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Militants have no foreign link, Babar says in NY

BSS, New York

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar has said the militants in Bangladesh have no international link.

"The militants were trying to destabilise the country's peaceful atmosphere [by] giving misleading interpretation of Islam," he said at a press briefing in New York on Thursday.

Babar told the journalists that he had held important bilateral discussions with high US officials, including Director of the National Intelligence (DNI) John D. Negroponte, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the Department of State Nicholas R. Burns, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Robert S. Mueller and Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher.

Success in combating terrorism, US cooperation in the next general elections and economic development of Bangladesh were on the discussion agenda with the US officials.

The US officials thanked Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her government for combating terrorism in Bangladesh within a

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Saddam ends hunger strike

AFP, Baghdad

Deposed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has ended his hunger strike launched to protest the killing of a member of his defense team, the US military said Friday.

"He (Saddam) resumed eating with his dinner meal on June 22," the spokesman of the US-run detainee operations told AFP.

On Thursday he said that Saddam had refused his midday meal to protest the killing of Khamis al-Obeidi, one of his senior lawyers defending him in the ongoing trial for crimes against humanity.

The spokesman said that other former regime officials had also ended their strike.

A group of former regime members resumed eating at the June 22 evening meal. They had refused three meals beginning with the June 21 evening meal, the June

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Garment worker stabbed to death at Khilgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment worker was stabbed to death inside the factory at Khilgaon in the capital on Thursday night.

Lucky Begum, a helper of Polite Garments on DIT Road, stabbed machine operator Anwar Hossain, 30, at around 9:00pm following an altercation, police and hospital sources said.

Fellow workers rushed Anwar to a hospital at Maghbar where doctors declared him dead.

They got locked in an altercation after Anwar rebuked Lucky saying that her work was not up to the mark, sources said.

Police arrested Lucky.

Another tremor jolts Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mild tremor measuring 4.7 on the Richter scale jolted the port city and its adjoining areas yesterday afternoon.

The tremor started at 1:00:49pm and lasted for 26 seconds.

Its epicentre was some 242km off the country's lone seismic observatory centre at Ambagan in the port city.

The tremor was the 3rd one of this month and the 9th of this year, said sources at the seismic observatory.

Prayer Timing

June 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-52	6-55
Esha	6-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

**JATRABARI-GULISTAN FLYOVER
Builder favoured, interest of commuters ignored**

RAFIQ HASAN

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) signed an agreement with a joint venture infrastructure development company for constructing the longest flyover in the country between Jatrabari and Gulistan in the capital giving extra benefit to the company and ignoring the interest of the commuters, according to sources.

The agreement signed between DCC and Belhasa Accom and Associates for building a 3.6 kilometre long flyover puts a bar on the government in building any road parallel to the flyover or any alternative infrastructure which would adversely affect the revenue income of the company.

The company is a joint venture formed between Belhasa International LLC of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Accom

Engineering Company Limited of Bangladesh.

"The DCC will not implement or develop, establish, construct, manage or operate any new road or parallel facility adjacent to project area or change in any way the operation of any existing roadway or permit any person to do so, which in the reasonable opinion of the concessionaire, would adversely affect the traffic flow or revenue streams of the project or otherwise adversely affect the rights and interest of the concessionaire," says the agreement in the article 7 under sub-head of 'Obligation and Undertakings of Dhaka City Corporation'.

As a result, according to experts, DCC has become a hostage to the company as it will not be able to take any development project in the area in future for solving traffic related problems.

The Daily Star talked to a number of experts and persons related to construction of flyovers but none of them wanted to be named fearing backlash from the government.

The formal agreement between Belhasa and DCC was signed on June 21, 2005 and a foundation stone for starting construction was laid by prime minister Khaleda Zia on June 4.

The experts also found massive flaws in the layout of the flyover which according to them will make the area clogged instead of allowing speedy transportation of vehicles.

"The company designed the flyover in such a way that would ultimately shrink the existing road and reduce the flow of traffic on the ground level forcing the commuters to use the flyover", said an

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**CUSTOMS PROBE IMPORT TAX
Tk 1.85 cr evaded in only 6 cases**

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

The customs intelligence in a recent investigation has found out a section of unscrupulous importers guilty of large-scale evasions of taxes through under-invoicing.

The Directorate of Customs Intelligence and Investigation has detected about Tk 1.85 crore tax evaded in only six cases.

The investigators found huge mismatches between the transaction value of the imported products at loading ports and import documents at Chittagong Port.

According to the investigation, importers brought spices, food grains and other food stuff from Iran, Malaysia and Singapore by declaring prices lower by \$200 to \$500 than the original prices.

The investigators compared the quoted prices of the products by collecting export documents from the loading ports' customs officials

and import documents submitted to Chittagong Port.

In one case, an importer showed the price of per tonne cumin seed \$750 as imported from Afghanistan. However, the investigators by reviewing the loading port's documents found out the original price was \$1,000 set by an Iranian exporter.

In another case, an importer declared a shipment of spices worth \$10,350 at Chittagong Port but the price was found out to be \$16,380 at the Dubai loading port.

Speaking anonymously, an intelligence official said, "We conducted the investigation at a random sampling basis and found out importers in each and every case are involved in under invoicing to evade taxes."

He said tax evasion can be curbed if the National Board of Revenue (NBR) reintroduces a

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Protesters damage structure for road thru' graveyard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 3,000 locals and relatives of those buried in Azimpur Graveyard demolished structures made for building a road over several thousand graves.

