

Taiwan bans plastic bags

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan will introduce today a ban on plastic shopping bags in an effort to help improve the environment.

Companies that distribute the bags will be fined up to 300,000 Taiwanese dollars (8,940 US dollars) under the new law, and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has launched television commercials urging individuals not to use them.

Activists have long complained that Taiwan is drowning in a sea of plastic bags with more than 16 million a day handed out on the island.

The EPA estimates plastic accounts for about 20 per cent of the domestic garbage produced by the island's 23 million people -- five per cent higher than in other industrialised countries.

BTTB calls metered

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access codes for most of the ISPs before introducing the system.

The toll free numbers of the police exchange and fire brigade will also remain out of the multi-metering system.

Subscribers said the BTTB should also exempt the telephone numbers of police stations and fire services from multi-metering.

Brokerage houses that deal in online trading through dial-up connections would not be exempted from the multi-metering system. This will overburden the brokers and hinder the capital market activities.

Since automation of both the country's bourses two years ago, several brokerage houses have been conducting online business.

Meanwhile, a magistrate court on Saturday issued a show cause on the chairman and secretary of the BTTB and the chairman of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), to explain why the enactment of multi-metering would not be declared as illegal. The court has asked for a reply within 10-days.

The case had been filed by the convenor of the Bangladesh Telephone Subscribers Asso-

ciation (BTSA) Mohammad Nurul Amin.

The BTSA in its submission said hundreds of BTTB subscribers would suffer if the multi-metering system were implemented. Subscribers would get bogus bills and would be deprived of a mini-mum service.

Telephone subscribers termed the system as discriminatory as multi-metering was introduced for only digital telephones. There are several thousand analogue telephones all over the country, including the capital.

The implementation of multi-metering will force digital telephone subscribers to pay for each unit, consisting of five minutes. Presently subscribers enjoy unlimited airtime for a call, which cost Tk 1.70.

Under the revised system, subscribers will have to pay Tk 1.50 for every five minutes during peak hours starting from 8:00am to 8:00pm. Subscribers will be allowed to talk for eight minutes for the same charge during the off-peak hours, from 8:00pm at night till 8:00am in the morning.

The BTTB has around seven lakh subscribers all over the country.

Advani denies rift

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hardline image, he said he had been working with the allies for over four years.

"I have been accepted by them and no new situation will arise as a result of this appointment," he asserted.

On the issue of BJP agenda, he said the government was that of NDA and not of BJP. Therefore, a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of NDA would be followed and implemented.

"We have honestly followed CMP for four years. This has nothing to do with my appointment as Deputy Prime Minister", he said.

He further said his appointment had been made after due consultation with the allies.

AFP adds: India's new deputy prime minister Lal Krishna Advani on Sunday dismissed suggestions of a rift between himself and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Advani, in a television interview, suggested that his promotion may have been prompted by persistent

reports that there were differences of opinion between himself and Vajpayee.

"The prime minister may have been prompted to do this by the sustained campaign or reports that there are differences between us," Advani told India's Star News television channel.

"My elevation to the post of deputy prime minister will not lead to the creation of an alternative power centre," he added in his first interview since being informed of his promotion late Saturday.

As India's home minister since 1998, Advani has already been seen as the number two in Vajpayee's cabinet.

In a separate interview with a Hindi news channel on Sunday, Advani said his appointment should not be seen as a move to succeed Vajpayee within the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP party hierarchy.

"This should not be seen as paving the way for a successor to Vajpayee as both of us are of the same age group," Advani said.

Justice goes wild

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government property.

Sources at the Ministry of Environment and Forest said the DFO was transferred suddenly to Rajshahi after he took the Jamuna Builders to court. He also lodged complaint with the police.

They said the DFO's move enraged the chairman of the Jamuna Group -- of which Jamuna Builders is a subsidiary -- who is very close to the top office of the ministry. He then had the forest official transferred.

Official sources said the DFO also earned the wrath of the top office and was rebuked for taking legal action against the Jamuna Builders before being transferred. Earlier, the Jamuna Group chairman had asked the DFO not to take legal action against his construction firm and warned of transfer or sacking should he dare to defy him.

According to the ministry officials, the Jamuna Builders started erecting boundary wall and setting up roads on the 4.53 acres of forestland on April 15 in a move to grab the land.

Its staff threatened the officials and employees of the Forest Department when they tried to save the forestland. The Forest Department then filed a general diary (GD) with the Kaliakoir Police Station on April 19 and urged the

law enforcers to act promptly. The DFO also urged the deputy commissioner of Gazipur to take necessary action.

