

Low-key Rajnath picked for BJP helm

AFP, PTI, New Delhi

India's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has chosen a low-key team player to replace the hawkish Lal Krishna Advani as its leader, the Press Trust of India reported.

The decision to promote party general secretary Rajnath Singh to president will be formally announced at the opposition party's five-day conclave in Mumbai from December 26 to 30, the news agency said, quoting party sources.

But outgoing president Advani said yesterday no decision has been taken on his successor as reports circulated that Rajnath Singh was tipped to take over from him.

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US monitors mosques for N-radiation

REUTERS, Washington

US officials have secretly monitored radiation levels at Muslim sites, including mosques and private homes, since September 11, 2001 as part of a top secret programme searching for nuclear bombs, US News and World Report said on Friday.

The news magazine said in its online edition that the far-reaching programme covered more than a hundred sites in the Washington, DC, area and at least five other cities.

"In numerous cases, the monitoring required investigators to go on to the property under surveillance, although no search warrants or court orders were ever obtained, according to those with knowledge of the programme," the magazine said.

The report comes a week after revelations that the Bush administration had authorized eavesdropping

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# ADB offers \$315m semi-hard loan a yr

## To help Bangladesh avoid commercial borrowing and improve infrastructure to boost FDI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has proposed to give a \$315 million near-commercial annual loan from its Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR) Fund for the next three to five years to help the country manage its debts in a sustainable manner.

An Economic Relations Division (ERD) source said the ADB last

month offered the loan expected to be used in infrastructure development. If a good progress is made in this area, the Manila-based regional development bank may consider raising the loan amount.

Referring to the investment proposals of Tata and Asian Energy to the tune of \$4.5 billion, the ADB said Bangladesh will need to improve its infrastructure to avail

those investments and the government can use part of the ADB's OCR loan towards that end.

If the OCR loan is used in developing the country's infrastructure facilities, the return Bangladesh will get by way of more foreign direct investment (FDI) will be significantly higher than the cost of

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Rahman brothers, Bangla Bhai accused in Barguna case

UNB, Barguna

Police submitted a charge sheet on Friday accusing 12 people including the JMB chief, his brother and Bangla Bhai of carrying out the August 17 blasts in Barguna.

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman, his younger brother Ataur Rahman Sunny and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) chief Shafiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai were accused in the charge sheet.

The other accused in the case are Hafez Mustafa Hasan, Al Amin alias Minto, Asadul Islam alias Arif, Rezaul Kabir, Shahidul Islam,

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# Azerbaijan plane crash kills 23

AFP, Baku

All 23 people aboard a flight from the Azerbaijani capital, Baku, bound for Kazakhstan were killed when their plane crashed overnight on the Caspian Sea coastline, the airline said yesterday.

"Everyone on board was killed. The authorities are investigating the incident," the carrier, state-owned AZAL, said in a faxed statement.

The plane, a Ukrainian-made Antonov An-140, crashed shortly after taking off from Baku late on Friday en route to the oil town of

Aktau, across the Caspian Sea in Kazakhstan, AZAL said.

"Five minutes after take-off the plane disappeared from the radar," AZAL said.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visited the crash site and ordered a speedy investigation, the semi-official ATV channel reported.

British citizen James Hardy and Australian Dexter Allen were among those killed in the crash, the British embassy in Baku told AFP.

Ten of the 18 passengers were Azerbaijani and four were Kazakhs. The two other passengers were

from Georgia and Turkey and all five crewmembers were Azerbaijani.

Television footage showed fragments of the plane both on land and in the sea, and it appeared that part of the airplane struck a building that was under construction, knocking down a wall.

The body of one man, wearing only underwear, was shown floating in the water shortly after the crash as investigators and medical

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PHOTO: STAR

Untreated waste and chemicals of the tanneries in Hazaribagh flow through a sluice gate to the Buriganga river. The picture was snapped yesterday.

# Rivers of poison

## Contamination of Buriganga, Turag continues

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Acute pollution of waters of the rivers Buriganga and Turag is killing thousands of fish and other aquatic animals.

Contamination of water of these rivers started taking a serious turn with the onset of the lean period as siltation in their sources in the upstream disrupted their normal flow. Thousands of cubic metres of lethal industrial wastes are dumped every day in the almost stagnant waters of the rivers.

The Buriganga, Turag and Balu rivers stop receiving water from their sources when canals and rivers from the Jamuna in the upstream dry up at their mouths. Movement of water in these rivers during the lean period is caused only by high and low tides from the downstream.

Dead fishes were seen floating in

the Buriganga near Basila yesterday, where 22,000 cubic metres of tannery wastes are dumped directly into the river every day. Moreover, thousands of cubic metres of other industrial wastes are also dumped into the river through 22 large outlets along the rivers.

Dispersion of these wastes stopped due to lack of water flow from the upstream. As a result, the rivers virtually turn into septic reservoirs killing all aquatic life. Thousands of dead fish fries, particularly prawns, were seen along the shore in Waaspur area.

Several dead cubs of Gangetic dolphins floated near Jhaochar last week. Many people including

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Teenager shot dead by BSF

UNB, B'baria

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) near Laxmipur frontier of Akhaura shot a Bangladeshi teenager dead on Friday and took his body away.

The victim was identified as Zakir Hossain, 14, of village Moniandha in Akhaura.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said BSF troops opened fire on Zakir as he got close to the border looking for his goat.

BDR, meanwhile, sent a letter to BSF asking them to return his body.

Prayer Timing		
December 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-27
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		