

Dhaka seeks US help to combat sea piracy

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has sought US logistic support to forestall reemergence of the golden triangle by combating terrorists and pirates in the high terrain and the coastal belt, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, Khan said the government sought helicopters and high-speed boats to enhance the capacity of the law enforcers and coastguards during his meeting with US Pacific Commander Admiral William Fallon.

"We have kept our strong vigil so that a new golden triangle cannot emerge," he said, adding that the coastguard will be strengthened to keep the country's coast and territorial waters safe.

The borderland connecting three

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO GREECE

Police yet to trace fake travel agency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are yet to track down Ali Overseas Travel Agency that organised the journey to Greece for 90 Bangladeshis rescued from a motor boat in the Bay of Bengal on Sunday.

They are quizzing three crewmen taken on remand, who were arrested from the boat.

A patrol team of Bangladesh Navy Sunday rescued the 90 youths while they were being taken to Saint Martin's Island in a motor boat to board them into a Greece-bound

ship.

Ali Overseas Travel Agencies is neither registered with the government nor is it a member of Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (Atab).

"It is very difficult to track down such people as they do not have registration or any particular address," said a high official of the civil aviation ministry, wishing anonymity.

Officials at the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment also has no information

about the so-called travel agency.

"We look after the matters related to recruiting agencies, not human trafficking issues, it is the job of the home ministry," said a ministry high official.

Police took the rescued 90 youths into safe custody, after producing them to court, our Chittagong office says.

Meanwhile, the three crew members during primary interrogation have told police that Md Mohiuddin,

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Poor mother sells baby for Tk 800

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Believe it or not, a poverty-stricken mother yesterday sold her 29-day-old baby after she failed to feed it.

The mother, hailing from Kamalnagore of Satkhira town, came to Bhadra Bazar with her 29-day-old male child and told people that she wanted to sell the baby as she could not afford to buy milk for him, locals said.

Mafizul Islam, son of Abdul Ali of Bhadra village in Sadar upazila gave her Tk 800 and took the baby to his house.

He will bring up the baby as his son, he said.

The incident created sensation in the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Rescue operations at the collapsed nine-storey building at Savar is now in the final stage as the rescuers reached the ground floor yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Gulshan Lake is under a fresh assault from encroachers with two-thirds of the water body already claimed to have been "purchased".

Most of Gulshan Lake goes to grabbers

People with purchase docs from private owners fill water body

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Gulshan Lake is once again under the grip of encroachers, who claim "two thirds" of the entire water body with "proofs of purchase" from private owners.

Several land claimants have already started filling the lake at several places near the Shahjhatpur Road, on the southern side of Morium Tower opposite Road-105. Locals say the problem began after the government took a decision to "de-acquire" the entire Batara Mouja and to disengage itself from

developing the Shahjhatpur areas, including Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani.

The declaration prompted private owners to begin selling their land, over which the government has no authority, local people in Shahjhatpur said. Since Rajuk never bothered to demarcate the lake area, large real estate developers, entrepreneurs, and service holders bought up large areas and small plots.

Workers were seen filling in a small part of the lake by dumping

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Rocca to visit Dhaka in May

BDNEWS, Dhaka

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca would arrive in Dhaka in the second week of May.

"She showed her interest to visit Bangladesh this week and meet me. But since I will be in Indonesia, she is likely to arrive in the second week of next month," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told reporters yesterday.

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Cardinals start new Pope election

REUTERS, Vatican City

Roman Catholic cardinals held a solemn Mass praying for divine inspiration yesterday, hours before locking themselves away from the world to elect a successor to Pope John Paul II.

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'Murdered' boy frees 'killer' mother from jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kamala Khatun, a village woman of Sherpur district, was sentenced to life imprisonment along with her second husband eight years ago on charges of "killing and hiding the corpse" of her eight-year-old son with her first husband.

She protested her innocence in the court but lost the case thanks to the circumstantial evidence produced by her first husband Julhas Miah. The Court of Sherpur District and Sessions Judge found Kamala and Mizanur equally guilty of the crime on May 28, 1997 and threw them behind bars.

Later, she appealed to the High Court against the verdict. Kamala had a troubled marriage with Julhas Miah who used to physically assault

her. In 1995, she divorced him and after six months, married her neighbour Mizanur Rahman.

Julhas decided to make Kamala pay for this, hid Faruk in another district and filed a murder case against her.

Then one fine morning in March, Faruk, the 'murdered' son, appeared in Sherpur town. Now aged 18, he looked for his mother and found her in the jail.

Faruk, on advice from her mother, went to Sherpur Police Station and told police that his father Julhas Miah had made him "vanish" and that his mother was innocent. He said his father framed his mother to avenge her second marriage.

The law-enforcers took him to

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CCC MAYOR POST 16 in final race, IOJ pulls out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Sixteen candidates are finally in the mayoral frame for Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) polls after the candidates of Islami Oikya Jote

(IOJ) and Jagrata Muslim Ummah Oikya Parishad pulled out from the race yesterday, the last day for nomination withdrawal.

Seventy nine of the 387 ward

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Small investors protest bearish trend in DSE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of small investors yesterday staged street demonstration in front of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) to protest continuous fall in share prices on the premier bourse.

The slogan-shouting protesters kept the busy road in Motijheel commercial hub blocked for around one and a half hours until 1:30pm. A huge contingent of police rushed to the spot and brought the situation

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Prayer Timing		
April 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Tk 3,000cr city dev project revived

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has revived a six-year-old Tk 3,000 crore project aimed at improving the waterways around the capital and building bypass roads and other infrastructure for a dynamic city.

An inter-ministerial meeting, chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday decided that two ministries and five government agencies would jointly implement the project. They are the ministries of land and environment, Water Development Board, Roads and Highways Department, Dhaka Wasa, Dhaka City Corporation and Rajuk.

A steering committee will ensure coordination among them for speedy implementation of the project.

The meeting also decided to seek the World Bank's support for a feasibility study on the project and for capacity building of the ministries and agencies concerned.

It was however not decided when the project would take off.

"It is a very important project," Saifur told journalists after the meeting. "It has multiple components and huge monetary involvement. We need to decide first how much of the funds we can arrange locally and how much from external

sources. This is why we want to scrutinise it before making a final decision."

He added, "I don't think we can start this enormous project by the next financial year."

The inter-ministerial meeting focussed on two projects - dredging of rivers around the capital and environmental improvement, and Dhaka flood protection embankment-cum-eastern bypass road multipurpose project.

The planning ministry estimated the cost of the dredging and environmental improvement project at Tk 650 crore. The government on

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