

Blueprint to rig polls will be thwarted: Oli

UNB, Ctg

Executive President of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Col (retd) Oli Ahmed yesterday said the four-party alliance's "blueprint" to rig the elections will be thwarted through a vigorous movement jointly led by the 14-party combine and the LDP.

"The administration set up by the BNP-Jamaat coalition has already started shattering in the face of our strong movement... Their debacle in the next general elections is inevitable," Oli told a public meeting at Satkania High School ground in the afternoon.

Oli said his party will continue its movement until a congenial atmosphere for holding a fair and neutral election is created. The LDP leader said he lost the election in Satkania-Lohagara constituency in 2001 due to the

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Nagorik Committee programme today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens' Forum, a civil society initiative for accountable development, will present the recommendations emerging from the citizens' dialogues held across the country at a programme at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre today.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, adviser to the caretaker government, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, secretary general of BNP, Abdul Jalil, general secretary of Awami League (AL) and members of the Nagorik Committee 2006 will address the programme.

The programme will start at 2:00pm and remain open for all citizens



PHOTO: STAR

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, accompanied by his wife and daughter, waves at Zia International Airport yesterday prior to his departure for Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Award.

Unfit vessels allowed to operate at Ctg port

Underhand dealings with ship surveyors alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many unfit and unsurveyed inland ships are sailing in and around the Chittagong Port channel and the Bay of Bengal misusing temporary 'tokens' issued by a section of dishonest ship surveyors in exchange for money.

Some vessels also ply in the Bay of Bengal even without the 'Bay crossing permission' by the Department of Shipping, sources

said. Besides, many vessels get undue extension of the tokens issued as per Inland Shipping Ordinance (ISO) with 45-day validity, through underhand dealings.

A surveyor posted in Barisal is mainly involved in such illegal practices, the sources alleged.

The magistrate of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) detained a few such ships last month with illegally renewed temporary tokens and

without Bay crossing permissions.

A master of one such ship, MV Malek, detained on November 12, confessed to the magistrate that no surveyor has ever boarded the ship, adding that the vessel was in Chittagong Port for quite sometime. He also confessed in his written statement that he used to get tokens regularly by couriers and validity of the token was extended twice.

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Bangladesh closer to whitewash

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh showed visiting Zimbabwe no mercy to extend their lead to 4-0 in the five-match one-day series with an eight-wicket victory in the fourth game yesterday.

There was a festive mood in the maiden international match of Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium as nearly 30,000 cricket crazy fans turned out but Zimbabwe's another brittle batting display dampened the atmosphere.

The home attack continued domination over their southern African opponents to pave the Tigers' way to another easy victory and now go into the fifth and final game today at the same venue to complete their desired whitewash.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and

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Road mishap at Uttara kills 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people died and another was injured in a road accident at Uttara in the city early yesterday.

The dead are Akkas Ali, 50, an employee of a private firm, Arif Khandaker, 32, an electronics businessman and brother-in-law of Akkas Ali and Tushar Ahmed 16, a class nine student of Mohammad Shahidullah High School at Pallabi and nephew of Akkas.

The injured, Deedar Ahmed, is brother-in-law of Tushar.

The accident occurred at about 12:15am when a speeding truck hit a CNG-run autorickshaw in which the victims were returning to Pallabi from Zia International Airport.

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Nepali Maoist chief eyes presidency

AFP, New Delhi

Maoist warlord turned statesman Prachanda said he is willing to serve as president of a future Nepal republic, and that only a "small, rich and corrupt clique" wants to retain the monarchy, a news report said yesterday.

"If the masses want to give me the responsibility and if my party chooses me as the best candidate (for president), then I will have to take it," said Prachanda, who waged a decade of armed struggle against Nepal's royalty, in the Indian Express.

His offer came after the former teacher signed a peace pact with Nepal's ruling coalition last month, formally ending a civil war that claimed at least 12,500 lives.

"Except perhaps for a small, rich and corrupt clique close to the

palace, I don't think the majority need a king, even emotionally," Prachanda, whose nom-de-guerre means "the fierce one," told the daily newspaper.

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Prachanda

King pays tax for first time

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's King Gyanendra and his son, Crown Prince Paras, were forced to pay customs tax to collect shipped goods at the airport in a first for the embattled royal family, officials said.

Gyanendra paid no customs tax before the government's recent moves to strip him of most of his powers, and the duty was levied as part of a move to treat the monarch like a "normal citizen," officials said on Friday.

"The customs office at the Tribhuvan International Airport charged a total of 130,893 rupees (1,817 dollars) as duty and tax to release 50 torches and a hunting trophy," said Lok Darshan Regmi, administrative chief at the airport customs department.

The torches were sent from the United States in the name of the king while the hunting trophy

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US Congress completes law for Indian nuke deal

AFP, Washington/ New Delhi

The US Congress completed final legislation for a landmark civilian nuclear deal with India, removing contentious provisions objected by the US and Indian governments.

The legislation reconciled separate bills passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives aimed at implementing a nuclear agreement reached between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W Bush last year.

It is expected to be passed by the House and Senate on Friday before Bush signs it into law.

Delhi welcomes

Lawmakers said key provisions objected by the administrations of Bush and Singh were "watered down," including one that initially virtually compelled India to back US efforts to contain New Delhi's traditional ally Iran's nuclear programme.

"This latest step in a long and sometimes arduous legislative process has resulted in a satisfying consensus," said Tom Lantos, the incoming head of the powerful House international affairs panel.

The final legislation "strikes the right balance between giving the President the necessary flexibility to negotiate the best agreement possible with New Delhi, while at the same time preserving Congressional oversight," he said.

Under the deal, India, a non-signatory of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), will be given access to civilian nuclear technology in return for placing its atomic reactors under global safeguards.

The pact was seen as controversial because the US Congress had to create a rare exception for India

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Garos celebrate Wangala

BISHAWJIT DAS

Responding to the call of *nakma*, a Garo tribal leader, thousands of urban Garo people yesterday gathered on a school playground in the capital to celebrate Wangala, the centuries-old harvest festival of the indigenous community.

Clad in colourful traditional clothing, the indigenous community thanked the god for the first harvest of the Bangla calendar with due respect and festivity on the playground of Lalmatia Housing Society School and College.

People of other communities like Chakma, Marma, Rakhaine and Bangalee also joined the most important of all Garo

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PHOTO: STAR

Garos artistes perform dance at Lalmatia in the capital yesterday on the occasion of their harvest festival *wangala*.

Crimes on rise as criminals coming out of hideouts

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Crimes like murder, robbery and especially mugging have increased in the capital and across the country because of, what the law enforcers say, restive political situation.

The biggest ever heist in the country, the latest sensational crime incident, took place at the 16-storey Mascot Plaza in Uttara early Wednesday where burglars broke into four jewellery shops and took gold ornaments and cash worth Tk 12.80 crore.

Business people and owners of a number of under-construction buildings in Mirpur, Karwan Bazar,

Moghbar, New Market, Mohammadpur and Badda areas alleged that local criminals, who went into hiding soon after the caretaker government (CG) assumed power, are in action again and have started extorting money from them.

Many of the criminals are among the around 2,000 accused who were released after around 300 criminal cases were withdrawn on the home ministry recommendations at the fag end of the four-party government, they alleged.

Even though concerned sections of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) could not provide any statistics, authorities admitted that crime has increased.

"The number of robberies and muggings have risen during the caretaker government regime as

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Correction

In a report titled '15000 hajj pilgrims keep fingers crossed for flights', published in The Daily Star on December 5, Syed Ahsan Hossain Kazi's name was printed as deputy general manager (public relations) of Bangladesh Biman Corporation instead of Khan Musharraf Hussein's.

In fact, Syed Ahsan Hossain Kazi is a former deputy general manager (DGM) of Bangladesh Biman, and Khan Musharraf Hussein is the present DGM. We regret the mistake.

Prayer Timing		
December 9		
	Azan	
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation