

Senate panel set to consider bid to censure Bush

REUTERS, Washington

Former White House counsel John Dean, who helped push President Richard Nixon from office during the Watergate scandal three decades ago, heads to Capitol Hill yesterday to back an uphill attempt to censure President George W. Bush.

Dean, author of a book about Bush titled "Worse than Watergate," was to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee in support of a resolution to rebuke Bush for a domestic spying program introduced secretly after the September 11 attacks.

Sen. Russ Feingold, a Wisconsin Democrat, introduced the resolution earlier this month.

He argues that the program, which allows eavesdropping on

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Bahrain cruise boat sinks, 57 bodies recovered

AP, Manama

A cruise boat carrying up to 150 people capsized Thursday night in the Persian Gulf off the coast of Bahrain, and at least 57 bodies were recovered, officials said. American divers and a US helicopter aided the rescue effort.

Interior Ministry spokesman Colonel Tarik al-Hassan said at least 67 people were rescued. A passenger on board the boat calling from his cell phone was the first to alert officials that the ship was

listing, he said.

Survivor Khalil Mirza of Bahrain told The Associated Press that he made that call. He said the listing began while the craft was making a left turn out of the harbour.

"People were scared in the water," he said. "They were fighting with each other and screaming."

Al-Hassan said not all the 57 dead could be identified because many did not carry identification papers.

The official Bahrain News Agency said the al-Dana was on an

evening cruise that was to last several hours. It overturned less than a mile off the coast, it said. Television footage showed the boat capsized but not sunk, with rescue workers walking on its brown hull.

US helicopters and divers joined the rescue operation launched by Bahrain's coast guard. Bahrain, a tiny island nation on the western side of the Persian Gulf, is home to the Navy's 5th Fleet.

Rescue teams brought bodies covered with white sheets to shore, SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Iran test-fires new 'invisible' missile

AFP, Tehran

Iran successfully test-fired yesterday a new missile capable of avoiding radar detection and striking a number of targets simultaneously, a top military commander announced.

"Today we have successfully tested a new-generation missile capable of hitting different targets at the same time," the commander of the Revolutionary Guards air force, Brigadier General Hossein Salami, told state television.

The missile, tested on the first day of week-long military exercises in the Gulf, can also "hide from radars and evade anti-missile missiles," he said, without disclosing the range.

Iran has medium-range Shahab-3 missiles with a range of 2,000km, putting arch-enemy

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WORLD POWERS TELL IRAN

Pay heed to UN call or face isolation

REUTERS, Berlin

The world's major powers told Iran on Thursday it must heed a UN call to curb its nuclear programme or face isolation, but Tehran refused to budge.

Britain said Iran could eventually face UN sanctions if it failed to suspend uranium enrichment, which can produce fuel for nuclear power stations or nuclear bombs.

In Doha, UN nuclear watchdog boss Mohamed ElBaradei said Iran posed no imminent threat.

"We need to lower the pitch," the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said. "My message to Iran: the international

community is getting impatient and you need to respond by arming me with information."

Iran says it wants only civilian nuclear power and rejected a UN Security Council statement adopted on Wednesday calling for an enrichment freeze and a report from the IAEA on Iranian compliance in 30 days.

Iran said in January it would resume uranium enrichment and began soon after on a small scale with a few centrifuges.

"Iran must decide between a self-imposed isolation through its continuation of enrichment...or a return to the negotiating table," German Foreign Minister Frank-

Walter Steinmeier said.

He was speaking on Thursday after a meeting in Berlin of the five UN Security Council permanent members plus Germany.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said the council might pass a legally binding resolution if Iran did not comply with the non-binding statement, opening the way to future measures against the Islamic Republic.

Asked if such action could include sanctions, Straw told reporters: "It could do."

Diplomats have suggested sanctions could include targeted moves such as visa bans for

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Boatloads of watermelon arrive in the capital. Delicious and thirst-quenching, the fruit is high in demand in summer. It sells at Tk 40-80 apiece. The photo was taken at the Badamtali terminal yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

AFC Challenge Cup kicks off today

SPORTS REPORTER

The inaugural AFC Challenge Cup begins today in Dhaka and Chittagong with 16 teams taking part in the biggest tournament in the country's history involving national football sides.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter, who arrives in Dhaka today, will inaugurate the tournament between the opening day's two matches at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Asian Football Confederation president Mohammad Bin Hammam will be present as special guest.

Hosts Bangladesh will take on SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

JCD leader, 3 others held for extortion in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) caught red-handed a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader and three of his accomplices for extortion at Dhap Islambagh in Rangpur on Thursday.

The Rab-5 also recovered a 9mm pistol from JCD leader and Vice-president of Rangpur Medical College Student Council ABM Maruful Hasan's room at the intern doctors' hostel.

Other arrestees are Ariful Islam alias Mithun, son of Azizul Islam of

Dhap Kotkipara, Sirajul Islam alias Mithu, son of Ansar Ali of the same area, and Masum Miah, son of Rahmat Ali of Babu Kha.

A Rab team led by ASP Saiful Islam caught the four when they went to collect Tk 50,000 from the house of Abdul Wahed Sufi around 3:30pm, Rab sources said.

Wahed alleged Maruf and his accomplices demanded Tk 50,000 from him for his under construction building and threatened to kill him if he did otherwise.

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Tank lorry strike called off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Tank Lorry Owners' Association withdrew its call for indefinite strike, which was supposed to start today, following fruitful negotiations with Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) yesterday.

The Tank Lorry Owners' Association had called for the strike protesting against what it said the non-implementation of a decision to raise transport fare following fuel price hike, said a press release.

The press release said the strike was called off after BPC said it would publish a gazette stating the new fare rates and agreed to implement the new fare and fuel commission from January 1, 2006.

Remittances exceed development aid, FDI in Bangladesh

AFP, Singapore

Annual remittances exceed official development aid and foreign direct investments in Bangladesh, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) said in its latest economic and social survey.

Migrant workers in high-income countries remitted a record of more than 167 billion dollars to their families in countries like Bangladesh last year, the UN agency report released Thursday said, calling for measures to ensure the money is used for long-term development.

If remittances sent through informal channels are counted, the figures could rise by as much as 50 percent, it pointed out.

As of 2004 three of the top five remittance-receiving countries in the world were located in Asia-India which received 21.7 billion dollars, China with 21.3 billion dollars and the Philippines with 11.6 billion

dollars, said the United Nations economic and social arm.

Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are also among the major recipients of remittances, while Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and the Pacific Island of Samoa benefit to a lesser extent.

The agency urged governments in recipient countries to cut the costs of sending money home and help the workers' families channel the funds into more productive endeavours.

Countries exporting migrant workers should also take steps to improve their skills and tighten policies to ensure they do not fall prey to unscrupulous recruitment agencies, UN-ESCAP said.

"Policy-makers need to recognise that remittances are private flows of money that need to be treated as such. Therefore, these flows should not be taxed," it said.

The money has already been taxed in the country of origin and

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Ainjibi Parishad sweeps SC Bar elections

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Pro-opposition lawyers' forum Sammilita Ainjibi Samannay Parishad (SASP) swept through the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) elections on Thursday winning all the 14 seats.

Chief Election Commissioner Advocate Nijamul Haque Nasim unofficially declared the results early Friday.

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Prayer Timing		
April 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation