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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 silvery, which changes to light green, if seen carefully. But the colour of a fake note does not change.

Saifur goes to Paris today to woo donors

UNB, Dhaka

With committed external development finances close to US\$ 6 billion remaining clogged in the pipeline over the years, Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman goes to Paris today to woo development partners into assisting the country in its drive for poverty reduction.

The cabinet on Saturday approved the country memorandum prepared for Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF), an annual pre-budget exercise which was earlier called Paris Consortium.

While presenting the memorandum, Saifur will explain Bangladesh position on governance, public expenditure control, reforms in administration, banking, judiciary, privatisation, human rights and

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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.

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 cadres 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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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 lose 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 Shafikul Alam, expressed concern over the

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A festival of future stars