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Protecting poor from high food prices biggest challenge: IMF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday said protecting the poor people from the impact of high prices of food, essential commodities and fuel remains the biggest challenge for Bangladesh.

Addressing a press conference

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SABBIR MURDER CASE ACC arrests ED of East West Dev Ltd

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) taskforce last night arrested Mohammad Abu Sufian, executive director of East West Development Ltd, a concern of Bashundhara Group, in connection with the Sabbir murder case.

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UN reveals battle plan today to tackle global food crisis

AFP, Geneva

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was set today to lead a concerted effort by 27 key UN agencies to tackle the growing crisis caused by a worldwide sharp rise in basic foodstuff prices.

The UN was scheduled at a two-day conference in the Swiss capital Bern to reveal a battle plan of emergency measures, while exploring other longer-term measures to solve the world's food crisis.

This will involve adjudicating between advocates of protectionism and those who favour opening up markets, as well as between supporters of biofuels and opponents thereof.

Rising populations, strong demand from developing countries, increased cultivation of crops

for biofuels and increasing floods and droughts have sent food prices soaring across the globe.

"The world food crisis and the solutions that the United Nations can provide will be at the centre of discussions," said the UN. The talks hosted by Ban will take place behind closed doors at the Universal Postal Union headquarters in Bern, lasting all day Monday and Tuesday morning.

Results of the deliberations are expected Tuesday when Ban Ki-moon gives a press conference flanked by Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the UN's World Food Programme, World Bank President Robert Zoellick, Jacques Diouf, head of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and Lennart Bage, President of the International Fund for

Agriculture Development.

The FAO has warned that sharp rises in cereal prices have left 37 poor countries in an emergency situation sparking food riots.

Ban Ki-moon called in Vienna on Friday for immediate concerted action to resolve the global food crisis.

"In the short term, we must address all the humanitarian crises which have been impacting poorest of poor people in the world," he said.

The World Food Programme had made an urgent appeal for additional 755 million dollars (485 million euros) to fill the gap.

But in the medium to longer term, "the international community and its leaders in particular should sit down together on an

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None can forgive war criminals

Ex-diplomats tell sector commanders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of former diplomats yesterday expressed support for the movement of Sector Commanders Forum, saying that none can forgive war criminals and trial of war crimes could be

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105kg unidentified drugs, forex worth Tk 32 lakh seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at Zia International Airport (ZIA) early yesterday seized 105 kilograms of drugs contained in five bags.

Police and officials of the customs department, and the Directorate of Narcotics Control (DNC), however, said they were not

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Karzai escapes deadly parade attack

MP among 3 killed, Taliban claim responsibility

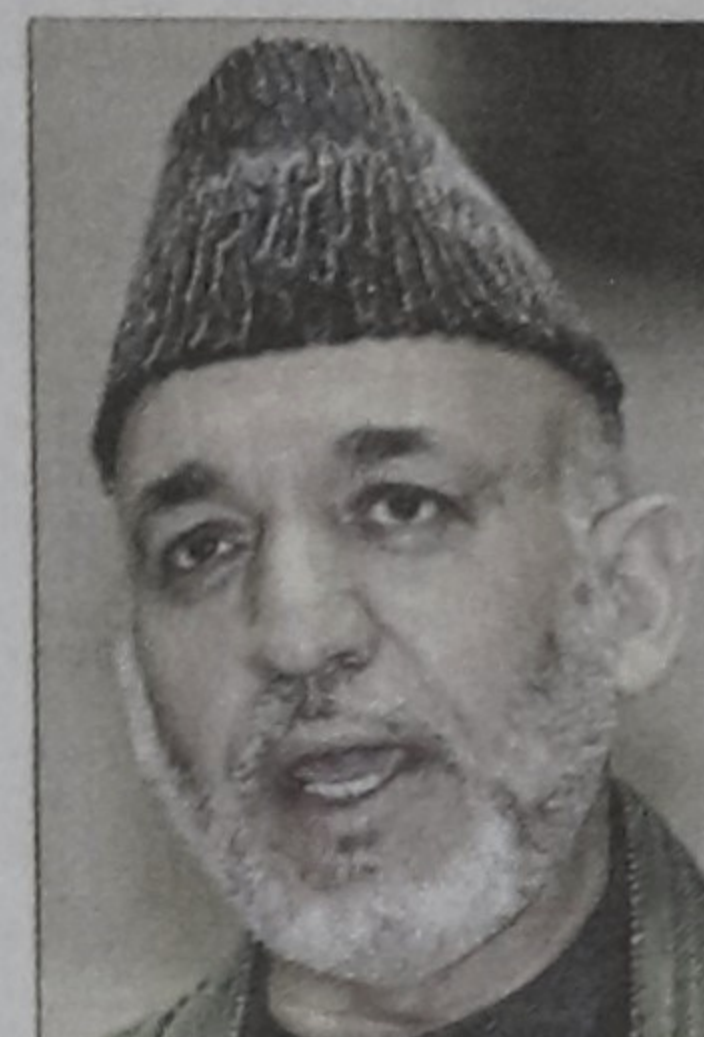
AFP, Kabul

Afghan President Hamid Karzai escaped unharmed yesterday after militants attacked a high-profile military parade with rockets and gunfire, killing three people including an MP and wounding a dozen.

The extremist Taliban movement claimed responsibility for the daring attack, denying however that it was an assassination attempt on Karzai.

Bullets struck into the back of a stage where the president and Afghan leaders, including the most senior international representatives here, were seated to review the country's most important annual military parade.

There were also several large explosions, with one -- likely from a rocket-propelled grenade -- landing just in front of the platform, Health Minister Mohammad Amin Fatimie told AFP.



Bodyguards sprang to cover the president and then whisked him away as other dignitaries fell to the floor or fled, said Fatimie, who was just metres away from Karzai.

The health minister later told AFP that an MP, Fazl-Ul Rahman Samkanai, suffered severe bullet wounds to his stomach and liver and died on the operating table.

The roughly 3,000 police and troops preparing for the parade broke from their formations and fled as security guards stationed across the area returned fire.

The leader of a minority tribe who had been sitting on the stage was killed in the attack in which the gunmen appeared to be positioned in derelict buildings about 400 metres (1,300 feet) from Karzai.

About a dozen other Afghans, including a parliamentarian and several security men, were wounded, officials said.

A 10-year-old boy living in the area was also killed, apparently in return fire, they said.

A Taliban spokesman who called media to claim the attack as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

ISLAMIC SCHOLARS ON WOMEN POLICY

Review body failed to pinpoint contradiction with Quran

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ulama committee formed to review the National Women Development Policy could not pinpoint in its recommendations which provisions of the policy contradict the Quran and Sunnah, said a section of Islamic scholars.

Considering the policy as a good document for establishing rights of every human being, they said those who are violating laws and threatening the government with greater movements have vested interests and should be brought under trial.

"The review committee could not pinpoint any verse in the Quran

that the women development policy contradicts," said Hafez Maulana Ziaul Hasan, chairman of Sammilito Islami Jote.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of Islamic thinkers emphasised that if any provision in the policy really contradicts the Quran or Sunnah, it must be corrected through dialogues, not violence.

They said these people, who are making a noise about the women development policy, also failed earlier to prove that they follow the teachings of Islam and rather dishonoured Islamic teachings through their acts.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed announced the National Women Development Policy 2008 on March 8.

Following violent demonstrations by a few Islamist parties in front of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and elsewhere in the country, the government formed the 20-member committee on March 27 to identify "inconsistencies" in the policy as per Islamic rules.

Maulana Ziaul Hasan said forming the review committee was not rational as the highest authority of the government had

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Eliminate theocracy

Politicians, women leaders say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians and women leaders said yesterday that communal politics and *mollatantra* (theocracy) are powerful barriers to empowerment of women in the country and both should be eliminated.

Participants at a workshop also urged the government to implement the National Women Development Policy (NWDP) 2008 to empower women politically and economically.

They were speaking at a national workshop titled 'Property Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and Women's Political Empowerment in Bangladesh' at the CIRDAP auditorium organised jointly by PRIP trust and Oxfam GB.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Ayesha Khanam said that the politicians should see women in the country as a political force.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Direct voting for Zilla Parishad chairman

Govt seeks six more months for upazila polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to introduce direct elections to the post of Zilla Parishad chairman and create two new posts of vice-chairman in the Zilla and Upazila Parishads.

The LGRD ministry yesterday finalised the drafts of the new ordinances on three local government bodies -- Union Parishad (UP), Upazila Parishad and Zilla Parishad -- with provision of equal share of the vice-chairman posts by man and woman.

The vice-chairmen will also be elected through direct voting.

In another development, the government has sought six-month extension for holding the upazila elections.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

LTTE airstrike hits Lankan army defence line

42 combatants killed in attacks

AP, Colombo

Separatist rebels used light aircraft to bomb an army defence line in Sri Lanka's war-torn north early yesterday, hours after fierce clashes killed 42 combatants, the military said.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said the Tamil Tiger plane dropped three bombs near Sri Lankan forces in the Welioya region but that no soldiers were hurt.

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan was not immediately available for comment Sunday.

Troops and insurgents engaged in ferocious fighting Saturday

along the front lines of Welioya killing 22 insurgents and seven soldiers, Nanayakkara said. One soldier was missing.

Separate clashes along the northern Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya fronts left 13 other rebels dead, he said.

It was the first attack by the rebels' air wing made up of a few self-assembled light aircraft since it helped insurgents on the ground attack a government air force base last October. The government lost eight planes in that assault.

Nanayakkara said two rebel aircraft were spotted on the radar and ground troops fired at them

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Water of the Crescent Lake near the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban turns dark due to pollution. The photo was taken yesterday from the eastern end of the lake.

Atiqullah gets 7yrs in fifth case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Daily Janakantha Editor Atiqullah Khan Masud has been sentenced to seven years imprisonment in a case filed against him for forging a design approval from Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk).

Judge Khandaker Kamaluzzaman

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Rab informant stabbed to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An informant of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) was stabbed to death last night at Dhalpur of Jatrabari in the city.

Victim Bilal Hossain, 27, son of Abdur Rob, was a resident of Golapbagh of Jatrabari.

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Banks asked to provide ex-AL MP Manik's account details

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday directed all commercial banks to provide accounts details of former Awami League lawmaker of Sunamganj constituency Mohibur Rahman Manik and 20 others by May 6.

The banks have been asked to provide their accounts information

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Prayer Timing

April 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Crocodiles basking in the sun near an artificial pond in Reptiles Farm Ltd of Hatibeer in Mymensingh. Six-month-old croc babies swimming in a tank. The photos were taken last month.



PHOTO: STAR

Croc farm fawns babies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The country's lone crocodile farm, Reptiles Farm Ltd, established at Hatibeer of Bhaluka upazila five years ago, now has 140 seven-month-old croc babies.

Fifteen crocodiles of the farm built on 13.40 acres of land last year laid 600 eggs of which only 141 could be incubated. The rest eggs were ruined as those could not be placed in incubator, farm sources said. One hatchling later died.

The babies are now around 24 inches long.

In 2006, two crocodiles laid 69 eggs and they were hatched naturally. The babies, however, died soon after. Last year a modern incubator was set up in Dhaka under

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



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Our sponsor Director **Mr. Altaf Hossain Sarker** has recently unanimously been elected as Chairman of the Board of Directors of **Dhaka Bank Limited**. On this auspicious occasion we are delighted and we express our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to Mr. Sarker. We hope that the **Dhaka Bank Limited** will further march ahead under his prudent leadership, long business heritage and versatile genius. We pray to the Almighty for his good health, long-life and grand success in business.



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