

7 Bangladeshis killed in Saudi road accidents

AFP, Riyadh

Seven Bangladeshi workers and an Indian have been killed in two separate road accidents in southern Saudi Arabia, newspapers reported yesterday.

In one accident, five Bangladeshis and the Indian were killed instantly on Monday when their saloon car collided with a van on the road to Jizah, southern Saudi Arabia, Al-Jazirah said.

In the second accident, two Bangladeshi workers were killed and nine others injured on Monday, some seriously, when the jeep they were travelling in overturned several times on the road to Taif, in the southwest of the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia has one of the world's highest rates of road accidents, according to the transport ministry.

Official reports indicate that more than 35,000 people died and over 200,000 were injured in traffic accidents in the past 10 years.

Taskforce for Buriganga protection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government plans to clear off illegal installations along the Buriganga to ensure navigability and natural flow of the river and protect the environment, according to an official notification.

The government has constituted an 11-member taskforce to recommend necessary steps to save the river.

The taskforce, headed by Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, has been asked to submit its report within three months. The shipping ministry is to provide secretarial assistance to the taskforce in preparing the recommendations.

Other members of the taskforce are Land Minister M Shamsul Islam, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, vice-chairmen of the Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon Professor Muzaffer Ahmad and Professor Abdullah Abu Syed, Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University, Professor Ainun Nishat of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Chairman of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh Quamrul Islam Chowdhury and Editor of the weekly Holiday Enayetullah Khan.

Crime takes toll on investment

Business leaders, economists talk of sense of insecurity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing deep concern over the deteriorating law and order, economists and businessmen yesterday said it is taking a heavy toll on the country's investment.

They said the law and order has deteriorated to such an extent that the businessmen as well as the commoners are suffering from 'a sense of insecurity'.

They said no measures would work to spur investment unless the situation is improved immediately.

They were speaking at a roundtable on the "State of the Economy and Investment Scenario in Bangladesh vis-à-vis LDCs in Asia" at the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) auditorium.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Bangladesh chapter, organised the programme chaired by its President Mahbubur Rahman.

"Some of the fundamentals of the economy show signs of improvement. But one particular factor, the deteriorating law and order has seemingly overshadowed all the positive gains, may it be on the economic front or on other fronts," said Rahman.

"Not the businesspeople in particular, even a commoner, who does not have anything to be taken away by criminals, has developed a sense of insecurity," he added.

He maintained that the problem of law and order has intensified over the past few years. "Killings, extortion and other crimes, however, have now reached a new height making people really scared," Rahman stated.

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Bush drops gung-ho Iraq approach

AFP, Damascus

Iraqi foreign minister accused George W Bush yesterday of trying to trick the world over Baghdad's alleged weapons of mass destruction, after the US president ordered Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to disarm or face war.

Bush made the demand as three key UN players - France, Britain and Russia - edged closer to agreement over the world body's message to the Iraqi leader.

In his first national television address on Iraq on Monday night, largely aimed at critics of his war efforts, Bush tried to sum up the case against the Iraqi regime, as well as offer a point-by-point rebuttal of reasons not to act swiftly.

Calling Saddam "a homicidal dictator who is addicted to weapons of mass destruction," Bush said Iraq's threat was unique because it combined lasting ties to terrorists with programs to develop nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

And with US public opinion polls showing uneasy support for attacking Baghdad, he also warned it was still not clear just how far the Iraqi strongman was from developing and deploying nuclear weapons.

"America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot



George Bush



Saddam Hussein

wait for the final proof - the smoking gun - that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud," Bush said.

He claimed Iraq may be plotting to attack the United States with such weapons, a threat made more vivid by the September 11, 2001 attacks.

But Bush dropped his go-it-alone approach to Iraq and insisted that Washington would work with a coalition of allies to address the threat that he sees from Baghdad.

"The time for denying, deceiving and delaying has come to an end. Saddam Hussein must disarm

himself - or, for the sake of peace, we will lead a coalition to disarm him," he said.

In another shift in stance, Bush also conceded war with Iraq was neither imminent nor unavoidable and laid out what Iraq must do: declare and destroy all of its weapons of mass destruction, end support for terrorism, cease persecuting civilians and stop all efforts to skirt UN sanctions.

Bush also for the first time demanded the right for inspectors

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Judgement in Mahima kidnap, rape case today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The judgement in the sensational Mahima kidnap and rape case will be given today.

Judge Abu Hanif of the Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression will deliver the judgement.

Mahima Khatun, a teenage girl of village Kanthalbaria in Puthia upazila, was kidnapped at gunpoint by four BNP-Jamaat activists on February 15 this year. The gang took Mahima to a sugarcane field near her residence and raped her by turn.

The rapists also took photographs while she was being raped and distributed those among the people of the area to humiliate Mahima's family.

The utter humiliation led Mahima to commit suicide by taking pesticide on February 19.

Following the incident, Mahima's father Abdul Hannan lodged a kidnap and rape case

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JS bodies to be formed soon, PM tells CPA team

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated that her party always encouraged participation of the Opposition in parliament for consolidating democracy in the country.

"We want to make the parliament fully effective and want the opposition to come to parliament to strengthen it," she told a visiting parliamentary delegation of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK Branch, which called on her at the Prime Minister's Office here in the afternoon.

Seeking cooperation from the Opposition to make things easier, Khaleda said that her party wants to make parliament the focal point of everything.

"We want flourishing of parliamentary democracy, for which we have fought," she said and informed the CPA delegation that various parliamentary committees would be formed soon.

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Two stabbed to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants stabbed to death an old man at Rayerbagh, Merajagar in the city's Shyampur area last night.

Nurul Islam, 60, a retired mill employee was found in a pool of blood near his residence at about 8:30pm. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Islam was on his way home a nearby mosque after Esha prayers. There were stab wounds in his left cheek.

Victim's eldest son Nasirul Islam told newsmen at the DMCH that Samad, son of Eskender, had been threatening his father for the last few days.

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PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of cars are parked every day at the roadside at Dilkusha in Motijheel, as offices there have no parking space. The result is traffic tailback during rush hours.

ONE YEAR OF COALITION RULE

Crime curve swings up

NAZMUL ASHRAF with SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

Law and order has shown little sign of improvement over the last one year, despite Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's "declaration of war" against crimes immediately after assuming office.

Latest police counts reveal an upward crime curve with murder, rape, abduction, mugging, robbery and extortion marking steady rise.

On an average, 325 people have been killed, 301 raped and 18 thrown acid every month till September 30 this year since the four-party alliance came to power. The monthly average was 283, 212 and 11 respectively during the five years of the Awami League government. Besides, as many 678 children have been killed during this period.

Political and social crimes recorded a surge as soon as the October 1 general elections were over and the trend continued for a few months after the new government took over.

As killings, many of them for political reasons, continued, listed criminals joined in with blessings from politi-

cal leaders. Sympathisers of the main opposition were not spared either.

Only a week in power, the Khaleda government formed a high-powered committee for recommendations towards improvement of law and order. However, half of the 21 recommendations of the committee are yet to be executed, officials say.

Meanwhile, the cabinet committee on law and order has so far met 28 times and adopted 178 resolutions to curb crimes. Only 14 have been either implemented or in the process of implementation, the committee members say. The prime minister herself chaired some of these meetings.

The government did earn some praise for actions against leaders and activists of the ruling BNP and its front organisations who were accused of crimes.

In a rare display of non-partisanship, the government had BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, son of state minister Ahsanul Haq Molla and brother of another ruling party MP Masud Arun arrested.

Introduction of a new law for speedy trial of certain

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2'x2 Col
DHAKA BANK

2'x2 Col
LUCAS

5'x4 Col
Amin Mohammad Foundation

BCS COMPUTER
6'x3 Col