

UPDF blocks Panchhari roads as bus owners refuse toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Armed members allegedly of outlawed United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) have been blocking a road at Jamtali in Panchhari for the last two days as Khagrachhari Bus Owners' Association (KBOA) refused to pay them 'New Year toll' which is Tk 2,500/= for each bus.

UPDF operatives have been issuing 'token' to bus drivers on Khagrachhari-Dighinala, Khagrachhari-Panchhari, Khagrachhari-Mahalchhari and other roads of the district against payment of annual toll since 2002, the KBOA alleged.

But the KBOA declined to pay the money this year as it was raised from Tk 1,200 in 2002 and Tk 2,000 in 2003, said a KBOA leader.

"We refused to collect 'tokens' SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Unexploded bombs spare sergeant's life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A traffic sergeant escaped an attempt on his life yesterday when two bombs thrown at him at Moilapota intersection under Sonadanga Police Station here failed to detonate.

Eyewitnesses said two young men hurled the bombs at on-duty Sergeant Shahadat Hossain at around 10:30am and sped away on their bicycles.

Police recovered the bombs and said the casualties would have included bystanders had the bombs exploded.

Police Commissioner Mustafizur Rahman visited the place of occurrence along with members of the joint forces.

Two people were detained for interrogation but they denied their involvement in the matter.

Table with 3 columns: Prayer Timings, January 13, Azan, Jamaat. Rows include Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is greeted yesterday by scouts on the concluding day of the Seventh Bangladesh and Fourth Saarc Jamboree held at the National Scout Training Centre in Mouchak, Gazipur.

Exercise human values

PM tells scouts

UNB, Mouchak

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has asked the scouts for exercising human values to save a particular section of the youth around them from frustration and erosion of values.

Terming the youth as 'bright' SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

and imbued with huge prospect, she said awareness should be raised for a clean and beautiful life with human values.

The prime minister was speaking at the concluding session of the seventh Bangladesh and fourth Saarc Scouts Jamboree 2004 at

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Levy proposal for Padma Bridge rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday rejected a communications ministry proposal for imposition of levy on utility bills, services, interest on bank deposits and other savings instruments to collect funds for the proposed Padma Bridge.

"We don't want to impose extra burden on the people to construct this bridge."

Finance and Planning Minister SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Jayanti's husband denies homicide

Says she committed suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Azam Reza, now on police remand, denied murdering his wife Jayanti Munshi Reza, a schoolteacher of Australian International School who was found dead in her Gulshan house Friday.

Jayanti's mother Lucille Sadekin accused Azam, a Dhaka Bank executive, of murdering her daughter in a case filed Saturday.

"Azam denied the murder charge" SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Israeli president offers Assad peace talks

Syria rejects invitation as 'not serious'

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel's president yesterday invited Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to visit Jerusalem for negotiations with Israeli leaders, but Damascus rejected the offer as "not serious."

"I invite the president of Syria to come to Jerusalem and meet with

the heads of the state and hold serious negotiations," President Moshe Katsav said on Israel Radio.

Although Katsav has largely ceremonial powers, his appeal added to pressure within Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government for the right-wing leader to

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Most trusted men may stage coup

US warns Musharraf

ANI, Washington

The Bush administration has warned Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf that his most trusted "underlings" could stage a coup against him in the near future.

According to a declassified intelligence report given to the Boston Globe, Islamic extremists have infiltrated Pakistan's omnipresent military establishment to attack Musharraf, who they fear will compromise with India on a number of issues dear to Pakistan, including Kashmir.

In view of this potential threat, Washington has reportedly taken the precautionary step of assisting in the training of guards and sharing of intelligence, The Daily Times quotes the Boston Globe report as saying.

American officials are taking credit for saving Musharraf's life

with the help of jamming equipment placed in his car.

According to the Boston Globe report, "the decision to assist in Musharraf's security - an unusual move rivalled abroad only by the American protection of Afghan leader Hamid Karzai - reflects the depth of the US concern."

A US embassy employee in Pakistan said the United States mapped out motorcade routes and provided 'telescope guns' that were placed across the capital, Islamabad, and the nearby suburb of Rawalpindi during the 12th Saarc summit last week.

Musharraf is said to be facing resistance to his efforts to hunt down al-Qaeda remnants on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border as also to his recent overtures to India

"The US government is facing a pressing dilemma: how to keep

Washington's most important friend in the Islamic world in power while nudging him to make peace with India and round up the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks," a source told the paper.

"Ultimately at stake are Pakistan's policy commitments to cooperation on terrorism, Kashmir and nuclear proliferation," declares the intelligence report summary.

"The more he (Musharraf) takes forceful actions, the greater the danger to him," the Boston Globe quotes former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Karl Inderfurth, as saying.

Peter Bergen, a terrorism specialist at the New America Foundation in Washington, told the newspaper that "killing Musharraf has been a central objective (of al-Qaeda and

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ROAD BARRICADE

It forces club workers, 12 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Twelve people were injured when joint forces baton charged workers of Daulatpur jute bailing press as they barricaded Khulna-Jessore highway disrupting traffic movement yesterday.

Six of the injured were admitted to different clinics at Daulatpur.

Witnesses said the workers put up barricades on the highway demanding participation of Awami League central leader and former MP Begum Mannujan Sufian in the election of jute bailing workers' union to be held on January 25.

The AL leader, who was elected president of the union each time since 1974, is not contesting this time reportedly on health grounds.

The joint forces swung into action and also fired a blank shot failing to persuade the workers to lift the barricades that stranded over 200 vehicles for about an hour from 10am.

The officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station the action was taken as the workers threw brick chips at the joint forces.

HABIB BANK

Meeting fails to end crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The crisis in Pakistan-owned Habib Bank over termination of some officials and employees is set to linger on as a meeting between the management and agitating staff yesterday failed to thrash out a solution.

At a press conference in the capital the same day, Habib Bank Country Manager Abdul Hye said as the staff failed to come up with any specific proposal, the meeting ended in conclusively. Regional Manager of the bank Ashraf M Wathra, who flew in here from Singapore to tackle the situation, was present at the meeting.

"We've given them a fair package, maintaining corporate norms and ethics. In corporate culture, such restructuring is an everyday affair."

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PHOTO: STAR

Discussants at the Muktijoddha Samabesh, a meeting of freedom fighters, organised by Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal singing the national anthem at Paltan Maidan yesterday.

3-WHEELER 'SCAM'

Huda's appeal may be ignored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda's appeal to recast the sub-committee on CNG auto-rickshaw scam is likely to fall flat as most members of the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry disagreed with him.

"When the sub-committee was

formed at the meeting of the standing committee, the minister did not disagree with its constitution. I don't know why he is now appealing for a revamp of the body," said Syed Monjur Hossain, chairman of the standing committee.

Three members of the committee echoed the same voice.

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PHOTO: STAR

US Congressman Joseph Crowley visits the Dhakeswari National Temple in Lalbagh yesterday evening to meet with representatives of minority organisations and leaders.