The magistrate of Kaliakoir after investigating the incident ordered that a status quo be maintained on the land but the Jamuna Builders went ahead with the construction in defiance of the judicial order. It also deployed gangsters to thwart forest officials and employees from stopping the construction.

Police finally intervened after the DFO filed another GD and forced a stoppage in the construction. But as soon as police left the spot the construction on the land resumed.

The DFO then sought deployment of police force on the site, but all moves to refrain Jamuna builders failed. The DFO then filed two separate cases, one seeking imposition of permanent restriction on construction works and the other accusing five persons of Jamuna Group, including its chairman, of defying official order.

As soon as the court accepted both the cases, the DFO was transferred to Rajshahi to allow the Jamuna Builders to continue with construction works on the government land violating the court orders, police prohibition and the order to maintain status quo, sources said.

CCC mayor

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Muhammad Nasiruddin had confiscated the money on November 11, 1992.

After investigation, the charge sheet was submitted on Thursday to the CMM's Court, Chittagong. After receiving the charge sheet, the CMM's Court sent it to the special judge court for proceeding with the trial.

Muggers

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Kamal Hossain, 30, a head porter of the Sadarghat launch terminal, was shot dead by unidentified men on the rooftop of Hotel Kismot at 26/2 Chittoranjani Avenue in the city's Kotwali area yesterday morning.

Two unidentified men went to the second floor of the two-storey building and shot Kamal in the head at around 10:30am yesterday. He died instantly.

Kotwali police went to the spot and sent the body to the Mitford Hospital for autopsy. According to sources, Kamal often stayed in lone third-floor room of the hotel. The motive behind the killing could not be known.

The duty officer of the Kotwali Police Station said they are yet to file any case as none of the relatives of the victim complained about the murder.

Bad loans up

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in December the previous year.

The BB governor also disclosed that the current account balance has improved during the first nine months of FY02. It is now in the surplus by US\$286 million against a deficit of \$544 million during the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

He said increase in remittance and a remarkable downturn in import led to current account balance improvement.

The foreign exchange reserves were \$1,585 billion on Saturday against \$1,306 billion a year ago.

Dr Fakhruddin said although the overall imports shrunk during FY02, that of capital machinery increased significantly. The BB governor termed it a 'very positive indication' and said, "It will help increase industrial production."

The BB governor also said the action plan to shut down or merge loss-making branches of the NCBs has worked well as some of the branches have already been able to make profits or are on way to making profit.

Soil fertility

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Saleque, senior scientific officer of the BRRI, is also contributing to the study.

They developed a presentation together on the work carried out under the PETTRA project.

The presentation says, "Farmers of Bangladesh are using 132kg of nutrient per hectare a year. At the same time, they are removing around 200kg."

"Food security in Bangladesh is largely dependent on the productivity of smallholders who face difficult challenges in maintaining the fertility of soils. The introduction of high-yielding varieties with increased cropping intensity causes increased nutrient mining from the soil," the presentation continues.

Experts said that Bangladesh having the highest cropping intensity rate (175 per cent) in the world reached a critical juncture of crop productivity and resource limitations. If farmers start cultivating three crops a year in all cultivable lands to meet the growing food demand, the cropping intensity rate will pick up to 300 per cent.

Official statistics show the current ratio of fertilizer application in Bangladesh -- 66 per cent nitrogen (mainly urea), 12 per cent phosphorus, ten percent potassium, seven per cent zinc and five per cent sulphur. This ratio tilts largely towards nitrogen.

Sensing a crisis, the government introduced urea super granule (USG) technology in 1995-96 to minimise over-application of urea and 'NPKS' (a balanced mixture of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur) in 2000 to offset imbalance in the use of chemical fertiliser.

The application of USG (urea in granule form) can save up to 30 per cent urea, which generally evaporates when applied in traditional dust form.

Swiss nationals

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official nor police during their trip and after being looted.

They sought help of the Forest Department to go back to their country.

The OC of Swarankhola Police Station banned notorious criminals of 'Rafiq Bahini' in the Sundarban area for the robbery.

The tourists were insulted when they went to the police station. It is alleged that the OC turned them out of his chamber abusing them. After few minutes they were called back for recording their statement. On Saturday morning the Swiss nationals were taken to place of occurrence.

Forest officials and police officers are now locked in altercation blaming each other for failing to ensure security of foreign nationals who went to the Sundarbans for sightseeing.

An official of the Forest Department said the Swiss tourists did not pay due fees required for trip to the Sundarbans. The Swiss nationals refuted the allegations.

Separatist violence in Kashmir kills 8

REUTERS, Srinagar

Eight people, including four rebels and two Indian soldiers, have been killed in separatist violence in India's revolt-racked Jammu and Kashmir, police said yesterday. Violence has surged in recent days in the disputed state despite a reduction in tension between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan who are engaged in a military stand-off over the region.

A police spokesman said four separatist guerrillas were killed in an overnight gunbattle at Dheri Dabsi area of Poonch district southwest of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

An Indian soldier was killed yesterday in another gunbattle in Verinag area of south Kashmir, police said.

They said a security force officer, and two civilians were killed in separate militant attacks in the region since Saturday.

Nearly a dozen militant groups are fighting New Delhi's rule in Jammu and Kashmir.

AFP adds: Tensions may have eased between India and Pakistan

but for the 130,000 displaced people near the Indian side of the disputed Kashmir border, fear of death is still only a gunshot away.

"We will prefer to get killed by snakes in the relief camps than fall prey to the bullets of Pakistani rangers," said captain Hakim Singh, 70, a retired army officer.

"The army says Pakistani shelling has reduced and there is no mortar shelling from across the border," said Hakim, who has fought in two wars between India and Pakistan.

"But the Pakistani guns continue to roar. This has discouraged all of us from going back to our homes."

Indian officials say at least 43 people -- soldiers and civilians -- have died in fighting on the disputed border since the crisis with Pakistan intensified after a May 14 massacre of women and children at an Indian army camp.

Pakistani officials put the toll on their side at more than 100.

The standoff that has sent one million Indian and Pakistani troops to the common borders calmed down somewhat in early June after intense international diplomacy.

Kuwait hangs 3 Bangladeshis

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spokesman Zahurul Huq told AFP in Dhaka. "We are trying to bring the bodies of the victims to Bangladesh."

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia sent an appeal to the Kuwaiti government following which authorities in the Gulf emirate scrutinised the case for two weeks, officials said in Dhaka.

But they said they were told that Kuwaiti law does not allow any reprieves for premeditated murder convictions.

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International last week repeatedly appealed to Kuwait to commute the death sentences.

62 shops

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were illegally sold or leased out by the DCC to influential individuals.

The Estate Department officials said Alir Foot was rented out 'temporarily' to earn some revenues, and the DCC could recover the road 'at any moment'.

However, the shopkeepers have constructed concrete walls at the site and placed a large signboard reading that the "DCC approved the wholesale market".

"Each of the 62 shopkeepers had to pay over Tk 1.5 lakh to obtain a shop. No receipts were given to the shop owners and they would probably do anything to prevent anyone from taking the space away," remarked one of the shop owners.

Kaikobad

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placed Jacob on a one-day fresh remand.

Kaikobad was shot and seriously injured in Motijheel on June 18, and died 10 days later at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the early hours of Saturday. He contested the last parliamentary election as an independent candidate from the Bhol-a-2 constituency.

According to an earlier report, unidentified gunmen shot him in the head while he and his friend Asim Kumar Das were going to Sharif Mansion in the Motijheel commercial area by a rickshaw to meet Kaikobad's cousin Hafiz Ibrahim, the BNP lawmaker from the constituency.

Brazil's Fabulous Fifth

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three-times winners Germany through Oliver Neuville four minutes into the second half.

Kleber curled a 20-metre effort against the bar after 45 minutes, while Brazil goalkeeper Marcos pushed a Brazilian-style swerving Oliver Neuville free kick on to his post four minutes into the second half.

Germany frustrated Brazil during a tight first opening period but the South Americans still created several excellent chances, the best of which came right at the end of the half.

Tackling and hustling the Brazilians tirelessly, Germany enjoyed plenty of possession but it was the South Americans who had the better chances of the half, with Ronaldo seeing three chances go begging.

He should have done better when released on the edge of the penalty area thanks to a sweet pass by Ronaldinho, back in the Brazil side after serving a one-match suspension. With Kahn advancing, Ronaldo's finish with the outside of his left foot rolled a full metre wide.

Kahn was on hand to thwart Ronaldo again on 30 minutes, getting a hand to the Brazilian's toe-poked effort after another clever pass from Ronaldinho caught out the German defence.

Bernd Schneider swung in some dangerous crosses for the Germans, although a wayward drive by Jens Jeremies, in for the banned

tences.

"These are matters that achieve public deterrence," prosecutor general Othman told reporters. "No doubt this will decrease and limit the number of crimes in our country."

The Bangladeshis were convicted of breaking into a Kuwaiti home and raping and strangling a Sri Lankan maid before robbing the house and fleeing.

In January 2001, Kuwait's court of appeals sentenced the three to death, overturning a life sentence.

"We were not under any pressure" to stop the hangings, Othman said. "What we did was within the limits of the law."

Asked if such public viewing of bodies after executions would now be the norm, Othman said that as long as court rulings are signed by Kuwait's emir, "I believe the gallows will be suitable for executing capital punishments."

Lawyer and human rights activist Ali al-Baghli said the authorities allowed public access to the execution as a deterrence to murders and violent crimes which are on the increase in Kuwait.

The brutal rape and murder last May of six-year-old Amna al-Khaledi shocked the country, with many

But few of the 130,000 villagers who fled on the Indian side are taking their chances, fearing the guns may boom once again.

"I know we face malnutrition and other discomforts in the camps but we are not ready to return to our homes unless we are sure that the Pakistani guns have fallen silent for good," said Shanti Devi.

Devi, 60, left her home in Chanducheck for a relief camp here, some 35 kilometers southwest of Kashmir's Hindu-majority winter capital Jammu.

Jatinder Kumar, 18, has just been selected to serve as a soldier in the Indian army but he too is unwilling to shift his family back to their village.

"We do not believe statements made by the Pakistani president because he changes his statements after 24 hours. On these circumstances, how can I shift my ailing father and mother to the border village when I will be away to join the army?" he said.

"If the situation on the border has improved, why don't the soldiers come back?" asked Nirmal Kumari of Begha village.

since calling for her killers to be publicly executed.

Three Saudis, including a woman, and a Kuwaiti are currently on trial accused of killing the child, who was a Bidoon, or stateless Arab.

"A lot of angry people were calling and sending us e-mails demanding the child's killers be hanged quickly and in public," said Mohammed al-Jassim, editor of Al-Watan newspaper.

"According to the law, hangings should not be done in public," Baghli told AFP. "But too many voices, including the public and lawmakers, asked for a public hanging to deter others from committing crimes."

"So those responsible for the execution circumvented the regulations that hangings be in private, by hanging them in private and letting people in after," said Baghli.

But Islamist MP Waleed al-Tabtabai said: "The goal of any sort of punishment is to set an example to the public, and that will automatically be done by conducting the punishment in the open..."

"They are nothing we should be ashamed of."

Kuwait has now executed 21 people since the 1991 Gulf War.

3 Indian ministers

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lation that both will be drafted into Vajpayee's ruling Hindu nationalist BJP party to help tone up its slipping image.

Health minister Thakur said he quit after being ordered to put in his papers by Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani, who was promoted to deputy prime minister on Saturday.

Thakur, however, added hastily that he would not step out of BJP party.

"There is no question of my leaving BJP. I will do what the prime minister directs," Thakur told reporters.

Political sources in Vajpayee's government said the decision to ask Thakur to quit was aimed at paving the way for a smooth shakeup of the cabinet, which was last revamped in September.

"The reshuffle is aimed at removing deadwood and bringing new life into the government and

some hard decisions have to be taken," a senior functionary from Vajpayee's BJP party told AFP.

The health minister had recently locked horns with Vajpayee's Animal Care Minister Maneka Gandhi over experiments on animals at research centres. The bitter spat ended only after the prime minister intervened.

Media reports say Maneka, a daughter-in-law of slain prime minister Indira Gandhi, could also be shown the door Monday.

Thakur, who has been widely criticised as ineffective, blamed his political downslope to his campaign against manufacturers of chewing tobacco products.

"It seems so. Such reports have been appearing in newspapers even earlier," he told Aaj Tak television network when asked if the powerful lobby had a hand in influencing other members of the cabinet against his anti-tobacco campaign.

Road accidents kill 4 in Ctg, 3 in Pirojpur

UNB, Chittagong

Four people were killed and 18 others injured at Madhiyam Mogadhia on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Mirsarai upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said an unidentified female passer-by was killed on the spot when a Dhaka-bound bus from Chittagong hit her at noon.

Being chased by locals, the bus rrammed into a roadside tree, leaving its driver, Tajul, and two unidentified passengers dead on the spot.

The injured were admitted to the upazila health complex and Mostannagar Hospital.

BSS from Pirojpur adds: Three passengers on a pick-up van loaded with fish were killed and

three others injured in an accident in Umedpur area under Zianagar upazila yesterday.

Police and hospital sources said the accident occurred in the early morning when a Jessore-bound pick-up van loaded with Hilsha fish from Pathorghata overturned.

One of the dead were identified as Paltu Bepari, 25, son of Khaleque Bepari of Purbarashdi village of Madaripur district. Identity of two others could not be known.

The injured persons were admitted to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital.

The bodies were sent to the morgue of Pirojpur Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Police seized the pick-up van but its driver managed to flee.

Hanif's son

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in jail and proper treatment for diabetes and high blood pressure during the period of detention.

They stated that Khokon was arrested as part of a conspiracy to harass him politically.

In the petition, the defence lawyers argued that Khokon should be released on bail no specific charges were brought against him nor was any regular case filed with any police station.

The prosecution side opposed the petition for bail.

After hearing both sides, the magistrate rejected the bail petition and ordered Khokon to be sent to the Dhaka Central jail. The court also instructed the jail authorities to provide first class division to Khokon and ensure his proper treatment during detention.

During the hearing, additional police were deployed in the court premises to avoid any untoward incident.

And He Rises

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Both men had shone like beacons in the opening round of the competition with 25-year-old Ronaldo quickly off the mark against Turkey while Klose, a year younger, making his entrance with a hat-trick against Saudi Arabia.

Klose was all the rage after netting five times, all headers, in three matches - but then his powder ran dry and he finished up being substituted in the final after failing to find the net for the fourth match in a row.

Ronaldo, on the other hand, was going from strength to strength and his two alert finishes brought the glory of a fifth Brazilian crown.

"It's a fantastic feeling to be a Brazilian tonight," an overjoyed Ronaldo said. "The whole squad has worked very hard. I worked for two and a half years to be here tonight."

"Slowly, slowly I am starting to understand what has happened," Ronaldo said later at a press conference. "It will take time but I am so happy right now. We played a great game and we have given joy to millions of people."

"Even in my wildest dreams I had never imagined that something like this could happen."

"I would be lying if I did not say that every time I step on the pitch, every time I score a goal and every time I enter a ground to play, it is a victory for me."

Adamjee closed

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Local politicians along with the AJM union leaders were found consoling the laid-off workers.

The authorities paid the workers their dues in part yesterday and scheduled next Thursday for payment of the rest.

The apprehension of deterioration of law and order set law enforcers on high alert.

"We fear that people won't be able to move safe in the area after a few days, especially after the sunset. Mugging and extortion will surely rise," said an AJM top official who worked at the mills for 21 years.

With establishment of the Adamjee Jute Mills, a lot of commercial establishments sprouted in and around the mill area. There were around 25,000 workers and employees, but it turned home to more than one lakh people...from now on, it will be a dead place, he said.

"Everybody in the area had an income source because of the mills. Thousands with different professions used to live at the AJM premises legally or illegally," said Amir Ali, a local shop owner.

Dhaka Baju is the only kitchen market that became a bustling commercial place thanks to the Adamjee Jute Mills, but with the announcement of closure, traders' sales nosedived. "I'm now thinking of moving on elsewhere," said Karim Ullah, a trader at the market.

Surprisingly enough, the workers did not resent the closure of the mills

Hartal

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The July 4 half-day hartal was called to demand release of all political detainees, including Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Bahauddin Nasim, Hajj Md Selim, Sayeed Khokon and Bangladesh Chhatra League President Liakot Sikder and General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and AL President Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday condemned Khokon's arrest without warrant and demanded his immediate release.

Hasina expressed deep concerns at the arrest of and torture on AL leaders and workers without any cases against them. She blamed their arrest on the BNP-Jamaat ruling alliance.

immediately after its announcement by the government. They held a protest rally on Saturday, though.

President of CBA (collective bargaining agent) of AJM Ruhul Amin Sardar told The Daily Star yesterday that the authorities concerned set the deadline of shutdown at 12:00 last night.

"We are trying our best to help the workers move on to their respective places safe," he said.

Yesterday, workers received house rents for three months out of four months in dues. The mill authorities have pledged to pay the rest and wages of eight days on Thursday next, he added.

Although three schools and a madrassah of AJM were open yesterday, the attendance was all too thin.

Our Narayanjan correspondent adds: The AJM management issued a notice yesterday to shut down the mill from July 1 onwards, saying that the mill is not in control of the management due to serious financial crisis.

"Rising labour unrest and bloodshed due to violence among the rival groups and failure to reach the production targets over the years have caused a huge amount of cumulative loss to the mill. So, it was out of control of its management. Therefore, all operations of the mill will remain suspended from July 1," the notice said.