Qatar minister due today

Manpower, air links deal to be signed STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) for increasing manpower export and air links is likely to be signed between Bangladesh and SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

40 crocs arrive tonight from India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty freshwater crocodiles of an endangered species arrive tonight in the capital from Madras Crocodile Bank Trust in India.

The freshwater carnivorous

JOINING AL

Akhtaruzzaman tells press today about decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP lawmaker Major (retired) Akhtaruzzaman will hold a press conference today to make a formal announcement regarding his **SEE PAGE 19 COL 2**

Prayer Timing		
June 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-52	6-55
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Building research instt in limbo on fund crisis

The Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) has fallen into stagnancy due to a lack of proper government support, resulting in a halt of research works in recent

The HBRI, falling under the housing ministry, was founded in 1960 to research improvements in local construction materials and to invent new methods of construction with affordable prices.

But presently the research activities of HBRI have slowed down due to lack of required funds, as well as a dearth in skilled researchers and modern equipment, a HBRI

Besides these problems, HBRI is now struggling to survive physically,

in Mirpur, has already been grabbed by locals.

The housing ministry now considers HBRI a completely ineffective body as it has failed to show any significant research activity in recent times

"Can HBRI show any substantial research work in recent years?" an official of the housing ministry asked, requesting anonymity.

HBRI officials, however, strongly protested such allegations against them, saying the stagnant situation in their research activities has resulted from the government's

"Presently a total of 18 researchers are working in the HBRI,

whereas 50 researchers are des-

works," Dr. Akhtar Uddin Ahmed, HBRI's Principal Research Officer, said. He emphasised the need to recruit qualified researchers to the

"The HBRI yearly receives a fund of Tk 1.50 crore, which must be increased to Tk 2.50 crore," he

Dr Ahmed also pointed out that a committee was formed in 2002 to recommend improvement in the conditions at HBRI. "But the recommendations provided by the committee in 2002 have so far not been implemented," he said.

Even the earlier recommendations for improving the condition of HBRI, submitted by Professor

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4



A peahen brought from India keeps keen watch on her five chicks hatched out at the Chittagong Zoo yesterday.

BB staff suspended for bond forgery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An assistant manager at Bangladesh Bank's (BB) Motijheel office. Abdus Salam Sikdar, has been suspended for alleged involvement in forgery of bonds worth Tk 3.95 crore.

A criminal case was filed with Motiiheel police station on June 13 in this connection Accused Salam is absconding.

Early this month, BB Motijheel office detected that 79 three-year national investment bond, each worth Tk 5 lakh, had gone missing from its securities section.

A probe committee formed later found assistant manager of securities section Abdus Salam Sikdar involved in the mischief.

The investigation unearthed that Salam issued 29 of the 79 bonds in favour of two organisations and an individual with fake signature and

ng 50 bonds are still to be traced.

Among the 29 fake bonds, 10 were issued in favour of Topoban Housing Ltd., 13 for IQ Trade International Ltd. and six for one Babul Ahmed. Topoban and IQ trade took a loan of Tk 61 lakh from Southeast and City banks against those bonds.

The central bank's inspection division is now probing how the banks gave loan without checking with the BB, and if anyone else was involved in the matter.

In a move to stop recurrence of such forgery, BB's Motijheel office has meanwhile reshuffled its bond distribution procedure

A high official at the Motijheel office said they will remedy procedural faults, if any, and take precautionary measures in the light of suggestions from the probe bodies

Naser against

Also criticises tax on

A treasury bench lawmaker yester-

day in parliament criticised the

budgetary provision for whitening

black money at 7.5 percent interest

rate and the tax on mobile SIM card.

for whitening the black money," said

Naser Rahman, a BNP lawmaker

"I am against any such provision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

scope for

whitening

money

SIM card

15 die in Nepal violence

Maoists kidnap 12 troops

AGENCIES, Kathmandu

At least eight Maoist rebels and seven security force members were killed in a gun battle in eastern Nepal while 12 soldiers were kidnapped by rebels, police said yes-

The skirmish occurred Wednesday when a group of rebels attacked a 90-strong security force team searching for Maoists who had been involved in a similar clash with troops earlier this week in a nearby

"Following the armed clashes,

security men to an unknown destination," a police official said. "The rebels also fled with some communication equipment.'

Nepal's human rights commission has said that Maoist rebels have kidnapped 12 security personnel in the eastern hill district of

The commission has urged the rebels to free the hostages who it says were kidnapped after clashes on Wednesday.

Casualties were feared on both sides, but the authorities said they had not received any details

3 die, 40 hurt as bus plunges into river

BDNEWS, Savar

Three people died and 40 others were injured when a Dhaka-bound night coach from Naogaon plunged into a river, breaking the railing of a bridge at Aminbazar early yester-

The dead are supervisor of the coach Sohel, 22, and passengers Mamun, 35, and Ashraf, 34.

Police and witnesses said the night coach with 50 passengers on board plunged into the river, breaking the railing of Salehpur Bridge at Aminbazar at about 5:00am.

On information, members of the Fire Brigade reached the spot rescued the injured and sent them to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) and local clinics at

40 killed as Iraq reels from blasts

3 GIs, Saudi top terror killed in attacks

AP, AFP, Baghdad

Nearly 40 people have died in a rash of car bombings in Iraq's capital over a 12-hour span, including two coordinated blasts early yesterday that killed 17 and wounded 28 more in a central Baghdad shopping district while three US troops were

killed in Ramadi attacks, police said. The attacks served as a chilling reminder of how potent militants remain in the capital despite around-the-clock American and Iraqi troop patrols.

Earlier one of Saudi Arabia's

most-wanted suspected terrorists was killed by a US airstrike in northwestern Iraq, the leader of al-Qaeda

The Web statement said Abdullah Mohammed Rashid al-Roshoud was killed in fighting near Qaim, on the border with Svria, It was signed by Abu Musab al-

The statement did not say when al-Roshoud was killed, but US forces have launched a series of offensives near Qaim in past weeks against militants coming across the

Thursday's carnage in the capital's Karradah area came on the heels of bloodshed late Wednesday that included four car bombs exploding within minutes of each other. At least 23 people were killed in western Baghdad's Shula neighbourhood and a nearby suburb. Nineteen were killed in Shula alone.

Most residents of Karradah and Shula are from Iraq's Shia majority, while the insurgents are almost SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

and also son of Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman. "When the minimum tax for

genuine taxpayers is 10 percent

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

