

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT Delhi to seek stronger ties with Dhaka

Says Indian strategic thinker Raja Mohan  
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The BJP government in India will have much stronger relations and broader engagement with its neighbours, including Bangladesh, as it looks forward for partnership and greater cooperation in the region for achieving development, an Indian foreign policy analyst said yesterday.

"There is no luxury of non-engagement irrespective of whoever is in power in the neighbouring country when you look for partnership," said Dr C Raja Mohan. Broader engagement with neighbours is a must to make sure that everybody benefits, he added.

Raja Moha, one of India's foremost strategic thinkers and commentators, was speaking at Eminent Person Lecture on "Political Transition in India: What it Means for South Asia and Beyond", organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel.

BIPSS President Maj Gen (ret'd) ANM Muniruzzaman chaired the event, which was attended by foreign diplomats, educationists, civil society members, and media personalities.

On the upcoming visit of Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to Bangladesh, Mohan said she was coming here on June 25, which would be her first international visit as foreign minister.

"I think the visit itself tells you that the new government in India is serious towards its neighbours," he said, adding that he did not want to say all problems between India and

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Nari Progati Sangha and People's Voice hold a candlelight vigil at the Central Shaheed Minar of Chittagong city last evening, marking the seventh anniversary of the calamitous landslide that killed 127 people in the city in 2007. The mourners demanded a stop to hill cutting, a major cause of landslides, and declaration of June 11 as "National Hill Conservation Day".

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

BLOGGER RAJIB MURDER

## SC directs accused to surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday directed Sadman Yaseer Mahmud, an accused in blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider murder case, to surrender before a trial court within two weeks.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the order after staying a HC order that granted bail to Sadman for six months in the case.

Rajib, also an activist of Shahbagh movement, was hacked to death in the capital's Pallabi on February 15 last year.

Yesterday, the SC chamber judge came up with the order after a brief hearing on a petition filed by the government seeking a stay on the HC order.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told the court that Sadman, a student of North South University, was involved in

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## Bangladesh offers to train Lebanese navy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Navy yesterday offered Lebanese navy thorough training in naval aspects on maritime strategy and warfare as Lebanon strives to upgrade its capability.

Bangladesh's Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (operations) Rear Admiral AMMM Aurangzeb Chowdhury met Lebanese Armed Forces Chief of Staff Maj Gen Walid Salman in Beirut and made the offer.

Lebanese navy said it is keen on sending its personnel for training and sought for detailed curriculum.

Aurangzeb is now in Beirut to send back two Bangladeshi naval ships—BNS Osman and BNS Madhumati, which are on UN duty—home. They will be replaced by two more ships—BNS Ali Haider and BNS Nirmul.

These two ships have completed four years of continuous duty as part of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil).

Unifil launched its lone maritime taskforce in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006. Israel had demanded that the sea route for weapon smuggling into Lebanon be stopped as a prerequisite to its withdrawal.

Bangladesh joined this taskforce in 2010 with 320 sailors and officers. Other countries participating in the taskforce are Germany, Brazil, Greece, Indonesia and Turkey.

Lebanese Armed Forces Chief of Staff Salman yesterday gratefully recalled the role of Bangladesh navy in securing his country's maritime boundary. "We want Bangladesh to continue the maritime interdiction operation," he said.

"Because of them no ships carrying weapons could illegally enter Lebanon. This played a big role in maintaining peace."

Commanding officer of BNS Osman Capt Abul Kalam Azad was also present during the meeting.

## CASE AGAINST ERSHAD Judge reluctant to proceed with trial

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A judge in a Dhaka court yesterday expressed his reluctance to proceed with the radar purchase graft case trial against Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad and three others.

Public Prosecutor Shaheen Ahmed Khan confirmed it while talking to The Daily Star.

The prosecution was scheduled to place the arguments yesterday for the third day.

Judge Abdur Rashid of the Special Court for Dhaka Division also ordered transfer of the case to the previous District and Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka which sent it to the court for its disposal in 1994.

On May 4, 1992, the then Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed the case with Cantonment Police Station against Ershad;

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## WASH SECTOR BUDGET It's injustice as rural people get only 16pc

Say analysts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a clear manifestation of discriminations towards the rural citizens, the proposed budget has put aside an overwhelming 83.73 percent of the total allocation of Tk 4,113 crore in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector for urban people who make up only 25 percent of the population.

The government kept Tk 3,444 crore for the city dwellers, and the residual amount for the residents of villages, coastal belts, chars, haors and hilly areas where many inhabitants still defecate in open places and are exposed to water-borne diseases.

An analysis on the budget allocation in WASH sector by Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) revealed it at a post-budget discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity, organised by WaterAid and HDRC. The government on June 5 proposed a Tk 2,50,506 crore budget for 2014-15 fiscal.

While presenting the analysis, eminent economist Prof Abul Barakat said such a disparity in allocation was violation of the constitution, and it was obviously done to serve the purpose of opportunists.

In the budget, he said the government proposed an expenditure of Tk 1,568 and Tk 2,771 for per person living in Dhaka and Chittagong cities respectively, while the figure stood at Tk 213, Tk 61, and Tk 54 for people in coastal areas, chars and haors.

Barakat pointed out that the budgetary allocation in 2010-11 and 2011-12 in the WASH sector was 2.39 and 2.25 percent of the total budget, while this year it reduced to 1.64 percent. "Are we assuming that the problem of pure water,

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## MOVE TO REDUCE WATERLOGGING Wasa cleaning canals, culverts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Wasa started cleaning the canals and box culverts in the capital yesterday by using modern equipment, which will help reducing waterlogging problem.

The equipment including floating bulldozer, excavator and micro-bulldozer are being used in the cleaning work which was earlier done manually.

The Wasa in collaboration with Vitens Evides International, Netherlands is carrying the work under "Urban Dredging Demonstration Project" which will be completed in 2016, said Jaki Mostafa, project director of the Wasa.

Kalyanpur canal and Segunbagicha box culvert are being cleaned, said Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan who inaugurated the project at the canal in Adabar yesterday.

Among others, Dutch Ambassador in Dhaka Gerben De Jong addressed the function. There are 56km canal and around 10km box culvert in the city, Wasa sources said.

Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan said after cleaning a canal through the equipment the situation will last for 10 years. He said after ending the project the Wasa would continue the work with its own capacity.

## DEATH PENALTY SC continues hearing on appeal of Kamaruzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday continued hearing for fourth day on the appeal filed by Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman challenging the death penalty given to him for his wartime offences.

Kamaruzzaman's counsel Nazrul Islam read out before the Appellate Division of the SC the statements made by prosecution witnesses over the charges of torture on Syed Abdul Hannan, the then Principal of Sherpur College, killing of 164 people in Shohagpur village and one Golam Mostafa of Gridda Narayanpur village in Sherpur during the 1971 Liberation War.

A four-member bench of

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Bangladesh Navy Assistant Naval Staff (operation) AMMM Aurangzeb Chowdhury talking training of Lebanese navy with Lebanese Armed Forces Chief of Staff Maj Gen Walid Salman in Beirut, the Lebanese capital, yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

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