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Shahadat Chy seriously ill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent journalist and Editor of the weekly Shaptahik 2000 Shahadat Chowdhury is seriously ill and fighting for his life at the moment.

Family members of Chowdhury have requested the countrymen to pray for his recovery, says a press release.

Khaleda talks militancy with 3 top ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday held a meeting with three senior ministers to discuss the militancy issue and work out the ruling BNP's programmes in the face of the opposition's

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Lawyers divided on JMB threat to SC judges

Security yet to be stepped up for judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pro-government and pro-opposition lawyers expressed opposite reactions to JMB's threat to Supreme Court (SC) and High Court (HC) judges, with the authorities yet to step up security for the SC judges.

Pro-government lawyers brushed aside the threat saying the letter was fake and someone might have sent the letter in the name of JMB to create panic. Meanwhile, the

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China wants revival of Silk Route

Delegation due on Thursday to meet govt officials

RAFIQ HASAN

A nine-member Chinese delegation will come to Dhaka on Thursday by road, reflecting Beijing's willingness to establish a direct road link with Bangladesh through revival of the ancient Silk Route.

The delegation comprising government officials, businessmen, tour operators, and academicians will come by car to the Bangladesh-Myanmar border and reach Teknaf after crossing the Naf river by ferry, sources in the Ministry of Communications said.

The main objective of the visit is to see the hurdles in the way of

reviving the route that was once linked with the Grand Trunk Road connecting Delhi with Arakan, communications ministry officials said, adding that the team will also explore the possibility of using the existing roads that will help to enhance cooperation in trade, tourism and sports among the three countries.

The direct air link between Dhaka and Kunming, the capital of Chinese western province Yunnan, has already been operative for several months.

Yiping Song, the leader of the Chinese team that will also visit historical places like Mainamati and Mahasthangarh and talk to

senior government officials, recently called on Bangladesh Ambassador to China Ashfaqur Rahman and requested for necessary cooperation from the Bangladesh government for the success of the trip.

"The nine Chinese travellers will embark on a road trip from Kunming in Yunnan province of China that will take them through Myanmar to Chittagong and then on to Benapole in the west of Bangladesh," said a fax message sent by the Bangladesh embassy in Beijing to the Ministry of Communications.

During Chinese Premier Wen

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US wants counter-terrorism cooperation

UNB, Dhaka

The US government yesterday spelt out both long-term and short-term solutions to the growing peril of terrorism in Bangladesh and expressed interest in considering new proposals for expanding cooperation in the counter-terrorism drive.

A spokesman for the US embassy in Dhaka gave the observations to the news agency in response to queries in the wake of Sunday's terror threat to blow up the US and European missions in Dhaka, which came from a self-proclaimed operative of Al Qaeda's regional wing.

The spokesman said: "As President Bush and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have both said, the fight against terrorism must be

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PHOTO: STAR

Law enforcers search a taxicab in Baridhara in the capital yesterday in the wake of a threat to blow up some diplomatic missions in Dhaka.

Industrial credit growth turns negative

Loans to public sector shoots up

REJAUJ KARIM BYRON

The credit growth has been more in the public sector than in the private one during the first three months of the current fiscal while the Bangladesh Bank (BB) has been scrambling to conform to the International Monetary Fund prescription for tightening the monetary policy to ease pressure on the foreign exchange (Forex)

reserve and for curbing of inflation. Economists and industrialists are of the opinion that instead of controlling private sector credit, public sector borrowing needs to be checked to address the situation. They also pointed out that if control over the private sector credit is tightened, industrial growth might face a debacle.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said, "The choice of an appropriate

policy mix in such a situation is part economics, part politics. Only the government can decide on the hard choices, the IMF will not have a clue. Unless the government can come up with a credible plan of its own, the negotiations with the IMF are likely to flounder."

The public sector credit has increased by 6.25 percent in the first three months of the current fiscal.

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Govt took all steps to protect foreign missions

Says Reaz Rahman

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken all steps to meet terror threats and protect foreign missions and their interests in Bangladesh.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Reaz Rahman asserted this as the British High Commission said it had received a bomb threat against the missions of European countries and United States.

"This is a matter of concern and we have taken it seriously," Reaz

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Ministry probe finds 31 ACRs tampered with

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A probe body of the establishment ministry has unearthed 31 cases of tampering with the officials' annual confidential report (ACR) which is used for their promotion.

The committee, headed by a joint secretary, found a section of ministry officials involved in such corruption to manipulate the process of the officials' promotion.

Sources said the committee, which is yet to complete the investigation, has submitted its preliminary report to the parliamentary standing committee on the establishment ministry.

"Irregularities have been found in preparing the dossiers on the government officials," a source said quoting the report after a meeting of a parliamentary body yesterday.

The ministry report says that the investigation is still going on and the prime minister, who is in charge of the establishment ministry, has been informed about overall situation.

The parliamentary body asked the ministry to complete the investigation and submit the full report at its next meeting.

Besides mentioning the cases of

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Jamaat statement on Star editor's commentary

Central publicity wing secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Prof Md Tasnim Alam, in a statement sent to The Daily Star yesterday, has claimed that a commentary by the editor of the daily published on November 27 under the headline 'Eureka ... The real culprit has been found' contained misleading information.

The statement alleged that The Daily Star had published unfounded reports on more than one occasion in the past and by repeating that again it tried to mislead the people.

Referring to the allegation of some militants' Jamaat-links,

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PHOTO: STAR

A motorcycle of a police sergeant goes up at Sholoshahar Railway Station as students of Chittagong University set it ablaze to protest against bribery and assault of a fellow student yesterday.

Cop assaulted after beating up CU student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Agitating students of Chittagong University (CU) yesterday afternoon beat up a traffic sergeant and set fire to his motorbike in Sholoshahar Railway Station area, protesting brutality on a fellow student by another sergeant the night before.

The injured Sergeant Shahidul Haque was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

M Hedayat Ullah Sabuj, 21, a third year student of Sociology Department of Chittagong University, found on-duty Traffic Sergeant Jasim Uddin extorting money from passing trucks and heavy vehicles at the Dampara Wasa Intersection on Sunday afternoon. He had emerged from

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KILLING, SLICING OF 2 INTO 149 PIECES

Jubo Dal leader, 8 others to die

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday gave double death sentence to Jubo Dal leader Rafiqul Islam Kajal and eight others for killing a businessman Mohammad Shamsul Haque and his son Russel Sheikh and slicing their bodies into 149 pieces in last March.

The other convicts are Kajal's brother Mohammad Sirajul Islam Faruq, Moloy Sarker, Bhutto alias Abu Taleb, Kazi Noor Qaiyum, Kalam alias 'Narsingdi' Kalam, Mohammad Mintoo, Nizam and Mohammad Abdur Rahim.

Only Rahim was present in the court during the delivery of the verdict while the rest were tried in

absentia.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 handed down the sentence at packed courtroom.

The lone accused in custody was brought to courtroom 10 minutes before the judge took his seat at 12:30pm and he read out the highlights of the 76-page judgement in five minutes.

The judge observed there was no room for sympathy and kindness for people who committed such heinous crimes. Moreover, they crippled a family forever, the judge noted.

The fugitives' punishment will be effective from the day of their

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