

### Anti-personnel mines, rocket shells seized at Bandarban

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban**

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in two separate operations at Naikonghari and Thanchi upazilas recovered firearms and ammunition, including four anti-personnel mines, rocket shells and SBBL guns yesterday evening.

On secret information, the BDR team led by Lt Col Abdul Awal, zonal commander of Naikonghari, recovered the special types of mines from the deep forest near Alekhangong border.

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### Patel assures PM of more WB assistance

**UNB, Dhaka**

World Bank (WB) Vice-President for South Asia Praful C Patel yesterday assured Bangladesh of the multilateral donor agency's continued assistance in implementing the programmes under the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

He said the bank, along with other donors, will help implement the PRSP for a faster progress on the country's growth track.

The assurance came when the World Bank executive called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office.

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### Niko dealings dubious, cancel contract

**Say AL observers**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The government's non-transparent awarding of the contract of the Tengratia gas field to Canadian company Niko Resources has undermined the interest of the nation in all aspects, the Awami League's (AL) Forest and Environment Affairs Sub-committee yesterday said at a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office.

The AL committee demanded

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## WB warns of 4 fiscal risks

**REJAUL KARIM BYRON**

The World Bank has identified four major risk factors in the financial state of Bangladesh and said unless properly addressed these may adversely affect the country's fiscal sustainability.

The factors are lack of fiscal and financial reforms, hike in public sector wage, high interest rates and extensive depreciation of real exchange rate, and a poor economic growth.

The country's recent fiscal stance is "heavily dependent on concessional financing," observed the WB, adding, "the level of comfort that can be derived from it is limited because of several vulnerabilities that loom large in Bangladesh's medium-term economic horizon."

The observations were made in a policy note based on the findings of a public expenditure review that the WB undertook last year and hopes to complete by this fiscal year. Before

concluding the review, the bank last month sent the note to the government wanting to know how it plans to deal with the risks and vulnerabilities.

The note said the country's fiscal balances are likely to come under pressure from various sources. Those include stagnation of revenue mobilisation efforts, slowed down reforms of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), and flagging structural and policy reforms to lift economic growth.

Pressures would also come from the government's commitment to increase public sector wages by nontrivial amounts, rise in explicit and implicit budgetary subsidies and a weakening capacity to absorb concessional external financing. "All these would have severe adverse impact on Bangladesh's public finances and pose material risk to fiscal sustainability," maintained the policy note.

It warned that any combination of

a slippage in growth, interest rate hike, further decrease in concessional financing and increase in SOE losses and wasteful public current spending would force the country to make fiscal adjustments that would harm poverty reduction and social development initiatives in the medium- and long-term.

The new pay scale raising the wage and allowances of government employees by 53 percent has scaled up public expenditure to Tk 116 billion from Tk 76 billion. Pension liabilities have also grown on an average by 19 percent a year and are projected to increase by around 30 percent when the new pay scale is implemented. "This is a very sizeable increase in budgetary liabilities, which could create pressure for reducing discretionary spending drastically or allowing the deficit and debt to go," the note observed.

Analysing the government's debt  
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### Ring Shine resumes production today

**REAZ AHMAD**

The second largest company at Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ), Ring Shine, reopens its industrial units today, after a four-day lay-off amidst workers' unrest.

The authorities have taken special security measures to avert any recurrence of violence when textiles, knitting and sweater units of Ring Shine resume production.

Taiwanese and Indonesian owned Ring Shine, the second largest foreign company at DEPZ with \$40 million investment, suspended production on Wednesday.

Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) that runs all six EPZs in the country has taken special measures for resumption of  
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Headlights of vehicles illuminate the Station Road intersection in Chittagong that plunged into darkness as a severe outage hit the port city yesterday. The picture was snapped at 8:00pm.

## Flood situation improves

**BDNEWS, Dhaka**

The flood situation in Kurigram, Nilphamari, Gaibandha and Sylhet is likely to improve, as the major rivers flowing across the districts recorded further fall yesterday.

According to a bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) yesterday, the situation in the low-lying areas in and around Dhaka, Narayanganj and Munshiganj remained unchanged.

The FFWC said though the Ganges and the Padma recorded further rise, the Brahmaputra and the Jamuna marked further fall at all

points except at Aricha. The rivers in the southeastern hill basin also receded further.

Out of 86 monitoring points, 35 points marked rise, 41 points recorded fall and 9 points—the Karatoa at Chakrahimpur, the Balu at Demera, the Padma at Goalundo and Bhagyakul, the Surma at Kanaighat, the Kushiara at Amalshid and Sheola, the Kangsha at Jarijanjail and the Meghna at Chandpur—were flowing above their danger levels.

In the Brahmaputra basin, all the rivers except the Karatoa at  
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## Power outage cripples Ctg

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

A severe power crisis hit the port city yesterday after a transformer at Khulshi power substation tripped due to technical fault.

The outage paralysed normal life and disrupted emergency services at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and other hospitals.

Power Development Board (PDB) sources said the transformer got into trouble at around 2:00pm, plunging vast areas of the city into darkness.

Power could not be restored when this report was filed at 10:00pm.

The accident instantly forced five major substations at Chittagong Stadium, Patharghata, Bakalia, Jalalabad and Muradpur in the city out of power.

These stations are responsible for over 60 percent of the PDB supply in Chittagong.

Around 20 lakh people suffered as Jamal Khan, Anderkilla, Dewan Bazar, Kazir Dewri, Nasirabad and Khulshi and many other areas had no power supplies.

When contacted, PDB Chief Engineer M Bashiruzzaman said they were doing their best to restore the supply as quickly as possible.



**CAUGHT RED-HANDED...** A mobile court in a raid finds workers of a fake company in the capital's Mohammadpur filling tap water in polybags yesterday to sell it as mineral water.

### 'MINERAL WATER'

### Owners of two factories fined for packaging tap water

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A mobile court yesterday fined owners of two factories in the capital Tk one lakh for packaging tap water in the polythene bags and selling those as mineral water.

The court led by Magistrate Rokanuddoulla yesterday visited two mineral water factories in Shyamoli and South Shahjahanpur and found water was being packaged without obtaining certificates from the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI).

Recently, the home ministry has formed two mobile courts to try instantly the crooked restaurateurs and food producers after The Daily Star ran a series of reports on adulteration of food.

During the drive in Shyamoli, the court fined Shaon, owner of the factory, Tk 50,000 under the B S T I  
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### CHEQUE FORGERY Bidisha sues Ershad

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

Bidisha yesterday filed a case against her former husband HM Ershad for withdrawal of money from her account through blank cheques bearing her signature. She filed the case with the First Joint District Judge's Court, Dhaka claiming that Ershad had taken four  
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### 7 Indians pushed in

**BDNEWS, Noagaon**

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday pushed seven Bangla-speaking and a Hindi-speaking Indians into Bangladesh territory through Bamanpara border in Sapahar upazila of Noagaon district.

BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) sources  
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### Bangladeshis among 25 arrested in Slovakia

**AFP, Bratislava**

Slovakian police said on Friday they had arrested a group of 25 Afghan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani illegal immigrants overnight near the border with Ukraine.

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Prayer Timing		
July 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation