

**UCBL staff acid-burnt**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of the United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCBL) yesterday threw acid on a woman receptionist of the same bank in Motijheel.

The victim Shaila Chowdhury Irani, 30, was returning to her ground-floor office after offering prayers on the first floor of the UCBL's principal branch building when driver Ranjit Barua threw acid on her at around 3:45pm.

As Irani fell on the stairs and shouted for help, her colleagues rushed her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The colleagues said the driver

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**Proshika chief gets bail**

UNB, Dhaka

Proshika President Qazi Faruque Ahmed and 11 others were yesterday granted anticipatory bail for two months by the High Court in a corruption case.

Bureau of NGO Affairs on May 2 filed a petition case with the Chief Metropolitan magistrate's Court under the Foreign Donations Voluntary Activities Ordinance accusing Qazi Faruque and 11 others of misappropriation of fund amounting to Tk 1.34 crore.

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**Nigeria detains Nobel laureate Soyinka**

AFP, Lagos

Nigerian riot police arrested and briefly detained Nobel laureate author Wole Soyinka yesterday after firing tear gas to break up an anti-government demonstration, fellow pro-democracy activists told AFP.

The 69-year-old writer was taken into custody along with Femi Aborisade, secretary general of the radical National Conscience Party,

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Prayer Timings		
May 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Streams of people walk across the busy road at Mirpur Section-1 in Dhaka yesterday, risking their lives. People continue to take the dangerous course without using the costly overhead footbridge built by Dhaka City Corporation for their smooth movement.

**Villagers nab 19 Bangla Bhai men**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Villagers foiled an operation of the dreaded Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) at Kalupara in Paba upazila of the district on Friday night, caught 19 armed operatives of the Islamic militant outfit and handed them over to Paba Police Station.

The villagers recovered a number of lethal and sharp weapons, 12 hockey sticks, two iron rods and 10 motorcycles from the militants.

But police filed a general diary and produced the JMJB operatives in court, showing them arrested under Section 54.

They told journalists at the thana hajat that they went to the village on the directive of Bangla Bhai.

It was the first operation of the militant outfit after its commander Bangla Bhai reportedly left Rajshahi

on the night of May 13.

Sources said a group of about 25 JMJB cadres riding motorcycles went to Kalupara village and forcibly entered the house of Anisur Rahman. They beat up Anisur's wife Maleka Begum and asked her to get her son admitted to a madrassah.

Anisur's brother Ahsan Habib announced over the loudspeaker at the village-mosque that dacoits attacked their house. Thousands of people from the village and other villages nearby, equipped with various weapons rushed to the spot, surrounded the house and caught 19 militants.

The villagers also cordoned a police team led by Sub-inspector Momin of Paba Police Station that went to the scene allegedly to save the JMJB cadres from mob attack. Later, riot police from Rajshahi

Police Line went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Sources said police picked up Anisur Rahman from his house after the incident and released him yesterday after he gave an undertaking where he stated that the militants did not attack his house but went to offer religious teachings.

Anisur's brother Ahsan Habib told reporters police took the undertaking by threatening him with harassment.

The officer-in-charge of Paba Police Station denied the allegation.

The 19 JMJB cadres include Abdur Rahman Bipul, Shahidul Islam, Rafiqul Islam, Ahsan Habib, Mustafa, Mokhlesur Rahman, Chanchal, Ruhul Amin, Manjur Rahman, Mizanur Rahman, Altaf Ali, Hafez Mofazzal Hossain, Mantu, Yasin Ali, Shamsur Rahman, Altaf Ali and Aminul Islam.

**SA to host 2010 WC**

BBC ONLINE, Zurich

Football governing body FIFA has awarded South Africa the right to host the World Cup in 2010.

The favourites beat Morocco 14-10 in the final vote to become the first African country to host the event.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter made the announcement following a secret ballot of its 24 executives in Zurich, Switzerland on Saturday.

Libya were disqualified before voting started and Egypt did not receive a single vote.

In making the announcement Blatter said the decision to send the event to Africa was a victory for the entire continent.

The South African delegation, including former president Nelson Mandela, erupted in noisy celebrations after finally overcoming the disappointment of losing to Germany by a single vote in the race to host the 2006 World Cup.

**24 Iraqis, 3 GIs killed**

Bush says US troops to stay after June 30 power handover

AGENCIES, Baghdad

British troops yesterday killed up to 20 Iraqis as the soldiers fought their way out of a series of three roadside ambushes in southern Iraq, and three US soldiers were killed in separate accidents.

The first US soldier died of wounds he received in a mortar attack on his unit and the second was killed in a sniper ambush. A third soldier died early Saturday when his vehicle overturned during a patrol, taking the US military death toll to 780 since the start of the invasion, according to a tally based on Pentagon figures.

US forces fought militiamen loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in Karbala, while insurgents in the northern city of Mosul attacked an Iraqi army recruiting center, killing four people and wounding 19.

Meanwhile, US President George W. Bush insisted yesterday that US troops will stay in Iraq after the June 30 handover of power despite doubts raised earlier by the United States and

three allies.

"America will keep its commitment to the independence and national dignity of the Iraqi people," Bush said in his weekly radio address.

"Yet the vital mission of our military in helping to provide security will continue on July 1 and beyond."

On Friday, the foreign ministers of the United States, Britain, Italy and Japan said their countries would withdraw their troops from Iraq if the new interim authority requests.

But US Secretary of State Colin Powell said it was highly unlikely they would be asked to leave.

"Were this interim government to say to us, we really think we can handle this on our own and it will be better if you were to leave, we will leave," Powell said after chairing a Washington meeting of the Group of Eight industrial countries.

However, two British soldiers were wounded when a convoy headed north on Friday toward

the city of Amara from their main base at Basra came under attack. Troops returned fire "to save their lives".

A second patrol which came to the rescue was ambushed by guerrillas who detonated a roadside bomb and opened fire with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and machineguns, the spokesman said. In all, there were three attacks, he added.

"About 20 were killed and 13 captured," a spokesman of the British army said.

In Najaf, gunmen from Sadr's militia, the al-Mahdi Army, controlled the city center and bands of fighters stood at almost every street corner around the Shrine of Imam Ali, one of Shia Islam's holiest sites.

Limited clashes erupted Saturday when al-Mahdi fighters fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a US tank stationed in the local police directorate building. The rocket missed the tank and US soldiers exchanged fire with Sadr followers.

(AFP, AP, Reuters)

**Khaleda for 'friendly political atmosphere' for investment**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged all to help keep a "friendly political atmosphere" for increased development, investment, production, employment and exports.

"It is not possible for the government alone to do this," she said, seeking cooperation of all political parties, social and trade organisations as well as all others concerned.

The government is taking various measures to improve the factors for creating an atmosphere of political and social amity, she told the members of the newly elected executive committee of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) when they paid a courtesy call on her at the Prime

Minister's Office (PMO).

She hoped that the FICCI and other trade bodies would take appropriate measures for maintaining the desired friendly political atmosphere.

Led by FICCI President Mahbub Jamil, the delegation included Vice-President Stephen Daintith and members Masih Ul Karim, Andrew L Fawthrop, Nasser Shahrier Zahedee, Carlo Cifello, Ruhul Amin and Rafi Omar.

Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury and Principal Secretary Kamal Siddiqui were present.

During the meeting, the FICCI members appreciated various steps of the present government, includ-

ing the formation of speedy trial court, and put forward a number of proposals for business promotion.

The proposals include formation of 'speedy commercial court' for quick disposal of business disputes and reintroduction of pre-shipment inspection (PSI) system in import-export trade.

The prime minister thanked the newly elected FICCI leaders and said their proposal would be considered in phases.

The entrepreneurs informed that Bangladesh earned the reputation of a more attractive place for foreign investment and said the steps of the present government would make Bangladesh "the best place for investment".

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**NON-PAYMENT OF LOANS**

**70 DU teachers lose job**

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Dhaka University (DU) has fired more than 70 teachers in the last two decades for not paying back around Tk 1.5 crore in education loans and grants from the university for higher education abroad, according to the university authorities.

A top university official said the DU authorities have been looking for these teachers -- many of whom are still in the country -- to get back the money, but have failed to trace them. The university authorities

then fired the teachers for being absent from the DU for long, but are yet to recover the money from them. Many teachers tendered their resignation letters to the university authorities, but have not repaid the money, officials claimed.

Teachers usually go abroad for higher education by taking education loans and grants from the university on conditions that they will have to rejoin their duties and that their loan will be deducted from their monthly salary in phases.

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**50 hurt as teachers, JCD-ICS cadres attack RU students**

ANWAR ALI and ABU KALAM, Rajshahi

Over 50 students of Rajshahi University were hurt in a string of attacks by pro-government teachers, the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) activists and police.

About 150 students, who were protesting the controversial appointment of 544 employees in front of the administration building, came under the attacks.

Critically injured Nurul Amin Madhu, a final year student of fine arts, Shovan Biswas, organisation secretary of RU unit Chhatra Federation, SM Chandon, president of RU Chhatra Union, were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, while 25 others including 10 female students received first aid.

Police arrested Tanveer, a fourth year student of English department, during the hour-long violence, in which two dozen crackers were

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