

Fake 500 taka notes raise alarm

The 'high quality' forged notes dupe city bankers

MONJUR MAHMUD

In the wake of an alarming rise in circulation of counterfeit 500 taka notes, the central bank is going to incorporate some 'additional security features' in the notes to be printed from now on and launch a campaign to create public awareness about this.

Officials in different banks in the city said they were frequently getting forged 500 taka notes in deposits made in the past few weeks. Many of them detected at least a dozen such notes.

These forged notes so closely resemble genuine ones that it is very difficult for people to identify those, they pointed out.

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The number (in red circle) in the upper half of a genuine 500-taka bill with Bangabandhu's picture on its right side first appears silver, which changes to light green, if seen carefully. But the colour of a fake note does not change.

Anwarul Karim made UN High Representative

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, a veteran Bangladeshi diplomat, has been appointed "High Representative" of the United Nations (UN) secretary-general, a UN announcement said on Saturday.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed Chowdhury high representative for the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries, the announcement added.

The appointment to the newly created senior position will carry the rank and status of an under secretary-general, sources said.

Officials said the newly created position would add a proud feather to the cap of Bangladesh as an LDC,

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PM's stance to provoke more crimes: Hasina

'Blatant lies, just to cover up failure'



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the prime minister's shifting of blame on the opposition will encourage ruling BNP-Jamaat cadre to commit more crimes, and lead to further deterioration in the law and order.

She said Saturday's statement of prime minister Khaleda Zia accusing the opposition of sponsoring crimes for a breakdown in law and order is a 'blatant lie and an irresponsible comment'.

"After her (Khaleda) statement, they (cadres) will now take for sure

that they will get protection from the Prime Minister," the Awami League president said at the press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

"She (Khaleda Zia) had promised a terrorism-free society. But she is now shifting the blame for crimes on Awami League".

Sheikh Hasina gave a vivid description of some recent crimes and quoted from newspaper reports to prove that leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations were involved those.

Attack on the labour court in Chittagong and gang-rape of

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Robbers shot dead one and injured 10 others before looting cash, valuables and gold ornaments said to be worth over Tk 50 lakh from a busy rural bazaar at Padua union under Rangunia upazila in the early hours of Saturday.

Six of the injured are in critical condition, police and hospital sources said. The dead was identified as Manir Dey, 60. Of the critically injured, Hafez Member, 60, and Rafiqul Islam, 30, were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

Police and witnesses said the a band of armed dacoits numbering about 50 to 60 cordoned off Bazarhat Bazaar at around 1.00am and looted 25 shops, including five grocery

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Robbers kill one, loot bazaar in Rangunia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

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PHOTO: STAR

Members of the public pass by the decorated walls displaying the mascot of the Seventh Bangladesh Games -- the victorious deer -- at one of the entrances to the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The Games begin today.

Govt striving to develop power export project

SHARIER KHAN

After three years of toying with the idea of power export to India, the government is now seriously trying to develop a project under which around 1000MW power may be exported.

The state minister for Power Division, Energy Ministry along with the power secretary and a joint secretary last night returned home after a five-day visit to New Delhi in this connection.

Sources said that during the visit the Bangladesh delegation held meeting with the National Thermal Power Company (NTPC) of India to discuss possibilities of joint venture between that company and the Power Development Board (PDB) to set up a 1000MW in Bheramara.

However, outcome of the visit could not be known.

As per a share equity formula, the NTPC would take 70 per cent of the power and export it to India. And the government would retain the remaining 30 per cent. The

government is thinking about giving 20 per cent to the PDB and 10 per cent to Petrobangla. This 30 per cent power may be distributed locally, sources said.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU), now under scrutiny by the Power Cell of the ministry, is expected to be signed soon.

Many energy experts prefer export of power to pipeline gas export to India because this would add value to local gas and generate employment.

Besides, this option has more or less a political convergence as the previous Awami League government in 2000 announced a policy that it would encourage power export as it would add more value to the country's gas than pipeline gas export.

However, so far there has been no move to undertake a feasibility study to detect possible technical problems and exact profitability of the project of such cross-border nature. Those who are pursuing pipeline gas export, especially the international oil companies,

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Commentary

The mystery of rising crimes is finally 'solved'?

MAHFUZ ANAM

We have it from no less an authority than our Prime Minister that it is the opposition which is responsible for all our recent murders, rapes, extortion, kidnapping, tender paper snatching, and what have we. It is really with a sense of great relief that we read the PM's comments in the post CHOGM press conference that

she gave on her return from Australia. The course of action is now clear. All we have to do is put our opposition leaders and workers in jail then most of the heinous crimes that have totally disrupted our lives will stop. The PM put our fears to rest by saying that she will promulgate a new law, if necessary, to bring all the criminals to book. Here we recall BNP's first term Anti-terrorism Act and AL's Public Safety Act and remember how better our lives became because of them.

As luck would have it, just as we were about to take comfort from Khaleda Zia's reassuring 'findings' a labour court in Chittagong was attacked. The judge had to hide for his life in the bathroom while the hooligans destroyed the furniture, records, electrical equipment, windows panes etc of the court-

room. Inspired by the PM's 'revelation' and just as we were about to demand the opposition's head for attacking the judge and destroying the courtroom (for we clearly remember the AL home minister letting loose thousands of slum dwellers on the Supreme Court premise and the *Lathi* (stick) procession outside the Supreme Court) we discover that it was the fight between two factions of BNP's labour front that resulted in the court attack. The judge was hearing a case of misappropriation of Tk 3 crore against the labour leaders when the attack took place.

Obviously the PM cannot be wrong, therefore it is our report which must have made the error. It

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Haripur project may get a new lease of life

STAR REPORT

The energy ministry is likely to recommend today re-tendering of a costly and backdated expansion of 109MW Haripur Power Plant without changing the project's stale design.

Initiated in 1993, the project outlines a cost of 151 billion yen, which industry insiders say, is good enough to set up a new power plant.

A previous study of this Japan-financed project recommended that the project be scrapped and that a fresh power project be pursued there. The Economic Relation Division (ERD) also supported this view.

The project, meanwhile, remained suspended due to bidding complications.

On March 2, the PDB sent a letter to the energy ministry, suggesting that it ask the Japanese financiers through the ERD to either re-tender the project with its existing design and configurations, or resume the existing bidding process, sources said.

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Rejoinder and our reply

Managing Director of Unique Hotel and Resorts Limited Mohd. Noor Ali sent a rejoinder on a report, captioned "Going high without heeding to rules" and published in The Daily Star on March 2, 2002.

Noor Ali said that the Rajuk had approved a 20-storey hotel building on November 27, 1997.

Subsequently, at an inter-ministerial meeting on July 10, 2001 at the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, clearance was unanimously given for a 24-storey structure.

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Attack on court Ctg lawyers to boycott court today in protest

UNB, Ctg

Lawyers of the district will abstain from attending the court today to protest Saturday's terrorist attack on the labour court.

This was decided at an emergency meeting of the District Bar Association yesterday. The meeting, chaired by its president Shafiqul Alam, expressed concern over the

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