

BRINGING NUKE ISSUE BEFORE SECURITY COUNCIL

# Iran threatens to halt snap UN inspections

REUTERS, Tehran  
Iran threatened yesterday to halt snap UN inspections of its nuclear facilities if it is taken to the UN Security Council, and Britain said the council would consider sanctions if Tehran defied international demands.

The United States and the European Union's three biggest powers said on Thursday that nuclear talks with Iran were at a dead end and Tehran should be brought before the Council.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said such a step would have "consequences" for the West.

"The government will be obliged to end all of its voluntary measures if sent to the UN council," state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying.

Iran has repeatedly threatened to end snap checks and resume uranium enrichment if it is reported to the Security Council.

The Iranian parliament enacted legislation in November that obliges the government to respond in this way, bringing it closer toward a collision course with the United Nations.

Cooperating with snap UN inspections is voluntary on Iran's part and halting them would not violate its international treaty

obligations. However, it would reduce Iran's cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog to the legal minimum.

Accusing Iran of turning its back on the international community, the EU's big three -- Britain, Germany and France -- said it had consistently breached its commitments and failed to show the world its nuclear activities were peaceful.

"Obviously if Iran failed to comply, the Security Council would then consider sanctions," British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told BBC Radio after the EU3 called for an emergency meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Asked if force were an option, he said: "No one is talking about invading Iran or taking military action against Iran."

Concern over the Iran crisis is spreading steadily through global financial markets, with equity investors beginning to price in the geopolitical risks that have lent support to oil and gold prices through the week and lifted the safe haven Swiss franc by about one percent versus the U.S. dollar.

Oil held above \$64 a barrel on SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Death trap of a road

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has completed a 1.76km road from Mohammadpur to Basila that locals term 'death trap' for its height, which at places reaches up to 25 feet, and the terrifying slope of its sides.

The 20-foot-wide road built at a cost of Tk 4.51 crore poses serious threats to motorists, pedestrians and non-mechanised vehicles for its unusually steep slope. A fall from the 20- to 25-foot high road will undoubtedly result in serious casualties.

DCC Chief Engineer Idris Mia said a proper slope could not be built because private landowners along the road refused to give up their land for its construction.

DCC Zone-6 Executive Engineer SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



The 1.76 km Mohammadpur-Basila road that is too high and steep for safe journey by pedestrians or vehicles.

## Sharon in coma, condition 'serious but stable'

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was pronounced "serious but stable" by doctors on Friday as he spent his ninth day in a medically-induced coma since suffering a massive brain haemorrhage.

The prime minister has been in intensive care since his collapse and three bouts of surgery to stem bleeding in the brain, leaving Israelis increasingly resigned to the likelihood that he will never return to government.

The Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem where he is being treated said Sharon remains in a "serious and stable" condition, but that he is yet to emerge fully from a deep coma, induced by medics in order to rest his body.

Doctors have been slowly reducing levels of anaesthesia but the 77-year-old premier has yet to awaken. Doctors have dismissed reports of an increase in general concern while the local media has focused on the fact Sharon has yet to open his eyes.

"We have been worried from the start, we continue to be and we are saying that his condition is serious," Hadassah spokesman Ron Krumer told AFP.

He confirmed that Sharon had been in a coma for nine days, but stressed the length of time such patients remained unconscious varied from case to case.

"We have expressed our concern since the beginning and we have not changed," he said, adding that there could be another update on Sharon's condition before the start of the Jewish Sabbath at SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Ctg JMB chief confesses to his role in Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) operatives, including Chittagong divisional chief Mohammad alias Aman Ullah, gave confessional statements before a court here yesterday.

Mohammad confessed that he, like the other JMB divisional chiefs, was in charge of field-level implementation of the decisions taken in the meeting of the seven-member Majlis-e-Shura of the JMB.

Ataur Rahman Sunny, military chief of the banned Islamist militant organisation, has led the blasts across the country, including the suicide attacks, court sources said quoting Mohammad's confession.

The JMB has carried out the attacks and blasts as it does not believe in the "conventional" judicial system and the constitution and vowed to continue the

attacks until the last member of the JMB is alive, Mohammad said.

Mohammad along with Cox's Bazar regional commander Naimuzzaman alias Zafar alias Sohag was produced before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mokseder Rahman at around 12:45pm under tight security.

In his two-hour-and-15-minute confession, Mohammad said he took training at a camp at Bagmara in Rajshahi after joining the JMB in 2003.

Mohammad admitted that he directly participated in the "outlaw eradication drive" led by Shaekh Abdur Rahman and Siddiqur Rahman alias Bangla Bhai at Bagmara in 2004.

He said all JMB activities were carried out at the direction of JMB chief Abdur Rahman while the organisation's operations chief Sunny discussed the directives in SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



Police produce JMB Chittagong divisional commander Mohammad at a court in the port city yesterday for recording his statement.

## Iraq moves closer to election outcome, fresh violence flares

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq moved closer on Friday to learning the final outcome of last month's general election after foreign monitors said they will release initial findings of an inquiry into the vote as early as Sunday.

Iraqi and US officials hope the December 15 poll will lead to the formation of a unified government -- representing Shiites, Sunni Arabs and Kurds -- that will help undermine the Sunni-backed insurgency.

In the latest bloodshed, at least 16 people were wounded in two separate car bomb attacks to the west and the northeast of Baghdad. These were the first such bombings since the start of a Muslim holiday on Tuesday.

An independent team of foreign monitors has been looking at the results of the parliamentary election, including a raft of complaints of election fraud and how Iraq's electoral commission handled them.

A positive assessment by the Canada-backed International Mission for Iraqi Elections will give further credibility to the commission's work.

The monitors, who have been working since the start of January, appeared ready to make an initial announcement.

"In a couple of days we will be issuing a statement," said Mazen Chouaib, director of field operations for the mission.

"We are looking at January 15 as a date, but it depends on the work of the mission today," he told AFP, adding that the announcement may not be made until Monday.

Abdul Hussein al-Hindawi, of Iraq's electoral commission board, said the commission would wait for the monitors' findings before announcing the result of its inquiry into the fraud complaints made by Sunni-backed and secular parties.

The commission will then reveal the final, uncertified results of the election -- Iraq's first for the full-term parliament since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003. SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Two killed in 'crossfire' in Narsingdi, Khulna

STAR REPORT

A listed criminal and arms smuggler and an outlaw leader were killed in 'crossfire' in Narsingdi and Khulna as their accomplices skirmished with law enforcers on January 10.

Detectives arrested Nuruzzaman alias Nura, 36, at his rented house in West Datta Para in the town around 11:30am on January 10, reports our Narsingdi correspondent.

Nura, son of Motalib, was accused of 10 criminals charges including one murder, police said.

The detectives handed him over to Narsingdi police, who took him to Chowala in the town to seize firearms and arrest his accomplices.

The police claimed as they reached Madanganj Road in Chowala, Nura's accomplices opened fire on them around 8:30pm.

The police returned fire and Nura died in 'crossfire' during the 'shootout', they said, adding, three policemen were also injured.

The police seized two light guns, two bullets and two cartridges from the spot. Regional leader of New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, 38, was killed in 'crossfire' during a 'shootout' between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices, reports our staff correspondent in Khulna.

A Rab press release said they arrested Mizan, son of Shaikh Shamsur Rahman, in Rayermahal in Khalishpur on January 8.

He was accused in at least 16 criminal cases including 10 for murders, the release added.

A Rab team came under fire around 4:00am when it took him to Rayermahal in the city to arrest his accomplices and seize firearms.

Rab sources said Mizan was killed in 'crossfire' as the Rab countered the attack.

The Rab recovered one pistol with two bullets, one pipe gun, seven bullets of .303 rifle, and two empty cases of shotgun cartridges.

## EU pledges \$100m to tackle bird flu

REUTERS, Ankara

The European Union pledged \$100 million in aid to boost the global fight against bird flu on Friday and Turkey stepped up the culling of birds to try to stop the deadly virus spreading further.

Makers of the Tamiflu drug, the best known defense against the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu, said on Friday they would donate more antiviral pills to Asia, the epicentre of the threat to global health.

The European Union funding comes after World Bank member states endorsed aid worth \$500 million to tackle a virus that has jumped from birds to humans and has killed at least 78.

A British laboratory found that two of the first Turkish victims were infected with a slightly mutated strain of H5N1.

Although it did not seem to be more dangerous, the mutation in theory could help the virus more easily pass from a chicken to a human. Of gravest concern is that the H5N1 virus will mutate so it passes from human to human.

