

Call money rate climbs to 52pc on Eid stress

STAR REPORT

Inter-bank call money rate hit as high as 52 percent yesterday as the banks were desperate to arrange funds to maintain their mandatory liquidity reserve with Bangladesh Bank besides meeting the huge demand of cash withdrawal ahead of Eid.

Call money rate was 30 percent at the highest on Sunday and 20 percent last week.

Banks need to maintain 18 percent statutory liquidity requirement (SLR) including 5 percent cash reserve ratio (CRR) in every 15 days. Some banks that would reach their 15-day maturity

during holidays had to maintain the mandatory reserve yesterday as the last working day. It was another major reason for the high call money rate.

From today, the commercial banks will remain closed for five days in a row -- three days for the Eid-ul-Azha, to be followed by Friday-Saturday weekend.

However, the approved banks involved in export-import trade in Dhaka and Chittagong will remain open from 9:00am to 12:00pm today on special arrangement, according to a central bank circular issued yesterday. Most of the banks have also decided to keep their branches open for three hours today in the two main cities.

The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) lent money to other banks at 22 to 26 percent interest, foreign commercial banks (FCBs) maintained a rate of 25 to 35 percent while the private commercial banks (PCBs) made transactions at the highest 52 percent interest.

The NCBs yesterday released funds as advances for procuring hides and skins of sacrificial animals during the Eid. Besides, city people rushed to withdraw cash from banks for buying sacrificial animals. The banks had to

s e t t l e

US urges BNP, AL to act responsibly

UNB, Dhaka

The US administration yesterday disapproved of any military intervention in Bangladesh as a horrible idea despite political disputes on election issues, but urged both the BNP and the Awami League to act responsibly putting interest of the nation above all else.

"No, I do not. Military intervention will be a horrible idea, and I

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ASSAULT CHARGE Sweepers lay siege to house of Abbas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sweepers of Dhaka City Corporation ward no 34 staged demonstration in front of the Shahjahanpur residence of Public Works and Housing Minister Mirza Abbas yesterday.

The sweepers stopped working as they came to know that father of

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Re-probe into journo Balu killing ordered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Md Abdus Samad yesterday ordered further probe into the journalist Humayun Kabir Balu murder case.

Following a prayer made by the Public Prosecutor advocate Abu Zafar, the tribunal judge ordered to send the case docket to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate for

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Coco-4 sets sail from Sadarghat launch terminal in the capital yesterday with its roof crammed with passengers, defying the BIWTA rules.

Ariel Sharon breathing unassisted

AFF, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was breathing unassisted yesterday while being gradually awoken from a deep coma so doctors can assess the extent of damage to his brain after a massive stroke.

The procedure will be the biggest breakthrough in his condition since the 77-year-old former general has been wired up to a life support machine after a huge brain haemorrhage and three operations.

The director of Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital, where Sharon has been treated since suffering a massive brain haemorrhage on Wednesday night, said the prime

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10 killed in road crashes, stampede

STAR REPORT

At least eight persons were killed in road accidents across the country caused by dense fog and two others died in a stampede at a launch terminal yesterday.

A bus ran over four people after the driver lost its control at Gulshan area in the capital in the early hours yesterday.

The Mohakhali bound bus, which departed from Tangail, ran into a road divider near Mohakhali kitchen market at 4:30am and knocked the four young men down. Three of them died on the spot and another was critically injured, local people said. The injured, who is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), could not be identified. The deceased are

Mohammad Shafiq, 22, of Ramganj in Laxmipur, Nuruzzaman, 25, of Chhagolnaiya in Feni and Shahidul Islam, 32 of Sonagazi in Feni.

The police recovered the bodies and sent them to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

The accident occurred due to poor visibility and the bus driver and helpers could not be arrested till 8:00pm, the police said.

A case was filed with the Gulshan police station.

Two persons were killed and 20 injured in a stampede at Sadarghat launch terminal in the capital when hundreds of passengers rushed to board launches yesterday evening

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Plane crash kills Iran's military top brass

11 on board die as pilot loses control

AFF, Tehran

Several top brass in Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards were among 11 people killed in a military plane crash in the northwest of the country yesterday, the second such deadly incident in barely a month.

The came down near Orumiyeh in a mountainous region of northwestern Iran after the pilot lost control following landing gear problems, and all 11 people aboard were killed, officials said.

"The plane was carrying eight Revolutionary Guards commanders and three members of the crew. Rescue workers are on the scene but some of the bodies have not yet been

identified," said Jamshid Mohammadzadeh, deputy governor of West Azerbaijan province.

Among the victims were Ahmad Kazemi, the commander of the Revolutionary Guards ground forces, and seven top commanders, including an intelligence chief.

The crash came barely a month after a decrepit Iranian military transport plane plunged into the foot of a high-rise housing block in Tehran after suffering engine failure.

A total of 108 people were killed in the December 6 incident, which raised concerns across the country about the state of the planes used by the military.

Monday's crash occurred at

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Human bird flu spreads in Turkey

5 new cases reported

AFP, Ankara

Turkey announced yesterday five more human cases of bird flu countrywide, bringing to 14 the number of people stricken by the lethal H5N1 virus and raising fresh alarms over its menacing westward advance.

Some 100 people were awaiting test results, including 10 from Istanbul, the country's business and tourism hub on the doorstep of Europe, where the presence of the

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Prayer Timing		
January 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Suicide bombers kill 28 at Iraqi ministry

REUTERS, AFP, Baghdad

At least 28 police were killed yesterday when two suicide bombers attacked Iraq's interior ministry where ministers and the US ambassador were attending a Police Day parade, a security official said.

Police shot one of the bombers because he looked suspicious, but the bullets detonated the explosives strapped to the man's body, the official said.

Police said one bomber had been wearing the uniform of a major while the second was dressed as a lieutenant-colonel. Both had difficult-to-obtain security passes, which enabled them to enter separately through the main checkpoint.

As one of the bombers walked away from the checkpoint, Interior Ministry guards became suspicious because he appeared to be "too fat," police told Reuters.

They opened fire, shooting him in the back and hitting the bulky explosives belt he was wearing beneath his uniform, causing him

to explode.

As the guards gathered around the blast site, the second bomber, who had not yet apparently aroused suspicion, detonated his explosives, blowing up policemen and ministry civilian staff.

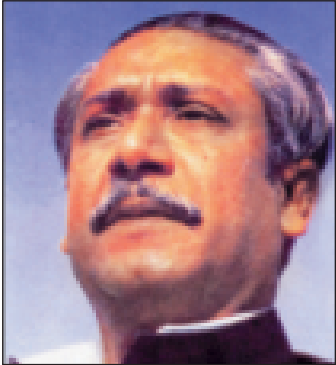
"We want to know where they got their security badges from," a police source told Reuters.

A ceremony celebrating the 84th anniversary of the formation of the Iraqi police force was taking place at the police academy next door to the ministry at the time of the blasts about 500 meters (yards) away.

Among dignitaries attending were the US ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad, and the Iraqi defence and interior ministers.

US military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Johnson, who was at the ceremony, said the attack on the ministry did not interrupt the parade.

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Bangabandhu's homecoming day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation celebrates the historic homecoming day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned home on this day in 1972 after a long confinement in the then West Pakistan during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971.

Pakistan army arrested Bangabandhu at his Dhanmondi residence on the night of March 25, 1971 and sent him to a West

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Criminal killed in 'shootout' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A listed criminal was killed yesterday during a shootout between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and a gang of criminals at Kafrul in the capital.

The dead was identified by Rab as Jamal, a criminal for hire, who had several cases filed against him including two for murder and one for robbery.

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US undersecretary Burn due Jan 17

UNB, Dhaka

US Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burn is likely to arrive in Dhaka on January 17 on a two-day official visit.

He will discuss political and security issues with Bangladesh leaders, a senior official in the foreign ministry said yesterday.

This will be Burn's second visit to Dhaka after June last year.

The official said the US under secretary and Bangladesh officials are likely to discuss and identify the

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