

EU grants 480m euro this year

UNB, Dhaka
European Union yesterday announced a grant of euro 480 million to Bangladesh this year to help alleviate poverty, promote good governance and human rights, and achieve the millennium development goals.
The EU assistance to Bangladesh this year surpasses the

range of euro 400 to 450 million in the last few years.
"Our relation with Bangladesh is wide and deep-rooted... European Union is committed to continuing its support to Bangladesh," Netherlands Ambassador Kees Beeensterboer told a press conference at a city hotel yesterday, on the eve of the European Day.
On the recent Washington meet-

ing of donors, Beeensterboer, who also holds the local EU presidency, said donors have concerns over development issues in Bangladesh, as "we want to remain positively engaged in development co-operation in this country through renewed efforts and dialogue with the government".
Declining to comment on the

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Mismanagement keeps the Chittagong City Corporation poll presiding officers waiting for long yesterday outside the election control office in the port city.

Top two rivals ready to accept people's verdict

STAR REPORT
Both the incumbent city father of Chittagong and his principal challenger yesterday said they would accept without question the voters' verdict today, with Mayor Mohiuddin putting in the condition of a free, fair and neutral election.
"I will accept any result -- in my favour or against -- if the ballot is

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Labour MPs ask Blair to quit

BBC ONLINE
Tony Blair has been urged to quit as prime minister early into his third term, days after Labour's election win.
Despite securing a historic third victory, the government's Commons majority was slashed from 161 to 67.
Several Labour MPs have called for Blair to resign as a "liability", among them former minister Frank Dobson.
However, senior party figures including David Blunkett and Peter Hain have rallied in support of Blair, urging MPs to "get behind" their leader.

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Wasa to restart canal clean-up next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Dhaka Wasa), citing recent improvements in its canal cleaning drive, will conduct a new drive next week in three other selected canals as part of its effort to protect the city from waterlogging during monsoon.

The selected new canals are the Abdullahpur canal, the Ziabari canal in Mirpur and Uttara and the Sangbadik colony canal located in Pallobi, Modina Nagar and Adarshanagar in Mirpur.

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Shibir man 'Azrail' Delwar killed in Rab 'crossfire'

BDNEWS, Ctg

Listed criminal and a cadre of Islami Chhatra Shibir Delwar Hossain alias Azrail Delwar was killed in a 'crossfire' during a gunfight between his cohorts and Rapid

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Black flag protest tomorrow if Faizee goes to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday announced another black flag procession programme on the Supreme Court premises tomorrow if High Court (HC) Additional Judge Faisal

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Prayer Timing		
May 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-34	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

\$2.5B INVESTMENT DEAL

Govt, Tata see Nov as signing deadline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has agreed to sign a \$2.5 billion investment deal with the Indian industrial giant Tata group by November 30 this year.

A preparatory meeting of a high level Tata delegation and Bangladesh government representatives at a city hotel also decided to start their formal investment negotiation by May 23 and complete it by August 31.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrif Hossain, however, said the government has to identify Tata's requirements of gas and pipelines, site

selection and land requirements before inking the final agreement.

Tata's investment will enable Bangladesh to earn around US\$26.6 billion net foreign exchange in 30 years, which will play a positive role in the country's balance of payment benefit, a Tata official said.

Some 5,600 skilled and unskilled people will be employed at Tata's projects and the investment will stimulate the country's gas exploration and development as well as diversify its energy basket, he added.

The gas pipeline, pricing and

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\$300m WB aid for health by July

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) will hand out a credit of \$300 million to Bangladesh by July for its Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS).

Sector Director of the WB's South Asia Human Development Sector Julian Schweitzer yesterday said this at a press briefing at the WB Dhaka office.

The WB will also administer an additional fund of about \$460 million provided by co-financiers Canadian International Development Agency (Cida), UK Department for International Development (DFID), European Union (EU), Swedish International Development Corporation Agency (Sida) and the UNFPA.

Schweitzer said Bangladesh is

able to sustain high rates of economic growth with considerable improvements in social indicators over the past two decades.

The country is well underway in achieving many of the Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and is doing fairly well compared to other South Asian nations, he observed.

The WB official however said despite improvements, challenges remain in the HNP sector in Bangladesh.

He said the gap in health conditions between the rich and the poor still remains high. Ensuring the quality of health care also remains a big challenge for the country.

Schweitzer said Bangladesh should emphasise reducing maternal mortality rate and improving

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