

'Outcasts' stand hand in hand against discrimination

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over 5,000 Hindus of the lower castes brought out a bicycle procession and also formed a five-kilometre-long human chain from Patkelghata to Shobhashuni on both sides of the Satkhira-Khulna road in observance of the International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Earlier they submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister to press home their 22-point demand, which includes legal provisions to ensure that outcaste people enjoy the same rights and treatment as other communities.

Speakers at a discussion this afternoon described that outcaste

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# 4 outlaws killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three leaders of two outlawed parties and a youth with criminal records were killed yesterday in Naogaon, Kushtia and Patuakhali in three separate encounters with police and alleged criminals.

The dead were identified as Majid and Rafiqul Islam Titu, leaders of the Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) of Naogaon, Bashir Uddin of New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) of Kushtia, and Ujjal of Patuakhali.

Bogra police nabbed Majid and Rafiqul, accused in four murder cases including a double murder,

from Simla village of Nandigram upazila of the district Sunday evening.

As police went on an arms-hunt with the two at Saria village under Atrai upazila of Naogaon district, PBCB men attacked them to snatch the two, prompting the police to open fire.

The two outlaws died on the spot after receiving bullets from their own men, police said, claiming that three policemen were injured during the shootout.

The PBCB men then retreated and police seized a shutter gun and four bullets from the spot.

Majid and Rafiqul gunned down

two Bangla Bhai operatives, Rashid and Nazrul, inside a mosque at Atrai upazila under Naogaon district on May 17 last year.

In Kushtia, Kumarkhali police nabbed Bashir Uddin, second-in-command and a close associate of NBCP chief Ekdil Hossain, also an accused in five cases including two of murders, from the town on Sunday night.

After Bashir admitted to possessing arms during an interrogation, police took him to Sultanpur Bridge at around 3:30am, where his accomplices attacked them, triggering a shootout.

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# Nine arrested for manpower sham

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Motijheel police arrested nine manpower agents in two separate drives at Fakirerpool in the last two days on charges of taking money

from innocent people and promising to sending them abroad.

The clampdown on travel agencies engaged in illegal migration began in the wake of the Mediterranean tragedy and the inhuman sufferings of 24 Bangladeshi fortune-seekers in Mali, police sources said.

In the first operation, police raided Midline International Travel Agent on Sunday evening and arrested eight agents.

The arrestees are SM Towhid, Saidul Haq, Ekramul Haq, Anwar Hossain, Abdul Hye, Noman Chowdhury, Kalim Uddin and

Jashim Uddin.

A woman, Rehana Akhter, filed a case with the Motijheel Police Station on Sunday night accusing manpower agents of sending her to Dubai after assuring her a job. But, they ultimately tried to force her into anti-social activities in Dubai, police said.

One Abu Saleh filed a case against the eight arrestees for cheating and embezzling him out of Tk 1.7 lakh. In the FIR (First Information Report) Saleh mentioned that the gang took the money from him, promising to send him to Dubai, but cheated him instead.

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# Indian HC for transit thru' Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Indian High Commissioner (HC) in Bangladesh Veena Sikri yesterday said a transit facility through Chittagong Port will help to make the bilateral economic ties between the two countries stronger.

"We had a proposal to have a transit facility through Chittagong Port and I think this will enhance the Bangladesh-India relationship and both the countries will be benefited from it," she told reporters after a meeting with Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at the latter's office.

Veena Sikri termed the meeting a 'courtesy call' and said, "We've talked on issues of common interest."

Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury agreed with the Indian HC's opinion on the transit facility through the Chittagong Port.

The Indian envoy praised the CCC's role in the fields of education, health and environment, the Mayor said.

Prayer Timing		
March 22		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-55	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-16	6-20
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# Dhaka observes water day today amid crisis of safe water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh, reeling from a serious water crisis due to both consumption and irrigation, will observe the World Water Day today.

The water crisis is particularly severe in the urban areas where overpopulation and industrialisation are alarmingly depleting the ground-water. People in the urban areas, particularly in Dhaka, can no longer use the surface water due to extreme pollution in the rivers and thus are completely dependant on the underground water supplied by the Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

According to experts, a water crisis grips almost three-fourth of the country during the lean period

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# Main accused in killing of 9 peacekeepers arrested

AFP, Kinshasa

A militia chief suspected of involvement in the killing of nine UN peace-keeping soldiers from Bangladesh was arrested in the Democratic Republic of Congo, local press said yesterday.

The newspaper Liberte said Union of Congolese Patriots leader Thomas Lubanga was suspected of being responsible with Floribert Ndjabu of another militia, the Nationalist and Integrationist Front (FNI), for the killing of nine UN peacekeepers on February 25 in the north-western Ituri region.

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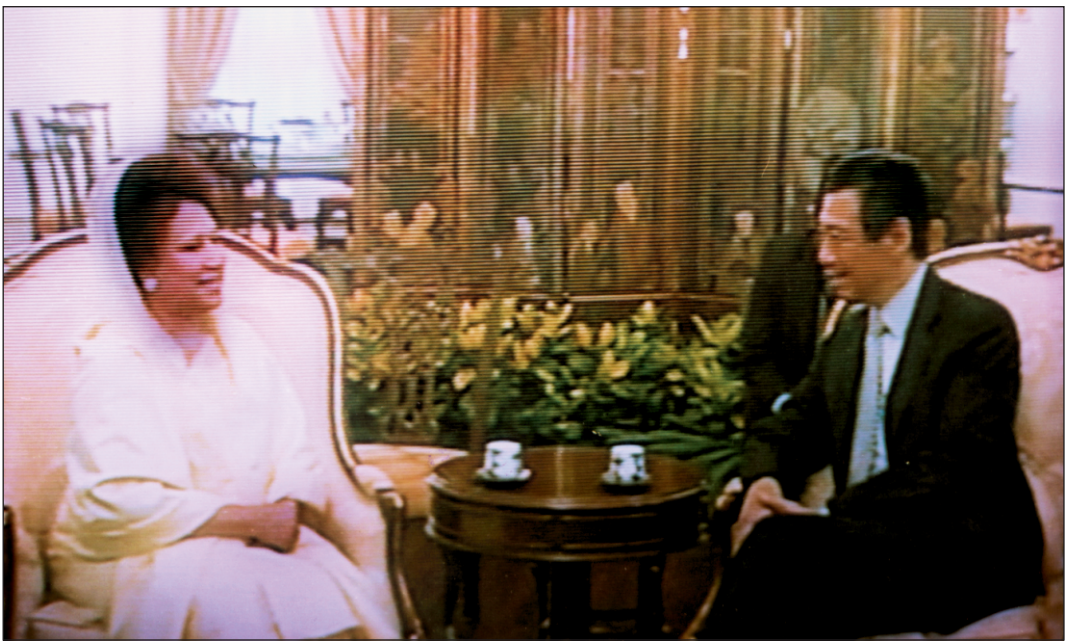


PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia meets Singapore Premier Lee Hsien Loong at the city state's presidential office yesterday.

## MEGHNAGHAT POWER PLANT

# Proposal not okayed for change in lead sponsor's name

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet purchase committee yesterday sent back to the energy and power ministry its 'faulty' proposal to award a contract for the second 450 megawatt Meghnaghat Power Project to a Dubai-Bangladesh joint venture asking it to revise the proposal.

The committee wanted the ministry to explain how the government can approve the contract for this joint venture when the original winner of the bid was another company.

The UAE-based trading company Belhasa along with local Orion Power Company had showed an experienced Japanese power company, Nissso Iwai Corporation,

as the 'lead sponsor' to pre-qualify in the tender for this power plant back in September 2003.

But after pre-qualifying, Belhasa changed the name of the lead sponsor to BN Consortium while submitting bid. This time Belhasa replaced Nisso with German company Steag AG as lead sponsor.

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