

## Tk 44 cr UNCDF, UNDP grant for local govt dev in Sirajganj

Bangladesh will receive nearly Tk 44 crore (8.92 m US\$) as grant for the Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project (SLGDFP), reports BSS.

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will provide the said grant to Bangladesh to implement the project.

The SLGDFP which has been launched from first of this month aims at providing improved and participatory local governance for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in the project area.

The project which will be completed in 66 months will cover 81 unions of Sirajganj district. In the first phase, the project has been launched in 18 unions of nine thanas of Sirajganj district and the remaining 63 unions would be covered during the project period.

A signing ceremony for the project document was held yesterday with the government of Bangladesh, UNDP and UNCDF at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) in this regard yesterday.

ERD Secretary Dr A K M Masirul Rahman and UNDP

## DAB urges MPs to maintain decency in JS

By Staff Correspondent

Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) yesterday expressed concern over use of indecent language in the parliament and urged the lawmakers to maintain decency while addressing in the parliament.

"We should be ashamed of the lawmakers using crude language in the parliament as the parliament session are broadcast live," DAB central convening at a meeting said.

The DAB accused that some lawmakers were engaged in conspiracy to tarnish the image of late president Ziaur Rahman, leader of the opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, deputy leader of the opposition Dr AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and some family members of Begum Zia, particularly her eldest son Tareq Rahman by making false statements.

They also said a vested quarter has also been engaged in conspiracy to blame Dr Chowdhury by misinterpreting his speech during the current session of the parliament.

The DAB leaders called upon the physicians of the country to come forward to protest such move against Dr Chowdhury.

The infrastructures including construction of roads and small culverts under the project area would also be developed for creating rural employment and poverty alleviation. Out of the total grant UNCDF will provide 7.3 million US dollar while

UNDP will give 1.72 million US dollar.



Filthy garbage litters three-fourth of the busy Purba Mothertek road causing inconvenience to the road users. Local residents allege that cleaners usually turn up once in 3 to 4 days.

Star photo



Incessant rains for days together has caused extensive damage to the city roads. Picture shows a big pothole on the Biswa Road near Golapbagh playground. —Star photo



Repair work for extensively damaged portion of the road at the Swamibagh crossing in the city going on. —Star photo

## Tk 1.03 cr EC grant for 4 NGOs

The European Commission has approved a grant worth Tk 1.03 crore for four NGOs involved in post-flood rehabilitation operation in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Aparajeyo, BRAC, Caritas and Concern are in the post-flood activity with the support of European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), said an EC announcement made available in the city yesterday.

The new allocation brings the total contribution of the ECHO, the department of the EC in charge of humanitarian aid, to flood-related relief and rehabilitation to 10.45 million euro equivalent to Tk 51.68 crore.

The new grant will enable the 4 NGOs and their respective European partner NGOs Terre des Hommes (Italy), NOVIB (The Netherlands), Caritas (the Netherlands) and Concern Worldwide (Ireland) — to meet outstanding needs of vulnerable families who have not yet managed to recover the damage caused by last year's deluge.

The NGOs will repair or build 7,800 houses, assist 10,000 people in resuming their income-generating activities, repair or install another 100 tube-wells, improve sanitation by providing latrines to 3,500 families and construct 8 flood-shelters on public school grounds traditionally used as shelters in flood-prone areas.

ECHO had earlier allocated 8.45 million euro (Tk 43.3 crore) to Aparajeyo, BRAC, Caritas, Concern Worldwide, the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation, Oxfam and the Red Crescent and their respective partners to provide emergency and rehabilitation assistance to the victims of the flooding throughout the country.

So far, ECHO's support has made possible the repair and construction of 17,000 houses in rural areas and the slums of Dhaka, the rehabilitation and installation of 35,000 tube-wells, installation of 30,000 latrines and occupational rehabilitation activities for 150,000 vulnerable people.

Alamgir visits Chancery bldg in Washington

State Minister for Planning Dr Mahiuddin Khan Alamgir, now in the United States, on Thursday visited the under-construction Chancery building of Bangladesh in Washington, a proud project of the country on foreign soil, reports BSS.

The construction of the Bangladesh Chancery on the soil of the lone Super Power is viewed as one of the wisest steps taken by the present government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a message received from Washington said yesterday.

The building when completed will proudly stand in the serene atmosphere of the US capital's International Drive where Chancery buildings of many other countries are located. The Bangladesh building on a foreign land will also fulfill the long-cherished aspirations of the large Bangladesh community living in the United States.

Dr Mahiuddin Khan Alamgir, who was visiting the US to attend the US-Bangladesh Business Council Roundtable held on June 29, was briefed about the design and other aspects of construction of the Chancery building and its progress of work by an architect of the renowned US Company KCF.

The meeting jointly convened by Fazay Ahmed, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury and Bashir Al Helal approved the programmes of the organisation.

Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury who chaired the meeting said that it was a must for the socialist intellectuals to be united now. "The humanity has just been reduced to commodity in this profit-oriented society and capitalistic system," Prof Chowdhury said.

## REB prize giving ceremony held

The prize giving ceremony of indoor games competition of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) was held at the Engineers Institute yesterday, reports BSS.

Chairman of REB Brig M A Malek distributed prizes among the winners and spoke on the occasion as the chief guest. The function was presided over by Member (Finance) of the board Golam Mustafa.

The function was followed by the annual drama "Bearing Chithi," organised by the Sports, Cultural and Welfare Council of the REB.

Rainstorms, hailstorms and

## The Surma flowing above danger level

Only the Surma in the Meghna basin was flowing above respective danger marks at Sunamganj and Kanaighat points while most of the rivers of the three river basins recorded rise during the last 24 hours ended at 09:00 hours yesterday, reports BSS.

According to the general river condition, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna recorded rise, the Ganges continued to rise at all points and most of the rivers in the Meghna basin registered further rise during the period, a message of the flood information centre said.

It also said moderate to heavy rainfall at all points with very heavy fall at one or two places over the Brahmaputra and the Ganges basins were recorded during the period with the Monsoon being active over the country.

Besides, light to heavy fall at all places over the Meghna basin and light to moderately heavy rainfall at all places over the South-Eastern basin were registered during the same period.

Significant rainfall was experienced at 130.0 mm at Dhemangunj, 122.0 mm at Mymensingh, 100.2 mm at Barisal, 80.0 mm at Rangpur, 79.5 mm at Panchagarh, 71.0 mm at Chandpur, 70.0 mm at Kanaighat and 61.8 mm at Pat-

## Flood death toll in China rises to 150

BEIJING, July 2: Severe floods caused by violent rains swept across farmland and villages in eastern province of Anhui leaving dozens dead and raising the death toll to about 150 so far this summer, officials said today.

"There have been 38 deaths in flooding in Anhui," provincial spokesman Zhang Zhongliang told AFP by telephone.

"The southern part of the province has been continually hit by torrential rain between June 16 and yesterday," Zhang said.

He said a total of 5.76 million people were affected by the floods, which had caused 2.5 billion yuan (300 million dollars) worth of damage.

Around 1.5 million people have been mobilised to fight the floods, which had hit Xuzhou, Wuhu, Anqing and Chaozhou, he said. Torrential rains had dumped as much as 1,000 millimetres of rain in the worst-affected areas, he added.

Migrant workers from the area working in the capital said the rice harvest had been wiped out in the disaster.

"The whole rice paddy has been drowned. That's it -- no money this season," said one woman who had spoken to relatives in the area.

Rainstorms, hailstorms and

mud-slides across central and eastern China in the past week have put the country on high-level alert as the flooding season begins in earnest.

Official media have reported 49 deaths in southwestern Sichuan province, 29 deaths in central Hubei, and 28 dead in northwestern Qinghai.

International opinion on the conflict has so far tended to favour India, with several western countries urging Pakistan to withdraw the fighters.

## NKorea ready to conduct missile test soon

TOKYO, July 2: North Korea will finish preparations for test-firing a ballistic missile in two or three weeks, Jiji Press said Friday, quoting a source, reports AFP.

