

Bomb hoax at Brac HQ

UNB, Dhaka

Panic spread among the employees of Brac head office in the capital yesterday following a phony phone call informing police that a bomb was set on the fourth floor of the building.

Police said a male voice, preferring anonymity, told them by telephone that a bomb had been planted in a room on the fourth floor of the NGO headquarters at Mohakhali under Gulshan Police Station.

"Police and Rab forces rushed in, cordoned off the building at about 11:00am and instructed all the employees to vacate the office as soon as possible," an official source said.

The law-enforcers searched the building for about an hour before finding no trace of a bomb. SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Myanmar FM due tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win arrives in Dhaka tomorrow on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh to discuss ways for further cooperation between the two countries in the field of trade and commerce, direct road link and repatriation of Myanmar refugees.

Nyan Win will be here at the airport at about 11:00am. SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Table with prayer timing for February 23, including columns for Azan and Jamaat, and rows for Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, and Esha.

Foreign ministry fails to build country's image

JS body blames it on financial shortcomings, structural flaws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry cannot function effectively in building up the country's image and launching economic diplomacy abroad due to financial shortcomings and structural flaws, a Jatiya Sangsad (JS) body observed yesterday.

It also has started reviewing the present structure of the ministry aiming to recast it.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Foreign Affairs at a meeting yesterday started discussing the existing insufficiency in finance and manpower and will continue with the agenda for a few more meetings. Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan was not present at the meeting.

"We have to know why the foreign missions have been failing to play their due roles," committee

chairman Ziaur Rahman Khan told reporters after the meeting at the JS Bhaban.

"The foreign missions have to initiate steps against any propaganda against Bangladesh as soon as it launches abroad. What is the benefit if the initiatives come after the propaganda has already done the damage," Khan questioned.

On the financial inadequacy the committee has recommended that the SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Rupali operations may be halted before private take-over

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Operations of Rupali Bank may be suspended for a few weeks in preparations to handing it over to a private management, according to an understanding between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the government yesterday.

After a meeting with an IMF mission yesterday, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman said, "The IMF wants a temporary suspension on the Rupali Bank operations before handing it over to the private management and we agreed to the proposal."

He said, "This is a common practice in many countries. But the suspension period should not

exceed four to six weeks." The three-member IMF mission led by its Advisor for Asia Nissanke Weeresinghe arrived here Monday to review the conditions of the \$70 million fourth instalment of the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) loan.

However, yesterday's meeting failed to reach a consensus on the capital adequacy requirement of Rupali Bank. The IMF said the government must inject funds to make up the capital shortfall of Rupali in line with international standards. The government needs to pump about Tk 2,500 crore into the bank if

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

JMJB plans to attack police camps to build armoury

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) said they are planning to attack the police stations across the country to collect arms and ammunitions.

JMJB chief Abdur Rahman Shai Bhai sought co-operation in this regard from Rezaul Karim, self-claimed secretary general of one of the factions of Ahle Hadith, another militant Islamist organisation.

Admitting to receiving the request from the JMJB leader, Rezaul Karim, a teacher of management at Azizul Haque College, Bogra said he had declined to comply with that.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Karim said, "We don't believe in such a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Locals line up to look at the about 1.5 acres of land along the Sripur-Kapasia Highway in Kapasia, 40km from the capital, that suddenly subsided to 15 to 20 feet yesterday morning due to a suspected underground caving-in.

1.5 acre Kapasia land drops to 20ft below

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About one and half acres of land along the Sripur-Kapasia Highway in Kapasia, 40 kilometres off Dhaka, suddenly subsided as much as 15 to 20 feet yesterday morning.

Locals said the stretch of land, which runs parallel to the Shitalakhya river in Souj-

Narayanpur of Gazipur district, started to crack with a sound at around 6:30am. Shortly afterwards, a thin crack appeared in the Sripur-Kapasia Highway while walls of two nearby houses were badly damaged, police sources said.

Nobody was hurt but vehicular movement in the Sripur-Kapasia SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

BB nod to Premier Bank MD under question

STAR REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank gave no objection certificate (NOC) to Managing Director of the Premier Bank Ltd Kazi Abdul Mazid although the central bank found him guilty of involvement in various irregularities in the past.

Mazid, however, had to sign a bond before joining his current position as Bangladesh Bank issued several letters of warning to him and even punished him for flouting its directives, sources said.

Before joining the Premier Bank, Mazid signed a bond telling the central bank, "I assure that I will not violate rules, regulations and guidelines of any regulator."

He was forced to resign from the posts of managing director several times after receiving warning letters from the central bank.

Mazid published CAMEL rating in the name of Bangladesh Bank making his earlier bank top performer when he was the managing

director of Prime Bank Ltd.

He was forced to resign from the post after former central bank governor Dr Mohammed Farashuddin asked him to do so in November 2001 following a probe carried out by the BB that found him guilty in this case.

After his resignation from the Prime Bank Ltd, Mazid joined the Premier Bank as its advisor in 2002. He became the MD of the bank after receiving an NOC in July 2004.

In 1997, the central bank gave a tough warning to Mazid who was then working as the MD of National Bank Ltd (NBL) for violating the BB rules by extending a loan facility to Abdul Halim, a director of NBL.

Following the warning, Mazid was compelled to leave the NBL on April 28, 1997.

The BB also warned Mazid for giving dividend without their approval when he worked in the Pubali Bank. The BB in a letter on February 22, 1994 mentioned that

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8