

CORRUPTION CHARGE  
Hearing on GD  
against Tarique  
on May 13

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed May 13 for hearing on a general diary (GD) filed against detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman accusing him of corruption.

Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka set the date following a time petition by the defence lawyers, who yesterday did not move a bail petition in connection with the GD filed with Kafrul Police Station against Tarique.

Earlier on March 15, Tarique's lawyers sought bail against a rejection order of the lower court on March 8.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

TOP 20 LOAN DEFAULTERS

NCBs fall flat on recovery target

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) realised a mere 11.89 percent of the targeted defaulted loans from the top 20 defaulters last year.

However, the rate was 68 percent in case of other defaulters during the January-December 2006 period.

This was disclosed at a review meeting between Bangladesh Bank

(BB) Governor Salehuddin Ahmed and the NCB high officials on Wednesday.

Available data shows, the four NCBs could realise only Tk 27.65 crore against the target of Tk 232 crore from the top 20 defaulters last year.

The governor reprimanded the NCB officials for the poor performance. However, the officials defended themselves saying most top defaulters were very powerful

and added they also resorted to the court to stop banks from taking actions.

The BB governor also expressed his dissatisfaction over the fact that the percentage of defaulted loans at the NCBs has gone up last year, which was going down gradually in the preceding years.

The largest NCB Sonali Bank recovered Tk 10.23 crore against Tk 154 crore target, which is 6.62

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Ex-state minister  
Azad surrenders,  
obtains bail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted ad interim anticipatory bails for four weeks to former state minister Lutfar Rahman Azad and Gopalganj BNP President MH Khan Manju after they surrendered to the court in connection with criminal cases filed against them.

A division bench comprising Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury passed the orders on separate petitions.

Azad is facing a theft and cheating case while Manju a murder case, court sources said.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq appeared for Azad while Moudud Ahmed for Manju.



PHOTO: PID

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed holds a bilateral meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in New Delhi yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

England fast bowler James Anderson appeals in vain against Sri Lankan opener Upul Tharanga (back) during their World Cup Super Eights match at the Sir Vivian Richards stadium in St. John's on Wednesday.

Mamun's close  
aide held with  
revolver

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested Kazi Nasir Uddin Babul, a close aide to Giasuddin Al Mamun, with a firearm and four bullets late Tuesday night in Gulshan area.

Babul is one of the business partners of controversial electric pole manufacturing firm Khamba Limited. He went in hiding soon after the declaration of state of emergency. He is widely known as Khamba Babul.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Babul in a three-day police remand as police produced him before it with a seven-day remand petition after filing an arms case against him.

Gulshan police said being tipped-off, one of their teams took position in front of house 10/22 on

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

44 foreign militants killed  
in Pak clashes

AFP, Wana, Pakistan

Forty-four foreign al-Qaeda militants were killed yesterday along with seven Pakistani tribesmen in the worst clashes yet between the two groups in a restive tribal area, security officials said.

Around 1,000 heavily-armed tribesmen were mounting a final push against Uzbek, Chechen and Arab bunkers after nearly three weeks of fighting in the South Waziristan tribal area bordering Afghanistan, they said.

"Both sides have been using heavy weapons since this morning and tribal fighters captured important Uzbek bunkers. In the clashes 44 foreigners were killed and seven tribesmen," one security official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Another report says, long-haired Pakistani tribesmen beat war drums for the first time in three years yesterday during heaviest battles with foreign al-Qaeda rebels, residents said.

Officials say more than 200 people have died during two weeks of vicious battles between the foreign rebels and the formerly pro-Taliban tribes who have come over to the government side.

Tribesmen stormed a bunker manned by foreign militants early yesterday and killed 11 Uzbeks and captured another 14, residents said, citing the tribal forces.

"Soon after morning prayers there was a heavy sound of war drums and tribesmen were seen leaving in different directions amid shouts of 'Allahu Akhbar' (God is

Greatest) and 'Victory, victory, victory,'" Malik Sangeen Khan, a resident of the region's main town of Wana, told AFP.

"Since this morning there have been massive sounds of rockets and gunfire. It is louder even than the Pakistani military operations here in 2004."

The war drums are made from animal hide stretched over wooden frames.

Ethnic Pashtuns in the semi-autonomous tribal zone play different drumbeats to call tribesmen to councils or celebrations -- but residents said this was the first time the war song has rung out since 2004.

Able-bodied males who refuse  
SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

ORIENTAL BANK SCAM  
Hearing on remand  
prayer for Koyes  
Sami on Apr 11

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed April 11 for hearing on the seven-day remand prayer to interrogate former managing director of Oriental Bank Limited Chowdhury Koyes Sami in connection with embezzlement of Tk 488.5 crore.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza adjourned the hearing on the issue yesterday, as Koyes Sami is suffering from heart and kidney diseases.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case produced Koyes before the court at 12:30pm where the defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the seven-day remand prayer due to their client's illness.

In the remand prayer submitted  
SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

'Daylight saving' plan to  
tackle power crisis

Govt plans to advance daytime by one hour soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to advance daytime by one hour under a proposed "daylight saving" plan to manage power crisis.

The advisory council of the caretaker government has also decided in principle to divide the country into cluster-wise zones for load management, the implementation of which is likely to start from April 15, Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury said yesterday.

"The daylight saving plan has already been sent to the cabinet

secretary for placing it at the next advisory council meeting," Tapan said after a meeting with a delegation of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) at his office.

Daylight saving time is the convention of advancing clocks so that afternoons have more daylight and mornings have less. Typically clocks are adjusted forward one hour near the start of spring and are adjusted backward in autumn.

"If we can manage zone-wise load across the country, it would help save on an average 250 mega-

watt power a day," Tapan said.

According to the plan, all industries and business ventures will be asked not to use power on a particular day of the week.

The government will divide the zones after holding meetings with the people of the areas and government agencies concerned.

Tapan said the government will update the programme schedule of the Power Division Master Plan as per reality.

A high-powered taskforce on implementing the master plan was

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Tax free income  
slab may be raised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will consider increasing the existing tax free income slab from Tk 1,20,000 in the next budget to relieve general public of tax burden.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) Chairman Badiur Rahman yesterday said, "We already got huge recommendations from different stockholders to consider the issue so that general people can get relieved from tax burden. And I think it may be reconsidered in the national budget for 2007-08 fiscal year."

He warned that the NBR will launch very strict moves to expand

its tax net and may also visit door-to-door to examine the taxpayers' capability.

"If eligible taxpayers do not come forward willingly to pay tax in the national exchequer, the NBR will be compelled to go door-to-door," the NBR chairman said.

Speaking at a pre-budget discussion meeting organised by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Badiur also gave hints that tax on credit card may be exempted in the next budget.

Stockholders from different sectors and NBR high officials spoke at the meeting presided over by DCCI President Hossain Khaled.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

45 RMG workers  
injured in  
stampede

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 45 garment workers were injured in a stampede at a factory in Bayezid area of the city yesterday when they were coming out of the factory fearing a fire incident.

Sources said the accident occurred at Clifton Textile and Apparels Limited near Tea Board at around 8:45am.

According to witnesses, fire panic spread among the workers when they saw smoke emitting from an electric switchboard on the fourth floor of the six-storey factory building.

The panic-stricken workers rushed to come out hurriedly through the staircase of the factory resulting the stampede that left 45 injured.

Around 35 injured workers were given first aid at the factory while 14 others were rushed to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

They injured include Rizia, 20, Raushan Ara, 19, Mariam, 18, Shahinur, 22, Nadia, 21, Dil Jahan, 24, Shamsun Nahar, 23, Laily, 26, Morshedha, 20 and Morshed, 21.

Visa policy  
amended

UNB, Dhaka

The government has amended the Visa Policy 2006 with immediate effect, liberalising travel requirements and granting no-visa facility to permanent foreign investors.

A Home Ministry announcement yesterday said the amendment was made to update the policy in tune with the modern times.

"The amendment was necessitated as the home ministry was informed that various ministries, government agencies, Bangladeshi missions/high commissions in foreign countries, foreign missions/high commissions in Dhaka and other government and non-governmental organisations are

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Prayer Timing		
April 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

6 more JMB  
suspects held

STAR REPORT

Six suspected militants of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested in Jamalpur, Joypurhat and Barisal yesterday and on Tuesday night.

Police arrested Saiful Islam, a teacher of Bulbul Girls High School in Islampur upazila of Jamalpur, at his house at Dhengragar village yesterday and seized some documents, according to the UNB.

Asadullah Asad, another suspected JMB cadre, was arrested from Aramnagar Bazar in Sarishabari upazila of the district on the same day. The law enforcers are quizzing the arrestees.

In Joypurhat, police arrested three suspected JMB men at their houses in Khatlal, Kalai and Sadar areas on Tuesday night.

Police said the arrestees--Abdul Hakim, Atiar Rahman and Imran Hossain--were reorganising the JMB men in the areas following execution of six top militants.

Our Barisal correspondent reported that Rab members arrested one suspected JMB militant and recovered four grenades from his possession yesterday morning.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-8, Barisal, arrested Maulana Aktaruzzaman, imam of a mosque in Sayestabad area, at around 7:00am. On his confession, the Rab men later recovered four grenades that were hidden at a place in the area.

The members of the elite force are quizzing the alleged JMB man.



PHOTO: STAR

A student paints the wall of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University, yesterday ahead of Pohela Boishakh, the first day of Bengali new year.