

## WPB likely to fire rebel leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) is likely to expel five 'rebel' members including one politburo member who have challenged the top leadership over ideological and strategic issues.

A top-level party source told The Daily Star that the WPB politburo yesterday held a meeting to discuss the matter. The meeting could not make a decision but recommended the central committee to punish the 'rebel' leaders according to the WPB constitution.

The two-day meeting of the WPB central committee starts today and is likely to make a decision against the rebels, sources said.

"It's almost certain that they will be expelled for their activity, which is clearly a violation of the party constitution," said a top WPB leader preferring anonymity.

The five rebels are politburo member Saiful Haq, central committee leaders Khandakar Ali Abbas, Paresh Chandra Saha, Nasiruddin Ahmed Nashu and Mohammad Zaman.

They are charged with openly

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PHOTO: STAR

### Rally round the disabled

Twenty-year-old physically challenged Nashiuddin of Shilamandi in Narsingdi with his mother yesterday at the first ever national conference of the physically challenged at Dhanmondi Women Sports Complex.

## One killed, 13 missing in Bay boat capsize

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

One fisherman died and 13 went missing as three boats sank in a storm in the Bay of Bengal Friday, six days after 40 fishermen drowned in thesea.

Fishermen Rahim, Abdus Sukkur and Hasan Ahmad who swam ashore said their boats were caught in a violent wind when they were fishing in the deep sea near Baharchhara coast in Teknaf.

"The boats sank in a moment before we could realise it well," said Rahim.

Police recovered the body of Gafur Alam but could not find anyone dead or alive until yesterday.

Over 50 fishermen went missing on June 12 as six trawlers sank in a storm in the sea near Cox's Bazar. Ten managed to come ashore while bodies of 13 were recovered from thesea.

# Govt mulls separate Sundarbans command

REZAUL KARIM

The government is mulling a proposal for setting up a separate, independent management body for the Sundarbans in order to preserve its bio-diversity.

In a momentous meeting yesterday, it was also decided to make eco-friendly modifications of the policy currently applied in mobilising resources from the world's largest mangrove forest.

Participants of the meeting, convened to review a report on the Sundarbans Bio-Diversity Conservation Project (SBPCP) prepared by Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Sundarbans Stewardship Commission, advised the government to adopt a more pro-preservation policy in case of the Sundarbans, also a world

heritage site.

Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam chaired the discussion held at the ministry's conference room and participated by conservation experts, academics, high officials, and representatives from forest department and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Pointing at the progressive decay the Sundarbans has been going through for long, a majority of the discussants maintained that it is well nigh impossible for the forest department to protect and conserve the reserve forest with the existing infrastructure.

Meeting sources said Ministry of Environment and Forest (MeF) Secretary Syed Tanbir Hossain first tabled the proposal to form a sepa-

rate authority for the Sundarbans comprising representatives of all the stakeholders to ensure conservation of its bio-diversity.

The minister seconded the secretary's scheme and asked all quarters concerned to ponder and suggest specific ways for forming such a separate command.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tariqul said, "We must go deep into the existing problems in the Sundarbans, as there are some 21 sections of stakeholders depending on this forest for their livelihood and income. To conserve its bio-diversity, we need to resolve the stakeholders' problems first."

The minister said if the current problems are let to continue for long

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BABY GIRL'S DEATH

## Grandfather remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grandfather of the 40-day-old baby girl whose body was recovered from a water-filled plastic container in Lalbagh Friday was remanded yesterday.

Body of Farzana, infant daughter of Mohammad Faisal, was retrieved from their tin-roofed two-storey house in the morning, nine hours after she went to sleep with her parents.

Police suspect someone tossed the girl into the water container sometime on Thursday night.

Farzana's mother Selina Begum in the first information report (FIR) named unknown assailant as the accused killer.

Police, however, arrested the victim's grandfather Mokbul Hossain on suspicion of the killing.

They produced him before the court yesterday and petitioned for a five-day remand. The court granted a day's remand.

Locals told police Mokbul was very angry with Selina because she did not give him a gold chain he demanded during her marriage.

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## Sweden rule out plot against Italy



REUTERS, Oporto

Sweden have ruled out any chance they would try and secure a result against Denmark that guaranteed Italy's elimination from Euro 2004.

Italians are worried that Denmark and Sweden could conjure up a draw of 2-2 or more that would send them to the next round.

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### TODAY'S MATCHES

SPAIN vs PORTUGAL  
Live at 12.40 am (Monday)  
GREECE vs RUSSIA  
Same day delayed at 3:00 am (Monday)

# 45 feared killed in Iraq violence

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A blast destroyed a house in the restive Iraqi city of Falluja overnight yesterday, killing 22 Iraqis and wounding at least four days after 20 Iraqi insurgents were killed or wounded in Baghdad.

A US soldier, a Portuguese telecommunications worker and two Iraqis were also killed in the violence-torn nation.

Witnesses said the Falluja house had been hit in a US helicopter strike, but the US military had no immediate information about the incident.

A foreign journalist said casualties were pulled from the rubble and taken to hospital after the raid.

The US military yesterday said around 20 Iraqi insurgents were killed or wounded in a day of clashes with US soldiers in the Baghdad Shia slum of Sadr City earlier in the week.

"A number of patrols around Sadr City were ambushed by small arms fire and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades), it went on throughout the day," said a US military spokesman, referring to the fighting that raged on Thursday.

"Around about 20 were killed or wounded."

Small, armed bands attacked the US patrols as they went about their work in Sadr City, a packed neighbourhood of around two million people, which is named after the father of firebrand cleric Moqtada Sadr, who was killed by Saddam Hussein's agents in 1999.

"We rendered the teams ineffective," said the spokesman, though he declined to give an exact breakdown of the dead and injured.

"There were no coalition casualties or damage to our equipment," he added.

Sporadic fighting between the US army and Sadr's Mehdi Army militia have claimed the lives of several people in the past week alone.

Family and medical sources said six Iraqis lost their lives last Sunday, while two Iraqi children were killed and 23 people injured in fighting on June 11.

The impoverished neighbourhood is a Sadr stronghold where the rebel cleric's militiamen have clashed repeatedly with US troops since he launched his uprising against the US-led occupation more than two months ago.

A Portuguese telecommunications worker and two Iraqis were killed in a roadside bombing near the southern Iraqi city of Basra yesterday.

"The body of a Portuguese man, registered under the name of Roberto Carlos, working for

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PHOTO: AFP

ONE GOAL TOO FEW: Italy's Antonio Cassano, right, scores against Sweden as Sweden's goalkeeper Andreas Isaksson looks during early yesterday's crucial Group C clash at the Dragao Stadium in Porto.



PHOTO: STAR

Hindu devotees pull the chariot of Lord Jagannath in Motijheel yesterday during the annual Rath Jatra festival.

## Tk 36.33 lakh in Myanmar currency seized, 6 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel on Friday seized Myanmar currency and Hilsha fish worth about Tk 41 lakh and arrested six Myanmar nationals from a fishing trawler in Teknaf.

Acting on a tip off, the BDR men raided the fishing trawler and seized an illegal shipment of Hilsha fish worth Tk 4.5 lakh.

After the seizure, the BDR men recovered the Myanmar Kyat worth Tk 36.33 lakh in a polythene bag from the machine room.

The arrestees are Mohammad Yunus, Shafi, Nurul Amin, Syed Alam, Yunus and Hossain, all residents of Mohseniappara in Akiab Mohkuma.

## British MPs shot at in Gaza

REUTERS, Gaza

Three British parliamentarians have come under gunfire during a visit to the Rafah flashpoint in southern Gaza, but nobody was hurt, a British official says.

The official said it was "too early to say" whether the parliamentarians came under fire from Israeli soldiers or Palestinian gunmen in the militant stronghold of Rafah,

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Prayer Timing		
June 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-52	6-55
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# 2 Kushtia schoolboys abducted, two others buy freedom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two people bought their freedom and two schoolboys were abducted on Friday, pushing the people of the district into deep anxiety.

College student Alam, 22, son of Sajdar Rahman of Karipol village in Daulatpur upazila, and businessman Abu Daud, son of Meher Ali of Kamarkhali village in Harinakundu upazila in Jhenidah, were released on payment of a hefty amount.

Criminals abducted Alam from his house on Tuesday night, demanded Tk 2 lakh for his release but freed him for Tk 70,000 after negotiations, sources said.

Daud was abducted by the cadres of notorious Chandu Bahini of Jhenidah on June 9 from his house. They initially demanded Tk 2 lakh but released him for Tk 1 lakh. The same gang had abducted on March 6 Daud's nephew Suman, 22, and let go of him for Tk 80,000, sources said.

Criminals, meanwhile, abducted Abdul Hakim, 18, son of Abdul

Malek, and Mithun Hossain, 14, son of Mintu, from Amlasadarpur village in Mirpur upazila.

Family sources said Hakim, an expatriate in the US, and Mithun, a student of class ten at Amlasadarpur High School, went to a friend's house with Arzullah when criminals picked the two from Amla graveyard.

Police quoting Arzullah said the criminals released him as he is the son of a poor farmer.

The abductors demanded Tk 10 lakh and threatened to kill the boys if they were not paid within 48 hours.

Families of the victims of all the four did not seek police help.

Abductors kidnapped 78 people including 29 students in the last five months with 13 in this month and killed nine of them. Police rescued four, seven are still missing and the rest bought their freedom.

Some organised outfits of criminals and outlaws are repeatedly carrying out abduction, police and the victims say.

# 14 Nepali cops killed in landmine blast

AFP, Kathmandu

Fourteen policemen were killed and four injured in southwestern Nepal yesterday when their bus hit a landmine planted by Maoist rebels, a senior police official said.

The blast happened near the town of Kalakate Saturday morning, the official told AFP.

In another incident in the region, a civilian bus was blown up by a landmine near the town of

Tulsipur, killing one passenger and injuring 13, the official said.

The Maoists have been fighting since 1996 to turn the Hindu kingdom into a communist republic in an insurgency that has left more than 9,500 people dead.

The two attacks came just five days after a suspected Maoist landmine killed 21 policemen and injured 16 others, also in southwestern Nepal.

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