The agitated locals and relatives held a protest rally on the graveyard compound after Juma prayers. The aggrieved relatives and locals went on a rampage after finding the graves demolished. They destroyed concrete walls and a few pillars of the under-construction road.

Sources said the demonstrators also chased away a contingent of police and an employee of the firm constructing the road when they attempted to obstruct the demonstrators from demolishing the under-construction structures. However, Lalbagh police claimed that no such incident occurred in the graveyard.

Addressing the protest rally, a number of relatives, whose loved ones were laid to rest there, condemned Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Sadeque Hossain Khoka's and local BNP

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Congress President Sonia Gandhi welcomes Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina as she calls on the former in New Delhi yesterday.

Hasina holds talks with Sonia, Pranab

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Regional security, including a wide range of terrorism and extremism issues, and relations between Awami League (AL) and India's ruling party Congress dominated Sheikh Hasina's meetings with Sonia Gandhi and Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee here yesterday.

A day after meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Hasina, on the third day of her five-day visit to India, had a 55-minute meeting with Sonia at the latter's residence at 10 Janpath Road in New Delhi. The meeting was followed by an hour-long talk with Mukherjee in two sessions.

Hasina met Mukherjee first at the defence ministry office and he hosted a lunch for her after that.

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs called on Hasina and talked to her for about 25 minutes at the state-owned Imperial Hotel yesterday evening.

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6 Al-Qaeda suspects killed in Saudi shootout

AFP, Riyadh

Six alleged members of the Al-Qaeda terror network and a policeman were killed early Friday in a pre-dawn shootout at a militant hideout in the capital Riyadh, the Saudi interior ministry said.

A seventh Al-Qaeda suspect was wounded and captured in the firefight in the Al-Nakhil neighbourhood of the Saudi capital, a ministry spokesman said in a statement, adding that other members of the security service were wounded.

"The security forces at dawn Friday pursued seven ... members of the 'deviant minority' to a house in the Al-Nakhil district of Riyadh ... where they suddenly came under sustained automatic weapons fire," the spokesman said.

The police "then replied and managed to take control of the situation quickly, killing six of them, wounding and capturing the

seventh," he said.

"A member of the security forces was killed and others were wounded in the operation."

The term "deviant minority" is used in Saudi officialese to designate the local branch of Al-Qaeda, responsible for a wave of violence that has shaken the oil-rich kingdom since May 2003.

One of the policemen cordon-off the area told AFP: "The group was preparing a terrorist operation and its members were being tailed on the basis of intelligence service information."

Residents of Al-Nakhil told AFP the clash started shortly before 2:30 am (2330 GMT Thursday) around a villa.

"Some armed men who had barricaded themselves in the villa tried to escape but the security forces fired at them, destroying their car," said one witness.

Several ambulances sped to the

scene, evacuating the wounded, the residents said. The shooting lasted about half an hour.

Residents said a police helicopter was called in to help with the operation and that they had seen at least 11 wounded police being taken away.

Police could be seen taking cardboard boxes stuffed with documents and computer equipment out of the villa after the operation.

Saudi King Abdullah pledged in April to annihilate Al-Qaeda-linked militants in the kingdom, vowing to "combat the ideology of those who accuse others of infidelity."

Saudi Arabia has been under pressure to crack down on militancy since the September 11 attacks on the United States, a strike masterminded by Saudi-born Osama bin Laden, in which 15 out of the 19 suicide hijackers were Saudi.

Moni Swapan threatens to resign

UNB, Dhaka

Deputy Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan has threatened to resign if the secretary of his ministry is not removed immediately.

"I have already made up my mind and kept my resignation letter ready. I may send it any day to the prime minister," he told the news agency yesterday, expressing his anger against CHT Affairs Secretary Ibrahim Khan for ignoring his order.

The deputy minister accused Ibrahim of dealing with the files on CHT development activities by sidetracking him. "When I write instructions on any file, he overrules it and writes counter notes," Dewan said.

He said he wrote a letter to the PM on May 18 explaining the problems he had been facing in conducting ministerial affairs because of Ibrahim who joined the ministry in January this year.

"I have also conveyed the mat

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Angered by the Dhaka City Corporation move to construct a road over the graves of their dear ones in Azimpur graveyard, people demolish part of the road after Juma prayers yesterday.

**PROBE COMMISSION REPORT
Keep watch on 13 king's men, Nepal govt told**

AFP, Kathmandu

A commission probing atrocities committed during Nepal's "people's movement" against the king wants 13 former ministers and royal advisors to be placed under surveillance, an official said Friday.

King Gyanendra was forced to end 14 months of direct rule in April after mass protests organised by sidelined political parties and Maoists.

During the often bloody protests, 19 people were killed and

thousands injured in clashes with security forces.

"The commission Thursday asked the government to put 13 people, who have been charged of committing atrocities against the pro-democracy movement in April, under surveillance so as to ensure their availability anytime for interrogation," Ram Kumar Shrestha, a commission member, told AFP.

"The commission will, within a couple of days, begin interrogating them," Shrestha said.

Those placed under surveillance and slated for questioning are 10 former ministers and three royal advisors, all royal appointees.

One of the advisors had already fled the country, a home ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

"Sharad Chandra Shah, one of the key advisors of the king ... fled the country on Wednesday afternoon," the official said, adding he had gone to Bangkok.

Shortly after parliament was

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