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15 return home after 15 months in Indian jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Fifteen Bangladesh nationals returned home yesterday morning after languishing in Amritsar Central Jail in Indian state of Punjab for 15 months.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said Border Security Force of India (BSF) pushed the 15 men into Bangladesh yesterday at the Tetulia border.

The returnees, Mostafa, Rashed Ali, Asgar Ali, Delwar Hossain (1), Lutfar Rahman, Shahabuddin, Nur Alam, Delwar Hossain (2), Humayan, Shajahan Ali, Nur Nabi, Rabhani, Majid Mia, Helaluddin and Rezaul, hail from Panchagarh town.

They had gone to Dhaka in search of work and fell victim to human traffickers, they said. They told The Daily Star human traffickers lured them into leaving the country with promises of lucrative jobs in Pakistan. The men set out for Pakistan via India and were sent to jail after being captured by the Amritsar police for illegal entry into India.

The men had urged their family members to take steps for their release through letter from the jail. They described their experiences in the jail as inhumane, family sources said.

No end to ordeal of arrest victims

Relatives still being harassed, bribe police at jail gate

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Relatives of the victims of recent mass arrest in the capital are still facing lot sufferings and harassment to get their detained relatives released from jail.

Many of the relatives alleged they had to bribe police to ensure that they would not implicate their near and dear ones in non-bailable cases. And a number of them on Thursday said the jail authorities did not allow their detained relatives to come out of jail despite court orders for their release on bail two days ago.

Some however managed to have their relatives out of jail soon after court granted them bail. "If you pay Tk 1,000 to officials concerned, your man will get out of jail in a day," said a woman waiting at the Dhaka Central Jail gate on

Thursday to get her husband released. More than 200 people were found waiting there to have their relatives freed.

Asked about this, Superintendent of the jail AKM Monjurul Karim said they were also getting such complaints. He however said it is almost impossible for a jail official to take bribe from relatives of detainees as members of different intelligence agencies maintain vigilance at the jail gate.

Garments worker Nasima Akhter was waiting at the jail gate Thursday afternoon as a Dhaka court granted bail to her 15-year-old brother Alamgir Hossain.

He was arrested at Sadarghat launch terminal on his arrival from Chandpur, she said. This was her brother's (rickshawpuller) first visit to the capital. So, she was very much worried about his fate.

She made a frantic search for Alamgir at city hospitals and police stations. Finally, a youth informed her that he is in jail being implicated in a motorcycle theft case filed with Khilgaon Police Station.

Alamgir is fortunate that his sister finally found him out and arranged bail for him. But relatives of primary school teacher Joyanal Abedin, aged around 45, still do not know that he is in jail.

"Joyanal bhai has requested me to inform his family at Babuganj in Barisal about his arrest," said Mujib, a driver, who was in jail with him.

Mujib said Joyanal came to Dhaka for official work on June 3 but Sabujbagh police arrested him and implicated him in a theft case.

Asma Haq, a housewife, alleged that Sabujbagh police arrested her

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Victims of friends' brutality, Badhon, above, Tonmoy, bottom left, and Nilav are undergoing treatment at Ibn Sina Hospital in the capital.

No trace yet of three teenage offenders

Victims' condition improving

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are yet to trace the three teenagers who cut the throats of three others and looted valuables from the house of one victim on Thursday.

Investigators said Jahan, one of the three attackers, has fled his house along with his family, while the identities of the two of his accomplices are yet to be learnt.

Meanwhile, the condition of the injured - Kazi Naimul Islam Badhon, Wadidul Kabir Tonmoy and Kazi Nibrush Nilav - has improved, their physicians said.

Jahan - a classmate of the three, and his two friends cut the throats of the three class VII students of Manipur Cadet School at Mirpur and looted valuables from Badhon's house. The victims were not acquainted with Jahan's friends.

The boys would often hang around at Tonmoy and Badhon's flats while their parents were at

work.

Dr M Abul Kalam Azad, head of the medical team treating the three boys at Ibn Sina Hospital at Kalyanpur, told The Daily Star yesterday that the tracheas, vocal cords and parts of oesophagus of the boys were cut.

None of the three victims can talk now but they respond by writing on papers.

According to police, the incident is not merely a robbery case. Investigation officer (IO) Sub-Inspector Rabiul Islam of Mirpur Police Station said, "How can we take it as a robbery case when the victims entered the house with their known friends? There must be other motives."

He said a teacher of the school told him that Jahan is a regular student. "The mystery will be solved after the victims will be able to tell the story after recovery and the arrest of Jahan," said the IO.

Badhon's mother Gulenur

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DMC teacher killed in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The head of the Department of Forensic Medicine of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) Prof Akteruzzaman was killed in a road accident at Azimpur in the capital yesterday.

The atmosphere at the DMCH became heavy as hundreds of physicians, students and relatives rushed to the hospital hearing his death news.

Akteruzzaman was taking a U-turn opposite of Eden College on the way to his Azimpur Officers Quarter residence riding his motorcycle at about 12:45pm when a speeding jeep hit his motorcycle and dragged him around 15 yards with it, said witness Waliur Rahman, a guard of the quarters.

The doctor was rushed to the DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries at about 3:15pm.

Locals held the jeep and handed its driver Monjur Alam to police. Police seized the vehicle.

Monjur could not hold back his jeep as the motorbike suddenly came in front, police said referring to the driver.

Dr Akteruzzaman, 56, who hailed from Homna in Comilla district, left behind three daughters and two sons. He was supposed to

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10 gunned down in Rangamati were Indian criminals Babar believes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar told the BBC Bangla Service yesterday that the 10 people who were killed during a joint operation by army and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Baghaichhari of Rangamati might be involved with an insurgent group.

The BBC Radio quoting Babar however reported Bangladesh thinks they are Indian miscreants.

"The raid was conducted on the request of India due to the kidnaping of Indian customs officials by insurgents or miscreants," Babar said.

A day after the killing of the 10 suspected Indian insurgents on June 12, Rab news release said it is suspected that they were not Bangladesh nationals.

"We always say we will not allow

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Prayer Timing		
June 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



A visitor takes a look at dates at a three-day fruit exhibition that began on the Krishibid Institution premises in the capital yesterday.

'Nuke incentive offer a step forward'

Tehran to carefully consider it: Ahmadinejad

AFP, Shanghai

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Friday the international incentive offer to curtail his nation's nuclear programme was a "step forward" that would be carefully considered.

"We regard the offer of a package as a step forward and I have instructed my colleagues to carefully consider it," Ahmadinejad, in China for the leaders' summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, told a press conference.

"We will give a response in due time in line with the international interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Ahmadinejad was commenting on the offer -- put forward this month by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany -- of incentives to Tehran if it agreed to suspend uranium enrichment.

Uranium enrichment makes nuclear reactor fuel but also atom bomb material.

The United States has led international warnings that Iran intends

to build a nuclear weapons program.

Tehran insists its nuclear program is only for energy purposes and that it has a right to enrich uranium.

"We are not seeking to develop nuclear weapons," Ahmadinejad reiterated Friday.

He then sought to focus attention on the fact the United States dropped atomic bombs in Japan at the end of World War II, becoming the first and only nation to use nuclear weapons.

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FM LEAVES TODAY TO JOIN ICMF

Terrorism, Islamophobia among major issues

REZAUL KARIM

Combating international terrorism and Islamophobia, Arab-Israeli conflict and the issue of Palestine, situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, the problem of refugees in Muslim countries and reform in the UN will dominate the agenda of the 3-day 33rd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) beginning on June 19 in Azerbaijan's capital city of Baku.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan will leave for Azerbaijan today to lead the Bangladesh delegation at the ICFM which will be

held against the backdrop of major developments in Muslim countries.

Foreign Ministry officials said assistance to LDCs, establishment of an Islamic common market, activities of the Islamic University of Technology at Gazipur in Bangladesh as well as restructuring of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) are also among the topics for discussion.

Bangladesh is the pioneer of the idea of an Islamic common market. Late President Ziaur Rahman had proposed formation of an Islamic common market at the 3rd Islamic

Summit held in Taif in 1981.

Bangladesh has the third largest Muslim population in the world. Moreover, Bangladesh is a member of the OIC Committee on Palestine (Al-Quds Committee) and the OIC Committee on the Philippines (Committee of Eight).

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan is expected to articulate Bangladesh's stand on some major issues and to call for 'solidarity and brotherhood among Muslim countries', said an official of the foreign ministry.

Officials said this session of the

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Storm, heavy rain in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A storm accompanied with heavy rain swept the city last night, damaging hundreds of trees and roadside billboards.

Shattered pieces of billboards and tree branches obstructed and slowed down vehicular movements in many city areas on the second day of the Bengali month, Ashar, which marks the beginning of the rainy season.

Met office recorded 67mm rainfall during 6:00pm to 12:00am and gusts of 59 km per hour in the capital and its surrounding areas.

At Pragati Sarani, many billboards collapsed during the storm and damaged vehicles plying the streets. Police said the storm also damaged many beautification structures on the Airport Road.

The downpour also created water logging in the low-lying areas of the city causing suffering to people.

Hundreds of people were seen waiting for transport as many vehicles were stuck on the water logged streets.

SEPTUPLETS Criminal case filed against ex-DIG 'father'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A human rights organisation yesterday filed a criminal case against a former deputy inspector general (DIG) of police and his wife, who have been in the centre of a controversy for claiming to have given birth to a set of septuplets.

The case accuses the couple of confining the children with an intention of trafficking. Nobody was however arrested in connection with the case by 11:00pm yesterday when this report was filed.

Advocate Alena Khan, executive director of the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR), had filed a complaint under Women and Children

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BDR, BSF trade gunfire

UNB, C'naubaganj

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) traded gunfire on Hakimpur border under Sadar upazila on Thursday night.

The BSF fired three bullets at 10:30pm, forcing the BDR to retaliate with 20 shots. However, no casualty was reported.

Lt Col Lutfar Rahman, Commander of 6 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident and said vigilance along the border has been strengthened.

Meanwhile, the BSF on Thursday night declared red alert and dug bunkers along Telkupi frontier in Shbganj upazila of the district, BDR sources said.

The Indian border guards withdrew its red alert following a company commander level flag meeting with BDR at Kiranganj frontier at about 10:00am yesterday.

At the meeting, both sides agreed to maintain peace in the bordering areas, the sources added.

Nepal govt, Maoists reach deal on ending insurgency

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's government and the country's Maoist rebels said Friday they had reached an agreement aimed at ending a decade-long insurgency after a day of unprecedented meetings between the two sides.

"We have reached an eight-point understanding to get the country out of the current crisis," Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula said.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and elusive Maoist chief Prachanda held a first round of face-to-face talks Friday to try to end the insurgency that has crippled the Himalayan nation.

"We've agreed to dissolve the parliament and the Nepal

Communist Party Maoist People's government, and on the framing of an interim constitution and the forming of an interim government," said a joint statement signed by Prachanda and leaders of the seven-party alliance now running the country.

The two sides also agreed to hold elections for a body to redraft Nepal's constitution, a key demand of the Maoists who also want to scrap the monarchy.

"A democratic republic is our minimum demand and we will go to the Nepal people with this demand during the constituent assembly elections," Prachanda said following the meeting at the prime minister's Kathmandu residence.

Both sides also agreed to request UN monitoring of arms during the polls.

"For free and fair constituent assembly elections both sides have agreed to request the United Nations to monitor the management of arms and soldiers (on both sides)," the joint statement said.

Prachanda said parliament should be dissolved in a month and that the constituent assembly elections should be held before April 2007, but there was no government confirmation of this timetable.

Prior to the announcement, a Western diplomat welcomed news of the high-level meeting, but said that arms issues should be

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14-party vows to force govt to accept reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition combine yesterday announced to lay siege to the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat on June 20 and set up road-rail-waterways blockades on July 2, to force the government to accept its reforms proposal.

They also said they will continue their agitation programmes until their demands for reforms in the caretaker government system and the EC are met and until chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other election commissioners resign.

AL General Secretary and 14-party Co-ordinator Abdul Jalil said the siege of election commission offices and road-rail waterways blockade are part of their consecu-

tive agitation programmes against the BNP led four-party alliance government.

"AL believes in democracy and wants the next general elections to be held in a free and fair manner. The party will continue agitation programmes because free and fair elections cannot be held without reforming the EC and the caretaker government system," Abdul Jalil said while addressing a rally in the capital.

City AL organised the rally in front of the central AL office on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital to protest against police atrocities on the opposition men during the hartal on June 13 and 14.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed said the BNP-Jamaat government began looting public

Conspiracy on to foil polls, says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

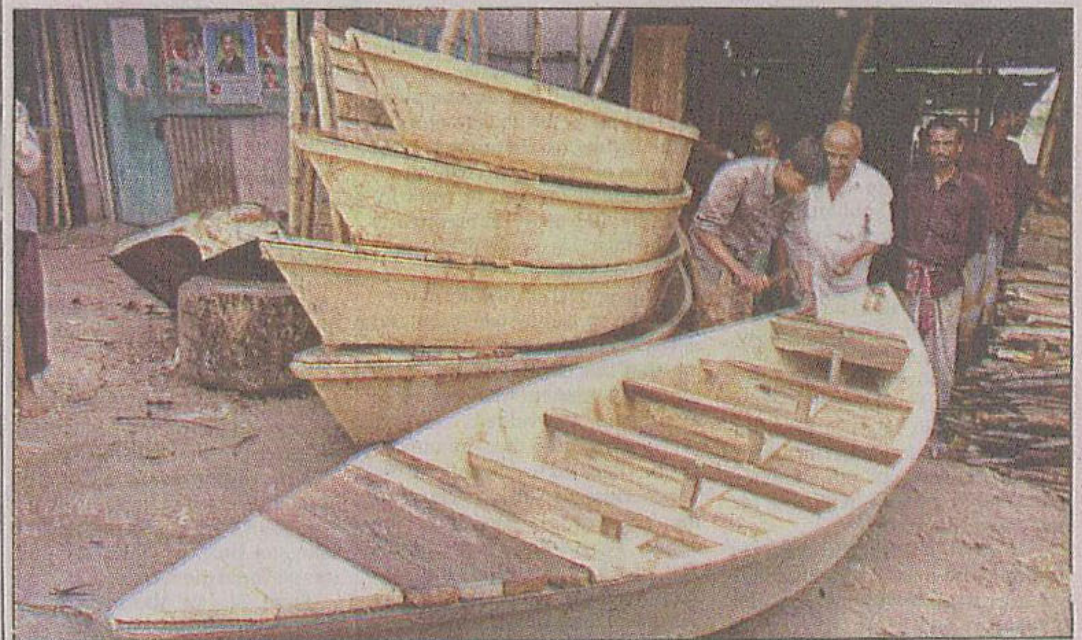
Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the alliance government is conspiring to foil the next election apprehending their defeat due to corruption, terrorism and price-hike.

"Any conspiracy against the elections must be foiled," Hasina told a meeting with the leaders of AL district committees of Chittagong North and South, Chittagong City and Cox's Bazar.

She asked the Awami League leaders and workers to forget trivial misunderstandings among them, reactivate the party and make preparations for the elections.

Accusing the government of politicising the Election Commission and the administration to rig the polls, she demanded immediate resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and two other election commissioners for

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PREPARING FOR FLOOD: Workers busy making boats for use on the city outskirts that go under water every monsoon. The photo was taken from Demra yesterday.