

5 get 2007 Ekushey Padak

UNB, Dhaka

Five distinguished personalities have been awarded prestigious 'Ekushey Padak' for this year in recognition of their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

The awardees are former chief justice and chief adviser of caretaker government Justice Habibur Rahman and Mohammad Mahfuz Ullah (literature), Anwar Parvez (music-posthumous), MA Beg (photography-posthumous) and Dr Selim Al Din (drama).

An official release yesterday said the award carries a gold medal weighing three tolas of gold, a certificate and a cheque for Tk 40,000 for each of the recipients.

HC ASKS GOVT Why decision to cancel cop hiring not 'unlawful'

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain why its decision cancelling the recruitment of 757 policemen, SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Resignation of PSC chief, members demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members at a discussion yesterday demanded immediate resignation of the Public Service Commission (PSC) chairman and members, confiscation of their properties and bringing them to book for what they said was destroying credibility of the constitutional body.

The PSC should also be made free from executive influence to end political recruitment process, they said at the discussion on "Structural reforms to ensure transparency and accountability of PSC" organised by Nagorik Sanghota at Teachers-Students Centre of Dhaka University (DU).

Honest and competent bureaucracy is a must for ensuring law and order, good governance and also maintaining reasonable prices of

essentials. But none of it is possible if public servants are appointed under political consideration, they added.

Former PSC member Dr Mohabbat Khan urged the caretaker government to initiate reforms in it and said corruption in the PSC would continue if corrupt people man it.

The recruitment process since the 24th BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) examinations should be investigated and the wrongdoers punished, he stressed.

Khandaker Bazlul Haque, another former PSC member, said there is now a syndicate of job seekers and PSC and government circles that has made it possible to get jobs paying money. This was not the case before.

"If there be a prime minister who will have no involvement in recruit-

ment process, the problems due to politicisation of the bureaucracy will be over," he said.

DU teacher Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Curzon in his keynote paper said, "The PSC that began to be politicised in 1991 plunged into corruption in the last five years of BNP-Jamaat rule."

Corruption cannot be checked just by strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) if corruption in the PSC cannot be rooted out, he said. Transparency and accountability of the PSC have to be ensured through its structural reforms, he added.

Hafizur Rahman suggested formation of a selection committee comprising judges, establishment secretary, educationists and experienced former secretaries that will consult civil society members for

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AL gets nod to hold discussion on Mother Language Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government yesterday gave the go-ahead to Awami League's discussion scheduled for February 21 commemorating the International Mother Language Day with condition that the party would refrain from delivering political speech at the programme.

The interim government had earlier issued a notice saying political parties would not be allowed to hold any political programme—outdoors or indoors—under the guise of cultural programmes.

Following the notice, a three-member AL delegation led by its General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday met law, justice and parliamentary affairs Adviser barrister Mainul Hossain at his office and sought permission to hold a discussion on February 21 where AL President Sheikh Hasina would attend as chief guest.

The law adviser authorised AL to hold the discussion at auditorium of Institution of Engineers' Bangladesh.

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21 killed as blasts rattle Baghdad

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A string of bombings killed 10 people yesterday in the Baghdad area one day after a massive car bomb attack in a Shia area market delivered the first major blow to the US-led security crackdown.

Five people died and 11 were wounded when a bomb exploded on a public bus headed for the mostly Shia area of Karradah in central Baghdad, police reported.

Meanwhile, a roadside bomb killed three policemen in the Shia area of Zafraniyah in southeastern Baghdad, wounding two other people, including a civilian, police said.

And in Mahmoudiya, 30km of the capital, a car bomb went off among auto repair shops, killing two and wounding two, police said.

Mahmoudiya is mostly Shia with Sunnis living in villages around the community and has long been a flashpoint for sectarian violence.

Two suicide car bombers exploded in the rebellious city of Ramadi west of Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 11 people and wounding four, police and witnesses said.

The attackers blew themselves up outside the house of a tribal leader who has led a government-backed campaign to fight al-Qaeda militants in Anbar province, police said.

Five police officers and six civilians were killed in the blasts, witnesses said. The first explosion hit the blast walls outside the house of tribal leader Abdul Setar Abu Risha, where a police patrol was stationed. The second suicide bomber rammed his vehicle into the house before blowing himself up.

The scattered blasts, which occurred during the morning rush hour, occurred one day after a massive car bomb attack in an outdoor market.

Police said at least 63 people died in the attack in the mostly Shia area of New Baghdad. Scores were injured as extremists sent a bloody calling card to officials boasting that militant factions were on the run.

Nearly 130 people were injured. Another person was killed in a car bombing Sunday in the Shia militia stronghold of Sadr City.

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Judicial probe against DC Kohinur starts

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday began judicial inquiry into a criminal case filed against 715 police personnel for attacking the then opposition Awami League activists on September 12 last year during their Prime Minister's Office siege programme.

Jubo Mohila League General Secretary Prof Apu Ukil filed the case on September 15 last year accusing mainly Kohinur Miah, the then DMP deputy commissioner (Tejgaon) for the attack.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohamamd Shamsul Alam recorded statement of Apu Ukil and fixed March 21 for next hearing on the issue.

The accused include the then Inspector General of Police (IG) Anwarul Iqbal, the then director general of Rab Abdul Aziz Sarker, the then Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman, five additional IGs, two DIGs, six DCs, 11 ADCs, 33 Acs and 17 OCs.

Following the case filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Metropolitan Magistrate

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Tigers off to Caribbean

SPORTS REPORTER

All went wrong for Bangladesh in the South African trip for the 2003 Cricket World Cup when the Tigers even lost to rookies Canada and returned empty handed from the game's showpiece event.

With a view to erase bitter memories of the previous edition, Bangladesh cricketers left Dhaka this morning for the West Indies for

their third World Cup.

As it so often happens, the past would inspire or haunt the Tigers, who had built expectations following a rather successful run in England in 1999, where they beat Scotland and eventual runners-up Pakistan.

To win two matches and repeat the feat of their maiden World Cup after being drawn in a group

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Gunfire traded on Satkhira border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunfire at two places in Satkhira along the border with India late Sunday and early yesterday.

BDR sources said BSF troops of Kalupota camp in the Indian district of 24 Parganas around 1:30am yesterday fired at least 10 bullets at BDR personnel at Ghona in Satkhira Sadar upazila. The BDR men retaliated the unprovoked firing with 55 shots.

In another incident, the BSF troops of Pakirdanga camp of 24 Parganas fired five shots at the BDR men of Kakdanga camp of Gazipur of Debhata upazila in Satkhira. Following the shooting around 9:30pm Sunday, BDR men retaliated by firing 30 shots, BDR sources said.

On contact, Lt Col Asif Abdur Rouf, commanding officer (CO) 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident and said as the BSF personnel fired over 15 shots at the BDR, BDR personnel were forced to retaliate.

Manikganj cop held for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

The army yesterday busted an assistant sub inspector (ASI) inside Manikganj Sadar Police Station while taking Tk 2,000 bribe.

The law enforcers recovered Tk 2,000 from the arrestee, ASI Delwar Hossain.

According to Kismat Ali, 38, son of Motzel Hossain of Koitora village under Manikganj sadar thana, the accused ASI Delwar demanded Tk 3,000 from Kismat at around 3:00pm after he went to the station for filing a case over a clash occurred the day before (Sunday evening).

After agreeing to pay the police official Tk 2000 in bribe for filing the case, Kismat informed the army of the matter. The army then went inside the police station and caught the ASI at 5:45pm during the act of receiving the bribe.

The army took the arrestee to a nearby army camp for interrogation.

Prayer Timing		
February 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		