

Stringent law to protect Bhawal park suggested

REZAUL KARIM

A high-powered committee on Bhawal National Park has recommended stringent legislation aimed to conserve this natural forest and its rich biodiversity, considered vital for preserving the ecosystem of the region including Dhaka.

Proper enforcement of all previous government orders and gazette notifications relating to the forest must be ensured, it stressed.

The committee suggested a ban

on any constructions or setting up of commercial and other establishments on privately owned land in the 2,572-acre core area of the national park in the 11,252.88-acre Bhawal forest.

It asked for immediate acquisition of 432.5 acres of private land in the core area of the park and recovery of illegally occupied forest land.

The committee's recommendations are based on a series of spot visits and discussions with environmental experts, researchers and local officials, committee sources said.

The government in 1982 declared the forest as a national park to protect the forest, the fabled Bhawal Raja's heritage, for educational, research and recreation purposes.

The six-member body headed by the director general of the Department of Environment was formed on April 18 this year to examine whether the government should allow commercial use of privately owned land in the forest area.

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BACK TO SQUARE ONE: Traffic jumps a red light at the newly installed automated traffic signal system, believed to greatly ease congestion, at Gulshan 1 as two traffic policemen, right, prefer to watch from a distance yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: AFP

Czech forward Jan Koller goes over the moon after scoring the opening goal of his team's 3-0 drubbing of Denmark in the quarterfinals of Euro 2004 in Portugal yesterday.

Rested Czechs rout Danes



REUTERS, Oporto

Rest could be the key to the Czech Republic's 'heaven or hell' semifinal against Greece on Thursday, Czech coach Karel Brueckner says.

Most of the team who beat Denmark 3-0 in Sunday's Euro 2004 quarterfinal had been left out of the Czechs' final group match against Germany because Brueckner's squad had already qualified, and they looked fresher for it.

After keeping the Danes at bay in the first half, the Czechs took the lead in the second half.

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SEMIFINALS

June 30
Portugal vs Netherlands (Lisbon)
July 01
Greece vs Czech Republic (Oporto)

Khulna a 'valley of death', says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina said yesterday Khulna has become a 'valley of death', Chittagong a 'safe haven' for abductors and Rajshahi is being ruled by Bangla Bhai.

This only shows violence has gripped the country as the ruling BNP-Jamaat alliance is harbouring extremist elements with ministers sheltering their godfathers, she said.

Speaking as chief guest at a meeting at the local press club to mourn the death of Dainik Janmabhum Editor Humayun

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Sylhet mayor receives death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Tiger Killing Force Limited, an unheard of organisation, yesterday threatened to kill Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran.

Kamran, also president of Sylhet city unit of the main opposition Awami League, received two hand written letters of similar nature, carrying death threat, the SCC mayor told The Daily Star last night.

Both letters were posted from Sylhet Post Office and written in Bangla and English, he added.

"You will be killed. You are our second target. The first target was missed. Hindustani agents won't be allowed to live here," the letters said.

The mayor informed local superintendent of police and deputy inspector general of police, Sylhet of the matter.

Send e-mails thru' your GP set

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

About 20 lakh subscribers of the country's largest mobile phone operator GrameenPhone (GP) Limited would be able to send and receive e-mails (electronic mail) from their handsets through a new service called 'cellemail'.

"The system would increase the country's e-mail users to 1.5 percent from current 0.1 percent," Mehboob Chowdhury, director (sales and marketing) of the GP, told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview yesterday.

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Outlaw leader killed in shootout

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A top underground leader arrested Saturday was killed in a police-outlaws shootout during a police raid to recover his arms cache in the early hours of yesterday.

Jhenidah police arrested Arab Ali, 40, alleged leader of outlawed Gana Mukti Fouz, with two sub-machine guns and 50-round bullets from a village in Sailkupa upazila.

A team of Jhenidah police along with Arab raided Khandakbaria village under the sadar upazila in Kushtia following his confession. Police suspect Arab distributed

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Grameen Bank wins Petersberg Prize

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameen Bank's Village Phone project won prestigious Petersberg Prize worth Euro 100,000 in a global competition for application of information technology (IT) for development.

Grameen Bank won the prize from a field of more than 200 nominees to recognise the NGO's outstanding achievement in the use of the IT to improve people's lives, said a press release of the Development Gateway Foundation (DGF), a Washington DC-based non-profit organisation.

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Saddam to be put in the dock within days

AFP, Baghdad

Saddam Hussein will be hauled in chains before an Iraqi judge within days to hear his arrest warrant and the ousted president will be guarded by Iraqis with limited support from the US military, top Iraqi officials said Sunday.

"We're going to have control of Saddam Hussein," Iraq's national security advisor Muwaffaq al-Rubaie told the US television network CBS.

"We're going to have two American military MPs to hand him over to four Iraqi policemen. They will put a chain (on him) and take him to the waiting room," Rubaie said.

"The judge will call his name, Saddam Hussein Majid. And they will bring him in... open his chain, handcuff and take him to the judge and the judge is going to give him his rights and his defence and he's going to issue an arrest warrant against Saddam Hussein.

Rubaie said Saddam will be hauled in the dock "in a couple of days time, probably."

Interim prime minister Iyad Allawi meanwhile said Saddam "will be kept by Iraqis..."

"We may ask a multinational force to be involved in the protection of the outside, of the outskirts of the prison, but definitely he will be under the jurisdiction of Iraq," he said.

"You will see him move and you will see him in the dock."

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Iraq militants threaten to behead US Marine

AP, Baghdad

Insurgents threatened to behead a U.S. Marine and a Pakistani driver they had kidnapped unless the United States releases all Iraqis in "occupation jails," according to a videotape aired on Arab television.

The family of Cpl. Wassef Ali

Hassoun confirmed that he was the kidnapped American Marine who appeared in a videotape shown Sunday. The U.S. military said Hassoun, a Muslim of Lebanese origin, had been missing from his unit for nearly a week.

The hostage had a white blindfold covering his eyes. He wore military fatigues, and his mustache was trimmed.

The kidnappers claimed to have infiltrated a Marine outpost, lured Hassoun outside and abducted him. Al-Jazeera said the militants demanded the release of all Iraqis "in occupation jails" or the hostage would be killed.

They identified themselves as part of "Islamic Response," the security wing of the "National Islamic Resistance 1920 Revolution."

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Prayer Timing		
June 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-57
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

INDIA, PAKISTAN TALKS

Rivals pledge to move forward

AFP, New Delhi

India and Pakistan agreed yesterday to strive for a final settlement to their 56-year-old dispute over Kashmir and to reopen consulates in their largest cities in the latest step to repair relations.

The nuclear-armed rivals, wrapping up their first talks in three years on Kashmir, issued a joint statement pledging to "con-

tinue the sustained and serious dialogue to find a peaceful, negotiated final settlement" on the dispute.

The statement said the two countries would immediately restore staff strength at their embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad to 110, the level before a near war in 2002, and reopen consulates in Bombay and Karachi closed in 1994.

The consulates in the two largest cities will make travel easier for members of families that were broken up by the subcontinent's partition in 1947.

The statement said Pakistan and India would formalise an agreement to notify each other of the testing of missiles and release all fishermen and other civilians who strayed into

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PHOTO: STAR

Small traders sell low-cost furniture on the footpath in front of the US embassy, posing hazards to pedestrians and traffic alike.