

2 JMJB cadres arrested in Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police in separate drives arrested two more cadres of outlawed Islamist outfit Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) in Bagmara upazila of the district early yesterday. The arrestees are Habibur Rahman, 36, of Ismailpur village, and Akram Hossain, 26, of Konabaria village under the upazila. They were produced in a court, which sent them to jail. The law enforcers have so far arrested 24 JMJB leaders and activists in the upazila. Police said Akram and Habib were wanted in police assault and killing cases.

Arrested Star reporter's family in anxiety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anxiety overwhelms the family members of The Daily Star's Nilphamari correspondent EAM Asaduzzaman Tipu, who was arrested on Wednesday, as his release is still uncertain. Meanwhile, Tipu's health has slightly improved, the jailer of Nilphamari District Jail claimed. He was moved to the prison hospital following an asthma attack on Friday. Tipu's wife said she along with her two daughters is living in uncertainty and her youngest daughter had been diagnosed with chickenpox. According to family sources, Tipu's 85-year-old mother became speechless after learning about her son's arrest. Tipu, younger brother of Liberation War martyr Captain Bashar, was arrested at his home on Wednesday morning in connection with a case filed by a fertiliser dealer, who said he had not filed the case. Tipu's arrest follows a report he had done about urea fertiliser crisis, which The Daily Star ran on March 17. The journalist community of Nilphamari has been demanding immediate release of Tipu before March 26.

Bapex to repair leaking gas wells at Titas

Foreign consultants to be hired if necessary

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

Gas production from well No 10 of Brahmanbaria Titas Gas Field is going to be suspended as the authorities are going to start repairing the well to stop dangerous leakage of gas through different holes and cracks on the ground at Shampur and Adandapur villages and Loiska Beel. The authorities have given permission to Bapex, a local gas exploration company, to set up rigs for digging into the ground to find out the leaks and repair the cementing work of the well to stop the uncon-

trolled leakage of gas. Bapex engineers have started setting up the rigs. During the period of repair work gas production at well No 10 will remain suspended. The repair work is expected to start in April, sources said. Well No 10 has been producing 16 million cubic feet of gas a day. Due to breaches in the cementing of well No 10, gas is now gushing out through hundreds of big holes at Shampur and Adampur villages and Loiska Beel, which are close to the well. An undetermined amount of gas has already been evaporated through the holes. Sources said such type of a catastrophe is new in the history of gas production in Bangladesh. As local engineers did not face such a situation ever before, they have yet to find out the perfect solution to the problem. Petrobangla has already given an order to Bapex to handle the situation. The engineers of Bapex have started setting up rigs to dig into the ground and carry out repair works at well No 8, 9 and 10. The sources said there are some faults in the cementing at well No

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Foreign drugs, cigarettes seized at ZIA

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign medicines and cigarettes worth about Tk 2 crore were seized at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, a customs team, led by Superintendent Ashok Barua, conducted a search and seized five suitcases and three handbags containing eight varieties of tablet, two varieties of injection and 150 cartons cigarettes from the luggage-belt area at about 1:00pm. The customs superintendent told the news agency that they kept a close watch on Pakistan Airlines flight PK 266 that landed at the airport from Karachi at about 11:56am. The customs team could not arrest the persons who were carrying the contraband items. "Sensing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Rocks illegally extracted by cutting hills in Khagrachhari are stockpiled at Nunchhari in the district.

Illegal rock collection goes on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Unabated collection and sale of rocks from natural hills in the district is causing serious geological impacts. The illegal rock extraction from hills is causing erosion of hill cliffs often leading to catastrophic landslides. This eventually creates silt build-up in nearby rivers - a reason of unseasonal flooding. According to rock collectors, over two lakh cft hill rocks are collected annually in eight upazilas of Khagrachhari. At least 12 to 15 hundred cft of rock

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

88 patients of MDR-TB detected

MOON MOON SULTANA

Eighty-eight patients have been recently detected with Multi Drug Resistance (MDR) Tuberculosis (TB), the extreme stage of the disease, giving rise to the fear of HIV/AIDS spread in the country as TB patients are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. The MDR cases have been detected under the government's National Tuberculosis Control Programme (NTP) by getting the samples examined from Belgium as there is no international standard laboratory in Bangladesh. The experts said the number of MDR cases would be much higher and it is increasing gradually despite the government's success in TB treatment by 91% in 2005. Lack of necessary equipment in the laboratories leaves MDR cases undiagnosed, said Dr Vikarunnesa Begum, programme manager of NTP.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

More sanctions on Iran likely

AP, United Nations

Major powers expect unanimous approval of new UN Security Council sanctions yesterday to pressure Iran into suspending uranium enrichment. The new measure comes after arduous negotiations that sought unity in meting out punishment against the Islamic country for its nuclear defiance. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who earlier said he wanted to address the council when it voted on the measure, cancelled a trip to New York and was sending his foreign minister instead. The six world powers that drafted the resolution spent Friday trying to overcome objections from several council members, reflecting concerns that anything short of consensus would undermine its efforts to send a strong message to Iran. The Security Council is voting on

its second set of sanctions against Iran; the country responded to the first by expanding enrichment. "We will be united again on this important resolution," French Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere told reporters after a closed-door Security Council meeting. "We hope that Iran will reflect on this resolution and make the right choice." The sanctions would ban Iranian arms exports and freeze the assets of 28 additional individuals and organisations involved in Iran's nuclear and missile programmes. About a third of those are linked to the Revolutionary Guard, an elite military corps. Alejandro Wolff, the acting US Ambassador to the UN, called the sanctions "serious measures that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Rice meets four Arab foreign ministers in Egypt

REUTERS, Aswan, Egypt

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived in the southern Egyptian town of Aswan yesterday at the start of a Middle East tour to explore Arab and Israeli views on possible steps toward peace. Just a few days before an Arab summit in the Saudi capital Riyadh, Rice meets four Arab foreign ministers friendly toward the United States, from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The summit will confirm an Arab peace initiative launched in 2002 and initially rejected by Israel because of its demand that Israel withdraw from all Arab land captured in 1967. Israel and the United States have recently shown some interest in the Arab peace plan and Rice told reporters on Friday the Arab governments could help by adding

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Fakhruddin lauds Prof Sobhan's contributions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday lauded Prof Rehman Sobhan for his 'immense contribution' to Bangladesh's independence and to the country's development through highlighting a myriad of problems and their solutions in his academic and popular writings. He made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at the publication ceremony of a four-volume 'Collected Works of Rehman Sobhan', published by the Centre for Policy Dialogue. Sobhan said the selected collection of his popular writings, stretching from 1958 to 2006, have the notion of justice at the core and express his ideas on political economy of the society. The book launch attendees' list was a who's who of Bangladeshi politics, business, academia, development sector, culture, media and the bureaucracy. It was held at a hotel in the capital. Fakhruddin, a student of the first batch who studied economics under Prof Sobhan at Dhaka University, recalled his contribution to Bangladesh's independence through elaborating the disparity

between the erstwhile West and East Pakistan through the 'two economies' theory. He also observed that the professor has highlighted 'the important role the civil society can play in bringing about substantial transformations in a society'. "This has been reflected, for example, in the countrywide dialogues he has led, aimed at reforming the electoral and political process in the country," Fakhruddin added. The CA said, "Prof Sobhan has provided valuable insights into how corruption can be handled and dealt with." He also noted the professor's contribution in highlighting the problems of governance, external dependence, land distribution and structural injustices. Fakhruddin's batch of 1961, also includes Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus and current Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam. He heaped praise on the professor for having a lasting impact on his own life, and on other economists and the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

New UN official takes on Darfur

REUTERS, El-fasher, Sudan

The United Nations' new humanitarian chief made his first trip to Sudan's Darfur region yesterday but the visit raised little hope among people displaced by years of violence. Inhabitants of the Abu Shouk Camp, who lined up for hours in the blistering sun to fill dirty plastic buckets from a well, seemed resigned to life in the sprawling desert base of 54,000 refugees. Latifa Youssef said she could never go back to the village where she saw militiamen shoot her father. She spends five hours a day making bricks and carrying them to her hut on her head.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Prayer Timing		
March 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Suicide bombers kill 30 Iraqis

2 GIs, 15 more die in other violence

AFP, Baghdad

A suicide bomber killed 20 Iraqis by driving a lorry packed with explosives and bricks into a tightly guarded police compound yesterday, underscoring the apparent powerlessness of officials to contain the insurgency. Another suicide bomber blew himself up inside a shop selling sweets in northern Iraq, killing 10 people on Saturday, an Iraqi official said in Mosul. The lone bomber penetrated the fortified compound in the militant stronghold of Baghdad's Dura district unchallenged by seemingly posing as a driver bringing building materials for construction work being carried out there, a security official said. He steered the truck past the first police checkpoint before blowing up both body and vehicle, damaging the front of the main police station and gouging a

giant crater out of the ground, splattering body parts and debris. Sixteen policemen, two detainees in police custody and two civilians were killed, while another 26 people were taken to hospital with injuries caused by the massive blast, the official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "There were many corpses lying in the compound of the police station. Some of the bodies were burnt, while some had shrapnel wounds... and many cars (were) destroyed," said one US soldier who quickly rushed to the scene. Dura, a known haunt of al-Qaeda in Iraq fundamentalists, is one of the most volatile districts of Baghdad where Iraqi and US forces have concentrated raids in a huge security operation launched last month to try to quell unrest in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



Australia opens Matthew Hayden (R) and Adam Gilchrist set off for a single during their final World Cup Group A clash against South Africa at the Warner Park in St Kitts yesterday. The pair produced 106 runs in just 14.5 overs to set the tone for a huge Aussie total in the much-hyped encounter.

PHOTO: AFP

