

Good news

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to keep those in their collection. "Over 50 percent of the released coins are not in the market at present," he said.

"The Bangladesh Bank is now planning to offer monetary benefits in exchange of coins with the banks for a certain period," he said. People will get a certain amount of money swapping the coins with the banks, but details of the plan is yet to be finalised, Mazharul added.

The BB has the plan to collect at least 300 million pieces of Tk 5 coin from the market in this way and release those again, he added.

Although the central bank had released 400 million pieces of five taka coin presently there are only 70 million pieces in the market, the BB estimates.

The central bank will also collect old and torn banknotes of Tk 2 and Tk 5 for removing those from the market as the commercial banks have failed to do the job despite repeated instructions by the BB.

Redwan sued for extortion

UNB, Comilla

An extortion case was filed against detained former state minister and LDP leader Redwan Ahmed yesterday.

Advocate Abul Kashem of Mohikail village under Chandina upazila filed the case with a cognizance court, accusing Redwan, his brother Emran Ahmed and three others of demanding Tk two lakh in toll from him.

In the case statement, the complainant stated that as he failed to meet the demand, the accused plundered his business house and took away Tk 1.50 lakh in cash on September 3, 2002. They also evicted him from his land.

The court sent the case to Chandina Police Station for investigation.

BGMEA

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a press release claimed that Rajuk in a board meeting held in July 2003 approved the BGMEA building plan.

BGMEA also submitted all relevant documents to the Rajuk before getting approval, the press release said.

Earlier on April 10, the local government adviser spelled out the decision to dismantle all illegal structures on the Hatirjheel and Begunbari canals from Sonargaon Canal crossing to Rampura in the city.

Govt to sue

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the tip of a corruption iceberg," he said with a tinge of frustration, adding that the government will not only cancel their allotments but also confiscate the amount they deposited with Rajuk for land purchase.

Almost all of the around 1,000 Rajuk plots allotted during the BNP-led alliance rule are suspected to be obtained through false declaration or other irregularities. "We have found irregularities in the allotment of over 80 percent of the plots in the last five years," said the investigator, wishing not to be named.

Under its Uttara third phase project, Rajuk allotted 897 residential plots, 804 of those were given as per the list of former Housing and Public Works minister Mirza Abbas, disclosed another taskforce investigator. The project was eventually cancelled by this caretaker government.

One hundred plots, 50 each in Banani and Uttara, were allotted to BNP leaders and the people close to the coalition government.

The influentials exploited the vague Genuine Deserving quota of Rajuk to obtain plots by giving false declarations, the investigators said, disclosing the declaration doctoring by former deputy minister for land Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu.

Dulu obtained a 5-katha plot in Banani with a declaration that he or his family does not have any house or plot in the Dhaka city. "But we found out that he, in fact, has two houses in city's Gulshan and Shyamoli areas," he said.

A Nam flat in Banani was also allotted to Dulu before the Banani plot, but he cancelled the flat allotment in favour of his Banani plot. His cancellation of the Nam flat allotment was also an instance of irregularity as he got that flat as being a lawmaker, pointed out the investigator.

"We are going to confiscate around Tk 60 lakh he deposited with Rajuk for the Banani plot including the registration fee," he said.

DULU IN THICK SOUP

Cheating case apart, a money-laundering case is also to be filed against the Rajshahi politician, who is accused of patronising dreadful militancy by the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

Dulu stashed nearly Tk 6 crore in the Jamuna Bank (Gulshan branch) and Social Investment Bank (Gulshan) and two old Dhaka branches) using fake names and addresses, found out a taskforce probe.

"We suspect, he used his portfolio as deputy land minister to make the money from dishonest contractors and through tender corruption," said a taskforce official.

Mazharul said that they are planning to change those banknotes with new ones under the supervision of the central bank. "We will set up booths in big cities for a certain period of time where people can change the old and torn notes instantly."

He also gave out a detailed plan of the central bank for meeting the crisis of the coins and banknotes of Tk one, two and five denomination.

Mazharul said that 100 million pieces of Tk 5 banknote have already been printed and would be released in the market soon, adding that another 250 million pieces are under process of release in the market.

In addition of releasing 500 million pieces of one taka coin, 200 million pieces of Tk 2 coin along with 260 million pieces of Tk 2 banknote will be released soon, he added.

PRESS NOTE

No fertiliser crisis in the country

Bss, Dhaka

The government in a press note yesterday said there is no fertiliser crisis in the country.

It said the reports published recently in some national dailies on the urea fertiliser crisis in several districts of the country are not true.

The industries ministry issued the press note giving an actual picture of current production, stock and distribution status of the urea fertiliser to remove any kind of confusion about the matter.

According to the press note, the total demand for the urea fertiliser in the country for 2006-07 was 28.75,000 tonnes. No fertiliser crisis had been reported during the last peak season of the IRRi-Boro cultivation due to proper management by the government.

Due to distribution of fertiliser among the farmers by rationing, the BCIC had a stock of nearly one lakh tonnes of fertiliser to face any unexpected situation.

In May and June, the demand for the urea fertiliser, fixed by the agriculture ministry for different districts of the country, was 1,77,348 tonnes.

Now, the BCIC has a stock of more than 4 lakh tonnes of fertiliser, which the press note says the highest in the last few years.

The taskforce has already forwarded the finds along with evidence to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for filing a money-laundering case against Dulu.

The taskforces are also gathering evidence against some other high profile corruption suspects for money-laundering case.

His wife Sabina Yasmin also turned against him, giving confessional statement to a Dhaka magistrate on June 20 where she disowned the Tk 3 crore asset shown by her husband in her wealth statement submitted to the ACC.

Dulu declared that he has assets worth Tk 4 crore and that he has no contribution to the Tk 3 crore assets of his wife.

Having being interrogated by the taskforce, Sabina went for confessional statement in which she stated 'I'm just a housewife. I don't have any income source. These assets were amassed by my husband in my name.'

The taskforce investigators also tracked down Tk 4 crore assets outside the wealth statement he submitted.

Cheating case

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In the case statement, Nizam alleged that the former lawmaker from Barguna-3 constituency took Tk 30,000 from him in June 2003, promising him a job.

The complainant further stated that Matuir failed to keep his promise and refused to return the money.

Matuir surrendered before Barguna District Judge's Court on June 18 and sought bail in the case. But the court rejected the bail prayer and sent him to jail again.

Magistrate Anupom Kumar Barua, after hearing arguments from both sides, pronounced the verdict in the afternoon.

CA greets

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friend in the new British leader.

The head of the caretaker government termed bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the UK excellent, saying that it has been expanded over the years in many areas, including trade, investment and culture.

He hoped that the existing friendly relations between the two countries would be further strengthened during his tenure as British premier.

"I look forward to closely working with you on issues of our mutual interest," the chief adviser said.



Asia Khatun

Sheikh Selim

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12:40pm, her nephew Awami League President Sheikh Hasina rushed to Selim's Banani residence where the deceased's body was taken.

A numbers of AL leaders including Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and barrister Amir-ul-Islam went to Selim's residence to see the deceased.

Namaz-e-janaza of the deceased will be held at Gulshan Azad mosque after the jum'a prayers tomorrow. She will be buried at the Banani graveyard beside her son Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni's grave.

Asia left behind two sons, three daughters and a host of relatives, admirers and well-wishers.

Jatiya Party (JP-Nazir) Chairman Nazir Rahman and Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun and Jatiya Party (JP-Manju) Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam have expressed deep shock over the death of Selim's mother.

In separate condolence messages they prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the family members.

Budget

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the population had sent suggestions on the proposed budget directly to the ministry, he noted.

The approved budget increased the minimum payable income tax from the proposed Tk 1,800 to Tk 2,000. Besides, there are changes in rates for high income tax payees on different slabs, NBR sources said.

It has also withdrawn the proposal for increasing the duty to Tk 500 from the existing Tk 300 on every mobile phone set to be imported. The approved budget contains a provision of withdrawing the import duty on newsprint on condition.

To promote export-oriented industries including textiles and pharmaceuticals, the approved budget provides for a duty of only five percent but that will be subject to certain conditions. Manufacturers of 100 percent export-bound textiles won't have to pay any duty.

Besides, there's a provision of imposing 'safeguard tax' on the imports likely to pose threat to local industries.

Mirza Azizul Islam unveiled the proposed budget in a speech over radio and TV on June 7. He called for feedback from different sections.

The finance ministry officials said they received 1,808 suggestions through e-mails and conventional mails.

Those had been compiled and sent to the council of advisers for their consideration. Besides, recommendations of different chambers, trade bodies and leading economists too were taken into account.

Danida driver

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dropped from helicopter in the remote hilly jungle areas in search of the official of Denmark International Development Agency (Danida).

Tipped off by the people of Kya Buri Para, law enforcers are hoping to find Shahid at any moment. A member of the law enforcement agencies said they could rescue the Danida driver as they changed their strategy.

