

Give Ayodhya site to Hindus

BJP asks Muslims

PTI, Mumbai

Unfazed by the special court in Rae Bareli framing charges against BJP leaders in Babri Masjid demolition case, the BJP yesterday said it was proud to be associated with the Ram temple movement and appealed Muslims to hand over the disputed site at Ayodhya to Hindus.

"The BJP is proud to be associated with the Ram temple movement and we appeal Muslims to hand over the disputed site to Hindus to resolve the vexed issue in the wake of the ASI report," BJP president M Venkaiah Naidu told reporters at the airport here on way to Solapur to campaign for the September 26 Lok Sabha by-polls.

The Ram Janmabhoomi issue

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

People make full use of water running into a manhole in torrents from a leaking supply line on the road near the PESPI plant in Tejgaon yesterday. The pipe broke a few months ago.

Tullow slams Block 9 share transfer

BSS, Dhaka

Transfer of Chevron-Texaco's shares in Block 9 to Canadian firm Niko Resources Limited has evoked sharp reaction from Tullow Oil Plc, another stakeholder in the gas block, with the Irish company leveling charges of foul play against the US oil giant Chevron that announced the sellout on September 16.

During a meeting with Petrobangla functionaries in the city yesterday, Tullow's representatives expressed resentment on the deal terming it a breach of trust and sought government intervention in the matter.

It has also sent a letter to

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Proteas won't tour Pakistan

REUTERS, Cape Town

South Africa have cancelled their tour to Pakistan because of security concerns, the United Cricket Board (UCB) said on Saturday.

The tour was given the go-ahead on Thursday but the UCB decided to call it off because of a bomb blast in Karachi on Friday. South Africa were due to leave on Sunday.

"The UCB regrets that South

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Corruption, red-tapism make LDC dev elusive

UNB, Dhaka

Weak incentives for performance, corruption, imperfect monitoring and administrative logjams impede public service delivery in many least developed countries (LDCs), making their development elusive.

The World Development Report 2004, ready to be launched ahead of the IMF-World Bank September 23-24 annual meeting in Dubai, observed this and suggested measures for the LDCs to achieve their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

It says too often key services fail poor people in access, in quantity, in quality.

This imperils a set of development targets known as MDGs, which call for halving the global in poverty and broad improvements in human development by 2015.

The report -- World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People -- will be released today simultaneously from Washington and the capitals of all member-countries.

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15 indigenous families flee after attack by criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least 15 indigenous families of Hatathpara village in Mohonpur upazila fled their homes, after a gang of local criminals attacked them and demolished a house Saturday morning.

The victims did not inform police fearing further attacks, sources said.

The upazila nurbahi officer (UNO) asked police and the local UP chairman to look into the matter after Dulal Murmu, a leader of the indigenous people, narrated the incident to him.

According to sources, the trouble started when one Anwar beat up Parimal, a member of an indigenous community at Hatathpara village, for feeding his cow with grass from another man's crop-field.

Parimal's companions charged Anwar for beating him. Anwar left

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Unification of health, family planning wings reversed

NAIMUL HAQ

The health ministry has reversed its earlier decision to unify health and family planning wings of the ministry, sparking off a controversy in the health sector.

A statutory regulatory order (SRO) against unification of the health and family planning wings was issued on September 14 and it will come into force on January 1 next year. It aims to avoid 'clash of interests' of personnel of the two

wings, official sources said.

Earlier on December 27, 1998, the first SRO was issued seeking to unify health and family planning delivery services up to upazila level. On July 9, 2001, a second SRO was issued to unify healthcare delivery services up to directorate level.

The Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), the apex body of more than 30,000 medical practitioners, has strongly protested the latest SRO, saying it goes against modern concepts of healthcare and

also contravenes the agreement reached at the international conference on population and development (ICPD) in 1995.

The then as also the present Prime Minister Khaleda Zia signed the ICPD agreement, which stated that health and population service should be delivered from the same site in a unified manner, officials said.

In the wake of the ICPD agreement, the then and present Finance

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Gas export, transit to help reduce trade gap: Tripathy

UNB, Dhaka

India considers export of natural gas and offer of land transit by Bangladesh as two effective means of reducing the yawning trade gap between Dhaka and New Delhi.

"Export of gas and offer of transit facilities on which bilateral agreement was reached way back in 1972 are viable options," the Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka, ML Tripathy, told the New Delhi-based Sahara Times.

He, however, said increased export is the other option for restoring a balance in the two-way trade, and for that Bangladesh would need to expand its export basket by offer

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Bangladeshis zero in on Everest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It's no big deal nowadays to reach the peak of Mount Everest, the highest summit in the world, but no Bangladeshi has ever been there. Now a group of Bangladeshi trekkers are dreaming to explore the Everest.

The 'Everest Team-1' led by eminent photographer and first Bangladeshi Antarctic explorer Enamul Haque, plan to go to the Himalayas in May next year, announced Bangladesh Trekkers' Club at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

The victim's brother Mozammel

filed a case with the Lalbagh Police

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Everest but not one of them happened to be a Bangladeshi although it is not more than 200 kilometres away from the border.

The goal of the Everest team-1 is to encourage the youth of the country go for trekking and riding on the Everest and share the experience of a lifetime with others. The team that also has a girl will go to Bandarban in October for hone their skills.

Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed was present at the press conference. Besides trekkers Enamul Haque, Siraajul Haque, Siraajul Haque

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Win or whitewash for Tigers today

HASAN MASOOD from Karachi

A win or a whitewash will be on Bangladesh's mind when they take on hosts Pakistan in the fifth and final one-day match at the Karachi National Stadium today.

The Tigers licking their wounds after four consecutive defeats will be hoping to draw inspiration from

their last game at Rawalpindi that the home side won with only a ball to spare.

The day-night match will start at 2:45pm (BST) with Bangladesh Television and Ten Sports covering the proceedings from the troubled port city that was rocked by a bomb blast Friday, prompting the cancel

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Iraq council member shot, critically hurt

AP, Baghdad

Aquila al-Hashimi, a member of Iraq's Governing Council, was shot and critically wounded yesterday in an assassination attempt outside her home in western Baghdad, police and doctors said.

Al-Hashimi was in critical condition with abdominal wounds, a doctor at al-Yarmouk hospital said on condition of anonymity. After surgery she was moved to an unspecified location in a convoy of American armoured vehicles and military ambulances.

Three of her bodyguards also were injured, said Mohammed Abdul Ghany, a security official at the al-Yarmouk hospital.

Members of al-Hashimi's secu

rity detail said the attack was carried out by men in two new SUVs. They fired rocket-propelled grenades that

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Aquila al-Hashimi



WB may double aid if reform pace sustained

UNB, Dubai

The World Bank has indicated that if the current reform process in Bangladesh is sustained, economic assistance to the country can be doubled-- from around \$500 million in the last fiscal to one billion this year.

The assurances came when Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman called on World Bank President James D Wolfensohn during the bank's fund meeting in Dubai on Friday, according to an official message received in Dhaka yesterday.

The WB president expressed satisfaction at the pace of reforms in Bangladesh and assured adequate financial support for the ongoing reforms.

Saifur observed that "reform is extremely useful in stabilising the economy, but it often contributes to social instability by reducing

employment".

In this regard, the funding agency's management agreed that new investment projects should be undertaken in the country to create new jobs.

The finance minister suggested that, in addition to human resource development, further investments are needed in agriculture, rural development, water supply, sanitation and transportation including railways, ports and inland waterways.

The World Bank president assured the finance minister that the bank was already working for new investment projects in priority areas suggested by the minister.

As the finance minister urged the bank management to expand the operations of the International Finance Corporation in Bangladesh, Wolfensohn directed the IFC officials to undertake review of its operations.