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India should not finance Rampal plant

Says nat'l committee to save Sundarbans
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists said India as a party of the World Heritage Convention has legal obligation not to finance the Rampal coal-fired power plant proposed to be set up 14 kilometres off the Sundarbans, a world heritage site in Bangladesh. Under the convention, Bangladesh is primarily responsible for protecting the world's largest mangrove forest situated within its territory, said the National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans (NCSS) in a legal briefing put up on its website yesterday. But India too should refrain from taking any step that would harm the forest, it said. Quoting the convention, the statement signed by NCSS Convenor Sultana Kamal says that India agreed "not to take any deliberate measures which



CARELESSNESS IN DEVELOPMENT

What appears to be a sand storm or at least the making of a dust devil is actually the dust kicked up by vehicles at Gabtoli in the capital. A utility service provider is installing underground pipes and the soil dug up is everywhere. People now collect money from locals to bring in water and spray it on the street to have some respite. Apparently, the utility agency did not care what its work would do to the environment.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Famed Afghan girl arrested in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar
An Afghan woman immortalised on a celebrated National Geographic magazine cover as a green-eyed 12-year-old girl was arrested yesterday for living in Pakistan on fraudulent identity papers. The haunting image of Sharbat Gula, taken in a Pakistan refugee camp by photographer Steve McCurry in the 1980s, became the most famous cover image in the magazine's history. She now faces up to 14 years in jail -- in an episode which highlights the desperate measures many Afghans are willing to take to avoid returning to their war-torn homeland as Pakistan cracks down on undocumented foreigners. Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested Gul for fraud following a

BANGLADESH IN DOING BUSINESS INDEX Two notches up but still behind neighbours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh has gone up two places in the World Bank's ranking of ease of doing business. However, the country still ranks 176 among 190 economies in the study owing largely to minute improvements in the parameters of resolving insolvency and registering property. In the eight countries of South Asia, Bangladesh is only ahead of Afghanistan that ranked 183 in the "Doing Business 2017: Equal Opportunity for All" report released on Tuesday. Bhutan was the best in the region at 73, followed by Nepal, 107, Sri Lanka, 110, India, 130, the Maldives, 135, and Pakistan, 144. Bangladesh's distance to frontier (DTF) score, which is used for making the rankings, was 40.84 percent, slightly up from 40.68 percent of the previous report. Compared to its competitors in East Asia, Bangladesh did not do so well on the overall doing business ranking and on the DTF score. It has the lowest ranking as well as DTF score when compared to Thailand, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia and Cambodia. "The bottom line appears to be that regulatory reforms in Bangladesh are not making ostensible progress," commented Zahid Hussain, lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office. He said Bangladesh remains behind its competitors in South and East Asia, although on a few indicators it is ahead

5-YR-OLD RAPE VICTIM Her condition critical due to infections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The five-year-old girl, brutally tortured and raped in Dinajpur eight days ago, is likely to be operated upon a few weeks later, as doctors are giving priority to her recovery from infections caused by injuries. Doctors at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where the girl is receiving treatment, yesterday said they found infections in her reproductive organ, and she was still in a critical condition. Her body bore bite, cut and scratch marks, and the rapist also burnt parts of her body with cigarettes, they said. Talking to journalists yesterday, Law Minister Anisul Huq assured of quick trial of the culprit. Bilkis Begum, co-ordinator of the DMCH One-stop Crisis Centre, said doctors conducted some tests on the girl yesterday, and detected cut marks around her reproductive organ. DMCH Deputy Director Khwaja Abdul Gafur said doctors would provide her treatment for recovery from infections and conduct operation on her a few weeks later. He said the girl was taken to operation

Iran develops 'suicide drone'



AFP, Tehran
Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards yesterday said they had developed a "suicide drone" capable of delivering explosives to blow up targets at sea and on land. The new drone is primarily for maritime surveillance and "has not been designed to be armed with missiles," the Tasnim news agency, which is close to the Guards, reported. "(But) it can carry heavy payloads of explosives for combat missions to launch suicide attacks. "Flying at a high cruising speed near the surface of the water, the aircraft can collide with the target and destroy it, either a vessel or an onshore command centre." Tasnim said the drone was designed to fly as low as two feet (half a metre) above the water at a speed of around 250 kilometres (160 miles) per hour but

Man held over killing 2 sons

Police claim he confessed to killing
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
Police yesterday arrested the father who they say has admitted to killing his two young sons as an act of reprisal against his wife. The arrestee, Satir Ali, 40, had been absconding since Monday night when bodies of his two children -- Rujel Ahmed, 7, and Abdul Momin, 11 -- were found beside a ditch in their village

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AHRC critical of legal system in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has made some critical observations about the legal system of Bangladesh. In a statement published last night in its website, the AHRC cited instances of the prolonged detention suffered by Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of daily Amar Desh, and the case filed against journalist Shafik Rehman. The commission observed that the police routinely use the term "shown arrested" to prolong the detention of a person already in jail, without even producing the detainee in Court, which defies the provision in Section 351 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, and basic principles of justice. The government used the police and other non-state actors to file 74 cases against Mahmudur, it added.



Law enforcers yesterday show the fake bank notes they seized during raids in Dhaka and Narayanganj cities. They seized notes worth Tk 67 lakh and arrested seven people in this connection on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Brisk business with fake note

Gang of 7 fraudsters held, huge amount of fake notes seized
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Detectives arrested seven members including the ringleader of a currency counterfeiting gang and seized fake notes worth Tk 67 lakh in separate drives in the capital and Narayanganj on Tuesday. The arrestees are Rafiqul Islam, 40, the ringleader, Jahangir, 35, Nizam, 35, Shaheed, 27, Abdur Rahim, 37, Jakir, 20, and Mahmud, 32. Abdul Baten, joint commissioner of detective branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told reporters at the DMP media centre that on information, a team of police arrested Jahangir, Nizam and Shaheed at Mir Hazirbagh in Jatrabari around 11:00am on Tuesday. Based on their information, the police arrested the rest of the gang at a fake note-making factory at Fatullah in Narayanganj and seized the fake notes. The gang could make fake notes worth Tk 20 to Tk 25 lakh only within a day. Once prepared completely, the gang used to sell Tk 1 lakh in fake notes in exchange for only Tk 6,000 to their agents in the districts. Then the agents used to sell the notes at upazila level and keep the fake notes circulated in the market. The equipment confiscated from the criminals included a notebook computer, a printer, ink cartridges, wooden frames, plastic jars and huge blank paper sheets. Baten said Rafiqul was involved in the offence for around 15 years, but they could not immediately say if he was arrested beforehand.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3