

WB to curtail loan as CG can't meet conditions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) will curtail 50 percent of its fourth instalment, worth \$200 million, of Development Support Credit (DSC) for Bangladesh, as the caretaker government cannot fulfil the conditions required for receiving the fund.

Finance and Planning Adviser Dr Akbar Ali Khan said this after a meeting with a 6-member WB team led by the outgoing WB Country Director Christine I Wallich in Dhaka yesterday.

Khan said the WB was not supposed to release any fund without full implementation of its terms. "But considering the present volatile economic condition of the country, the bank has agreed to release \$100 million."

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Hajj flights likely to be open to other airlines

Biman's partner Saudia declines to operate special flights for pilgrims

RAFIQ HASAN

The government is likely to allow other airlines to carry hajj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia this year in addition to designated carriers the Bangladesh Biman and Saudia airlines.

The decision was taken as the Saudia expressed inability to carry its share of pilgrims. Earlier, Saudia and Bangladesh Biman used to carry 50 per cent pilgrims each, sources said.

"The Saudia airlines has officially informed the government that it will

not operate any extra flights for carrying hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh this year," said a high official of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

The Saudia will carry pilgrims only in their normal scheduled flights, he said, adding that Saudia might have taken the decision thinking that the operation of extra flight would not be profitable for them.

A high-level meeting at the Ministry of Religious Affairs yesterday was told that the Saudia would

not be able to carry more than 10,000 pilgrims this year by its regular flights.

The job of carrying the rest of around 38,000 pilgrims has been kept for Biman alone.

Although the government is yet to officially declare to allow third carrier, it would be necessary as it is impossible for Biman alone to carry all the 48,000 pilgrims, the source said.

Last year Biman unofficially

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Traders ask chief adviser to reconstitute EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Traders Council yesterday urged the President and Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government Prof Iajuddin Ahmed to reconstitute the Election Commission (EC) by removing the chief election commissioner, other election commissioners and its secretary.

In a memorandum to the president that was handed over to the Bangabhaban officials at its gate, the traders' council also urged him to replace all the persons of the EC earlier appointed under political considerations with the neutral

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Condemned JMB men threaten judge with death

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two Majlis-e-Shura men of the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) warned a judge of death yesterday after the judge gave them the gallows in connection with a murder case.

After receiving the verdict of death sentence from a Dhaka court, the two JMB men threatened the judge saying "their court" has already sentenced the judge to death and the order would be executed shortly.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 handed down the verdict in presence of the convicts Salaudinn alias Salehin of Narayanganj and Rafiq Hassan alias Hafez Mahmud of Jamalpur.

Earlier, another Dhaka court had sentenced Hafez to 54 years of rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal firearms, explosives and ammunition.

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Bangladesh may miss Trans-Asian train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is about to miss the chance to sign up for the Trans-Asian Railway network in the first round of agreement signing at Busan, South Korea.

A conference of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-Escap) member countries on the Trans-Asian Railway network began at Busan on November 6 and will continue until November 11. Today and tomorrow have been reserved for signing the agreement after a technical meeting that finished yesterday.

The countries which will fail to sign the agreement in the first round will, however, be allowed to sign up

from November 16, 2006 to December 31, 2008.

An authorised representative of the government or ambassador of the country concerned to USA can sign the agreement at any time during November 16, 2006 to December 31, 2008. The treaty would be kept at the UN headquarters during this time, sources said.

Former communications minister Nazmul Huda said the four-party alliance government had no objection to join the UN-Escap sponsored Trans-Asian Railway network but the time to sign the agreement is yet to mature.

According to Huda, one junior level officer was supposed to attend the conference in South Korea. But he was not authorised to sign any

agreement or give consent to any policy matter, he told The Daily Star Wednesday night. Bangladesh Railway sources, however, said none was sent to represent Bangladesh at the conference.

Huda claimed the conference in South Korea was not for signing any agreement rather it was just to discuss about the progress in this regard. He also claimed that no concrete proposal was made from Escap to sign any agreement.

When asked whether Bangladesh will join the network, Nazmul Huda said, "I do not see any problem in joining the network as there is no dispute on the question of proposed railway route."

Former director (transport) of

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PHOTO: STAR

Rapid Action Battalion members seize a huge cache of artefacts worth around Tk 40 crore from a house at Uttara in the capital yesterday.

BDR-BSF talks postponed again

India declines to attend

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The biannual meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) chiefs, which was set to begin in Dhaka tomorrow, has been postponed once again following India's sudden unwillingness at the last moment to attend it.

With the latest, the director general (DG)-level talks saw three postponements this year, which was previously called off in April and July citing 'technical problems'.

No fresh schedule has been

fixed as yet.

Although the meeting is supposed to be held twice a year -- alternatively in Dhaka and Delhi -- the border force DGs of the neighbouring countries failed to meet even once this year. The last meeting took place in Delhi in September last year where both the sides agreed to strengthen confidence-building measures and maintain peace along the border.

Contacted, a BDR high official confirmed the postponement.

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Americans in Bangladesh alerted over 'security state'

UNB, Dhaka

The US State Department has reminded Americans in Bangladesh to remain vigilant because of the deteriorating security situation in the country.

A department public announcement on Wednesday noted that recent political violence in Dhaka and in other cities killed about 15 people and wounded several hundred.

It also pointed out that the political opposition shut down the country's major port in Chittagong, border entry points

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Enayetullah's first death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of Enayetullah Khan, founding editor of the Daily New Age and editor-in-chief of the Weekly Holiday.

A titan of Bangladeshi journalism of regional and international repute for his fearlessness for more than four decades, Enayetullah Khan passed away in Toronto, Canada, on November 10, 2005 at

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Bangladesh outshines Asian giants in few fields

Says UNDP report

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that Bangladesh has outshone Asia's emerging giants in a few fields with impressive gains, especially in water and sanitation sectors.

"Income matters, but public policy shapes the conversion of income into human development," says the UNDP Human Development Report 2006.

The report entitled "Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis", substantiated its observations through a comparison with the situation in India at the next door.

"India may outperform Bangladesh as a high-growth globalisation success story, but the tables are turned when the benchmark for success shifts to sanitation...despite an average income some 60 percent higher, India has a lower rate of sanitation coverage. Similar gaps between wealth and coverage are observed for water,"

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Huge cache of artefacts seized from city house

3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested three members of a gang, who smuggle out precious statues, and recovered touchstones and archaeological artefacts worth about Tk 40 crore during a raid at a house at Uttara in the city.

A plain-clothes intelligence team of Rab-3 swooped on the house on road 7/C in sector 3 at around 12:30am and made a thorough search inside. The team recovered two touchstone statues, 30 brass statues, 20 wooden statues and 90 other statues stolen from archaeological sites.

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Prayer Timing		
November 10		
	Azan	
Fajr	5-00	5-35
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation