

IRAN NUKE ROW

# US pushes for asset freeze, sanctions

REUTERS, Washington

The United States will push its allies next week to consider targeted sanctions on Iran that include a freeze on assets and visa restrictions, the State Department said on Friday.

Political directors from the main powers involved in trying to rein in Iran's nuclear programmes are due to meet in Moscow on Tuesday to discuss what action to take after Tehran announced this week it had become a nuclear power by enriching uranium.

The senior officials from France, Germany, Britain, the United States, Russia and China will look at "real actions" the United Nations can take to get Iran to change its behaviour, said State Department spokesman Sean McCormack.

The options under a Chapter 7 resolution under the UN charter could include a freeze on assets and travel restrictions on some members of the Iranian government, said McCormack.

"These are all levers at the disposal of the international community," McCormack told reporters.

While pushing for sanctions, US officials said they would not look at imposing restrictions on the oil and gas sectors, pointing out the intention was not to create further hardship for the Iranian people.

In an interview with Voice of America's Persian language television programme, senior State Department official Nicholas Burns said Tehran would face sanctions and that Iran had left itself "no exit points" on the Iran issue.

## Minister Selima Rahman hurt in road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman along with eight others were injured in a road accident yesterday in Mymensingh as she was returning to the capital from Netrokona.

She received injuries to her right leg and right knee.

The accident took place at Bhaluka around 5:30pm as her escort police car hit an oncoming microbus and her car collided with the escort police car.

Her driver, a woman and six policemen were injured in the accident.

Bhaluka police rushed to the spot and took the state minister to Gazipur Sadar Hospital. The injured policemen received treatment at Bhaluka hospital. She was later shifted to Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka.



PHOTO: STAR

Traders keep their shutters down and hoist black flags in Dayaganj in the capital yesterday to protest the killings of local leader Abdur Rob Sardar and former DCC ward commissioner Alimullah Aleem Friday night.

## Grameen Bank to operate in India from next month

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, acclaimed worldwide for its success in micro-financing, is starting its operations in India next month.

The bank is understood to have secured regulatory permission to set up a liaison office in Mumbai.

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## Tigers' 2nd Test against Aussies begins today

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

Bangladesh will be under different kind of pressure when they face off against mighty Australia in the second and final Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium today.

Proving a point that improvement will be higher on the list of

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## Strike at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University (CU) yesterday virtually came to a halt as Sadharan Chhatra Chhatri Sangram Parishad enforced a student strike protesting against acute water crisis and frequent power cuts.

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# Confrontational politics puts nation at critical juncture: ICCB

STAR REPORT

Some economic and political developments including high oil price, erratic power supply, declining law and order situation and above all confrontational politics have put the nation at a critical juncture in 2005 and those are very much apprehended to continue in 2006, said Mahbubur Rahman, president of the Bangladesh chapter of International Chamber of Commerce (ICCB).

In order to avoid further deterioration he urged the leaders to avoid confrontational politics through intense dialogue and narrow-down their differences on critical issues as well as to develop a culture of development oriented politics for growth and prosperity of the country by making the national parliament the centre for resolving all aspects of economic and social life of the people.

As the nation is going through a

difficult time due to adverse internal as well as external factors, he said political sagacity and visionary leadership is of utmost importance to overcome the economic and political crises. "We do earnestly hope that our leaders will not let us down," the ICCB president said.

Mahbubur Rahman was speaking at the ICCB Annual Council

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## Bangla Bhai to appear before Chandpur court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A first class magistrate's court yesterday granted permission to produce Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) second-in-command Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai before a Chandpur court in three cases today.

Detective Branch (DB) Sub-Inspector (SI) Mainul Islam produced Siddiqul Islam before the court of Magistrate Atiqur Rahman at 11:20am, also seeking permission to show the militant leader arrested in two other cases filed in Bagmara, Rajshahi.

Siddiqul Islam will be produced

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## Niko-Bapex deal 'unusual'

Country manager admits, but claims it never broke rules

SHARIEF KHAN

Canadian company Niko Resources -- which entered Bangladesh's energy sector through a controversial deal and recently said in a Canadian daily report the country has a 'vindictive' atmosphere -- now claims to have become a "much more play-by-the-rules company".

"We don't want to dodge the rules," said Niko Country Manager

Brian Adolph, while admitting that the Niko-Bapex joint venture deal was 'unusual'.

Talking to The Daily Star in an interview arranged by Niko's media consultant Nayeemul Islam Khan, editor of Amader Samay, Brian argued that the company did not "break all the rules" in dealing with various issues in Bangladesh. He also tried to defend Niko's Chief Operating Officer (CEO) Hornaday,

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## Nominate honest candidates in elections

Speakers urge at discussions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Emphasising the practice of democracy inside the political parties, speakers at separate discussions yesterday said honest and eligible candidates should be nominated in the upcoming general elections to establish a healthy

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Prayer Timing		
April 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation