

Rice defends nuclear

FROM PAGE 16
Paul Sarbanes (news, bio, voting record) D-Md. said the administration was asking Congress to approve the agreement without divulging the safeguards. They will be given to the International Atomic Energy Agency, but Sarbanes said, "I don't know they should be substituted for Congress."

But Sen. George Allen (news, bio, voting record), R-Va., said, "this is a good bet," when benefits to India and the rest of the world are taken into account. The two countries share democratic values and there is a shared sense of security, he said.

At the committee hearing, Rice addressed critics who say the plant President Bush agreed to last month with India could dramatically increase India's nuclear arsenal and weaken efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

"Civil nuclear cooperation with India will not lead to an arms race in South Asia," she said.

India has never signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and, Rice said, is unlikely to ever do so.

"We are simply seeking to address an untenable situation," she said. "This agreement does bring India into the nonproliferation framework, and does strengthen the regime."

Rice said the "path-breaking" deal "obviously deserves the support of the U.S. Senate." The pact, which must be approved by Congress, strengthens U.S. ties with the world's largest democracy but also upends more than three decades of U.S. law and policy.

Rice also was scheduled to appear later before the House International Relations Committee.

Her appearance comes at a time of growing domestic disengagement with U.S. foreign policy. Uncertainty over the military course of a rising China, unceasing turmoil in Iraq and stalemates Mideast and nuclear diplomacy over Iran and North Korea pose difficulties for Rice, even though her own performance continues to receive rave reviews on Capitol Hill.

The election season is dawning for members of Congress and those who aspire to replace them. They all are aware of public discontent with the Bush administration's global record on several fronts.

The new US strategic partnership between Washington and New Delhi reverses restrictions on trade with states, such as India, that did not accept comprehensive international safeguards over all their nuclear facilities. The administration's response is that the deal will foster nonproliferation by conditioning India's purchase of foreign-made nuclear reactors on opening its civilian facilities to international inspections.

However, the Congressional Research Service, in a report last week, noted that India would have the sole right to decide which reactors are civilian and which are military, which need not be under international supervision.

Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, who played a pivotal role in negotiating the agreement, has offered assurances that "India can be trusted."

But Sen. Barbara Boxer (news, bio, voting record), D-Calif., a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, is critical of the agreement.

"I do not share the view that closer US-India ties will be a coun-

terweight to China, which seems to be the unstated yet driving force behind this deal," Boxer said in remarks prepared for delivery at the hearing. "This type of thinking is not only outdated and dangerous, it flies in the face of reality."

Boxer said India's recent record indicates that it has no interest in being a "hedge" against China. "It is naive to think otherwise," Boxer said.

Opposition

FROM PAGE 16
reign of terror all over the country and did not carry out any development activity. Even then they did not stop.

The prime minister has made it clear that they will complete full term, which ends next October.

She said bomb blasts started during the AL rule but they did not take any step to stop the bombings. "Rather, they gave shelter to the bombers."

She said the bombers have no political identity. They are enemies of the country. "We have introduced speedy trial court to punish them."

She said with the help of police, Rab and other law enforcement agencies, her government has been able to eliminate bomb terrorism and arrest the militant kingpins. "The remaining two top terror leaders will also be arrested," the prime minister told the rally.

Referring to her call for national dialogue to deal with the bomb terrorism, she said all parties and professional bodies responded to her call and joined the dialogue to resolve the problem.

But, she regretted, the main opposition party did not join the dialogue, as "they don't want peace and end to terrorism."

The prime minister said if the BNP returns to power in 2007 elections, Bangladesh will appear as a prosperous country, not a dependent one.

Presided over by local MP Matiur Rahman Talukder, the meeting was also addressed by Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain, State Minister for Finance and Planning Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selina Rahaman, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, Barisal City Mayor Moljibur Rahman Sarwar and Nurul Islam Moni MP.

Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated Amtali Municipality sewage project by unveiling a plaque.

Frequent power

FROM PAGE 16
Tuesday's halstorn.

"The opposition leader's residence faced a four-hour power cut from 7:00pm on Tuesday," a personal aide of Hasina told The Daily Star yesterday.

Describing yesterday's experience, he said Sudha Sadan and adjacent houses on Road 5 in Dhammendi suffered power outages for six times until 6:00pm.

Asked, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority Chairman Touhidul Islam told The Daily Star last night that a feeder transformer of Jigatola-Kalyanpur line was damaged due to halstorn on Tuesday evening that might have caused the power disruptions.

"Our engineers are working at the spot round-the-clock to repair the transformer," he said, adding that he is aware of the power outage at the opposition leader's house.

Tax intelligence

FROM PAGE 1
smuggling rackets, they must have transacted a huge amount of black money through their banking channels. We will examine their bank accounts and life style details of the owners," an income tax high official said.

"We might freeze their bank accounts if we find that the directors transacted beyond their annual expected transaction," the tax official said.

Sources said BD Foods Limited raised their paid up capital to Tk 4.51 crore from only Tk 1.0 lakh within two and a half years, which is an abnormal fast pace for such an increase in the capital.

The company also brought massive changes in its ownership pattern.

It was reported earlier that Badru Haider Choudhury is the chairman of BD Foods Limited, but further investigation found that Bodruoza Momen is the chairman of the company, and his eldest son Badru Haider Choudhury is the managing director, while his other two sons Abu Sharar and Tafim Al Azmi are the directors.

Primarily, Bodruoza Momen owned 55 percent of the shares of BD Foods and his sons owned 15 percent each. Later the majority of the shares was transferred to the youngest son Tafim Al Azmi.

The home ministry and criminal investigation department are keeping mum about the case maintaining the highest level of confidentiality.

Home ministry official said they do not know about the development of the case while CID officials said they are continuing their investigation.

Government intelligence agencies found that the alleged smuggling racket smuggled 147 kilograms of heroin to the UK.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the Special Branch (SB) of police are also investigating the smuggling ring.

REJOINDER
Meanwhile, BD Foods Limited in a

heated arguments and counter arguments, the minister announced formation of an investigation committee to hear all sides.

BY-POLLS BNP nominates Gaibandha-4 candidate

UNB, Dhaka

The ruling BNP has nominated Mohammad Shamim Kawtar to contest the forthcoming by-election in Gaibandha-4 parliamentary constituency.

The BNP Parliamentary Board unanimously took the decision at a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday with party chairperson Prime Minister Khaleda Zia that 11 votes were not counted, as the ballots were faulty.

Balaram Poddar officially announced the election results at AL office in Dhammendi after counting the votes around 5:00pm in presence of hundreds of BCL leaders and activists.

The parliamentary board also called upon the voters of the constituency to vote for Mohammad Shamim Kawtar to continue the trend of development, peace and prosperity.

BNP Secretary General and LGDR and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Chief Whip Khanderak Delwar Hossain, RA Ganj, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mosharrif Hossain, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed and KM Obaidur Rahman were present in the meeting.

BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi farmer and abducted another on Nazirakona border in Mujibnagar of Meherpur yesterday morning.

The dead is Mithu alias Jantu, 36, son of Hashem Gazi, while the abducted was Mona 30, son of Nabi Uddin of Nazirakona village.

Sources in the 9th Rifles Battalion said a BSF patrol team of Hridoypur checkpoint through Chhata Police Station of Nadia district opened fire on the two while they were going to their cropland near the border at about 5:30am.

Mithu died on the spot while Mona received serious injuries.

The Indian border guards took away the body and injured Mona to their camp.

BSF yesterday sent a letter to the BSF authorities, asking them to hand over the body and injured Mona.

Road closed

FROM PAGE 16
through an area with hillocks has some turns drivers considered to be risky.

The R&H officials on April 1 stopped vehicular movement on it and asked all to use the new bypass.

However, the road was damaged on the very next day allegedly due to its poor construction quality. Moreover, several trucks got stuck at different dented points, causing a severe congestion on the road.

The authorities took about 10 hours to clear the road around 4:00am on April 3. The R&H officials immediately closed the road and asked all to use the old bypass again until further decision.

The department has however started repairing the damaged parts of the road.

Hundreds of trucks transporting stones from the country's biggest stone quarry on Bholaganj border ply on the road every day.

Besides, the road links several upazillas including Gowainghat, Companiganj and parts of Sylhet sadar upazila.

Locals allege about 50 families have not yet got compensation for the land acquired by the R&H for the road.

Coconut waste

FROM PAGE 1
Nessa Ahmed, fined the contractor of Rajarbagh traffic police canteen Tk 5,000 and the owner of Moonstar Hotel at Motijheel Tk 20,000 for lack of hygiene.

The magistrate fined the owner of New Moon Hotel and Restaurant at Fakirpool Tk 30,000 for keeping raw meat, ripe papayas, sweets and drinks in the same refrigerator.

He also exacted Tk 20,000 in fines from four sweetmeat shops at Fakirpool and another four at the nearby intersection for selling stale sweets and yoghurt, and date expired Bakarkhani.

Another court, headed by Magistrate Rashedul Hassan, fined Islam Plastic Factory at 78, Nurbagh in Kamrangirchar Tk 15,000 for producing banned polythene bags. Rashedul sealed off two more factories for the same reason. The court, however, did not find any one except two women workers in those so-called factories.

The court of Rashedul also fined Lysa Bread and Biscuit Factory for selling date-expired vermicelli and a resident of the area, Afzal Hossain, for keeping construction materials on a footpath.

Body formed

FROM PAGE 16
additional fare. The drivers also deny going to short distances and suburb areas and often misbehave with passengers, especially women and school-goers.

The government permitted 13,000 CNG vehicles to ply in Dhaka city but the actual number would be two or three times more. Golam Mohammad Siraj MP said, adding that all the CNG vehicles should be checked as there are more than one vehicle with the same registration number.

The CNG drivers charge extra fare as the owners charge Tk 600-700 instead of fixed rate Tk 300 per day, representatives of the drivers told the meeting.

Apparently to put an end to the heated arguments and counter arguments, the minister announced formation of an investigation committee to hear all sides.

Boy burned

FROM PAGE 16
was busy getting her television out when Hridoy entered one room locked the door from the inside by himself, she added.

"Hearing the cry of my child from the room I begged my neighbours to break down the door and rescue my child but they said 'Save your won life,'" she said lamenting. Helena also suffered from burn injuries while attempting to rescue her son.

Firefighters brought the fire under control around 11:50am, forty minutes after it broke out. The fire officials estimated the damage to be around Tk 2 lakh, although the residents claim it to be a lot more.

BCL council elects

FROM PAGE 16

Hasibul Islam Mithu Kotowal got 307 votes and Salehin Raza got 287 votes among 24 candidates.

The poll was held in the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh auditorium on Tuesday with transparent ballot boxes and identity cards for the councilors. A total of 21,000 councilors cast their votes to elect the top two leaders. The chief election commissioner of the council, Balaram Poddar told The Daily Star that 11 votes were not counted, as the ballots were faulty.

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The parliamentary board also called upon the voters of the constituency to vote for Mohammad Shamim Kawtar to continue the trend of development, peace and prosperity.

BNP Secretary General and LGDR and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Chief Whip Khanderak Delwar Hossain, RA Ganj, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mosharrif Hossain, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed and KM Obaidur Rahman were present in the meeting.

The ruling BNP has nominated Mohammad Shamim Kawtar to contest the forthcoming by-election in Gaibandha-4 parliamentary constituency.

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