

Forbes ranks Khaleda as 29th powerful woman

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Forbes magazine's second annual ranking of the world's 100 most powerful women has placed Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the 29th position this year.

Khaleda Zia was at the 14th position last year.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has been ranked as the world's most powerful woman. She topped the 2004 list too when she was US National Security Advisor.

Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi was runner-up for the second year in a row, but other prominent Asian women fared less well.

Former Indonesian president Megawati Sukarnoputri, eighth on the list last year, fell out of the ranking list following her failed re-election bid.

India's ruling Congress party chief Sonia Gandhi, who was

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Indian jets violate airspace

UNB, Lalmonirhat

Three Indian jets allegedly violated Bangladesh airspace and entered 12 kilometres inside frontier Patgram upazila in the district yesterday.

The jets intruded into Bangladesh territory at about 11:40am and staged demonstration for 3-4 minutes before returning perhaps to adjacent Hashimara in Kuchbihar district of West Bengal, police and BDR sources said.

North Korea got N-tech from Khan, says US

PTI, New York

The Bush administration has for the first time presented North Korea with specific 'evidence' that it secretly obtained uranium enrichment technology from the founder of Pakistan's nuclear programme, senior administration officials said in New York.

The decision to share the intelligence with North Korean negotiators during the ongoing six-party talks in Beijing was part of an effort to convince the North that any discussions about disarmament must cover not only the nuclear weapons programme it has boasted about, but a second one that it now denies exists, the officials said.

Putting on the table the evidence that North Korea obtained technology

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Prayer Timing		
July 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Suicide bomber kills 25 in Mosul

AFP, Mosul

A suicide bomber blew himself up outside an army recruitment centre in the northern Iraqi town of Rabia, near the Syrian border, killing 25 people and wounding 35, police said.

"An initial toll put the number of those killed at 25 and the number of those wounded at 35," police General Said al-Juburi said from Mosul.

The victims were young men waiting to sign up to join the army, he said.

Insurgents have repeatedly attacked army recruitment centres across the country as thousands of young men, most of them unemployed, seek to join.

Some 1,000 to 1,400 recruits are joining the new army every month, US officials said.

The attack took place at 12:30 pm local time as the suicide bomber was mixed up among the recruits, Juburi said.

Some of those most seriously wounded were rushed to the hospital in Mosul, some 370 kilometers north of Baghdad, according to medical sources.

"I was waiting in the court in the middle of the recruitment center with four of my friends when there was a blast behind us," said Raduane Muayyad, one of the survivors, who was hit with shrapnel in his back and legs.

Rabia's residents are largely Sunni Arab, formerly privileged during the regime of ousted dictator Saddam Hussein and now blamed for being the backbone of the insurgency against the Iraqi government and US forces in Iraq.

US and Iraqi officials have long complained that foreign fighters entering Iraq largely cross into the country through Syria. Damascus denies the charges.

Meanwhile Philippine diplomats in Iraq have left their Baghdad mission indefinitely and pulled back to Jordan due to a rash of kidnappings of foreign diplomats, Foreign Undersecretary Jose Brillantes said Friday.

The three-member mission, led by charge d'affaires Eric Endaya, had arrived at the embassy in Amman where they would be posted "for an indefinite period of time," Brillantes said in a written statement.

"The diplomats in Baghdad are in Amman for security reasons occasioned by the recent kidnappings of diplomats," he added.

Foreign students ordered out of Pak madrasas

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said yesterday that foreign students attending Islamic religious colleges in the country would be ordered to leave as part of a crackdown on militant groups.

"They must leave. We will not issue visas to such people," he said in a meeting with Islamabad-based foreign media.

The government estimates there are 1,400 foreigners studying at religious schools -- known as madrasas.

Pakistani security forces have detained hundreds of suspected militants and Islamist clerics after a crackdown launched after the July 7 London bombings.

Pakistan's latest crackdown came after revelations that three of the four suspected bombers in London were Britons of Pakistan descent and at least two of them had visited Pakistan recently.

Asked how long the ongoing

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Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon forms a human chain at Shahbag in the capital yesterday, urging the authorities concerned to gear up the ongoing operation against adulterated food. A number of food stall owners and employees have been fined and jailed by mobile courts during their recent drives following newspaper reports.

Suspension of BNP body Sylhet city tense, tight security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Security measures have been beefed up in and around the city due to a rivalry among the ruling BNP factions in the wake of Wednesday's suspension of the party's district convening committee, police said.

Speculations were rife that city unit BNP President lawmaker Ariful Haque Chowdhury is losing his directorship at Jalalabad Gas Transmission and Distribution Systems Limited. But the gas authorities have not announced anything in this regard.

Lawmakers M Ilyas Ali, Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury and Syed Mokbul Hossain on Thursday met a number of BNP top brass in the capital. They raised a barrage of allegations against Ariful and other people blessed by Finance Minister M Saifur

Rahman and his son Naser Rahman, MP.

Ariful, also a ward commissioner of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC), was tipped to be a director at Jalalabad Gas after being nominated by the finance minister a few years ago.

Meantime, police on Thursday arrested SCC Ward Commissioner Farhad Chowdhury Shamim on charge of looting cellphone sets worth Tk 16 lakh the previous day.

Shamim alleged he was arrested on instructions of the finance minister and the city unit BNP chief for his relations with lawmakers Ilyas.

But police claimed they have proof of his involvement in the looting. The police have started the process of filing three cases against him including one under the Speedy Trial Act.

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Maharashtra monsoon death toll nears 900

AFP, Mumbai

The number of people killed in record monsoon rains in west India climbed to near 900 yesterday after a stampede sparked by rumours of a burst dam in a Mumbai shantytown and a landslide in a village, police said.

"We are now confirming that the number of dead in Mumbai is 370," said A N Roy, police chief of the western commercial hub.

The figure included 18 killed in the overnight stampede, 74 bodies dug out by rescuers from a landslide that engulfed houses in Mumbai's Sakinaka area and five other flood-linked deaths, Roy said, updating earlier tolls.

At least 513 people have been killed elsewhere in Maharashtra state, of which Mumbai is the capital, according to B M Kulkarni, of the state police, taking the total number of confirmed deaths to 883.

The deaths were caused by landslides, drownings and building

collapses that followed lashing rains that swept through the state from Monday.

Aerial pictures of Mumbai showed much of the city marooned in debris-laden water. Long queues of vehicles were stranded on highways.

However, the main airport reopened Thursday afternoon after being closed since Tuesday due to waterlogged runways.

Aside from allowing the resumption of commercial flights, the reopening had allowed the air force to start flying in relief materials, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said.

Suburban trains -- the lifeline of the city -- were also limping back to normal, a railway official said, but inter-city lines had yet to be restored.

Heavy casualties occurred in a remote village in Raighad district of the rain-lashed state, where at least 100 people from 20 families were feared killed by a landslide, PTI said.



LIFE AFTER BLASTS

INAM AHMED, FROM LONDON

Phew, that was a good Thursday

At Bromley-By-Bow Underground station, the cops are a surprise to me; six of them -- two at the entrance and four on the platform -- and none of them had been there for the past few days. Their presence reminded me today is Thursday, another Thursday exactly three weeks after those grisly bomb attacks.

With some nervousness I walk past them, my huge black rucksack feeling heavier, and look at the cops in the eyes. Their hard, flint-stone stare measures me up. I walk down to the station and find the other four there.

As the District Line train pulls up, I

step into an almost empty carriage. I sit opposite a past-middle-age couple, with their probing eyes all over me. I feel their eyes groping me for something, and of course the stare stops at the rucksack. It is an unusual thing for London where people ride through their trips without even bothering to look who is sitting in front of them. Typically they keep their eyes glued to a book or a newspaper. Well, today is Thursday and it is a London after 7/7.

The man is wearing a white shirt and black trousers, the woman a beige suit, both of them wearing large silver rings. After a while they

withdraw their eyes. I relax.

Did they think I am a suspicious character? Yes, they did. And they had been trying to see if I have hair on my chest, but they could not as I have done up today. Somewhere they read suicide bombers shave the hair before their (un)holy mission. They tell me all this later when I reveal to them my identity.

The next station is Bow and here a young lady clad in jeans walks in. She stands in front of me and immediately gives me a glance, but I don't care -- today is Thursday.

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Rab recovers arms, bombs from Khulna outlaw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Thursday recovered five firearms, four powerful bombs, over 50 rounds of ammunition, and pamphlets from a top cadre of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

Sakhawat Hossain, an operative of Janajuddho faction of PBCP, was arrested during a Rab raid on a house in Kalikapur village of Jhenidah Sadar on Thursday evening. The arms recovered from the house include two foreign-made pistols, one revolver, one shutter gun, and one sawn-off rifle.

The arrestee hails from Jibon Nagar upazila of Chuadanga district. He stands accused in Chuadanga UP chairman Noor Ali murder case. According to police, he had long been staying in the house of Abu Baker in Kalikapur as a banana trader.

Two other cadres who were staying with him had managed to

escape during the raid. They are Saifuzzaman Shoaib alias Ripon Ahmad and his younger brother Sharifuzzaman Shumon alias Babu.

Besides the arms and ammunition, the Rab men recovered some 600 pamphlets of the outlawed party.

Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Dada Tapan, founder of the Janajuddho faction, used to frequent the house, where a number of killings were planned, said wife of the arrested PBCP cadre.

Meanwhile, security measures have been beefed up in Khulna City and elsewhere in the district against the backdrop of a sudden rise in acts of terrorism.

Rab and police have prepared a fresh list of outlaws and militants operating in the south-western region. The list also includes criminals like smugglers, drug traffickers, and abductors.

Sources said Khulna unit of Rab plans a new drive in the south-western districts.

'Bomb blast' on Indian train kills 12

AFP, New Delhi

An explosion on a long distance passenger train in northern India that killed 12 people was caused by a bomb, an official said Friday.

"It is definite that it was a planted bomb that ... blasted from an unclaimed suitcase placed near the toilet," said Alok Sinha, principal home secretary in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

The authorities had earlier suspected the explosion that ripped through the compartment of the Shramjeevi Express near Jaunpur, 190 kilometres, east of Uttar Pradesh state capital Lucknow late Thursday was caused by a gas cylinder.

NDTV television channel said bomb experts had found traces of the explosive RDX in the carriage.

RDX, which forms the base of a number of common military explosives, has been used by Islamic militants fighting Indian rule in divided Kashmir as well as by separatist rebels in the troubled northeast region, who frequently target trains.

At least nine people died on the spot due to the impact of the blast but federal Railways Minister Laloo

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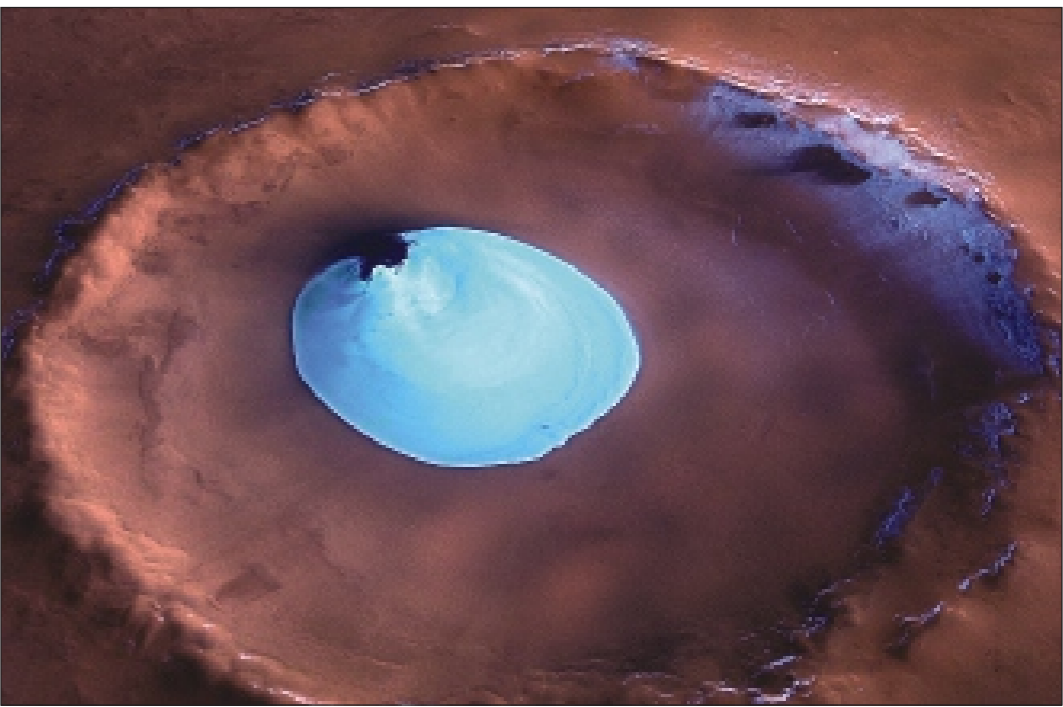


PHOTO: AFP

An image of a patch of water ice sitting on the floor of an unnamed crater near the Martian north pole. The crater is 35 kilometres wide and has a maximum depth of approximately 2 kilometres beneath the crater rim. The circular patch of bright material located at the centre of the crater is residual water ice. The image taken by the High Resolution Stereo Camera (HRSC) on board ESA's Mars Express spacecraft was released on Thursday.