-56
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# Hamas, Jihad disown Abbas-Sharon truce

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Mahmud Abbas were both facing threats to their authority Wednesday after agreeing at a landmark Middle East summit to end four years of bloodshed.

While world leaders hailed what they widely saw as a chance of a historic breakthrough between Israel and the Palestinians, commentators warned that many obstacles lay ahead on the road to peace.

Both Sharon and Abbas declared a ceasefire at the summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh but the main Palestinian militant

movement Hamas swiftly dampened some of the optimism by saying it was not bound by the deal.

As Sharon prepared to brief his senior ministers on the outcome of his historic meeting with Abbas and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the shores of the Red Sea, his disgruntled Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom pledged to lead a campaign to ensure his flagship project to quit Gaza is put to a referendum.

Abbas was also facing a struggle to persuade militant factions such as Hamas to support his declared agreement with Sharon "to cease all acts of violence against Israelis and against Palestinians wherever they

are."

In his summit speech, Sharon had reiterated his determination to implement his plan to pull troops and settlers out of the Gaza Strip.

The pullout, due to be completed by the end of the year, will be the first time ever that Israel has left occupied Palestinian territory and has been widely cited as another factor which could transform the peace process.

Shalom was conspicuous by his absence at the summit when Sharon reiterated that he was "absolutely determined to implement the disengagement plan".

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PHOTO: STAR

Jatra (indigenous theater) artistes yesterday protest a home ministry ban on Jatras because of 'security fears'.

# Rice urges Europe to get tougher on Iran

REUTERS, Brussels

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged European allies yesterday to get tougher with Iran, highlighting continuing policy differences despite her call for a new chapter in transatlantic relations.

Rice flew to Brussels for talks with Nato foreign ministers and the European Union after saying Iran should be warned it faces referral to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions unless it accepts an EU deal on its nuclear program.

"(The) Iranians need to hear that if they are unwilling to take the deal,

really, that the Europeans are giving ... then the Security Council looms," she told Fox News.

"I don't know that anyone has said that as clearly as they should to the Iranians," she said in a comment intended not only to pressure Tehran but also to spur France, Britain and Germany to get tough in their negotiations with Iran on the EU's behalf.

Policy divisions over Iran and China were likely to test the upbeat mood nurtured by Rice this week on her maiden journey as secretary of state.

The United States has rejected

European calls for the Bush administration to bolster the EU's leverage by getting involved in the bargaining and offering incentives of its own for Iran to end uranium enrichment activities, which Washington says are part of a secret drive to build a bomb.

Meanwhile, the EU has rebuffed US pleas to reverse course on plans to lift an arms embargo on China this year.

Rice's first stop was at Nato, the transatlantic military alliance whose members disagreed over the Iraq war and are still willing to give

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Foreign ministry denies Ottawa mission issued passport to Noor

UNB, Dhaka

The foreign ministry yesterday said the Bangladesh mission in Ottawa has not issued any passport to Noor Chowdhury as claimed by the political secretary to the Awami League president.

The Bangladesh High Commissioner in Canada informed that no passport was issued from the Ottawa mission in the name of Noor Chowdhury.

About the date and signature of the official contained in the said passport, a press release of the foreign ministry said no official in that name was employed at the Ottawa mission at that time.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury,

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6-day security blanket on Shaheed Minar

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Central Shaheed Minar will be brought under stringent security measures for six days from February 18 to observe the International Mother Language Day.

Members of police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh Rifles and Special Branch will encircle the area from February 18 to 23.

A meeting at the home ministry with state minister Lutfozzaman Babar in the chair took the decision yesterday.

Emerging from the meeting, Babar told journalists that the RAB members will perform personal searches of suspected people in the

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