

DFID, Scotland Yard to help fight graft

Says ACC chief

UNB, Dhaka

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Scotland Yard would extend cooperation in the anti-corruption drive in Bangladesh.

They will provide information about Bangladeshis who siphoned off money and amassed wealth in the UK if specific information could be given. Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury said yesterday.

"I have visited the offices of the Scotland Yard and DFID to utilise the new prospect of cooperation between them and us. If we can give them information, they will assist us," he told reporters about

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

DU demands division for detained teachers

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday requested the government to provide division to its detained teachers.

DU Syndicate members led by Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz made the appeal yesterday at a meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office.

They also requested the chief adviser to show flexible attitude towards the three detained teachers and charge-sheeted DU students, accused of instigating violence on the DU campus, Prof Faiz told the journalists at his office after the meeting.

He said the CA assured them of all necessary assistance to reopen the university.

DU Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider and Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad, among others, accompanied him.

Army Chief of Staff General Moeen U Ahmed, Education Adviser Ayub Quadri and other government high-ups were also present.

They discussed the overall situation of the university which

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Flood situation improving

STAR REPORT

Overall flood situation of the country is improving, as the monsoon is less active at home as well as in neighbouring India, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said.

The FFWC bulletin said two major rivers, the Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Ganges-Padma, are receding. Those rivers will continue to fall during next 24-72 hours improving the flood situation of Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur, Tangail, Rajbari, Faridpur, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Gopalganj, Chandpur and in some places of Dhaka district.

However, our correspondents reported the flood situation remains unchanged in some regions.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports: The flood situation is yet to show any sign of improvement in Sylhet-Sunamganj region although there have been less rainfall during the last three days.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Get Prayer times from Warid Menu

Iftaar Sehri

6.04 PM 4.26 AM

WARID

Sehri, Iftar timing			
Ramadan	Sep	Sehri	Iftar
4	17		6-04
5	18	4-26	6-03
5	19	4-26	6-02

Prayer Timing		
September 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-26	4-36
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-04	6-19
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

87 killed in Thai plane crash

AFP, Bangkok

A Thai passenger plane crashed and burst into flames as it landed in driving rain on the resort island of Phuket, killing 87 people including foreigners, officials said.

A senior civil aviation official said the pilot of the MD-82, operated by budget carrier One-Two-Go and carrying 123 passengers and seven crew, had received permission to abort the landing at the last minute.

Instead the plane smashed onto the runway, careered into an embankment and broke in two, witnesses and officials reported.

Marine Keisel, from Paris, was

aboard a plane behind the one that crashed and saw the accident happen.

"When the plane landed it caught fire," she told AFP at Phuket airport. "We could see the fire coming out of it. It was chaos inside my plane."

Television images showed the blackened, smouldering jet lying on grass off the runway by a fence and close to trees. Officials and rescuers could be seen carrying bodies covered with blankets from the wreckage in the pouring rain.

Health Minister Mongkol Na Songkhla said in a statement that 87 people had died and 43 survived, accounting for all those on

board. Initial reports had put the total on board at 128.

Officials believe 15 survivors were Thai and 28 were foreign but were still verifying the identities of the dead and injured.

"Some victims died of fire, some were thrown out of the airplane," deputy provincial governor Vorapot Ratsima told AFP.

"There are bodies piled up inside the smouldering wreckage," Vorapot told Channel 11 television earlier. "What we have to do is to identify and return dead bodies to their relatives."

Deputy transport minister Sansern Wongcha-um earlier said

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Gastright due tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, John Gastright Jr, will arrive tomorrow on a two-day visit to Bangladesh.

He will be the first senior US official to visit Bangladesh since the present military-backed caretaker government assumed power in January. His visit was officially confirmed by US authorities yesterday.

During the visit, he will hold discussions with senior government officials and members of civil society on bilateral issues.

The focal point of his meetings with the chief adviser and government high-ups will be the progress of the roadmap for holding the parliamentary elections by the end of 2008.

A number of high-profile US officials including the secretary of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BB asked to check rising loan defaults

Owners of many companies on the run amid anti-graft drive

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bank chiefs yesterday sought the central bank's intervention in the phenomenon of sharply rising numbers of loan defaults as a many leading businesses are struggling to repay debts since their owners are either detained or on the run from the ongoing anti-corruption drive.

The intervention was sought by the chief executive officers (CEOs) of commercial banks who met Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Salehuddin Ahmed to express their concerns at the rising numbers of loan defaults.

The bankers told the BB that the owners of some large business

groups, who are detained or absconding from the government's ongoing anti-crime and anti-corruption crackdown, are not being able to repay their loans as they are not being able to operate their bank accounts.

Some bankers fear that if the current trend continues, by December the amount of loan defaults by the companies with detained or fugitive owners will stand at Tk 500 crore to Tk 600 crore at the least.

After the meeting, the governor told the media that he advised the banks to deal with the problem by ensuring that those profit-making enterprises are kept afloat through the strength of their 'bank-client

relationships'.

Bank sources said the finance ministry is likely to release a guideline on how the banks should deal with the troubled companies, after the central bank had already sent a letter to the ministry regarding the matter.

The guideline is likely to be sent within a day or two to the BB, which will then circulate it among all commercial banks.

But the BB also told the banks that they should consult with lawyers to refer particular cases and problems to the central bank, as well as to exercise their own judgement in dealing with individual cases.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

DELHI OPENS MARKET PARTLY Duty-free garment export deal signed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) yesterday on procedural arrangements for duty-free entry of eight million pieces of Bangladeshi apparels into India annually.

Abdul Wahab Mian, joint secretary to the commerce ministry, and Mukta D Tomar, Indian deputy high commissioner in Dhaka, signed the MoU on their countries' behalf in Dhaka.

Feroz Ahmed, secretary to the commerce ministry and Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, were present during the signing.

After the signing Chakravarty said India recognises the need for addressing the trade imbalance between the two countries and both sides are looking at ways and means to bridge the gap.

He said signing of the MoU reiterated India's commitment to provide better market access for products from Bangladesh.

Mentioning the improving trend of Bangladesh-India trade relation, he said trade between the countries

is growing fast and went beyond \$2.5 billion this year, the number was \$2.1 billion in the previous year with a growth of 21 percent.

He said exports of goods to India from Bangladesh have gone up 480 percent in the last five years, whereas Bangladesh's global exports have gone up only 104 percent during the same period.

Feroz Ahmed said the signing of the agreement would open a new market for readymade garment producers.

"The agreement will help pave the way for reducing trade deficit between the two friendly neighbouring countries," Feroz Ahmed said.

The Indian high commissioner said it would take less than one month for the new agreement to come into effect.

Government high officials, trade body representatives were also present on the occasion.

Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath in 2005 promised Bangladesh that his country would allow duty-free entry of eight

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

3 pirates killed in shootout with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Three pirates were killed and seven including two policemen were hurt in a shootout with police at Charvaranga on the Jamuna River under Manikganj district on Saturday night.

Police arrested five pirates and recovered five pipe guns, a revolver, nine live cartridges, seven live bullets, three sharp weapons, three mobile sets and the pirates' engine boat.

The dead are Khalek Fakir, 30, of Rajdhoria village under Bera upazila of Pabna, and Suman, 28, and Mannan, 32, both hailed from Rajbari.

The injured policemen are sub-inspectors Mazhar and Belal.

The four of the five arrested pirates were identified as Hontej Mondal, 30, of Dobir Char village under Bera upazila in Pabna, Masud Rana, 27, of Kabilpur village, Yasin Gazi, 32, of Nawdubi village and Afjal Sikdar, 22, of Dhawabera village under sadar upazila in Rajbari.

Police suspected them to be members of Purbha Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

On information, a police team of Daulatpur Police Station reached Charvaranga at around 11:30pm where a gang of 18 to 20 pirates was preparing for dacoity with huge firearms and ammunition, according to

Police

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Property of former MP Salimul to be attached

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered attachment of moveable and immovable properties of former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haq and Nazneen Banu, wife of detained former power secretary ANH Akhter Hossain, in connection with graft cases.

The same court issued arrest warrants against wife and son of detained former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed and wife of former additional inspector general of police Shahidullah Khan after National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed three tax evasion cases.

It also ordered further investigation into a money laundering case

filed against detained former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas.

SALIMUL CASE

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court issued the order to attach Salimul's properties as he failed to comply with the court order for appearing before it.

Earlier on September 11, the same court had issued arrest warrant against him following a plea submitted by the investigation officer (IO) in a Tk 1 crore bribery case.

On September 9, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Assistant Director Ashrafur Islam, also the IO of the case, submitted

the charge sheet against detained former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed and Salimul Haq to the court of Dhaka's chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM).

The ACC filed the case on May 29 alleging that they took Tk 1 crore in bribe from Mir Zahir Hossain, owner of a construction firm, in exchange for winning a work order for his business.

Salimul, also chairman of Econo Ball Pen Industries Limited, has been hiding since the case was filed.

AKHTER'S WIFE CASE

The court issued the order to attach Nazneen's properties following a

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Rawshan places 13-pt reform proposal to party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acting Chairperson of Jatiya Party (JP) Rawshan Ershad yesterday said she placed a 13-point reform proposal in the party aiming to make the party more democratic, pro-people and to turn it into the largest political party of the country.

She said the reforms proposal aims at curtailing the absolute power of a few leaders in the party and establish collective leadership within the party ensuring accountability and democracy.

Rawshan said this while talking to Jatiya Krishak Party, a front organisation of JP, leaders who met her at her home in the city. President of Jatiya Krishak Party led

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Writ petition to prevent govt from signing deal with IMF

UNB, Dhaka

A public interest litigation (PIL) writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday seeking a directive preventing the government from continuing negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for signing a Policy Support Instrument agreement.

The PIL writ petition also sought a directive to restrain the government from signing an agreement with the IMF engaging private company to operate the New Mooring Container Terminal in Chittagong Port.

The PIL writ, filed by M Mesbahul Islam, an advocate of the High Court, is likely to come up for hearing today, court sources said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A group of visually-challenged beggars hang out in front of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the capital yesterday. They said people do not help out as much as they expect and their problems have intensified with the price hike of essentials.

LDP leaders won't join BNP now

Says Maj Mannan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury-led Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) would not join any faction of BNP at the moment as they found BNP a 'sinking' party.

"At present BNP is just sinking...so it would not be rational to join them at this moment," LDP Secretary General Maj (retd) MA Mannan told reporters after the party's presidium meeting held at its media office at Baridhara in the capital.

"It will not be a wise decision to rescue a sinking party like BNP," Mannan said.

Asked about B Chowdhury's return to BNP the LDP secretary general said, "We could not take any decision about this in the meeting."

The LDP presidium members would sit again today to discuss different issues including the much-talked-about issue of B Chowdhury's possible return to BNP.

The LDP secretary general said, "Both the factions of BNP sought support of our party president B Chowdhury. But the fact is that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

LANDSLIDE Rail links with Ctg, Sylhet snapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rail communication on Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Chittagong routes remained snapped since Saturday night after a Dhaka-bound train derailed due to landslide at Satgaon in Srimangal.

However, there was no report of any casualty. Several trains remained stuck as railway authorities postponed their scheduled departure.

Sources said the incident occurred at about 11:30pm on Saturday night when Dhaka-bound Surma Mail reached a hilly place between Satgaon and Rashidpur railway station. The engine and two compartments of the train derailed in the hilly area where earth was piled up on the rail tracks due to landslide wrought by downpour.

Three rescue teams from Akhaura, Kulaura and Dhaka were conducting salvage operation since 3:00am to restore rail communication. Although the two derailed compartments were

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Rejoinder

Independent researcher and consultant Khurshid Alam in a rejoinder to a story headlined "Experts allay fear of devastating tsunami" published in The Daily Star on September 16 said the report had quoted him incorrectly.

Khurshid said during the roundtable, he never said that "the government should immediately explain why tsunami warning on September 12 came late" -- as appeared on The Daily Star.

"Rather, I emphasized on issuing a statement to the public explaining why tsunami did not occur in Bangladesh so that credibility and reliability of the warning retain, which is absolutely important for any warning system," he explained in the rejoinder.