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CID says no bullet marks on Hasina's Mercedes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has said that they found no bullet mark on the bullet-proof window glasses of Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina's Mercedes Benz, which was badly damaged in the grenade attack on an AL rally in 2004.

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Tigers leave for New Zealand

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team left Dhaka yesterday for New Zealand on their first assignment under new coach Jamie Siddons, knowing they will miss this month's Victory Day and Eidul Azha celebrations.

The Tigers, who played only two Test matches in their first tour to New Zealand in 2001, will this time play three one-day internationals and two Tests besides some warm-up games and an exhibition Twenty20 match to raise funds for the victims of Cyclone Sidr.

The team will go into the new calendar year soon after completion of the one-day series as the final match is scheduled for December 31, followed by games on December 26 and 28.

The first Test will start on

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Prayer Timing		
December 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

RUPALI SALE OFF

Legal notice served on Saudi prince for \$458m

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

The Privatisation Commission served a legal notice to the Saudi prince on Tuesday, asking him to deposit \$458 million within December 26 as per the commission's tender participation rules for taking over Rupali Bank.

The notice signed by Barrister Tofaelur Rahman said according to the commission's rules, the highest bidder must deposit the amount offered within the stipulated timeframe, otherwise the commis-

sion will take action against them.

Upon getting prior approval from the government high-ups, the Privatisation Commission sent the legal notice attached to a letter to Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al-Saud through the Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh.

The notice said, "The Privatisation Commission will take unilateral decision to discontinue the sale process with the prince if he fails to deposit the entire amount within the deadline."

After December 26, the prince will be liable to forfeit \$100,000 in security money paid to the Privatisation Commission, it said.

Earlier, the commission termed the Saudi prince's latest lowered offer for acquiring Rupali Bank a "breach of international norms" and took advice from the chief adviser and the finance adviser regarding the matter.

On Sunday it emerged that Prince Bandar is proposing a lower amount than he was earlier willing

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Hasina claims innocence in Niko case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she did not cause any loss to the state by awarding a gas deal to Canadian gas exploration company Niko.

Through her lawyer the former premier said she did not abuse power in awarding the deal, and claimed that the deal rather benefited the country.

Hasina said foreign investment might stop if the government files such "false" cases against foreign companies like Niko.

Hasina's lawyer Advocate Qamrul Islam conveyed her reaction to reporters after meeting her

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RANGS BUILDING

Rescue act stopped on security ground

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rescue operation at Rangs Bhaban, which had resumed yesterday five days into the cave-in of the building, was stopped on safety grounds 10 minutes after the operation had started.

Engineers from the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) stopped the rescue work by the firefighters, saying the supporting structures built inside the collapsed building for conducting rescue operation were not fit.

At around 4:10pm, the firefighters attempted to recover the hanging bodies trapped on the sixth floor before the experts asked them to stop, witnesses said.

The Rajuk hired four private firms to construct supporting structures with steel bars for carrying out a risk-free rescue operation.

Dr Syed Istiaq Ahmed, associate professor of Civil Engineering Department of the Buet, told The Daily Star, "At this moment, it is risky to continue the rescue operation as the construction of the protection structure was

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Congress passes bill for Sidr help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US Congress on Tuesday passed a bill unanimously requesting the US Government to provide support to the people affected by the Cyclone Sidr in the southwest Bangladesh on November 15.

Congressman Steven Rothman of New Jersey introduced the bill supported by 29 other Congressmen where the casualties as well as economic and environmental damage caused by the cyclone were highlighted elaborately.

The bill also drew attention to the massive devastation of the Sundarbans, death of a Royal Bengal Tiger and other wildlife due to Sidr, which was the most violent

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Car bombings kill 33 in south Iraq

British army to hand over Basra to Iraqi forces Dec 16

AFP, Amara, Iraq

Four car bombs killed at least 33 people in Iraq yesterday, including 28 in the southern city of Amara, as Baghdad said it would retake control of Basra province from British forces on December 16.

Triple car bombs in Amara killed at least 28 people and wounded another 151, 10 of them children, said Zamil Shia'a al-Oreibi, director general of Amara health department.

Amara police Lieutenant Ali Kadhim Hassan said the bombs

exploded within minutes of each other, the first going off at 10:30 am (0730 GMT).

Hundreds of relatives rushed to hospitals to seek their loved ones as police announced a 24-hour curfew in Amara, an AFP correspondent reported.

"The security personnel must carefully check all the cars in the city, especially those entering the city," said Ali Hussein, 35, whose 11-year-old brother was wounded in the attack and was in Amara's Al-Zahravi hospital.

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