

\$1b credit line to Dhaka

Bangladesh, India sign deal; Delhi has agreed on transit for Bangladesh to Nepal, Bhutan: Pranab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will receive a billion-dollar soft loan from India through a deal seen as a new era in the relations between the two neighbours.

The \$1 billion loan, the biggest ever credit package by India to any nation, will finance 14 development projects of Bangladesh -- particularly for infrastructure building.

The line of credit is also the single largest loan to Bangladesh from any nation, development bank or donor agency.

Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday signed the loan agreement in presence of Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Bangladesh Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

Food Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque and the Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman were also present on

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Facts in loans

REZAUL KARIM BYRON and SHARIEF KHAN

While the BNP has alleged that 1.75 percent interest for the \$1 billion loan from India is very high, facts about loans taken by different previous governments show that the rate is not high.

The main opposition party also found it disgraceful that the government was signing the loan deal with Indian Exim Bank instead of the Indian government. In practice, most of the bilateral loans are typically signed with national bank of the lending country.

Like any other developing nation, Bangladesh has taken different types of loans and grants from different countries and multilateral donors--sometimes on hard conditions and sometimes soft.

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Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gano Bhaban yesterday.

Indian FM, PM discuss bilateral issues

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Finance Minister and influential Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gano Bhaban yesterday afternoon.

They discussed a wide range of bilateral issues, said PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

The Indian minister apprised the PM of the one billion dollar credit to be given to Bangladesh for implementing various infrastructure development projects.

Azad said the issues discussed at the meeting included quick implementation of the joint declaration of the two countries on Dahagram and Angarpota

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New power link stays on hold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will not give new electricity connection to any industry or house in the next two months, said Abdul Kalam Azad, secretary to Power Division of the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, yesterday.

"We did not give any new connection over the last four months because of power crisis. This decision will last for the next two months to minimise load shedding and meet the existing demand of electricity," he said.

Azad was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural of a three-day long workshop on "Rural electrification through renewable energy: a sustainable model for replication in South Asia" jointly organised by Saarc Energy Centre and Grameen Shakti at a city hotel yesterday.

The country has been reeling under an increasing power crisis for the last several years. Presently it has turned acute and the country is experiencing hourly load shedding almost round the clock, Azad said.

The government has taken up dozens of power projects and a number of measures to conserve energy to ease the ever-increasing power demand, he added.

The secretary said the decision to suspend new power connection for six months is one such conservation measure.

Alongside such measures, the government is working hard to popularise the solar energy system in the country, he added.

Azad also stressed the need for coordinated efforts of all the

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MOSQUE CONSTRUCTION 10 hurt in attack on Ahmadiyyas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Ten Ahmadiyyas were injured yesterday when a group of enraged villagers attacked them at Chandara village of Ghatail upazila yesterday afternoon.

The followers of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Bangladesh came under attack at 2:00pm after inaugurating the construction works of a mosque at Akandapara, local sources said.

The injured were Jafarullah, Mozibor, Halim,

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'DODGY DOCTORS' 4 out of 17 join Patuakhali duties

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, from Patuakhali

Against the backdrop of thousands of people suffering, only four out of 17 doctors posted in Patuakhali 250-bed general hospital have joined their duties.

The Barisal division Directorate of Health transferred these doctors on June 21 with a directive to join the hospital within seven days from the issuance of the order.

Ironically, of the four doctors who have joined, one has already been transferred to his native district of Bhola while another of the same district is pursuing Directorate General of Health in Dhaka to get himself transferred there, said sources in the hospital administration.

The initiative to fill up the vacant posts for doctors came after five years of the hospital's odyssey with only 18 doctors against a requirement of 58.

On an average Patuakhali general hospital every day receives about 400 patients in its outdoor facilities while 100 in the boarding facilities. Most patients here complain of poor treatment.

With serious injuries Yasin Miah, 54, has been admitted to the surgery unit of the hospital a month ago. He said only one orthopedic physician runs the unit and visits patients once a day, five days a week.

"Proper treatment and medical consultancy

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BCL at it again

10 injured in factional clash at RU

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Ten people were injured, two of them bullet-hit, in a factional clash among Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists over establishing supremacy on Rajshahi University campus yesterday afternoon.

Later in the evening police picked up BCL university unit general secretary Mazedul Islam Opu from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital premises in connection with the

violence.

Campus sources say the clash ensued as Opu's men threatened Kabir Hossain, supporter of BCL RU unit president Awal Kabir Joy, at Ziaur Rahman Hall on Friday night.

Both the sides locked in an altercation around 3:00pm near Tukitaki Chattar on the campus yesterday.

At one stage, supporters of Joy attacked Opu's men with machetes, Chinese axes and

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An armed group of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists in Rajshahi University during their factional feud on campus that left 10 injured. More photos on page 5.

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