The human victims of the disease had all been in east Asia until the recent outbreak in Turkey brought the virus toward the edge of Europe.

Three infected children died last week in eastern Turkey and 15 more people have tested positive, but officials say they are being treated with antivirals and their condition is not critical.

One eight-year-old girl who tested positive was discharged from hospital in Van, eastern Turkey, on Friday after being treated with Tamiflu, which is made by Swiss company Roche.

Two more people were admitted to hospital in the southeast Turkish city of Diyarbakir for tests after showing "suspicious" symptoms. The disease has struck poultry in the area.

Turkey's Anatolian state news agency said authorities had culled 7,000 poultry in the southern province of Isparta on Friday after detecting the virus in birds there. Nationwide they have culled more SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



An octogenarian offers munajat after the Eid-ul-Azha prayers at the National Eidgah in the capital Wednesday.

## Eid celebrated

UNB, Dhaka

Eid-ul-Azha, the second biggest religious festival of the Muslims, was celebrated across the country on Wednesday amidst religious fervour, spirit of sacrifice and submission to Allah.

After offering the Eid prayers, Muslims sacrificed animals commemorating Prophet Ibrahim's great sacrifice of his son Ismail to the will of Allah.

But many homebound people had to offer their prayers on the wayside due to dense fog and unprecedented traffic congestion.

Thousands of people were stranded at Maowa and Aricha ferry terminals. No ferry could ply from the terminals for long 12 hours from 10:00pm Tuesday to 10:00am on Wednesday due to heavy fog.

In the capital, the main Eid congregation was held at National Eidgah where President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia hosted separate receptions for cross-sections of people and diplomats

Ministers, MPs, judges, political leaders and people from all walks of life attended the congregation. SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

## Galib's men clash with others on Eid day: 15 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Fifteen people including two policemen and a woman were injured in Bagmara upazila on the Eid day when militant kingpin Asadullah al Galib's men clashed with the general Muslims over Eid congregation at Koalipara Eidgah maidan.

Some 30 followers of Galib, who tried to hold the Eid congregation in their own way, also ransacked two houses, a shop and a mosque near the eidgah.

Opposing the usual way of Eid prayers, Galib's followers started holding separate Eid congregation at the 150-year-old Koalipara Eidgah maidan last year while the general Muslims of the surrounding villages stood against them, sources said.



Father of Selina Akhter Shelly bursts into tears on arrival of her coffin at Chittagong airport on Tuesday.

## Shelly laid to rest amid tears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Bangladeshi woman killed by a stray bullet on December 28 in the USA was laid to eternal rest at her husband's village house in Fatikchhari of the district on Tuesday evening.

Selina's father Master Mohammad Yeahia, husband Golan Maola and other relatives received US expatriate Selina Akhter Shelly's body that reached Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport at around 11:00am on the day.

After two Namaz-e-janazas at the house of Selina's father in Gahira under Raozan upazila and her husband's house in Sundarpur SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## YANGON-BEIJING GAS DEAL

# Tri-nation pipeline at stake

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The proposed \$1 billion Myanmar-Bangladesh-India gas pipeline appears to be in danger of remaining a mere pipedream as Myanmar has agreed to sell the gas to China from a block where the product is jointly owned by Indian state-owned companies and South Korean energy majors Daewoo and Korea Gas.

On December 7 last year, the Myanmar government inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with PetroChina for supplying 6.5 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas from Block A in the Bay of Bengal over 30 years, according to Indian petroleum ministry sources.

This fact came to light when Indian Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary (Gas) Ajay Tyagi returned here last weekend cutting short his trip to Yangon, after the Myanmar authorities had told him they already had tied up with

PetroChina for sale of gas from the field. The overseas arm of India's Oil and Natural Gas Commission -- ONGC Videsh Ltd -- and Gas Authority of India Limited together hold 30 percent stake, Daewoo 60 percent and Korea Gas 10 percent of Block A.

The gas supply from the Myanmar was crucial to India's quest for energy security to meet the need SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Pakistan's Younis Khan was eyeing a double century after scoring his third Test hundred in as many matches against India on Friday.

He was unbeaten on 147 as Pakistan reached 326 for two wickets at close of play on the first day of SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Prayer Timing		
January 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation