

Negotiations on Safta to end by Oct

UNB, Dhaka

The Safta negotiations are expected to conclude by October through resolving the remaining issues to give effect to the agreement on the South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta), as experts from the member-states desired at their just-held ninth meeting in Kathmandu.

"Things were positive... all the members were interested to conclude the negotiations by October,"

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Teletalk, GP sign interconnection deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State-owned cellphone operator Teletalk Limited yesterday signed interconnection agreement with the country's leading cellular operator GrameenPhone Limited, officials said.

Teletalk also signs today interconnection deal with Sheba Telecom, the operator under the brand Banglalink, sources said.

The four private operators have agreed to sign the deal with Teletalk

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Asean boost for Dhaka

AFP, Vientiane

Southeast Asian officials recommended Sunday that Bangladesh be admitted to Asia's biggest security forum, the Asean Regional Forum.

If Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) foreign ministers approve the recommendation, Bangladesh could join the forum by July next year, Laotian Deputy Foreign Minister Bounkeut Sangsomsack told reporters here.

The Asean ministers begin a series of meetings in Vientiane from Monday.

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Tk 233cr project for DND formulated

Eviction drive from tomorrow; more pumps to drain out water from inside the area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inter-ministerial meeting yesterday decided to request the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to constitute an authority on Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) project to solve the problem of water logging and its byproducts health and environmental hazards in the area.

For quick solution to the problem during this rainy season, the meeting decided to strengthen the eviction drive that begins tomorrow and install more temporary pumps to drain out water from inside the area, Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed said at the meeting held at the ministry.

Lack of coordination among different government agencies like Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Water Development Board (WDB), and Rajuk and unplanned road construction by Roads and Highways Department and Local Government and Engineering Department worsened the situation, the meeting observed.

A Tk 233 crore project on DND has been formulated and will be placed to Ecneq for approval soon, the minister said at the meeting.

The meeting observed that unplanned urbanisation and industrialisation and illegal encroachment of the canals in the 8340 hectare DND area that was initiated for

cultivation in the late 60's caused the problems.

The DND area, where some 30 lakh people live, was waterlogged for more than a week following only two-day rain in the beginning of this month and for more than a month due to week-long rain last year.

"The DND has now become an orphan, nobody wants to take the responsibility," the water resources minister said, adding that it is necessary to form an authority and distribute responsibilities among the government agencies for integrated efforts."

Local lawmakers and officials of Rajuk, Wasa, WDB, DCC and LGRD

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London cops killed innocent man

Brazil demands explanation

AP, REUTERS, London

Police identified the man who was chased down in a subway and shot to death by plainclothes officers as a Brazilian and said Saturday they no longer believed he was tied to the recent terror bombings.

Friday's shooting before horrified commuters prompted criticism of police for overreacting and expressions of fear that Asians and Muslims would be targeted by a "trigger-happy culture" after two well-coordinated attacks in two weeks.

Police expressed regret for the

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Charles de Menezes

Shocked Muslims call for unity against terror

Over 70 detained in Egypt

AGENCIES, Dubai/Cairo

The world's Muslims were urged yesterday to unite against terror after the bombings in Egypt's top tourist resort, roundly condemned in the Arab press as barbaric attacks that do nothing to serve their cause.

Egyptian police searched for

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Rejoinder, our reply

Russian company Technopromexport (TPE) in a rejoinder to a report headlined 'Siddhirganj Power Plant: Extra Russian staff cost additional Tk 5cr a year' published in the July 19 issue of The Daily Star said all the additional personnel were provided in accordance with the Power Development Board's (PDB's) request.

The TPE also protested being termed inefficient and corrupt, saying it has constructed more than 400 power plants in 50 countries

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Prayer Timing		
July 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court unearths stale prawn swarming with cockroaches, sauce and a soup ingredient at Sajna, a plushy restaurant at Gulshan in the city, yesterday. The restaurant was fined Tk 40,000 for the gross sanitary violation.

Rotten meat seized at posh restaurant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government-formed mobile court yesterday seized rotten meat and unapproved sauce from Sajna, a well known restaurant in Gulshan, and also conducted a drive at Wimpy's, a prominent fast food shop in Gulshan.

The court filed four cases against Sajna restaurant that was stinky. South Indian and Chinese cuisine, under the city corporation act and levied a fine of Tk 40,000. They held the manager of the restaurant and put him in jail for one day as he was bargaining with the court, the court sources said.

"We found meat and shrimp in the Sajna restaurant that was stinky. They use unapproved chemicals in their preparation," said Rakanuddoula, the magistrate of the court.

Asad Khan, Managing Director of Sajna, explained that the smelly shrimp is not a regular incident in the restaurant, and may have been

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Make loan dear for hoarders

Fiscal council asks banks in order to contain price hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The high-powered Fiscal Co-ordination Council in its first-ever meeting yesterday asked all banks to step up their interest rates on loans given to hoarders to contain the spiralling inflation and price hike of essentials.

The council also directed the Bangladesh Bank (BB) to continue with its tight monetary policy and explained the increased dollar price as a result of the government's pro-export policy adjustment.

The tight fiscal policy "will continue for irresponsible bankers, not for the responsible ones," Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, who heads the council and chaired the meeting, told the press.

"You open an LC [letter of credit] worth Tk 50 with just one taka in your pocket! It cannot be tolerated," he added.

On inflation and price hike of

essentials, Saifur said some millers are hoarding rice with loan taken from banks. So, in spite of a bumper Boro harvest, the price of rice has not come down.

To stop the malpractice he advised the banks to do upward adjustments in interest rates on loans handed out to millers.

He also assured that there is no reason to worry about inflation and that the price of rice would become stable within this month.

On the current scarcity of US dollar, Saifur said the government had to adopt policies considering the entire economic situation that ultimately benefited the exporters.

He also pointed out that, for a long time since its floating, the exchange rate of dollar remained stable. But a destabilised international money market due to various reasons including the Iraq war and oil price hike has negatively affected

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Truck bomb kills 40 at Baghdad police station

REUTERS, AFP, Baghdad

The US military said at least 40 civilians were killed in a truck bomb blast outside a Baghdad police station yesterday, citing Iraqi police as the source, but the police put the death toll at 22.

In a statement, the US military said a flat-bed truck loaded with 500 lbs of explosives blew up at the front gate of the police station in the east of the city. The statement said 25 people were wounded in the blast, which destroyed a dozen vehicles and left a crater in the street.

"The number of dead could rise further as we are still looking for bodies," the official said.

He said bodies of the victims, many of whom were policemen, were completely burnt by the blast.

The incident occurred at around 3 pm (1100 GMT) outside the Al-Rashid police station in the Al-Mashtel neighbourhood in the

southeast of the capital.

Around 22 civilian cars and one residential building were set ablaze in the massive explosion, he added.

The bombing, one of a number of deadly attacks against police, occurred as Sunni Arab leaders were considering ending a boycott of talks on a constitution to lay out Iraq's future following the ousting of Saddam Hussein in April 2003.

With an August 15 deadline looming for parliament to vote on a draft constitution, Sunni Arab leaders said they would reconsider their boycott of the committee writing the basic law.

The boycott was called in protest at the murder by insurgents on Tuesday of two Sunni members of the committee.

"Today we are holding meetings amongst ourselves to reach a joint decision on whether to resume our work in the committee," Ayad

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