

Security, border issues to feature in Indo-Bangla secy level talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India will be looking into expanding security cooperation and resolving the outstanding land and border issues during the annual home secretary-level meeting beginning in New Delhi today.

The Bangladesh delegation comprising Home Secretary Md Abdul Karim, Bangladesh Rifles director general, director general for South Asia at the foreign ministry, and Additional Inspector General of Police, among others, left Dhaka yesterday for the 8th version of the talks.

Both sides are also likely to take advantage of recent friendliness between Dhaka and New Delhi to re-energise deals on joint-border patrolling and border demarcation issues.

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WB wants power price hike, Agrani sale for \$1.6b loans

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank (WB) has set a number of conditions, including hike in power price, sale of Agrani Bank and mandatory wealth statement submission by the civil servants for the bank's next round of supports to Bangladesh.

In addition, the Bretton Woods institution has made a commitment to provide \$1.6 billion loans in current fiscal year.

At a city hotel last week, the WB people met high officials of the government to discuss broadly on the proposed loans and conditions.

The bank is likely to grant \$400 million as budgetary support, of which \$200 million will be given as develop-

ment support credit (DSC), \$100 million as power sector support credit and the rest as education sector support credit.

Around \$500 million, which was last fiscal year's commitment, will be given in the current fiscal for water, roads and highways, public procurement cell reforms and avian flu control programmes.

"World Bank is interested to provide another \$600 million loans for new development projects," a source said.

The government will have to fulfil a number of conditions, mostly reforms in sectors like banking, revenue and energy, as well as in civil administration to get budgetary support credits from

the institutions.

"We have got World Bank proposals for supports in different sectors and discussion has already begun on their proposals (conditions)," an official of the finance ministry said. "We are hopeful to finalise the issues by next month," he added.

For improved quality of public administration, the Bretton Woods institution proposed the government ensure that the civil servants comply fully with the recently introduced legal requirement of mandatory submission of income tax returns and statements of

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Moeen urges all to help flood-hit people

Cancels India, Pakistan visit

STAR REPORT

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday urged all to help the flood-affected people in combating the natural disaster.

"Flood is a national crisis and it is impossible for the army or the government alone to fight it. So, every able person should come forward to help the flood-affected people," said the Army Chief yesterday while addressing a gathering at a flood-affected area in Netrokona.

The army chief witnessed the prevailing situation in the flood-affected areas of the district travelling by a helicopter. Later, he distributed relief items among the

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Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed visiting town protection embankment in Kurigram yesterday. Food and Disaster Management Adviser Tapan Chowdury and Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Lt General Masududdin Chowdury are also seen.



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Surging floodwaters washed away part of a road at Raipur in Sirajganj submerging fresh areas in the district yesterday.

Two UGC members quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two of the three defiant members of University Grants Commission (UGC) resigned yesterday following the pressure of the Education Ministry. The remaining member may resign today, sources at the ministry and UGC said yesterday.

The three UGC members, Prof M Mahbub Ullah, Prof Sultan Hossain and Prof Tareque Shamsur Rahman, met with Education Adviser Ayub Quadri yesterday and decided to resign.

Prof Mahbub Ullah and Prof Sultan sent their resignation letters

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Prayer Timing		
August 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-47	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Bombings kill 69 in Baghdad

AFF, Baghdad

Three large bombs tore through crowded Baghdad districts on yesterday, killing at least 69 people, as government figures revealed Iraq's civilian death toll jumped by more than one third in July.

In the largest blast, a truck bomb detonated near a filling station in west Baghdad, setting fire to a huge fuel tank and killing at least 50 people and wounding at least 60 more, according to security officials.

A US military spokeswoman said that Iraqi and American soldiers were at the scene and that initial reports were that a 7,000 gallon (26,500 litre) fuel tank had exploded. She could not confirm the death toll.

Hours earlier a car bomb ripped through a busy Baghdad shopping district, killing at least 16 Iraqis and

wounding 14, according to Brigadier General Qassim Atta, an Iraqi army spokesman for Baghdad security operations.

The blast erupted near the Karrada Harij electronics market at a cross-roads known for the popular Al-Fiqma ice cream store, sending a dull boom echoing across the city and sending a plume of smoke skywards.

Iraqi forces sealed off the area, as residents and ambulances ferried the dead and dying to city hospitals.

Ten of the bodies were taken to Ibn Nafees hospital following the explosion and 25 people, including women, were wounded, a hospital official said.

There was no word on who might have planted the bomb, but the area is known as a stronghold of supporters of Shiite leader Abdel

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Huda, Sigma shown held in extortion case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda were yesterday shown arrested in an extortion case while a graft against Huda was transferred to a special court for quick disposal.

Besides, former general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Iqbalur Rahman was placed on a two-day remand in connection with a case filed for extorting Tk 75 lakh from a businessman in August 2001.

The 11 tax evasion cases filed against former minister Shahjahan Siraj, his wife Rabeya Haider and son Rajib Siraj were sent to a special court for quick disposal.

IQBAL CASE

Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza passed the order after Shahbagh police produced Iqbal before the court at 4.00 pm with a

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Musharraf now wants 'harmony' with CJ

AFF, Islamabad

President Pervez Musharraf has said he wants "harmonious ties" with Pakistan's chief justice, whose suspension by the military ruler was overturned earlier this month in a major political blow.

Musharraf said he accepted a July 20 Supreme Court verdict that reinstated top judge Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. Chaudhry's fightback against his March ouster turned him into an icon of opposition to the embattled president.

In his first public comments on the case, Musharraf said he had personal relations with Chaudhry dating from before the judicial crisis erupted in

March.

"We had family ties and hope to maintain same harmonious ties in future," the official Associated Press of Pakistan quoted Musharraf as telling a ceremony late Tuesday at the offices of state-run Pakistan Television.

"I accept the judgement of the judiciary and honour it," the president said.

But in an apparent swipe at Chaudhry's high-profile campaign to win back his job, Musharraf said that "personal egos" should not be involved in national matters and that the judiciary should not be politicised.

Chaudhry's supporters say Musharraf tried to oust the independ-

ent-minded judge because he wanted a pliant judiciary that would allow him to defy the constitution and stay on as president-in-uniform past the end of 2007.

General elections are also due in Pakistan by early 2008.

Analysts have said that Chaudhry's reinstatement could open the floodgates for legal challenges against Musharraf's dual position as army chief and president, and also against alleged electoral irregularities.

In the first such case, the Supreme Court said on Monday

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Khaleda urges all to stand by flood victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the countrymen, regardless of their political ideology, to come forward and help the flood-affected people through the natural calamity.

The former prime minister also asked her party men as well as the wealthy people to extend their support to the destitute people.

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FERTILISER CRISIS
2 teachers jailed over protest

UNB, Naogaon

Two teachers of Damurhat upazila were sentenced to different jail terms Tuesday in a case filed on charge of violating Emergency Power Rules by trying to stage a 'drama' on fertiliser crisis in March this year.

Court sources said madrasa teacher ANMA Afzal Hossain was sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk 10,000, in default, to suffer six months

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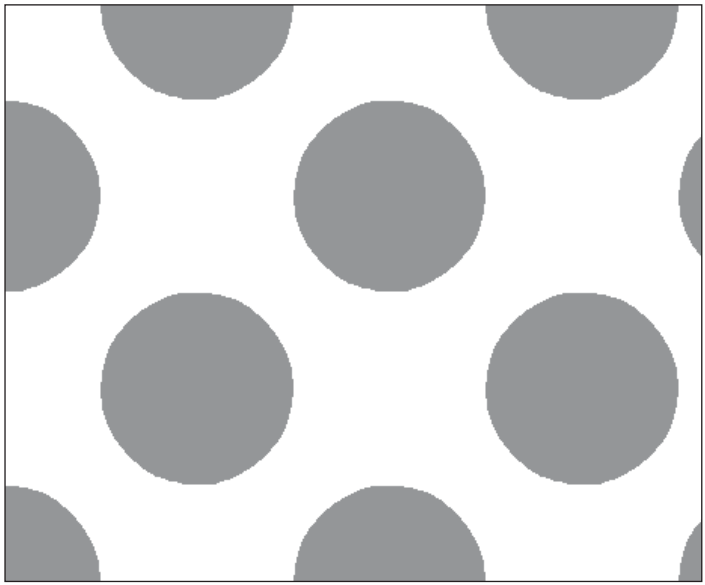
3 speedboats of Manju seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police seized three speedboats of the former communications minister Anwar Hossain Manju from Buriganga in Narayanganj yesterday.

Fatullah police seized the speedboats from the BIWTA's VIP jetty Mary Anderson at Pagla at noon as per directives of the anti-graft taskforce.

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Jobless, they look to future in tears

EMRAN HOSSAIN, from Khulna

Abdul Hakim burst into tears leaning his head against the huge gate of 53-year-old Peoples Jute Mills Ltd after he came to know on Tuesday night that the mill was closed forever.

About 200 others gathered in front of the mill's main entrance as a closure notice was hung on the factory notice board at 10:27pm. They cried, screamed, sobbed and blamed the people who did 'injustice' to them. Several elderly people were seen standing in silence with a bewildered

look.

The crowd got excited as two vehicles carrying the joint forces left past the mill.

Rapid Action Battalion had already taken position near the closed factory.

At one stage, the crowd became vocal and chanted slogans demanding payment of their dues including salary and other benefits.

The closure notice did not say anything about if or when the labourers would get their outstanding dues.

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PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court on Manik Mian Avenue in the capital fines drivers of CNG-run three-wheelers for charging fares higher than the government-fixed rates yesterday.