

**TIES WITH PAKISTAN  
India rejects  
troops pullout  
before talks**

AFP, New Delhi  
Indian officials yesterday rejected calls for an early withdrawal of troops from a Himalayan glacier or from the rest of Indian Kashmir, saying militancy was spreading from the disputed territory to elsewhere in the country.  
The comments came ahead of talks next week with rival Pakistan over the presence of troops on the 6,300-metre (20,700-foot) Siachen glacier, dubbed the world's highest battlefield.  
India and Pakistan each hold part of Kashmir but claim it in full.  
Defence Minister Pranab  
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**MADHYAPARA HARD ROCK MINE  
Petrobangla to take it  
over from DPRK firm**

**KONGKON KARMAKER,**  
from Dinajpur  
Petrobangla's subsidiary Madhyapara Granite Mining Company Ltd (MGMCL) is scheduled to take over the responsibility of completing the Tk 1,275 crore Madhyapara hard rock mining project this month from the North Korean company Namnam, which has proven itself to be utterly incompetent.  
According to MGMCL sources

Namnam is leaving the project in such a bad shape that MGMCL will not be able to start production immediately since it will have to fix manifold technical problems first.  
Sources said about six percent project work is still to be completed. As per the latest government approval, Namnam was to hand over the completed project on May 5 this year.  
Sources said MGMCL's three of the five rock crushing machines arrived in early May and it will require at least four months to set those up. Bulldozers, rock loaders and shovels are still to arrive from China.  
Namnam on May 4 issued a letter informing Petrobangla that it will complete the project between May 15 and May 25 this year and the plant will be commissioned on May 27, and then it will go into trial production for 72 hours.  
But it failed to develop the site within the latest timeframe.  
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**NY FLIGHT  
US govt official  
apologises to  
Bangladesh  
ambassador**

UNB, Dhaka  
The US government and the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) have apologised for mistakenly barring Biman's New York-bound flight from entering American airspace on Sunday, as Biman Bangladesh Airlines is considering legal options to seek compensation from the FAA.  
Robert Sturgell, deputy administrator of the FAA, called Shamsur M Chowdhury, Bangladesh ambassador in Washington, over telephone on Tuesday and apologised  
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**Iran offers EU its  
own nuke deal**

**Tehran scorns European incentives**  
AFP, REUTERS, Tehran  
Iran yesterday offered greater European access to its economy if its nuclear programme was accepted, the exact opposite of a deal currently being put together by the European Union.  
"The incentives raised by the Europeans will not replace our rights. They have to recognise our rights," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi was quoted as saying by the IRNA news agency.  
"We are ready to propose economic incentives to the Europeans to obtain our rights, and the market of 70 million Iranians is a part of this," Asefi added.  
The EU-3 of Britain, France and Germany plan to offer Iran trade and technology benefits in exchange for the country agreeing to halt sensitive uranium enrichment work.  
The Islamic regime has already rejected the EU-3 proposal -- before it has even been finalised -- and on Wednesday headline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ridiculed the idea of getting "nuts and choco-

late" in exchange for "gold".  
Asefi, however, said that "as long as we haven't seen the proposal, we cannot comment".  
Accepting EU incentives that urge Iran to stop making atomic fuel would be like trading candy for gold, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said yesterday.  
Britain, France and Germany, the European Union's three biggest powers, plan to offer Iran a  
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**Section 144 as  
14-party, Jubo Dal  
announce rally  
at same place**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra  
Local administration imposed Section 144 in Dupchanchia pourasava yesterday afternoon as the 14-party opposition alliance and its front organisations and Jubo Dal, youth front of the ruling BNP, called meetings at the same place and time.  
Local 14-party alliance called a public meeting at 3:00pm on the Paura Mukta Mancha premises protesting high price of essentials, harassment of Awami League followers and filing 'false' cases against the 14-party leaders and activists in Bogra district, officer-in-charge of Dupchanchia Police Station said.  
Local Jubo Dal also called a  
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PHOTO: STAR  
Repair work of underground electricity lines going on for the last two weeks near Karwan Bazar in the capital while the dug up road poses threat of accident.

**WHO confirms  
bird flu in  
Indonesian  
family**

REUTERS, Jakarta  
At least five members of an Indonesian family have been infected with bird flu, the World Health Organisation confirmed yesterday, after the case triggered widespread fears of human-to-human transmission.  
There is no immediate evidence the H5N1 flu virus passed easily among at least seven members of the family in North Sumatra province. But experts said on Wednesday nothing could be ruled out and more testing was crucial.  
In a day of fast-moving events, the WHO also said a caterer from Surabaya city in East Java had died of bird flu, while Indonesia's health  
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**Alternative Dhaka-Ctg  
highway proposed**

**Malaysian consortium keen  
to invest \$884m**  
BSS, Dhaka  
Azimat Consortium of Malaysian is vying to construct an alternative four-lane highway between Dhaka and Chittagong and the proposal is lying with the government for negotiation.  
The group has proposed to build the 198-km highway at a cost of \$884 million on build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) basis. It will run through Narayanganj, Munishiganj, Matlab, Chandpur, Laxmipur, Sonagazi, Feni, Mirersharai, Hathazari to Chittagong.  
The consortium comprising four leading Malaysian builders has proposed that the self-financing project will be completed in five years after the approval. The disclosure came at a presentation yesterday by Mannan Bin Amir, chief executive officer (CEO) of the consortium, at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.  
Kazi Solimul Haq MP, Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka Abdul Malek Bin Abdul Aziz, Vice-President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Dewan Sultan Ahmed were Present.  
The government is now expanding the existing Dhaka-Chittagong  
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**Hasina vows to  
continue her  
fight against  
misrule**

UNB, Dhaka  
Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday vowed to continue her fight to free the country from what she said was misrule of the coalition government.  
"I must free the country from  
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Prayer Timing		
May 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

