

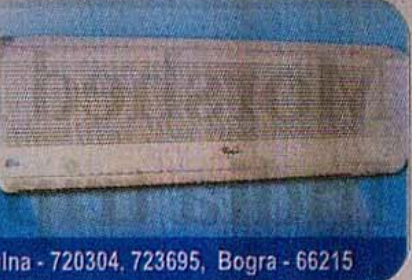
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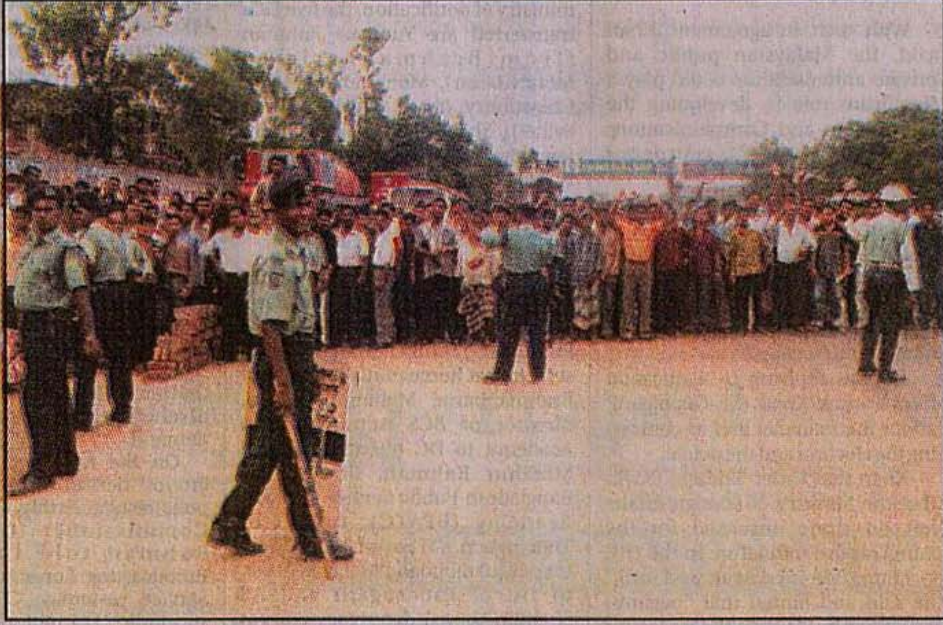


# BTRC okays 23 more fixed phone licences

**STAR REPORT**  
Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has decided to award 23 more fixed phone licences to private operators. Sources said eight out of the 23 licences have gone to four firms, which are majority owned by ruling party lawmakers. The telecoms watchdog at a recent meeting approved the 23 applications to run fixed phone networks in the country's four zones -- south-east, south-west, north-east and north-west -- and notified the selected operators last Monday. The four zones cover most of the country excepting the central zone, which includes Dhaka City, Jinjira, Tongi, Savar and the district headquarters of Narayanganj and Gazipur. The central zone has remained off-limits to the current fixed phone licensing process due to a dispute with WorldTel, which had obtained a fixed phone licence for Dhaka in 2001. The BTRC has asked the selected operators to submit a licence fee of Tk 20 million along with a Tk 50-million bank guarantee against performance for each licence within the next 30 days. Of the 23 approved applications, Dhaka Telecom Limited, backed by a minister, has been selected to have licences for all the four zones, BTRC officials said. Other companies who have been approved for four licences each are Telebarta Limited, Peoples Telecom and National Telecommunications Network. GEP Telecom Limited, which is majority owned by a ruling party lawmaker, and another company named Keari Telecom bagged approval for two licences each. Three companies -- OneTel Limited, a joint venture of Nitel Group, and Absco Limited, which belongs to a ruling party lawmaker, Dominus Telecom Limited and QC



Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, who returned from Istanbul yesterday, shouts from her car at police officials for allegedly assaulting her party activists waiting since daybreak in the airport area to receive her.



# Hasina sees govt hand in attack threat

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Brushing aside the possibility of any international link with the recent threats of attacks on her, Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the government has a hand in it. In an oblique reference to the government, Hasina told a press conference in the city, "Failing to face us politically, they have resorted to killing, and as part of the plot have been propagandising that top hit man Kala Jahangir has died." Hasina, also president of the main opposition, Awami League (AL), returned yesterday morning from Istanbul after attending a conference of D-8 signatories there.

# DEMAND FOR END TO EXTORTION Keraniganj traders hem in cop station

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
More than 2,000 business people of Keraniganj yesterday laid siege to the local police station demanding trial of the killers of their fellow businessmen Delwar Hossain and Nasir Ali. They also demanded an immediate stop to violence and extortion that are rife in the locality. The business people gathered in front of Upazila Market at east Aganagar at around 4:00pm and from there they marched to the police station in procession. President and general secretary of Keraniganj Businessmen Association led the procession. At the police station they chanted slogans in support of their demands. During the hour-long siege, policemen remained inside shutting down the collapsible gate, witnesses said. The businessmen also demanded arrest of five brothers of Omar Sheikh, the prime accused in the Delwar murder case, on charge of the killing. They alleged that Omar's five brothers were involved in various criminal activities in the area. They left the police station after top police officials assured them of probing the murders properly and taking steps to resist crime.

# Smugglers rough up 2 Rab men

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**  
Smugglers yesterday roughed up two Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) officials when they visited Panchabati to gather information on drug peddlers. Monirul Islam and Torab Ali came under the attack of smugglers, led by Monir and Rony. The two received first aid. Police later arrested Monir, but a pro-BNP Ward Commissioner Saiduzzaman Khan Mato allegedly forced the law-enforcers to release him. Director of Rab in Rajshahi Lieutenant Colonel Faruk Hossain however denied the allegation of assault. But the duty officer of Boalia Police Station last night confirmed they recorded an assault case of two Rab officials.

# ROCKET ATTACK THREATS US, UK embassies in Pakistan closed

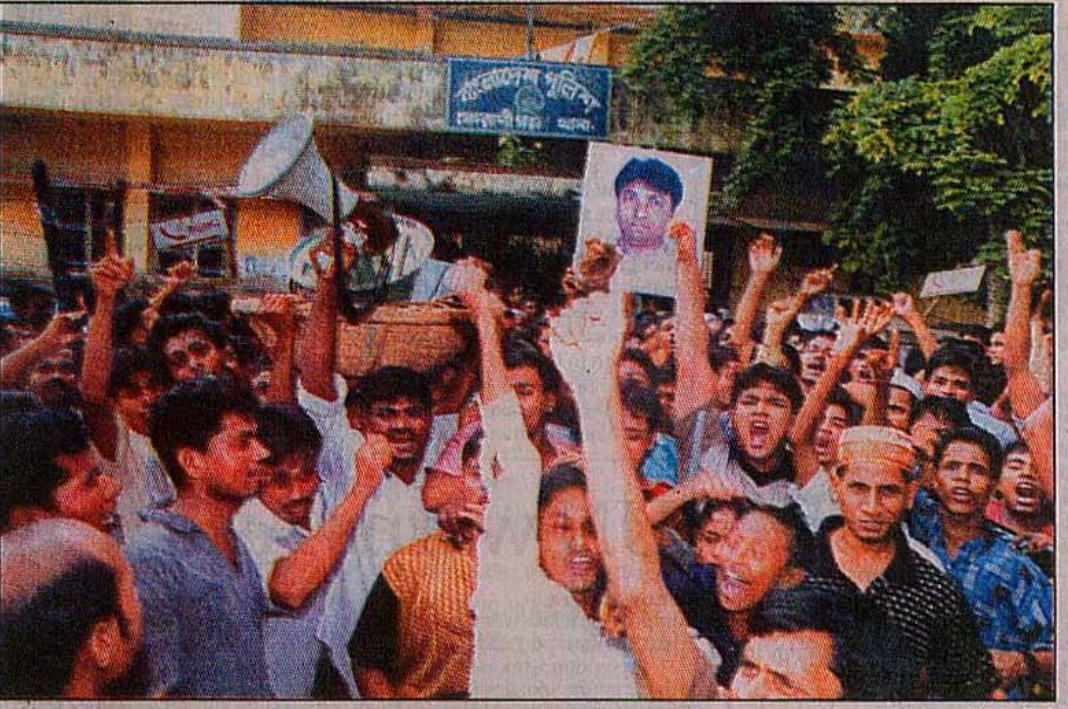
**AFP, Islamabad**  
British and US embassies in Islamabad closed for a second day yesterday after threatened attacks on Western diplomatic missions, spokesmen said. Telephone calls Monday threatening rocket attacks on the British high commission triggered the closures by both missions, according to Pakistani officials who would not be named. Representatives of the British and US missions would not comment on the nature of the threat. "We've taken the decision to remain closed today (Tuesday) for staff safety considerations," British high commission spokesman Tim Handley told AFP. "We're liaising closely with the relevant authorities and we're monitoring the situation very closely." The US embassy cancelled a Fourth of July celebration planned for Monday, when embassy staff also happened to be observing a public holiday. It decided to remain closed Tuesday because of "a rather serious threat to the diplomatic enclave against a specific embassy," a US spokesman told AFP without elaborating.

# MANIK SHAHA MURDER Court accepts charge sheet

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**  
A metropolitan magistrate's court on Monday accepted charge sheet in journalist Manik Saha murder case. The charge sheet against 12 accused in the case was submitted on June 20 to the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Shafina Begum by Officer-in-charge of Khulna Police Station Mosharraf Hossain. The accused are Sumon, Ali Akbar, Akram Hossain alias Bomaru Akram, Bulbul Hossain, Abdus Sattar alias Disco Sattar, Shawkat Hossain alias Saka, BDR Altaf, Mahfuz alias Nasim, Sarwar alias Soro, Billal, Omar Faruque alias Kachi and Mitul. Another accused, outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party

# 26 Iraqis, 3 Marines killed in violence Masked men vow to kill Zarqawi in video release

**AGENCIES, Baghdad**  
A car bomb exploded yesterday in Khalis, a town northeast of Baghdad, killing 13 people who were attending a funeral for the victims of a previous attack, hospital officials said. The bombing in Khalis came two days after gunmen fired at a building belonging to a city council official, killing two people and wounding two. Tuesday's attack targeted the wake for those killed Sunday. "So far, we've received five of the dead," said Dr. Nasser Jawad Kadhim, the head of the morgue at Baqouba General Hospital. "Thirty-five of the injured have been hospitalized." Other hospital sources said 13 were killed. Two US marines were also killed in action and one died later from wounds received during an operation in a restive Iraqi province, the US military said yesterday. "Two marines assigned to First Marine Expeditionary Force were killed in action and one marine died of wounds received in action Monday in the (centre-west) area."



Businessmen of Keraniganj yesterday lay siege to the local police station demanding an immediate stop to violence and extortion.

# Kerry picks Edwards for US race

**REUTERS, Pittsburgh**  
Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry has picked North Carolina Senator John Edwards, "a champion for middle class Americans," as his vice presidential running mate. With his announcement at a rally in Pittsburgh, a huge crowd of supporters burst into applause, waving handmade signs that mixed with professionally printed "Kerry-Edwards" signs kept under wraps until the last minute. "I trust that met with your approval," Kerry said with a smile as a banner unfurled behind him that read, "Kerry-Edwards. A stronger America." "He has shown courage and conviction as a champion for middle class Americans and those struggling to reach the middle class," Kerry said of Edwards, a first-term senator and millionaire trial lawyer.

# UN warns Asia of 'Aids calamity'

**AFP, Bangkok**  
The Aids epidemic is spreading unchecked throughout parts of Asia with more people infected with HIV in the region during 2003 than ever before, according to a United Nations report published yesterday. Sharp increases in HIV infections were reported in China, Indonesia and Vietnam with the number of Asians having the AIDS-causing virus rising to an estimated 7.4 million, the 2004 Report on the global Aids epidemic said. In Bangladesh despite currently low HIV rates, a rise in drug use in some areas, a highly active commercial sex trade and the widespread shunning of birth control threatens a spike in infections. Surveys there showed fewer than 20 percent of married women and 33 percent of married men had heard of Aids. Record sums are being spent on research and educating the public but more than 20 years since the world's first Aids diagnosis in 1981, huge swathes of the region's population remain ignorant about the disease and how to protect themselves. Aids experts warn the fast-growing epidemic in Asia, with a record 1.1 million new HIV infections last year, has huge implications since the continent is home to 60 percent of the world's population. Epidemics are particularly serious in the Southeast Asian nations of Myanmar, Thailand and in Cambodia where three percent of the population is infected with HIV - the highest proportion in Asia. Despite some successes in reversing the upward trend of cases, the United Nations warns that many national leaders remain in denial about the impact of Aids on their people. While in many countries the response of the authorities is

# Mugger beaten to death

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
An alleged mugger was beaten to death and his two accomplices were wounded by a mob at Shyamoli in Mohammadpur yesterday. Locals caught three of a six-member gang when they stopped a passenger vehicle (Rider) to mug its passengers on Ring road near Shyamoli at around 12 noon. Police rescued Mohammad Titu, 22, Anwar Hossain, 24, and Javed 26 from the mob's wrath and admitted them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Javed died there at around 3:30pm. Hospital sources stated condition of Anwar to be critical. The rest of the gang managed to escape by hurling eight to 10 homemade bombs at the people who came to the rescue of the passengers.

**Publication of BAS**  
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh  
C.A. Bhaban, 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) is pleased to announce the publication of compendium of Bangladesh Accounting Standards (BAS) for use by all interested offices and individuals. The compendium comprises 2 volumes and a CD.

Above compendium of Bangladesh Accounting Standards can be purchased from the Directorate of Studies (5th Floor), C A Bhaban, 100 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215, at a price of Tk- 650/= per set. ICAB students can purchase the set at a subsidized price of Tk 350/= per set, on production of their ID cards.

J C Biswas FCA  
Director of Studies-ICAB

# 10,000 murdered in 32 months

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Lawmakers from across the political divide yesterday expressed concern at the downslide in law and order as the number of murders across the country rose to about 10,000 since the general elections in October 2001. Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar however did not entertain a single adjourn motion moved by opposition lawmakers during question-answer session in the House to discuss law and order situation. Sircar rejected 89 of the 118 opposition motions mostly seeking adjournment of the House proceedings to discuss law and order downslide. He will give his decision on the remaining 29 at a later date, he said. At least 10 people were killed everyday in the country from October 1, 2001 to June 15 this year, according to figures provided to the House yesterday by State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar. As Babar is now abroad, Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury who now holds charge of the home ministry, told the House 9,737 killings took place during the period. Answering lawmakers' queries, Altaf however claimed law and order has improved since the BNP-led coalition government took over. Lawmakers belonging to the BNP and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami and opposition Awami League (AL) and

**Prayer Timing July 7**

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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