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US scrambles to defuse Japan beef row

BBC ONLINE

The US is dispatching a team of experts to Japan to oversee US shipments of beef, in an effort to persuade Tokyo not to reimpose a total ban on beef imports.

Japan said the ban would resume after outlawed spinal material was found in a 390kg batch of meat from New York.

It came only a month after a two-year embargo on US beef, imposed over fears of BSE (mad cow disease), was lifted.

US Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns admitted an "unacceptable failure", but denied any threat to public health.

He said US exports to Japan would from now on face stricter controls, and that US inspectors in

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Costly cranes lie idle at Ctg port

Lack of installation facilities, resistance from workers, stevedores main reasons

RAFIQ HASAN

Four sophisticated gantry cranes imported from Japan have been lying idle at the Chittagong seaport for about four months due to lack of installation facilities and opposition from the stevedores and port workers.

The government imported the cranes at a cost of Tk 123 crore in the middle of last September but could not install those as the port needs some civil construction done and the workers are opposing the installation fearing massive job cuts, according to sources.

The government, however, claims that commissioning of the cranes is being delayed because it takes some time to install such sophisticated machines.

"It is not correct that the commissioning of gantry cranes is being delayed due to opposition from the port workers," said AMM Shahadat Hossain, chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

Expressing his unwillingness to accept the description of the cranes as 'lying idle', he said, "We have to get some civil construction

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Hasina slates attack on AL workers

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday criticised the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for attacking opposition activists and said people will foil their plan to remain in power through vote rigging.

"No one can resist the people with armed terrorists and police. People will bring an end to the misrule of the alliance government through a mass movement," said Hasina, also the president of the Awami League (AL), in a statement.

She strongly protested the armed attack on AL workers at Bangabandhu Avenue and other parts of the capital.

Police yesterday foiled an attempt by AL activists to bring out a procession from Bangabandhu Avenue to drum up support for today's countrywide hartal.

She demanded immediate release of her party leaders and workers and exemplary punishment to the attackers.

5 lakh fake driving licences in use

MONJUR MAHMUD

Around half a million people are driving motor vehicles on roads across the country with fake licences thanks to corruption and poor manpower of the regulators who check them.

The number of driving licences issued by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) so far has been over 5.5 lakh against nearly 10 lakh motor vehicles across the country, according to an investigation by The Daily Star.

"One of every two licences is possibly fake and it means roughly 50 percent people are driving with fake licences," a highly placed source at the commerce ministry told The Daily Star. "When mobile courts are in operation we seize huge numbers of fake licences and unfortunately things are getting worse," the source added.

The number of driving licences issued should be more than the vehicles that are plying since public or commercial vehicles run longer with multiple drivers for a single vehicle, the source said. Besides, large number of private vehicle owners have licences despite having, in some cases, more than one chauffeur. But reality is the opposite, he observed.

The number of vehicles registered with the BRTA is about 8.5 lakh. But the actual number of vehicles on the road is higher than the registered ones as a large number of vehicles use fake registration plates or no registration plates at all, the source said. The number of vehicles across the country is at least 10 percent higher than the 8.5 lakh which the BRTA claims to have registered.

BRTA Chairman MA Momen said the number of fake licences is huge and the traffic police are not doing their jobs properly in this regard. "It is not possible for BRTA to check and ensure that everybody has a genuine licence. But things are improving," he added.

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Charges pressed against 10 for killing journalist Goutam

BDNEWS, Faridpur

Police yesterday pressed charges against 10 people for killing journalist Goutam Das, Faridpur bureau chief of the daily Shamokal.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector (SI) Golam Nabi submitted the charge-sheet to the court of a first class magistrate two months and four days into the murder after taking depositions of two prosecution witnesses and confessional statements of the three accused.

In the charge-sheet, the IO stated that the Samakal ran a news item on corruption and irregularities in the repairing work of Mujib Road, which infuriated the accused, leading to the murder of Goutam.

Goutam's mother Satirani Das and father Balam Das demanded arrest and speedy trial of the accused.



Rab men display huge bomb-making materials seized in Shahjahanpur upazila in Bogra yesterday.

US Islamic NGO team in Iraq to free abducted US journo

ANADOLU, Baghdad

A delegation of the Council of American-Islamic Relations, (CAIR), a non-governmental organisation, went to Iraqi capital Baghdad to exert efforts for the release of the American female journalist, Jill Carroll, who was abducted on January 7.

General Nadi Awad, the council's director, upon his arrival at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

US sees Iran facing growing isolation

AFP, Washington

The United States said Friday that Iran's move to transfer currency deposits away from Europe is a sign of growing isolation amid heightening tensions over its nuclear programme.

US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Iran's market manoeuvres would not deter moves to refer its nuclear activities to the UN Security Council.

The chief of Iran's Central Bank

indicated that Tehran has started shifting foreign currency deposits to southeast Asia amid the threat of sanctions, Iranian media reported Friday.

"I think it is an indication that Iran is further isolating itself from the rest of the world," McCormack told a press briefing. "I don't know what it is that they hope to accomplish by doing this."

McCormack described the decision making process of the Iranian leadership as "opaque" to

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Mizan Chy still in coma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Elderly politician and noted Awami League leader Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, 78, is still in a coma at intensive care unit (ICU) at Birdem Hospital in the capital.

His condition remains unchanged and his kidney is not working for the last few days, hospital sources said. He was kept alive through mechanical ventilation and artificial dilation at the ICU last night, doctors said.

Mizanur Rahman has been suffering from various old-age complications for long and was committed to Birdem on January 5.

Hailing from Chandpur, Mizan Chowdhury started his political career as the vice-president of All India Muslim Students League,

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Nepalese protesters clash with police

Hundreds rounded up

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepalese police rounded up yesterday hundreds of protesters and fired tear gas during running clashes in central Kathmandu with

activists demonstrating against King Gyanendra.

Hundreds of protesters played cat-and-mouse with police, throwing stones and running away in and

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Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation
Scholarship for meritorious and needy students

Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation awards scholarships to meritorious and needy students studying at different levels i.e. H.S.C., Bachelor & Master degree level for full academic period. The Foundation also awards Fellowships for conducting research at M.Phil, PhD & Post-Doctoral level.

In continuation to its scholarship awarding program, the Fundation is now inviting application from the students who have passed the H.S.C. in 2005 & fulfill the following minimum requirements.

Eligibility for the scholarship :

| Minimum CGPA Science Group (without 4th Subject) | | Minimum CGPA other than Science Group (without 4th Subject) | |
|---|------|--|-----|
| Students who have passed H.S.C. from the institution situated in City Corporation areas | 4.80 | Students who have passed H.S.C. from the institution situated outside City Corporation areas | 4.4 |
| Students who have passed H.S.C. from the institution situated in City Corporation areas | 4.70 | Students who have passed H.S.C. from the institution situated outside City Corporation areas | 4.3 |

Amount and duration of scholarship :

| Academic Level | Scholarship period | Monthly Scholarship | Annual grant for reading materials |
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| Bachelor | 2-5 Years (Renewable) | Tk. 2,000.00 | Tk. 5,000.00 |

Other criteria of the scholarship :

- The scholarship will be renewable from year to year basis for the entire duration of a particular course subject to satisfactory result/academic performance duly certified/recommended by the Principal/Institutional Head.
- Students availing scholarship from other sources will not qualify for Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation (DBBF) scholarship. In case of opting for DBBF scholarship one has to surrender the scholarship now availing (if any) from other sources.
- A DBBF scholarship holder shall not apply for other scholarship. In case of availing other scholarship he/she will have to surrender the DBBF scholarship.
- 50% scholarship will be earmarked for rural students.
- 50% scholarship will be earmarked for female students in both the cases of awarding scholarship to the students of urban and rural areas.
- Prescribed application form will be available in all the branches of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited. Where there is no branch of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited, the applicant may apply in plain paper giving personal and academic details along with copies of certificates, mark sheets, income certificates of father/mother/guardian, 4 copies of recent passport size color photographs (duly attested by the institutional head) and recommendation from the Institutional Head/Departmental Head.

Application should reach coordinator, Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation, Sena Kalyan Bhaban, 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 on or before March 30, 2006

Kosovo President Rugova dies

CNN, Pristina

Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova, the literary scholar turned politician who was the symbol of the fight for Kosovar self-rule, died of cancer yesterday, officials said. He was 61.

Rugova, who was diagnosed with lung cancer last year, died in the Kosovo capital Pristina.

"President Ibrahim Rugova died today at 11:40am (1040 GMT). He carried his battle with cancer with great dignity and courage until his last breath," his spokesman Muhamet Hamiti said.

"He was surrounded by his family, personal physician and American physicians who were treating him," The Associated Press quoted Hamiti as saying.

Tearful staff, bodyguards and neighbors gathered at Rugova's hillside residence in Pristina, where a flag was lowered to half-staff, AP reported.

The capital's streets were empty, with people glued to their radios and TV screens. Television stations were playing classical music.

A region of Serbia and

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| Esha | 7-15 | 7-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

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