

Bangladesh to get \$16.5m WB loan to fight avian flu

UNB, Singapore

The World Bank is likely to provide Bangladesh a loan of \$16.5 million within a year to design specific programmes in tackling the risks of avian flu.

However, the pipeline commitment is tentative and the specific amounts and timing are subject to change as well as the existing projects would require restructuring, a seminar on Avian and Human

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Mufti Hannan's brother shown held in Ramna blast case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Banned Islamist outfit Harkatul Jihad's (HuJi) operations commander Mufti Abdul Hannan's brother Mohibullah alias Mofizur Rahman was shown arrested in the Ramna Batamul carnage case and placed on remand yesterday for five days.

Earlier on September 10 and 14, Hannan and his accomplice Mamun were shown arrested in the

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Seaport alert system remains down

Authorities play down risk factor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the essential security alarm system at Chittagong and Mongla ports for ships, remained off for the last four consecutive days, the government and high officials of the Chittagong Port Authority seem to be in no hurry to immediately restore the system.

When contacted, State Minister for Shipping Quamrul Islam echoed Port Chairman AMM Shahadat Hossain, who downplayed the disruption as a 'rumour'. Quamrul Islam also does not see any problem in disconnecting the mobile phone lines which are a vital part of the alarm system.

He told The Daily Star last night that everything is fine and the collapse of the security alarm system is just a 'rumour'. The phone sets were disconnected after getting allegations of misuse, he said.

But according to sources, the disruption in the alarm system could bring serious dangers to local and foreign ships that might tarnish the image of the country's seaports. With the disruption of the alarm system, the crews of ships

have become helpless and cannot even inform any responsible authority if they face any danger in the outer anchorage or in the sea.

Ships are not being able to get information about the security situation in Bangladesh ports before calling in.

Although the three mobile phone sets are vital for keeping the security alarm system active, the government disconnected the phone lines alleging misuse of ISD phone lines without realising the essentiality of those, sources pointed out.

One of the three mobile sets stays with the director general of shipping who is also the convener of international ship and port facility security code (ISPS code) designated authority (DA) committee. Another phone stays with the principle officer of mercantile marine department (POMMD) and the third is kept at ISPS code cell office.

The security alarm system was installed through these phone sets as the master of every ship, who is responsible for the ship's security, knows a secret number to push and trigger the alarm whenever a

ship faces piracy or falls in danger.

The phone sets are kept with three key members of the DA Committee in line with the ISPS code. Under the system the members are supposed to take quick action after getting an alarm.

The urgent alarm system was developed under the ISPS code which has been mandatory in Bangladesh since July 1, 2004.

The department of shipping has been receiving fax messages from ships inquiring about the disruption in the alarm system. The system has remained off since Thursday evening, the sources said.

Director General of Shipping AKM Shafiqulah told the Daily Star last night that he will meet the state minister today and try to convince him about the importance of the alarm system.

If the phone sets are misused, the government can take alternative measures but should not disconnect the system, he pointed out. He admitted that his office has been receiving messages from ships in the sea inquiring about the disruption since the system collapsed.

EROSION-HIT BORDER
It inspection in Bangladesh part begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Indian officials begin today a joint inspection of the trans-border areas in Bangladesh, which are affected by land erosion due to the rivers shared by the neighbouring countries.

Both delegations will meet in the capital on Wednesday on completion of the inspection designed to provide them with a first-hand knowledge of the sufferings of the people of those areas during the monsoon flooding of the rivers.

The inspection in Bangladesh is the second part of the joint inspection to the affected areas.

A 12-member Bangladesh delegation led by the Commerce and Water Resources Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed along with the 16-member Indian side led by Indian Water Resources Minister Prof Saif Uddin Soj, visited border riverbank preservation work of West Bengal and Tripura in India on Friday.

They visited 40 kilometre areas from Shilachhari at Sabrum in Tripura State, where the Feni river originates, to Muhurichar at Bilonia and Amlighat irrigation projects in South Tripura.

The two teams were scheduled to fly in Dhaka last night for starting the inspection here today.

Indian Water Resources
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PHOTO: STAR

This 71-metre tower at Chandgaon in Chittagong has a restaurant on the top that rotates once every 90 minutes. The restaurant was inaugurated Saturday.

JCD leader, outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

STAR REPORT

A regional leader of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP)-Red Flag faction and a Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal leader were killed during 'encounters' with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the police in Pabna and Chittagong yesterday.

The regional leader of PBCP was killed in 'crossfire' during a shootout between his accomplices and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Ataikula upazila in Pabna yesterday, our Pabna correspondent reports.

The victim was identified as Bachchu Sheikh, 28, of the village Shripur in the upazila.

Rab claimed a team of the elite force, following a tip off, raided Shimulchara of the upazila around 3:30am where a gang of criminals were hiding.

They said the criminals opened fire on them in a bid to make their escape and the team retaliated.

Following the shootout Rab discovered Bachchu critically injured at the spot. They rushed him to Pabna General Hospital where he died early yesterday.

Rab recovered a locally made gun, a few sharp weapons from the spot. Bachchu's accomplices, however, managed to escape.

Rab said Bachchu Sheikh was accused in several criminal cases including three murder cases.

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PHOTO: STAR

Frequent power cuts result in long queues of vehicles at several CNG filling stations in the capital yesterday.

Iraq oil city shudders as bombing kills 27

34 more corpses found

AFP, Kirkuk

Iraq's fragile northern oil city of Kirkuk yesterday buckled under a wave of bombings targeting the security forces and killing at least 27 people.

The most dramatic attack came when a bomber firing a machine gun with one hand and driving a bomb laden truck with the other detonated his vehicle near a police centre killing at least 19 people, officials said.

Six other blasts rocked the city, killing another eight people.

The bombings in the north come at a time when Iraq, mainly Baghdad, is witnessing its own surge in sectarian violence between the dominant Shia and the once powerful Sunni Arabs, with another 34 corpses recovered Sunday.

Thirty-two of the bodies were found in Baghdad, while two were recovered from the town of

Suweira, downstream of the Iraqi capital, the official said, asking not to be identified.

Most of the victims had been shot dead.

Since Tuesday, security forces have recovered more than 180 bodies, mostly from Baghdad and most of them killed execution-style, according to officials.

The attack on the Kirkuk police investigation centre, which wounded at least 65 people including the head of the unit, was clearly aimed at Iraq's fledgling security forces, police said.

"He drove towards the centre, firing the gun with one hand randomly to push back civilians, and then detonated the truck in front of the centre," a Kirkuk police officer said.

Those killed included six women and two children who had gone to see imprisoned relatives as Sunday is visitation day.

Around half an hour after the

attack, a car bomb exploded in front of the Mahaba wa Tasamah (Love and Forgiveness) foundation killing one woman and wounding four others.

The organisation had closed its doors a week earlier after threats from the al-Qaeda linked Ansar al-Sunna group. The building was owned by a local tribal sheikh who had recently called for Saddam Hussein's release and reinstatement.

A second car bomb exploded outside the offices of a private security company, killing two people and wounding three.

As US forces arrived at the site of the blast and surrounded the company's offices, another suicide car bomber detonated his vehicle at the site, killing four civilians and wounding six.

A pair of roadside bombs went off within five minutes of each other targeting a passing police

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Abbas freezes talks with Hamas on unity govt

REUTERS, Ramallah

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has frozen talks on forming a unity government after Hamas said it would not accept interim peace deals with Israel, two of his aides said yesterday.

Hamas said it was not aware negotiations had been frozen and said while there were some differences of opinion, formation of the unity coalition was "irreversible."

The row threatens to unravel Palestinian efforts to end international isolation and restore direct Western aid that was cut when the militant Hamas movement took office in March.

Ahmad Abdel-Rahman, one Abbas aide, said negotiations would be frozen until the president returned from a trip to New York later this week, where he will attend a UN meeting.

"The president has frozen measures to form a unity government

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CLASH WITH BDR
Another bullet-hit villager dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Death toll following the BDR-villagers clash over seizure of smuggled Indian bids rose to three as another villager shot by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on Saturday succumbed to bullet injuries yesterday morning at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The dead is Taher Miah, 35 son of Shafi Miah of Bahadurpur village.

Villages surrounding Bahadurpur of bordering upazilas of Chhatak and Companiganj remain mostly uninhabited as many villagers fled their homes

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ATTACK ON JOURNOS
4 BCL men expelled from DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday temporarily expelled four leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) for attacking journalists on the campus the previous day.

The expelled activists are Tarek, Faisal, Titu and Zico.

At an urgent meeting yesterday the authorities took the decision.

Dhaka University Journalists' Association (Duja) filed an attempt

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Stalled Indo-Pak peace talks start next month

Decide Manmohan, Musharraf

AGENCIES, Havana

India and Pakistan will resume formal peace negotiations frozen after July train bombings in Mumbai and set up a joint agency to tackle terrorism, their leaders said yesterday.

Talks between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf defied low hopes for progress amid resentment in Islamabad and anger in New Delhi,

which blamed Pakistani militants for the carnage in Mumbai that killed 186 people.

"It was agreed that the peace process must be maintained. We instructed our foreign secretaries to resume the comprehensive dialogue as early as possible," Singh said, reading out a joint statement after talks with Musharraf on the fringes of a summit of Non-Aligned Movement nations in Havana.

The leaders of the two nuclear-armed South Asian powers con-

demned terrorism and vowed joint efforts to stamp it out.

Singh said he and Musharraf "decided to put in place an India-Pakistan institutional mechanism to identify and implement counterterrorism initiatives and investigations."

He said the foreign secretaries would meet next month in New Delhi to prepare for a resumption of formal peace negotiations

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Dhaka presses for free labour movement
Nam Summit concludes

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday called for enhancing the dormant South-South Cooperation for fostering peace, security and economic development in the less developed hemisphere of the world.

The call was made in the country statement presented by Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan on the second day of the 14th Nam (Non-Aligned Movement) Summit in Havana.

The Summit concluded with the

adoption of Havana Declaration and an outcome document, reaffirming the principles and objectives of Nam and calling for solidarity among its members to address the challenges facing the Movement.

Delivering the statement on behalf of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Morshed recognised the relevance of Nam in the present-day context and called for special emphasis on movements of people and rights of migrant workers.

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Criminal flees from Rab custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A criminal managed to get away from Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)'s clutches at Mirersarai upazila of the district yesterday.

Sources said, two plainclothes personnel of Rab -- Captain Shahriar and constable Nazmul -- went to Nandipur village under Mirersarai yesterday morning and took position inside a shop to arrest the criminal, also a Jubo Dal goon, Tobarak Hossain.

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Prayer Timing		
September 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-09	6-12
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

Long, narrow rowing boats in a race on the Buriganga river. Residents of Basila organised the traditional boat rowing competition yesterday.