

Illegal 11-storey building knock-down stopped on HC stay order  
*Rajuk says*  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (Rajuk) authorities yesterday said they could not demolish the unapproved 11-storey building in Patuatuli in Old Dhaka due to a High Court stay.

A statement signed by Md Nasiruddin, member (planning), said the Rajuk chairman had allocated Tk 4.56 lakh to knock down the building.

Rajuk sent a team comprising magistrates and police with necessary equipment to bulldoze the building on 11 May. But the team could not perform its duty due to the

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Musharraf to seek re-election in 2007  
AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf will seek another five-year term as head of state after his current tenure ends in 2007, the country's Information Minister Sheikh Rashid said Tuesday.

"He will seek another term," Rashid told AFP by telephone from the eastern city of Lahore. "He will stay as president beyond 2007 because Pakistan needs his leadership."

The minister declined to comment on whether Musharraf, who is also the army chief, would retain the dual position when he seeks re-election.

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Prayer Timing		
May 19		
	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		

# Havoc at CMCH as power supply cut for 3 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) remained without electricity for more than three hours yesterday morning as the Power Development Board (PDB) suddenly snapped the supply, allegedly without any prior notice.

The abrupt action caught the entire CMCH administration and doctors by surprise, leading to

cancellation of scheduled operations. A stand-by electricity generator, however, kept the life-saving devices operating in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and carried out other emergency works.

According to sources, the PDB action, which came without any prior notice, allegedly caused the death of three patients kept in the ICU of the hospital. However, no doctors were available to confirm the allegation.

The PDB officials claimed that the hospital's electricity bills since January this year were not paid.

Health Secretary AFM Sarwar Kamal told this correspondent yesterday that all arrears due with all users under the health ministry worth Tk 22 crore up to December 2004 were paid. Following this "the finance ministry categorically said

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PHOTO: STAR

A policewoman drags an activist of the Jubo Mahila League onto the van at Dhanmondi in the capital during yesterday's hartal.

Dhaka-Beijing flight opens  
UNB, Dhaka

A Boeing 737 of China Eastern Airlines flew in Dhaka from Beijing in an inaugural flight yesterday as Bangladesh and China established direct air link between the two countries aiming to enhance people-to-people contacts.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Nasiruddin welcomed the passengers at Zia International Airport after the flight landed at 4:40pm.

Chinese Ambassador in

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Delhi, Dhaka, Kathmandu sign deal to fight kala-azar  
PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India, Bangladesh and Nepal yesterday signed an agreement to set up a task force for cooperation in eradicating kala-azar, which affects about one lakh people each year in the three countries.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard was

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PM wants close Saarc, Asean link  
UNB, Hanoi

Khaleda Zia yesterday assured Vietnam's leaders that as the next Saarc chairperson Bangladesh would like to develop closer links between the Saarc and the Asean.

"Bangladesh would also like to be a dialogue partner of the Asean," she said thanking Vietnam for its support, which she hoped will lead to getting Bangladesh accepted at the forthcoming Asean ministerial meeting in Vientiane.

The Bangladesh prime minister made the remarks in her speech at a banquet hosted by Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai at the Government Guesthouse yesterday evening.

Terming Bangladesh and Vietnam as natural partners in development, Khaleda said the two countries are bonded together by many common ties that have steadily grown since 1973.

"Common history, culture, ideas and traditions, and most of all, socioeconomic challenges make us

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Dhaka, Hanoi sign investment accord

UNB, Hanoi

Bangladesh and Vietnam yesterday agreed to cooperate with each other in all potential sectors, especially investment, trade, tourism and agriculture, for mutual benefits of the two nations.

Dhaka and Hanoi also signed an agreement to promote investment in the two countries. The agreement came during official talks between Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her Vietnam counterpart Phan Van Khai, who led their respective sides.

Formation of a joint commission between the two countries to formulate guidelines for promoting bilateral cooperation in all sectors also came up in the more than an hour-long talks held at the Government Office of Vietnam.

Briefing reporters on the outcome of the talks, Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin said the two sides also agreed to the formation of joint working group for expanding cooperation in agriculture.

The joint working group will be

finalised through further discussions at the foreign ministry and ambassador levels.

Following the official talks, Bangladesh State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Alamgir and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Dy Nien signed the agreement on promotion and protection of investment between the two countries.

Both prime ministers witnessed the signing ceremony.

"What is critical now is to have working groups and a commission...to implement the two prime ministers' agreements," Khai told reporters after the meeting.

"I believe that the visit by the Bangladesh prime minister will help strengthen our cooperation in many fields," he said.

Hemayetuddin said the official talks covered the entire range of bilateral relations and ways to promote cooperation in trade, commerce and investment.

Describing previous visit of

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4 die in road crash in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Four people were killed and 35 others were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Bogra highway near Chandaikona Bazar area under Raiganj upazila in the district yesterday.

Police and eyewitnesses said the accident took place at around 1pm when a bus of the Hanif Enterprise skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch while trying to avoid a headlong collision with a bicycle.

Three persons died on the spot and another died on the way to the hospital.

Two of the victims were identified as Jannatul Tasrin, 17, and Moyna, 18, of Gorostanpara village of Gaibandha district. The identities of the two others could not be known immediately.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to the general hospital morgue for autopsies. A case was filed with the Raiganj Police Station.

Nor'wester victims in distress  
Death toll 29 in 10 upazilas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Several thousand victims of Tuesday's devastating nor'wester in 10 upazilas of Natore and Rajshahi districts are in crying need of food, medicine and shelter.

The severe storm left 29 people killed, unofficial sources said yesterday. But the district administration put the death toll at 16 in Natore and

5 in Rajshahi.

The identities of nine more victims were known yesterday. They are Karim Newaz, 56, Sabuj, 12, Rubina, 18, and Golejaan of Natore Sadar upazila, Taslima of Lalpur, Razzak and Moslem of Bagmara, Amanat of Puthia and Somijaan of Durgapur upazila.

Karim Newaz died of heart failure

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50 rebels, 9 troops killed in Nepal

AFP, Kathmandu

At least 50 Maoists and nine soldiers were killed in a battle in south-eastern Nepal, state media reported Wednesday, in one of the latest outbreaks of heavy fighting since King Gyanendra seized power.

The battle, in which troops launched ground and air attacks, also marked the biggest reported loss of life for security forces since

the king took control February 1 in what he said was a move to end the increasingly deadly revolt.

Bodies of Maoist fighters littered the scene of Monday's clash in and around Udayapur district, 280 kilometers southeast of the capital, Kathmandu, state-run radio and newspapers said.

The clash that state media said lasted several hours was not

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