

Most BNP leaders unhappy over Iskandar's appointment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the BNP leaders feel 'embarrassed' by the appointment of Major (ret'd) Sayeed Iskandar, younger brother of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, to the post of a vice president as they think the decision contradicts the possible reforms in the party.

Expressing resentment over the appointment, several leaders said they think it will strengthen the negative image of the party that BNP leadership never exercise democratic practices in conducting the party.

BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan told The Daily Star on Monday that Sayeed Iskandar was made a vice-president on January 10 but they could not disclose the matter formally due to imposition of a ban

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A medical university turns ordinary hospital

Politicisation in last 5 years blamed

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), which was supposed to be a centre of excellence in medical education in the country, is just operating like a general hospital as the institution saw widespread politicisation during the five years of the past BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

The country's lone medical university that was established in 1998 with a view to creating efficient doctors and bringing uniformity in medical education across the country is ruined by the corrupt administration, sources said.

The main objectives of formulating the university were to improve the quality of medical

education, create high quality doctors and initiate a technologically developed education system through the residency programme, said several senior teaching staff of the university.

A batch of students were admitted under the residency programme and a modern curriculum was nearly completed but it was later eliminated by the administration headed by former vice chancellor Prof MA Hadi.

"Now the medical university is following the course module which was prepared in 1965 by the University of Dhaka. The age-old course is not seen in any country in this modern age," said Rashid e Mahub, a retired professor of the Department of Surgery.

"Just before finalising the curriculum, former vice chancellor Prof MA Hadi cancelled it and restored the decade old, backdated curriculum," said members of the committee formed for developing the curriculum.

The departments are running in an unplanned way, while a five-year plan remains inactive due to unwillingness of the authorities, they added.

Discrepancies are observed in works of different syndicates and partisan people sometimes form the syndicate, present Vice Chancellor Prof Tahir told The Daily Star.

But for politicisation, the university would see positive signs in

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Accused of Prof Yunus murder held in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Law enforcers yesterday arrested one of the prime accused in the Rajshahi University Prof Yunus murder case from Perihat of Gabtoli upazila.

The arrestee, Shahidullah, is the husband of executed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) kingpin Bangla Bhai's niece and an activist of banned Islamist outfit JMB. He is the son of Abdus Sattar from Sarukdanga of Shapahar upazila in Naogaon.

According to sources, a joint team of Detective Branch (DB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) made the arrest.

Shahidullah confessed to be one of the planners of Prof Yunus murder, but he claimed that he was not present at the scene during the murder, added the sources.

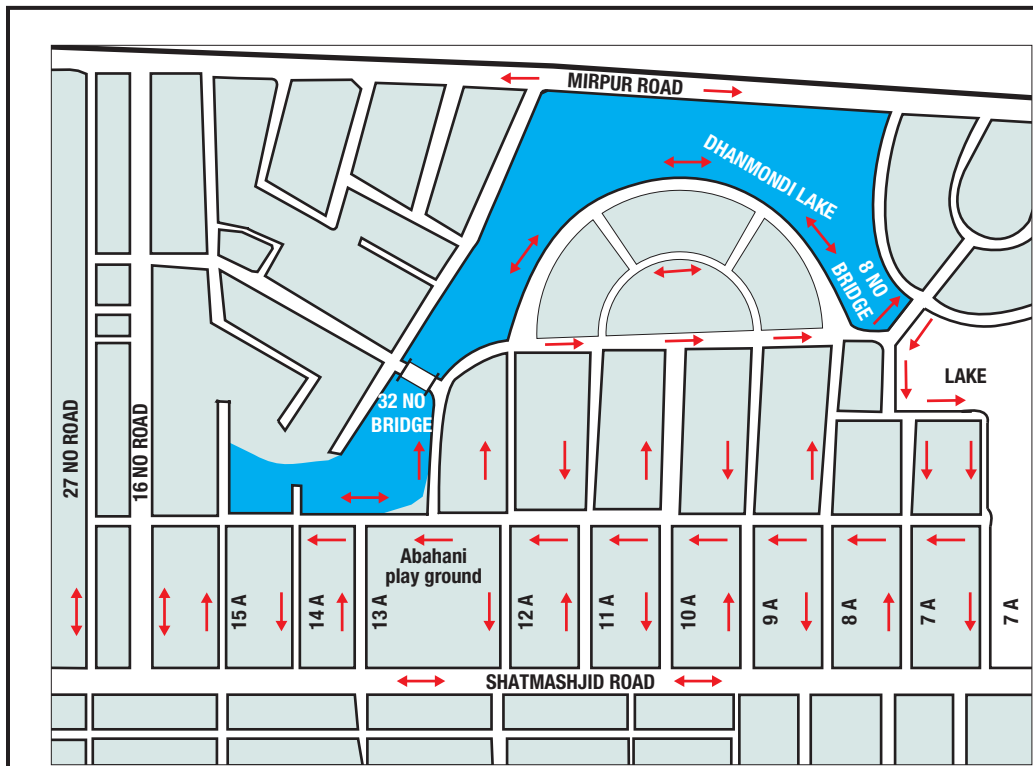
Shahidullah's statement

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PHOTO: STAR

Devotees light candles at Kamalapur Buddhist Monastery in the capital yesterday in observance of Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of Buddhists.



Dhanmondi roads made one-way  
No honking on more streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has banned honking on a number of major rickshaw-free city roads and a few streets in Dhanmondi residential area from May 6 in a bid to minimise noise pollution.

A number of roads in Dhanmondi are also being made one-way from 7:00am to 9:00pm to reduce traffic.

DMP officials at a press conference yesterday said eight more roads will be made horn-free. The road from Shahbagh intersection to Shaheed Jahangir Gate was declared horn-free a few months earlier.

Police can fine vehicles up to Tk 200 if found guilty of blowing horns in the horn-free zone without unavoidable reasons. Police will be in plain clothes so that drivers cannot be alerted.

The one-way restrictions on vehicular movement in Dhanmondi will not apply on holidays. These one-way roads will also be considered horn-free.

The horn-free roads include the Airport Road from Shaheed Jahangir Gate to Uttara and Abdullahpur, Kemal Ataturk Avenue up to Phoenix Bhaban via Gulshan-1 and 2, roads from Gabtoli to Azimpur

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US issues security alert for its citizens in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The United States has said the security situation in Bangladesh is fluid and urged its citizens to check with the US embassy for the latest information.

In Bangladesh consular sheet issued on May 1, the State Department said Bangladesh is currently under a state of emergency and elections have been postponed until late 2008.

"And it is unclear how long the current government intends to stay in office. The security situation in Bangladesh is fluid and Americans are urged to check with the US embassy for the latest information," it said.

The US citizens were also advised not to travel to Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban hill districts.

Additionally, the Consular Sheet

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Bush vetoes Iraq troop pullout bill

4,000 US soldiers arrive in Baghdad, 16 killed in attacks

AP, AFP, Washington/ Baghdad

President Bush's veto of an Iraq war spending bill that set timelines for US troop withdrawals puts new pressure on Democrats in Congress to craft a compromise even as their caucus grows more fractious on the topic.

Nearly 4,000 US soldiers have arrived in Baghdad while bombings and shootings killed 16 people Wednesday, including three Sunni brothers who were shot to death in Baghdad.

The party's most liberal members, especially in the House, say they will vote against money for continuing the war if there's no binding language on troop

drawdowns. Bush and almost all congressional Republicans continue to insist on a spending bill with no strings attached on troop movements.

Bush on Tuesday rejected legislation pushed by Democratic leaders that would require the first US combat troops to be withdrawn by Oct. 1 with a goal of a complete pullout six months later.

"This is a prescription for chaos and confusion and we must not impose it on our troops," Bush said in a nationally broadcast statement from the White House. "It makes no sense to tell the enemy when you plan to start withdrawing."

The standoff gives Republicans

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Rejoinder

M/S OrasInvest (Bangladesh) Ltd in a rejoinder yesterday said the report published in The Daily Star on April 28 headlined "Huge number of SIM, scratch cards seized for evading Tk 90 cr VAT" was incorrect.

The rejoinder said the company did not violate section 6, 15, 32 or section 37 (1 & 2) of VAT laws, 1991. It said the company has been registered under VAT laws and the registration number is 5091039973 (Area code number is 50204).

The rejoinder further said the company has been doing its business by its incorporation certificates, but the report has damaged its goodwill.

Our Reply

The Daily Star report was totally based on the press release issued by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Customs Excise and VAT. The Daily Star contacted Banglalink authorities, informed them about the contents of the press release by the VAT authorities and asked for their comments. But most of the officials did not comment and some said that they would need 24 to 48 hours to give reaction.

Storm kills 1 in Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A teenage boy was killed and another injured as nor'wester lashed Shailkupa upazila yesterday afternoon.

The dead was identified as Bappi, 13, son of Bacchu Molla while the injured is Rabbi, 10, of Damukdia village under the upazila.

Locals said Bappi and his friend Rabbi were at a nearby mango orchard when the storm hit the village. Suddenly, a big branch of a mango tree fell on the two, killing Bappi on the spot and injuring Rabbi.

Rabbi was admitted to Shailkupa Upazila Health Complex.

Prayer Timing		
May 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-31	6-35
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Law enforcers examining aluminium plate inscribed with various warnings, and other materials recovered from the capital's Kamalapur railway station after Tuesday's bomb explosion.

VoIP equipment seized, 2 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized a huge number of VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) equipment and arrested two businessmen from the city's Shyampur area.

Rab-10 personnel arrested Faruk Ahammed and Rakib from a house on information that they are running VoIP business that goes against the Bangladesh Telecommunications Act 2001.

Rab sources said Faruk along with his brother Solah Ahammed, now absconding, had been operating VoIP equipment to illegally divert calls abroad by call origination and termination using BTB phones and mobile SIM (subscriber identity module) cards in the area.

The seized items include SIM cards, computer monitors and batteries.

Drug peddler killed in 'shootout'

UNB, Rajshahi

An alleged drug peddler was killed in an 'encounter' with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Monoharpur village under Charghat upazila of the district early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mokbul Hossain, 35, son of Lokman Hossain of Gargari village of the upazila.

Acting on a tip-off that some drug peddlers were holding a secret meeting at a house of the village, Rab personnel conducted a drive at around 2:30am.

Sensing the presence of the Rab men, the drug peddlers opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate.

Rab sources said Mokbul received bullets during the "shoot-out" and died instantly, while his accomplices managed to flee.

Later, the elite force arrested another drug peddler named Liton at the village and recovered 370 bottles of Phensidyl syrup and a shotgun from his possession.

Container handling in Ctg port marks record after latest reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A record 83,245 TEUs (twenty equivalent units) containers were handled at the Chittagong port last month thanks to a number of reform measures taken by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

During the period, 86 vessels were handled against 76 in April last year.

According to sources, the CPA handled an average of 68,931 containers each month during the 2005-06 fiscal year (FY). The quantities were 62,167 in 2004-05 FY, 54,510 in

2003-04 FY and 46,707 in 2002-03 FY.

To ease container congestion, the CPA is currently allowing vessels' berthing at the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT).

It also extended the port's storage capacity from 12,293 to 16,397 TEUs by bringing a part of the NCT under the storage area about two months back.

The CPA has also started charging businessmen four times the usual rate for their containers' overstay in the port yards.

The port authorities are putting

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BSF kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Two Bangladeshi farmers were shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) near Chanduria border under Pirganj upazila yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Ramiz Uddin, 45, of village Amirpara under Pirganj upazila, and Rafiqul Islam, 40, of village Sadamangol under Bochaganj upazila.

BDR sources said the border guards of 116 BSF Battalion opened fire on Ramiz and Rafiq while they were irrigating Irri-boro field near border pillar no 337/2 at around 5:30 am, killing them on the spot.

Immediately after the incident, the BSF personnel took away the body.

BDR strongly protested the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the bodies.