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India 'positive' on rail transit to Nepal

2 foreign secys finalise issues for PMs' Dec 19 meeting in Delhi; 3 deals to be signed; Dhaka focuses on Teesta water sharing agreement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India gave an upbeat response to giving Bangladesh railway transit to transport goods to Nepal, said Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes yesterday.

Three important agreements will be signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's three-day visit to India from December 19.

Dhaka will also emphasise striking a deal on sharing the Teesta water, said the foreign secretary.

Mijarul, after meeting his Indian counterpart Nirupama Rao, told journalists at the foreign ministry, "We want to remove cobwebs on different issues and understand each other's position in a transparent manner so we can make joint efforts to resolve the problems."

Nirupama came to Dhaka on Saturday ahead of Hasina's visit to India to prepare the ground for it.

Bangladesh's connectivity to Bhutan through India, sharing of power, resolution of outstanding border issues, transfer of enclaves, cooperation in river dredging to restore navigability and upgrading Bangladesh railway would be on the agenda of Hasina's first visit to India since her return to power in January.

The agreements to be signed are on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters, transfer of sentenced persons, and combating international terrorism, organised crimes and illegal drug trafficking.

Quayes said India agreed to allow railway transit to Nepal through three bordering points -- Birol-Radhikapur, Rahanpur-Singhabad and Chilahati-

Haldibari. Earlier in September, New Delhi agreed to provide Nepal-Bangladesh and Bhutan-Bangladesh connectivity.

Besides meeting Quayes, Nirupama also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia.

During the discussions, the two sides reviewed issues concerning bilateral ties and implementation of Bangladesh-India agreements reached during Dipu Moni's visit to India in September.

In a major development in bilateral relationship, India then agreed to give Bangladesh transit to Nepal and Bhutan, provide at least 100MW power on a priority basis, expand trade and communication and resolve other outstanding issues.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Top outlaw killed by rivals in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSTIA

One of the top leaders of outlawed Gono Bahini Obaidul Islam alias Obaidul Haq alias Lal Bhai was shot dead in India by his rival cadres Friday night.

Leader of the rival faction Azibor alias Azibor chairman claimed responsibility for the killing over telephone. Both Azibor and Obaidul were hiding in West Bengal.

The incident took place at Bagdi village of Karincha in 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Sources said a faction of the outfit led by Ahsanul Haq alias Mandar shot Obaidul on a street around 9:30pm while he was talking on his cellphone. He died on the spot.

The killers shot 5/6 rounds with a 9mm pistol, sources said.

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Dubious deposits for 'destitute'

Netrakona businesses forced to contribute to unregistered welfare fund; AL lawmaker terms it voluntary donation

STAR REPORT

The lawmaker of Netrakona-1 constituency has reportedly been realising huge amounts of money from local contractors, coal importers, dealers in white clay, two sub-registry offices and market lessees in the name of an unregistered destitute welfare fund.

Locals and sources at the LGED and the Roads and Highways Department said all contractors have to pay lawmaker Mostaque Ahmed Ruhi one percent of the money they draw against any work.

Requesting anonymity, coal importers of Bijoypur LC station alleged that they have to contribute Tk 1,000 to the destitute welfare fund against each letter of credit.

Businessmen of Bijoypur white clay mine have to pay Tk 50 per tonne of white clay while

Ruhi's men collect Tk 30 per deed from the sub-registry offices of Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazilas for the fund.

Local sources said the destitute welfare fund has a joint account at the Durgapur branch of Sonali Bank. Durgapur Baro Masjid Imam Hafez Hossain Ahmed and his assistant Anwar Hossain are the account holders although they do not have any authority over its operation.

Branch Manager Taiyab Ali told The Daily Star that former general secretary of Durgapur upazila Jubo League Mobarak Hossain deposits money in the account, but he refused to give details about the amount deposited so far.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hafez Hossain Ahmed and Anwar Hossain said, "We do not have any authority to operate the account but we have to sign cheques supplied by Jiban

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Cops on trail of 20 more Lashkar men

Work mostly as textile technicians; finance comes through some medicine traders

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

At least 20 more Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives of Indian and Pakistani nationalities are in Bangladesh to build a strong militant network here.

Officials investigating the reported LeT plot to attack the Indian and US embassies in Dhaka have also gathered that the Pakistan-based militant group is recruiting cadres from Rohingya refugees in Chittagong.

An investigator requesting anonymity to speak more freely about the ongoing probe shared the information with The Daily Star yesterday.

He said of the 20 LeT operatives, some hail from Kerala and Kashmir of India and some from Pakistan. Most of them work as textile technicians here.

Detectives have also learned they receive financial backing from some contraband medicine traders in the capital's Paltan and Mitford hospital areas.

DB sources said the detained LeT men told interrogators that a Pakistani national posing as a stranded Bihari is involved in Lashkar operations here. He runs a medicine store on Topkhana Road in Paltan and makes regular contributions to the militant campaign.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Teacher exposes his dark side

Gets arrested for humbling Hasina in question paper

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CIG

A question paper casting aspersions on the religious sentiment and knowledge of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina triggered strong resentments and protests among students, teachers and conscientious people in the port city.

The question paper in Islamic Studies for class eight in the annual examination at City Government Girls' High School was viewed as sarcastic and provocative, and intended to give a wrong message about the prime minister to the students.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong city unit brought out a procession and laid a siege to the school at Ice Factory Road demanding immediate punitive action against the teacher who set the question -- Tajalli Bin Azad.

High officials of the district administration and Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education rushed to school and asked



Tajalli Bin Azad

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

EU not happy with rights records

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union might intervene to prevent human rights violations in Bangladesh unless the scenario improves, head of the delegation of European Commission to Bangladesh Stefan Frowein said yesterday.

"If need be, we will intervene through dialogues and diplomatic means to defend human rights," he said at a national advocacy meeting organised by rights group Odhikar in the city.

"However, we would like the Bangladesh government to address the issue at national level," he said.

Frowein said that extrajudicial killings, torture in custody, cruelty, inhuman and degrading treatment are just unacceptable and no one should be subjected to any of those abuses.

The meeting on national

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

REBUILDING OF AILA-HIT EMBANKMENTS

2 lakh people stay homeless

Donors' lack of interest lamented

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Donors are not assisting the government in repairing damaged embankments in Aila-affected areas in coastal districts, said Disaster Management Bureau Director General Farhad Uddin.

"Around two lakh homeless are living on the embankments for several months after Aila hit the areas, as water still gushes into their houses through the damaged embankments. We asked donors to help repair it, but they said they are assessing the needs," he said addressing an inaugural session of a two-day national conference on community-based climate change adaptation at LGED auditorium in the capital.

There are certain issues of paramount importance but instead of addressing those, donors are spending money on researches, the chief guest of the session Farhad said.

Citing his visit to the Aila-affected areas, he said repairing embankments is more important than supplying food relief but donors are not coming forward with financial help, he added.

Besides, he said poverty should be addressed first but natural disasters hit the country repeatedly due to climate change that makes it even more difficult to eradicate poverty.

Strengthening embankments in the coastal areas, building houses on higher grounds and constructing more cyclone shelters are among the tasks imperative to reduce the impact of

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FAO SUMMIT Hasina flies to Italy today

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today leaves for Italy on a four-day visit to attend the World Summit on Food Security 2009 in Rome.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) will organise the three-day summit beginning on November 16 at a time when the world is facing a food crisis due to climate change and global economic recession.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

The First WiMAX Operator In Dhaka

See next page for details

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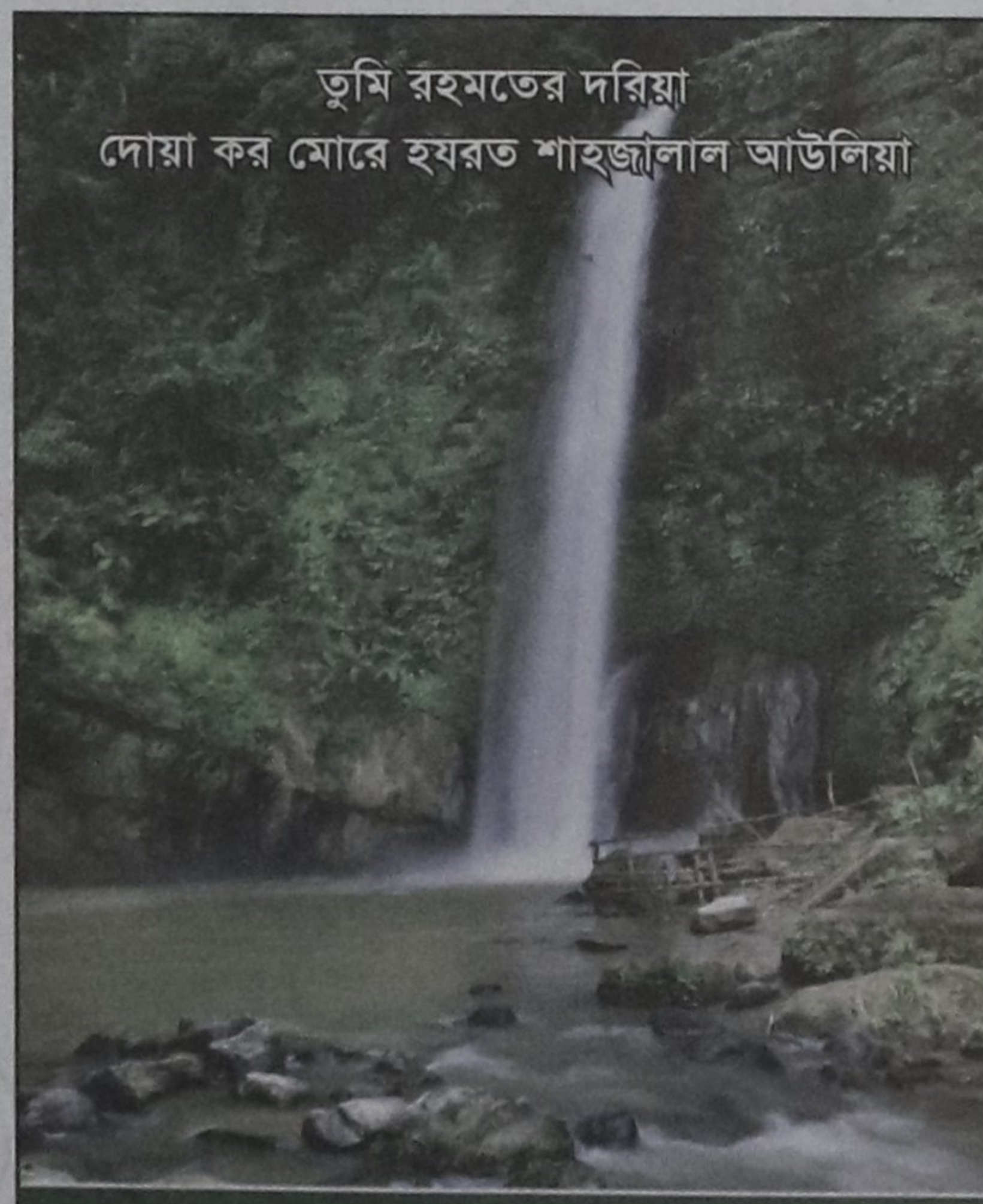
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