

Toll collection

FROM PAGE 1
various road crossings and collect toll.

The Daily Star has collected some 'tokens' with time limit for use of those. One such token for use in July this year contained a symbol. It was given at Tangail against payment of Tk 200, indicating that the driver concerned would not have to pay any more toll at that point in July.

The main targets of police extortion are trucks carrying goods, which normally ply at night. Such a truck had to pay at least Tk 1000 to police at different points on Dhaka-Khulna route.

On Dhaka-Chittagong route, the amounts charged by police are Tk 700 to 900 for any truck and Tk 12,00 for one loaded with wood. Police sergeants or their agents wait at various points till late night to collect money, drivers said.

Drivers and helpers at the central truck terminal at Tejgaon in the city said they have virtually become hostage to police sergeants. "They never allow us to go without paying them money even if we have all valid documents," said one of the drivers, Kalu Mian.

"I was coming to Dhaka from Gaibandha last night and my truck was stopped at Shyamoli and a police sergeant demanded Tk 1000 without any cause. I showed them all relevant documents and also my certificate as a Freedom Fighter, but he ignored those. Then I had to pay him Tk 400," said another driver, Abul Hashem.

"We are yet to get any benefit from the army drive, except that an illegal truck terminal at Uthaly on Dhaka-Aricha route was removed," said Mahbub Chowdhury Santu, member-secretary of Bangladesh Truck Tank Lorry Malik Sramik Oikya Parishad.

Trucks mainly carrying cows were

Shipu murder

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is on bail.

Three other accused -- Ziauddin Ahmed Jewel, Naimuzzaman Zobayer and Shafiqul Alam -- have been absconding since the incident.

Meanwhile, the court cancelled the bail petition of Sagar yesterday and sent him to the Dhaka Central Jail.

Advocates Mahbub Ahmed and Syed Shamim Ahsan Habib conducted case on behalf of the accused.

Speaker unmoved

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legal actions taken in this regard," he said, adding that arrest of an MP does not require prior permission of the Speaker.

Earlier, the 21-member AL delegation led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abul Hamid submitted the memorandum to the Speaker, demanding immediate release of Sheikh Selim and Sabar, political secretary to Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

The memo termed the recent raids on houses of some lawmakers without any warrants or specific charges unprecedented. "People having no legal identity are conducting such raids at the dead of the night, scaring the their families."

Referring to the arrest of Selim and Sabar, it said the arrested were taken to unknown destinations, and asked "irrelevant and irritating" questions by unidentified people.

Returning from the Speaker's office, acting AL chief Abul Samad Azad told reporters that they had discussed with the Speaker the prevailing situation caused by the current anti-crime drive.

"We're worried about the situation, particularly about harassment of opposition leaders and workers," he said.

Azad said they had urged the Speaker to protect the dignity and privileges of the lawmakers and the Speaker was sympathetic to their demand.

Martel wins Booker

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After the judges made their final decision on Tuesday night, prize administrator Martyn Goff said: "The discussion was strong and good but never unpleasant. They felt very strongly about things and really discussed them."

"It was a close run thing with another book," Goff said. But he refused to say who was the runner-up after the judges opted 4-1 for Martel after 70 minutes of thrashing out their final choice.

After winning the literary horse race that fascinates British gamblers, Martel said: "It really is a lottery. I emphasise that my book is the luckiest. This really is a writer's dream."

The 39-year-old Martel did not start making his living from writing until his late twenties. He now divides his time between writing, yoga and volunteer work at a care unit.

Lisa Jardine, chair of the 2002 judges, said: "In 'Life of Pi' we have chosen an audacious book in which inventiveness explores belief. It is, as the author says, a novel which makes you believe in God or ask yourself why you don't."

The winner, hailed by London literati at a glittering dinner in the British Museum, received 50,000 pounds (\$77,330) for his Booker Prize, sponsored for the first time this year by the hedge fund managers Man Group Plc.

The Booker, picked from 130 novels from Britain, Ireland and the Commonwealth, always sparks

forced to stop at the terminal and pay Tk 350 for each trip earlier. This has now stopped, he mentioned.

