

Tk 1,000 crore

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Under the package, exporters will receive 5 percent cash incentives for new export destinations for three years while all export destinations, except the US, EU and Canada, will be considered as new, the minister said.

The exporters will get 5 percent cash incentives in the first year, 4 percent in the second year and 2 percent in the third and final year.

According to the package document, members of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) will receive this facility only for direct export of yarn.

Forward exchange booking is a must for exporting home textile in other currencies rather than dollar. This sub-sector will also receive the bank loan re-scheduling facility, the document says.

The government has also decided to give a special benefit to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Companies that exported up to \$3.5 million in FY2008-09 will be brought under the SME category, it says.

Such SMEs will receive 5 percent cash incentives if they can export more than the actual export of the last fiscal year in FY2009-10, Muhith said.

The government will also give 10 percent electricity bill to SMEs that do not have their own captive generators up to June 30, 2010, but the facility is subject to some conditions including non-availability of bank loan re-scheduling facility, not being an enterprise of the owner of a large industry and the basis of acceptance of real information, the finance minister said.

The government will introduce a uniform bank service charge after discussing with Bangladesh Bank and the Bankers' Association of

Bangladesh.

From now, an individual exporter can receive \$10 million from the Export Development Fund through three banks; an exporter gets \$1.5 million at present. The bank interest rate in this case will be London inter-bank offer rate (LIBOR) plus 2.5 percent and Bangladesh Bank will take necessary actions in this connection.

The BTMA members that import cotton and other fibres for producing yarn will also get the same benefits against a few conditions, the minister said.

He suggested forming a joint contributory fund for the export sector for improving market and quality of the products.

He said the government is ready to give Tk 300 crore to this fund and the private sector exporters have been asked to contribute at a rate of 0.1 percent on their free-on-board value of exportable products up to June 2010 and at 0.2 percent from July 2010.

The government will bear 50 percent cost of the operation of the National Institute of Textile Training, Research and Design from FY2010-11 although it bore 100 percent cost of the institution for FY 2008-09 and 60 percent for FY2009-10.

The government will also give cash incentives to shipbuilders and crust leather exporters as these sectors have potential. It has also declared bank loan moratorium facility for these sectors for a certain period, Muhith said.

On November 10, former finance minister M Syeduzzaman, chief of the working committee on recession, recommended that the government provide different facilities to exporters to offset the bad impacts of global recession from the domestic economy.

Bombs in Iraqi Shia city kill 1

AP, Baghdad

A double bombing yesterday killed 1 and injured 25 civilians in the Iraqi city of Karbala ahead of an Islamic holiday, officials said.

One bomb first exploded in a restaurant, drawing onlookers and police, before a suicide bomber on a motorcycle then drove toward the crowd and detonated his explosives, said a provincial police officer and a doctor at al-Husseini General Hospital.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

The restaurant was strewn with overturned tables and chairs in the aftermath of the blasts. Fragments of broken dishes and slippers littered the bloodstained floor.

"Where is the protection, where is the government?" a distraught woman shouted at Iraqi troops who arrived at the scene.

Karbala, a Shia holy city, has periodically been targeted by Sunni militants. Overall, violence descended sharply in Iraq.

The four-day holiday of Eid-ul-Azha begins for Iraq's Sunnis on Friday, while Shias start the feast on Saturday.

PM flies

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Centre in Port of Spain.

Hasina is among the 52 leaders attending the summit of the leaders from the former British colonies, including Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The entourage includes Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Ambassador-at-Large M Ziauddin, Foreign Secretary Mohammad Mijarul Quayes, Bangladesh High Commissioner to London M Saïdur Rahman Khan and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Apart from attending the inaugural function of CHOGM at the National Academy for Performing Arts, the Bangladesh premier is expected to hold a meeting with her host-country counterpart and attend a luncheon.

Besides, she will attend a dinner to be hosted by Queen Elizabeth II and a joint reception to be accorded by the premier of the host country and the commonwealth secretary-general.

During her stay, Hasina is expected to visit Bangladesh Trade Centre and enjoy a T20 cricket match there.

