

Pakistan hands over top Qaeda man to US

Key US ally Pakistan has handed over alleged top al-Qaeda operative Abu Faraj al-Libbi to Washington, an official said yesterday.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Jalil Abbas Jilani confirmed a reported statement by Pakistan's military ruler President Pervez Musharraf in a Dubai newspaper on Monday that the terror network's alleged number three had been deported.

"The president made a statement to this effect. The president's statement was self-explanatory," Jilani said.

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WOMEN'S RESERVED SEATS

SC to hear stay appeal on polls June 11

UNB, Dhaka

An application seeking stay on election to 45 women's reserved seats in parliament will come up for hearing before the full bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on June 11.

Chamber Judge MM Ruhul Amin passed the order yesterday upon an application seeking leave to appeal against a High Court (HC) judgment clearing the way for holding the elections.

On May 30, the High Court

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Police resentful of salary 'discrimination'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A deep sense of disparity has been prevailing in the police over 'salary discrimination'.

Sources said the government on Saturday stepped up security measures at all police lines across the country. Members of different intelligence agencies are keeping a close watch on both Rajarbagh and Mirpur Police Lines in the capital and other police houses elsewhere in the country.

Recently, the government has increased the salaries of police constables along with those of the sepoy's of armed forces. But it caused anger among the constables as the increase in a constable's salary was less than that in a sepoy's though both are of the same grade and have to have the same educational qualifications.

Referring to the police constables' demand for elimination of 'discrepancy' between salaries of sepoy's and constables, DMP Commissioner Mizanur Rahman told The Daily Star last night, "The

higher authorities have been informed of the demand and they seem quite agreeable."

A traffic constable requesting anonymity however said, "The authorities have prohibited any discussion on the issue and our movements are being watched round the clock."

The resentment started to fester on Saturday when some policemen learnt about the new salary for the armed forces sepoy's.

The armed forces sepoy's, police constables, and sepoy's of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) used to be paid the same salary, Tk 1625 a month.

In the new pay scale okayed by the cabinet on May 16, the salary of a police constable was increased to Tk 2,600 while an army sepoy's salary has been upped to Tk 3,150.

"What is the reason behind this discrimination when we and they have the same educational qualifications?" questioned a police constable.

"We have to be on duty for the

whole year while the army sepoy's (do) only occasionally," observed the constable.

Constables at Rajarbagh Police Lines, which houses 20,000 policemen, were preparing to stage demonstration on Saturday morning against the 'discrimination'. But on intelligence information, the higher authorities ordered the police administration to quash the move.

"While we were preparing to come out of the barracks, we were instructed to get back inside and not try to get out without proper cause," another constable of Rajarbagh Police Lines told The Daily Star.

"We've been instructed to carry our ID cards even while going to bathroom," said the constable.

Besides, the same day BDR men were deployed at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

Asked about Saturday's incident, Additional Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Faruq Ahmed said he did not know of any resentment among the policemen, and

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IOJ leader, driver die in road crash

UNB, Comilla

Two people, including a leader of Islami Oikya Jote (Amini), died and seven others were injured in a collision between a microbus and a covered van on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Burichang upazila early yesterday.

The dead are Maulana Ishaq Faridi, 55, joint secretary of the IOJ central committee and senior vice-president of Jamiatul Olama, and Mohammad Russell, 21, microbus driver.

Police said the Chittagong-bound microbus, carrying the IOJ leader and his entourage, collided head on with the covered van coming from the opposite direction at Korpai at about 1:30am, killing the microbus driver on the spot and injuring Maulana Ishaq and seven others.

Ishaq succumbed to his injuries

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Tension mounts at DU over simultaneous JCD, BCL rallies

DU CORRESPONDENT

Tension ran high on the Dhaka University (DU) campus as pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi (JCD) Chhatra Dal and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the Awami League, announced simultaneous programmes at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Police however prevented BCL activists near the High Court intersection from going to the programme venue. DU authorities and top police officials, on the other hand, persuaded JCD activists not to march towards the Shaheed Minar.

Earlier, a number of JCD leaders

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INDO-BANGLA TALKS Foreign secys prepare for 'fruitful meet'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Foreign secretaries of India and Bangladesh will meet in the Indian capital on June 20 and 21 to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral ties, diplomatic sources said here yesterday.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin will be here on June 19 for talks with his Indian counterpart Shyam Saran during which the two will focus on bilateral relations including some ticklish issues relating to security, boundary and trade, they said.

The twice postponement of the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka and the killing of a senior BSF official inside

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LUNCH AT TK 5: Poor hawkers have meal with leftovers of on-duty policemen at Ramna Park yesterday. The leftovers are sold by workers who are employed as cook for policemen but do not get monetary payment.

NON-TRANSFER OF POWER LINES TO REB

WB threatens not to grant PDB Tk 500cr

BONEWS, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) will not release the remaining Tk 500 crore to the Power Development Board (PDB) if it does not transfer its electricity lines to the Rural Electrification Board (Reb) as per the condition.

A five-member delegation led by the bank's Acting Country Director Antony Bottrill told State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

In reply, the minister said about 6,000-km of electricity lines have already been transferred to the Reb, but the remaining 3,407-km of lines could not be handed over due to pending cases.

The WB has signed a credit agreement deal of \$190 million under its Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development Project.

As per the condition of the deal, the government will have to transfer 9,407-km of electricity lines of DESA

and PDB to the Rural Electrification Board (Reb).

Under the project, the WB has already released \$85 million. It will not provide the remaining \$105million if the government fails to transfer 3,407-km of power lines by June this year.

The delegation said the new project will cast a negative influence on providing economic support to the Siddhirganj Plant and Chittagong Power Distribution Project.

Zero tax ceiling to go up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is raising the ceiling of zero tax from Tk 100,000 now to Tk 115,000-125,000 because of inflation and enhanced pay scale of government employees, National Board of Revenue (NBR) sources said.

The budget for the next fiscal year will contain this decision but it is likely to be enforced from fiscal 2006-07.

The recent pay hike of government employees is leading to pay rise in the private sector too. All this and the inflation rate are making the government to refix the zero tax ceiling, the sources mentioned.

From the current fiscal year, the

government is fixing the individual tax payment rate in advance so that it can plan its tax revenue earning of the next year beforehand.

The government may also raise the level of highest tax payable income to Tk 10 lakh from Tk 9 lakh.

The corporate tax structure might also be changed. Tax of the companies that are not listed in the share market is 37.5 percent now but it might be increased to 40 percent.

The opportunity of making black money white through investment in industry and share market is going to be over this year. But the scope of indirectly making black money

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Sabihuddin new HC to UK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has called back Bangladesh High Commissioner to the United Kingdom AH Mofazzal Karim, a highly placed source at the prime minister's office (PMO) said.

Subsequently, the government has appointed Sabihuddin Ahmed, the ambassador to Sweden, as the

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Prayer Timing		
June 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Construction of a modern children's park adjacent to Osmani International Airport in Sylhet nears completion.

Hasina reiterates demand for early elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded immediate elections, as it believes the current parliament has become 'totally non-functional and the government has failed miserably to deliver'.

An AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) meeting chaired by Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated the demand for early election.

Hasina, also the AL president, asked her deputies to inquire about government officials at their respective areas so that any official with bias in favour of ruling alliance cannot get appointment as a polling official, sources said.

Addressing the ALPP meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, she observed that the ruling alliance might quit before its term ends as the government is losing its grip day by day. So, the party leaders better prepare for the next general election, she added.

"People just don't want to see the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition anymore in power, as it has become a burden for the country," Hasina told the newsmen after the meeting.

She said the next election would have to be held after necessary reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission (EC).

The meeting decided not to join the budget session of parliament, which begins today. Besides, it discussed the party lawmakers' resigning en masse from parliament, sources said.

Backing away from its earlier stance, the AL yesterday decided not to take reserved women seats in parliament.

AL sources said the meeting discussed among other things the strife between two top leaders of Dhaka city AL, budgetary allocation against constituencies, and latest political developments in the country.

The ALPP decided to take legal

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