The timing of the launch is still unclear as it would be affected by political considerations, the source, who was not further identified, was quoted as saying.

Japanese government officials earlier said they were closely monitoring developments, but did not confirm a missile test was imminent.

Japan raised concerns about a North Korean military threat following reports that the reclusive Stalinist nation was preparing to test-fire a ballistic missile in July or August.

## Non-Aligned Movement hails G8 debt relief decision

PRETORIA, July 2: The Non-Aligned Movement has welcomed a decision by the world's leading industrialised nations to slash the debt burden of developing countries, NAM chairman South Africa said in a statement issued here Friday, reports AFP.

However, the 114-nation body said it believed a complete cancellation of debt would be the only real solution for the poorest nations.

NAM wishes to reiterate that only an outright debt cancellation for the heavily-in-debt poor countries without due conditionalities is the surest way to secure the sustainability of the development prospects in these countries," the statement said.

The G8 -- the world's seven most industrialised nations and Russia -- agreed in Cologne last month to cut some 70 billion dollars in nominal terms off the 214 billion dollar debt

burden of the world's 40 poorest nations.

They emphasized that the relief was conditional on better government and financial management.

NAM said plans by countries to sell their gold reserves to help finance the debt relief should not prejudice the interests of gold-producing developing countries.

South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has warned that financing the debt relief package though gold sales could have dire consequences for gold producers.

The gold price has been hovering at a 20-year low following an announcement by the Bank of England in May that it planned to sell off more than half of its gold stocks.

As a result South Africa's pressured gold mining industry plans to retrench some 8,000 workers.

## Speculation over snap polls in Lanka

COLOMBO, July 2: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga's decision to appoint several ministers to handle her party's election campaign has sparked speculation that she plans to call a snap general election or early presidential polls, reports Reuters.

"Govt prepares for early polls," read the independent island newspaper's frontpage headline today.

"CBK (Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga) rings poll bells," said the Daily Mirror.

On Wednesday, Kumaratunga appointed 10 government ministers, two chief ministers and two deputy ministers to handle her People's Alliance party's poll campaign throughout the Indian Ocean island.

These organisers have been told to submit reports within two months, after which a decision is likely to be made on the timing of the elections," the Mirror reported.

Government officials were not immediately available for comment on the newspaper reports.

General and presidential elections are not due until late next year but political analysts have said Kumaratunga could call early polls to catch the opposition off guard.

## Anti-terrorism squad arrests 7 Tamil Tigers

KATHMANDU, July 2: Nepal's anti-terrorism squad has rounded up seven suspected Tamil Tiger activists ahead of the arrival Monday of Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga for a four-day state visit, sources said Friday, reports AFP.

"At least seven Tamils have been arrested on suspicion of their having connection with the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) while they were roaming near the Kathmandu bus terminal on Thursday," a Home Ministry spokesman said.

A police source said the identity of the seven suspects was being investigated, although they claimed they were Indian tourists.

They had been staying at a succession of guest houses in the capital.

The Tamil LTTE suspects have entered Kathmandu via India and they have been moving from one hotel to another almost every day," the police source said.