The PM will leave the Caribbean country on December 2 for Dhaka via London and Dubai.

She is expected to return home on December 4.

Increased salary

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The public servants. The highest salary was fixed at Tk 40,000 and the minimum at Tk 4,100.

The government will require an additional amount of Tk 6,222 crore a year to foot the bill for the pay rises. Only the basic salary will come into effect since July this year.

allowances from next July. In September last year, the seventh pay commission was formed with former chairman of the Revenue Reform Commission Mustafizur Rahman as its chairman.

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11 outlaws

FROM PAGE 16

The 11 persons who submitted applications to the authorities concerned to drop their names from the charge sheet are Habibur Rahman, Nurul Islam Talukder alias Montu, Selim Reza, Altaf Hossain, Arab Ali, Abed Fakir alias Joyanal Abedin, Abdul Matin Fakir, Shafiqul Islam alias Rubat, Nuruzzaman, Abdur Rahim and Kamal Box.

On May 18, the decision of sending recommendation letter to drop the names of 11 accused from the charge sheet was taken at a meeting at the conference room of deputy commissioner Sirajganj.

Sirajganj Superintendent of Police Mosharaf Hossain, Additional District Magistrate Dipak Ranjan Adhikari and Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdur Rahman were present at the meeting. As per the decision, two separate recommendation letters were sent to the home ministry and other relevant departments on May 25 and June 14.

CID police sources said accused Yusuf Ali, Abdur Razzaq, Anwar Hossain Sarker, Abdul Gafur, Saidul Islam, Serajul Islam and Altaf Hossain, who were earlier arrested from Belkuchi Char areas, in a written statement under section 164 before the magistrate court mentioned the involvement of other accused. In the statement, they also said that the 11 accused were not directly involved in attacking, killing and looting incident at Randhunibari temporary police outpost.

Abdur Rashid, CID inspector and investigation officer (IO) of the case, said there is no question of implicating the names of 11 persons in the charge sheet to harass them politically. He further said that Nurul Islam, a prime accused of the

case, formed a team in collusion with extremist leader Abdul Momin in the middle of 1999 and started collecting tolls from local loom owners and traders. Later, a temporary police outpost was set up at Randhunibari following complaints from local people.

As local people stopped paying tolls to the outlaws after setting up of the police outpost, the gang became furious and attacked the police outpost.

When contacted, Advocate Abdur Rahman, public prosecutor of Sirajganj district judge court, said two recommendation letters were sent to the higher authorities to drop names of 11 accused following the request of local Awami League (AL) leaders and high officials. But it is the matter of the higher authorities whether the proposal would be accepted or not, he added.

Deputy Commissioner Md Humayun Kabbeer and Superintendent of Police Mosharaf Hossain told The Daily Star that the recommendation letters were sent after analysing the rules and regulations and views of the committee concerned.

However, local people said they now feel insecure after hearing the news that names of 11 accused might be dropped from the charge sheet. The persons will create problem again after returning to their locality, they feared.

Jatrabari flyover

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flyover projects including Gazipur-Kanchpur and Satrasta-Moghbazar flyovers inline with 'Vision 2021'.

Local Government Division secretary and representatives from the flyover construction company Belhasa, Titas Gas, BTRC, Dhaka Wasa and DPDC attended the meeting.

2.5m gather

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year, the WHO said on Friday, and Saudi authorities have deployed as many as 20,000 health workers to deal with major outbreaks during the hajj.

Marghani said the threat of heavy rain in Makkah could raise the health risks for pilgrims, but that, "We have planned for this possibility."

Amid a war of words between Riyadh and Tehran over predominantly Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia's treatment of Iran's mainly Shia pilgrims, sources in the Iranian delegation said they would undertake a ritual protest in their own camp in the massive pilgrims' tent city in Mina valley.

While Saudis have banned any political acts that may disrupt the hajj, the Iranians said they will go ahead with the ritual chanting of "death to Israel, death to the United States" and call for unity among Muslims around the world.

Traffic was jammed around Makkah late Tuesday as last hundreds of thousands of latecomers arrived in the western Saudi Arabia city to launch into the rites of the

hajj, required for all able Muslims at least once in their lifetime.

The rites begin with the "tawaf," the circling seven times of the cubic Kaaba building in the centre of the massive, one-million-person capacity Grand Mosque, in whose direction all Muslims around the world pray.

Pilgrims then proceed to Mina to spend the night before climbing Mount Arafat, near where Islam's Prophet Hazrat Mohammed (SM) gave his final sermon, to recite the Quran and pray.

Possible flooding from a rainstorm Wednesday could complicate the movement of so many people, with drainage systems limited in normally parched Saudi Arabia.

Flooding in the Mina tent city "would be a catastrophe," said Karim Saleh, 34, a pilgrim from Qatar.

Authorities were expecting about two million foreigners this year for the annual pilgrimage. But the number of pilgrims from inside the kingdom, which can top half a million, is expected to be sharply down this year due to fears about the flu.

Rental power projects

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and required machinery in their stocks," said an official. "But it was later found that they were neither experienced, nor did they have any machinery in their stocks."

Such practice had given contracts to novice companies like Energy Prima, Venture Energy and Precision Energy during the caretaker government's tenure. All these companies not only failed to implement the power projects in time but also resorted to court so that the PDB cannot penalise them for their failures.

This time the country's biggest furniture manufacturer Otobi along with a Chinese partner submitted documents showing that it had necessary equipment ready for the projects.

As required by the tender terms, Otobi's bids did not provide power plant equipment serial numbers as a proof that it owned these.

Sources pointed out that for Bheramara project, Otobi provided letter of firm commitment from a Chinese company named Tellhow Sci-Tech Co stating that Tellhow owned a 110 MW diesel-fired power plant, and it has committed to supply that to Otobi for the Bheramara project. But the sources said the plant, which is not in operation for the last one year, is actually

owned by another company named Hui Yang Power Generation Company.

Otobi also provided end user certificate of a Chinese company on a letterhead having no contact information. The letterhead written in Chinese reads Guangdong Guang-Dian Power Grid Group Co. But this company changed its name to "Guangdong Power Grid Company" in 2005.

Someone named Chen Yueming of "Power Purchase Department" of that company signed the letterhead. But there is no such department or person in that company. The address typed below the signature also refers to a different organisation. The contact e-mails belong to China Minsheng Banking Corp.

Denying any external pressure on bid evaluation, PDB Chairman Alamgir Kabir however expressed his hope that the tender evaluation would be completed within this month. The bid process is being delayed as many questions have been raised on the selection process and qualification of certain bidders, he said.

The PDB had repeatedly promised to stick to its deadline for completing the tender for rental power projects to increase power supply from the next lean period.

2 jailed

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Khan delivered the verdict in the evening in presence of the accused.

Bina Akhter, an animal lover of Dighirparh area, filed a case with Bagerhat Police Station on April 27 last year accusing the two for beating up the crocodile called "Pilpil" in the house of one Masud Fakir on April 26, 2008.

"I could not check my emotion seeing such brutality of the two so-called fakirs (mendicant at the mosque). So I lodged an FIR seeking justice against the crime committed by a group of impostors," the complainant said in her FIR.

Police arrested the two accused at their houses in Dighirparh on the same night the case was lodged and produced them before court on April 28, 2008.

The court rejecting their bails sent them to Bagerhat district jail.

In the charge sheet police stated that without any provocation, the fakirs gave the croc sedatives and beat it with sticks.

The crocodiles of the historic Khan Jahan Ali Dighi are subjected to torture if they do not respond to the call of a group of people who claim themselves caretakers of the dighi (a big pond). These people collect money from visitors by exhibiting the crocodiles.

The authorities responsible for looking after the dighi said five crocodiles died in the last 10 years due to ruthless torture by these so-called fakirs.

Pratibha Patil

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On her arrival at the air base at around 9:00am, Patil, the supreme commander of the armed forces, was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour by Indian Air Force personnel.

President Patil's travelling in a fighter aircraft was the culmination of more than three months' preparations after she expressed a desire to fly in a Sukhoi.

