

Teesta talks

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however, was for having patience over the issue since there had not been any-level talks between the two countries on sharing water of Teesta or other rivers for the last seven years.

He said, "You cannot expect a solution in seven days." Karim expressed hope that the agreement would resolve the Teesta issue as the Ganges Water Treaty between Bangladesh and India worked out in 1996.

He said India-Bangladesh Joint Working Group on land and maritime boundary issues would meet separately, hopefully a few weeks after the JRC meeting.

"There are difference in opinions over these issues but we want to resolve them," he said.

Both the countries have territorial claims on a portion of the Bay of Bengal and the matter has reached the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

He said out of 4,016 kilometres of land boundary, India and Bangladesh are yet to settle dispute on only a 6.1km stretch. It includes two water routes, which sometimes becomes challenging because of shifting course of rivers.

"We have to think out of the box to solve the issue of shifting rivers and the boundary demarcation", the Bangladeshi envoy said.

Karim termed Hasina's visit a "game changer" and on the outcome of the visit he said, "What we have got not only met our expectation but exceeded our expectation."

Asked to explain what he meant by "exceeded expectation", he said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has doubled India's Line of Credit from

\$500 million without Bangladesh ever bargaining for it.

The Indian prime minister realised that the economic development of Bangladesh is in favour of India's strategic interests. He recalled late Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's remark in mid-1980s about the need for an economically strong and stable Bangladesh.

"It is time we righted the wrongs in our relations," he said adding, "We cannot afford distant proximities."

Proshika

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6:30pm and asked the employees, demonstrating in front of the office, to go to work today.

Police took control of Proshika Bhaban on January 12, after driving out around 25 supporters of Faruque who had taken over the building by force the preceding midnight despite a High Court order allowing Faruque only to enter the building alone to meet the present chairman and the CEO.

Several hundred Proshika employees have been staging sit-ins since then demanding their right to enter their office building.

Proshika CEO Mahbubul Karim filed a writ petition last Sunday seeking High Court's direction upon the police to hand over the keys to him.

An HC bench comprising Justice Mohammad Montazuddin Ahmed and Justice Naima Haider gave the directive on Tuesday after hearing the petition.

Rob said the Proshika authorities in presence of police will prepare a list of missing valuables and documents in the wake of the recent break-in to the building.

ILLEGAL WEALTH

ACC sues livestock officer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The Anti-Corruption Commission has filed a case against a store officer of livestock department for amassing wealth worth about Tk 6.5 crore beyond his known sources of income.

Aminur Rahman, ACC assistant director of coordinated district offices of Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira, filed the case against Afsar Ali Mallik with Tejgaon Police Station in the capital yesterday afternoon.

The ACC found that Afsar made the money in between January, 2004 and January 27, 2009.

He joined the livestock department in 1982 as a store-keeper and was later attached to the livestock department at Farmgate in the capital as an assistant store officer.

Afsar became a shareholder of Falcon Homes Ltd, a real estate company registered with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, hiding his identity of a government officer.

Afsar deposited over Tk 3.16 crore in his account at Karwan Bazar branch of Standard Chartered Bank and withdrew the same on different occasions during the period, the ACC investigation reveals.

On May 5 last year, the ACC issued a notice to Afsar asking him to submit wealth statement following allegation against him.

Afsar, hailing from Chowbaria village of Satkhira district, submitted wealth statement worth Tk 73.18 lakh on May 27 last year.

Earlier on January 21, the ACC filed another case against him with Sonadanga Police Station of Khulna on charges of corruption.

Pak troops kill 3 militants in N Waziristan

AP, Dera Ismail Khan

Pakistani security forces killed three militants in North Waziristan yesterday, their first reported foray for months in a region where America is calling for action against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, intelligence officials said.

North Waziristan is home to hundreds of fighters that U.S. officials say are fueling much of the insurgency in neighbouring Afghanistan. They say Pakistani military action to clear the area is essential if the American-led war in Afghanistan is to succeed. The army said in a statement three militants were killed and two wounded in a search-and-clearance operation close to Miran Shah, the major town in North Waziristan. It gave no more details, and there was nothing to suggest it was the start of a major offensive.

Earlier, intelligence officials said army helicopter gunships killed one person in a car close to Miran Shah. It was not immediately clear whether they were referring to the same operation.

On Thursday, the Pakistani army ruled out launching any new offensives in the border area for at least six months. It said it wanted to consolidate gains it has made in other parts of the region over the last year, including in South Waziristan where a major offensive is now winding down.

The Pakistani army has several bases in North Waziristan, but residents say soldiers rarely leave them and the region is in control of the militants. Faced with Pakistani inaction, the United States has launched scores of missiles strikes against militant targets there over the last 18 months.

Schoolboy

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Police found the stabbed body of Alamgir at Shanirakhra half an hour after he went missing, the SAdded.

In the other incident, South Keraniganj police recovered the body of Nazmus Saqib, 13, a student of class VIII at Nakhla para Hossain Ali High School, from inside a sack floating in the Buriganga on Thursday.

Saqib's father Mansur Ahmed told The Daily Star, "I lodged a general diary with Tejgaon Police Station after my son had gone missing from our Shaheenbagh residence a week ago."

Mansur Ahmed yesterday identified the body of Saqib at the Mitford Hospital morgue.

"I received a phone call early Thursday and the caller told me that I will never get back my son," Mansur said.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station, said they are trying to trace the caller.

Biswa Ijtema

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their juma prayers on the roof of vehicles while a number of devotees were seen offering prayers from rooftops of nearby buildings.

Locals and witnesses claimed that around 25 lakh devotees attended the juma prayers yesterday.

"I have been attending Biswa Ijtema for the last five years but never seen so many people on the first day," said Abu Solaiman, a devotee from Mymensingh.

Many said they could have offered their prayers in a better way if vehicular movement were stopped before 12:00noon and the authorities could arrange loudspeakers outside the Ijtema ground.

A few street vendors were seen selling polythene sheet and newspapers to devotees who had to offer prayers on the road.

Shamsul Haque Tuku, state minister for home, Shahjahan Miah, state minister for religious affairs, Mozibur Rahman Fakir, state minister for health, AKM Mozammel Haque, lawmaker from Gazipur-1, Zahid Hasan Rusel, lawmaker from Gazipur-4, Ajmat Ullah Khan, mayor of Tongi municipality, the Gazipur deputy commissioner, Gazipur police superintendent and other high-ranking officials offered their juma prayers at the Ijtema ground.

The Biswa Ijtema began with the delivery of religious sermons after the Fajr prayers yesterday.

The Tablig-e-Jamaat has been organising the gargantuan gathering since 1976.

The event mainly focuses on prayer and meditation seeking

divine blessings of Allah. The event will conclude with Akheri Munajat, the final prayer, on the last day on January 24.

Maulana Jobayerul Hasan of India is scheduled to lead the Akheri Munajat.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia and top civil and army officials are expected to attend the prayer.

The programmes of the Ijtema include delivering sermons on six foundations of Tablig, faith (Iman), recitation from the Quran and Hadith, prayer for spiritual adulation, exaltation and welfare of the Muslim community, forming new teams of Tablig, arranging dowry-free marriages, and registering names for Chilla (a forty-days spiritual tour).

Ulemas and Islamic scholars from different countries will deliver lectures, which will be instantly interpreted in Bangla, English, Arabic and a few other languages.

The number of overseas participants is incremental with more than 9,000 devotees from different countries attending the event this year. Many are expected to join before Akheri Munajat.

The law enforcers meanwhile captured 15 pickpockets and snatchers from the Ijtema venue from Thursday night to Friday morning. Eight devotees were reportedly mugged by members of Agyan party, said police sources.

Some 40 devotees have been admitted to Tongi hospital with complaints of diarrhoea, asthma, cold, cough and vomiting as of Thursday afternoon.

Officials from Kingfisher Airlines also said they were strengthening their own security for passengers because of the latest alert.

"We are strictly abiding by all the guidelines given to us by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security," an airline executive who did not want to be named said.

Meanwhile, the Press Trust of India news agency, quoting unnamed officials, reported that the LeT had acquired paragliding equipment to launch aerial attacks on India. Officials said they were unaware of any such threat.

The developments came as India named a former foreign secretary, Shiv Shankar Menon, as its new national security advisor in a step to revamp its intelligence machinery.

The last hijacking in India occurred on Christmas Eve in 1999 when Islamic rebels seized an Indian Airlines plane travelling from Nepal to New Delhi and forced it to land in the then-Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

One passenger was stabbed to death by the hijackers before New Delhi agreed to release four Islamic militants in exchange for the 167 passengers and crew.

India has been battling an Islamic insurgency in its Muslim-majority region of Kashmir for the past 20 years.

Prominent rebel groups fighting Indian troops in the disputed region include the LeT and the Jaish-e-Mohammed, founded by one of the militants freed in return for the Indian plane hostages.

The overall security is provided by the government but we have our own security and our aircraft are guarded," company senior general manager AK Shivanandan told AFP.

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Villagers beat

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gun till 6:00pm when the tiger was killed.

Meanwhile, at least 15 people were injured as Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel charged baton on a gathering of villagers who attempted to kill the tiger at about 5:00pm.

Villagers also threw bricks at law enforcers and forest officials while incidents of chase and counter-chase took place throughout the day between local people and members of law enforcement agencies.

Locals and forest officials said the tiger entered the village in search of food after crossing river Chunna Thursday night.

In the morning, villagers found the tiger sitting near the house of Khorshed Ali of Abadchandipur village and chased it. At one stage, the tiger entered the kitchen of Khorshed Ali and villagers locked its door from outside.

They later started guarding the kitchen so that the tiger could not come out and attack them. Meantime, police, BDR and forest guards rushed to the spot.

Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker HM Golam Reza, commanding officer of 7 Rifles Battalion Lt Col Badrul Alam, officials of local administration and forest department also rushed to the spot and asked the villagers not to kill the tiger.

They told villagers that they were bringing tranquilliser gun to catch the tiger alive.

At one stage, villagers killed the tiger at about 6:00pm as forest department officials failed to bring tranquilliser gun by the time, local sources said.

Sources in the forest department said they could not bring tranquilliser gun by the evening, as there is no such gun kept at its Khulna office.

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Indian land scam

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Indian land scam spotlights military corruption

AFP, New Delhi

A land scandal involving Indian generals has shaken public faith in the country's massive military at a time when unprecedented sums are being spent on modernising the armed forces.

Four high-profile generals face an official investigation into charges that they gave the go-ahead for a builder to acquire a 70-acre (30-hectare) plot of army land at a throw-away price in the Himalayan resort of Darjeeling.

Deepak Kapoor, chief of India's army, said he was left speechless by the allegations against the four-star officers, including Lieutenant General Avadhesh Prasad, one of the country's eight key military advisers.

"Such aspects dent the image of the nation and these aberrations need to be corrected," Kapoor told a news conference last week, adding

that they also affected military morale.

The land scandal coincided with action last month against 41 officers who allegedly sold service weapons on the black market, confirmed Kapoor who heads the world's fourth largest military.

Experts such as retired lieutenant general Afsir Karim fear corruption in the higher echelons could affect national security.

"The system must reform itself because corruption now seems to be an accepted form at various levels and this will hurt India's readiness, especially for any big conflict such as a war with China," Karim warned.

"Besides, corruption gets in the way of modernisation and it blunts the credibility of the armed forces."

A string of eye-popping fraud cases has damaged the institution in recent years.

because we have no prior experience with three dimensional technology," he said.

"This was abandoned because we all agreed that the gas reserve of the Bakhrabad field would not increase. So we want to do something that has encouraging results," he added.

Bapex would now start with surveying 325 square kilometres of the Rashidpur gas field. This would take three to four months as it is the first such venture of Bapex.

It would be followed by studying in Titas field. But as this field has developed some leakage in recent years, Bapex would have to take advice from a consultant whether they would be able to conduct a 3-d survey there.

"Chevron can produce more gas from Bibiyana because they have a picture of that field. We don't have such pictures. In the past we kicked off gas production in the Bakhrabad field without having any clear idea about the field size or health. The field initially produced 220 mmcf/d gas. Now it came down to 35 mmcf/d. And the field is surely not that old. This is a good example why we need to have updated information about the fields to keep reliable production," he observed.

