

Weekly meeting of advisory council now on Saturdays

UNB, Dhaka

The regular weekly meeting of the council of advisers was held at the chief adviser's office yesterday.

Earlier on March 5, the council decided to hold its weekly meeting on Saturdays instead of Mondays.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed chaired the meeting. Members of the advisory council attended the meeting and discussed current affairs.

The cabinet secretary, the press secretary to the chief adviser and high officials concerned were also present.

Bin Laden 50 today?

REUTERS, AK, Afghanistan

Osama bin Laden, if he's alive, celebrates his 50th birthday yesterday, and his friends in the Taliban prayed for his long life.

The al Qaeda leader's long silence has fueled speculation that the world's most-wanted fugitive may have died, though many in the international intelligence community reckon Islamist militant Web sites would circulate word of his death.

"He is alive. I am 100 percent sure," Taliban spokesman Mullah Hayatullah Khan told Reuters.

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Prayer Timing		
March 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-12	6-15
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Ctg port functions better after new steps taken

RAFIQ HASAN from Chittagong

The performance of Chittagong Port improved significantly after a number of steps were taken by a taskforce formed by the joint forces.

The age-old practice of under-hand dealings inside the port for container movement has been checked considerably as well.

Although bribing of customs officials for customs clearance has stopped, a small number of highly secretive underhand dealings still take place in the port, according to sources.

According to sources, the joint

forces had formed a taskforce immediately after the declaration of emergency in the country for improving the situation at the port.

The task force had a series of meetings with all stakeholders before adopting the plan of action, the source said.

The arrest of a number of powerful CBA and stevedoring leaders including Nurullah Bahar, Abdul Ahad, Mohammad Ibrahim and Raihan Sharif left the port free from opposition by the dock workers and helped the task force implement its plan.

According to a Transparency

International Bangladesh (TIB) investigative report, underhand transactions of around Tk 400 crore used to take place annually at the premier port.

Earlier, the government or the port authority failed to take on any major reform programme due to strong opposition from dockworkers and CBA leaders.

The taskforce has taken a number of steps for accelerating container handling and reducing cost. Many of the steps have already been implemented and some

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2 journos arrested in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Editor of a local weekly Md Idris Ali and district correspondent of Bangla daily, the Jugantor, MA Muhit, were arrested and sent to jail here on Friday evening.

Sources said the two were arrested from Muhit's residence on Kashinath Road of the district.

Police said they were arrested under the State of Emergency Ordinance 2007.

Muhit's wife Shirin Akhtar told this correspondent that a supporter of one of the local leaders, against whom Muhit did corruption stories, filed a defamatory case against her husband a few days back.

18 killed in Baghdad suicide bombing

AP, Baghdad

A suicide car bomb struck Baghdad's Shia militia stronghold yesterday, killing at least 18 people as international envoys met in the Iraqi capital to talk about stabilising the violence-shattered country.

The blast hit an Iraqi patrol in Sadr City at midday, scattering burning debris across a small bridge, witnesses said.

An Associated Press reporter traveling with US troops nearby said the explosion showered shrapnel across a joint US-Iraq security station 300 yards away. The partially

shattered windshield of a car landed at the gates of the compound.

Police said at least 18 people were killed and 48 wounded.

Home to about 2.5 million of Baghdad's poorest residents, Sadr City is the base for fighters allied to anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. His militia, the Mahdi Army, has laid low in recent weeks during a US-Iraqi security crackdown under pressure from Iraqi Prime Minister Nourial-Maliki.

Hours earlier, Iraqi special forces teams backed by US soldiers detained six suspects believed to be a rogue members of the Mahdi

Army, the US military said in a statement.

The suspects were accused of coordinating and carrying out kidnappings and murders of Iraqi civilians, the statement said.

In central Baghdad, two mortars fell near Iraq's Foreign Ministry, where envoys gathered for an international conference on how to quell the violence and bolster Iraq's government. There were no reports of injuries, but smoke was visible from the meeting area.

Meanwhile, Iraqi officials said

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Dhaka acceding to UN convention on nuke terrorism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday announced that Bangladesh is in the process of acceding to the UN Convention on Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism.

"In conformity with the UN Charter and international law, Bangladesh supports all international efforts, including implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly 1373, to combat terrorism," the foreign affairs adviser told a seminar at Bangladesh Institute for International Strategic Studies (BISS).

The daylong seminar titled 'Challenges to Security in the 21st Century: Bangladeshi Perspective'

was organised by Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies (CSPS).

The foreign adviser said that Bangladesh recognises that the growing trends in terrorism and fundamentalism are the gravest challenges to democratic societies and international peace and security.

Bangladesh is party to 12 of the 13 UN Conventions on terrorism.

The adviser reiterated that Bangladesh would never allow its soil to be used for propagating terrorism, fundamentalism and sectarian violence.

"We do not view acts of terrorism as insular and isolated events," he said adding, "we have, time and

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Cop held for bribery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces yesterday arrested a police sub-inspector (SI) while he was taking bribe from a city hotel.

In Gazipur, another SI and a businessman were arrested on Friday by the joint forces for bribery.

Acting on a tip off, the joint forces conducted a drive at Hotel Noor Residential at Fakirapul in the capital at around 3:00pm and arrested Shahabuddin, former SI of Motijheel Police Station who was transferred to Rajshahi Range on February 27, with bribe money worth Tk 5,000 and seized his mobile set.

Shahabuddin was later sent to Paltan army camp and filing of a case with Paltan Police Station was under process as of submission of this report.

Shahabuddin, investigation officer of a deception case filed by Abdur Rahman against his business partner Hanif Sharif Hannan on April 30, 2006, demanded Tk 80,000 from Rahman for a report in favour of him, Rahman told reporters.

He said though he paid the claimed amount, Shahabuddin demanded Tk 5,000 more before filing

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Sub-inspector Shahabuddin, arrested for bribery.

Lankan fighting escalates

8 killed in wildlife park

AFP, Colombo

Suspected Tamil Tiger rebels shot dead four security personnel and four park officials inside a wildlife sanctuary as fighting escalated elsewhere on the island, the military said yesterday.

The bullet-riddled bodies of the eight men were found following a search operation in the Wilpattu national park in the northwest of the island, a military official said.

Another official in the region said the victims were on their way to identify locations for setting up military detachments on the perimeters of the sprawling wildlife sanctuary, when they were ambushed on Friday.

There was no immediate word from the Tamil Tigers about the latest attack, but the guerrillas said they were returning the bodies of four police commandos killed in heavy fighting raging in the island's restive eastern province.

Tamil Tiger spokesman Rasiiah Ilanthiriyar said the rebels buried two other bodies of elite Special Task Force (STF) commandos because they were too mutilated.

A total of nine STF commandos were killed in Friday's confrontations with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Tigers said, adding that they lost only one of their combatants in the district of Ampara.

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