Meanwhile, the first secretary and other officials of Danida who rushed to Bandarban following the kidnap spent a busy day yesterday. The army did not allow them to go to Thanchi area for security reasons, but the Danida officials met the Bomang king and sought his help to rescue Shahid.

The eight NGO officials including one Danida official, who were held after the kidnap, was not freed as of yesterday.

EC ready

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Asked which of the factions they would prefer to be in dialogue with when a number of political parties face potential split, the poll chief yesterday said, "We will talk with everyone. Rifts in the organisations are not our concern."

"Despite the ban, the political parties can sit with the commission. They can come over for informal discussions about the electoral reforms. There's no restriction in it," CEC said.

About the initiative to invite political leaders for talks, he said, "Currently, we are not inviting anyone. They can come on their own. We are ready to talk."

Speaking to newsmen after the meeting, Nilu said that after withdrawal of the ban they will float a new political party dissolving the present JP faction and that will be called 'the National People's Party'.

He said they have placed some of their proposals to the EC and discussed the electoral reforms at the meeting.

Verdict of Mir Nasir

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former state minister for energy Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, his wife, son and daughter in connection with a graft case.

Besides, a Dhaka court yesterday closed recording statements of witnesses of the arms case against controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun while another court could not begin trial of a criminal case against former law minister Moudud Ahmed as he was not produced before the court yesterday.

NASIR CASE

After completion of arguments from the prosecution and the defence, Judge AK Roy of the Second Special Court fixed July 4 for delivery of the verdict of the graft case against Mir Nasir and his son Mir Helal.

The case was filed against them with Gulshan Police Station for possessing huge wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income.

TUKU CASE

ACC Assistant Director ASM Akhter Hamid Bhuiyan, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet against Tuku, his wife, son and daughter to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka showing 61 people as prosecution witnesses.

Of them, Tuku was earlier arrested while his wife Rumana Mahmud, son Abed Hasan Mahmud and daughter Sarah Hasan Mahmud are absconding.

A Dhaka court could not begin trial of the case against Moudud filed for possessing contraband liquids, as the jail authorities could not produce him before the court yesterday due to his illness.

Judge AKM Enamul Haq of the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set July 2 for next hearing of the case.

MAMUN CASE

After completion of recording statement of the IO of the arms case, Judge Mohammad Abul Bashar of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed July 1 for Mamun's testimony in connection with the illegal firearms and ammunitions.

The court recorded statements of 26 prosecution witnesses including the complainant and IO of the case.

Mamun was present at the court yesterday during the hearing of the case.

LOBICASE

Judge Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday fixed July 2 for hearing on charge framing against former BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi and his wife Khushnud Asgar in connection with a graft case.

The court also transferred the case to the Third Special Court set up at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostelfor its quick disposal.

PINTU CASE

Another Dhaka court could not frame charges against BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu for the fourth time yesterday, as the jail authorities did not produce him before the court in connection with an attempted murder case.

Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Abdus Salam Miah fixed July 25 for next hearing of the case.

Ctg mayor

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Other accused in the cases are former CCC secretary AFM Solaiman Chowdhury, noted drama personality Abdullah Al Mamun, General Secretary of Chittagong Bar Association Iftekar Samul Chowdhury, former leader of Shilpi Samonnoy Parishad Golam Mostafa Kanchan, Professor of the Sociology Department at Chittagong University Iftekar Uddin Chowdhury, former CCC chief executive officer Abdul Haque and former chairman of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Mahmudul Islam.

Sources said the city mayor, Iftekhari, Golam Mostafa and Abdullah Al Mamun have been implicated in the first case where the plaintiff alleged that the four had gobbled up an amount of Tk 44 lakh for making a documentary on Chittagong titled "Muktijuddheh Chittagang" during the Awami League rule.

The ACC official in his second case alleged that the city mayor, Prof Iftekhari, Solaiman Chowdhury (also the former establishment secretary), Abdul Hoque and Mahmudul embezzled an amount of Tk 41,25,718 for conducting a population census of the CCC when AL was in power.

The city mayor was arrested in March on charges of corruption and irregularities.

Deep depression over Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The monsoon depression over west central Bay and adjoining northwest Bay intensified into a deep depression.

It was centred at about 760-km southwest of Chittagong port, 715-km southwest of Cox's Bazar port and 590-km south-southwest of Mongla port yesterday evening, said a special bulletin of the Met Office.

