

Dhaka reviews decision on hilsa export to Delhi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is reconsidering its decision to export hilsa to India after Indian media reports indicated that New Delhi may suspend exporting rice to Bangladesh in retaliation.

This comes on the same day as the historic Dhaka-Kolkata train service had its first trial run, which the government called a 'symbolic reflection of improving relations between the two countries'.

"We have not received any information from the Indian government on the matter," said Foreign Secretary Tuhid Hossain at a press briefing yesterday.

He, however, said the commerce and fisheries ministries are reviewing the government ban on hilsa export to India.

Indian media reports during the past two days have said India may

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Biman corporatisation won't pay off if govt retains all shares

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The restructuring of Biman Bangladesh Airlines by turning it into a public limited company (PLC) would bring no positive changes if the government kept 100 percent shares of Biman in its hands, speakers at a roundtable yesterday said.

Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) and Media Foundation for Trade and Development jointly organised the roundtable titled "Restructuring Biman" at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

The speakers stressed the need for a "road map" with a clear-cut strategy on how the government would turn Biman into a PLC. They said during the rule of political governments Biman was destroyed in a planned way.

Speakers at the roundtable said Biman would have to offload its 100 percent shares in the market to make it a profitable organisation. They also demanded full autonomy of Biman.

Presided by the BEA President Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, the meeting was addressed by Managing Director (MD) of Biman MA Momen, BEA General Secretary Prof Abul Barkat, former

Bangladesh Bank governor Mohammad Farashuddin Ahmed, former finance secretary Matul Islam, Acting Secretary to the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry Sheikh Altaf Ali, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, FBCCI Director AKM Shahidul Haque and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Director Shajahan Khan.

Singling out corruption being the main reason for Biman's current bad shape, Biman MD Momen

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CA condemns attempt on Musharraf's life

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday condemned the assassination attempt on Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf.

"I have been deeply shocked at the news of the cowardly attempt on your life," he said in a message to the Pakistan president.

"The government and people of Bangladesh join me in condemning this dastardly act. We thank Almighty Allah for protecting you and pray that He grant you long life and good health to serve the cause of peace," he added.

The Pakistan president survived an apparent assassination attempt on Friday after his aircraft was fired on. His plane was shot at as it left the Chaklala military airbase in Rawalpindi, a garrison town outside the capital Islamabad.



Children of Viqarunnisa School in the capital learn about animals the fun way as Manimal, an organisation, holds an animal awareness programme yesterday.

Japanese firm wants to invest \$1b in energy, sugar

UNB, Dhaka

Japanese industrial giant Honda Denki Co Ltd has expressed its keen interest to invest 1 billion US dollars in Bangladesh's power, energy and sugar sectors.

The investment offer came when president of Japanese firm Shin-ichi Honda met Industries Adviser Geeteera Safiya Chowdhury at her ministry yesterday.

During the meeting, Shin-ichi said his company wants to invest in power generation and environment-friendly alternative energy bio-ethanol projects.

He said his firm is also interested to provide pure drinking water to the poor and finance housing projects.

Shin-ichi informed the adviser that the Japanese industrial giant is also keen to extend its cooperation

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Indian Additional Home Secretary AE Ahmed faces questions from journalists after he along with his delegation reached Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station yesterday onboard Maitree, a Dhaka-Kolkata train, on its dry run. Story on Page-1.

ATTACK ON UNO OFFICE Ministerial body visits Nachole

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A high-powered four-member ministerial committee last night went to Chapainawabganj from Dhaka to investigate the July 4 Nachole violence that left 10 persons including four government officials injured and government properties damaged.

The committee, headed by Anwar Faruk, director general of seed wing under agriculture ministry, is to start investigations today. Two joint secretaries from the same ministry and an additional divisional commissioner of Rajshahi are also on the committee.

Meanwhile, the three-member probe committee headed by

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Housewife killed after rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was killed allegedly after being raped by unidentified criminals in her residence at Uttara in the capital yesterday morning.

Police recovered the body of the victim, Nazmun Nahar Nila, 36, wife of Jahangir Alam, in the afternoon.

The victim's son, Niloy, a student of class six, found her mother lying unconscious on the floor of their flat at 1:30pm.

As Nila did not reply to Niloy's call, he informed his aunt about the matter over cellphone. Neighbours thronged the spot and found her dead. They informed the police immediately.

The family members told the police that Nila was alone during the incident as her two sons left for school at 8:00am while her husband stays in Gazipur and visits home twice a week.

Police said primary probe suggests that some known person aided by more people have committed the crime.

Police suspect the housewife was killed after being raped as scratches were found on her neck and nothing was taken away from the house.

BNP leaders divided over council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP leaders are now divided over the holding of the party council amid the state of emergency as a group wants a 'transparent' council with the presence of the party chairperson Khaleda Zia while the other group wants an early council even if the chairperson does not approve.

Leaders of both the groups are trying to woo the field level leaders' support and party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who are now at loggerheads over reforms in the party, talked to many district and upazila level leaders.

An effective council is not possible without lifting of the ban on indoor politics, said BNP Joint Secretary General Selima Rahman, who is known to be 'close to' the party chairperson.

They want to hold the council with the participation of both the chairperson and the secretary general, she added.

"I told the secretary general that we want a representative council which should be transparent and accountable," Selima Rahman, also a former state minister, told the reporters after a meeting with Mannan Bhuiyan at his Gulshan residence.

Party Vice-president Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, on the other hand, said, "The secretary general has taken all the steps to hold the council according to the party constitution."

The state of emergency is not a problem for bringing reforms in the party through holding the party council, he added.

Besides former lawmakers and party leaders from Barisal Division,

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Sigma shown held in extortion cases; Pintu denied bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained Sigma Huda was shown arrested in two extortion cases yesterday while a Dhaka court rejected bail petition of former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu in connection with a murder case.

Paltan police sought a seven-day remand to interrogate former BRTC chairman Toymur Alam Khondaker in connection with a cheating case while detained former state minister Amanullah Aman and his wife Sabera Aman were shown arrested in an extortion case.

Proceedings of an arms case against former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar were adjourned yesterday, as the jail authorities could not produce him due to his illness.

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ACC chief holds meetings with CJ, law secretary

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman yesterday had separate meetings with the chief justice, the attorney general and the law secretary, and reportedly discussed the constitution of separate benches to dispose of the graft cases at the high court.

ACC Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury met separately with Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin and Attorney General Barrister Fida M Kamal at their offices while Law Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal came to the ACC office to have a meeting with the ACC chairman.

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ATTACK ON UK ENVOY Cases might be shifted to special tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is taking initiatives to hold the trials of cases filed in connection with the grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury in a special tribunal for their quick disposal.

"Police will be asked to appeal to the authorities concerned seeking trial of the cases in a special tribunal for their quick disposal," a home ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday.

The decision was made at a meeting of the monitoring cell of the home ministry. Secretary to the

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Pak mosque raid looms amid al-Qaeda links

Militants kill commando

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani troops yesterday moved closer to a full-scale raid on Islamabad's Red Mosque, amid fears that al-Qaeda insurgents holed up inside the fortified compound may start killing women and children.

Government forces tightened the noose on day six of the siege of the Red Mosque, after a top commando died in an operation to blast through the wall around the complex and allow the alleged "human shields" to escape.

Officials said some foreign rebels were barricaded in the building, along with Pakistani militants from a group linked to the beheading of US journalist Daniel Pearl and attempts to kill President Pervez Musharraf.

Religious Affairs Minister Ijaz-ul

Haq said the government believed the mosque's firebrand deputy leader, Abdul Rashid Ghazi, had effectively been deposed by the extremists.

"The hardcore militants are in control of the mosque," Haq told AFP. "Our fear is that they may start killing the women and children to press for their demand for safe passage."

Haq said that one or two militants from Uzbekistan were among those believed to be in the mosque.

Uzbeks, Arabs and Chechens formed the backbone of an al-Qaeda force that fled into Pakistan's troubled tribal areas after the US-led invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

Military ruler Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz spoke

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Prayer Timing		
July 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

7 new wonders of the world chosen

AP, Lisbon, Portugal

The Great Wall of China, Rome's Colosseum, India's Taj Mahal and three architectural marvels from Latin America were among the new seven wonders of the world chosen in a global poll released on Saturday.

Jordan's Petra was the seventh winner. Peru's Machu Picchu, Brazil's Statue of Christ Redeemer and Mexico's Chichen Itza pyramid also made the cut.

About 100 million votes were cast by the Internet and cellphone text messages, said New7Wonders, the non-profit organisation that conducted the poll.

The seven beat out 14 other nominated landmarks, including the Eiffel Tower, Easter Island in the Pacific, the Statue of Liberty, the Acropolis, Russia's Kremlin and Australia's Sydney Opera House.

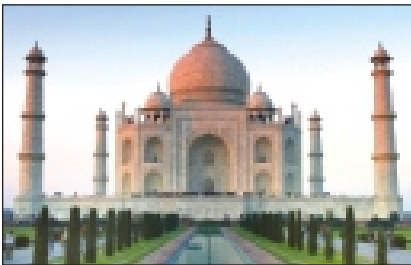
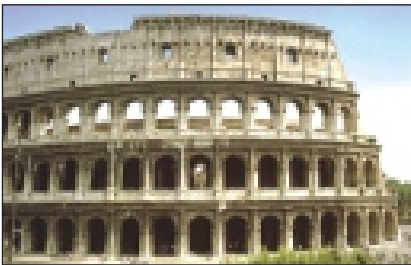
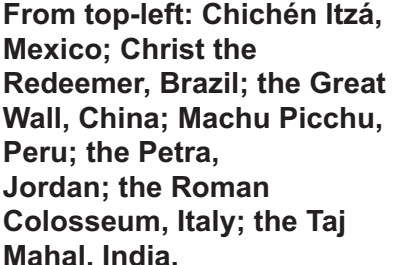
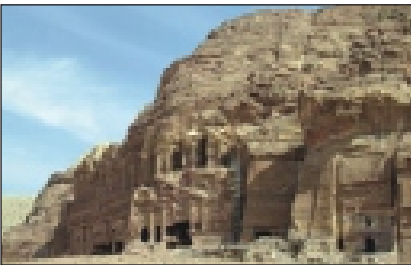
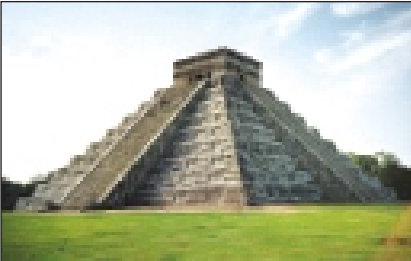
The pyramids of Giza, the only surviving structures from the original seven wonders of the ancient world, were assured of retaining their status in addition to the new seven after indignant Egyptian officials said it was a disgrace they had to compete.

THE NEW WONDERS

The Great Wall of China is the longest human-made structure--6,400 kilometres in length--was built, rebuilt and maintained between the 5th century BC and the 16th century to protect the northern borders of the Chinese Empire.

Taj Mahal is the famous mausoleum in the northern Indian city of Agra commissioned by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a sign of his love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Its construction

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From top-left: Chichén Itzá, Mexico; Christ the Redeemer, Brazil; the Great Wall, China; Machu Picchu, Peru; the Petra, Jordan; the Roman Colosseum, Italy; the Taj Mahal, India.