

PARKING AT WILL



PHOTO: STAR

A pickup threads its way through the stretch of the busy Nawabpur Road now choked with parked rickshaw-vans. Obstruction to traffic movement is often the result of illegal parking.

Housewife raped at Madartek

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven youths raped a housewife in front of her two children at Madartek in the city Wednesday night.

The youths allegedly led by Shafi, son of her landlord, raped her when her trucker husband was not home, she complained to police.

They entered the flat at around 10:00pm during a power cut and raped the 28-year-old lady.

She also named two of the rapists as Saiful and Khokon, friends of

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Biman flight stuck on minister's programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A scheduled flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines was delayed for two-and-a-half hours at the Jessore Airport on Wednesday to accommodate Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, causing immense sufferings to passengers and financial loss to the national carrier.

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Pakistan gets even with India

Four embassy staff asked to go home

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan yesterday expelled four members of the Indian High Commission in an expected tit-for-tat response to New Delhi's expulsion of four Pakistani diplomats a day earlier, sending diplomatic relations between the nuclear enemies to a new low.

"The acting Indian High Commissioner was told today that all four officials must leave Pakistan within 48 hours," foreign ministry spokesman Aziz Ahmed Khan told

AFP.

Counsellor Vipin Handa, Second Secretary RP, Singh, attaché Wakil Ramdas and embassy staffer PH Sundaram had engaged in "activities that were incompatible with their status as members of the diplomatic mission," Khan added, using terms normally associated with spying.

India's mission slammed the allegations as false.

"These allegations are absolutely untrue. This is a retaliatory act," a high commission official told

AFP, asking not to be named.

The four officials have been declared person non grata and their families have been given a week to leave.

Yesterday's expulsion orders are a replica of those served on Pakistan's mission in New Delhi on Wednesday.

India expelled two Pakistani diplomats and two Pakistani embassy staffers for "activities incompatible with their status" and gave them 48 hours to leave.

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Kolkata mission asked for more info on push-in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is yet to confirm the reported push-in of 76 Muslims to Bangladesh territory by the Indian authorities but has asked the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and deputy high commission in Kolkata to look into the matter and send details.

"We've only seen the newspaper reports. We have instructed the BDR and our deputy high commission in Kolkata to furnish us with more details," Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury told a weekly briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

However, such a push-in is not "acceptable to us", he said.

The matter was raised with an Indian delegation now in Dhaka for the India-Bangladesh joint working group meeting on border, he said. "The Indian team has been requested to make an inquiry about the report."

Reports have it that the Indian Border Security Force pushed 76 Indian Muslims into Bangladesh territory through Sharsha border in Jessore on Wednesday.

Asked what sort of relationship

Dhaka and New Delhi is going through at present, the foreign secretary said, "Our relation is normal. Even differences on different issues is part of normal relations between neighbouring countries."

"We want constant dialogue to resolve all the problems with India and want to address all issues within the framework of discussions."

Commenting on the just ended joint expert committee meeting on sharing of waters of the common rivers, Chowdhury said there was "some progress."

He did not agree with the view that the meeting ended in failure. "One or two meetings are not enough to reach a formal agreement on sharing of water of common rivers."

Asked whether Senator Hillary Clinton would lead the planned demonstration of Bangladeshis in New York, he said the report is not true.

The foreign secretary said Vietnam has opened its embassy in Dhaka and its charge d'affaires will soon present his credentials.

Legal aid cell opened for Bangladeshis in New York

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has opened a "Legal Aid Cell" at the office of the consulate general in New York for providing legal assistance to non-immigrant Bangladeshis in the USA.

The cell has been set up because the inclusion of Bangladesh in the terror-risk list has brought non-immigrant Bangladesh nationals under the "Special Registration" system.

According to a release from the consulate general, the cell will remain open every Saturday from 10:30am to 2:30pm starting January 25.

During the period, Bangladeshi attorneys will be present to provide legal aid at the consulate office at 211 East, 43rd St. Suit # 502, New York.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 24		5-39 pm
Jan 25	6-42 am	

Prayer Timings		
Jan 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-45	6-15
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-51
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

UP polls

Half the centres in Rajshahi marked risky

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

About 48 per cent of the Union Parishad (UP) polling centres in the northern region have been identified as risky and 60 per cent of the risky centres as most risky.

The Rajshahi range police identified at least 4,300 polling centres in 1,064 unions in the 16 districts as risky and 2,580 out of the risky centres as most risky.

"The number of risky centres may increase in case of any security breach," a high police official told The Daily Star yesterday on condition of anonymity.

The highest security measures will be taken in Rajshahi, Natore, Naogaon, Bogra, Pabna and

Sirajganj frequently troubled by outlawed activists.

The army-led anticrime operation could not arrest any identified activist of outlawed parties in the region. They broke cover after pullout of the army, sources said.

"They (outlaws) are roaming the area and the candidates were campaigning with them," a school-teacher of Jhikra Union of Bagmara said.

Preferring anonymity, the teacher said the outlawed leaders had controlled polls in Bagmara since the early 1990s.

However, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shamsul Alam of Bagmara Police Station has claimed that the

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6-month deadline to prospective CNG-fillers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decided to revoke licences of the enterprises that will fail to set up CNG-filling stations in six months.

The decision taken on Wednesday at a meeting of the communications ministry came after the shortage of gas stations in the city left the CNG-run auto-rickshaws in crisis.

The government will also confiscate

Tk 25 lakh in deposits from the entrepreneurs.

At present, 11 CNG stations are operating in the city and nine others will be installed by the middle of this year, the meeting was told.

State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda and State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed, among others, attended the

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PHOTO: STAR

Leaders and activists of the Workers Party of Bangladesh form a human chain in the city yesterday protesting the US decision to include Bangladesh in the terrorism watch list.