

**RUPALI SALE-OFF  
HC order stayed  
for a week**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday suspended for a week the execution of the High Court's (HC) stay on the process of selling the state-run Rupali Bank.

The Appellate Division chamber bench of Justice Amrul Kabir Chowdhury issued the rule in response to an application filed by the Privatisation Commission.

The court also asked the original petitioner ABM Abu Taher to file by this time a regular application for leave to appeal seeking overturning of the HC decision.

Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali moved for the government and barrister Ajmalul Hossain QC for the Privatisation Commission. Dr M Zahir stood for the Rupali Bank while Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury appeared for the government.

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**Italy offers to lead UN force in Lebanon**

**Israeli troops kill 2 Hezbollah fighters, Annan to visit region**

AFP, REUTERS, Beirut

Italy has offered to lead a peace-keeping force for Lebanon to shore up a tenuous UN-brokered truce, which was rattled further with the killing of two Hezbollah guerrillas by Israeli troops.

Monday's announcement by Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi came as US President George W Bush called for the "urgent" creation of a beefed-up UN force, with only a few nations willing to send troops to Lebanon.

Italy said yesterday it would

contribute 2,000 to 3,000 troops, about one third of the European contribution, to a UN force for Lebanon provided Israel did not violate the truce.

Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema said Italians would be supported by Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and other nations in the force which Italy has offered to lead.

"In the end our troops, between 2,000 and 3,000, will represent about a third of the total sent from Europe," D'Alema told the newspaper La Repubblica in an interview.

UN chief Kofi Annan was also considering travelling to the region to assess the ceasefire ending end 34 days of warfare between Israel and Hezbollah that cost more than 1,400 lives and devastated much of Lebanon.

The Israeli military said it had killed at least two Hezbollah fighters in south Lebanon late Monday, although this was denied by the Shia militant group on its Al-Manar television.

Troops fired on a group of armed Hezbollah militants who

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**BoI CHIEF'S CASE  
Bail bonds for 5 eminent citizens placed in court**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Five eminent citizens yesterday appeared before the Additional District Magistrate's (ADM) Court, Dhaka and furnished their bail bonds in a defamation case filed by Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment (BoI) Mahmudur Rahman on August 9.

The five are renowned economist and Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan, its Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and CPD trustee board members former adviser to caretaker government Syed Manzur Elahi, former finance minister M Syeduzzaman and former president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Laila Rahman Kabir.

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PHOTO: STAR

The five trustees of Centre for Policy Dialogue with their lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain head for the Additional District Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday to submit bail bonds.



PHOTO: STAR

Journalist Nirmal Sen struggles to hold back tears at Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday during a discussion meeting commemorating the late poet Shamsur Rahman.

**Jalil accuses govt of looting public money**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat coalition government has been engaged in plundering public money by hastily approving a large number of projects as their tenure is about to end.

"This government, champion four times in corruption, is looting the public money through approving numbers of projects in the cabinet purchase committee," Jalil said in a statement.

The AL general secretary termed the government's Tk 4,000 crore block allocation as "looting allocation" and alleged that the government has set its eyes on it.

"The government has left a scope for plundering Tk 1,200 crore of public money by approving 17

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**Mumbai cops foil terror attack**

**One Pakistani militant killed**

REUTERS, Mumbai

Police said they had foiled a possible terrorist attack in the financial hub of Mumbai after they shot dead a suspected Pakistani national and arrested another after a gun battle in the metropolis yesterday.

The shootout came less than a month and a half after serial bomb blasts hit packed commuter trains

and stations in the city, killing 186 people and wounding about 700.

Acting on a tip-off, police surrounded a dilapidated building in a central neighbourhood and began searching for suspects linked with the July 11 attacks, AN Roy, Mumbai's police chief, told a news conference.

"We intercepted a car last night and arrested a person who led us to

the hideout of his accomplice," Roy said. "There, the other man did not surrender and fired 18 rounds from an AK-47 rifle. We returned fire in which he was killed."

A senior officer had earlier said Tuesday's killing and arrest was a breakthrough in last month's train bombings as the two men were

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**JP to contest alone if AL boycotts poll**

Says Ershad

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday asked his party men to prepare for contesting the next elections in all 300 seats alone if the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine ultimately decides to boycott the polls on the issue of electoral reform.

"The AL-led 14-party combine has declared not to take part in the elections without electoral reforms...It seems to me we'll have to contest the next elections without joining any alliance," he told a meeting of his party workers from Khulna division at a city hotel.

Terminating the present political situation "very crucial" for the Jatiya Party, Ershad said he may get a big post like that of prime minister or

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**BSF abducts 2 Bangladeshi farmers**

UNB, Habiganj

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday entered Bangladesh territory at Chunarughat and abducted two farmers at gunpoint.

Villagers said the Indian border guards picked up Iman Ali of Dootpatil and Mashuk Mia of Jamburachhar while they were

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**BPC further curtails fuel supply to North**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) further curtailed distribution of diesel to the agents and dealers of Padma, Maghna and Jamuna oil companies in 16 northern districts.

BPC official sources said yesterday that 62 lakh litres of diesel was supplied yesterday to 16 northern districts that includes 24 lakh litres unusable residual oil - also known as dead stock. In other words, only 38 litres consumable diesel was supplied yesterday.

The distribution has been curtailed 25 to 50 per cent to cope with the present shortage, a Regional Control Room (RCM) official said.

Aminul Islam, manager of Karotoa Filling Station situated on

the outskirts of Bogra town said his filling station requires approximately 9000 litre diesel every other day, but he received about half of the requirement.

A bus driver had no option but to abandon his bus temporarily at Aminul's filling station premises as they could not provide sufficient diesel for the bus running on Rajshahi-Rangpur route, Aminul said.

Because of the ongoing fuel shortage for the last ten days, Aminul had to purchase 9000 litre of diesel on August 20 from black market in Baghabari river port depot area to meet the customers' demand and to remain in business.

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**Three to die for killing reporter**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a woman, her lover and another one to death for killing the woman's husband Nabil Abdul Latif, a reporter of the daily New Age in March 2004.

Judge AR Masud of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 gave the verdict in absence of the convicts in a packed courtroom.

The convicts are victim's wife Farhana Sultana Kanak, her lover Nirzon Mostakin and Shahidul Islam Pappu.

The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender and they can appeal to the High Court against the verdict within 30 days from receipt of the judgment copy, the judge said.

Victim's uncles Harunur Rashid and Abdul Kuddus Akand, present in the court, expressed their

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PHOTO: STAR

A water pipe sticks out of the middle of a road in Lalbagh in the city. Dhaka Wasa installed new water pipes under the road two months ago but has not yet repaired the road causing suffering to the commuters.

**Bangladeshi wounded in BSF firing**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Bangladeshi national was wounded as Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire on Zakiganj border in Sylhet, while shots were traded between the Indian border guards and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) along the border in Satkhira yesterday.

Injured Asad Uddin, 65, of Koshkonokpur village was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical

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**Jute workers go on rampage in Khulna**

**Vandalise shops, cars after daylong strike**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Workers and employees of jute mills of Khulna-Jessore region went on a rampage as they were returning from a rally held at Hotel Royal Square in Khulna city around 6:00pm yesterday.

The workers also enforced a daylong strike yesterday at jute mills of the region in a bid to realise their eight-point demand.

According to police and eyewitnesses, the workers vandalised Mina Bazar, Zia Hall, Hotel Royal, Hotel Castle Salam and NCC bank. Windowpanes and glass doors were shattered as they pelted stones at the buildings. At least 20

rickshaws and 12 cars were also vandalised and 17 billboards were torn down. A large number of security forces were deployed to bring the situation under control.

The rally was held under the banner of Paatkal Sangram Parishad and backed by Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal.

When asked, Convenor of Paatkal Sangram Parishad Sardar Motaharudin said it was very difficult to control the aggrieved workers and employees as they were fed up with the double standard of the government.

Meanwhile, over 30,000 workers and employees of eight jute mills in

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**Indigenous people block highway to condemn firing by forest guards**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Organisations of indigenous people yesterday barricaded the Mymensingh-Tangail highway for three hours protesting the firing by forest guards on their women that left one injured at Hayetkura under Madhupur National Park.

Joyenshahi Adibashi Parishad and Bangladesh Adibashi Forum jointly organised the protest.

Later, a rally presided over by Ajoy Mou was held at Sataria in Muktagachha where Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University, Father Joseph Gomes and Sanjeeb Dronng spoke among others.

The speakers demanded proper investigation into the incident and

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