

‘Highway linking Bangladesh, Myanmar, China under plan’

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said a highway linking Bangladesh, Myanmar and China is being constructed for enhancing cooperation among the eastern countries.

He said, "Bangladesh is pursuing an active policy of promotion and maintenance of friendly relations and cooperation with neighbouring countries in South, Southeast and Far East Asia for enhancing trade, commerce and peace in the region."

The President made the comments when outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Seung-Ung Park paid a farewell call on him at Bangabhaban. He told the envoy that the next parliamentary election in Bangladesh would be held "in a free, fair, credible and impartial manner".

Referring to heavy trade imbalance between Bangladesh and Korea, Dr Iajuddin

requested the Korean government to take appropriate measures to narrow the gap by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers on Bangladeshi

exportable goods to the ROK market.

He hoped that the ROK would continue to provide financial and technical assistance for develop-

ment of Bangladesh, especially in ICT sector, as one of the important development partners of Bangladesh.

He also expected that Bangladesh would be included into the list of workforce-sending countries under employment-permit system by the Korean government. He thanked Korea for making a large amount of direct investment in Bangladesh.

Dr Iajuddin informed the envoy that Bangladesh has achieved some of the goals of millennium development, including in education, healthcare service, micro-credit, women empowerment, supply of arsenic-free pure water and sanitation.

Ambassador Seung-Ung said that the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Korea are excellent and the ties would be further strengthened in future.

Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen M Aminul Karim, Secretary to the President's Office M Sirajul Islam and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Korean Embassy were present on the occasion.

3 JMB men held in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) men in Rangpur yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Kafiluddin, son of Anwar Hossain of Goneshpur, Ashraf Hossain Alamgir, son of late Abul Hossain of Jummapara in the town and Hafez Enamul Hoque, son Khaza Miah of Pholiagram under Polashbari upazila in Gaibandha.

Rab arrested Kafiluddin and Ashraf from their houses and Enamul Hoque from North Debipur

Madrasa of Polashbari upazila.

They arrested Kafiluddin and Enamul according to the confessional statement of Ashraf.

Rab also recovered 13 books on Islamic revolution written by Dr Abdullah-Al Galib and Dr Sakwat Hossain from their possession.

Rab sources said the arrestees are Ehsar members of JMB and they were regrouping themselves for a fresh attack ahead the execution of the JMB kingpins.

The JMB men are being interrogated at the Rab Rangpur camp till the filing of the report.



PHOTO: STAR

Patients gather in front of Al-Noor Eye Hospital at Lalmatia in the city yesterday after the hospital authorities closed the hospital in a sudden move following longstanding disagreement with the employees.

Thousands of Nepali rebels, arms still unregistered?

AFP, Kathmandu

The United Nations mission in Nepal said Tuesday it was concerned about media reports quoting the Maoist leader as saying that thousands of former rebel fighters and weapons remained outside UN monitored camps.

UN special representative Ian

8 arrested for rhino poaching

AFP, Kathmandu

Eight men, including a former airline pilot and an army officer, have been arrested on suspicion of poaching rhino in one of Nepal's most important national parks, reports said Wednesday.

"The former pilot allegedly supplied guns to other smugglers and the army man supplied the live ammunition," the state-run Rising Nepal newspaper reported.

The population of the endangered one-horned rhinoceros in Chitwan National Park -- 200 kilometres (125 miles) southwest of Kathmandu -- dropped to 372 in 2005 from 544 in 2000.

Martin "today raised these reports with the Maoist leadership and who maintained that the reports were incorrect," the UN said in a statement.

The Maoists and government signed a peace deal late last year under which they agreed to place their weapons under UN monitoring.

The Kathmandu Post reported on its front page that "Maoist chairman Prachanda said on Monday that thousands of his party's combatants and weapons were still outside the cantonments as they 'couldn't meet United Nations standards,' to be registered with the latter."

Maoist spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara said the report was incorrect.

"We are gravely concerned about these reports. They are totally baseless, misguided and misleading," Mahara told AFP.

The spokesman said that comments by Prachanda had been misinterpreted.

"Prachanda said that there were amounts of small home-made explosive devices that do not meet UN standards that are not inside the UN (weapon storage) containers, but even these small devices are under the supervision of the UN," Mahara said.

In addition, the rebel leader did not say there were thousands of People's Liberation Army fighters outside the UN camps but said there were thousands of non-army cadre who would be willing to fight again if needed, he said.

"Many Maoist cadres, like myself, are not in the People's Liberation Army outside the cantonments," Mahara said.

UN monitors have completed the first stage of registering former rebel weapons and soldiers, and have handed over their findings.

A key part of Nepal's peace process, the UN monitoring team has registered just over 31,000 Maoist fighters and 3,430 weapons.

Some politicians and the army have said the number of weapons registered seems too low to be credible.

The second stage of UN monitoring is slated to begin in around 10 days and will involve verifying that all the combatants registered are over 18 years old and were in the Maoist army before May 2006.

Nepal's Maoists are poised to enter government after waging a decade-long bloody "people's war" that killed at least 13,000 people.

Six NGO men sued for misappropriating Tk 2 crore in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Development of Ideal Muslim in Bangladesh (DIMB), an NGO, allegedly misappropriated Tk 2 crore of 2300 members at Hizla in Barisal.

DIMB started functioning in 2003 and opened four branches in different places at Hizla. It allured the village people, mainly teachers and petty shopkeepers, by assuring to give Tk 1400 as monthly profit against the deposit of Tk one lakh.

However, the NGO officials fled away on Monday night and the agitated members and customers found their main office at Harinathpur Bazar closed.

The infuriated villagers put the shops owned by branch officer Naim Khondokar and DIMB agent Gias Matubbar at Harinathpur Bazar under lock and key on Tuesday morning.

On behalf of the affected people, one Shukkur Ahmed lodged a case with Hizla Police Station yesterday accusing Bellal Hossain, chairman of the organisation, Rina Begum, his wife, and Faruk Hossain, Maruf Hussein and Jasim Rari, employees of the organisation.

Officer-in-Charge of Hizla Police Station Matiar Rahman confirmed the incident.

Police is yet to arrest anyone in this connection.

9 Buddhists massacred in Thai south

AFP, Yala

Nine Buddhists were massacred Wednesday after separatists ambushed their bus in Thailand's restive Muslim-majority south, highlighting an escalation in the insurgency.

Local police said three men and six women, including two girls aged 14 and 15, were shot in the head at point-blank range after armed rebels forced their minibus off the road.

The driver, a Muslim man, and a seriously injured Buddhist passenger were the only survivors from the daylight attack in Yala, one of three southern provinces where about 2,000 people have been killed in three years of separatist unrest.



PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court conducts a raid on ARA Enterprise at Wari in the city yesterday and fined it Tk 50,000 for illegally producing oral saline.

Ayurvedic co, two Zarda factories, oral saline manufacturer fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile courts fined one Ayurvedic medicine company, two Zarda (chewing tobacco) factories and one oral saline manufacturer in the city in separate drives yesterday.

A mobile court led by magistrate Rokon-Ud Doula conducted a drive at the showroom of Carlo Pharma (unani and ayurvedic) at Elephant Road and arrested three of its employees, including General Manager Golam Kabir.

Earlier on August 29, 2006, the same mobile court conducted a drive at its sales centre at Shahbagh and collected a number of samples to test the ingredients.

The test revealed that 12 samples, out of 16, are substandard and do not contain the same ingredients mentioned in the label.

For example, one of the tablets manufactured by it is Jurion and this medicine is prescribed to people who suffer from skin diseases and pregnant women with iron deficiency. The contents mentioned in the label of Jurion are Vitamin C, riboflavin, thiamine, pyridoxine, nicotinamide, chloride and iron. But lab test proves the presence of only vitamin C.

The court fined the arrestees Tk 3

lakh each.

The court issued warrants against its owners Mohammad Alauddin and Rafiqul Islam. Later, the court raided the residence of the owners, its factory and a warehouse.

The court filed two cases against the owners and ordered them to appear before the court on March 20.

Meanwhile, another mobile court led by Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas fined two Zarda factories in Lalbagh area in the city yesterday.

During a raid on Kaus Chemical Works, the mobile court found glycerine, glucose and other raw materials for Zarda are kept in an unhygienic

condition while Zarda are kept on the muddy floor for packaging.

The court fined owner Haji Kaus Mia Tk 1 lakh.

The court also raided Monipuri Zarda and fined the manager of the factory Tk 25,000 and issued warrant against the owner of the factory for running the business without the approval of the fire department and using non-edible colours.

The same mobile court fined Peacock restaurant at Shahbagh Tk 1,00,000 under pure food ordinance.

Another mobile court led by Magistrate Abdur Rauf Khan fined a manufacturer of oral saline for produc-

ing the life-saving medicine without proper permission from the authorities concerned.

Ara Food Products in Wari was manufacturing and marketing Ara oral saline although it does not have licence for oral saline. It does not have any chemist or quality controller of other food products.

The court fined its two owners Tk 50,000.

The court also fined Shahjalal Hotel, Tanjila Hotel, and New Rabin Hotel in Sayedabad area in the city Tk 10,000 each.

Workshop on risk reduction feature writing begins

A two-day workshop on 'Risk Reduction Feature Writing', organised by the Advocacy Component of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) under the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, began yesterday at CDMP conference room in the city, says a press release.

Chief Technical Adviser to the CDMP Ian Stanford Rector inaugurated the workshop. National Consultants of CDMP Dr Aslam Alam, Otin Dewan and SM Alamgir were present at the inaugural session.

A total of 25 young journalists from the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University and different newspapers are participating at the workshop.

The workshop has been designed to promote young journalists in covering the risk reduction issues in the print media.



PHOTO: STAR

Participants of a workshop on 'Risk Reduction Feature Writing' pose for photograph with the guests at the conference room of Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) in the city yesterday. Advocacy Component of CDMP organised the workshop.

LAWYERS' PROTEST Pak censorship on TV coverage condemned

AFP, Islamabad

A global media watchdog condemned the Pakistani government yesterday for allegedly censoring the coverage of protests against the sacking of the country's chief justice.

Paris-based Reporters Without Borders said the Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority suspended broadcasts by the private Aaj and Geo television stations after they screened footage on Monday of clashes between police and lawyers.

The images from Lahore included footage of lawyers covered in blood and being beaten by riot police with batons, following President Pervez Musharraf's firing of top judge Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry on Friday.