

Europe mulls new Iran nuclear sanctions

AFP, Paris

European powers are considering imposing new sanctions on individuals and institutions linked to Iran's nuclear programme, diplomats in several capitals said Thursday.

According to a report in the Financial Times, Britain, France and Germany have drawn up a list of 34 Iranian entities and 10 people they would like to see punished for helping in Tehran's enrichment of nuclear fuel.

Officials who spoke to AFP played down the report, insisting that the list had not been finalised, but confirmed talks were ongoing. "It's not a preparatory draft," said one. "It's not a final list," added another.

Again according to the Financial Times, EU members Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Austria and Sweden are opposed to Europe taking new measures against Tehran, perhaps

explaining why diplomats were reluctant to talk publicly.

"I can't confirm this list," French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner told reporters when asked about the FT article.

"Specific European sanctions have been suggested, and worked on a little," he confirmed, adding however: "No decision has been made on sanctions under the auspices of the European Union."

The list cited in the Financial Times report includes names already under United Nations and United States sanctions, but also adds new Iranian targets for a possible round of European measures.

These include the Sharif University of Technology, Iran Air Cargo, the Iran Insurance Company, Bank Tejarat, the economic arm of the Revolutionary Guards and the Razi Institute for Serum and Vaccine.

News of the possible new sanctions came a week after UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, warned that Iran had ignored previous measures and had continued enriching uranium to make nuclear fuel.

And on Wednesday, Iran began testing its first nuclear reactor at the Bushehr power plant, which has been under construction for 14 years but which is now within months of opening, according to Iranian officials.

Washington and Europe believe Iran's civil nuclear power programme masks a plan to build atomic weapons, a move that would fundamentally alter the balance of power in an already volatile Middle East region.

In Paris, Brussels and Berlin, diplomats said they believed the threat of new European sanctions could strengthen the hand of US President Barack

Obama as he attempts to engage Iran in a dialogue on the issue.

An official in the office of EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana said any new openness in White House policy would need to be backed up by "a firmer hand on the sanctions side."

But he cautioned: "It's still too soon to say whether the Americans will also come to this conclusion."

France for its part is worried that Obama will reach out to Iran too early and thus give a boost to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad before June's election, when he will face a challenge from reformist leaders.

Washington appears to want to take steps as quickly as possible, amid fears that the current hardline regime is on the verge of a nuclear breakthrough, even if that hurts the chances of Ahmadinejad's more amenable opponents.



Prof Kabir Chowdhury speaks at a discussion titled 'Responsibilities of citizens in present crisis of the country' at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday. Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion. (Story on Page 3)

Police recover 3 firearms at JU hall

UNB, Savar

The police recovered three firearms from Maulana Bhasani Hall of Jahangirnagar University during a raid on Thursday night.

On receiving information from acting provost Prof Badiur Rahman, police searched the common room of the hall at about 11:45pm and found two pistols and a pipe gun in a locker.

A case was filed in this connection.

N'ganj folk festival begins

BSS, N'ganj

A month-long folk festival and fair began on the vast premises of Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation (BFACF) in Sonargaon upazila with much enthusiasm and jubilation yesterday.

Abdullah-Al Kaiser MP inaugurated the festival in the afternoon. Deputy Commissioner AMA Rehman, Upazila Chairman Mosharrif Hossain and director of the foundation Sheikh Alauddin, among others, also addressed the function.

As many as 182 stalls of various products like tribal handloom cloth from Moulvibazar, shola crafts from Jhenidah, painted potter from Rajshahi, handmade tan from Chittagong, shatranj from Rangpur, wooden painted dolls from Sonargaon, jute goods from Narsingdi and bamboo works from Tangail were set up at the festival ground.

The month-long programmes include cultural performances like Patagon, Bhalgan, Jari and Sarigan, songs of Hasan Raja, Longinti, Marfati, Murshidi and traditional wedding songs.

Other attractive features

of the festival are Kabigan, puppet show, kite flying, staging of Mymensingh gitika and folk dance, organisers said.

Child trafficker jailed for life

BSS, Chuadanga

A court on Thursday convicted one person to suffer life term punishment in jail and fined Tk 5000 in default to suffer more six months RI in jail on charge of child trafficking.

The convict is Muktar Hossain, 25, son of Jamal Ali of village Toilla under Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah.

The prosecution story in brief is that the convict was arrested by the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) men along with three children from Changkhali border areas of Jibannagar upazila of Chuadanga on November 20 in 2005 when he was trafficking 3 children to India.

The BDR men recovered the children from the possession of the convict and filed a case against him with Jibannagar Police Station.

One bombed to death in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A villager was killed when a gang of criminals hurled bomb targeting a group of villagers while gossiping at an intersection at Ashasthali village under Sadar upazila in Jhenidah yesterday.

The victim was identified as Buro Mollah, 55, of Ashasthali village under Sadar upazila.

Locals said some villagers were gossiping at an intersection of the village at around 7:30pm. Then suddenly a gang of armed criminals hurled bombs targeting them, leaving Buro Mollah dead on the spot.

When contacted, Officer-in-Charge of Sadar Police Station Kazi Wased Ali confirmed the incident. Further information could not be known immediately.

Save Zillur

METRO DESK



(UODA), is suffering from Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), a disorder in which the body's immune system attacks part of the peripheral nervous system.

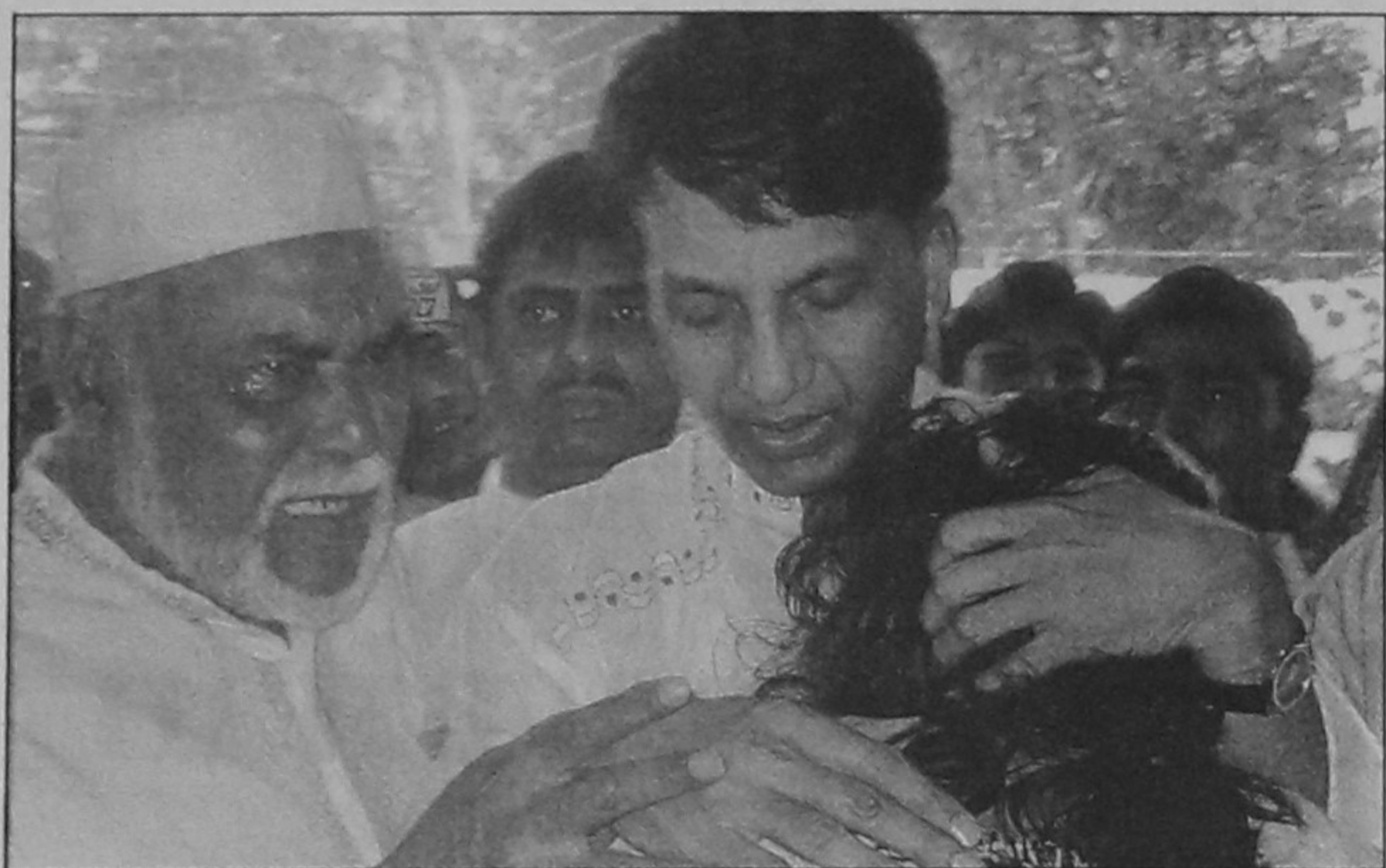
He is now undergoing treatment at intensive care unit (ICU) of City Hospital at Lalmatia in Dhaka.

According to the doctors, the patient needs necessary treatment immediately which will cost around Tk eight lakh.

But it is quite impossible for his father Md Anisur Rahman, a petty government service holder, to arrange such a big amount of money for the treatment.

So, they have appealed to the affluent class of the society to come forward with their financial assistance to save the potential life of their beloved son.

Contributions can be sent to Md Golam Mostafa (Zillur), Savings A/C No 34062856, Sonali Bank Limited, Lalmatia branch, Mohammadpur in the city or anybody wishing to donate can contact the cellphone 01717943099.



IGP Noor Mohammad consoles Captain Mazharul Haider Rubel's younger sister Mimi at her Karatia residence in Tangail yesterday. Capt Rubel, son-in-law of IGP Noor Mohammad, was killed inside BDR headquarters during the mutiny by BDR jawans.

Capt Rubel buried in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Captain Mazharul Haider Rubel, who was killed inside BDR headquarters during the mutiny by BDR jawans, was buried at his family graveyard with state honour at Birpushia in Tangail yesterday.

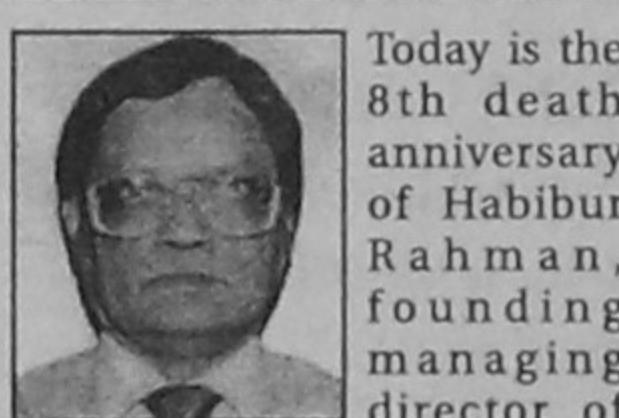
Captain Rubel, son of late Prof Abdul Mazid, had married Bandhan, daughter of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Noor Mohammad, nearly three months ago.

The body of Capt Rubel, a staff officer of BDR Director General Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed, was brought to his Karatia residence at 12:30pm after an autopsy on the body at the Combined Military Hospital.

His first namaz-e-Janaza was held at Zaminder Bari Mosque premises in Karatia after Juma prayers. IGP Noor Mohammad, General Officers Command (GOC) of Ghatail area Maj Gen AKM Mujahiduddin, Commander of 98 Composite Brigade Brig Gen Nasimul Gani, Tangail Deputy Commissioner Maksudur Rahman Patwari and Tangail Superintendent of Police Abdul Mannan attended the Janaza.

Capt Rubel, who passed SSC and HSC from Comilla Cadet College, joined the Bangladesh Army in 2000.

Death anniversary METRO DESK



Today is the 8th death anniversary of Habibur Rahman, founding managing director of APPL, says a press release.

All are requested to pray for peace of the departed soul.

India steps in to prevent Gandhi auction

AFP, New Delhi

India has stepped in to prevent several of freedom leader Mahatma Gandhi's possessions, including his iconic round glasses, from being

Rotary Int'l District 3280 confce begins

METRO DESK

The two-day 25th district conference of Rotary International District 3280 Bangladesh began at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

About 1500 Rotarians of all 153 Rotary Clubs of Bangladesh, some representatives from other countries and a GSE team from Brazil attended the conference.

Jichiro Nakajima, personal representative of the president of Rotary International, also attended the conference with his wife Takako.

The inaugural session of the conference observed one minute's silence in memory of the army officers, BDR men and others who were killed in the BDR mutiny.

In different sessions, Rotary's public image, disaster management, other humanitarian activities of Rotary and its plan were discussed.

DG M Hafizullah, PDG Salim Reza, DGE AKM Shamsul Huda, Conference Chair Safina Rahman, DGN Dr Monzoorul Hoque Choudhury, Conference Secretary Mansurul Alam and District Secretary Farid Uddin Khan Siddiqui also spoke.

auctioned off next month in New York, a report said Friday.

"Whatever can be done is being done to ensure that articles are not auctioned by involving all concerned stakeholders," Culture Minister Ambika Soni told the Press Trust of India news agency.

A culture ministry official said the government had approached the various owners of Gandhi's belongings to ask them to "offer the items to the government on the basis of honour and due acknowledgement," according to the news agency.

The owners include the

daughter of one of Gandhi's nieces, who authorised a German collector to give them to the auction house Antiquorum Auctioneers.

The official said there were two other options -- asking for the items to be withdrawn from the auction so the government could buy them or asking US Indians to buy them and donate them to India to be put in a museum.

A special government committee is working on how to reclaim the pieces, given an estimated value of between 20,000 and 30,000 dollars.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Chances of light rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over the regions of Rangpur, Tangail, Mymensingh, Comilla and Sylhet during the period, Met Office said.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Patuakhali and lowest 14.6 degrees Celsius at Dinajpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:01pm today and rises at 6:21am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

The barbarity is unimaginable, unforgivable

FROM PAGE 1

for what "crimes" were these officers meted out such inglorious death? For what unprofessional acts were life snuffed out of them at the height of their career? For what possible action of theirs could a section of BDR jawans murder their officers in such an inhuman and un-soldierly manner? The answer escapes reason, words and logic. However, one thing can be said with certainty, if there were some sympathy for the points raised by the rebellious jawans, not an iota of it remained in the public mind after the initial extent of the crime became evident yesterday.

No, these cannot be outbursts of anybody that ever wore any uniform of a disciplined force. These cannot be the soldiers of BDR as we knew them and respected them for their untiring work in guarding our borders. These were the work of premeditated murderers who planned, prepared and then executed what amounts to the biggest loss of life of our well-trained officers corps of our armed forces.

We express our deepest shock and heart felt condolences for the families, relatives and friends of those who gave their lives while serving the cause of our security. We join the nation in mourning for them and praying for the salvation of their souls and hoping that Almighty will grant them eternal peace. We express our solidarity with the families of the bereaved and promise to stand by them as their children and families struggle to move forward in life.

As we absorb the shock and the feel in our hearts of the true extent of the tragedy, we must also be aware that we have a nation to take forward, our armed forces to strengthen, our BDR to rebuild and, most importantly our democracy to strengthen and make functional.

tasks before us, we must commend the political leadership for the way it has handled the crisis so far. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina showed tremendous sagacity, foresightedness and patience in handling the crisis. She could have easily taken the harder line and ordered the army to recapture the Pilkhana area. That might have satisfied some who wanted precipitous action against the rebels who clearly needed to be captured. Fearing greater loss of life and wanting to avoid what she termed as "brothers shooting brothers", she opted for a negotiated solution. Her address to the nation, especially directed at the rebels, had tremendous impact in resolving the crisis and hastening the surrender.

It would have been a most satisfactory ending but for the fact that much earlier, in fact within hours of the first act of rebellion (as narrated by Lt. Col. Kumruzzaman who miraculously survived assassins' bullets) and before the PM could know, "brothers" had already taken "brothers' lives" and in a most gruesome manner. Around 50 bodies of officers had already been found, some bayoneted either after or before being killed, and their bodies buried in mass graves or put in the sewer to be drained out into the Buriganga.

Given the evidence of mass murders that have come out and are likely to surface later, we categorically state that the general amnesty declared by Sheikh Hasina earlier cannot apply to those who indulged in the mayhem. We must institute investigation and find out the culprits and punish them according to our laws. There cannot be any compromise on this account.

Just as we praise the sagacity of the present political leadership, so also we commend the restraint, discipline and institutional dignity exhibited by our armed forces. Let us have no doubt that the provocation has been tremendous and the feeling of the officers of our armed forces and of the troops in general have been hurt very deeply. They have been devastated by the brutality of it all and are naturally in a mood for immediate justice. This is only natural. When we as journalists see one of our own brutally murdered or even assaulted, we ourselves demand immediate action.

However we want to point out that it is not only that of our armed forces whose feelings have been wounded and who want action against the killers. The whole nation mourns the death of the officers and our people are one in demanding expeditious pursuit, apprehension, prosecu-

tion and punishment of the murderers. At this moment our armed forces enjoy the love and sympathy of the whole nation. This is both because of the brutal crime that has been committed against them as a body and also because of the discipline, respect for order and restraint shown by them. We would like to point out here that the actions of the wayward jawans (who are only part and do not encompass the whole of BDR as testified to by Lt. Col. Kamruzzaman in his TV interview yesterday) have nearly destroyed the BDR which is itself a great national loss. Anything remotely amounting to a breach of discipline anywhere else will weaken us further. This cannot be to our national interest.

We conclude with an appeal to all to unite as a nation and strengthen the hands of our newly elected government so that it can take the sternest measure under law against those who killed our valiant officers and brought such a disaster and shame on our country. We also need to restore the dignity, respect and self-respect of all our armed forces, especially that of the army whose morale has been affected by this brutal killing. But above all we need to strengthen our democracy and all institutions that make it functional.



Rotarians observe one minute's silence in memory of the army officers killed in the BDR mutiny at the inaugural session of the 25th district conference of Rotary International District 3280 Bangladesh at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. From left are Governor-elect AKM Samsul Huda, Takako, District Governor Prof M Hafizullah, RIPPJ Chiro Nakajima, Conference Chair Safina Rahman, District First Lady Zohura Hafiz and DGN Dr Monzoorul Hoque.