

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the taxicab service of Trust Transport Services at the Army Golf Club in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday. Story on page 3

SECURITY DIALOGUE

US to help enhance anti-terror capacity

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Washington yesterday assured Dhaka of continuing its support to enhance Bangladesh's capacity of anti-terrorism, counterterrorism as well as maritime and border security.

"A strong bilateral partnership and improved defence ties between Bangladesh and the United States are in both of our interests, and will contribute to our common desire for stability, peace, and prosperity in the region," said Tom Kelly, principal deputy assistant secretary of political-military affairs at US State Department.

He was speaking at a joint press conference on conclusion of the Third Bangladesh-USA Dialogue on Security Issues at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) in the capital. Bangladesh, he noted, is playing

significant role in establishing maritime security, which is very important to the United States. It is absolutely critical not just for Bangladesh but also for the United

States and all countries of the world that true maritime security is established in the Bay of Bengal, added Kelly, who led a 26-member US delegation to the dialogue.

He said the US-Bangladesh security relationship focuses on four aspects -- humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; peacekeeping operation and defense cooperation; counterterrorism; and maritime and border security.

Free navigation in the waterways is the fundamental interest of the USA and it is one of the motivating factors of the US foreign policy to ensure safe navigation throughout the world, he mentioned. On the joint military exercise by

Bangladesh and China, the US official said his country fully respects Bangladesh's sovereign right to establish cooperation with any other country.

contributed \$2.5 million to Bangladesh as defence assistance this year. Bangladesh has sought

some military equipment from the USA to enhance its security capability, he added.

City

Mostafa Kamal, secretary (bilateral) of the foreign ministry, led a 35-member Bangladesh delegation to the meeting. He said there is no piracy within the economic zone of Bangladesh. He, however, noted that

Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Coast Guard needed to be well equipped to ensure security in the country's huge sea territory.

Among the members of the US delegation were US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan Mozena, Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Atul Keshap and senior civil and defence officials.

Bangladesh delegation was composed of foreign ministry director generals Saida Muna Tasneem and Mahfuzur Rahman Responding to a query by a and officials from Prime Minister's newsman, Kelly said the USA has Office, home ministry, Armed Forces Division, Bangladesh Coast Guard, Border Guard Bangladesh and the Department of Narcotics

Drought dampens

FROM PAGE 1

increase the production cost. But we're still optimistic about a good Boro harvest," said Abdul Mannan, field service wing director of the DAE.

He added both the ministry and the department concerned have sent letters to the power division, asking it to ensure nonstop power supply for irrigation from 11:00pm to 9:00am every day.

As farmers in the haor regions do not want to take any risk of losing

crops during hailstorms or flash they sent out teams to inspect it. floods, they have started reaping Boro early, he said.

"At least 25 percent of Boro rice in the haor areas have already been harvested," added Mannan.

Talking to this correspondent, Matia said farmers needed to irrigate their rice fields well now so that the grains could form properly.

She said there were some reports paddy not forming grain from some parts of the country and that

According to her, excessive rain in

some haor regions during Boro planting had some impacts on the crop. In some areas, farmers used various inputs excessively, which has led to the sterility.

A team from Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) visited some fields in Chandpur recently and found that excessive application of fungicides rendered Boro rice sterile.

Sister defends Mir Quasem

was giving "false" testimony to

"defend" her brother. She, however, denied it. Replying to court queries, Momtaj

said her father and brother Quasem had been living in Comilla during the war. Quasem had come to her house from Comilla, she added. "My brother had come to Dhaka

to give me company and when we left Dhaka for Comilla, he also returned to my father," she said. She, however, could not say since when her father had been living in Comilla. Her testimony and answers

sharply contradicted with the testimony of prosecution witnesses and prosecution documents.

According to the testimony of

Nurul Islam, investigation officer and last prosecution witness in the case, Quasem was a first-year honours student at Chittagong Government College in 1971 and was the president of the college and Chittagong city unit Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat.

Quasem became the general secretary of Chhatra Sangha of East Pakistan on November 6, 1971 and in collusion with the Pakistan army, Jamaat and other anti-liberation organisations, he "formed Al-Badr force" in Chittagong, the investigator added.

According to a newspaper report, which is also one of the prosecution documents, of daily Azadi published on August 1, 1971, Quasem, as the president of Chittagong city

unit of Chhatra Sangha, presided over a citizen rally at Muslim Institute in Chittagong.

Motiur Rahman Nizami, the then president of Pakistan Islami Chhatra Sangha, addressed the rally, the report said.

Besides, most of the prosecution witnesses testified that they had seen Quasem at Dalim Hotel, which was an Al-Badr torture centre in Chittagong, when they were taken there by Al-Badr men allegedly controlled by the war crimes accused.

The defence, however, claimed their client came to Dhaka after he had become the general secretary of Chhatra Sangha of East Pakistan on November 6, 1971.

The tribunal adjourned the proceedings until today.

No action till Sunday

Patients' woes mount further

and cameras.

Assistant Attorney General Titus Hillol Rema prayed to the court to adjourn the hearing, saying that Attorney General Mahbubey Alam would place

arguments on the petition. In response, Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Md Habibul Gani fixed Sunday to resume the

hearing on the petition. Mobassher and five other environmentalists submitted the writ

He added that interns had promised

him to join their duties within

4:00pm. But they had not returned

to their work stations till the filing of

Talking to this correspondent

yesterday, the RMCH director said

the Sunday night's incident hap-

pened following a misunderstand-

On Monday night, two injured

ing over a trivial issue.

this report at 10:00pm yesterday.

FROM PAGE 16

legality of a Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) notice requesting Sheikh Jamal Dhanmodi Club to take approval for constructing structures on the playground.

They also sought directives from the HC on the authorities to remove the structures already built there, and to ensure access of general people to the playground.

The Dhanmondi Club following a demonstration by environmentalpetition on Monday challenging the ists on April 18 filed a case accusing

journalists -- Assaduzzaman Asad of

Amar Desh and Mahfuzur Rahman

Rubel of ATN News -- filed two cases

In their case statements, the

journalists accused seven people

mentioning their names and 150

unnamed interns for attacking 10

journalists and damaging their laptops

human chain at Shaheb Bazar in

with Rajpara Police Station.

them of creating chaos near the "private property." The green activists also face charges of entering Dhanmondi playground illegally and hampering construction work.

The petitioners, however, said the club had been constructing structures on the playground violating laws relating to environment, building construction and water

Several rights organisations have also been waging movements demanding public access to the

Rajshahi city yesterday, protesting the interns' attack on journalists.

They formed an 11-member attacked the newsmen.

The journalist leaders also met the vice chancellor of Rajshahi University and submitted a memo-Meanwhile, journalists formed a randum with a demand for not issuing certificates to the interns

steering committee to continue their movement until the authorities arrested the interns who had

Shazneen

FROM PAGE 16 conclusion of the judicial process and dispensation of justice as the case is waiting to be heard at the Appellate Division of the Supreme

Shazneen was a class IX student of Scholastica School when she was murdered on the night of April 23, 1998. People from every walk of life were dumbfounded by the brutality of the event. Her parents were shattered. Their lives were changed forever as the unending absence of their daughter and the void created by her absence engulfed their very existence. Their hope was to get justice for this crime.

Four years later a special tribunal found six persons, including a contractor engaged for renovation of the house, Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan, domestic help Shahidul Islam Shahid, Hasan's accomplices Badal and maid servants Estema Khatun Minu and Parvin and carpenter Shaniram guilty.

They were all sentenced to death.

In July 2006, a death reference bench of the High Court confirmed the death sentences of five of the convicts and absolved Shaniram.

The five murderers then went to the Appellate Division. Their case is waiting to be heard.

Like every year Shazneen's family has arranged a milad mehfil after Asr prayers at 5:30pm today at their residence at House No # NE(J)4 on Road # 83 in Gulshan - 2, Dhaka. Shazneen's father Latifur

Rahman, Chairman of Transcom Group, and mother Shahnaz Rahman have requested all relatives, friends and well-wishers to attend the milad mehfil.

Scientists 'edit' FROM PAGE 16

technology to cure adult laboratory mice of an inherited liver disease by correcting a single "letter" of the genetic alphabet which had been mutated in a vital gene involved in liver metabolism. A similar mutation in the same

gene causes the equivalent inherited liver disease in humans - and the successful repair of the genetic defect in laboratory mice raises hopes that the first clinical trials on patients could begin within a few years, scientists said. The success is the latest achieve-

ment in the field of genome editing. This has been transformed by the discovery of Crispr, a technology that allows scientists to make almost any DNA changes at precisely defined points on the chromosomes of animals or plants. "We basically showed you could

use the Crispr system in an animal to cure a genetic disease, and the one we picked was a disease in the liver which is very similar to one found in humans," said Prof Daniel Anderson of MIT, who led the study.

Jennifer Doudna, of the University of California, Berkeley, who was one of the co-discoverers of the Crispr technique, said Prof Anderson's study is a "fantastic advance" because it demonstrates that it is possible to cure adult animals living with a genetic disor-

Doctors see rise

FROM PAGE 5

survey in NIDCH to gather information about the people with OSA related conditions in 2011, and it would be concluded by 2016.

OSA is characterised by the repeated cessation of breathing during sleep, he explained. For the condition, airflow may be blocked for 10 seconds or more, says a UKbased health website.

Presenting a paper during a press briefing in a city hotel, organised by Philips Healthcare, South Asia, Dr Ali Hossain said the symptoms included snoring, obesity, and excessive daytime sleepiness.

Sleep apnea is as common as diabetes and affects different organs, said Dr Jakir Hossain Sarkar, senior consultant of pulmonology and sleep medicine at Labaid hospital. He said OSA might even cause

sudden death and the biggest challenge was that people in general were not aware of the problem in Bangladesh. Dr Mohammad Murtaza Khair,

pulmonology consultant at Square Hospital, said most Bangladeshi doctors were unaware of the disease, and most OSA cases went undiagnosed. There are two types of treatment

for OSA--behavioural therapy advising patients to avoid alcohol, nicotine (smoking) and sleep drugs, and physical or mechanical treatment providing medication and wearable devices to prevent breathing disruption, said Prof Ali Hossain. Currently, the OSA is being

treated improperly in Bangladesh due to lack of sufficient sleep labs, which are required to diagnose patients, he said. Philips Healthcare India has

decided to set up 10 sleep labs in Bangladesh by this year and 20 more by 2019, said Bidur Dhaul, senior director of Philips Healthcare South Asia.

Secretary sued for corruption

FROM PAGE 1

Showkat got the size of his plot increased to five katha from three katha in 2005 when he was a deputy secretary. The three plots were first allotted between 1995 and 2005 to the trio in Rajuk's Purbachal and Uttara projects in the capital.

On the ACC's approval, its Deputy Director Jatan Kumar Roy filed the cases with Motijheel Police Station, said ACC Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya.

Proloy Kumar Saha, inspector (investigation) of the police station, said, "The ACC will carry out the investigation in the cases."

The anti-graft body could file the lawsuits against Showkat as a recent High Court verdict scrapped a provision in the ACC law that required prior permission from the government to file corruption cases against public officials. ACC Commissioner Shahabuddin said

the HC declared the controversial provision illegal a few months ago, and no appeal was filed against the verdict. "We did not require any prior permission

from the government to file the cases," he said.

WHAT PROBE REPORT SAYS

In the probe by ACC Deputy Director Roy, it was found that the Rajuk officials concerned tampered with the date on Rajuk documents of the three-katha plot allotted to Showkat's mother Zakia Amjad for reallotting her a five-katha plot.

The ACC retrieved Zakia's application

to the Rajuk for altering her plot size to five katha from three katha, and found that Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda put a remark on the application "Reference --Secretary (Showkat) ... consider the mat-

Huda then forwarded the application to Akhter Hossain Bhuiyan, member (estate) of Rajuk. On May 12, 2011, the application was placed at a meeting of Rajuk board which eventually approved it, said the

report. Similarly, Showkat's wife Aysha Begum got re-allotment of a 12-katha plot in 2010, instead of a 7.5 katha-plot allotted to her in

Asked about the lawsuits against him, Showkat said the ACC filed the cases based on a wrong premise.

"It is not legally right to file a case at a time when enquiry is going on," he said.

categories is very common, and the change in size of plots was done following due procedures of Rajuk. "We made formal appeals to the Rajuk

tions and altered those. Rajuk knows whether it followed its rules or not." He also said the ACC didn't take permis-

sion from the higher authorities for filing

Despite repeated attempts, Huda could not be reached over the phone.

Modi wants to change strategy

FROM PAGE 16

"Petty statements by those claiming to be BJP's well wishers are deviating the campaign from the issues of development & good governance," Modi, the biggest campaigner for the party, said in a Twitter post. "I disapprove any such irresponsible

statement & appeal to those making them to kindly refrain from doing so."

Bihar state wing of the party, said those opposed to Modi would have to leave India and go to Pakistan after the BJP won the election and formed a government. A couple of days later, television channels

showed a video in which Praveen Togadia, a firebrand member of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a sister organisation of the BJP, was seen offering advice on how to prevent Muslims from buying property in Hindusdominated areas.

Togadia denied that, saying he only asked Hindus to seek the help of police to resolve property disputes involving Muslims. The statements, however, have re-ignited

concern about religious minorities under a BJP government, which rivals say has a deep-seated bias against India's 150 million Muslims. A first information report (FIR) has been registered against Togadia.

"An FIR has been filed against him under sections 153(A), 153(B) and under 188 for violating notification of the Election

Commission," District Collector and

yesterday. Togadia over his hate speech and also directed it to submit action-taken report as

soon as possible. Modi himself is tainted by accusations that he encouraged or turned a blind eye to Hindu-Muslim riots in 2002 in Gujarat, the state he has governed for 13 years. More than 1,000 people, most of them Muslims,

were killed in the violence. He has always denied the accusations and a Supreme Court inquiry did not find

evidence to prosecute him.

Stepping up its campaign against Narendra Modi, the Congress yesterday released video clips of alleged "hate speeches" by several BJP, VHP and Shiv Sena leaders and demanded their arrest, PTI reported.

and BJP leader Giriraj Singh, besides VHP leader Praveen Togadia and Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam. "These crocodile tears ... will not do,"

While opinion polls are predicting Modi's BJP-led alliance will win the biggest chunk of the 543 parliamentary seats being contested in the election, that ends on May 12, most of them show he will need allies

An anti-Muslim pitch is not only expected to make it tougher for him to find coalition partners, but could also drive away some of middle-class voters, whose support Modi is banking on to unseat the Congress

the election in Bihar, said he stood by his

This month, the election commission administration to take action against election rallies on charges of making

> Amit Shah, vowed not to use abusive or derogatory language. The commission said that it would monitor his campaigning.

Separately, a leader of the BJP's alliance partner in the Western state of Maharashtra said on Monday Modi would teach a lesson to Muslim rioters. Shiv Sena leader Ramdas Kadam made the comments at a joint

US for improving worker safety

They said there have been some improvements in workplace safety measures and cited an increased number of inspectors and

During a meeting on April 28 in Dhaka, US officials will attempt to verify the number of inspectors that have been hired and press Bangladesh to ensure workers have the freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively.

In June last year, President Barack Obama suspended Bangladesh's tariff benefits under the GSP, a scheme that aims to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential dutyfree entry for up to 5,000 products. The programme benefits 126 designated countries and territories.

Obama cited as the basis for his decision the tragic deaths of workers in the Tazreen Fashions fire and the Rana Plaza collapse, as well as the inability of Bangladeshi workers to exercise their full labour rights.

In July 2013, the United States Trade Representative provided Bangladesh with an action plan on worker rights and safety that, if implemented, could provide a basis

for the president to consider the reinstatement of GSP trade benefits

and only a small portion of Bangladesh's exports to the US are eligible for the programme because textiles are exempted.

One of the US officials said the removal of Bangladesh from GSP had a limited influence on its exports but did send a strong message.

Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (Ticfa), and meetings under the forum will take place in Dhaka on April 28. A review of Bangladesh's GSP eligibility is under way, the official said, with a deci-

sion expected in the second half of June. If a reinstatement is recommended, it would be unlikely to happen while the programme has lapsed, he said. "We had our first interim review of

Bangladesh late last year, and in early January of this year we indicated to the Bangladesh government that while some progress had been achieved, there was some way to go. We would not be moving to reinstate benefits at that time."

With details from Bloomberg BNA and PTI

ইভাস্ট্রিয়াল জমি বিক্রয়

পাশে দেয়াল ঘেরা ২২ বিঘা ও মুন্সীগঞ্জ জেলার গজারিয়া থানাধীন রায়পাড়া মৌজায় নদীর পাশে ২২ বিঘা জমি বিক্রয় হইবে (সম্পূর্ণ নিষ্কন্টক অবস্থায় এখনই ইন্ডাস্ট্রি করার উপযোগী)। আগ্রহী ক্রেতাগণকে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হইল।

যোগাযোগ: ০১৯৬২৪২৩৬৮০

The secretary claimed alteration of plot

authorities, seeking alteration of categories of our plots. Rajuk considered our applica-

Party spokesperson Randeep Surejewala also demanded an "apology" from Modi On Saturday, Giriraj Singh, a leader of the and action against his key aide Amit Shah

said Abhishek Manu Singhvi, a leader of the ruling Congress party, referring to Modi's Twitter posts criticising colleagues' statements.

"People know the truth."

after the polls for a majority.

But some of Modi's colleagues remain defiant. BJP leader Singh, who is contesting

statement. "I have said what I felt. I will give Returning Officer P K Solanki said here my explanation." The poll panel had asked the district banned one of Modi's top aides from

> inflammatory speeches against Muslims. The ban was lifted last week after the aide,

election rally with Modi in Mumbai.

FROM PAGE 16

inspections.

The GSP scheme lapsed at the end of July

Washington and Dhaka on November 25 signed the US-Bangladesh Trade and

গাজীপুর জেলার শ্রীপুর থানাধীন টেপিরবাড়ী মৌজায় পাকা রাস্তার