

US House okays deadline for Iraq troop pullout

Bush vows to veto bill

AFP, Washington

Ignoring President George W Bush's staunch vow of a veto, the US House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a war funding bill that includes a timetable for pulling US troops out of Iraq.

Lawmakers paid little heed to the visiting top army general in Iraq, David Petraeus, who during a closed-door session earlier in the day championed the troop "surge" strategy and appealed for time so it could show results.

The narrow 218-208 vote by the Democratic-majority House links release of 124 billion dollars in military spending for Iraq and Afghanistan to a schedule for the pullout of American troops, beginning as early as October.

The bill next faces a vote in the Senate, expected on Thursday, when it is likely to be approved. Then it heads to Bush, who has repeatedly vowed to block it.

"Tonight, the House of Representatives voted for failure in Iraq," said a statement by White

House spokeswoman Dana Perino. "Democrats have forced this process to continue for too long. The president calls on the Senate to quickly pass this legislation so the president can veto it."

Bush would then "work with the Congressional leadership on a clean bill that funds our troops while respecting the judgment of our military commanders and helping ensure the safety of the American people," Perino said.

Democratic House leader SEE PAGE 19 COL 7



Policemen try to pacify garment factory workers demonstrating for payment of arrears at a plant on Shyamoli-Mirpur Road in the capital yesterday.

Two generals to become ambassadors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Services of two top-ranking serving army officials have been placed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for appointment as ambassadors on deputation.

According to separate notifications issued by the Ministry of Establishment yesterday, services of Quarter Master General (QMG) of Bangladesh Army Major General Abu Rashed Mohamad Rokonuddowla and General Officer Commanding of 19 Division Mohammad Ishtiaq have been placed with the Foreign Ministry.

Upazila edn officer held for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Upazila education officer (UEO) of Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila and his two associates were arrested yesterday by joint forces for taking bribe from a retired primary school teacher.

Sources said UEO Jamal Uddin, his office assistant Ali Akkas and peon Sagir Ahmed had long been demanding Tk 4000 in bribe from retired primary school teacher Shahidul Huq.

As Huq refused to comply with the demand, the three had been giving him the runaround for approving his pension fund.

A team of joint forces caught the three at around 10:00am in the act of receiving Tk 4,000 in bribe from Huq.

Govt asked to explain detention of Zafarullah

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain why the detention of Awami League presidium member Kazi Zafarullah should not be declared illegal.

The court gave the order on a habeas corpus petition filed by Zafarullah's son challenging the legality of the detention order.

"The rule is returnable in 10 days," says the court order.

Kazi Zafarullah was arrested on April 18 in front of his Gulshan residence in the city. He was later sent to jail with a 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act.

Advocate Khan Tipu Sultan appeared for the petitioner.



Partial payment of arrears of jute mill workers begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Eight state-owned jute mills in Khulna and Jessore industrial areas yesterday started making partial payments of the arrears to the employees.

The government has allocated Tk 19.74 crore for the payments. Shamim Ahmed, zonal coordinator of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and also general manager of Crescent Jute Mills, received the amount on Wednesday.

The same night, Khulna Deputy Commissioner Firoze Alam presided over a meeting where officials of the state-owned jute mills and the BJMC zonal office discussed modus operandi for the payments.

Tk 14,55,75,000 will be paid to 22,000 laid off employees of the four jute mills, said BJMC Zonal Coordinator Shamim Ahmed.

Earlier on April 15, accumulated unpaid wages triggered a labour unrest at Crescent, Star, Peoples and Platinum Jubilee jute mills.

Workers of the four jute mills were laid off by order of BJMC chairman on April 19.

Between April 15 and April 21, over 200 people were injured when the workers fought pitched battles with law enforcers.

The law enforcers picked over 100 workers during nightlong raids in labour colonies on April 21 and April 22. Thousands of family members of the workers were forced out of their home by the law

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Tigers return smiling

SPORTS REPORTER

After a successful World Cup mission, the Bangladesh cricket team returned home yesterday.

The squad was received at the Zia International Airport by former Bangladesh captains, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials and family members amidst huge enthusiasm and excitement.

The Tigers looked tired after an almost 40-hour flight from the Caribbean island Barbados, where they played their last match, via London but expressed their happiness over some success and despair over the defeat against ICC associate member Ireland.

Captain Habibul Bashar and all his colleagues branded their wins as results of teamwork.

"I think what we achieved in the tournament was due to some brilliant team effort," said Bashar while talking to the reporters. Evaluating the team's performance, he said: "There was a lack of consistency in our performance... we're still a developing side."

Bashar mentioned he was not overall satisfied with the performance but at the same time it was not too bad.

"We won some good matches and achieved our goal by reaching the second round but we lost some matches badly. What makes me and the team proud is that we have

earned the respect of the others as a team," said the Bangladesh skipper.

"It's a big, big achievement to earn respect from your opponents in such an important tournament."

"We proved in the tournament that if we can play to our potential then it is not impossible to beat any team. Still, we have to win matches on a regular basis," he added.

Bashar's men qualified for the Super Eights after beating pre-tournament favourites India and Cup debutants Bermuda in the group stages and then stunned eventual semifinalists South Africa in the second round to finish seventh in the tournament, ahead of Ireland.

This was the first time a Bangladesh side made it past the first round of a World Cup and their success buried bitter memories of the last World Cup held in South Africa four years ago, when they failed to win a single match.

Bangladesh returned home exactly after two months and seven days. During their long stay in the Caribbean, Dav Whatmore's charges gave the country some reasons to smile as they won seven matches out of thirteen they played including the triangular series against Canada and Bermuda before the World Cup.

Bangladesh first served the warning in the tournament after

beating full-strength New Zealand in the warm-up game before securing a win against Scotland.

Bashar's men are now looking forward to continuing their impressive performance against India in the upcoming home series. India will arrive in Dhaka to play two Tests and three one-day internationals on May 7.

Bangladesh now go on a week's break.

The squad for the Test and one-day series against India is expected to be announced on April 30 and the players will report back for training on May 3.

Former national captains Shafiqul Haque Heera, Roquibul Hasan, Minhalzul Abedin and Khaled Masud, former national cricketers and current selectors Atbar Ali Khan and Golam Nawsher, BCB vice-presidents Shah Nurul Kabir and Gazi Golam Dastagir, and joint-secretaries Reazuddin Al Mamun and Rafiqul Islam were present to receive the cricketers with sweet meats and garlands.

Youth and Sports secretary Golam Mostafa Talukder and NSC secretary Aminul Islam Khan were also present at the airport.

Tiger kills 1 in Sundarbans

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A Royal Bengal tiger killed a honey collector near Handhali canal in the Sundarbans on Wednesday afternoon.

The victim was identified as Abu Hasan, 35, son of Aziz Dhali of village Burigolani in Shyamnagar upazila.

Police said the victim along with 15 others went to the mangrove forest on April 20 to collect honey by taking permission from Burigolani forest office.

While they were collecting honey from beehives near Handhali canal, Royal Bengal tiger swooped on Hasan and dragged him into the deep forest, police quoting witnesses said.

Other honey collectors later recovered the body.

Mamun confesses to extortion again

Charges pressed against him in arms case; Mirza Abbas shown held in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, a close friend of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, yesterday confessed his involvement in the extortion of Tk 1.17 crore from a businessman.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Cantonment police yesterday pressed charges against Mamun in connection with the case filed for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition.

Proceedings of cases against former minister Nazmul Huda and Awami League leader engineer SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Cop, govt staff among 10 doped, robbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10, including a policeman and a government employee, fell victim to robbery by drugging and hospitalised in the capital yesterday.

Constable Shahadat Hossain, 26, of Rajarbagh Police Lines was found unconscious at Sayedabadi Bus Terminal around noon. He was rushed to the police hospital in Rajarbagh and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The cash he was carrying was allegedly missing when he was

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ADB for big IPP plants to mitigate power crisis

UNB, Dhaka

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Director Hua Du yesterday stressed the need for setting up big plants of Independent Power Producer (IPP) to mitigate the power crisis in Bangladesh.

"You definitely need big IPP plants," she told newsmen after meeting with Finance Advisor Mirza Azizul Islam at his secretariat office.

About the small IPP plants, the ADB country chief said before setting up small IPP plants "you must take into account the site, economic viability and how far it is

from the grid."

Hua Du observed that the production cost and selling price of power have wide gap even after power price hike.

She lauded the government measures during the last couple of months and said those are very encouraging in the power sector.

About issues of her discussions with the finance adviser, she said they discussed ADB's support in implementing development programmes in power sector and good governance.

Star reporter acquitted in fertiliser dealer's case

STAR REPORT

A Nilphamari court yesterday acquitted EAM Asaduzzaman Tipu, Nilphamari correspondent of The Daily Star, of a case filed by a local fertiliser dealer.

The Nilphamari Speedy Trial SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

ACC set to sue ex-state minister Salahuddin for Tk 1cr bribery

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is going to sue former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed for allegedly taking Tk 1 crore in bribe from a contractor of Roads & Highways Department misusing his power.

According to an ACC source, the commission has already approved the filing of the first information report (FIR).

It has been alleged Salahuddin received Tk 1 crore in bribe from the contractor, Mir Zahir Hossain.

Meanwhile, ACC Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said the charge sheets against Awami League leader and former state

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Members of the Election Commission meet around 40 eminent personalities at the National Economic Council in the capital yesterday during a daylong dialogue on a set of proposals for electoral reforms.

Prayer Timing

April 27

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Magrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation