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British minister for int'l dev arrives today

British Minister for International Development, Shahid Malik, arrives today on a two-day visit to the country. Malik is scheduled to meet the Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam during his visit and confirm details of a high level

Financing budget deficit a real challenge

CPD dialogue told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam yesterday said there are no immediate remedies to the budget implementation crisis unless long-term investment is made in the public sector.

"We need to import an angel if we want an immediate solution to the problem," he said at a dialogue styled "State of the Bangladesh economy and an analysis of the national budget for FY2008-09" organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) at Sonargaon Hotel.

Mirza Aziz made the comments following questions raised by discussants including politicians, economists, business leaders, civil society members and donors on the government's poor administrative capacity for implementing the budget.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud welcomed the increase in allocation for the social safety nets but said implementation of the allocation is a real problem.

"Coordination and mechanism have to be put in place to ensure implementation. Let the money be spent for the poor," he said.

On June 9, the finance adviser presented a heavily indebted budget of Tk 99,962 crore for the FY2008-09. The budget has a deficit of around Tk 30,580 crore, which will be met with foreign and domestic borrowings.

The government is set to borrow Tk 13,498 crore from banks in the coming fiscal year, which the busi-

Huge smuggled electronics seized at ZIA

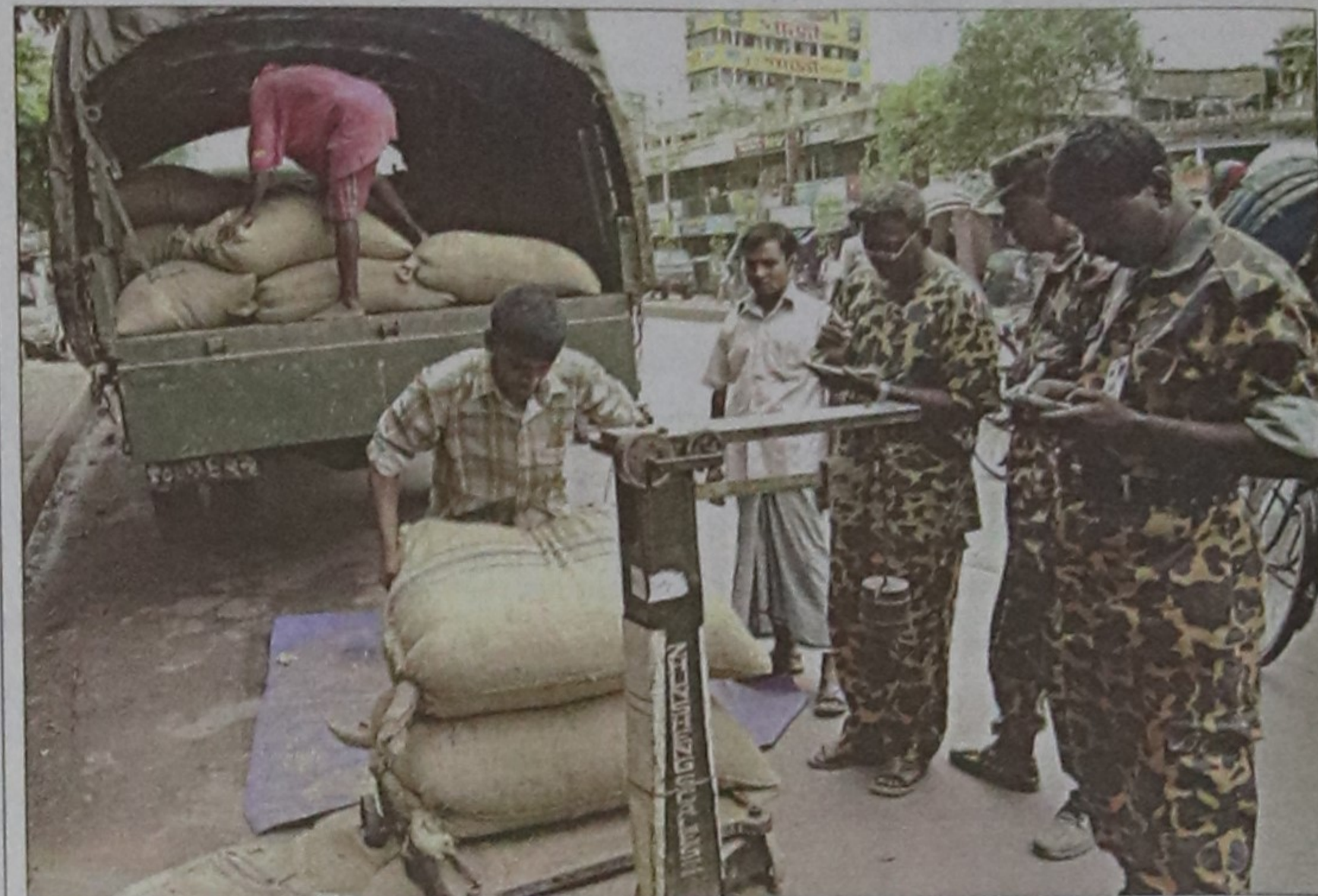
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials seized smuggled mobile phone handsets and other electronic items worth about Tk 70 lakh at Zia International Airport yesterday.

The smugglers, however, managed to flee from the scene on seeing customs officials approaching them, leaving behind a bag containing the contraband on the second floor of the airport.

The seized commodities include 998 cell phone handsets including India, 1177 MP3 and MP4 players priced at around Tk 23 lakh, 197 batteries worth about Tk 4 lakh, 4,140 memory cards for mobile phone valued at about Tk 14 lakh and 177 iPods worth about Tk 6 lakh.

Customs officials said they seized the items on information that some smugglers were trying to take the goods out of the airport.



Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel take away rice from their fair price outlet at the city's Nayabazar yesterday. Lately, the paramilitary force has closed a number of such shops due to dwindling stock of subsidised rice.

BEGUNBARI CANAL 300 shanties demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished over 300 illegal shanties on the Begunbari canal near Tongi Diversion Road.

A Rajuk team led by Magistrate ASM Emdadul Dastagir started tearing down the shanties at around 11:00am to make way for a road network under Hatirjheel-Begunbari Integrated Development Project.

At least 60 workers, 40 police personnel and two bulldozers took part in the drive that continued till 5:00pm.

"We are bringing down the structures as part of our ongoing drive against illegal encroachment to implement the Hatirjheel-Begunbari Integrated Development Project," said Dastagir adding that the drive will continue for five days.

However, the Rajuk could not demolish the filling station across FDC due to an injunction from the court, he said.

Besides, the station owner was negotiating with the railway authorities to get a replacement land elsewhere, he added.

Since March, Rajuk so far has removed over 600 illegal structures from Hatirjheel-Begunbari area to implement the road network.



Slum-dwellers in the city's Hatirjheel-Begunbari area take refuge on railway lines as Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha yesterday knocks down shanties encroaching on Begunbari canal.

50 Bangladeshi women trafficked to India a day

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Every day 50 Bangladeshi women are lured to India and sold there, Home Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin yesterday told the inaugural ceremony of a new police investigation unit formed to strengthen fight against human trafficking.

"According to one report, every day 50 Bangladeshi girls are lured across the Indian border and sold. India shares 4,222 kilometres of border with Bangladesh and most of the border is open to trafficking," he said.

The unit labelled "Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) Investigation Unit" has been set up within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) with Additional Deputy Inspector General Abdul Jalil as its head.

The unit will initially have 12 police officials having specialised training on investigations into human trafficking at home and abroad.

Held at a city hotel, the function

4 Huji cadres jailed for 20yrs for keeping explosives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Four Harkatul Jihad (Huji) cadres were sentenced to 20 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) in an explosives case in Magura yesterday.

The special tribunal court also fined them Tk 5,000 each, defaulting on which will earn them additional one-year RI.

The sentenced are Mokaddes Ali, ameer of Magura district unit

Traffic police's wit saves traders from being abducted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic sergeant's presence of mind saved two traders from being abducted in city's Panathopath area yesterday.

Bappi Basu from Azimpur and his friend Srikanta, who were carrying Tk three lakh in cash at the time, were forcibly being driven away by a group of criminals in broad daylight when the sergeant came to their rescue.

Bappi, after his rescue, said that five people intercepted him and Srikanta as they came out of Brac Bank's Sukrabad branch with the money. The men identified themselves as detective branch (DB) personnel and asked the two

Saarc Summit to focus on food, fuel security

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Food and fuel security will be high on the agenda of the upcoming 15th summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) in Colombo in August.

The visiting Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama stated this in New Delhi on Monday evening after holding talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The summit is scheduled to be held against the backdrop of soaring prices and crisis of food grains and oil across the globe that is hitting South Asian countries hard.

The two-day summit of South Asian heads of state and government, scheduled to begin August 2, is expected to see a forward movement on the proposal for setting up a SAARC Food Bank aimed at meeting the requirements of member-countries at times of need.

Bogollagama said the food as well as fuel security issue would be high on the agenda of the summit, that will have a structured discussion on the subjects to see how the two issues can be addressed and the burden reduced.

Both leaders discussed the food security issue and agreed on need for boosting food grains production.

Saarc had agreed during the previous summit last year to set up

Heavy rain paralyses life in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Life became paralysed in Chittagong yesterday as major parts of the port city were submerged in knee-deep water following heavy rains throughout the day.

Besides, two walls collapsed at Lalkhan Bazar and Surson Road in the morning due to the downpour, but none was hurt.

According to the Met Office at Patenga, over 202 millimetres of rainfall was recorded in last 24 hours till 3:00pm yesterday.

City dwellers, especially the office going people and the students, faced untold sufferings to get to their destinations, as there were few vehicles in the inundated streets. Many were forced to stay indoors.

EU to sharpen Iran sanctions

Tehran warns Europe

AP, AFP, Luxembourg

The European Union agreed Monday on the need to sharpen sanctions on Iran possibly targeting the oil and gas sectors in what would mark Europe's strongest punishments yet to discourage Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

In line with such a move, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said the EU will join Britain in freezing the assets of Iran's largest bank.

"We will take any necessary action so that Iran is aware of the choice it needs to make," said Brown at a London news confer-

Rice prices mark rise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of different varieties of rice continued to rise both in wholesale and retail markets in the capital while potato price came down yesterday.

Meantime, rice was selling at many of the fair price outlets of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday

Musharraf will be replaced soon

Says Zardari

PTI, Lahore

With rival-turned ally Nawaz Sharif stealing the limelight with his full-throated demand for Pervez Musharraf's ouster, PPP Chairman Asif Ali Zardari has said his party will soon "appoint" the next president, hinting that the former general's days in office could be numbered.

"The day is not far off when someone like Salman Taseer will be in the Presidency. The PPP will soon appoint the next President," Zardari said addressing a gathering of PPP workers at the Governor's House in Lahore on Monday night.

Prayer Timing

| | Azan | Jamaat |
|---------|-------|--------|
| June 18 | | |
| Fajr | 4-05 | 4-40 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-50 | 6-55 |
| Esha | 8-15 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

Life Standard Chartered The Daily Star

A Film, Photography & Lyrics Contest 2008

The film contest is a short documentary and fiction film competition based on the theme "Knowing Bangladesh Better". Contestants have been invited to make films on the aspects of our country, culture and heritage. The theme is quite broad; and filmmakers are allowed to choose to depict any aspect of Bangladesh. We encourage a focus on rural Bangladesh and not just on urban centres.

The length of the films should not be less than 20 minutes, and we recommend not more than 45 minutes. The submissions must be in DVD format for preview purposes. Only winners will be asked to provide master copies of their awarded films in DVCAM master format. Submissions must be original and unscrubbed work of the filmmakers.

The awards are: Best Documentary, Best Short Fiction, Special Jury Award Documentary, and Special Jury Award Short Fiction. Cash awards in the amount of Tk 100,000 each will be given to the two Best Films, and Tk 50,000 each to the two Special Award films.

The winning films will be broadcasted on Channel I. The winning films will also be screened in a touring festival program at the district level throughout Bangladesh.

For more information, log onto www.celebratinglifefbd.com

THE LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION IS 30th JUNE 2008.

For any further enquiry, please contact:
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