He said they were also discussing whether the unit would be formed with serving or retired army or government officials.

DGFI has its own counter intelligence agency.

The intelligence agencies have failed to provide information in advance about the BDR mutiny and the subsequent killings. They have also been blamed for failing to provide information beforehand regarding high-profile criminal acts in Bangladesh.

The home secretary said National Committee for Intelligence Coordination, formed on July 30 last year, is meeting every month to coordinate the activities of different intelligence agencies by overcoming limitations.

The cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the Prime Minister's Office, director generals of National Security Intelligence (NSI), DGFI and Special Security Forces (SSF) and the inspector general of police (IGP) are members of the committee.

The committee was formed following the intelligence agencies' failure to warn the government before the BDR Pilkhana headquarters carnage took place.

On May 21, the 12-member national enquiry committee on BDR mutiny submitted a 309-page report to the home minister. The report, disclosed on May 27, failed to determine the "genuine" reasons and motives behind the mutiny.

The probe, however, revealed that existing "negative sentiments" among BDR soldiers about army officers and their dissatisfaction and resentment over unfulfilled demands could be the primary reason.

The Daily Times quoted Sanaulah, as saying that Parliament's decision regarding providing immunity to the President under the Constitution is yet to come.

Kaptai hydropower

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Bangladesh authorities to assign Sadelmi's contract to Busi Power, we contacted the Italian government to settle the matter and got their approval on December 15 last year," Jalal Uddin said.

"Busi Power is now carrying out the job after we requested them to complete the work as soon as possible," the project director said.

He said contract to overhaul unit-4 has been signed with a Japanese company at a cost of Tk 150 crore.

Power production at two units out of five will remain suspended till May this year, as unit-3 is likely to go into operation in May.

The station requires 105 mean sea level (MSL) of water to keep all the units operational. The water level now stands at 96 MSL and power generation will stop when it goes below 75 MSL, sources said.

Production at the 420MW Rauzan Thermal Power Plant remains suspended for long due to lack of gas supply while the 116MW Shikabaha Power Plant often trips due to technical glitches and gas supply shortfall.

As a result, over 5,22,800 power subscribers in the Southern Zone (Chittagong) of Power Development Board (PDB) have to experience around 250MW load-shedding during peak hours every day against a daily demand of around 600MW.

Construction work of 40MW unit-1 and 40MW unit-2 of Karnaphuli Hydro Power Station started in October, 1957, and was completed in December, 1961, while work for unit-3 began in 1969 and was completed in December, 1981. The construction work for unit-4 and unit-5 was completed in December, 1987, having been started in 1984.

Behind gas crisis

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This is important because this bigger reserve allows higher gas production from the Bibiyana field, which is now pumping more than 650 million cubic feet of gas a day into the national grid.

"This shows the importance of having information about gas fields," said a Petrobangla official.

"For example, our Titas gas field has all the signs of being even bigger a gas field than Bibiyana."

As per latest official estimation, total recoverable gas at Titas gas field is 4.740 TCF, of which 65 percent has been already recovered. This field is currently producing around 400 million cubic feet of gas a day. All 15 wells of this field use 3.5 inch casings to extract gas.

Whereas, the wells of Bibiyana are installed with 5 to 6 inch casings. Therefore Bibiyana can produce more gas from each well.

Experts say, this production level can be increased as they believed that the field's actual recoverable reserve would be much higher and a new study is required to understand this gas field's actual health.

Although the Titas field is producing gas since 1968, gas flow pressure from most of its 15 wells hovers around 2,700 to 2,800 pressure per square inch (psi). Normally, gas from a new well flows at 3000 psi. If the gas pressure falls below 2,200 psi, installing a bigger casing would not increase gas production.

"There is no alternative for us but to conduct a three dimensional seismic survey in the Titas field. If we find a bigger reserve, we can think about 5-inch tubing. Times have changed and we need more gas," said an expert.

The gas demand in 2012-13 would rise between 2,500 million cubic feet of gas a day and 2,873 million cubic feet of gas a day and