She underwent a fitness regime and was given a detailed briefing on her proposed flight besides an audiovisual presentation of what to expect before and during the flight by senior IAF officers at the Presidential Palace in New Delhi.

Patil became the second Indian president to fly in a Sukhoi after her predecessor APJ Abdul Kalam had done the same in 2006.

There are about 784 woman officers working in Indian Air Force but at present they are kept from flying combat aircraft.

Nizami

FROM PAGE 16

Bangladesh.

The book selected 500 personalities among politicians, scholars, preachers of Islam, social work, development and culture.

Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud topped the list followed by Iran's Supreme Leader Grand Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Ali Khamenei.

King of Morocco Mohammed VI, King of Jordan Abdullah II bin Al Hussein and Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan got the 3rd, 4th and 5th place in the list.

High price

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He has already been offered Tk 4 lakh from a potential buyer.

Despite a High Court directive against setting up cattle markets on the roads, huge traffic congestion has occurred in Armanitola, Nayabazar and their adjoining areas due to the presence of unauthorised markets.

Dhaka City Corporation issued 15 leases for makeshift cattle markets, including those at Armanitola (Nayabazar), Meradia Bazar, Jhigatola-Hajarobag, Rahmatganj, Dhupkhola, Balurmat (adjacent to the Brothers Union Sporting Club in Kamalapur), Banarupa Housing Project at Khilkhet, and the open space adjacent to the Taltala (Khilgaon) bus stand, Argaoan (adjacent to the LGED Bhaban) and at the DCC on the south side of Outfall Staff Quarters.

Although the DCC initially invited tenders for 10 cattle markets, last-minute permission was given for five additional markets, which include those at Dholai par schoolfield, Moitri Shingha in Uttar Shahjahanpur, the field of Dholai par High School, the open space near Bonani-Kakoli rail gate and at Azampur Government High School in Uttara.

BNP units get

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Taimur Alam Khandaker was elected the president and Kazi Maniruzzaman the general secretary of the Narayanganj unit of BNP.

During the Khagrachhari council at Alutia, at least six leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations were injured in clashes between two factions led by Samiran Dewan and Abdur Wadud Bhuiyan.

The council of Sylhet district BNP, which could not be held just two days ago because of an apprehension of clashes among the existing groups, was held yesterday peacefully.

A rival faction brought out a procession near the Humayun Rashid Chowdhury square, but police barred it from advancing towards the conference venue at about 2km distance. The demonstrators put up blockades on the road there but later police cleared it.

Former lawmaker M Ilyas Ali was elected the district unit president in Sylhet, advocate Abdul Gaffar the general secre-

tary and Ali Ahmed its organising secretary.

Party leaders Tariqul Islam and Nazrul Islam Khan were present at the Khulna unit's council chaired by Nazrul Islam Manju.

Chilmari upazila administration in Kurigram yesterday imposed section 144 around a BNP council venue from 9:00am to 6:00pm as two factions of the party were going to organise their councils there at the same time.

Earlier, councils of Faridpur, Chittagong, Bhola, Chhatak, Sunamganj, Cox's Bazar, Habiganj and Comilla could not be held because of internal conflicts.

The BNP could not even announce new committees in a number of districts including Chittagong and Faridpur.

Party leaders alleged that they could not hold councils in Satkhira and Lalmonirhat as the administration had imposed section 144 on the council venues.

Mumbai attacks

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Mumbai rampage on Pakistan's banned militant group LeT. The attacks stalled a fragile four-year peace process between the two nuclear-armed south Asian rivals.

In Washington for a state visit this week, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called on the world to pressure Pakistan to rein in extremists.

US President Barack Obama said he believed Pakistan was making progress in fighting extremism.

The nuclear-armed Muslim nation is locked in offensives against Taliban militants in the northwest and has historically funded anti-India groups.

Wednesday's indictments come a week after India handed Pakistan more information about the attacks, which New Delhi blamed Pakistani "official agencies" for abetting. Islamabad flatly denies such charges.

Court proceedings have taken place behind closed doors with journalists barred from the hearings and defence lawyers leaking only small details.

"We will defend them. The

next hearing is December 5," said Rajput.

New Delhi has been pressuring Islamabad to speed up a probe of Pakistani militants blamed for the 60-hour siege that saw 10 heavily armed gunmen target luxury hotels, Mumbai's main railway station, a restaurant and a Jewish centre.

Repeating India's stance, junior foreign minister Shashi Tharoor told parliament that Pakistan had failed to provide the "necessary cooperation in bringing the perpetrators of what happened last year to justice".

According to news agency Press Trust of India, the latest information handed to Pakistan included statements of key witnesses, including a magistrate and FBI officials, from the trial of the lone gunman to survive the attacks.

The gunman, Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, has confessed to his involvement in the attacks in a dramatic announcement to a court in Mumbai.

The two countries, which gained independence from British rule and split in the 1947 partition, have fought three wars.

Obama, Manmohan

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all nations," Obama said, flanked by Singh. "As we work to build that future, India is indispensable."

In a toast later before the more than 300 guests dining in candlelit tent on the White House lawn, Singh told a moved Obama that his historic election "captured the imagination" of millions of Indians.

"You are an inspiration to all those who cherish the values of democracy, diversity and equal opportunity," Singh said.

In a nod to Indian concerns about Pakistan, the two leaders issued a joint statement voicing "grave concern about the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremists emanating from India's neighbourhood."

Obama accepted an invitation to visit India next year and his administration signed eight memoranda aiming to solidify growing cooperation.

One 10-million-dollar initiative named after Obama and Singh would support university linkages; India is already the top source of foreign students in the United States.

The two nations also agreed to launch a dialogue on economic relations, with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to head to India in early 2010.

Other projects would work to boost food security and support research on green technology, with two dozen cities across the United States and India to test new systems on solar technology.

Climate change has been one of the few points of recent discord between India and the United States, with each side pressing the other to make further commitments ahead of next month's high-stakes Copenhagen summit.

But Obama, who is expected to make an announcement in coming days on a target for US cuts in carbon emissions, said he agreed with Singh and Chinese leaders to reach a "strong operational agreement" on reducing global warming.

"It takes us one step closer

to a successful outcome in Copenhagen," Obama said.

With a cold drizzle covering Washington, the White House called off an elaborate welcome on the South Lawn. But it went ahead with a glittering dinner whose guests included entertainment mogul Steven Spielberg and members of the increasingly influential 2.5-million-strong Indian-American community.

"You are the hottest ticket in town," Vice President Joe Biden told Singh at a lunch he co-hosted for the premier with Clinton.

Showing the new president's style, his wife Michelle Obama served fresh argula (rocket) grown at a White House garden she set up in a drive to encourage better eating habits.

The entertainment for the night was to feature two Oscar-winners -- Jennifer Hudson, the singer and actress from "Dreamgirls," and A.R. Rahman, the composer of music for "Slumdog Millionaire."

The pageantry comes one week after Obama paid his maiden visit to China, where he faced criticism at home for a lack of concrete achievements, with Chinese state television not even broadcasting his sole public forum.

India, by contrast, has transformed in a matter of years in US eyes. After decades of mutual unease during the Cold War, ties with the United States have been rapidly warming and enjoy strong support across party lines.

Former president George W. Bush signed a landmark accord with Singh to allow cooperation on civilian nuclear technology, ending New Delhi's long pariah status for declaring itself a nuclear weapons state.

Obama is a strong advocate of nuclear disarmament and many Indians doubt he would have reached the same agreement. But Obama pledged to go ahead with the deal.

"I am confident and I have the assurance that that process can be completed without much further loss of time," Singh said.

Curious change

FROM PAGE 1

and audacious. It also vowed to resist such move until trial of war criminals are held and Jamaat apologises to the nation for its misdeeds during the Liberation War.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shahriar Kabir, acting president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, said, Jamaat, the main opponent of our Liberation War, does not have any right to observe the Victory Day until it publicly apologises for its misdeeds.

"We'll resist Jamaat wherever we see them observing any programme during the month of victory," Shahriar, also a veteran freedom fighter, vowed.

"There will be no cooperation with them [Jamaat] until trial of the war criminals is completed," he added.