

Britain issues travel alert for its citizens in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of Britain has cautioned its citizens travelling to Bangladesh about high threat of terrorism, apprehending further bomb attacks in the country.

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Bomb found at Feni school

UNB, Feni

A powerful bomb was recovered from a high school on the outskirts of Feni town yesterday.

Sonapur High School authorities said peon Abdul Qader found the bomb under a chair when he went to clean the room of Headmaster Mir Hossain at about 9:00am.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bomb wrapped with red tape. They took the bomb to Feni Sadar Police Station.

Bombs are blasted by AL-backed groups: IOJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Chairman Mufti Fazlul Haque Amini MP yesterday said his party will ask the government to expel Jamaat-e-Islami from the 4-party alliance if it

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SERIAL BLASTS CASE Awal placed on 10-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Awal, son-in-law of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman, was shown arrested in a case filed for the August 17 bomb blasts and remanded yesterday.

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HIKE IN SAVINGS CERTIFICATE YIELD

Move to ease inflation at high interest cost

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

By the sudden interest-rate hike in savings instruments announced Thursday the government may succeed in easing the inflationary pressures, but the move will also scale up its interest expenditures.

The 1.5 percentage point interest rise in every category and term of savings instruments effective from today has put the highest interest rate at 12.5 percent on Pensioner Savings Certificate. In comparison, the highest interest rate on bank deposits is 11.5 percent.

While the government has to pay interest at a rate ranging from 6.78

to 7.5 percent on bank borrowing, it will have to pay 11.5 to 12.5 percent interests on public borrowing.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattachariya said, "In the backdrop of modest increase in revenue collection, the offtake in public expenditure portfolio has accelerated in the recent month. To meet the widening fiscal deficit, in the absence of adequate foreign financing, the government had to resort to domestic borrowing."

The move, which will attract more public investment in savings instruments, is expected to reduce the government's bank borrowing. It

is also seen to shrink the liquidity and credit outflow of banks, abetting the non-food inflation.

Until September, on a point-to-point basis, the food inflation has been leaping relentlessly and non-food one registering but minor changes, both upward and down.

But in September, the overall point-to-point inflation fell by .92 percentage point, standing at 7.01 percent, though the non-food inflation rose by 1.15 percentage point and stood at 6.86 percent.

A source at the Bangladesh

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Catfish threatens local species

Sewers become breeding ground

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A carnivorous alien species of African catfish is spreading in the natural eco-system of the country, posing a great threat to other local and indigenous fish species of the country.

In Dhaka City, people often capture catfish from different ditches and the sewerage system, suggesting the catfish has been slowly spreading there. Raising the issue again, a large catfish was caught from the Baitul Mukarram mosque pond a few days ago.

Last year, experts expressed their concern when a 20-kilogram catfish was caught from a sewerage line of the Panthapath. Sewer cleaners who killed the huge catfish claimed there were more African catfishes in the sewers, hinting that the sewerage system might have become a home to the species.

While the impact of other alien fish species seems to have been negligible, the African catfish noticeably wiped out indigenous fish populations in ponds and water bodies where it lived. Some fish farmers complain African catfish are harmful because they destroy all other species living with them.

"It is a active predator in the true sense. It eats up all the small fishes in the pond, even the frogs are not spared," Dr. Muhammed Shafi, a prominent fish expert of the country, said in his book,

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PHOTO: STAR

Law enforcers frisk people and vehicles at the main entrance to Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong yesterday as part of the heightened security measures in the wake of recent terror attacks by Islamist extremists.

4 more Gl's, 11 Iraqi soldiers die in attack

AGENCIES, Baghdad

Four more US soldiers have died in Iraq while 11 Iraqi soldiers were killed and two wounded yesterday when a roadside bomb detonated next to their convoy.

During the latest anti-insurgent operation in Ramadi, a marine soldier died of wounds sustained when a rocket struck his vehicle on Thursday, the Pentagon announced yesterday.

The city 110km west of Baghdad was the scene of rebel action Thursday but the US command minimised the seriousness of the appearance of armed men in broad daylight, saying it was a largely symbolic action for propaganda purposes.

On Friday, three soldiers died in a car accident in Balad, north of Baghdad.

This news comes following Friday's announcement of the killing of 10 marines on Thursday during a night patrol near Fallujah, 50km west of the capital, not far from Ramadi.

That incident marks the single largest military combat death since August.

A total 2,125 US service person-

nel have died in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion, the Pentagon said.

Eleven Iraqi soldiers were killed and two wounded yesterday when a roadside bomb detonated next to their convoy and they were ambushed by insurgents, an army officer said.

The attack took place near Adhaim area, about 60 miles north of Baghdad, said the officer, who asked not to be identified for security reasons.

The report follows the announcement of a roadside bombing that killed 10 Marines and wounded 11 others on a foot patrol near Fallujah.

IMPACT ON VOTING

Yesterday, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the country's most influential Shi'ite cleric, issued instructions to followers urging them to vote in the election and to cast their ballots in favour of religious candidates from the principle lists.

While falling short of a religious edict or fatwa, the instructions are likely to have an impact on voting and looked like a coded endorsement of the main Shi'ite bloc contesting the elections, the United Iraqi Alliance, winner of January's poll.

According to Sistani's office, the

reclusive scholar has instructed believers to do three things: turn out to vote; avoid voting for any list whose leader is not religious; and avoid voting for "weak" lists so as not to split the Shi'ite vote.

Sistani, who is in his late 70s and rarely appears or speaks in public, holds huge sway over Iraq's 60 percent Shi'ite majority. His instructions could dent the hopes of secular Shi'ite candidates such as Iyad Allawi and Ahmad Chalabi.

Allawi, Iraq's first prime minister after the fall of Saddam Hussein, is mounting a strong challenge to the ruling Shi'ite Islamist coalition, which was originally formed at Sistani's urging to contest the first post-Saddam election in January.

Yesterday's ambush on the Iraqi troops occurred in Udaim, a volatile town near Baquba, and is the latest in a long series of attacks to target Iraq's fledgling police and army forces.

Sunni Arabs form the backbone of the insurgency, which is waging a violent campaign to destabilise the Shi'ite- and Kurdish-led government and drive U.S.-led forces out of Iraq.

Bill Gates arrives tomorrow

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bill Gates, chairman and chief software architect of Microsoft Corporation, arrives in Dhaka tomorrow on a one-day visit amidst tight security.

Sources concerned said Bill, the richest man in the world and a great philanthropist, will be accompanied by his wife.

He is expected to meet the business leaders and elite of the

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Moudud terms court attacks a deep-rooted conspiracy

UNB, Dhaka

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the conspirators are now out to destroy the judiciary after having failed to oust the government before its five-year tenure.

"Repeated attacks on the judiciary are a deep-rooted conspiracy,"

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ATTACK ON COURTS

Hearing on govt appeal today

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing of government plea for staying operation of the High Court order directing the police to submit progress reports to the court every two weeks on the investigations into the recurrent bomb attacks is likely to be held today by the full bench of the Supreme Court.

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Prayer Timing		
December 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		