

Unsure power supply first hurdle, corruption next

WB report on investment climate in Bangladesh says

REJAUL KARIM BYRON
A latest World Bank (WB) study has identified erratic power supply as the worst hurdle to investment. Corruption is the next big problem, with the customs and tax departments being the most corrupt. Environmental and labour and social security agencies are also high on the corruption matrix. The WB study titled 'Improving

the Investment Climate in Bangladesh' also identifies problematic tax administration, cost of and access to financing and uncertainty in economic policy as the other hurdles. The surveyed firms include garments, textiles, food and food processing, leather and leather products, electronics, chemicals and pharmaceuticals located in Dhaka and Chittagong. The survey

was done in end-2002. The WB report, based on a survey of 1,000 manufacturing firms, says each of them on an average paid Tk 55,000 to the customs in bribes last year and Tk 20,000 to the tax authorities. Environmental agencies took Tk 4,800 in bribes and social security

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The wife and mother of Bijon Bihari Mondol grieve after his coffin arrives in Khulna yesterday, left. Bijon was injured in Monday's violence that killed Awami League leader Monzurul Imam and died on the way to Dhaka. Workers rule Khulna streets, right, during the 48-hour hartal yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

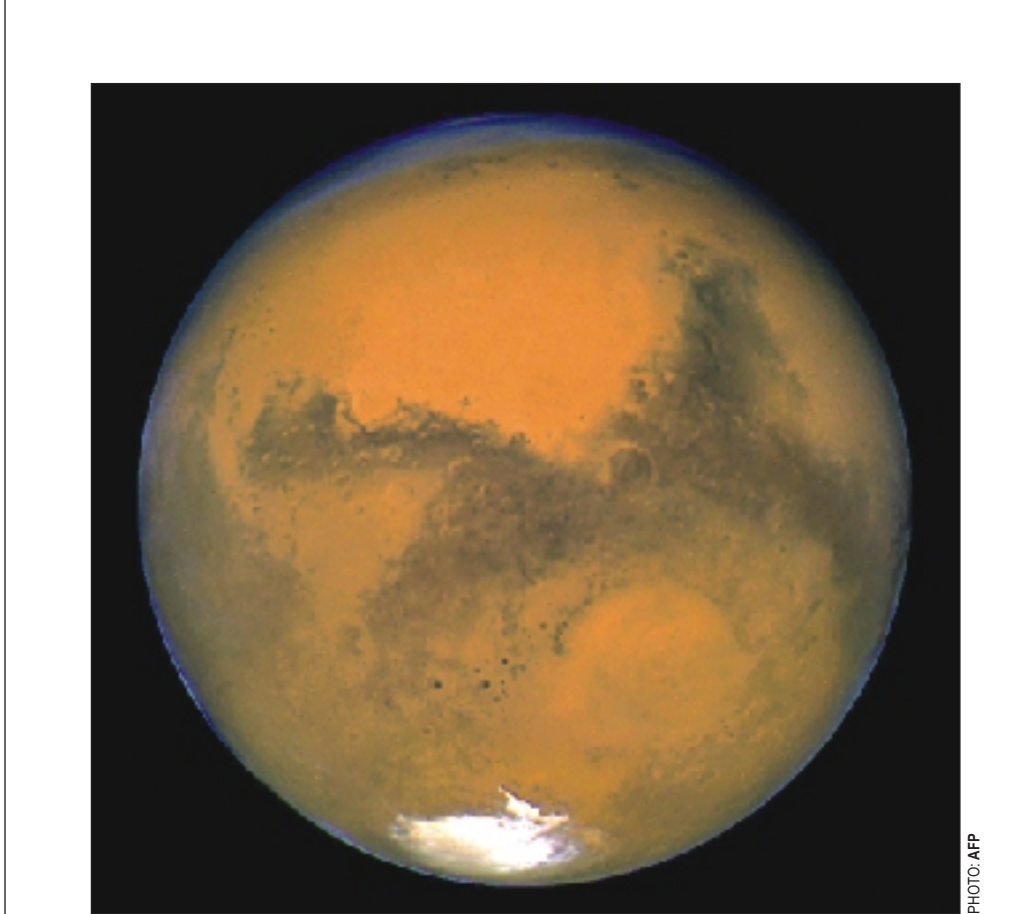


PHOTO: AFP

Mars up close, as seen through the Hubble Space Telescope.

Close Mars encounter delights skygazers

REUTERS, Sydney
The last time Mars came this close to Earth, our ancestors were living in caves and struggling to make basic tools out of rocks. A mere 60,000 years later, thousands of people around the world were using a vast array of high-tech digital and optical equipment yesterday to observe the red planet as it passes. From the shores of Tahiti in Polynesia to outback Australia and Japan, amateur and

professional stargazers aimed their telescopes at the eastern sky for a close encounter with Mars. At 0951 GMT, Mars passed just 34.65 million miles from Earth, making it the closest such encounter since the Stone Age. Hundreds of stargazers queued up outside the Sydney Observatory as dark fell, eager to look through some of about 10 telescopes set

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Top office people dominate promotion list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials at important offices including the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the ministries of establishment and home and private secretaries to influential ministers dominated the list of promoted civil servants yesterday. The promotees include Prime Minister's Private Secretary (1) AHM Nurul Islam, her Press Secretary Tajul Islam and Director General at PMO Safar Raj Hossain. They were elevated as additional secretaries. Of the three, Nurul is expected to be appointed as the acting secretary to the premier as the post has long been lying vacant and Safar is likely to be made the acting secretary of a ministry, sources said. It is not yet known whether Tajul will continue in the current post or be given a foreign posting. He has been acting as the prime minister's

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Hasina talks of govt 'hit list' of 8,000 AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the government has put 8,000 popular leaders of her party on its hit list. "Of the listed leaders, 1,000 are from Dhaka city," she said while addressing a discussion meeting in the city organised by the Jatiya Sramik League to observe the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The popular AL leaders became targets of the ruling coalition as part of a blueprint to clear the way for the rulers, she said. "When the AL is organising a movement, the four-party alliance is implementing its plan of eliminating

its leaders," she said. She brushed aside allegations that AL leaders were killed because of intra-party feuds. Hasina said about 24,000 opposition leaders and activists have been killed since the present government came to power. The opposition leader said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would have to bear all the responsibilities for the killing of Imam and other AL leaders including Sharif Mozammel of Dhaka city. She recalled other AL and its front organisation leaders who were killed in recent times. Hasina asked her party leaders and workers to continue the movement against the government until its ouster from power.

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Judge appointment creates new controversy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A controversy has emerged between the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the government over the appointment of judges in the Appellate Division. The SCBA alleged that the government has appointed Tafazzul Islam as the judge of Appellate Division, superseding Justice Syed Amirul Islam. Talking to the BBC Bangla service last night, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, president of the SCBA, said the government had done this out of stubbornness. "By making such an appointment, the government is trying to prove that they don't bend to any suggestion by the SCBA," said Rakanuddin Mahmud. He alleged that this act of the government has tarnished the image of the Supreme Court.

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Mintoo new FBCCI chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Awal Mintoo yesterday was elected president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) for the 2003-2005 term. Mintoo, a nominated director from Bangladesh Association of Banks, got 36 votes out of 38. He got the support of 22 elected directors and all the 14 government-nominated directors, who were the

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BTTB cellphone project HC rejects Chinese company's writ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The High Court Division yesterday rejected the writ petition filed by Chinese telecom equipment vendor ZTE Corporation challenging the legitimacy of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board's (BTTB) mobile phone project. The court earlier asked the BTTB

to maintain status quo for 10 days and asked the government to explain why the BTTB's mobile project would not be declared illegal. The ZTE Corporation in its petition claimed that it was declared responsive in the preliminary evaluation but was announced non-

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Mild tremor in Ctg again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A light tremor measuring 4.22 on the Richter scale jolted the port city and its adjoining areas yesterday morning. The 18-second tremor, felt at 7.45*18", had its epicentre some 163-km off the seismic observatory at Ambagan, sources said. However, no casualty or property damage was reported. It was the third jolt of the current month including the one on a moderate magnitude of 5.31 on the Richter scale on August 13. The city has experienced as many as 15 quakes this year.



PHOTO: STAR

A trader at Dhaka's New Market sells fish, top, from his candle lit stall as a power cut lurched into its 10th day yesterday. New Market traders take their grievances to the streets, bottom, in protest.

New Market area without power for 10 days

Shop owners barricade road in protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shop owners and shopkeepers in the New Market area yesterday laid a two-hour siege to the nearby road, demanding immediate restoration of power to more than 2,000 stores. Seven markets adjacent to the New Market have been reeling under brownouts for the last 10 days after two transformers of the power

distribution substation exploded. But the authorities did not make any move until yesterday to put the system back on the line. The shop owners alleged that the officials of Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA) instead of restoring electricity are asking for a bribe of Tk 20 lakh from them. "Our business has plummeted,

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 28		6-21 pm
Aug 29	5-38 am	

Prayer Timings		
August 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-28	6-31
Esha	8-00	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation