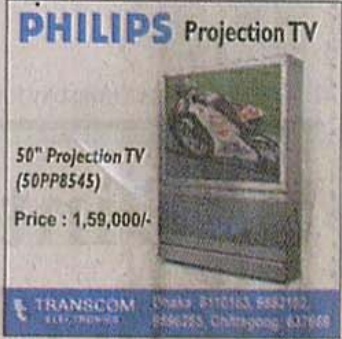




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BDR man dies in gunfight with smugglers

UNB, Benaipole

A BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) man was killed and a smuggler injured in a gunfight between the border guards and a gang of smugglers on Benaipole border early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Lance Naik Piar Mohammad, 47, son of Hanif Munshi of village Kaunia in Faridganj of Chandpur district.

Official and local sources said the injured smuggler, Rabiul Islam, 32, was admitted to a hospital in a critical condition.

The clash erupted when BDR patrols challenged some armed smugglers, who were carrying illegal goods from India, at around 3:00am

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

DOLLAR CRISIS

Saifur rejects MCCI bailout call

Says profiteering put banks in trouble, govt needs forex reserve for priority imports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While a leading business chamber urges the central bank to release foreign currency quickly before the current dollar crisis further dents the country's image, the finance minister brushes off any such scarcity of US dollar in the

market. It is not possible to release dollars from the central bank whenever someone wants, said Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday.

The government has to maintain foreign currency reserve to meet priority import demands for petro-

leum, fertiliser and food, he explained to reporters after a meeting with Bangladesh Bank (BB) governor and other high executives and the chairmen and managing directors of nationalised commercial and specialised banks.

Earlier in the week, on Saturday, SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

NON-ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

Khulna stops for an hour in protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The entire Khulna city came to a standstill yesterday in response to a one-hour work stoppage called by the Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee (GKDACC) in protest against non-allocation of any fund in the current national budget for development projects in the city.

As the clock struck 11:00am, all modes of vehicles stopped on the roads and work in all government, non-government and autonomous organisations suspended.

Braving the heavy rains since morning, thousands of people from SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Corruption eats up Desa's Tk 2,000cr

JS body blames the power authority for not collecting bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday blasted Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) for a Tk 2,000 crore deficit in its account, saying the huge amount of money is traceless due to corruption and irregularities in the last 10 years.

Desa's financial statement says it owes Tk 4,000 crore to Power

Development Board (PDB) but the public and private sector electricity subscribers owe Tk 2,004 crore to Desa that shows a mismatch of around Tk 2,000 crore.

Referring to the statement, members of the parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources ministry blamed the Desa officials for the huge loss and their failure to

realise the Tk 2,004 crore outstanding bills.

"Desa officials said it is due to system loss. There is a huge mismatch in their accounts and we fear the money was embezzled by the corrupt staff," Committee Chairman Shahidul Islam told The Daily Star after a committee meeting yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

150 dead in Pak train crash

AFP, Ghokki

Three crowded passenger trains collided in a devastating crash at a station in southern Pakistan Wednesday, killing up to 150 people, injuring 1,000 and leaving many others trapped, officials said.

The driver of one express misread a signal and ploughed into a stationary train full of sleeping passengers near the remote town of Ghokki, then a third train slammed head-on into the wreckage, according to railway officials.

Rescuers were trying to save dozens of people still imprisoned in the mangled carriages of the three trains, which lay scattered amid

piles of debris and body parts.

"It's a painful scene. There are bodies scattered all over. People are crying, fathers are looking for children, husbands for their wives and brothers for their sisters," a witness told AFP by telephone.

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf ordered an urgent investigation and promised to punish those responsible for the pre-dawn pile-up, the country's worst in 15 years.

"It's a tragic accident, I am deeply saddened. I express my condolences," he told state television. "It was not sabotage, it appears to have been caused by some carelessness."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

WATERLOGGING IN DHAKA

Unplanned roads, illegal structures blamed

PINAKI ROY

Unplanned crossroads and illegal structures blocking water flow in the city's remaining canals are the main causes of waterlogging, said the steering committee studying the nagging problem.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has constructed most of the unplanned roads in the city, said the recently formed committee in its Monday's report.

The committee yesterday held a meeting and directed authorities to remove all structures that block water drainage.

"We've already identified some of the illegal roads set up on the canals. We'll soon identify the rest and start removing those to facilitate drainage," said Mehedi Ali Khan, DCC additional chief engineer.

The government on July 3 formed the committee to find out the SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Vendors sell vegetables at the capital's Shantinagar kitchen market that went under ankle-deep water due to incessant rain yesterday.

Dhaka waterlogged again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy rainfall for six hours at a stretch yesterday caused immense sufferings to city dwellers as temporary waterlogging obstructed traffic movement at city's major junctions slowing down movement of the vehicles.

The Met Office recorded 101 millimetres (mm) of rains during the 12 hours from 6:00am yesterday in the city, one of the highest amounts of rainfall measured in the city so far.

The Met Office said a "very heavy" rainfall is likely over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in the next 48 hours beginning 12 noon yesterday due to the depression over SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

PM seeks Japanese help for Padma Bridge

AGENCIES, Tokyo

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged Japan to assist in building another major bridge over the river Padma, which will complete the linking of different parts of Bangladesh into a single economic entity.

She was speaking at a meeting of the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary League (JBPL) at the Green Hall of Akasaka Prince Hotel here in the evening.

JBPL President Shin Shakurai MP, Vice-President Wakako Harinakawa and Adviser Hajime Ishi also

addressed the meeting that began with the playing of national anthems of both the countries.

Describing Bangladesh as a model of democracy among the developing countries, the prime minister said Bangladesh is not far from the goals of attaining a bright economic future with a democratic polity that inspired its independence.

Khaleda, now on a five-day official visit to Japan, requested the Japan-Bangladesh Parliamentary League to help in making our relations stronger and closer in the years to come.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

LONDON BOMBINGS 4 'Pakistan origin attackers' were UK bred

REUTERS, London

Police on Wednesday hunted for a mastermind behind suicide bombings in London as the country reeled from news that the four suspected attackers, Muslims of Pakistani origin, had been born and brought up in Britain.

Security experts said the four, the first suicide bombers to strike western Europe, would have received training and direction from a more senior militant for their attacks, which killed at least 52 people.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Lalmatia 'robbers' were petty traders

Cops say at least one had no criminal record

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five of the six alleged robbers killed in police firing at Kazipara and Lalmatia in the capital on Tuesday have been identified.

Monir Hossain, 25, Jakir Hossain, 27, and Ramjan, 25, died in Lalmatia, while Plabon Hossain, 17, son of Iskandar Ali Mollah of Shewrapara, and Nazrul Islam, 17,

were killed at Kazipara.

Relatives identified the three alleged robbers killed in Lalmatia at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) morgue last night.

Monir, a resident of Dhupkhola in Sutrapur, used to supply bread and banana to a hospital in Nayabazar, his sister Sumi Akhter told reporters. Sutrapur police SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

US envoy asks Hasina about AL stance on next polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Chargé d'Affaires Judith Chammas yesterday called on Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi house and discussed the opposition's demands for electoral and caretaker government reforms and the Awami League's stance on the next general elections.

Awami League (AL) will participate in the polls, if people can exercise their franchise freely and SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

News analysis

JS bodies' anti-graft moves turn futile

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The parliamentary committee system is a glaring example of how a good initiative to curb corruption and irregularities in the government machinery turns futile due to lack of cooperation from the ministries and the government high-ups.

Different parliamentary bodies have formed as many as 120 sub-committees in the last two years to probe allegations of corruption and

irregularities against ministers and officials, but only 20 of them submitted reports, that too after a long delay, sources said.

The activities of a good number of vital parliamentary standing committees have also raised questions about whether the committee system is effective in curbing irregularities.

Undue pressure from the government high-ups has compelled a SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

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