

WB okays \$100m for education reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) yesterday approved a \$100 million credit to Bangladesh for implementation of a reform programme to enhance access to and quality of secondary education.

The Programmatic Education Sector Adjustment Credit is the first in a proposed series of three support packages for education. "This will assist the Ministry of Education in pushing through the first phase of a long-term and ambitious reform agenda," the WB said in a statement.

Bangladesh with a population of 135.7 million has over eight million students in the secondary education system, mostly in private schools, which are subsidised by the government.

Secondary enrolments more than doubled in the 1990s. And the enrolment of girls increased to over 50 percent by 2003 from 33 percent in 1990. As a result of this rapid expansion, the quality of education has suffered, causing attendance rates to fall and teacher absentee-

ism to rise. The government's reform programme is designed to address this quality issue, the WB noted.

The vision behind the reform programme is that by increasing the quality of education, Bangladesh will build a more skilled labour force, making the country both more competitive in the global market and better able to tackle its high rate of poverty.

"The reform programme, supported by the bank operation, will change the incentives in Bangladesh for the financing and provision of education," said Amit Dar, WB senior economist and task leader for the project.

"This will ultimately build greater accountability in the education system, which in turn will increase cost effectiveness for the benefit of students, teachers, parents and service providers," he added.

The goals of the reform programme are to provide more equitable access to secondary education by building more schools particularly in under-served areas,

to increase accountability of the schools both to the community and to the government, link government subsidies to schools to objective measures of performance and devolve more authorities to local levels of government, the WB statement said.

The loan will help enhance capacity to monitor public expenditure on education, evaluate programmes and policies and disseminate information on standardised examinations results, school performance and program effectiveness.

It will reduce teacher absenteeism and build teacher efficiency with improved teacher recruitment and training programmes and work toward greater student enrolment, higher completion rates and better examination results.

The programme will also help improve textbook quality by introducing competitive production.

By raising the quality of service delivery and improving equity in access to secondary education, this

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Rab starts drive to catch Litu's cadres

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Notorious criminal Asaduzzaman Litu, killed in a shootout with cops Monday, has disclosed names of his political godfathers and beneficiaries in police in his last interrogation, reliable sources said.

In a 20-hour-long interrogation in Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police custody, Litu said his political godfathers and police beneficiaries used to give him shelter and save him by suppressing his crimes and forcing complainants to withdraw cases against him, the sources added.

The Rab and police have meanwhile started a joint drive to arrest Litu's cadres he mentioned in the quizzing hours to recover his arms collection. Apart from recently hanged criminal Ershad Shikder's arms left to him, Litu had over 40 firearms now belong to his cadres.

We are scrutinising all the information before swinging into action, said a senior official of Khulna Metropolitan Police. Our top priority is to recover his hidden arms and arrest his cadres, he added.

The drive to track Litu's cadres and recover firearms has been extended up to the Sundarbans, a stronghold of Litu.



PHOTO: STAR

Police inspect the scene at Harinal Bazar in Gazipur where a time bomb went off yesterday injuring six people as a crowd looks on.



PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, middle, and her senior party colleagues say prayers at the grave of the party's founder president Ziaur Rahman marking its 26th founding anniversary yesterday.

THREAT TO PMO Email senders remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday remanded two young men in police custody enabling law-enforcers to grill them on charge of threatening to blow up the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) by email.

Police said the pair confessed to the crime, saying they used the ruse to frame one of their rivals for the crime.

Dhanmondi police took the two-- Khondoker Hasan Shariar Dipu, 22, and Shafoet Wahid Sohel, 29, -- to the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

The police prayed for taking the pair on a five-day remand, saying the two needed to be thoroughly interrogated to find out their

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Women activists demand neutral probe into AL rally bombing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred women activists from a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday protested the deadly grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally that killed 19 people, including the party's Women's Affairs Secretary Ivy Rahman.

The rally under the banner of Women from All Walks of Life demanded immediate and impartial probe to track down the perpetrators

of the carnage and subject them to exemplary punishment.

"The government has failed to ensure minimum security of people and women are most vulnerable," one of the speakers told the rally.

The programme was the first of a nine-day anti-government programme, simultaneously announced by the AL, Workers Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal and the parties' front organisations.

Addressing the rally, most lead-

ing women leaders termed the August 21 attack as 'a planned attempt to exterminate the AL and its entire leadership'.

Veteran women leader Hena Das compared the grenade attack on Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina's rally with the August 15, 1975 killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most family.

"The attackers wanted to kill all

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Razzak undergoes surgery in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors of Apollo Hospital in New Delhi examined the health of Awami League (AL) leaders, who were injured in August 21 grenade attacks.

The health of AL presidium member Abdur Razzak improved slightly as he underwent his first surgery at the hospital.

Presidium member Suranjit Sen Gupta was under intensive observation after doctors had conducted some medical tests, says an AL press release.

Doctors X-rayed both the legs of another AL leader Obaidul Quader, who will undergo surgery after carrying out other medical tests.

AL leaders AFM Bahauddin Nasim, major general (retd) Tarek

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

KEPZ MD MURDER

Charge framing date deferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong yesterday deferred the date for framing of charges in the sensational Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) managing director commodore Golam Rabbani murder case to September 7.

Judge M Hasan Imam shifted yesterday's charge framing date, as some important documents and evidence were not available from the case's previous court, Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

PM pledges ICT society by 2006

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government was sincerely working for building an information and communications technology (ICT) based society by 2006 and called for its effective application at socioeconomic and administrative levels.

She urged the private entrepreneurs to come forward to supplement the government's efforts in implementing the ICT policy com-

pletely and also for overall development of the information technology to help the sector compete in the global market.

The prime minister formally launched 'Shaheed Ziaur Rahman ICT Scholarship' at the International Conference Centre. The scholarship has been introduced to help the poor and talented students get higher education in the ICT.

She called for more investment in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Norwegian family mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four armed muggers yesterday robbed a Norwegian family of Tk 12,000 and two mobile phones at gunpoint on Kemal Ataturk Avenue in Dhaka.

The incident took place when Ms Anders Lergen along with her two children and another companion came out of a Hall Mark Card Shop at about 5:30pm. The waylaying muggers pointed firearms at the two women and two children and snatched away the money and mobile phones.

Ms Lagen wife of Anders Lergen and her two children were mugged

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

GRENADe ATTACK FALLOUT

\$2b Tata investment now uncertain

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

The prospects of the \$2-billion investment proposed by India's industrial giant Tata Group has become uncertain due to the current political volatility.

A high-powered feasibility study committee, formed upon receipt of the proposal from Tata on June 29, at a meeting yesterday felt it is of no

use to work and decide on an investment offer the future of which has become uncertain.

Following the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally, the entire scenario has changed, the five-member committee headed by Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami observed.

The other members of the study team are State Minister for Energy

and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood, Board of Investment Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman and Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui.

The meeting was told that the proposal has been kept in abeyance following the August-21 massacre

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Bangladesh asks UK to recruit workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formally requested Britain to hire nurses, paramedics and caterers from Bangladesh.

The request came when British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury called on State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam at the secretariat.

The minister also requested the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

BLAST PROBE

Judicial body looks into AL's rally permission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judicial commission formed to probe the August 21 carnage asked Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday to inform it whether the Awami League (AL) had a permission to hold a rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

A source said the commission has sent a letter to the DCC on this end.

The commission also sent a letter to the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Pollution builds in bay, probes opened into fish death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Sea fish that died on an epidemic scale at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port are rotting, posing a threat of further pollution of bay waters, a survey team from the Marine Fisheries Department said yesterday.

The epidemic broke out on Monday, two days after oil spillage from a state-owned Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) oil tanker polluted the port channel.

The team headed by the department's Deputy Director Sabbir Ahmed went to survey the outer sea.

"We have seen a blanket of dead fish, most rotten, floating in the seawater," Sabbir said adding: "The rotten fish will cause further con-

tamination in the bay." "We have collected rotten fish's sample for laboratory tests," he added.

Another team member said a tidal wave washed many dead fish into to coastal areas.

Another team from Bangladesh Forest Research Institute in Cox's Bazar is expected to arrive in Chittagong tomorrow to launch a survey to find the causes of the fish epidemic.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) sued the BCS oil tanker MT Banglar Sourav after the spillage that spread over 15km in the sea. The CPA also formed a two-member body to probe the oil spillage.

The probe body is expected to submit its report today, port officials said.



PHOTO: STAR

Sarbastorer Nari Samaj organises a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday mourning prominent political leader Ivy Rahman and others who died in the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally.