

Sit for talks to reach decision on reforms PM masks opposition

UNB, Lalbagh
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has made a fresh offer to resolve the standoff over reforms of the caretaker government system, urging the opposition to sit across the table candidly for a decision. "We want to resolve all issues through dialogue, not on the streets. The door is still open," she said while addressing a public meeting in the city's Lalbagh area yesterday. The prime minister referred to her earlier proposal for dialogue and said after exchanging some letters the opposition is now

CONGESTION AT CTG PORT

Feeder operators mull fresh surcharge

RAFIQ HASAN
Feeder operators have decided to slap an additional surcharge of \$130 on each TEU (twenty equivalent unit) container coming to Chittagong Port unless the congestion at the port that delays unloading of vessels did not improve in a month. The long queues of ships at the outer anchorage and huge congestion of containers at the terminal yards are the main reasons for such delay at the

port, according to sources. The feeder operators at a meeting in Dhaka yesterday took the decision. They are likely to issue today a notification in this regard, the sources said. Representatives of leading feeder operators including QC Container, HRC Shipping, Orient Express, Advanced Container and Sea Consortium were present at the meeting. "We will give one month's time (to the port authority) to improve the

situation by clearing congestions," said an operator after the meeting. "If the situation doesn't improve, we will not have any alternative to imposing the additional surcharge." He claimed that representatives of all the feeder operators agreed to impose the surcharge. The operators will collect the additional surcharge from mainline operators. But ultimately exporters and

Bus strike on in 13 districts

BDNEWS, Barisal
Bus strike on 175 routes of 13 southwestern districts continued for the second day yesterday, mounting sufferings of the commuters. Buses and minibuses owners association of Barisal and Khulna divisions and Bus Workers Union enforced the indefinite strike demanding cancellation of state-run BRTC bus services on these routes. The Bus Owners-Workers Oikya Parishad yesterday held rallies at different places of the 13 districts to realise their demand. They also demanded resignation of BRTC chairman. BRTC Chairman Advocate Taimur Alam Khondker said the

BDR rescues 34 from traffickers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi
Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in Rajshahi rescued 34 people including 16 women and 15 children as they were being trafficked to India through Barakuthi Ghat on the Padma yesterday. BDR also held a trafficker but three of his accomplices managed to escape. On information, BDR men from Talaimari outpost raided Barakuthi Ghat around 5:00am and rescued the people while they were being taken onboard a boat. Police arrested Imanuddin Sheikh

of Butakhol of Narail and he confessed to police about human trafficking after he and the rescued were handed over to Boalia Police Station. He said the rescued people, mainly from Jessore and Khulna regions, were congregated at Natore Railway Station a day before and were taken to Barakuthi Ghat to be sent to India. BDR men also recovered two letters addressed to the fathers of the children Moyna, Monirul and Ajmira Khatun in Narail from Imanuddin's possession. The letters assured the parents

safety of the children and their good jobs. The traffickers collected Tk 2000 for each of the people they were trafficking, the letter mentioned. The victims said many of their relatives went to India through the held persons before. They told police they were offered jobs in different Indian regions including Surat in Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Kolkata, New Delhi, Ajmeer, Meerat, and Kanpur. The rescued were taken into safe custody while the arrestee was sent to jail after he was produced

FM to lead team to D-8 Summit in Bali May 11

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the D-8 Summit instead of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, beginning May 11 in Bali, Indonesia. The reason behind cancelling the prime minister's trip to attend the three-day summit could not be known. The prime minister had confirmed to attend the summit in March when Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono sent his special envoy with formal invitation. Besides, the Indonesian president had also requested the Bangladesh premier personally to attend the summit, official sources said. The prime minister, however, is going to Kuwait on a two-day



Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh chief AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury waves as the party's long march starts from his Baridhara house in Dhaka towards Rajshahi yesterday to protest against the price hike of essentials, and power, diesel and fertiliser crises.

New Tata offer much better, says Saifur

UNB, New Delhi
Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said the government found the new proposal of Tata group much better than the previous one as it offered to buy natural gas at a higher price. "The government will seriously study the proposal and it will be placed before the cabinet," he told newsmen in Hyderabad where he was attending an ADB meeting. Saifur said Tata is now willing to pay a higher price for gas, which may settle around \$3 per thousand cubic feet. He said Tata has also offered a 10 per cent stake to Bangladesh government in the green-field projects, while another 10 per cent will be offloaded via initial public

Nepali Maoists agree to hold peace talks

AFP, Kathmandu
Nepal's rebel Maoists agreed yesterday to hold talks on ending their decade-long insurgency, clearing the way for the release of hundreds of jailed fighters. The new interim cabinet on Wednesday announced an indefinite ceasefire and removed the terrorist tag from the Maoists to try to kickstart talks and bring peace to the impoverished Himalayan nation. The Maoists called their own three-month ceasefire last week and on Thursday agreed to discussions on ending the revolt in which over 12,500 people have died. It is the third time that the government and rebels have called ceasefires at the same time and tried to start

peace talks, but on previous occasions, negotiations broke down and the country was plunged back into conflict. "We are entering into a dialogue process, feeling deep responsibility for people's aspirations towards democracy and peace," said the rebel chief Prachanda, whose name means "the fierce one." "We hope that the peace talks will not fail this time." Cabinet minister Gopal Man Shrestha said earlier that once talks start, the government would release rebel leaders from jails across the country. Thousands of Maoists have been detained during the insurgency and the interior ministry said up to 700 Maoists, of all ranks,

PM leaves for Kuwait Sunday

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia leaves for Kuwait on a two-day official visit beginning on Sunday, during which she will discuss the economic cooperation and increasing Bangladesh labour force in Kuwait. Official sources said an agreement on purchasing crude and refined oil on credit is also expected to be signed during the visit. Bangladesh imports around 90 per cent of its requirement from Kuwait in cash. This time the Kuwaiti government has agreed to sell around 50 per cent of Bangladesh's oil requirement on credit, the sources added. Khaleda Zia is going to Kuwait

Robber killed in 'crossfire' with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
A member of a notorious gang of robbers was killed in 'crossfire' during a gunfight between his associates and the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Bakerganj of the district early yesterday.

SC bans razing of Gujarat mosques

Troops guard riot-hit Vadodara

AFP, New Delhi
India's Supreme Court yesterday banned the western state of Gujarat from razing mosques in a city where a municipal drive to clear congested areas triggered sectarian violence that left six dead. The ban came as soldiers were ordered to support police in the city of Vadodara (formerly Baroda), where clashes since Monday between Hindus and Muslims have also left scores injured and many stores gutted. The national government has told the chief minister of Gujarat to avoid a repeat of the 2002 Hindu-Muslim

riots, a top home ministry source told AFP. "Law and order is a state issue but Gujarat has been told in clear terms to stem the violence," he said, warning that more troops would be deployed if local police turned a blind eye to the clashes. Some 1,500 soldiers were rushed to Gujarat after a Muslim trader was burnt alive in his car Tuesday. The thinly-veiled federal warning came after Vadodara's Muslims complained that when they telephoned the city police for protection a gruff voice advised them to

KIBRIA KILLING Trial adjourned for 10 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
Trial of the former finance minister SAMS Kibria killing case was adjourned yesterday for 10 days at the Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal. Judge Biplob Goswami gave the order as the complainant filed a petition praying for four weeks' time to appeal against the rejection of a prayer for reinvestigation of the case. The court rejected the prayer for reinvestigation of the case yesterday. Advocate Abdul Majid Khan, complainant of the case, and others filed the petition on May 3. The trial started on February 7 and was stayed by the High Court (HC) on the same day after a reinvestigation appeal. The trial remained suspended as the

| Prayer Timing | | |
|---------------|-------|--------|
| May 5 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-15 | 4-50 |
| Juma | 12-30 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-34 | 6-38 |
| Esha | 8-00 | 8-30 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

