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US coordinator for counterterrorism arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Dell L. Dailey arrives in Dhaka today to discuss issues related to counterterrorism and US-Bangladesh cooperation on the global war on terror with senior government officials.

This will be the first visit of the

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Duke of Gloucester due today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Duke of Gloucester, Prince Richard, arrives in Dhaka today on a four-day private visit to Bangladesh.

This will be the second visit to Bangladesh by the Duke who visited Bangladesh back in October 1987.

Official sources at the British High Commission in Dhaka said

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BIBIYANA POWER PROJECT

Relaxed conditions mulled to lure bidders

SHARIER KHAN

Under pressure from pre-qualified foreign power companies bidding for Bibiyana power project, the power ministry is considering some measures to make the project friendlier to them.

The measures include the government giving 'partial risk guarantee' for the 450MW power project for the same way it did in the past for Haripur and Meghnaghat power projects, and waiving the bidders' obligation to offload 30 percent of the project's shares on the share market.

Earlier last month, the Power Cell extended the deadline for submitting bids for Bibiyana 450 MW power project by a month, from June 11 to July 15, under pressure from two US bidders.

Guided by an advice from

International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank, the Power Cell already made the bid exclusive for foreign companies by arbitrarily disqualifying a Bangladeshi company, Summit.

The project now has three bidders -- Chevron of the US, which operates Bibiyana gas field, AES of the US as well, and a Malaysian-Korean consortium led by Powertek.

The power ministry at a meeting on April 30 discussed that for both Meghnaghat and Haripur private power projects, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had given partial risk guarantee, against which the Economic Relations Division (ERD) provided a counter guarantee.

The meeting then decided if the World Bank agrees to give such a guarantee for Bibiyana power

project, the power ministry will ask the finance ministry to give its opinion on the matter.

The meeting chaired by a special assistant to the chief adviser also discussed a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) framed law that demands making public 30 percent of shares of a company within six months of investing over Tk 40 crore as paid up capital.

The power secretary said the law would discourage power sector investors and therefore the SEC should be requested to provide a waiver for them.

Other decisions taken at the meeting include acquiring 1.7 acres of land to install a gas supply pipeline for the power plant, while the government already acquired 37 acres of land for the project.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Huji man Sumon now accused in CPB rally blast case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday implicated detained Harkatul Jibad (Huji) leader Arif Hasan Sumon in yet another case, for his involvement in the blast at a CPB rally in 2001.

CID showed Sumon arrested in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Muggers stab shop staff, loot Tk 24 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals stabbed two employees of a plastic raw material shop and snatched Tk 24.50 lakh at Lalbagh of Old Dhaka yesterday.

Witnesses said a gang of six on two motorbikes ambushed four employees of Bakir Enterprise around 11:00am on Urdu Road slope just 50 yards away from

Lalbagh Police Station. They employees were going to a bank on foot to deposit the money.

General Manager of Bakir Enterprise Mohammad Alauddin said the muggers armed with pistols and machetes first tried to take away the money from their employee Giasuddin who had the money inside a bag.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Oil price hits new record, near \$121

AFP, London

Crude oil reached a new record high price of 120.93 dollars a barrel on Tuesday as concerns resurfaced over tight supplies and a struggling US currency, analysts said.

After setting a fresh all-time peak, New York's main oil futures contract, light sweet crude for June delivery, stood at 119.92 dollars per

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

A large crowd throngs a BDR fair-price shop in Nayabazar in Old Dhaka yesterday as many open market sale outlets are being closed gradually.

Sector commanders for trial of war criminals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Sector Commanders Forum, a platform of sector commanders of the Liberation War, said the government should lodge cases against war criminals and hold trials since the war criminals are the enemies of this state.

"We have to complete the unfinished task of our Liberation War at the twilight of our lives and bring the war criminals to book since successive political governments failed to materialise our demands," said sector commander Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta.

The forum organised a reunion

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

45 injured as students clash with workers

Bus torched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A clash between students and transport workers at Polytechnic intersection in Sirajganj sadar upazila yesterday left at least 45 people injured, a bus torched and six more vandalised.

The injured include students, police personnel and pedestrians. Out of the injured, 30 including four in a critical condition were admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital and local clinics.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

UK wants strong democracy in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Outgoing British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury yesterday said he is extremely hopeful about free, fair and credible elections with maximum participation.

"We not only want democracy but a strong democracy that will deliver development of Bangladesh," he said after

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

OC, SI punished for role in garment worker's suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Adabar Police Station in the city was transferred to Rajshahi range while a sub-inspector of the same station was closed to the Rajarbagh Police Lines as punitive measures yesterday.

Police sources said OC Mohammad Salauddin and SI Abdus Salam were disciplined on charges of creating circumstances that led garment employee Nur

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

RICE

Wholesale price yet to impact retail markets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The falling wholesale prices of rice over the last couple of weeks are yet to make any considerable impact on its retail prices.

Meanwhile, crowds at fair price outlets of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in the capital are growing day-by-day following the closure of open market sale (OMS) programme of food directorate on April 30.

Col Mujibul Haq, BDR commander in Dhaka, said they are selling about 650-700 tonnes of rice everyday at 75 outlets in the capital.

The wholesale prices of fine rice including Miniket, BR-28 and Parjati that reached the market recently came down by Tk 170-200 per maund in the last two weeks. These varieties are now selling for Tk 1,130 to Tk 1,400 per maund (37.32 kg) as opposed to Tk 1,300 to Tk 1,600 per maund two weeks back.

The wholesale prices of coarse rice such as Irri-8 also fell by Tk 100 per maund. This variety now sells at Tk 1,050-1,060 per maund --

down from previous rate of Tk 1,170-1,200.

However, the price of another coarse variety, Gutti (old), remained at Tk 1,200 per maund at wholesale markets for the last 25 days.

The retail price of fine rice came down by Tk 2-4 per kg while the price of coarse rice dropped by Tk 1 per kg in the last two weeks in the capital.

At city retail markets, the minimum price of coarse rice was Tk 33 while fine rice was Tk 43.

Retailers said sale of rice plummeted significantly during the last two weeks and they could not sell rice at lower prices since they had purchased it at higher rates.


Wholesalers at Badamtoli, Babubazar and Mohammadpur Krishi Market said though the new rice has been getting to the markets from rural areas everyday, their sales are not satisfactory. For this reason, many of them stopped procuring the new rice, they added.

Masud Rana, manager of Ekota Rice Agency at Mohammadpur Krishi Market, said his agency also

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Prayer Timing		
May 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-34	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



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