

Saudis seize 'terror' missiles

BBC ONLINE

Saudi authorities say they have seized a lorry-load of surface-to-air missiles destined for an unnamed terrorist group.

The consignment was intercepted last month on a desert road near the port city of Jeddah.

Police say the weapons -- capable of being used to bring down aircraft -- had been smuggled from Yemen.

Last month, air travellers from the United States and Britain were alerted to the possibility of attack if they went to Saudi Arabia.

The alerts came after intelligence reports were relayed to Washington and London by the Saudis of a specific threat to British airlines flying in or out of Riyadh international airport.

And British Airways, one of the world's biggest airlines, suspended all flights to Saudi Arabia until further notice.

The airliner says it has had good co-operation from the Saudi authorities and hopes to resume flights soon.

The Americans are particularly sensitive to threats in Saudi Arabia following the suicide car bombings on 12 May on residential blocks

France, Germany not ready to back US draft on Iraq

Rumsfeld flies into Iraq as US pushes for multinational force

REUTERS, AP, AFP, Dresden, Germany

French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said yesterday they were not ready yet to accept a U.S. draft for a new United Nations resolution on Iraq.

"We are ready to examine the proposals but they seem quite far from what appears to us the primary objective, namely the transfer of political responsibility to an Iraqi government as soon as possible," Chirac told a news conference with

Schroeder. Facing almost daily casualties in Iraq, Washington has drafted a new U.N. resolution aimed at getting more countries to contribute soldiers and cash to its occupation but which insists on full U.S. military control and a dominant political role.

Schroeder said that the proposals showed movement in the U.S. position but did not go far enough. He said that while France and Germany opposed the U.S.-led war in Iraq, they now wanted to help bring stability and democracy to the country.

"Such a perspective can only

develop if the United Nations takes over responsibility for the political process and if an Iraqi administration is installed," he said.

The proposed U.N. resolution marked a policy reversal for the administration of President Bush, which had resisted U.N. involvement after the Security Council's failure to approve the war that toppled Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

France, Russia, China and Germany were among nations on the Security Council which opposed

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



A house collapses in debris in Lalbagh's Rahanganj in the old quarter of Dhaka yesterday, miraculously without any casualty.

Shell seeks work extension for blocks 5, 10

UNB, Dhaka

Shell, which is quitting Bangladesh, has sought a one year extension of the term for its geological work programme on blocks 5 and 10 covering Khulna, Barisal and Noakhali districts.

It, however, said that the one-year extension from July 4, 2004 will not affect the subsequent deadline of July 4, 2006 by which time the initial exploration period would have to be started as per the PSCs on the two blocks.

In a letter to Petrobangla, the Anglo-Dutch energy giant also sought permission for decreasing the multifold seismic survey in block 10 and aeromagnetic survey in block 5.

Shell's other plea is for undertaking a 2-D seismic survey with the equivalent cost of 6,500-km of aeromagnetic survey in block 5 and an additional 2-D seismic survey in the block which is equal to the decreased amount of multifold seismic in block 10.

"... There is no change to the total net value of our commitment; however the value of information is deemed much higher," said a letter from Shell Bangladesh Managing

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



Green Force environment activists on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protest India's plan to divert waters from rivers flowing into Bangladesh.

Safe sex for sex workers under cop clampdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sex workers at a discussion yesterday accused police of harassing non-governmental outreach workers while distributing condoms to save them from HIV.

"Police beat us, alleging some NGOs are doing business in the name of protecting sex workers from AIDS," said a hermaphrodite sex worker, involved with the HIV outreach programme of CARE Bangladesh.

The sex workers at the discussion, "Media Campaign on Legal, Ethical and Human Rights Issues for the HIV/AIDS-Related Vulnerable Groups," also alleged that police, local gangsters and fake journalists abused them in multiple ways.

A member of Durjoy, an organisation of sex workers, alleged many policemen had had unpaid sex with them and behaved rudely, when they demanded money.

She said, "Clients don't want to use condoms during sex. We have launched an awareness campaign

to alert the sex workers to HIV risk and motivate them not to have unprotected sex."

The discussion, organised by Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum (BMSF), quoted official statistics until December 1, 2002 as saying Bangladesh has 248 HIV-positive people, while the World Health Organisation put the figure at 13,000 to 17,000.

Among the government-detected HIV-positive people, 111 (68 per cent) are workers, 88 (36.85 per cent) unknown, 25 (11.42 per cent) housewives, seven commercial sex workers, five children under 15, three businessmen, two infants, two truckers, two prisoners and one student.

The 10 HIV-vulnerable groups include migrant workers, hermaphrodites, sex workers, street children, truck drivers, professional blood donors and intravenous drug users.

Journalist Saleem Samad moderated the discussion and BMSF Executive Director Kamruzzaman

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Outlaws trade over 100 rounds in gunfight at Icegati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Panic gripped the people of Icegati union of Rupsha upazila, following a gunfight between the armed cadres of two factions of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) yesterday morning.

Police could not tell the reason behind the hour-long battle, which began at around 6:00am between the PBCP (Tapan) and the PBCP (Janajuddha) rivals near Amam Sea Foods at Shingherchar village.

Both the groups used hand-bombs and exchanged more than 100 rounds of shots between them. But no casualty was reported.

The PBCP (Tapan) left the spot by three-wheeler vans towards Terokhada, while their rivals, Janajuddho, towards Labanchhora of Khulna by trawlers, witnesses said.

The outlaws of Janajuddho forcibly took PBCP (Tapan) cadre Mujibar Rahman, 20, with them, witnesses added.

A large number of people of Icegati have left the area fearing another flare-up.

Police picked up 10 suspects in this regard.

Bridge toll collection to be computerised

REZAUL KARIM

The government has ordered the communications ministry to introduce computerised toll collection system for all important roads and bridges to raise revenue collection.

Official sources said the instructions followed reports of low revenue collection from bridges, roads and ferries under the ministry, despite a 50 to 100 per cent increase in toll rates.

They said the tolls or taxes have been raised but the revenue income of the government has not gone up proportionately.

According to the officials, the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) collects tolls from 73 ferries, 33 bridges and two roads.

Of the 73 ferries, the RHD collects tolls from 49 ferries through lessees and directly from the 24 others. It also collects tolls directly from five bridges, through the lessees from 27 bridges and through the computerised O&M (operation and maintenance) system from one bridge.

Tolls from the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge are collected by the Jamuna Multi-purpose Bridge Authority under the O&M system.

Sources said the government in its bid to enhance revenue income increased the toll rate by 80 per cent

on the Tongi-Ashulia road under the RHD. The tolls on Meghna-Gumti and Meghna bridges on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway have been increased by 100 per cent.

According to a summary of the communications ministry placed at a recent cabinet meeting, toll collections by the RHD increased to Tk 111.36 crore in 2002-2003 fiscal (till June 30 this year) compared to the previous year's collection of Tk 62.02 crore.

So, the annual toll collection increased by Tk 49.34 crore, which is 79.54 per cent higher than the previous year's total collection.

On the other hand, toll collection from Jamuna bridge stood at Tk 107 crore in 2002-2003 fiscal, 20 per cent higher than the previous year's collection, despite no increase in toll rate.

The cabinet observed that the government's revenue income should have increased with the rise in toll rates and that toll collection was not satisfactory.

It found that toll collection is being obstructed due to the legal complexities created by the lessees in collaboration with dishonest officials.

Sources said the dishonest officials inspire the lessees to go for

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

One gets life for rape in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Speedy Trial Tribunal (STT) of Barisal yesterday sentenced two to life imprisonment for violating a rickshawpuller's wife.

Judge Abdul Quddus Miah sentenced Abbas and Kabir of Patharghata in Barguna to rigorous imprisonment for life and fined them Tk 1 lakh each.

The court ordered Barguna district commissioner to seize properties of the accused to realise the amount.

The two raped Soleman Howlader's wife April 26, 2002 at about 8:00pm, sources said.

Sub-inspector of Patharghata Police Station Shahidul Islam filed charges against the accused on July 18, 2002 and it was transferred to the STT of Barisal. The tribunal started judicial procedure on July 6, 2003.

The tribunal delivered the verdict in 16 working days after examining 10 witnesses.

26 bank DGMs get promotion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday promoted 26 deputy general managers (DGMs) of nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), specialised banks and financial institutions to general managers (GMs).

In accordance with the proposal of the finance ministry, the prime minister promoted 26 DGMs out of 40. The remaining 14 officials will also be promoted as per vacancies available, sources said.

Among those elevated to GM, 11 are of the Sonali Bank (SB), six of the Agrani Bank (AB), three of the Janata Bank (JB), three of the Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB), two of the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), and one of the Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RKUB). The DGMs of the Rupali Bank (RB) did not get promotion.

Most of the newly-elevated GMs got new postings at other banks.

Of the SB officials, Abdul Latif Barabhuiyan, Mainul Islam, Shariful Moslemin Khan and Md Golam

Sarwar have been transferred to the JB, Kazi Fakhrul Islam, Md Mofazzal Hossain, Shafiqur Rahman and Monir Uddin to the AB, Pradip Kumar Dutt and Md Azir Uddin to the BKB, and Md Shamsuddin Ahmed to the RB.

AB officials HKM Aftab Hossain and Khatib Nazrul Islam have been posted to the SB, Kazi Obaidur Rahman and AKM Khabiruddin Chowdhury to the JB, Masud Alam Khan to the RKUB, and Md Siddiqur Rahman to the BKB.

JB officials, AKM Rashiduzzaman and Md Zahirul Alam Sikder have been transferred to the SB and Nazli Shamima Ferdous to the AB.

BKB officials Dr Zillur Rahman has been posted to the RB and Abdus Salam to the SB. Manzur Ahmed stays with his bank.

Of the two ICB officials, Mohammad Jahangir Mia is to stay, while Kabari Mujib has been transferred to the SB. RKUB official Abu Jafar Md Sayeed has been posted to the BKB.

'Criminal' shot dead inside Dhanmondi Club

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed assailants yesterday gunned down an alleged criminal inside Dhanmondi Club in Dhanmondi.

Five young men shot Meraj Ali alias Meraj randomly at around 1:20pm killing him on the spot. Meraj was lying on a bench, witnesses said.

He is the prime accused in Sujon killing case. He and seven others allegedly cut both hands of Sujon in Kalabagan on September 9, 1999 causing Sujon's death.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Petrobangla union leaders demand toll from Unocal

UNB, Dhaka

Some Petrobangla union leaders allegedly demanded toll from the international oil giant, Unocal, said sources at the state-run oil and gas corporation.

They said the unionists claimed the toll in the name of donation for one of their ailing colleagues when senior officials of the Unocal were holding a meeting with the management of Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources Corporation at Petro Centre on Wednesday.

The Unocal officials, including

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 05		6-13 pm
Sept 06	5-40 am	

Prayer Timings		
September 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-45	5-10
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-35	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-24
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation