

PM seeks power

FROM PAGE 1

also stressed the need for joint efforts in power and energy sector, particularly in generating hydroelectricity, for mutual benefits.

The premier proposed that the electric power generated in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan could be exported to neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh.

"For such regional grid connectivity, our two countries could work together," she said.

Hasina further called for united efforts for best utilisation of the two countries' scenic beauties in the tourism sector. "We could prepare alluring packages combining visits to the snowy white mountain ranges of the Himalayas with the silvery, sandy beaches of Cox's Bazar in southern Bangladesh," she said.

The Bhutanese prime minister welcomed Hasina's suggestion for introducing bilateral road communications between the two countries.

"We will be happy if we can set up land communications with Bangladesh," the host prime minister said when Sheikh Hasina met him at his office Gyalong Tshokhang in the capital yesterday afternoon.

Both the prime ministers agreed that all the South Asian countries need to work in unison for poverty alleviation and protecting people from the climate threats.

BSS adds: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh and Bhutan could work together in tackling the climate change challenges, expanding bilateral trade and enhancing regional cooperation in the greater interest of the two peoples.

"We can take joint efforts in tackling the consequences of global warming as both the countries are exposed to worst impacts of the phenomenon," she said while Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk hosted a reception in her honour at his palace.

The issues, including bilateral trade expansion and enhanced regional cooperation, were other major issues to dominate the nearly one hour meeting, followed by a royal lunch at the king's palace garden at Thimphu.

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She said her government would provide necessary support to Bhutan for its socio-economic and infrastructure development sector alongside taking initiatives for increased trade and economic relations.

She said Dhaka would soon send a business delegation to Bhutan to explore potential areas of bilateral trade.

She declared at the meeting that the planned Rangamati University will be built in the light of Bhutanese architectures.

Hasina invited the Bhutanese prime minister to visit Bangladesh. The

Bhutanese premier accepted the invitation.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan and Bhutanese Economic Affairs Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk signed the trade agreement in the presence of the two premiers at the Bhutanese Prime Minister's Office.

After signing the deal, the Bhutanese prime minister expressed his gratitude to the government of Bangladesh for allowing tariff-free access of more Bhutanese products to Bangladesh.

He said, "The farmers of Bhutan will be significantly benefited by the tariff-free access of 18 more products to Bangladesh market."

Under the renewed trade agreement, Tamabil of Bangladesh has been introduced as a new entry and exit point for Bhutan in the protocol to the trade agreement.

Besides, the number of products has been increased to 90 from the previous 74 for trading between Bangladesh and Bhutan.

The trade agreement was first signed in 1980 for ten years and extended for another 10 years automatically as per provision of the deal that means the validity was up to 2000.

The trade agreement was signed again in 2003 for five years.

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Muggers shoot staff for Tk 2 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed muggers snatched Tk 2 lakh from a sales representative of a cell phone company, leaving him bullet injured at Raysaheb Bazar in the city's Sutrapur yesterday.

Subrata, 26, serving as Banglalink's Old Dhaka office, was admitted to Pangu Hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Mohammad Hanif of Sutrapur Police Station told The Daily Star a gang of two snatchers shot Subrata in the leg as he tried to resist the snatchers grabbing the money from his possession around 4:00pm.

The OC said Subrata was collecting money from different outlets in the area on foot when he fell victim to the snatchers.

November 7

FROM PAGE 1
leaders, pro-BNP intellectuals and ex-army personnel said country's present situation is worse than the 'chaotic' and 'disorderly' situation that prevailed in the first week of November, 1975.

To uphold the spirit of the day, they urged people to unite under the leadership of party chief Khaleda Zia.

They also observed that the country's independence and sovereignty would have been lost had the day not come as the National Revolution and Solidarity Day.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, party standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and M Shamsul Islam, former vice-chancellors of Dhaka University Moniruzzaman Mia and Emajuddin Ahmed, Maj General (retd) Ruhul Amin, Brig Gen (retd) Mukhlisur Rahman, among others, addressed the meeting.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was also in the attendance.

Earlier in the day, Khaleda Zia accompanied by her party leaders placed wreaths at the grave of former president and founder of BNP Ziaur Rahman in the city's Chandrima Udyan.

A large number of leaders and activists of BNP and its associate organisations also paid tribute to the former president with colourful banners and festoons.

Besides, a blood donation programme was inaugurated on the premises of Zia's shrine.

On the other hand, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal observed the day as the "Civil-Military Uprising Day".

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote marked the day as "the Day of Killing of Freedom Fighters" at a rally in front of Awami League office in the city.

At the rally State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam alleged that BNP is creating confusions among people by distorting the real history of November 7.

He urged the army personnel, intellectuals and journalists to inform the nation of the 'real fact' on the day.

Ekkattor Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee also interpreted the day with the same spirit at a meeting held at the city's Bangabandhu Avenue.

Bangabandhu Smriti Sangrakshak Parishad formed a human chain near central jail in the city observing the day as "the Day of Killing of Freedom Fighters".

Y-Platoon, an organisation run by freedom fighters of sector two, placed wreaths at the grave of Major Khaled Mosharraf marking the day as "the Day of Killing of Soldiers".

The organisation also held a discussion in Mohammadpur.

Lashkar

FROM PAGE 1
Monirul Islam, a DB deputy commissioner, said two foreigners top their list of LeT suspects. The two know the ins and outs of the attack plot and are playing an important role in efforts to pull it off.

"Not only the US embassy, they may attempt to attack other places as well," the DC DB said. "We have specific evidence the detainees had links to plotting terror attacks here."

The three Lashkar men rounded up from Chittagong are Mufti Harun Izhar, 33, Shahidul Islam, 26, and Al Amin alias Saiful. Harun is son of Mufti Izharul Islam, ameer of an Islamic Oikya Jote faction.

The DB assistant commissioner, who led the raid on the Chittagong madrasa, said they had been looking for several persons linked to LeT and Huji and the planned terror attack.

He said they have information that the suspected foreigners used to frequent the madrasa, which might have been used as a training camp-shelter for the militants.

Cellphone crime

FROM PAGE 16

numbers as well as little known cellphone set companies, said BTRC Chairman Zia Ahmed adding, "We are making some new rules so that the cellphone operators are bound to maintain the SIM registration process properly."

He said a data bank of mobile operator companies will be set up under the new rules to verify identities of SIM card holders and added that national identity cards would help this process.

Additional Commissioner Mahbubur Rahman of DB said extortionists use several cellphone sets with the same IMEI number for issuing threats or demanding toll and they later alter their SIM cards to dodge law enforcers.

He mentioned that even after changing the SIM used for issuing threats, detectives earlier could identify the criminals by their IMEI numbers but recently the detectives found that 198 cellphone sets were used by a gang of extortionists using one IMEI number.

DB sources said when extortionists could understand that detectives are able to locate them by their IMEI

numbers even if the SIM cards are changed, they started to use one fake IMEI number for several cellphone sets at a time.

BTRC sources said each cellphone set bears one IMEI number with 15 digits which helps locate the cellphone holder and identify the SIM card number used in the cellphone.

British Approval Board for Telecommunication (BABT) in Britain regulates IMEI numbers internationally and Bangladesh is also a member of the BABT.

DB said cellphone sets with fake IMEI numbers are available in most of the city markets and almost all the cellphone sets with fake IMEI numbers are being imported by a group of small importers.

Earlier Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque told The Daily Star that top listed criminals--Dakaat Shahid, Shahadat, Monwar Hossain Manu, Khurshed and Mukul--are controlling their gangs from India while Narottam Saha alias Ashik runs his criminal acts from Dubai.

149 out on bail

FROM PAGE 1

they cannot be involved in militancy again.

"We've already instructed all our units across the country to keep constant watch on those who were arrested on charge of militancy but were released on bail or acquitted of the charges," says Rab intelligence wing Director Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan.

Sources in the Special Branch say they have evidence that some of those people have returned to militant activities again.

"We'll arrest them and show them arrested in other cases filed for blasting bombs on August 17, 2005 and at other times," says an SB official wishing anonymity.

The sources say the law enforcement and intelligence agencies including Rab have so far arrested around 600 militants, mostly linked to JMB, since the August 17 synchronised bomb attacks across the country.

The law enforcers and intelligence officials suspect since the militants are out of prisons without receiving any anti-militancy motivation they may not renounce Islamist extremism.

Moreover, the present JMB leadership is also trying to take back their old members. A few members of the outfit have already been assigned to arrange legal assistance for the detained activists for this

purpose.

On October 26, Rab members arrested JMB ehsar member Akbar alias Al Amin, who is in-charge of Bagerhat district. The elite force claims Al Amin was providing financial support to families of the arrested JMB members and maintaining contacts with the operatives who are behind bars.

"In absence of motivational programmes in the jails, the accused or convicted militants may not only return to militancy but also brainwash other inmates and persuade them to join in," observes an intelligence agency official.

Stressing the need for motivation, he cites the example of JMB Shura (highest policymaking body) member Khaled Saifullah, who took part in the August 17 blasts 10 days into his release from Dinajpur jail.

Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Golam Haider admitted there is no special motivational programme for militants in jail.

The DIG however said sometimes they motivate JMB members in jail taking special initiatives.

When their officials pass through cells meant for JMB militants, they ask the inmates to shun the path of militancy saying Islam does not permit such subversive activities, he explained.

Traffic, air

FROM PAGE 16

Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, a noted civil engineer and transport expert, said most of the industrial workers travel to work along the main roads on foot. As there is often no designated pedestrian footpath, this contributes to traffic congestion.

Faruque Hassan, vice-president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), told The Daily Star at a workshop on November 1 that at least 1,000 of 4,800 BGMEA members operate factories at the heart of the city.

"We want to relocate the units out of the capital. But we cannot get gas or electricity supplies outside," he said.

Shahen Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Tanners Association, said 65,000 workers are employed at 194 tanning units at the city's Hazaribagh tannery estate.

The High Court ruled that tanneries must be shifted to Savar by February 2010, and the industries ministry has handed over 154 plots to the tanners there. However, the tanners are asking for more time to negotiate with the government on compensation.

According to a DAP survey, 526 industrial units were set up in the DMP area between 1997 and 2005.

AKM Alamgir Kabir Dewan, who did his master's thesis at Buet on industrial distribution and trends, said until 2005, there were 1,120 industrial units in the DMP area, while the number of those set up in the DMP area between 1997 and 2005 was 998.

DMDP earmarks Savar municipality, Dhaka EPZ, Gazipur and Tongi as special incentive zones for industrialisation.

Abdul Kader Chowdhury of the Public Works Department

division-2 (Dhanmondi) said a government survey found that 147 residential plots in Dhanmondi have been turned into commercial premises, while 261 are being partially used for commercial purposes.

Delwar Hossain Dulal, vice-president of Gulshan Society, said there are at least 100 factories in Gulshan's residential area.

"An unauthorised industrial unit is set up in connivance with DCC, Rajuk, Desa, Wasa and Titas Gas officials," he said.

DCC has not issued any fresh trade licences in designated residential areas since 2007, following the caretaker government's decision to halt new trade in those areas.

Prof Sarwar Jahan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said the DMDP structure plan deems industries and factories in the areas in or near the centre of Dhaka city unacceptable.

Environmental Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said Dhaka's 1954 master plan was designed to protect the residential areas from commercial and industrial invasion. But it has failed in its purpose.

Carjackers

FROM PAGE 16
home Thursday night saying he was going on a trip outside Dhaka. He never returned.

Officer-in-charge Mohammad Moniruzzaman of Jatrabari Police Station told The Daily Star that they recovered the microbus that they abandoned at Matuail in Jatrabari Thursday night.

He said the snatchers might have killed Liton somewhere else and dumped the body at Jatrabari.

Selim said the criminals might have left the microbus due to police patrol in the area.

ATTACK ON TAPOSH Cops verifying versions of arrestees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent to jail two sons of Bangabandhu murder convict Lt Col (retd) Mohiuddin Ahmed and Freedom Party leader Abdur Rahim, who were arrested in connection with the bomb attack on Awami League lawmaker Fazle Noor Taposh.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hasan Talukdar sent Mohiuddin's sons Nazmul Hasan Shohel and Mahbulul Hasan Emran and the Freedom Party leader to jail after the investigation officer of the bomb attack case produced them before the court.

Investigation officer Assistant Commissioner Akbar Hossain told the court that the three needed to be sent to jail for the sake of verification of the information they had given interrogators.

Freedom Party leader Abdur Rahim had been interrogated for 12 days while Sohel and Emran for eight days each in three spells of remand, police said.

Detective police arrested seven persons for their suspected links to the bomb attack on Taposh, and five of them are family members of convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Five of the arrestees are now in jail. The Detective Branch is interrogating two others.

Deputy Commissioner Md Monirul Islam of DB south told The Daily Star that they gleaned important information from the arrestees but declined to disclose the findings for the sake of investigation.

Lawmaker Taposh came under the bomb attack on October 21 night that left at least 13 people injured. Taposh escaped unhurt.

Medicine

FROM PAGE 16

Contacted, Joint Secretary of the association Monir Hossain admitted that the drugs seized by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Chittagong contained contraband ones. He however claimed that most of the drugs were legal.

He alleged that Rab personnel did not show any seizure list of the drugs. And this created suspicion among drug traders, he said.

Earlier on Wednesday night, Rab conducted a raid at Popular Medicine Hall in the port city's Hajari Lane area, seized drugs worth over Tk 20 lakh and arrested three staff.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong adds:

Employees of the drug store Rab raided said yesterday their central leaders have already informed the higher authorities about the matter, and they expected an end to 'harassment'.

"Our staffs who were arrested have been sent to jail, and we are trying for their release through legal procedures," said one employee.

Meanwhile, many drugs traders here alleged that during law enforcers' raids, legal drugs are also seized along with contraband ones, while costly drugs are not seen in the seizure lists.

Many medicines marketed as foreign products are actually produced locally and a section of physicians prescribe those, they alleged.

"Those who market these medicines and those who prescribe these go unchallenged, but sellers like us have to face harassment," said a pharmacy owner preferring anonymity.

Outlaw leader

FROM PAGE 16

Police arrested Suja wounded and recovered one Shutter gun and two bullets from his possession. He is now undergoing treatment at Chuadanga Sadar Hospital.

According to police, Suja using the name, Joy Babu, had been demanding extortion from people in Chuadanga and Meherpur for last several months.

On his confession, police picked up Atiar Rahman Atiq of Chuadanga and Mohsin Ali of Meherpur from their residences. Both are local correspondents of Chuadanga based daily Mathabhang.

Police quoted the Lal Pataka cadre as saying that the journalists were helping him collect toll in their areas and sharing the booty with him.

Save Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

people of Bangladesh have shown a resilience unmatched anywhere else on earth with the possible exception of Holland. Land lost to the rivers or the sea has been reclaimed, new crops planted and replacement homes built. More recently, with help from the UK and other donor governments, limited steps have been taken to provide storm refuges and lift the level of the land.

The British lawmaker went on, "Until very recently, all that happened in response to occasional, sudden and rather unpredictable crises. Not any more. Climate change threatens to melt the snows and glaciers of the Himalayas more quickly than in the past, and it is likely to affect the monsoons and increase the frequency of the cyclones. Above all, it threatens an inexorable rise in sea level. That is not just a future threat—it is causing problems now in Bangladesh."

Dobson praised British government's climate pledges to Bangladesh. The UK is already providing £75 million to support climate change adaptation and has committed another £100 million in coming years to help people maintain livelihoods in areas most vulnerable to climate change, he said.

"Those are immediate measures intended to deal with

Yunus

FROM PAGE 16

as a leading figure in fighting poverty and promoting economic and social opportunity.

The senate approved the bill on October 15, according to a report published in Microfinance Focus, a US-based global magazine on microfinance and sustainable development.

Yunus and his Grameen Bank were awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for their efforts to create economic and social development from below.

US President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom on August 12.

The Congressional Gold Medal is considered the congressional equivalent to the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It is awarded to individuals who perform an outstanding deed or act of service to the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States.

"Dr Muhammad Yunus believes overcoming poverty is not just a gesture of charity; it is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right: the right to dignity and a decent life," said Durbin.

"He is truly deserving of the Congressional Gold Medal and I am honoured to call him a friend."

"Over the last thirty years, his theory of micro-enterprise has become a phenomenon touching the lives of more than 100 million people around the world. It is hard to think of any single idea in our lifetime which has lifted so many people out of the deepest depths of poverty."

Former recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal include George Washington, Sir Winston Churchill, Elie Wiesel, Pope John Paul II, Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr and Coretta Scott King.

Pak girls' school

FROM PAGE 16

oil- and gas-rich Baluchistan province, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, senior police officer Khalid Manzoor said.

The grenade blew off the staff room's roof and splinters hit two female teachers and an eight-year-old student, he said.

"The teachers had wounds to their heads but both are out of danger in the hospital," Manzoor said, adding that the student had only minor injuries.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack.

Grenade and bomb explosions and drive-by shootings are fairly frequent in impoverished Baluchistan province, which is gripped by an insurgency.

Earlier Taliban militants killed three Pakistani soldiers in an assault on a check post in the northwest as the military pressed its ground and air offensive, officials said Saturday.

The militants launched a rocket and gun attack on a paramilitary post in Torawari area of Hangu district late Friday, a security official said.

Three soldiers were killed in the raid, he said. A senior police official said the attackers were Taliban militants who came from the neighbouring tribal region of Kurram.

Security forces based in a nearby fort responded by killing at least six attackers, police and military officials said.

The attack came as Pakistan's military continued a major ground and air offensive against Taliban strongholds in the lawless South Waziristan region near the Afghan border.

In mid-October, Pakistan launched an offensive in South

the problems that are arising now, but the longer-term protection of the people of Bangladesh will require funds and attention on an altogether vaster scale," he said.

"Otherwise, about half the population of Bangladesh--70 million people-- could be affected by flooding every year and a tenth of the low-lying land could be lost for ever. Therefore, vast civil engineering works will be required: villages must be raised above flood levels; more flood and cyclone centres need to be built; embankments must be raised; and probably equally importantly, crops capable of coping with the occasional ingress of salt and brackish water must be developed," Dobson said.

Iran rejects

FROM PAGE 16

Energy Agency said on Saturday that it was "still waiting for the formal response" from Soltanieh.

But a second member of the Iranian parliamentary committee also said that response would be negative.

"We were not against the exchange," the ISNA news agency quoted Hossein Naghavi Hosseini as saying.

"But during the negotiation, they were unable to give Iran the confidence and so the response of the Islamic Republic of Iran is negative."

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki had said on Friday that Iran was considering alternatives to the exchange deal -- either further enriching the uranium on its own for the Tehran reactor or importing the fuel commercially.

But Russia, which would have further processed the Iranian uranium under the UN-brokered deal, warned Tehran it risked further sanctions if it took a "less constructive position."

"If the Iranian leadership takes a less constructive position, then in theory anything is possible," Medvedev said in the interview, a full transcript of which was released by the Kremlin.

"I do not want that all this ends up with the adopting of international sanctions because sanctions, as a rule, lead in a complex and dangerous direction," Medvedev added.

"But if there is no movement forward then no-one is going to exclude such a scenario," he said in the comments to German weekly Der Spiegel.

In its initial reply to the IAEA-drafted plan handed over on October 29, Tehran took issue with provisions for it to ship out 75 percent of its stocks before receiving any fuel, Iranian media reported.

A number of senior officials had argued that that stipulation would be a major concession for Iran for which it would receive little in return.

"What guarantee do we have that if we deliver our enriched uranium, we will get the fuel?" hardline cleric Ahmad Khatami said on Friday, giving vent to the misgivings of many in the regime.

In an interview with the New York Times on Thursday, IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei acknowledged Iranian suspicions.

"There's total distrust on the part of Iran," he said.