



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XV NO. 140

DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 9, 2005

JAISTHA 26, 1412 BS

ZAMADJUL AWAL 1, 1426 HJRI

16 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

www.thedailystar.net

Ex-chairman of Bagerhat Poursava hurt in bomb attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Former chairman of Bagerhat Poursava SM Atahar Hossain was critically injured in a bomb attack by unidentified criminals on Tuesday night near his house at Harunkhana in Bagerhat sadar upazila.

The criminals threw two bombs when he got down from a rickshaw in front of his house at about 10:30pm and fled away in a microbus, police and witnesses said. Splinters of the bombs hit his head, chest and abdomen.

Witnesses said the attackers chanted slogans of Purb Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) before leaving the spot. The rickshawpuller also fled, police said.

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Unquiet time for Saifur

INAM AHMED

For Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, it is going to be an unquiet time to present his final budget in the tenure of the coalition government today -- he might get another chance to formulate another budget, but he will have little role in terms of implementation.

He will have to have the nerves to withstand too many things -- electoral, social, economic and, of course, donor pressures; this is going to be his first budget under the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

It will also be an unquiet time for analysts to watch whether Saifur will actually give up prudence in favour of political expediency. Indications are there that he will compromise to some extent, to prove once again that economic consolidations in the first years of a government are squandered away in the end year.

On the economic front, Saifur will have a lot of comforts to dance with -- a good export performance, strong industrial and agriculture outputs, below-the-limit budget deficit, low borrowing from the banks and strong foreign exchange

reserves.

Yet, he will have plenty to worry about, if a finance minister's outlook has to be beyond the political tenure -- a nagging inflationary pressure, the paradox of an agile investment demand that leads to pressure on the balance of payment (BoP) situation, poor implementation of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) that undermines the country's growth potentials and straining revenue situation.

Revenue is one area where the government still has to worry about.

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PLANE CRASH BAF assures victims of compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) will compensate for the Uttara fighter crash that left six people injured and three houses damaged on Tuesday.

The BSF yesterday took the decision to compensate the victims, said Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR).

"The BSF will form a board to estimate the damage and compensate the victims in no time," ISPR Director Lt Col Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star last night. The BAF had also compensated for its earlier crashes.

Meanwhile, BAF officials yesterday started recovering the wreckage of the F-7 MB aircraft nosedived on a house at Fayedabad in the city.

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Bangladesh Air Force personnel yesterday conduct salvage operation of the fighter crashed on a house in Uttara on Tuesday.

Japan investors keen to set up bamboo-based textile units

UNB, Dhaka

A group of Japanese investors has decided to set up textile and cotton factories in Bangladesh to produce cloth and yarn from bamboo.

The decision was taken at a meeting between a six-member Japanese delegation and Textiles and Jute Minister Shajahan Siraj at his office yesterday.

Japanese delegates Masaki Shibata, Ok Jong Doo, Han Yuhee, Lee Kwon Hyuk, Yoshito Igarashi and Mohammad Scim, Textiles and Jute Secretary M Abdur Rashid Sarkar and other high officials were present.

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Bidisha moved to prison cell

Lower courts refuse her bail, she fears for her life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bidisha, the beleaguered wife of former president HM Ershad, was moved to the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) yesterday afternoon.

The police yesterday showed to have arrested Bidisha in connection with a passport forgery case. She is already in police custody in a theft

case filed by Ershad on June 4.

Two lower courts rejected her bail prayers after she was produced before them yesterday in the theft and passport forgery cases, the second one filed with Mohammadpur Police Station on June 5. Both courts also directed the authorities to comply with Tuesday's High Court (HC) orders.

She was produced before the

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Mobile to be taxed, money whitening to continue

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government plans to impose Tk 1,500 in taxes on each SIM card, identifying the mobile phone sector as a thriving sector, and extend for another year the opportunity to whiten black money in the new budget.

These are some of the highlights of the 2005-06 budget Finance Minister Saifur Rahman is scheduled to propose today in parliament.

In view of the poor import tax collection, the government is giving

special emphasis on VAT, income tax and supplementary duty to collect an additional Tk 6,500 crore, an NBR source said.

In the current budget, the government set a fixed tariff of Tk 1,500 on each mobile set against an earlier tariff of Tk 3,000 to Tk 4,000 depending on their prices.

Given the rapid growth in the number of mobile phone subscribers in the country, the government is expected that the tariff cut would not affect its revenue income. But

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RMG orders to shift unless work condition improves

Major buyers, int'l labour body warn after Savar factory collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the heel of accidents in garment industries, the latest being the collapse of Spectrum Sweaters in Savar that killed at least 61, a high-level delegation of top apparel buyers and labour organisations yesterday cautioned that Bangladesh may face a major decline in orders if working environment in the industry did not

improve.

Lakshmi Bhatia, a representative of US buyer GAP, based in Bangkok, said the company will buy garment products from China, Cambodia and Vietnam if the Bangladesh garment industry owners did not improve working conditions.

General Secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation

(ITGLWF) Neil Kearney said poor infrastructure, factories' record on workers' health and safety and working hours in Bangladesh are "appalling."

"The government's indifference to the victims of the Spectrum Garments disaster also damaged Bangladesh's image abroad," he said after a meeting with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at her

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Policewomen take Bidisha, divorced wife of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court, Dhaka, yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Hasina accuses cops of torturing Bidisha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that police have been torturing Bidisha, divorced wife of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, in the name of interrogation.

"She [Bidisha] may be accused of criminal offences, but why the police are torturing a woman in such a way?" the Awami League (AL) chief said when family members of slain Jubo League leader Sumon met her at her Dhanmondi residence.

Sumon was killed in "crossfire" with the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members in the capital on May 31. The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka ordered a judicial inquiry into the killing after the victim's mother filed a complaint.

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Thomas may be replaced

New US envoy likely to be named soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US Ambassador in Dhaka Harry K Thomas may be replaced and his successor may soon be named, diplomatic sources said last night.

The US Department of State recently called Thomas back to Washington and informed him of the decision, added the sources.

An official at the American embassy in Dhaka yesterday confirmed that Thomas returned from Washington on Monday. But the official claimed unaware of any such developments.

A top government official, meanwhile, told The Daily Star last night

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PBCP threatens 5 journos with death

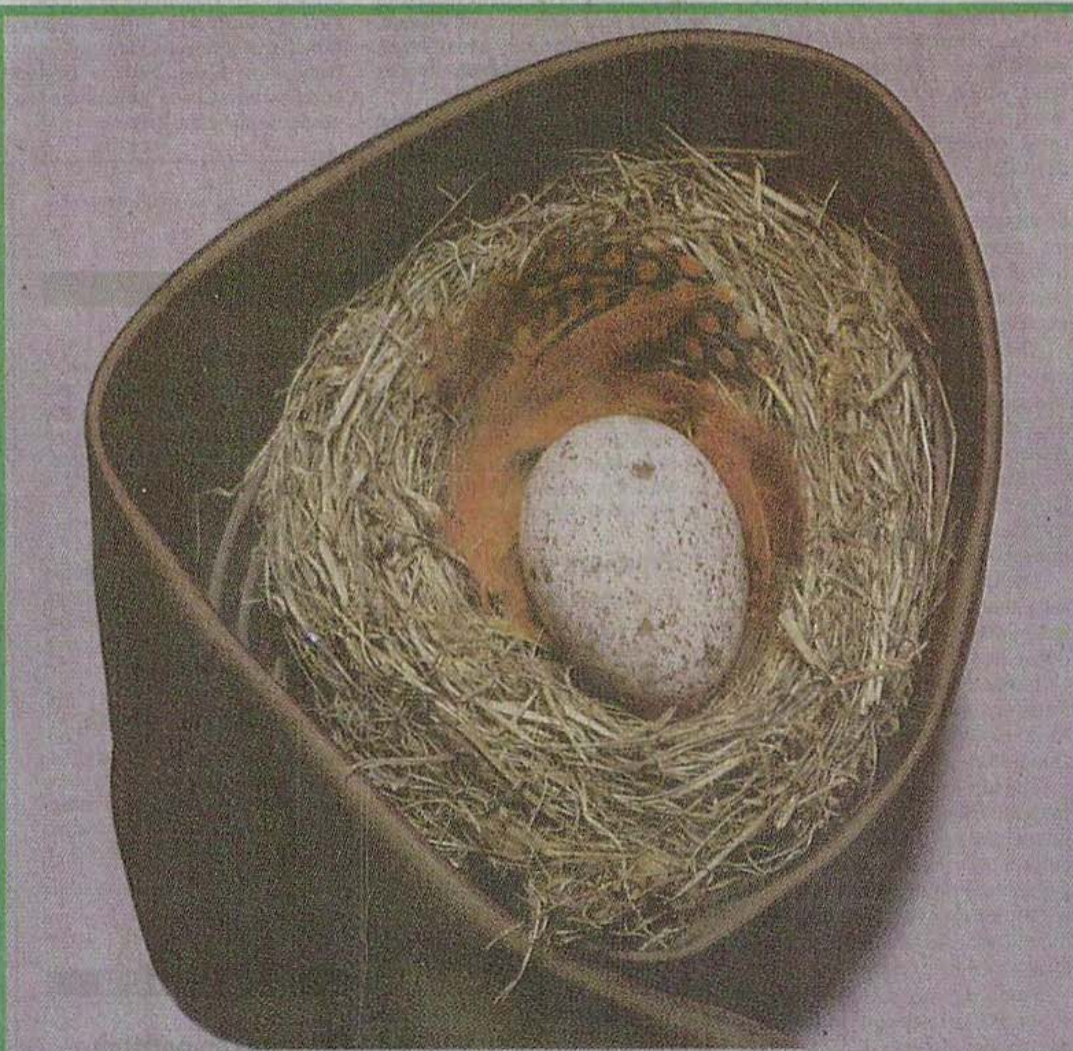
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

The outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party's (PBCP) Janajuddha faction yesterday threatened five journalists with death in Sathkira.

Janajuddha member Atiar Rahman in a letter sent to the Sathkira Reporters Club convenor said five journalists of different national and local dailies are on their hit list.

They are Janakantha correspondent Mizanur Rahman, Prothom Alo correspondent Kalyan Bannerjee, Jugantor correspondent Subhas

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