## Japanese police raid Aum factories

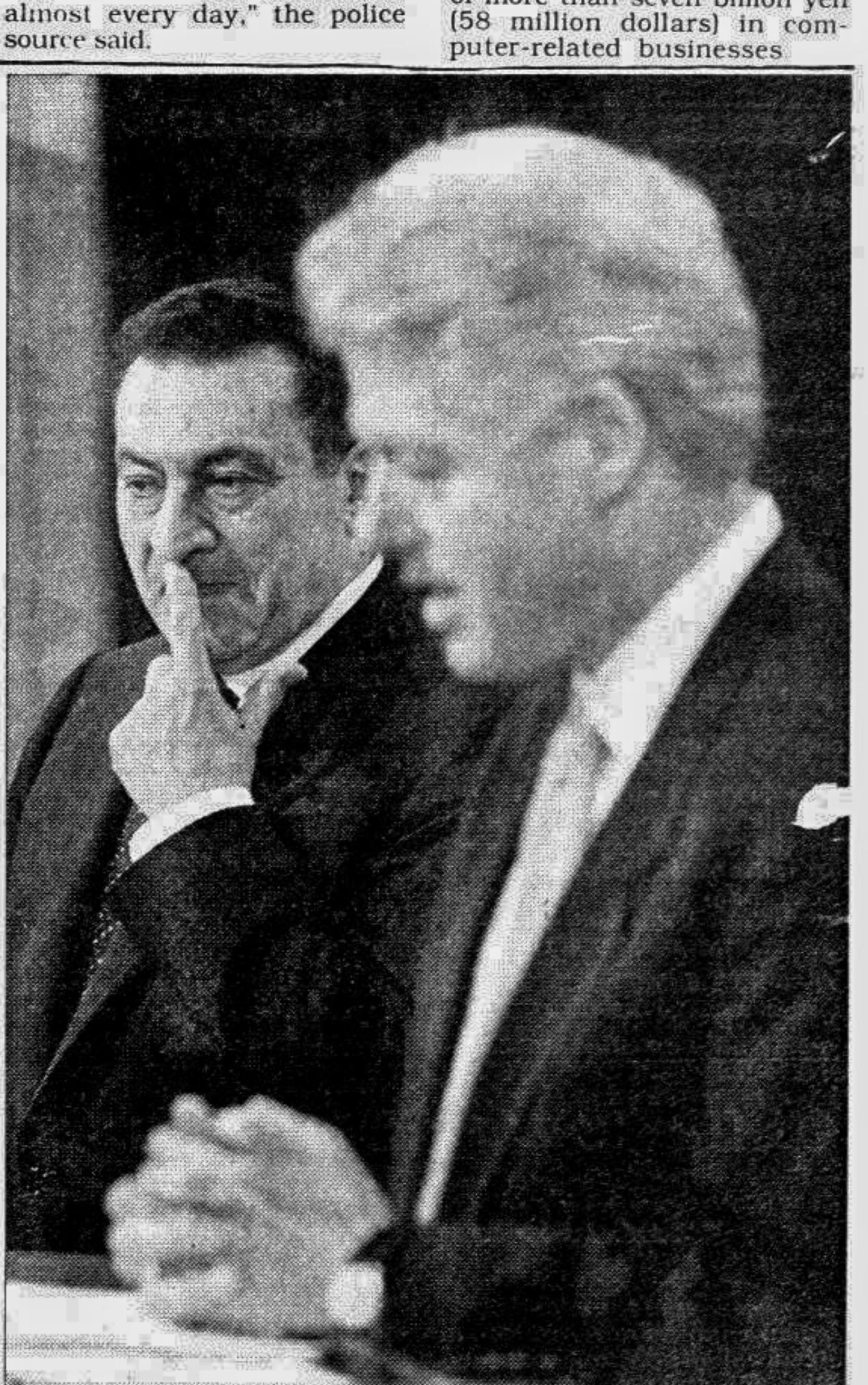
TOKYO, July 2: Japanese police today raided the Aum Supreme Truth sect's computer factories believed to be a leading source of funds for the doomsday cult, police said, reports AFP.

Police swooped on more than 20 computer assembly factories and shops across the nation, arresting one person.

Masahiro Itatani, 32, manager of an Aum computer shop in Tokyo, was suspected of falsifying documents to rent a warehouse in Kawaguchi, north of Tokyo.

The computer business is believed to be the biggest financial source for the Aum sect, accused of the March 1995 fatal Sarin gas attack on Tokyo subways that killed 12 people and made thousands ill.

The sect enjoys annual sales of more than seven billion yen (58 million dollars) in computer-related businesses.



US President Bill Clinton (R) speaks as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak looks on during a joint press conference in Presidential Hall at the Old Executive office Building near the White House on Thursday. Clinton and Mubarak met to help revive the Middle East peace process. —AFP Photo



Non-Violent Conflict Resolution training was held in ADSC, Banani, in the city, organised by ANANDO recently. Participants are seen during the training.