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## BSF guns down 2 Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Two Bangladeshi cattle traders were shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Datbhanga beel (water body) under Swarnapara Police Station of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India, early yesterday.

The dead are Forhan Ali, 25, son of Barik Ali and Abul Bashir, 35, son of Abdul Majed of village Gangula in Sathkira Sadar upazila.

BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) and police sources said the two went to India on Wednesday to purchase cattle. While returning home at about 2:30am yesterday, the Indian border guards chased the cattle

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## HABIGANJ BY-POLLS BNP man collects nomination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Ahead of the Habiganj-3 by-election scheduled for April 25, ruling BNP candidate Abu Laish Mobin Chowdhury yesterday collected nomination paper to get his party ticket for the by-polls.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant after Awami League (AL) lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria was killed in the January 27 grenade attack on an AL rally at Boidder Bazar in Habiganj.

A former chairman of Habiganj

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## Holiday notice

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today on the occasion of the Independence and National Day. However, the newspaper will come out tomorrow (Sunday) under special arrangements.



PHOTO STAR

A woman and two kids light candles in memory of the Liberation War martyrs on the eve of the Independence Day at Mukti Juddho Jadughar at Segun Bagicha in the city yesterday.

## Nation celebrates 35th Independence Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation celebrates today the 35th Independence and National Day to pay tributes to the three million martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for independence, with fresh pledge to build a happy and prosperous society to materialise their dream.

On March 26, 1971, independ-

ence of Bangladesh was formally declared, leading to the nine-month Liberation War against the Pakistani occupation forces and resulting in the emergence of a sovereign state on the global map.

Thousands of peace loving Bangladeshis in the then East Pakistan on this day took up arms against the highly-trained Pakistani troops for freedom as Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the country's independence on March 26.

After the occupation army's brutal crack-down on unarmed Bangladeshis on the night of March 25, they joined an all-out guerrilla warfare for independence under the leadership of Bangabandhu.

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## CCC elections acid test of fairness

EC plans foolproof security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) plans a foolproof security for the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls, slated for May 9, which is widely seen as an acid test of how free and fair the next parliamentary election is going to be.

Against the backdrop of a ruptured credibility in Dhaka-10 by-election, the degree of fairness of the CCC polls would dictate the terms for the opposition parties for participating in the next general elections, as they have already voiced urgency for

reforming the caretaker government system.

Both the ruling and the opposition camps started full-swing campaigns in the port city before filing their candidatures, as they consider the polls as their last political showdown before the next Jatiya Sangsad (JS) elections as well as a dress rehearsal for that near final ballot war.

Meanwhile, the Jatiya Party has apparently turned down an appeal of the ruling coalition mayoral candidate, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, to support

him, as it has declared to contest the polls itself.

To win the polls, the four-party coalition intends to cash in on its last parliamentary election scores that saw it win all the JS seats in the CCC area. The main opposition Awami League, on the other hand, plans to utilise Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury's experience of winning the polls twice as well as what it says is the government's failure to run the state.

Both the candidates are promising the city dwellers to make their

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## CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS Bangladesh has excellent track record: Tata

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Bangladesh has an excellent track record with regard to contractual obligations and the country needs to get a start, according to Tata Industries Group Chairman Ratan Tata.

"Contrary to general perception, Bangladesh's track record in contract obligations is excellent. On the whole, it is a country that needs to receive a start. The sooner India, Bangladesh and Pakistan get moving together, the better it is for the

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## India irate as US offers F-16s to Pakistan

AFP, Washington

The United States plans to sell F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan despite objections from Islamabad's arch-rival India, a senior US official said yesterday.

The announcement was part of a new strategic approach to the troubled subcontinent that was presented to both countries by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on her visit there earlier this month.

"Existing military assistance will be supplemented by moving forward on the sale of F-16s to Pakistan and we're notifying that to Congress

today," the official told reporters. He refused to say how many F-16s were involved.

But the official, who asked not to be named, added that "although the numbers involved are relatively small, there is no set limit on what the United States is going to be willing to sell to Pakistan."

