

Foreign diplomats assured of political stability

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday assured the foreign diplomats in Bangladesh of the government's all-out efforts to preserve the political and territorial integrity.

The foreign minister called a briefing for the foreign envoys and heads of international agencies based in Dhaka to apprise them of the current political development following a spate of violent activities by some religious groups.

Forty-two ambassadors, high commissioners or charges d'affaires and chiefs of six international agencies attended the briefing held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday. However, envoys of the OIC countries who were briefed earlier last week were not invited.

Azad said the government was aware of the situation and said efforts were being beefed up to control the circumstances. He hoped that the envoys enlighten their respective governments of the sincerity in restoring normalcy.

He pointed to the escalation of

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Azizul Haq, Amini and 14 others sent to different jails

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) chairman Azizul Haq, secretary general Fazlul Haq Amini and 14 other leaders and activists of the party were shifted to different jail across the country from Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

The IOJ chief and seven others were shifted to Barisal Central Jail, Amini and four others to Rangpur jail and the rest to Dinajpur jail.

The IOJ chairman Azizul Haq was arrested in the early hours of February 5 on charge of killing police constable Badsha Mia. He along with his five followers was returning to Dhaka after attending a grand rally of Sarbadaliya Sangram Parishad in Rangpur.

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Stray incidents mark Ctg hartal: 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 10 people were injured in sporadic violence and cocktail explosions during hartal hours in the port city yesterday.

The injured were admitted to different clinics.

The dawn-to-dusk hartal was enforced by the BNP-led opposition alliance demanding release of city BNP joint secretary Abu Sufian. Sufian was arrested from his residence on Thursday.

Police and witnesses said seven persons were injured in cocktail explosions at Ambagan, Bahaddarhat, Kulshi and some other places of the city in the morning.

Police arrested two persons suspecting their involvement in the blasts.

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INSIDE TODAY

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Kashmir: Bumpy road ahead for peace initiative
Column: Perspectives
Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

FOCUS 5

Green accounting: Sustaining the ecological balance

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 12		5.51 pm
Feb 13	6-34 am	

Prayer Timings

February 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-20	4-35
Maghrib	5-54	6-00
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



Anxious depositors crowd the Sonali Bank branch at Mirpur Section 12 in the city yesterday to know the status of their savings after a cashier was said to have misappropriated a huge amount of money.

Cashier 'missing' with huge bank money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of depositors with a nationalised commercial bank (NCB) yesterday laid siege to one of its branches in the city when news broke out that a cashier had siphoned off a huge amount of money.

According to depositors and bank officials, Tapan, a cashier of the Sonali Bank branch at Mirpur Section 12 in the city, has misappropriated a huge amount of money from the bank. He has not reported to work for the last five days, informed officials.

The incident came to the notice of depositors and bank officials, when Lokman, a client of the bank, went to the branch on February 4 to get his financial statement and found that his accounts show a figure that was much less than what he had deposited.

While Lokman's deposit book showed that he had deposited Tk 105,000, he found only Tk 5,000 in his account.

When the news broke out, other depositors got panicked and a large number of depositors yesterday crowded on the bank premises. At one stage they confined the branch manager Mushfiqur Rahman in his office. However, no untoward inci

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Tawfiq Aziz Khan passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent journalist, sports commentator and Executive Editor of the Daily Star, Tawfiq Aziz Khan, breathed his last yesterday at 10:05 am at Salahuddin Hospital in the city.

He was 64. He had been suffering from lung cancer.

He is survived by his wife Suraiya Khan, a Dhaka University teacher, two sons, one daughter-in-law and a grandson.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Babupura Mosque near his 278/2, Elephant Road residence after Zohr prayers. The second namaz-e-janaza was held on the premises of Jatiya Press Club after Asr prayers. A large number of senior journalists, officials and professionals attended it. The Press Club Management Committee, Rotary Club of Dhaka North West and some other professional bodies placed wreaths to show their respect to the veteran journalist and a cultural personality.

From there his body was taken to The Daily Star office for the journalists and employees to pay last



respect to their beloved colleague.

His mourning colleagues took part in a third namaz-e-janaza held in front of the office and placed wreaths before the body was taken to the Banani graveyard for burial.

His qulhwani will be held after Magreb prayers on Wednesday (14th February) at his 278/2, Elephant Road residence. Relatives, friends and well wishers have been

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Probe body recommends blacklisting UK power project consultant

SHARIER KHAN

An investigation committee of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has strongly recommended blacklisting of project consultant Mott Ewbank Preece, UK for its controversial role in land development of the AES Meghnaghat 450MW power project and implementation of the 109 MW Haripur Power project, sources said.

In its report, the committee has observed that Mott Ewbank Preece performed inefficiently in both the power projects, forcing the government to incur huge financial loss. On the basis of the investigation, the

energy ministry has come to the conclusion that it would be unsafe to appoint the consultant for future national projects.

The report was sent to the Prime Minister on February 4.

A well-placed Power Development Board (PDB) source said that the board was preparing separate reports on delay in implementation of AES Meghnaghat Power Project and Haripur Power Project.

The three-member committee, headed by a joint secretary, was formed last year to look into the poor quality of works and delay in implementation of the Meghnaghat land

development project.

"The consultant (Mott Ewbank Preece) is directly responsible for lack of supervision, testing and evaluation of the Meghnaghat 450 MW combined cycle project site and the financial loss of the government," concludes the committee.

Due to poor site development of the Meghnaghat project by a Chinese company, okayed by Mott Ewbank, the government had to pay US power company AES 4.5 million US dollars for remedial works to be undertaken at the site.

In addition, the consultant allowed the Chinese company to

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CHT culture, heritage to be protected

PM assures Shantu Larma

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured CHT Regional Council Chairman Shantu Larma of full cooperation for further development in the three hill districts when Larma met the Prime Minister at Gano Bhaban in the city yesterday. She said her government is keen to protect culture and heritage of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The prime minister said she had asked different ministries to expedite the development projects for the hill tracts.

The government has taken 56 projects for development of the hill districts Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban. Of the projects, 24 have already been approved and the rest are in the process of approval,

the Prime Minister informed Larma.

Among the projects approved are development of infrastructure in the CHT, maintenance of rural roads, speeding up the establishment of sanitation and water supply systems, construction of 12 roads in the hill districts, setting up of an agriculture training institute and providing small irrigation system.

A release from the Prime Minister's office termed the meeting "very cordial" and said Sheikh Hasina gave a patient hearing to Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo Larma alias Shantu Larma who drew attention of the PM to some issues.

The issues include setting up of English-medium high schools in Rangamati and Khagrachhari, establishment of paramedical

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From judicial body to probe B'baria incident, demands Khaleda

REZAUL KARIM, From Brahmanbaria

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday demanded formation of a judicial inquiry committee to probe the February 6 killings at Brahmanbaria, canceling the present committee.

She said nine people were killed and hundreds injured in indiscriminate firing by police and BDR at the "dictate of autocratic and anti-people Awami League government".

Addressing a huge public meeting at Neaz Muhammad High School playground here, she claimed that the killings were aimed at foiling the current out-government movement and "eliminating" Islam from the country.

Thousands of people wearing black badges came from far away places and attended the meeting, organised by the local unit of the All Party Action Council (APAC).

Local people hoisted black flags atop houses and shops at the district town to mourn the deaths on Feb 6.

Khaleda Zia said the AL government has been trying to create a rift in the four-party opposition alliance but failed. Rather, the unity has become stronger following government's repression on the opposition and arrest of its leaders, she added.

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Human genome map unveiled

Man is "twice a fruit fly in complexity"

AFP, Washington

Scientists have published their first attempt to decipher the map of the human genome, raising immense hopes for curing diseases and wiping out birth defects, along with fears of genetic discrimination and selective breeding.

Last June, two competing teams of researchers announced that they had each completed rough drafts of the human genetic blueprint, the most important scientific achievement since the moon landing.

In the meantime, researchers have completed compiling a catalogue of the genetic information contained in human cells.

Scientists said they were elated having reached the milestone.

"I think that the whole genome assembly exceeded our wildest expectations," said Eugene Myers, a scientist from Celera Genomics of Rockville, Maryland, a private company that spearheaded one of the efforts to plot the human genetic roadmap.

Celera began its work to decipher the human genome in 1998, while another government-funded effort, the international, multibillion-dollar

Human Genome Project, officially began here in 1990.

The duelling research teams will provide detailed analysis of their findings Monday, at news conferences in Washington, Tokyo, London, Paris and Berlin, as well as articles published in the prestigious scientific journals Nature and Science.

Researchers have learned that the human genome includes some 30,000 genes, merely twice the number that form the genome of the tiny fruit fly.

"We're twice a fruit fly in complexity," said J Craig Venter, Celera's lead scientist.

Monday's announcement is likely to be just the beginning, with a steady succession of exciting findings stemming from the human genome likely. He likened the deciphering of the genome to chemists' assembly of the periodic table of the chemical elements.

"It's really the beginning of the story," said Eric Nestler, a neuroscientist at the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas.

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Jubo League, BCL men sued under PSA

Hazari cadres clash with police at Feni, 20 injured

UNB, Feni

At least 20 people including four police and three Ansars were injured in a clash with cadres of the Joynal Hazari, MP, following arrest of Abul Kalam Manu, accused in a criminal case, at Daganbhuiyan late Saturday night.

Police sub-inspector Mitasree Barua, constable Rafiq, Ali Ahmed and Rafiq Ali, Ansars Abdul Mannan, Abdul Barek and Mizanur Rahman were admitted to hospital.

Deputy Commissioner Debashis Nag and Police Super Monwar Hossain visited the injured in the hospital where condition of constable Rafiq was stated to be serious.

Police and witnesses said the clash began shortly after arrest of Manu. He was arrested by plainclothes policemen backed by armed police in connection with a case of ransacking Sultana

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Dipu moves freely but police say 'untraceable'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While police claimed that Dipu Chowdhury, the prime accused in Taraj Uddin murder case, went into hiding, sources claimed that he was seen in different areas of the city in the last two days.

Besides, a controversy has arisen over giving the responsibility of investigating the murder case to S I Hamid as he is known in Uttara area as an 'intimate' friend of Dipu, son of State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

According to the FIR filed with Uttara thana, armed men shot Taraj Uddin following instructions from Dipu, who was present on the spot during the killing.

Taraj, president of a cooperative society at Dakkhin Para in the city's Uttara area, was shot dead at his office on Thursday night.

Meanwhile, it was alleged that a vested quarter was trying to divert

the case by establishing that victim Taraj Uddin and the person who filed a general diary (GD) on January 10 accusing Dipu were two persons.

As per the GD, Dipu and his associates attempted to forcibly occupy the land belonging to Taraj Uddin. The complainant, Taraj Uddin, later dropped Dipu's name from the GD, allegedly due to pressure from Dipu.

When contacted yesterday, Uttara police said their investigation revealed that victim Taraj Uddin was the same person who filed the GD on January 10.

Uttara police said they are hunting for Dipu and but he could not be located as he went into hiding.

But sources concerned claimed that Dipu was seen at Minto Road and in Gulshan area in the last two days.

Twenty-three persons including

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