

# Transit to benefit

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freely as soon as the connectivity is established.

In March this year, Hasina also sought Chinese assistance for establishing direct road and rail links with China. A specific proposal was put forward for construction of Chittagong-Kunming highway through Myanmar to boost trade and economic cooperation.

"Bangladesh has been almost isolated regionally and globally, but we don't want to be isolated as the world is now moving fast, and countries around the world are connecting with each other for economic development," the foreign minister said at the briefing yesterday, adding that Bangladesh will benefit economically by allowing transit facilities to India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

The issue of allowing India transit to its north-eastern states through Bangladesh was a bone of contention between the two neighbours.

Replying to a question, Dipu Moni said not only trucks from Nepal will have access to Bangladesh in Bangladesh, similarly Bangladeshi trucks will also have access to Nepal through India.

In that context, she made it clear that no fresh agreement or protocol or amendment to previous protocol will be required to open the transit way for Nepal and Bhutan.

"This will be done just through exchange of letters. We are hopeful to do that within this year," she said.

The foreign minister expressed the hope that an interim agreement between Bangladesh and India on sharing the water of the Teesta River will also be concluded next year.

The Joint Rivers Commission will meet in few months, and both countries are moving towards a positive conclusion, she added.

When asked whether the 14 projects approved for getting allocations from the Indian billion dollar credit will serve only Indian interest, connecting its eastern and western parts, Dipu Moni said, "The one billion dollar line of credit was taken for Bangladesh's interest, but India will also benefit. If the connectivity is in place, all will be benefited. It will be a win-win situation."

She said people should get rid of the negative thinking that only India will be benefited if roads and ports are developed. "Bangladesh will be benefited, and in some areas India will also get the benefit."

Termining the Indian loan at the interest rate of 1.75 percent as a kind of a "concessional loan", the foreign minister said donor agencies will not provide loans for every project that serves Bangladesh's interest. When donors provide loans or grants, they protect their own interests too, she added.

Replying to another question, Dipu Moni said the Indian government will give the loan through Exim Bank, and the Bangladesh government will fix its priority projects for utilising the loan.

When a reporter pointed out that the projects slated for allocations from the loan, were identified not by the Bangladesh government alone but by both governments, Dipu disagreed saying, Bangladesh will prepare the projects, and India will provide the loan for the projects.

When reporters pointed out that Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in his statement said the two governments identified the projects together, she expressed her ignorance about Pranab's arrival statement at Shahjalal International Airport on Saturday.

When another reporter pointed out that Bangladesh had prepared 29 projects for utilising the loan, and then officials of the two countries primarily finalised 14 projects at a meeting in New Delhi, the foreign minister expressed her ignorance about that as well.

Replying to another question, Dipu Moni informed the media that Bangladesh-India Joint Boundary Working Group will meet in September to address the issues of demarcation of 6.5 kilometres of border area, and exchange of enclaves and adversely possessed lands.

Blasting an opposition leader for his comment about the Indian loan, the foreign minister said, "I don't understand how a person who had worked at Economic Relations Division made such a comment."

"When they [BNP] are in power they follow a policy of pleasing India, and when they are in opposition they are vocal against India," she said adding that the opposition is not finding any issue for politicking now, so they are launching pointless campaigns.

BNP standing committee member also a former minister MK Anwar at a news briefing on Friday said the government is getting the loan from the Indian bank at an interest rate seven times higher than what any multinational bank or donor agency would charge.

He said the deal for infrastructure projects will eventually benefit India while Bangladeshis will have to repay the loan. "The implementation of the projects with the Indian loan will serve Indian interests more than Bangladesh's," he said.

The BNP lawmaker claimed that such loans are available for any multinational bank at only .25 percent interest. Dipu Moni however made it clear yesterday that the government signed the agreement with India by following international norms and standards, and the cabinet also gave its nod.

# UAE workers can break Ramadan fast in extreme heat: Fatwa

AFP, Dubai

Workers contending with high heat and humidity can break their Ramadan fasts to avoid health problems, according to a fatwa issued by the top religious authority in the United Arab Emirates.

"It is permissible for workers in certain professions to break the fast because of severe hardship," says the fatwa, or Islamic religious edict, issued by the General Authority for Islamic Affairs and Endowments.

However, it says that this is only on the condition that the worker start the day fasting, and stop only when it is too difficult to continue.

The fatwa, published on the General Authority's website, was issued in response to a question from an oil rig worker who asked whether it was permissible to break his fast over fears of health problems from not eating or drinking while working in high heat and humidity.

Temperatures in the desert Gulf state consistently top 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

The Muslim fasting month of Ramadan begins either on Wednesday or Thursday, with the exact day depending on the sighting of the new moon.

# Matia

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the hungry and marginalised people for whom the donors' funds are meant, Matia said.

She urged the NGO representatives to work for sustainable development of the disadvantaged people and empowerment of the women.

Matia, also an Awami League presidium member, described the NGO people as "good salesmen who have an attractive exterior".

She also stressed the need for digitising the land record system for permanent resolution of land dispute across the country.

Speaking as the special guest, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman laid emphasis on expansion of education to build a mindset not to violate human rights.

He said the commission would not act as a silent observer if the government violates human rights.

Presiding over the session, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, underlined the importance of integrated efforts to improve the living standards of the marginalised people and to stop violence against women.

Presenting the keynote paper, Manusher Jonno Foundation Director Rina Roy highlighted different achievements and activities of the organisation founded in 2006.

Braekhus Kyr Elvenes, deputy head of mission of Royal Norwegian Embassy, and Chris Austin, country representative of UK Department for International Development (DFID), among others, were in attendance.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs suggested taking steps against unregistered NGOs working in the CHT region.

The meet advised to monitor the NGO activities in the region through coordination among district and regional councils and deputy commissioners of three hill districts.

# ACC asked

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petition filed by Tarique challenging the 2009 act and the filing of the case under the law.

The petition says the act was placed in parliament as a money bill, which as per the constitution is illegal.

Tarique, senior vice-chairman of BNP, was released on bail on medical grounds by the Supreme Court.

ACC filed the case on October 26, 2009 with a Dhaka court against Tarique and his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun on charges of laundering Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore between 2003 and 2007.

Mamun was arrested in January 2007 and is currently being worked on three others.

He said the authorities concerned would be adding 188 million cubic feet of gas a day this year. "Moreover, we are looking forward to add additional 1,285 million cubic feet of gas a day in the national grid by 2013 and 1,853 million cubic feet a day by 2015."

Many power stations are now sitting idle due to gas supply shortfall. Against an official demand of 2,400 million cubic feet of gas a day, Petrobangla can ensure a maximum supply of 2,000 million cubic feet.

Mejbahuddin said they would increase gas supply to Chittagong from the Meghna gas field immediately.

The power secretary told the meeting that a total of 871 megawatts of electricity have been added to the national grid since the government assumed power.

On August 1, Tarique's counsel Mahub Uddin Khokon filed the writ petition with the HC saying that the Money Laundering Prevention Act was passed in parliament on February 24, 2009 with retrospective effect from April 15, 2008 in contravention of the rules of the constitution.

# Israel confident as UN poised to launch Gaza flotilla probe

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday expressed confidence that the UN's Gaza flotilla inquiry would satisfy global public opinion, as the panel's Israeli and Turkish delegates were named.

"I believe this committee will direct the important opinion of the international community, and not the committee set up by the anti-Israeli body in Geneva," the Israeli premier told ministers at the weekly cabinet meeting.

Israel said last Monday it would agree to cooperate with a UN committee to probe the deadly May 31 raid on a Gaza-bound aid ship which left nine Turkish nationals dead.

But it has refused to have anything to do with another UN inquiry, launched last month by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council -- a body which Israel perceives as having an in-built bias against the Jewish State.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's four-man team will be chaired by former New Zealand prime minister Geoffrey Palmer, with outgoing Colombian President Alvaro Uribe as his deputy.

The other two members, a Turkish national and an Israeli, were named by the UN on Saturday as Ozdem Sanberk, former director general of the Turkish foreign ministry, and Joseph Ciechanover, who held the same position in Israel.

"Israel was involved in the process of setting up the committee, writing its mandate and selecting its members," Netanyahu said, informing the cabinet that Ciechanover would be Israel's representative on the panel.

Ciechanover, 77, is a former senior diplomat who has spent many years on the board of big Israeli companies such as national carrier El Al and Israel Discount Bank.

In 1997, he headed an inquiry into Israel's failed attempt to assassinate Hamas' Khaled Mashaal in Jordan during Netanyahu's first term as premier. The committee concluded that Netanyahu had managed the affair in "a responsible manner."

His name was recently

# 3-lane system

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minutes to cross this distance."

Many other commuters spoke of similar sufferings yesterday.

Driver of a city service bus, Ibrahim, said he started from Abdullahpur at 2:00pm yesterday and reached Gulistan at 4:35pm, but usually it takes around one hour.

Asked about this, some high officials of the DMP's traffic wing said there were several reasons behind yesterday's unusual gridlock for hours. But they also said the city dwellers might not have an immediate respite from such a situation with Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr nearing.

Explaining the reasons, Deputy Commissioner (traffic) Selim Mohammad Jahangir said many English medium school in the capital reopened yesterday. Besides, street vendors, rickshawpullers, workers and such other people who usually come to the capital from rural areas before and during Ramadan have started coming.

He admitted that reintroducing the three-lane system might also have worsened the situation on the first day yesterday.

Selim mentioned that they re-launched the drive dividing the DMP areas into 13 sectors, and at important intersections they compelled drivers to follow the new system.

Under the three-lane system, one lane is for private cars, minibuses and jeeps, one for minibuses, buses, covered vans and trucks and the other for CNR-run autorickshaws, pickup vans, motorbikes and other vehicles.

On December 8 last year, the DMP introduced the system but managed to keep it in force only for a short time.

Many of the commuters said inadequate number of traffic personnel deployed at intersections to enforce the new system causes jams instead of easing it.

Drivers of different modes of transport said since this system is enforced only at the intersections, and not all along the roads, it results in unusual traffic congestion.

raised as a possible chairman of the internal committee to examine the flotilla raid -- a position which went to former supreme court head Yaakov Tirkel.

The UN committee is due to begin work on August 10 and submit a first progress report by mid-September.

It will review reports on the internal investigations by both Israel and Turkey and will draw conclusions about the facts, circumstances and context of the incident, and issue recommendations on steps to prevent a recurrence of such incidents, the UN said.

In Israel, the Tirkel Commission began looking into the legality of the raid in June, with the five-man panel due to hear testimonies from Netanyahu, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Chief of Staff Gaby Ashkenazi this week.

Turkey reportedly began its own inquiry within days of the botched raid, with prosecutors in Istanbul launching an investigation into the actions of the same three Israeli leaders with a view to charging them with murder and piracy.

Israel says its commandos used force after they were attacked as they rappelled onto the deck of the Turkish passenger ferry Mavi Marmara. But the activists on board say the troops opened fire as soon as they landed.

# Bilashi

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Thursday afternoon.

Raihan died Thursday night and Rajani Friday morning at the same hospital. Bilashi died around 6:00pm.

Bilashi's brother Selimuzzaman said his sister died in his presence at the ICU and before her death she was looking for her children. Bilashi was not told about their deaths.

Rajani and Raihan were buried at their paternal grandfather's home in Faridpur and Bilashi's body was taken to her father's home in the same district yesterday.

Police on Thursday arrested her husband Syed Rajeb Ali after Selimuzzaman filed a case with Motijheel Police Station accusing Rajeb, his second wife Afrin, his father Syed Rustum Ali and three others of provoking Bilashi to attempt suicide and torturing her for dowry.

Before her death, Motijheel police had filed two separate cases against Bilashi for killing her two children and attempting to commit suicide, said Motijheel Police Station Second Officer Mamun-ur-Rashid.

Motijheel police filed the murder case against Bilashi since no family members of the victims came forward to file the case, police said, adding that the other case was filed since suicide attempt is a punishable offence.

Another housewife, Farzana Kabir Rita in Jurain killed herself, her 12-year-old son, and 10-year-old daughter with overdose of sedatives on June 11 after her husband took another wife.

# Constitution

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the constitutional provisions before and after the fifth amendment, and the present state of the provisions after the Supreme Court declared the fifth amendment illegal.

"All members of the committee were provided with the comparative study reports. We can now start the work for bringing changes to the constitution," Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the committee, said at a press briefing after the meeting.

He said there are some contradictions between the constitution and the two verdicts delivered by the High Court and the Appellate Division on the fifth amendment.

Asked about the contradictions, Suranjit said the right time is yet to come to make those public.

The committee requested Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and Law Commission Chairman Justice MA Rashid to attend its meeting regularly to give their opinions on different issues, said a source close to the meeting.

Suranjit at the Parliament Media Centre told journalists that the law minister and the law commission chairman were co-opted as committee members.

But according to the rules of procedure of parliament, the two cannot be included in the committee as they are not members of the House.

# 30 BCS exams

**FROM PAGE 1**  
50,000 candidates were affected because of errors and inconsistencies in 10 to 15 queries in set-2 question paper of the preliminary test held at 110 exam centres across the country on July 30.

They sought a court directive for cancellation of the test, saying the PSC failed to hold a fair examination.

Manzill Murshid appeared for the petitioners, while Deputy Attorney General Nazrul Islam Talukder stood for the government.

# 'Shootouts'

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were killed by Rab since its inception in 2004.

In reply to a query, the Rab DG claimed that they stormed the residence of BNP leader Mirza Abbas following a government directive.

The Rab chief hinted that a vested quarter is responsible for the recent labour unrest in the garment sector.

He also claimed that an "external force" might be involved in creating the unrest to destroy the garment industry.

The Rab DG said they would take necessary measures to ensure public security during the Ramadan.

Law enforcers would increase patrols in and around the markets and other important establishments across the country, the Rab chief said.

Plain-clothes policemen would stand guard at bus, launch and railway stations and ticket counters to prevent extortion and other crimes.

He said Rab arrested 13,500 people including 50 militants, 16 members of outlawed parties, 560 extortionists, 125 counterfeit currency makers and 130 stalkers in the last seven months.

# Health secy

**FROM PAGE 1**  
An HC bench of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Sheikh Hasan Arif issued the rule following a contempt of court petition filed yesterday by Omar Faruk, a slum dweller.

An eviction team demolished the slum on Thursday and Friday.

Following an earlier writ petition filed by Omar Faruk, the HC on May 24, 2005, directed the four officials to maintain status quo regarding the demolition of Sat Tala slum till disposal of the petition.

Omar Faruk filed the writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of a notice issued by the health ministry on April 3, 2005, for bulldozing the slum to retrieve a land owned by the ministry.

Advocate Atiur Rahman appeared for the petitioner.

# BCL suspends

**FROM PAGE 16**  
One of the factions is led by unit President Awal Kabir Joy and the other by its Secretary General Mazedul Islam Opu.

Following the clash, the rival factions filed two separate cases against each other, in which at least 32 activists of both groups were charged.

Azizul Haque, a member of Opu group, filed one of the cases with Motiur Police Station accusing 21 rival activists and Joy, while the other was filed against Opu and nine others by Mehedi Hasan of Joy group with the same police station.

Officer-in-charge of the police station Abul Khair said Opu was shown arrested yesterday in the case filed against him as he had been detained on Saturday evening from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The Metropolitan Magistrate's Court-1 of Rajshahi sent Opu to jail rejecting his bail prayer when he was produced before the court.

Police said they also showed two Joy loyalists -- Shariful Islam of the accounting department and Mehedi Hassan of Sangkrit department -- arrested yesterday. They are undergoing treatment at RMCH.

Meanwhile, Opu loyalists brought out a march on the campus demanding his release yesterday.

Sturday night following the clash, police raided Bangabandhu and Sher-e-Bangla residential halls for two hours without making any arrest.

RU Proctor Prof Chowdhury Zakaria said they urged the law enforcers to take legal steps against those who tried to create unrest on the campus.

OC Abul Khair said, "We are conducting drives to catch people involved in the violence."

Tension is still high on the campus, although classes and examinations are being held.

# Extortion, control

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"Both Joy and Opu are so inefficient that they have no control over their followers. As a result, our repeated warning did not work at all," city unit Awami League acting general secretary Shafiqur Rahman Badsha told The Daily Star.

He also blamed the university authorities for favouring one group against the other keeping alive their rivalry. He blasted the central BCL unit for not approving the fully-fledged RU committee.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner M Nawsher Ali said they are playing their role properly as per the government's directives. Replying to a question, he said, "Normally we cannot recover hidden arms cache as the cadres run away sensing police raid."

He said they have already arrested Opu and are looking for others involved in crimes and illegal activities.

Asked if the authorities have failed to disarm BCL on the campus, Proctor Chowdhury Mohammad Jakaria said, "It is not true that the authorities are silent to BCL activities. We are trying our best."

On the allegations of taking seat rent at halls, he said, "We haven't yet got any complaints in this regard."

Before his arrest, Opu told this correspondent, "Some untoward incidents are occur-

# Medvedev makes surprise visit to Abkhazia

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Police were yet to arrest the driver of the lorry.

In another incident, two people were killed and another was injured when a Dhaka-bound oil lorry racked a CNG-run autorickshaw at Magpukur in Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong at about 11:00am yesterday.

Two passengers of the three-wheelers -- Wasim, 27, of Kumira in Chittagong and Yunus, 30, of Hatiya in Noakhali, died on the spot while the auto-rickshaw driver, Delwar Hossain, 27, sustained serious injuries, said Wahidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Highway Police Station at Baro Awlia in the upazila.

Delwar was undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has made an unscheduled visit to Abkhazia, his first to the breakaway Georgian region since the brief war between Russia and Georgia two years ago.

He held talks with Abkhazia's leader and promised to develop economic, political and security relations.

In the wake of the 2008 conflict, Moscow recognised Abkhazia and nearby South Ossetia as independent states.

Georgia still considers both breakaway regions part of its territory.

During his visit, Medvedev pledged more financial support to the two regions.

Close ties.

In televised remarks, Medvedev said Russia's decision to recognise the independence claims of the two regions was the right one.

"It was painful, it was not simple, and time has proven that it was the right decision," he said.

Russia has used the anniversary of the conflict to emphasise the strength of its ties with the two breakaway states.

Last year Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin visited Abkhazia for the first anniversary of the conflict and announced Moscow would pay for part of the country's defence infrastructure.

# Bigots vandalise

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"They made the attack after police left the village," he said.

His family and dwellers of the other houses however managed to flee to safety, he added.

Mominur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ghatail Police Station, confirmed the incident, and said two cases had been filed in this connection.

M Bazlul Karim Chowdhury, deputy commissioner of Tangail, visited the village yesterday morning and talked to the Ahmadiyyas and others of the village.

He told The Daily Star that construction of the mosque had been suspended.

"Additional policemen will be deployed in the village to avert further violence," he added.

A section of locals under the banner of "Imam Parishad" have long been campaigning against 40 Ahmadiyya families in the village.

On June 17, they thwarted another move to start building the planned Ahmadiyya mosque.

# Hasina invites

**FROM PAGE 1**  
challenge people, wounded freedom fighters and Islamic scholars on the first day of Ramadan at Gono Bhaban.

She will also hold iftar party for diplomats, judges, and civil and military officials on Ramadan 3 while for the professionals on Ramadan 7.

ring as some BCL men feel insecure on the campus and apprehend attacks by Shibir cadres anytime."

Asked about his room at Bangabandhu Hall, Joy said, "My fellow students have willingly kept me there."

# Israeli nuclear whistle-blower Vanunu freed from jail

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu was freed from jail yesterday after serving 11 weeks behind bars for breaking the terms of his release and meeting a foreigner, a prison official said.

"Mordechai Vanunu was freed from prison on Sunday morning," a spokesman for the prisons authority told AFP.

Vanunu began serving a three-month sentence at a prison in Ramle near Tel Aviv on May 23.

A court had in December ordered him to do three months community service or serve three months in prison for violating the terms of his release from jail back in 2004.

The former nuclear technician was arrested in December at a Jerusalem hotel while talking to a Norwegian woman -- a violation of the terms laid down when he was freed after serving 18 years for disclosing the inner workings of Israel's Dimona nuclear plant to Britain's Sunday Times newspaper.

# 2 students

**FROM PAGE 16**  
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