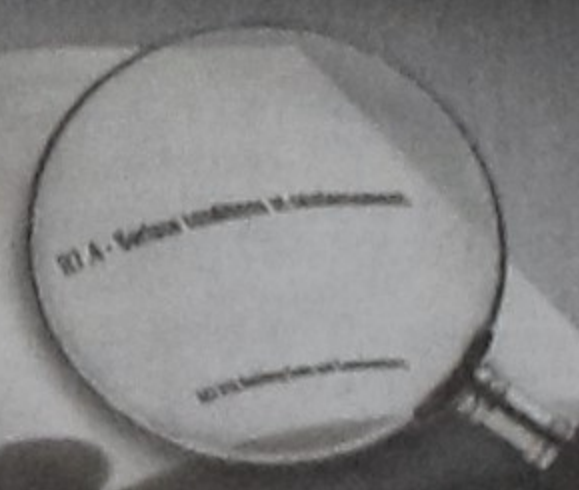


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Dhaka, Delhi to review all bilateral issues

FM's meet Sept 8

UNB, Dhaka

The Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and India hold bilateral talks in New Delhi on Tuesday (Sept 8) for a review of the entire range of bilateral issues as well as finding out newer avenues of cooperation between the two next-door neighbours.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni goes to Delhi tomorrow to hold the meeting with new Indian External Affairs Minister SM Krishna at Hyderabad House, diplomatic sources said.

The last foreign minister-level meeting between Dipu

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VGF bid at stake

Politicisation, anomalies rule rice distribution for poor

STAR REPORT

Politicisation, mismanagement and the practice of graft marred the very purpose of providing the poor with free food under the government's special vulnerable group feeding (VGF) programme devised for the month of Ramadan.

The special Ramadan VGF that kicked off on September 1 with a target of reaching one lakh metric tonnes (MT) of rice to 10 million poor across the country witnessed gross irregularities in different districts over listing of beneficiaries and allotment of VGF cards.

Reports dispatched by our correspondents from districts said ruling party men influenced local-level administration to claim unofficial 'quota' on the cards being distributed among 2,000 to 2,200 beneficiaries in each union. It deprives the genuine marginalised poor of the benefit at different places, said the reports.

Local Awami League leaders took away 900 out of a total of 5,000 VGF cards sanctioned for Kishoreganj municipal area. Besides, many cardholders alleged that they got two to 3 kg less than what they are entitled to—10 kgs against each card.

When asked, Kishoreganj Municipality Mayor Abu Taher Mia said all ward presidents and secretaries of the ruling party together took 900 cards for distributing among their nearest needy people. He, however, denied the allegation of anomalies in weighing rice.

In different upazilas of Dinajpur, ruling party men mounted pressures on local government authorities demanding 1,000 VGF cards against the sanctioned quota for each union.

Khairul Islam Raju, chairman of Birampur upazila in Dinajpur, said that he got 14,000 VGF cards for seven unions of the upazila but the AL men pressed him to give away 7,000 cards to them.

In various unions in Pabna, ruling party leaders took up to 40 percent of the sanctioned VGF cards, reports our correspondent.

Operation of VGF was suspended in two unions of Jaldhaka upazila in Nilphamari over a row between the men of JJP lawmaker and local Awami League.

Shahidul Islam Bhuiyan, the UNO of Jaldhaka, said though he got lists of prospective beneficiaries from two union parishads, the local lawmaker Kazi Faruk Kader of Jatiya Party in a fax message from Dhaka directed him to suspend the delivery and distribution of VGF rice. The MP could not be reached for his comment.

Meanwhile, Nilphamari sadar thana police Thursday raided the house of Itakhola union unit AL secretary Babul Hossain and recovered 320 kgs of misappropriated VGF rice and detained his wife. Babul fled sensing trouble.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Truck kills 5 of a family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five members of a family were killed and as a speeding truck collided head-on with a taxicab and reduced it to wreckage on Pallabi Beribadh in the city's Mirpur yesterday. The cab driver sustained severe injuries.

The deceased Nasiruddin, 28, his wife Sharifa, 22, their one-year old daughter Suma, Nasir's mother Mahmuda Begum, 55, and brother Zihad, 9 were the passengers of the cab. Injured driver Tajul Islam, 35, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Nasiruddin was a driver at Pashnia Sweater Ltd in Ashulia and resided at Kumkumari Bazar of the area.

Injured Tajul lives at East Sheorapara in Kafrul, said Mohammad Rafiq who identified Tajul at DMCH.

Police said the accident occurred in front of Birulia Pump House on Pallabi Beribadh around 12:30pm. A brick laden truck heading for Gabtoli rammed the cab coming from the opposite direction.

Witnesses said all the five passengers of the cab died of head injuries under the impact. The cab driver was in serious condition and fell unconscious on the spot.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Bank robbery foiled

Four robbers held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Local people and police jointly foiled a robbery in Agrani Bank under Sadullapur upazila while police caught two robbers of the gang of four members red-handed from the spot around 12:30am on Friday.

According to their confession, police later arrested two other members of the gang from Hotel Al-Kawsar in Gaibandha pourashava.

The robbers are identified as Rafiqul Islam, 32, a resident of Tungchar village under Hija upazila in Barisal district, Saidul Baser, 42, of Nimta village under Amtali upazila in Barguna district, Jakir Hossain, 38, of Ranogopal Nadi village under Dashmina

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



HELLO MAYOR... IS THIS OUR FOOTPATH?

Furniture shops display items on a pavement at Jatrabari in the capital. The parked truck and rickshaw-vans used for delivery also create difficulties for pedestrians.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Indian giants seek telecoms corridor

Want to connect seven sisters, offer an access to alternative submarine cable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh can have access to an alternative submarine cable if it allows two Indian companies to build a fibre optic network to take low-cost telecommunication services to India's seven sister states.

Indian telecom giants-- Bharti Airtel and Reliance Communications--have recently submitted a joint proposal in this regard to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory

Commission (BTRC).

If any deal is signed, Bangladesh can use the companies undersea cable network as an alternative to lone submarine cable SEA-ME-WE-4.

Experts think that such initiative can also relieve Bangladesh from repeated disruption of undersea cable, which inflicts a huge loss to the country's information and communication technology sector.

In line with the proposal the companies are

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

LOWER COURT JUDGES 101 more get appointed soon

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government has decided to appoint 101 assistant judges to lower courts in addition to 207 whose appointments are now almost at the final stage.

Even the law ministry has already in a requisition letter asked the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC) authorities to select qualified candidates for the appointment of 101 assistant judges through holding necessary tests and examinations, sources said.

Meanwhile, BJSC sources said the commission had already selected 448 candidates out of total 926 through a written test to finally appoint 207 candidates as assistant judges.

The selected candidates are now facing interviews, as their recruitment process will be completed within one month.

A BJSC official requesting anonymity told The Daily Star that the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission will hold a meeting

SEE PAGE 12 COL 8

15 tourists drown in Macedonia lake

AFP, Ohrid

Fifteen people, including several Bulgarians, died Saturday when an ageing tourist boat sank within seconds into Macedonia's Lake Ohrid, a popular attraction in the Balkans, officials said.

The liden was 200 metres (yards) from shore when it apparently capsized into the deepest lake in the region -- famous for its turquoise waters -- at around 11:00 am (0900 GMT) near a campground outside Ohrid city.

"More than 70 passengers were on the boat," Interior

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Rab men to watch Eid ticket sale

BSS, Dhaka

The government will deploy 5,000 Rab members all over the country ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr festival to check black marketing of tickets for bus, train and launches for home-bound people.

They will be deployed at all bus, train and launch stations all over the country from September 15 in uniform and plain clothes. Director General (DG) of Rab Hassan Mahmud Khondker told reporters here yesterday.

He said they will start watching the situation at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

43 killed in Pak offensives

Militant base destroyed

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistani forces yesterday killed at least 43 Islamic militants and destroyed their headquarters in the lawless Khyber tribal area bordering Afghanistan, officials said.

Helicopter gunships, paramilitary troops and artillery units carried out the attack on a Lashkar-e-Islam (Army of Islam) headquarters in the Tirrah valley, a security official in Peshawar told AFP.

"A total of 43 militants were killed today during an operation in Khyber," said a paramilitary Frontier Corps statement.

The toll could not be confirmed through

independent sources as the area is under military control.

Pakistani forces have been fighting an offensive in the area after a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a police barracks near the Torkham border crossing between the two countries on August 28, killing 22 policemen.

"Today (Saturday) the security forces destroyed the hideouts and a training centre of the Lashkar-e-Islam in Tirrah valley, heavy casualties of militants are expected," said an earlier Frontier Corps statement.

Security forces on Thursday destroyed the vacated house of Mangal Bagh, the headline

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Indian court lifts Jinnah book ban

BBC ONLINE

The high court in the Indian state of Gujarat has ordered the government to lift the ban on a controversial book on Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

The book was written by Jaswant Singh, a leader in India's Hindu nationalist

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

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OnlinePoll

Do you support Rab's method of crossfire to eliminate criminals?

Yes (68.8%)
No (30.2%)
No Comments (1.0%)

Total votes: 672

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think Rajuk should return deposited money with bank interest to unsuccessful applicants instead of making profit out of Uttara Model Town and Purbachal New Town Housing Project?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Sept	Sehri	Iftar
15	6	7-15	
16	7	5-21	7-14
17	8	5-21	7-13

Prayer Timing

September 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-21	5-31
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	5-30	5-45
Maghrib	7-15	7-25
Esha	8-45	9-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

His memory will live forever

Former Finance Minister Mr. M. Saifur Rahman died in a tragic road accident yesterday, September 5, 2009, around 3pm (Innalillahi wa inna ilaihi rajun). This veteran politician was the longest serving Finance Minister of Bangladesh and his contribution to achieving economic independence of this country is unforgettable.

On behalf of Board of Directors & all the Employees of Dhaka Bank Limited we express our deep mourning at his untimely death. We pay our homage to his departed soul and share our cordial sympathy with his bereaved family.

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