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## Salaries under new pay scale from next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will start implementing the new pay scale for public servants from next month.

The pay commission's recommendations will be implemented in three phases, said Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday.

The first phase containing a major portion of the recommendations will be put into operation as of May, he told newsmen after a meet-

- Implementation in 3 phases, says Saifur
- First phase includes arrears from January

ing with a visiting IMF mission at his residence in the city.

"People are eagerly awaiting the new pay scale. So, we will go for its implementation from next month. And the government staff and pensioners in a single chunk will get the

total amount in arrears from January, the month the new pay scale comes into effect," Saifur said.

The meeting with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission covered issues including the new pay structure, monetary

expansion, exchange rate and export-import programme, Saifur said. He termed the discussions satisfactory except for a few differences.

Sources said a secretary-level committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Dr Saadat Hossain will come up with its final recommendations on pay increases and table before the cabinet. The committee has already held two meetings and is expected to finalise its

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## China to help solve water problems

UNB, Dhaka

China has offered cooperation in solving water problems and in management of different rivers in Bangladesh, including Brahmaputra.

With their advanced know-how, China would also help the country's Disaster and Flood Warning Centre in dealing with natural calamities.

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao gave the assurances while calling on President Dr Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Premier Wen assured the president also of cooperation in education, agriculture and mitigation of arsenic contamination of groundwater. "The cooperation in

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Leaders from more than 100 nations and a multitude of mourners gather for the funeral of Pope John Paul II at St Peter's Square in the Vatican City yesterday, where German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger presides the funeral mass.

## Millions bid final farewell to Pope

AP, Vatican City

Presidents, prime ministers and kings joined pilgrims and prelates in St. Peter's Square yesterday to bid an emotional farewell to Pope John Paul II at a funeral service that drew millions to Rome for the largest gathering of the powerful and the humble in modern times.

During a courtesy call on the Chinese leader, she also called for a robust role by China in alleviating poverty and bringing about stability in Asia.

The AL president along with senior leaders of the party called on Wen Jiabao at his hotel suite yesterday morning.

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and placed on a carpet in front of the altar. The book of the Gospel was placed on the coffin and the wind lifted the pages.

After the Mass ended, bells tolled and 12 pallbearers with white gloves, white ties and tails presented the coffin to the crowd one last time, and then carried it on their shoulders back inside the basilica for burial again to sustained applause from the hundreds of thousands in the square, including dignitaries from more than 80 countries.

Chants of "Santo! Santo!" urging John Paul to be elevated to sainthood immediately echoed in the square.

The first non-Italian pope in 455 years was buried at 2:20 p.m. (8:20 a.m. EDT) in the grotto under the basilica, the Vatican said.

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## JOINT COMMUNIQUE Dhaka, Beijing to exchange information on terrorism

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and China have reaffirmed their commitment to fight terrorism and transnational crimes.

In a joint communique issued at the end of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's two-day visit, they agreed to share information, exchange intelligence and cooperate in law enforcement to ensure peace and stability in the region.

The two countries also agreed to establish a comprehensive partnership of cooperation featuring long-term friendship to reap equal benefits in all sectors.

The two sides pledged to continue efforts to further strengthen cooperation in the fields of economy and trade, investment, agriculture, transportation, tourism, education and culture based on equality, mutual benefit and rationality for gaining concrete results.

It said the two sides agreed to continue frequent contacts and exchange of visits between senior leaders and exchanges between government agencies, parliaments,

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## Beijing for subsidised import, tariff cut

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao yesterday said his government would give subsidy to their business people to increase the import of Bangladeshi goods under a package of measures.

China would adopt three-pronged measures, including the subsidised import, to augment trade with Bangladesh, he said.

The two other steps Wen spelt out are reducing tariffs and increasing understanding between the business communities of the two countries, especially through holding more trade fairs.

"We are going to reduce tariffs on some Bangladeshi goods," the Chinese premier told leaders of the local business community at Hotel Sonargaon in the morning.

The Bangladeshi business community was led by President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Abdul Awal Mintoo.

The Chinese premier said in recent years there has been a significant increase in trade between the

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PHOTO: PID

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan sees off Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao bound for Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, at Zia International Airport yesterday at the end of his two-day official visit to Bangladesh.

## I just want my daughter, cries a Bangladeshi mother in NY

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"I don't want to live here anymore," the mother said. "I always thought that this country (USA) is better for my children, but now..." She broke off and began sobbing. "She's just 16," she cried. "I just want my daughter. Please, can you help me?"

This was how the mother of an ill-fated Bangladeshi teenage girl, now in US federal custody after her arrest on March 24 on immigration charges, cried for help as a New York Times (NYT) correspondent talked to her.

In the report titled "Girl called would-be bomber was drawn to Islam," published yesterday, NYT reporter Nina Bernstein tried to portray the helplessness of the 16-year-old girl's Bangladeshi immigrant parents, who were taken by surprise at her confinement.

Earlier, the NYT and international news agency Reuters reported that two New York teenage girls, one of Bangladeshi origin and the other of Guinea, were arrested and are in federal custody after authorities said they planned to become suicide bombers on US soil. The family and friends of the Bangladeshi girl called the allegations absurd.

Quoting an unnamed law enforcement source, Reuters

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## INTERNAL AUDIT Rajuk defrauded of crores of taka

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Officials at Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakha suspect crores of taka might have been embezzled over the last decade from the 47 accounts the city planners hold with three nationalised commercial banks.

The revelation came in the wake of the recent resumption of an internal audit that had been stopped 10 years ago by an office

order.

Rajuk sources said the main motive behind suspending the internal audit was to "loot" public funds. Over the decade, the city witnessed a phenomenal growth, while "a group of Rajuk officials in connivance with some bank officials orchestrated the misappropriation in the finest way."

They said they are now trying to

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## Cops rescue 6 kids, nab 3 abductors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in three separate operations on Wednesday and Thursday rescued six abducted children and arrested three alleged kidnapers.

At about 6:00pm on Thursday, Tejgaon police raided on Ambagan slum on Green Road in the capital, rescued four boys and held a suspected child trafficker, Habil alias Salam.

The rescued kids are Jahid, 12, of Dinajpur, Munna, 10, of Sylhet, Rakib, 11, of Dhaka and Sharif, 10, of Brahmanbaria.

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## Three new Sangu wells to add to gas supply

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Drilling of three new wells -- Nos. 7, 8 and 9 -- on Sangu Alpha Platform has ended that will raise gas production by 105 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) at the country's lone offshore gas field in the Bay of Bengal.

Cairns Energy PLC, which operates Sangu gas field under the production sharing contract (PSC) for block 16, started drilling of the new wells under the second phase of

development involving \$50 million in the middle of November last year.

Well Nos 8 and 9 connected to the onshore gas processing plant have increased the production of Sangu gas to 170 mmcf from 110. Well No 7 is likely to start operation and be connected to the processing plant by the end of this month, enhancing the Sangu production to over 200 mmcf, sources said.

The firm that drilled the three wells, Diamond Offshore, is prepar-

ing to leave the site by today.

Sources mentioned that after the discovery of Sangu field in February 1996, Well No 1 was developed next year on Sangu Alpha Platform that stands 110 metres above the seabed. It started supply of gas extracted from a depth of some 3,500 metres on June 12, 1998.

Another five wells -- Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 -- were gradually developed in Sangu field, located in the Bay, some

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## Jamshedpur ODI today

REUTERS, Jamshedpur

Pakistan vice-captain Younis Khan is set to return for the third one-day international against India in this eastern city on Saturday.

The 27-year-old batsman, who scored 508 runs in the drawn three-Test series, which ended last month, missed the first two one-day games due to a fever.

"I'm fully fit now, there is no

problem," Younis told reporters on Friday.

"We'll decide the final playing 11 in the team meeting this evening or maybe even tomorrow morning."

Younis could replace Shoaib Malik or all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez.

Pakistan, trailing the six-match series 2-0, are toying with the idea of dropping paceman Mohammad

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