

South African first lady Mbeki arrives tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

South African First Lady Zanele Mbeki will arrive in Dhaka tomorrow on a three-day visit.

She will lead a high-level team from SA to see the microcredit activities of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).

Director General of National Treasury Maria Ramos and South African High Commissioner to India Nkoana Mashabane will accompany the First Lady.

They will observe the role of PKSF in microcredit operations, microcredit-financed income generating activities (IGA) and their success in poverty alleviation efforts in Bangladesh.

PKSF, a non-profit organisation set up by the government, extends support for microcredit and capacity building of both government and non-government partner organisations.

AL activist killed in clash with BNP in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An Awami League activist was killed and 10 others injured in a clash between AL and BNP at village Charpara under Sadar upazila yesterday.

The clash began when BNP men swooped on the AL activists who were going to attend a party meeting at house in the village.

Both sides clashed for an hour using lethal weapons.

AL activist Sajjad Hossain, 29, son of Anwar Ali, was hit by an iron rod. He succumbed to injuries on way to Sadar hospital. The injured were admitted to the hospital.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They arrested 25 persons from the spot.

Teenage boy shot in city

UNB, Dhaka

A teenage boy was critically injured as unidentified miscreants opened fire on him at city's RK Mission Road yesterday.

Hospital sources said two unidentified youths sprayed bullets on Emrul Islam Tipu, 15, while he was playing cricket at a field near his house at about 3 pm.

He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The reason behind the attack could not be known.

In another incident, an employee of a madrassah was stabbed by miscreants at Nurjahan Road in city's Mohammadpur yesterday noon.

He was rushed to the DMCH and later shifted to Pangu Hospital.

KPM CBA leader held with arms

BSS, Rangamati

Police arrested a leader of Collective Bargaining Agent of the Karnaphuli Paper Mills (KPM) Limited during a raid Friday evening.

Police recovered arms and ammunition from the residence of the arrested KPM employees union leader Mohammad Shahjahan in presence of the Zone Commander of Bangladesh Rifles of Kaptai Special Zone, Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of the district and Kaptai Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

Police also picked up five more workers of KPM from the spot for interrogation during the raid.

A case was lodged with Kaptai Police Station in this connection.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 19		6-36 pm
May 20	5-14 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

All-party effort envisaged to curb rising crimes

NAZMUL ASHRAF

The government plans to form all-party committees to prop up its fight against crimes across the country.

Members of Parliament (MPs) will head the proposed committees to be formed in all the 300 constituencies of the Jatiya Sangsad, according to sources.

The idea of all-party committees has been conceived following a series of meetings the ruling BNP policymakers held on law and order in the past few days, sources involved in the process said yesterday.

Besides launching a crackdown on crimes in the capital, the BNP policymakers continued to consult party leaders including ministers and MPs, and the relevant officials to thrash out effective ways to arrest the fast worsening law and order.

Curbing crimes was one of the major election commitments of the BNP-led ruling coalition.

"The move to involve all political parties at the grassroots level has been taken since anti-crime drives have always failed due to political patronisation of the criminals," said an influential minister, requesting anonymity.

He said the proposed committees would basically assist the law enforcement agencies to perform better by launching a social movement against crimes at the local level.

They would also act as watchdogs of the police and other law enforcers

and recommend measures to the Cabinet Sub-committee on Law and Order, he added.

Reports have it that a section of the BNP leadership has asked the alleged criminals belonging to the party to go into hiding to avoid arrest during the ongoing anti-crime drive that began a week ago.

The joint drive by the police and paramilitary BDR has so far failed to net the top criminals and seize any significant amount of illegal arms.

Another government policymaker noted that the plan for all-party committees would be finalised once Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is back home. "The proposed committees may be formed by the parliament or through a negotiation with the opposition outside the House," he said.

Speaking on condition that he not be named, the policymaker added that a dialogue with the opposition parties would be opened soon.

According to the plan, the proposed committees would try to settle local disputes and alert the criminals before going for any legal action. Each MP-led committee would involve local leaders of all the political parties of a constituency.

Local elite and officers-in-charge of police stations may also join the proposed committees. Such committees may also be expanded up to the upazila and union levels.

A recent meeting of the MPs in the capital with BNP Secretary General and

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Bush denies failure to respond to warnings

AFP, Washington

US President George W. Bush on Friday rejected charges he failed to respond adequately to intelligence warnings of potential terrorist attacks prior to September 11.

Bush opponents in Congress have called for an investigation after his administration acknowledged the president had received warnings in August that terrorists might be planning to hijack US passenger planes.

"The American people know this about me, and my national security team, and my administration: Had I known that the enemy was going to use airplanes to kill on that fateful morning, I would have done everything in my power to protect the American people," Bush said.

The administration was also forced to defend not responding to a report, released two years before hijackers plunged four airliners into US targets, that warned terrorists might be planning just such an attack on federal facilities.

"Suicide bomber(s) belonging to al-Qaida's



Martyrdom Battalion could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives (C-4 and semtex) into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency, or the White House," the September 1999 report, called "Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?" warned.

The report, prepared by the research division of the Library of Congress, outlines the motivations of modern terrorism and profiles those likely to carry it out, calling Islamic fundamentalist groups like al-Qaeda "the most dangerous type."

The report "did not come to the attention of this administration when we took office on January 20," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said.

The information "did not raise enough alarms with anybody... the people in 1999 didn't see this and bring it to anybody's attention," he said. "People on (Capitol Hill) didn't, and as I indicated, the White House didn't."

Fleischer warned Democrats from seeking political

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10 hurt as students, police clash at SUST

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least ten people, including two assistant proctors and three policemen, were injured in a clash between police and students on the campus of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) on Friday night.

Campus sources said, the trouble began at about 9-30 PM following assault on a student of the university by a video shopkeeper at nearby Madina Market.

Shopkeeper Raihan and the student, Indrajit were bargaining over price of a CD. At one stage, Raihan beat up Indrajit.

Hearing the news, a large number of students rushed to the spot and ransacked the video shop.

On information, police reached the spot and tried to bring the situation. But the agitating students started hurling brick chips at the police. Police fired teargas shells and blank shots, leaving assistant proctors Munim Joarder and Murshed Zaman injured. They were admitted to a local hospital.

Police Sub-inspector Nurul Islam and two constables were also injured in the pitched battle.

Police have been deployed at Madina Market and to varsity gate as tension mounted in and around the varsity.

Police filed a case against 300 students of the university in connection with the incident.

Immediately after the incident, Madina Market Shop Owners' Association in a meeting condemned the incident. The association also suspended the membership of the shop owner.

HSC exams: 7664 expelled on 2nd day

BSS, Dhaka

As many as 7664 examinees were expelled for cheating in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examinations from different examination centres under seven educational boards across the country on the second day yesterday.

Officials of the central control room of the Ministry of Education said 12 teachers were also expelled for their alleged connivance in students' cheating during the examinations.

Of them, 1299 examinees and five teachers were expelled from 247 examination centres under Dhaka Board while 921 students and a teacher were expelled from 104 centres under Comilla Board.

Besides, 758 students were expelled from different examination

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PHOTO: STAR

State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon looks at a heap of copy chits recovered from examinees at a centre at Kapasia during yesterday's HSC exams.

Bail petitions of Alamgir rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Dhaka yesterday rejected the bail petitions of former state minister for planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in connection with three graft cases.

Magistrate Mohammad Nurul Karim Majumder passed the order on three separate petition, submitted by the defence lawyers on behalf of the accused.

Alamgir was produced before the court at about 1.15 pm.

Moving the petitions, Advocates Syed Rezaur Rahman, Rahamat Ali, Sahara Khatun, Quamrul Islam, Abdullah Abu, and Abdur Rahman Hawlader stated that the co-accused of the cases except former prime minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina were earlier granted ad-interim bail by the High

Court. So, the accused Alamgir should be released on bail as co-accused.

Special PP Fazlur Rahman Khan opposed the petitions.

After hearing both sides, the court passed the order.

The court also directed the jail authorities to provide all necessary things to Alamgir in the jail custody.

In the first case, filed with Tejaoga thana, it has been alleged that during the Awami League rule, the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Alamgir and six other ministers embezzled Tk 21,57,050 by appointing consultants for the Bangabandhu Novo Theatre without inviting bids.

In the second case, filed with the same thana, it has been alleged that Alamgir and seven others embez

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Criminal snatched from police in Rajshahi

BSS, Rajshahi

One arrested criminal was snatched away by his accomplices from the police custody in railway bridge area under Rohanpur Upazila in Chapainawabganj district yesterday evening, police said.

Rohanpur police arrested one Habibur Rahman Hobu, who convicted in a number of criminal cases with different police station, from the railway bridge area at about 7:30 pm. When they were taking him to police station, some people, two of them were identified as Fazlu, younger brother of Hobu and Latif, intercepted them and snatched away the arrested person.

Armed men take control of tender box at BIWTC office

STAR REPORT

A group of armed men took control of the tender box at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) office at Dilkusha in the city and prevented others from dropping tender schedules, it was alleged.

The allegation was made in a statement issued by the Ship and Launch Owners Association of Bangladesh (SLOAB) yesterday.

BIWTC floated a tender recently

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PHOTO: STAR

Not a hartal day... city dwellers stayed off the roads yesterday due to the heat wave. This picture was taken from the Gulistan roundabout at noon.

CNG conversion of vehicles stuck

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The project to promote use of compressed natural gas (CNG) has stalled due to lack of infrastructure.

The project could save the government up to Tk 182 crore a year and ensure a pollution-free environment.

Owners of the CNG-converted automobiles are facing trouble since there are very few filling stations in the capital. The long queue in front of the present six CNG filling stations is an evidence in this regard.

The state-run Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL), a subsidiary under Petrobangla which came into operation in 1987 to promote CNG use, owns four of the stations while a joint venture Chinese firm owns the rest.

As the fuel stations share gas lines with the domestic subscribers rather than having a dedicated gas line of their own, they suffer from low gas pressure which delays the refuelling of vehicles with compressed gas.

"There should be dedicated gas pipelines for CNG stations otherwise the low-pressure problem will continue," an official of a CNG station said.

Officials of the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited said it has a plan under the sixth Five-Year Plan to construct 100 km of gas pipeline in order to improve the gas supply to customers including CNG filling stations in the city, by spending over Tk 90 crore.

However, the CNG sector insiders said there will be no immediate improvement in the sector of CNG converted automobiles, as the Titas project is still a long way to come into operation.

The government issued licenses to 12 privately owned companies to operate in the field of the CNG to facilitate the CNG users during the current fiscal.

The RPGCL received additional

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Road accidents kill 10 in Jhenidah, Mymensingh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least ten people were killed and three others injured in separate road accidents in Jhenidah and Mymensingh districts yesterday.

Of them, eight were killed in Jhenidah and the rest two in Mymensingh.

Our Jhenidah correspondent reports: Eight people were killed and three others were injured when a Kaliganj-bound bus collided head-on with a Kotchandpur bound tempo at Eshbar in Kaliganj at about 8 pm yesterday.

Police and witnesses said six passengers of the tempo died on the spot while two in Kaliganj hospital. The identity of the dead could not be known immediately.

Three injured persons including the driver of the tempo were sent to the nearby hospital with critical condition.

In Mymensingh, a local leader and an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were killed in a road accident at Fulpur bus stand on Mymensingh-Sherpur road yesterday evening, according to UNB.

The victims were identified as JCD Fulpur upazila unit president Abul Hashem, 26, and activist Ferdous Ahmed, 27.

Police and witnesses said the JCD men were killed when a Dhaka-bound coach of Dreamland Transport Line from Sherpur hit their motorbike at about 6.45pm. They died on the spot.

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Special passport demanded for workers going abroad

RAFIQ HASAN

The Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) has protested the sudden passport fee hike and demanded introduction of a special 'employment passport' at minimum charge for workers going overseas for jobs.

"In order to boost manpower export and increase remittance, the government should make it easy for workers to obtain passport including cost reduction. But instead it has raised the fee which would adversely affect the country's manpower export," said Golam Mostafa, secretary general of BAIRA.

The government recently increased passport issuance and renewal fees amending the Bangladesh Passport Rules 1974.

A 48-page international passport now costs Tk 5000 and Tk 3000 under the 'most urgent' and 'urgent' categories respectively.

The new fees for a 68-page passport for the 'most urgent', 'urgent' and 'normal' cases are Tk 6,000, Tk 3,500 and Tk 2500 respectively.

The renewal fees are now Tk 1,000 for urgent cases

and Tk 500 for normal cases.

Mostafa suggested introducing a 24-page multicoloured 'employment passport' exclusively for wage earners costing no more than Tk 500 and issued without any hassle, adding that it is unfair that a poor worker should pay Tk 5,000 for a passport.

State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Major (Retd) Mohammad Quamrul Islam however denied getting any such proposal from the BAIRA.

But he told The Daily Star that a proposal for issuing a 4 or 5-page 'worker's passport' for overseas jobs has been approved by the home ministry and is currently under active consideration of the directorate of immigration and passport. The fees for such passport would be decided on the basis of tender.

The state minister also felt that recruitment fees for overseas employment should be reduced drastically. He blamed a section of unscrupulous recruiting agents who charge unreasonably high amounts for sending people abroad.

The minister alleged that many workers seeking jobs

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