

Pentagon pushes for action on Iran

REUTERS, AFP, Washington
The Bush administration has cut off contact with Iran, and Pentagon officials are pushing for action they believe could destabilise the government of the Islamic republic. The Washington Post reported in its Sunday edition.

The move follows intelligence reports suggesting al-Qaeda operatives in Iran played a role in the May 12 suicide bombings in Saudi Arabia, according to the newspa-

per. Citing administration officials, the newspaper said the White House "appears ready to embrace an aggressive policy of trying to destabilise the Iranian government."

Officials will meet tomorrow at the White House to discuss the Iran strategy, with Pentagon officials pressing for action that could lead to the toppling of the government through a popular uprising, the Post said.

A White House spokeswoman declined comment on Saturday.

The United States severed ties with Iran following the 1979 Islamic revolution. Last year, President Bush branded Iran as part of an "axis of evil" that was trying to develop banned nuclear weapons. The United States also has accused Iran of harboring members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, which Washington blames for the September 11, 2001, attacks.

But since the US campaign to topple the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Iranian and US officials have met from time to time to discuss a variety of issues.

After this month's suicide bombings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Bush administration canceled the next planned meeting, according to the Post.

The newspaper said "very troubling intercepts" before and after the meeting.

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2 to die, parents to spend life in prison for wiping out 4 of a family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A speedy trial tribunal yesterday sentenced two brothers to death and their parents to life imprisonment for killing four members of a family two years ago in Patuakhali.

Judge Abdul Quddus of the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Barisal convicted Forkan Mistri and brother Lokman Mistri (absconding), father Khaleque Mistri and mother Hafija Begum of the murders but cleared Imam Ali, another accused, of the charge.

Khaleque and Hafija were fined Tk 10,000 each and have to serve one year more imprisonment in default to pay the fines.

According to the prosecution, SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Panni murder CID examining footprints

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police took footprints for examination from the boundary wall of Humayun Khan Panni's Dhanmondi residence yesterday.

The detectives suspect that the footprints might have been left on the wall when the intruders got inside the premises to kill the landlady, Sultana Khan Panni.

The investigators said the footprints would help them trace the criminals involved in the killing.

Dhanmondi police arrested Alaudin Munshi, a cook, Mohammad Roni, a domestic help, his wife Ruby Begum and SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Restrictions on tax holiday may be relaxed a little

NAZMUL AHSAN

One of the two restrictions on tax holiday is likely to be withdrawn in the next budget.

The current budget barred industries from enjoying tax holiday if they sold products to their sister concerns.

But the National Board of

Revenue (NBR) now mulls that such industries may be given the privilege if they made commercial transactions among associate enterprises at market prices.

"To prevent misuse of tax holiday through internal transfer pricing, I propose to make provision for considering transaction between associate enterprises as a disqualification for tax holiday,"

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman had said in his last budget speech.

The restriction imposed in the current fiscal hit both local investment and joint ventures, investors said.

Only 124 applications seeking tax holiday for newly set-up industries were received. SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Job seekers turn to backwaters

RAFIQ HASAN

Africa and the Pacific regions have become new destinations for Bangladeshis to get overseas employment. They are now getting jobs in many far-flung areas in those regions.

The ministry of expatriate welfare and overseas employment sources said, "Several hundred Bangladeshis recently got job in these countries where any one hardly got employment earlier".

The countries are: Tonga of Pacific, Madagascar, Namibia and Botswana.

The sources informed that 35 Bangladeshis got job in Tonga, while 1200 employed in Madagascar on the month of February-March this year. On the other hand, 30 Bangladeshi engineers have been recruited in Botswana and 50 workers in

Namibia.

"These countries are showing interest to recruit people from Bangladesh because they need a lot of workers," said, Daliluddin Mondol, secretary in-charge of the expatriate welfare ministry.

He also added, "The expatriate ministry, Bangladesh missions abroad and all other related government agencies are trying their best to increase overseas employment of our people".

When the secretary was asked about the possibility of resuming manpower export to Malaysia and South Korea, two major destinations of Bangladeshi workers, he has given a negative impression.

For last few years, the employment of a large-scale Bangladeshi workers remained suspended in these countries.

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Sylhet mayor, 16 others get bail in graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Mayor and 16 newly elected and former ward commissioners of Sylhet City Corporation were granted ad-interim bail for three months in a graft case yesterday.

A division bench of the High Court comprising Justice Goura Gopal Shaha and Justice Abdus Salam Mamun issued the bail order.

The graft case had been filed with the Sylhet Kotwali police station on May 8 by the District Anti-Corruption Bureau accusing mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, and 16 present and former ward commissioners of illegally leasing out the third floor of the city's Shibganj kitchen market.

The other accused are Syed Ahmed Hossain, Pradip Bhattacharya, Abdul Wadud Khaled, Abdul Qayyum Jalali P o n k i , SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

As Kaptai Lake gets filled up, fish population has dwindled dangerously in the largest waterbody. The livelihood of scores of fishermen like those in the picture is now threatened with the decline in catch.

'Kidnapper' Marjina remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Schoolteacher Marjina Begum, arrested on charge of kidnapping four girls from Motijheel, was placed on a two-day remand yesterday.

Police returned three of the abducted girls -- Nasima, 7, Soma, 7, and Bilkis Chhaba, 8, -- to their parents and the other girl -- Mother Teresa, 6, -- to Mahila Ainjibi Samity as nobody claimed her.

Marjina admitted before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday to taking t h e SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

JCD clash stalls DMCH service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clashes between two factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday sent a wave of panic through Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and brought the emergency unit's healthcare services to a half-an-hour halt.

The clashes were triggered by another round of clash between the factions of the ruling BNP's student front, which left at least five activists injured on the Dhaka

University campus. The incident led to expulsion of five activists from the JCD.

Among the injured, Moazzam Hossain Liton of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall JCD unit, was admitted to the DMCH where a rival gang of 12 went to beat him again. The JCD activists Pilot and Jibon of the Mohsin Hall unit beat up Liton at the DU Central Library, said campus sources.

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Kaptai cries for fresh water

PINAKI ROY and MONIRUL ALAM of Rangamati

Kaptai Lake, the largest artificial waterbody, is under threat due to pollution and soil erosion of the barren hills surrounding it.

This has driven down fish population especially of the carp variety over the last few years.

There are 73 species of fish in the lake. According to the Bangladesh Fish Development Corporation (BFDC), catch of carp has decreased to 220 tonnes from as high as 972 tonnes in 1964.

Because of the fish stock depletion, the government now plans to ban fishing for a year or two.

"When we ban fishing, the government will support the fishermen for the period," said Moniswapan Dewan, deputy minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs.

But fishermen from Jaulapara in Rangamati fear that the ban would seriously threaten their livelihood. They alleged that the BFDC was supposed to provide them Tk 5,000 in interest-free loan during off-seasons, but they did not get the money. The Bangla months of Jaistha, Ashar and Shraban (May, June and July) are considered as off-season.

"We live in utter misery during the three-month off-season. God only knows what would happen if they slap the ban," said Nakul J a l d a s ,

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Rejoinder

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday contradicted the introduction of his interview carried by The Daily Star on May 24 under the headline 'Not too easy to address overnight, says Moudud'.

In a rejoinder, he explained that he never said, "Separation of the judiciary, formation of human rights and anti-corruption commissions and installation of an ombudsman are not in sight" as the story quoted him as saying.

Moudud said 'the recording of the interview will show' that quoting him in such a way 'has no basis whatsoever'.

Ourreply
The law minister said full separation of the judiciary, an election p l e d g e o f SEE PAGE 11 COL 6