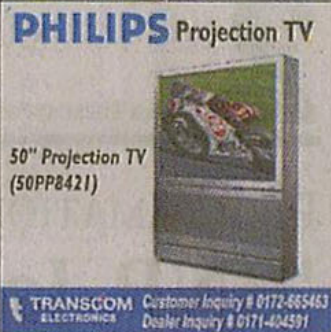




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**Dhaka to seek free access of goods to Turkey**  
*PM flies to Ankara tomorrow*

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka will seek duty free access of Bangladesh products to the Turkish market and pursue increased exports of pharmaceuticals, ready-made garment, ceramic and leather goods during Prime Minister (PM) Khaleda Zia's three-day visit beginning tomorrow.

She will fly to Ankara tomorrow afternoon at the invitation of Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It will be the first ever Bangladeshi PM's state visit to Turkey.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Violence flares up in tense Kansat

**Cops break into houses, beat up residents, fire rubber bullets; protesters attack police, damage vehicles**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Tension in and around Kansat continues to rise as protesting local people defying section 144 carried out fresh attacks on the law enforcers and vandalised their vehicles amid chase and counter-chase on the fourth day of their indefinite hartal yesterday.

The police forced shopkeepers to keep their shutters down, entered houses and beat up 10 people including two women. They arrested nine people.

Local administration yesterday slapped a fresh ban on all kinds of gatherings in 17-kilometre area for an indefinite period after Sunday's ban in 5-kilometre area ended at

8:00am yesterday.

Defying the section 144, the protesters brought out a procession carrying sticks and damaged a culvert at Takshaldighi on Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid road as Palli Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Parishad (PBUSP) agitated through the whole day to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

**BNP stalwarts blamed for Kansat crisis**

*Rabbani tells of 'crossfire' fear*

ANWAR ALI, Kansat

Expressing the fear of being killed in 'crossfire', Kansat Palli Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Parishad convenor Golam Rabbani accused local BNP stalwarts of repeatedly cheating the power-starved people that resulted in the recurrence of bloodshed that claimed 13 lives.

He sought intervention of the prime minister or other top government representatives to the exclusion of the minister in charge of the district and Rajshahi Mayor

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Tigers serve Australia second day stunner

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh continued to surprise Australia and the world audience alike with yet another dream day's cricket at the Fatullah Stadium on Monday.

After putting up 427, their second highest score in the five-day game, the tail-end Tigers got the Australians in all sorts of trouble on the second day of the first Test as the tourists were reduced to 145 for six.

With Adam Gilchrist, the only recognised batsman at the crease,

and Brett Lee at the other end, the world champions were fighting to score another 83 runs to avoid the ignominy of following-on against the lowest-ranked team.

There were discussions how the vaunted Australian batting line-up response after Bangladesh, resuming the day on 355 for five, added 72 runs to their overnight total before being bowled out half-an-hour after lunch.

Chasing a total of 427, the going got tough for the Australians as they floundered on a wicket that remained slow and low. After

Bangladesh's new-ball pair Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shahadat Hossain had drawn the first blood, left-arm spinners Mohammad Rafique and Enamul Haque got Ricky Ponting's men on the ropes, evenly sharing four wickets.

When the world-class Aussie pacers struggled on the slow pitch, the Mashrafe-Shahadat pair started the operation with a big heart to stun their mighty opponents.

Tearaway Mashrafe gave the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Tearaway Shahadat Hossain exults after having Australia skipper Ricky Ponting plumb in front.

PHOTO: STAR

**FM defends appointing US lobbyist**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday strongly defended the appointment of a US lobbyist to counter alleged adverse campaigns that try to portray Bangladesh as a fundamentalist state influenced by the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Talking to a group of reporters at his office, Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan admitted that the government had appointed a lobbyist firm 'Washington Group' in line with the US political culture to pursue Bangladesh's interest in the US administration and the Capitol Hill.

He said the lobbyist firm was appointed on a temporary basis with a monthly retainer of \$45,000 by slashing some expenditure in Bangladesh Mission in Washington that includes closing down the post of the press minister.

Justifying the appointment of a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

### Holiday Notice

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on account of Miladunnabi. Therefore, there will be no issue of our newspaper tomorrow.

**Miladunnabi today**

BSS, Dhaka

Eid-e-Miladunnabi, marking the birth and death anniversaries of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), will be observed today across the country.

The government and various religious and socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

The day is a public holiday. President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in separate messages greeted the countrymen on the occasion of Miladunnabi.

The president wished peace, progress and welfare for the people of Bangladesh and the Muslim

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**Traders protest JCD attack, keep shops closed**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tension mounted in and around Chandrima Super Market in the city yesterday as a big traders' protest rally was held near it and the market was kept closed and heavily guarded fearing further attacks by students allegedly belonging to Dhaka College unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) who clashed with traders on Sunday night, leaving about 50 injured.

Traders at the market and the students had a series of clashes for over four hours from about 9:30pm, and police fired tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Blaze kills 100 at Indian trade fair

AFP, New Delhi

At least 100 people were killed yesterday when fire swept through large tents packed with shoppers at a trade fair in north India, police said.

"At least 100 people are dead," Rajiv Sabarwal, police chief of Meerut, 80km north of New Delhi, told AFP.

Witnesses said bodies were charred beyond recognition and had been scattered throughout the stalls of the sprawling exhibition ground.

Badly burnt bodies of men, women and children had been

dumped in the back of trucks, police inspector Rakesh Tomar told AFP, predicting the death toll could rise much higher.

Television footage showed blackened steel frames were all that remained of the air-conditioned tents that had been erected at the fair.

Plumes of thick black smoke billowed into the air as rescue workers ferried casualties to Meerut district hospital.

"We have so far removed 45 bodies to the mortuary," district police chief Raj Kumar Vishwakarma told Star news television by telephone.

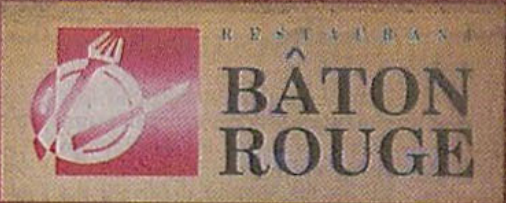
Paramilitary troops backed firefighters and police tackling the massive fire, he said.

The early evening blaze destroyed three giant exhibition tents at the Brand India Fair at the city's Victoria Park where companies displayed products for throngs of shoppers.

"The fire has been brought under control," Yaqoob Qureshi, state minister for minority welfare, told NDTV.

"The tents had a capacity for 2000-2,500 people. It is difficult to say how many people were there," Qureshi added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



## GRAND OPENING

at  
**PINK CITY, GULSHAN**  
ADJACENT WONDERLAND PARK  
**11 April 2006**  
OPEN FOR ALL FROM 12TH APRIL

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