According to drivers, various extortion points on Dhaka-Khulna route and the amounts charged are: Farmgate - Tk 50, Sangsad Bhaban area Tk 50, Mirpur Darussalam - Tk 50, Manikganj crossing- Tk 100, Savar thana area - Tk 100, Rajbari crossing-Tk 30, Faridpur crossing - Tk 40, Magura - Tk 40, Kaliganj - Tk 30, Jhenidah- Tk 40, Jessore- Tk 50, Nawapara- Tk 50, Fultala- Tk 100 and Khulna- Tk 100.

Major extortion points on Dhaka-Chittagong route are: Barawalia - Tk 300, Barir Hat - Tk 200, Barir Hat bridge- Tk 200 Meghna bridge- Tk 200 and Sonagazi - Tk 200.

Those on Dhaka-Bogra route are Joydevpur- Tk 100, Tangail - Tk 100, Sirajganj- Tk 100 and Bogra- Tk 100.

DMP Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Qayyum could not be contacted over telephone despite repeated attempts.

Accused dies in the dock

UNB, Nilphamari

A man, who was sentenced to life term imprisonment by a court here Monday for killing his wife, died of cardiac arrest in the courtroom after hearing the judgement.

The deceased was identified as Yusuf Ali of Chhota Rounda village in Domar upazila.

According to the prosecution, Yusuf beat his wife Anwara Begum to death following a family feud on December 24, 1999.

Police charge-sheeted Yusuf after the victim's father filed a murder case against him.

After examining the records and witnesses, the Judge found Yusuf guilty of murder and pronounced the verdict, but the accused died in the dock hearing the judgement.

Body of Bhola SL leader handed over to relatives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The body of Bhola district Shramik League general secretary Rocket Chowdhury, who died after arrest by the joint forces, was handed over to his relatives yesterday.

He was buried at the family graveyard of his father-in-law at Kali Bari road in the town after Namaz-e-Zanaza in front of Poet Mozammel Haq Town Hall.

A large number of people attended the Zanaza, held under police protection.

Doctors at Bhola Sadar Hospital said he died due to high blood pressure and asthma but family sources claimed that the cause of death was torture in army camp.

Rocket was arrested Monday night after joint forces recovered 23 bullets of gun and six bullets of pistol during a raid at his house in the town.

UN Day

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chief guest while UNDP-Chief Jorgen Lissner, Resident Coordinator, UN System in Bangladesh as special guest.

Former Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan will present the keynote paper. Prof Salahuddin Ahmed, president of UNAB, will preside over the function.

Meanwhile, Department of Peace and Conflict of the Dhaka University will hold a seminar today in observance of the day.

The seminar will be held at 10am at the conference room of Business Studies Faculty of the university with DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair.

Road accident kills 3 in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three persons were killed and three others injured in a road accident at Goalchamat on Faridpur-Kamarkhal highway yesterday morning.

According to police and local people, a Faridpur-bound speeding passenger bus from Kamarkhal hit three rickshaws with six passengers aboard from behind, killing three rickshaw passengers on the spot and injuring three others.

Two of the dead were identified as Sheikh Jalal, 52, and Siraj, 60.

Of the injured, two were admitted to Faridpur Medical College Hospital while the rest was released after first aid.

The bodies were sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. The driver of the bus fled away. Police seized the bus.

Depression over Bay

BSS, Dhaka

The depression over West Central Bay off Andhra coast remained stationary about 1400 kms south-west of Chittagong Port, 1360 kms southwest of Cox's Bazar port and 1210 kms southwest of Mongla port at 3pm yesterday.

It is likely to intensify further and move in a northwesterly direction.

Maximum sustained wind speed within 44 kms of the depression centre is about 40 KPH rising to 50 KPH in gusts/squalls, sea will remain moderate.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted distant cautionary signal number-one.

Saifur

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Department (LGED).

The state minister said corruption was rampant at the LGED and in the name of contracting out physical works, many of its officials in fact did the work and pocketed the money.