It is likely to intensify further and move in a north or northwesterly direction. Maximum sustained wind speed within 48-km of the depression centre is about 50 kph rising to 60 kph in gust or squalls. Sea will remain rough.

Under its influence, steep pressure gradient persists over north Bay and squally weather may affect the ports and coastal districts, Met Office sources said.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay have been advised to remain in shelter until further notice.

Moderate to heavy rain may occur at many places in Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Sylhet, Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions.

The low-lying areas of the coastal districts of Noakhali, Laxmipur, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barisal, Chandpur, Barguna, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and their offshore inlands and chars are likely to be inundated by wind driven surge of 2-4 feet high above normal astronomical tide.

2 more forest officials suspended

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two more top forest officials were suspended yesterday.

The suspended officials -- Atique Azam, conservator of forest, Chittagong Circle, and Dr Tapan Kumar Dey, divisional forest officer (DFO) of Chittagong North region -- went into hiding since the joint forces started drive to arrest them on different charges.

The joint forces on Sunday and Monday raided the offices and residences of the two forest officials in city's Nandan Kanan and Sholoshohar area but could not arrest them.

The forces recovered Tk 12.96 lakh in cash from the office of DFO Tapan, also the project director of Dulahazra Safari Park in Cox's Bazar, during the drive.

250 Bangladeshi

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Among others, Force Commander of UNMIL Lt Gen Chikadibia Isaac Obiakor, Deputy Force Commander Maj Gen Mohammad Tahir and Acting Commissioner of UN Police Gen Maritz Du Toit were also present on the occasion.

Tigers

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Left-arm pacer Lasith Malinga and man-of-the-match Muttiah Muralidaran took only 4.4 overs to wrap up Bangladesh's second innings, which collapsed at 254.

Sri Lanka continued their domination over the Tigers by winning all eight Tests by big margins including five innings victories.

Having won nine out of their 11 previous Tests at the SSC since 2001, Sri Lanka's twelfth victory at this venue must have been one of the easier ones as first, Bangladesh meekly surrendered in the first innings at only 89 and then revisiting their batting ghost on the fourth day.

Bangladesh resumed the day on 233-5 with a hope to delay the inevitable and after all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan cracked a boundary off the very first ball of the day, it seemed almost possible.

But experienced wicketkeeper-batsman Khaled Mashud opened the floodgates in only the tenth ball of the day. Malinga's yorker swung into the big gap between his bat and pad to knock the middle stump as he was late in bringing the bat down. Mashud scored only one.

Then champion off-spinner Muralidaran came into action with a 'doosra' to trap Mashrafe Bin Mortaza leg before. Mashrafe struck two boundaries in his short innings of nine runs.

Young left-handed batsman Shakib then demonstrated how dangerous and wrong it is to flash at the ball away from body as Malinda Wamapura caught him at short-cover off Malinga, who also took the wicket of Mohammad Rafique to finish with figures of 4-80.

Muralidaran finished the job by having tail-ender Shahadat Hossain stumped by Prasanna Jayawardene as Bangladesh lost their final seven wickets for a meagre 27 runs.

Muralidaran, who is now 26 short of Australian legend Shane Warne's Test record of 708 wickets, returned with brilliant match figures of 9 for 102. He captured four wickets in the second innings.

The second Test starts at the P Saravanamuttu Stadium here on July 3.

Khaleda yet to receive

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hand it over to Khaleda Zia, sources said.

The leader went to Jahangir Gate of Dhaka Cantonment at around 8:00pm on June 25, but the army authorities did not allow him to go inside the cantonment area although he informed the on-duty official about the purpose of his visit.

A senior BNP leader seeking anonymity yesterday told this correspondent that Khaleda Zia told a party leader by phone on June 25 not to send her the copy of the reform proposal until and unless Mannan Bhuiyan comes to meet her.

"The man who prepared the reform proposal should himself come up with the papers...I will not accept the copy from the hand of anyone except him [Mannan Bhuiyan]," the leader quoted Khaleda Zia as saying.

Since June 25, Bhuiyan asked several junior leaders to reach the copy to Khaleda Zia, but none agreed to carry it fearing 'chastisement' by the party chief, BNP insiders said.

Party sources said Bhuiyan is likely to meet Khaleda Zia after making some additions to the reform proposals that will also cover the post of secretary general so that he cannot be blamed for the reform

proposal that is aimed at only excluding her.

Amid criticism in the rank and file of BNP as well as outside the party, Mannan Bhuiyan-led reformist group has made a move to bring reform concerning the post of secretary general.

In conformity with the proposal regarding the post of the chairperson, the new proposal will also spell out that the secretary general will be elected for three years and no one will be allowed to hold the post for more than two terms.

Emerging from a meeting, BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council member Maj Gen (ret'd) ZA Khan told the reporters yesterday that they had decided to hold the council session of the party for getting the reform proposals approved, but the date is yet to be finalised.

BNP has decided to take the opportunity announced by the government to allow holding council session for reforms, said Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, who also met Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday.

Holding the council will mean an end to dynastic politics in the party, he said.

21 killed in Baghdad

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communal bloodletting including car bombings.

Four members of a family, including three women, were killed on Thursday when several mortar rounds struck their home in Baghdad's Al-Fadhel neighbourhood, witness Mohammed Saad said.

"Another man was wounded, with his legs blown off," he told AFP. In the southern city of Basra, three British soldiers were killed and a fourth seriously wounded when a roadside bomb hit their foot patrol, military spokesman Major David Gell said.

"It is with deep regret that we can confirm that three soldiers were killed by an IED (improvised explosive device) this morning," Gell told AFP by telephone from Basra, adding that another soldier was seriously wounded. Iraq's second city is a battleground between rival Shiite factions, and the 5,500-strong British force deployed there often comes under attack.

"The device detonated at approximately 1:00 am (2100 GMT) as they were conducting a dismounted patrol after getting out of their Warrior armoured vehicle in the Al-Antahiyah district in southeast Basra," Gell said. The deaths brought the total number of British casualties in Iraq to 156, and came a day after Britain's new Prime Minister Gordon Brown pledged to "learn the lessons that need to be learned" from his country's interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The US military reported the death of one soldier in a similar roadside bomb in Baghdad, taking its losses to 76 in the month of June and 3,553 since the March 2003 invasion, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures. The Paris-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders said on Thursday that four more Iraqi journalists had been killed in the past three weeks.

One of the most recent victims was Rahim al-Maliki, a well-known poet who hosted cultural programmes on the state-run Iraqiya television network before he was killed in a Baghdad hotel bombing on Monday. Another veteran reporter, Hamid Abd Sarhan, 57, was ambushed and killed as he drove home on Wednesday in the southern Baghdad district of Al-Saidiyah, the organisation said, citing the Journalists Union.

A third journalist, Aref Ali Falihi, a correspondent for Aswat Al-Iraq (Voices of Iraq) was killed in a June 11 car bomb in the town of Khalis, northeast of the capital.

At least 187 journalists and media assistants have been killed since the start of the March 2003 US-led invasion. Two are missing and there has been no news of 14 others since they were kidnapped, according to the media watchdog. Insurgents have also continued to target the country's dwindling religious minorities. On Wednesday night two members of a Christian cultural society in Mosul were found dead in the city centre, according to local police.

Police later identified one of the men, Luay Suleiman, as a reporter for Nineveh al-Hurra, a local newspaper.

North Korean

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impoverished North Korea with an initial tranche of energy aid promised in a February disarmament agreement.

Under that deal, the communist country vowed to shut down the five-megawatt Yongbyon site under UN supervision in exchange for badly-needed energy and diplomatic concessions.

Olli Heinonen, head of the four-strong UN team that has been in North Korea since Tuesday, was quoted as saying in Pyongyang that "we are going to see the facilities and continue our discussion in more detail."

The team is expected to return to Pyongyang Friday, China's Xinhua agency quoted him as saying as he left for Yongbyon.

Officials from the two Koreas will meet Friday and Saturday on providing 50,000 tons of fuel oil at the North Korean border town of Kaesong, the South's unification ministry said.

Yongbyon, 95km north of Pyongyang, was ostensibly built to generate electricity but it is reportedly not connected to any power lines.

2002, has predicted it will shut down Yongbyon within three weeks. He hopes the plant could be "disabled" by the end of the year.

Meanwhile Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe demanded a tough international response to the North's latest missile tests on Wednesday.

"We must seek a severe response in the international community," Abe said. "North Korea must respond to the concerns of the international community."

Pentagon officials played down the launches as a routine military exercise that was not intended to be provocative, while South Korea's defence ministry said the launches were aimed at testing new ballistic missiles.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi spoke by telephone Thursday and were upbeat about the progress in the nuclear issue, Xinhua reported.

Japan and China are two of the six nations involved in talks on the North's nuclear drive. The others are the two Koreas, Russia and the United States.

Officials in Seoul and Washington expect full six-party talks to resume in July.

Russia's envoy