The official said that the United States was also ready to boost defense cooperation with India, including the sale of F-16s, F-18s or other aircraft, to help it develop as a major power.

"The US will respond positively

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## Anti-smoking law effective from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law restricting smoking at public places comes into effect from today as per Thursday's government gazette notification issued on the "Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act 2005".

There is provision for a fine of Tk 50 for violating the law that was passed in parliament on March 13.

"The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare set the date through a gazette notification as per sub-clause 1(2) of the Act after the president's consent to the bill," an official announcement said on Thursday.

The law defines as public places educational institutions, offices of the government, semi-government and autonomous bodies, libraries, elevators, hospitals and clinics, court buildings, airport buildings, sea and river port buildings, railway

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From left to right, M Matiur Rahman, Nur Mohammad Sheikh, Munshi Abdur Rouf, Mostafa Kamal, Hamidur Rahman, M Ruhul Amin and Mohiuddin Jahangir

## Monuments for the 7 Birshreshthas

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

The government will erect monuments for the seven Birshreshthas and construct commemorative school and college buildings in their home areas to pay homage to the country's highest gallantry award.

The war heroes -- Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir, Lance Naik Nur Mohammed Sheikh, Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf, Flight Lt M Matiur Rahman, Engineer Ruhul Amin and Sepoy Mostafa Kamal -- sacrificed their lives for the coun-

try's liberation in 1971.

Six of the mausoleums will be constructed at their graves in Moulvibazar, Jessore, Khulna, Rangamati, Chapainawabganj and Brahmanbaria. However, the monument for Matiur Rahman will be built on the premises of Bangladesh Air Force Shaheen School and College in the capital, as his grave is in Karachi, Pakistan.

The Tk 5.98-crore project now awaiting the approval of the Planning Commission is scheduled for an immediate start and expected to be complete by June next year,

according to sources at the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.

"Nothing has been done so far under any government initiative to honour the supreme sacrifices of the Birshreshthas," said a high official at the ministry on condition of anonymity. He believes the project will make their families and the local people happy.

The project conceived in the last fiscal year initially aimed at only constructing monuments, each at a cost of Tk 67 lakh. It was later revised bringing the estimated cost of each monument down to Tk 9.10

lakh and allocating Tk 60 lakh to construct a school or a college building in their names in each of their home areas -- Narsingdi, Barisal, Jhenidah, Bhola, Noakhali, Faridpur and Narail.

A committee headed by the deputy commissioner has been formed in each district to select where to construct the educational institutions as memorials to the liberation martyrs, the sources said.

The Public Works Department will build the monuments and the Education Engineering Department the academic buildings.

## New chiefs of EC, army, air force in next quarter

Opposition watches closely who get the vital posts ahead of next polls

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) and the armed forces in the next quarter this year will see new appointments to four key posts that are to play vital roles in holding the next parliamentary elections under the caretaker government.

Speculations have been rife as to who would be the next chief election commissioner (CEC), election commissioner (CEC), election commissioner and the chiefs of staff of army and air force.

The tenure of the incumbent

CEC M A Syed will expire on May 22 and that of Election Commissioner Safur Rahman on June 24. In the armed forces, the tenure of army chief Lt Gen Hassan Mashud Chowdhury will end on June 15 and air force chief Air Vice Marshal Fakhrul Azam on April 7.

Sources said government high-ups are looking for 'appropriate' people to fill the forthcoming key vacancies keeping the next general elections in mind, while the opposition is keeping a close watch on the

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## Mammoth Pak score

REUTERS, Bangalore

Vice-captain Younis Khan struck a career-best 267 to help Pakistan to an imposing first innings 570 on the second day of the third and final Test against India here on Friday.

Younis, playing his 35th Test, exploited a placid pitch to hammer 32 fours and a six in his marathon 504-ball knock, batting for 11-1/2

hours in sapping heat.

It was the highest score by a Pakistani batsman in India, surpassing Saeed Anwar's 188 not out in Calcutta in 1999, and the sixth highest for Pakistan overall.

The 27-year-old shared in a 324-run stand for the third wicket with skipper Inzamam-ul-Haq (184) and added 84 for the fourth with Yousuf

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