"The LGED contracts out works the department itself is capable of doing," the state minister pointed out. "It could have saved the money just by engaging labourers."

He also charged that there was no proper accounting of vehicles at the LGED. "In fact, vehicles outnumber the officials at the department now. The LGED does not have space to accommodate the cars. And still, the department wants to buy more cars."

Allegations were also raised about LGED involvement in a large number of projects across various sectors, which breeds corruption. Against this backdrop, Saifur said such wastage of resources had to be checked. He also said there were projects where 95 per cent of the resources went to the pockets of foreign consultants.

Another death

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Narayanganj, eight of them activists of the ruling BNP-backed Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Jubo Dal. The army later handed them over to the Narayanganj police station.

In Chittagong, five people including two Awami League-backed ward commissioners and notorious criminal were arrested yesterday.

The commissioners are Haji Nurul Haque of Borihard ward and Mohammad Hossain Hiron of Pahartoli ward. Hiron was arrested from a toilet of the Chittagong District Bar Association at the court building in morning.

When Kamal Uddin was done with the written statement, the journalists threw a volley of questions before him. But he refused to take the questions saying that "it was a press briefing and

he would not reply to any question".

Asked about the number of people who died in army custody, Wahiduzzaman suggested that the question be submitted to him in writing and that a reply would be given later on the basis of the records. He however said he has taken the questions seriously and would reply in the next briefing.

"We have informed you earlier the reason behind the death of two persons and now we are gathering information about other deaths. We will also let you know the reason after getting the information," Wahiduzzaman said.

About allegations that the drive was politically motivated, he said people are being arrested irrespective of their political affiliation. "All the political parties including ruling ones and those in the opposition have some criminals and the joint forces are arresting them."

Tipu honoured

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annual press freedom gala, said awards would also be made to Ignacio Gomez of Colombia, Tipu Sultan of Bangladesh, Irina Petrushova of Kazakhstan and Fesshaya Yohannes of Eritrea.

Gomez was cited for untangling a web of violent conspiracies in the face of routine death threats, and Sultan for his exposure of official corruption that resulted in him being beaten nearly to death.

Petrushova was also recognised for rooting out government corruption despite severe intimidation, while Yohannes is currently being held incommunicado after the authorities banned all of Eritrea's independent newspapers for "jeopardising national unity."

The awards will be presented at a dinner ceremony in New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on November 26.

The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo created a fund for the treatment of Tipu in Bangkok and carried out a yearlong campaign to complete his treatment.



City Awami League took out a procession yesterday in support of today's half-day hartal.

US drones look for al-Qaida men in Saudi desert

AFP, Washington

Unmanned US military aircraft are searching the Empty Quarter, a sprawling desert in Saudi Arabia, where al-Qaida members fleeing a global dragnet are believed to be hiding, The New York Times said yesterday.

The members of the terrorist group behind the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States are thought to move between Yemen and the Saudi desert where they seek refuge among the Bedouins, nomadic tribes in the area, Yemeni officials told the daily.

"They are moving around in a pickup truck with a simple tent on the top and probably a Bedouin who knows the Rub al-Khali (the Saudi name for Empty Quarter) like you know the palm of your hand," said Abdul Karim Iryani, an adviser to the Yemeni president.

"That is how they have been avoiding the government and your US drones," he was quoted as saying in Sana, Yemen.

The drones, it is hoped, will detect al-Qaida operatives moving in sufficient number to be tracked. So far they have had no success.

"They are basically looking for

movement within the desert, unusual movement, of cars and so forth," said Yemeni Foreign Minister, Abubaker al-Qirbi.

"They are moving in a highly under populated area of the country. It's mostly desert and mountains," he told reporters.

The Yemeni officials said the fugitives are wanted for terrorist operations in Yemen, including the October 2000 bombing of the US destroyer Cole, and some perhaps have fled to the region from Afghanistan.

They are believed to be living in Yemen but heading north into Saudi Arabia where they need to collect money from their supporters, the officials said.

Bosnia, Y'slavia The United States earlier on Tuesday demanded that authorities in Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina take action against firms that its says have been selling military equipment to Iraq in violation of UN sanctions.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the United States expected both countries to stop the transfers, investigate the sales and prosecute those found responsible for them.

"The US expects the relevant

authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia to take the necessary steps to immediately halt any ongoing cooperation with Iraq, to conduct a thorough investigation and to hold accountable those responsible," he told reporters.

Derailment Dhaka-Ctg train service disrupted for 6 hrs

UNB, Comilla

Train movement on the Dhaka-Chittagong line was disrupted for six hours after a container train derailed at Rajapur station here yesterday morning.

"It was a minor accident and nobody was hurt," a senior railway official said adding that only one container of the Chittagong-bound train derailed at about 6:30am.

Several passenger and goods trains remained stranded on both sides. Train movement resumed at 11:30am when a relief train from Laksam went to the spot and salvaged the container.

Ministry evades questions

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The officials however said they would reply to the questions only after going through the records. They also said they would inform higher authorities of many of the queries the reporters had.

The written statement read out by Mohammad Kamal Uddin only highlighted some facts of the joint drive between 8:00am Tuesday and 6:00am yesterday. It said of the 302 people arrested during the period 44 are identified criminals. The other official Wahiduzzaman said they did not know whether any of the most wanted criminals of the capital were among the arrested 44 arrestees. The joint forces also recovered 32 firearms and 597 rounds of bullets during the drive, according to the statement.

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About allegations that the drive was politically motivated, he said people are being arrested irrespective of their political affiliation. "All the political parties including ruling ones and those in the opposition have some criminals and the joint forces are arresting them."

He said there are specific charges against former minister and MP Sabar Hossain Chowdhury. However, he could not cite those "specific charges". "He has been placed on police remand and you will come to know of the charges within a short time."

He said he would inform the higher authorities of the question regarding whether army alone is conducting the crackdown on the criminals and taking the arrestees to its custody blindfolded instead of turning them over to police.

About the authenticity of the information that two detainees died of heart attack, Wahiduzzaman said, "We gave information that we got."

Many journalists frustrated at the so-called press briefing told the home ministry officials to send copies of the 'briefing' to their offices instead.

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Powerful attack cripples majority of key Internet computers

AP, Washington

An unusually powerful electronic attack briefly crippled nine of the 13 computer servers that manage global Internet traffic this week, officials disclosed Tuesday. But most Internet users didn't notice because the attack only lasted one hour.

The FBI and White House were investigating. One official described the attack Monday as the most sophisticated and large-scale assault against these crucial computers in the history of the Internet. The origin of the attack was not known.

Seven of the 13 servers failed to respond to legitimate network traffic and two others failed intermittently during the attack, officials confirmed.

The FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center was "aware of the denial of service attack and is addressing this matter," spokesman Steven Berry said.

Service was restored after experts enacted defensive measures and the attack suddenly stopped.

The 13 computers are spread geographically across the globe as precaution against physical disasters and operated by U.S. government agencies, universities, corporations and private organizations.

"As best we can tell, no user

noticed and the attack was dealt with and life goes on," said Louis Touton, vice president for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the Internet's key governing body.

Brian O'Shaughnessy, a spokesman for VeriSign Inc., which operates two of the 13 computers in northern Virginia, said "these sorts of attacks will happen."

JUTA strike

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classes were held."

JUTA called the indefinite strike on October 19 to press its 11-point demand including election of the VC panel within one month and of the Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council and Finance Committee by November 5, and deferral of Syndicate meeting and all appointments till the polls.

Earlier, on October 21, 75 teachers in a joint statement had said that they would take classes, defying the strike call. But JUTA leaders had said that names of many teachers were included in the statement without their consent.

Meanwhile, a Syndicate meeting was held yesterday. JUTA earlier urged teacher not to attend at the meeting. Only one teacher representative attended the meeting, sources said.

Haripur plant

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Meanwhile, the project, practically initiated in 1998, remains suspended due to discord between the Power Development Board (PDB), the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, the JBIC and the ERD.

Last year, a team of Japanese experts observed that the expansion project was not viable in its special assistance in project implementation (SAP) report.

The report said the design was too old and the project too costly, suggesting the fund could be better utilised by setting up a new power plant.

The PDB has however opposed the idea of new power project so far, saying the JBIC might not agree to such a proposal. Besides, it says, a new project would be more time consuming.

The PDB is also trying to retain the consultant whose self-contradictory role has delayed and complicated the expansion project, sources said.

The Haripur expansion project outlines a cost of 151 billion yen (around \$66 million) or Tk 416 crore.

As power plant manufacturing cost has gone down significantly since 1995, it is possible to set up a new 180MW power plant with the same budget.

Till May this year, the PDB and the energy ministry had been of the view that the expansion project should be implemented, although it was embroiled in a number of controversies and disagreements.

The PDB sought the Cabinet Purchase Committee's approval in April to open proposals of three bidders for the expansion project. However, it concealed the fact that there were many objections about the project, including its design that was already too old.

The bid, floated in August 8, 1999, remains suspended because of disagreements between the PDB, the Japanese financier and the ERD.

Earlier, a PDB tender committee on evaluation of the three bidders -- Marubeni, Mitsubishi and Mitsui -- observed that the project's consul-

tant Mott Macdonald had taken side of Marubeni and had technically disqualified Mitsui although both had the same qualification. The local agent of Mitsubishi is also the agent of Macdonald.

The existing Haripur plant has an installed capacity to produce 100MW power.

Ex-chief whip

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the water.

Three cases have been lodged with the Kotwali police station -- one of those against Abul Hasnat and his three sons Sadek, Moin and Ashik under the Arms Act for illegal possession of one double barrel gun, one shotgun and 170 bullets.

Two cases have been filed against Abul Hasnat under Section 5 (2) of Anti-corruption Act and sections 166, 167 and 420 of CrPC for possessing money inconsistent with his income and some blank but signed freedom fighter certificates.

SI Borhan Reza filed the three cases, which will be investigated by DB police, the sources said.

Three cases have been lodged with Agailghara thana after the joint forces recovered illegal arms, some relief goods, 38 pieces of crockery with monograms of Jatitya Sangsad, Tk 57,290, two FDR accounts of Tk 23 lac and Tk 21 lac in the name of Abul Hasnat were seized during a raid at his house at Sharal village.

The relief goods are 655 shares, 100 lungis, 50 shirts, two blankets, nine pieces of jainamaz (mat used in prayer).

SI M A Mannan of Agailghara thana filed the three cases.

One case has been filed under the Arms Act against the former chief whip, his three sons and another person named Mojibur for possessing illegal arms and ammunition.

Two other cases have been filed against Abul Hasnat for possessing government property (the crockery), and money and bank accounts inconsistent with his income.

Climate confce on

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but not developing ones -- to make specific cuts in their output of carbon-based gases from their 1990 levels by a deadline of 2008-2012.

Baalu appealed to the industrialised world to transfer "innovative technologies," particularly in the energy sector, to developing countries to help them maintain sustainable development.

He said he expected Russia to ratify the Kyoto Protocol soon, which is vital for it to come into force.

The treaty has to be ratified by countries accounting for at least 55 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions in 1990. Ninety-six countries, which account for 37.4 per cent of the total global emissions, have already ratified the treaty. With both Canada and Russian indicating that they are likely to ratify, it seems likely that the protocol will come into effect even without the US.

"The negotiations at this conference will also generate the political momentum needed to bring the Kyoto protocol into force," Baalu said.

The Indian minister said the Delhi declaration would cover climate change and sustainable development.

Joke Waller-Hunter, executive secretary of the United Nations Climate Change Convention, said that while the Kyoto protocol was the first major step against global warming, more measures had to be taken.

Earlier, the COP-8 was inaugu-

rated through a traditional lamp lighting ceremony at the Vignay Bhaban, the venue of the convention.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will address a high-level ministerial meeting on October