



Spice tonic

REUTERS, London

The Football Association (FA) hope David Beckham's popstar wife Victoria can sing the England team to World Cup victory in Japan later this month.

Her latest album has been included in an entertainment package which members of the England squad will receive when they arrive in Japan.

Also in the package is the David Beckham Soccer video game and coach Sven-Goran Eriksson's collection of classical tunes.

The England players will be able to choose from a 400-strong selection of CD's, books and videos

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Priced criminals slip through dragnet

566 including 4 listed ones rounded up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police on the second day of its special drive yesterday arrested four listed criminals and 562 others in the city for their alleged involvement in crimes.

But none of the most wanted criminals was arrested till yesterday. Earlier, the home ministry made a list of 23 most wanted criminals to net. Sources said these criminals are mainly responsible for escalation of violence in the city.

Seventeen people were arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 442 under the Dhaka Metropolitan Act, 74 in regular cases and 11 under the Motor Vehicles Act in 20 police station areas.

Hard on the heels of rising crimes, the government

decided to carry out a special drive with the backups of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Ansar to net notorious criminals and improve law and order.

The government formed a national committee to dare criminals and conduct a joint drive, and a meeting was held at the home ministry, chaired by Home Minister Alraf Hossain Chowdhury.

As per the decision of the meeting, the BDR forces patrolled different city areas yesterday. They have given a nod to the joint drive to arrest accomplices and relatives of top criminals as a strategy to mount pressure on them.

Accordingly, a team of detectives arrested Sonia Akther, wife of Kala Jahangir, an alleged criminal, Monday night.

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Compensation fund for launch disaster victims

SHAHRIAR KARIM

The shipping ministry yesterday decided to create a special fund by levying passengers to give compensation to the families of launch disaster victims.

Each passenger travelling to a distance of up to 100 km on a river vessel will have to pay an extra Tk 0.50 per ticket. Above this distance, they will be charged Tk 1.

The decision will be made effective from July 1, according to sources. This special fund will be managed by a trustee board, comprising government officials, people's representatives and launch owners.

A meeting at the shipping ministry took the decision yesterday with Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain in the chair. Shipping Secretary Ghulam Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), director general of the shipping department and other officials were present at the meeting.

"We have taken the decision as it would take time to introduce the

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HC quashes graft case against Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday quashed a corruption case against Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) had filed the case during the rule of Awami League in 1996 regarding the appointment of police sub-inspectors (SI).

The BAC submitted the charge sheet of the case in 1998. Former home minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury was the other accused in the case.

The High Court bench comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Mohammed Momatazuddin

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ZAYADUL AHSAN

If you try to conceive of any easy ways to become a millionaire without having to make a huge investment, being a 'metre reader' would be the last thing to race across your mind.

However, rather than wincing at the proposition should you take up the seemingly unimpressive job, let's say at the Titas Gas Transmissions and Distribution Company, you can become filthy rich in a few years.

You can buy cosy flats, hit the road on expensive cars, and fly your



Mahbubur Rahman

Murky way to millions

family to Singapore to spend the vacation!

And, all you need to do is become a high-ranking unionist and forget work ethics. Soon, you will be held in high esteem by leading industrialists and powerful politicians alike.

Now, having politicians' blessings means that the Bureau of Anti-corruption or any other authorities cannot touch you. Moreover, when you rub shoulder with the powerful you do have a say on how Titas should run.

Exactly that's the kind of power and privilege most metre readers of Titas enjoy.

No wonder some 'honest' managers of Titas and Petrobangla, its parent organisation, find the fact something too hard to swallow. Everyone knows the criminal activities of most of the 60-70 metre

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PHOTO: STAR

Signs of corruption... Titas gas millionaire meter reader Mahbubur Rahman owns two of his flats in this building.

Matir Moina denied certificate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has banned the feature film "Matir Moina", terming it religiously sensitive.

The film has qualified for screening at the Cannes International Film Festival on May 16.

On April 27, the majority of the Film Censor Board members suggested that the film be released uncut. It was expected to be given certificate within a day or two, sources said.

The 98-minute film that portrays childhood of the director of the film,

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60 hurt in N'ganj as gang of criminals attacks houses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 60 people, including five policemen, were injured, six of them with bullets, in a clash between the villagers and criminals at three villages under Bakarboli Union of Fatullah thana yesterday morning.

The trouble began when a gang of 100 criminals led by Motaleb, an accused in sensational Khalil murder case, attacked the houses of the witnesses in the case at about 9 am.

The criminals equipped with firearms swooped on the houses of the witnesses at Akbarnagar, Protapnagar and Uttar Gopalnagar villages. They exploded bombs and fired shots during the attacks.

The criminals stormed into different houses of the villages and beat up the inmates.

In the face of attacks, the villagers build up resistance to the attackers hurling brickbats and using lethal weapons.

On receiving information, police team from Fatullah and Siddhirganj thanas rushed to the villages and brought the situation under control at around 11-30 am.

The agitating villagers also pelted stones at the policemen for their delayed arrival at the villages.

Five policemen were injured in the attack. They are SI Rafiqul Islam, 38,

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33 killed as Kashmir militants attack bus, army camp

AFP, Jammu

Thirty-three people were killed yesterday when three Muslim militants opened fire on a civilian bus in Kashmir and then stormed the residential quarters of a nearby Indian army camp, officials said.

Twenty-three people, 18 of them women and children, were killed at the army camp near Kashmir's Hindu-majority winter capital Jammu, along with seven bus passengers and three rebels, Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani said in New Delhi.

The attack, the deadliest on the army in Kashmir in the past year, came just hours after US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca arrived in New Delhi to urge the Indian leadership to cool tempers with Pakistan.

"Events like this will ensure that restraint (by India) will not last," junior foreign minister Omar Abdullah told reporters.

Rocca said Washington "unequivocally" denounced the attack.

"It is precisely this type of Barbaric terrorism that the international war on terrorism is determined to stop," she said.

The Pakistani government condemned the attack but called for an inquiry.

"Acts of violence resulting in civilian casualties in the Indian occupied Kashmir and India continue to coincide with high-level visits to the region," a foreign office statement said.

"Such incidents warrant an impartial and comprehensive inquiry to

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Bhomra land port incident Five but main accused held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Police yesterday arrested five persons for their alleged involvement in looting rice-laden trucks from Bhomra land port Sunday night.

They are Rafiq, Shaheen, Shahadat, Shahinur and Nazrul, although they were not named in the first information report (FIR).

Police are yet to arrest the accused criminals included in the FIR, sources said.

The accused are Habibur Rahman, general secretary of the district BNP, Sumon of Ali Enterprise, Rabiul Islam of Rafi Enterprise, Abdur Rahim of Rupali Enterprise, Shaheen of M Rahman and Sons, George of Asa Enterprise, Abdul Gafur of BM Enterprise and Wahidul.

Earlier, Customs Superintendent Shivu Pada Biswas lodged a case with the Sathkira Police Station.

A gang allegedly belonging to the local lawmaker forcibly took away six trucks loaded with rice from the land port Sunday night at gunpoint.

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