



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus 32-page Star Campus



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVII NO. 109

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 6, 2007

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

BAISHAKH 23, 1414 BS

RABUI SANI 18, 1428 HJRI

24 PAGES PLUS STAR CAMPUS PRICE: Tk 12.00

14 EU MPs for lifting state of emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen members of the European Parliament have urged the caretaker government to lift the state of emergency immediately and arrange for a free and fair parliamentary election as soon as possible.

In a joint statement, the lawmakers from different member states also asked the security personnel to respect human rights and use force only when required.

"As members of the European Parliament we are ready to support further enhanced cooperation with Bangladesh as a long lasting development partner, if the present government restores civil and political liberties and arranges as soon as possible for free and fair democratic elections under the presence of international observers which will include a delegation from our European Parliament,"

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Shibir leader held while videoing army camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Army personnel arrested a Shibir leader while he along with his associate was taking video footages of an army camp in Chapainawabganj on Friday afternoon.

Police said the detainee, Abdur Rashid, was 'baitul maal' (treasury secretary) of Chapainawabganj municipality unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

However, Rashid's accomplice

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SADARGHAT MAYHEM

6 more bodies found

Rescue work called off as no one reported missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six more bodies were recovered from the Buriganga yesterday, raising the death toll in the Friday night's clashes at Sadarghat to 10.

"We have pulled out seven bodies till 5:30am and wrapped up the rescue work at 10:00am as no one else was reported missing," said Selim Newaj Bhuiyan, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence (Dhaka division).

Shortly after the fire brigade divers had packed up, locals recovered two more bodies. Earlier in the morning they hauled another one out of the water.

The government has formed a four-member probe committee. The team headed by a home ministry joint secretary has been given

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PHOTO: STAR

Relatives wail as the bodies of Friday night's clash at Sadarghat in the capital were recovered from the Buriganga.

REFUSAL TO FLY HASINA

Legal notice served on BA claiming £1m in damages

AFP, London

Former Bangladesh premier Sheikh Hasina is seeking a million pounds in damages from British Airways for not letting her board a plane home.

Hasina's lawyers served a legal notice on British Airways (BA) on Friday after the airline refused to let her board the April 23 flight to Dhaka, her secretary told AFP.

"BA did not give her a boarding pass, citing security reasons. It caused her immense mental stress and agony," Abdus Sobhan Golap said from London.

"We are seeking a million pounds (two million dollars) in damages," he said, adding that BA has two weeks to reply to the notice.

There was no immediate

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Process, timing of Iskandar's selection as BNP VP not right

Says Osman Farruk

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former education minister Dr M Osman Farruk yesterday categorically said the 'process and timing' of making BNP chairperson's brother Sayeed Iskandar a vice-president of the party were not appropriate.

He also said it is not acceptable if anyone in politics is promoted

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Hasina to fly in, wait for politics to start

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina returns home tomorrow with plans for now to wait for the emergency rule and the ban on political activities to go.

Talking to The Daily Star by phone from London yesterday evening, she said it is not possible to begin the work on the much-talked about reforms of the political parties as long as the ban is in place.

Hasina is scheduled to board a Dhaka-bound flight of Etihad Airways from Heathrow at Bangladesh time 1:30am. After a stopover in Abu Dhabi, the airliner will arrive in the city at around 4:00pm.

Asked if anyone of the military-backed interim government has

communicated any message to her lately, the former prime minister answered in the negative.

She said on return she would at first contact the party colleagues and enquire about the families that depend on financial support from the AL.

The AL chief said she has not yet decided whether to hold a press briefing on her arrival. "However, I'd certainly like to exchange views with the press... may be a few days later," she added.

She ruled out the possibility of taking up any political programme alongside BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami and said, "I won't indulge in any alliance with the thugs who are solely responsible for the current situation."

She observed that the BNP and Jamaat have been involved in

rampant crimes and corruption. They are the ones responsible for numerous terrorist acts in the last five years. The alliance men went as far as to smuggle 10 truckloads of arms and ammunition in the country, she alleged.

Queried if she would take measures to rid the AL of leaders who stand accused of corruption, Hasina said, "In the last five years, the alliance government tried everything to ruin Awami League. If they had any proof against my leaders, do you think they would have spared them?"

Maintaining that she is never against reforms, she said, "Those talking about reform of the political parties should say exactly what they expect. I came up with specific proposals for reforms in the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Dhaka to sign Trans-Asian railway deal

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers at its meeting yesterday approved a proposal for signing the inter-governmental agreement on Trans-Asian Railway Network.

The objective of the deal is to develop transport communications in Asian and its surrounding countries, gradually connecting the European countries with the trans-border railway, which will enter Bangladesh from three directions in

the west and get out through a single gateway on the eastern front.

The meeting asked the foreign ministry to take necessary steps to sign the treaty, according to Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim.

The three routes passing through Bangladesh under the treaty are 1) Gede (West Bengal, India)-Darshana (Kushia, Bangladesh)-Iswardi-Jamuna Bridge-Joydevpur-Akhaura-Chittagong-Dohazari-Gundhum-Myanmar.

Myanmar, 2) Singabadi (West Bengal)-Rajshahi (Bangladesh)-Iswardi-Jamuna Bridge-Joydevpur-Akhaura-Chittagong-Dohazari-Gundhum-Myanmar and 3) Radhikapur (West Bengal)-Dinajpur-Iswardi-Jamuna Bridge-Joydevpur-Akhaura-Chittagong-Dohazari-Gundhum-Myanmar.

Eighteen countries, including China, Nepal, Iran and Indonesia, signed the deal in South Korea in 2006.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

MANPOWER RECRUITING Lax watch leads to cheating

SHARIFUL ISLAM and EMRAN HOSSAIN

Deception of people by unscrupulous manpower recruiting agencies and brokers in the name of jobs abroad has marked a sharp rise recently in the absence of proper government vigil and law enforcement inaction in this regard.

But these criminals are evading the grip of law due to lack of evidence against them, police officials investigating such cases said.

In most cases, people pay money to these agencies and brokers without taking any receipts. A total of 111 cases of tricked job seekers have been lodged only with two city police stations alone in one and a half months, indicating a strong nexus between a section of manpower agencies and brokers.

The poor victims were found to have paid the brokers Tk 1.2 lakh to Tk 2.5 lakh which they managed by selling their belongings including cropland, and taking loans. And they are now in dire straits.

From March 1 to April 15, 39

cases were filed with Paltan Police Station and 72 with Motijheel Police Station under sections 420 (cheating) and 406 (breach of trust) of the Penal Code, according to police.

The number of people cheated by manpower brokers is much more than the number of cases being filed, police think.

"Rate of filing of such cases is higher than any other type of cases," said Sub Inspector Nurjahan of Paltan Police Station.

Cases of such deception had decreased significantly as the law enforcers launched a crackdown on manpower agencies and brokers in 2005 and 2006 following the Mediterranean Sea tragedy in December 2005 that killed 11 fortune seekers from Bangladesh. A month after that, 24 other Bangladeshis fortune seekers returned from the jaws of death being dumped in the Sahara desert.

The law enforcers later slowed down their drive, and this prompted the dishonest agencies

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BIRD FLU 8,500 chickens culled in 3 Savar farms

UNB, Savar

Some 8,500 chickens were culled in three poultry farms here Friday evening following detection of bird flu in a nearby farm.

Joint forces and livestock officials culled 4,000 chickens in Masum Poultry Farm of Abdul Karim, 2,500 chickens in Lamia Poultry Farm of Anwar Hossain and 2,000 chickens in Patuakhali Poultry Farm-2 of Joyal Abedin.

On Thursday, 1,500 chickens were culled in Patuakhali Poultry Farm in Rajason area following detection of bird flu.

After that, the government took decision to cull the chickens of the farms within one-kilometre area of the affected farm and informed it to the farm owners through a notification.

It also imposed a ban of transportation of poultry products in the affected area.

On Thursday night, 2,000 of chickens of Khulna Poultry Farm of Maulana Alamgir Hossain at Rajason were also culled.

The farm owners, however, claimed the disease as "Ranikhet".

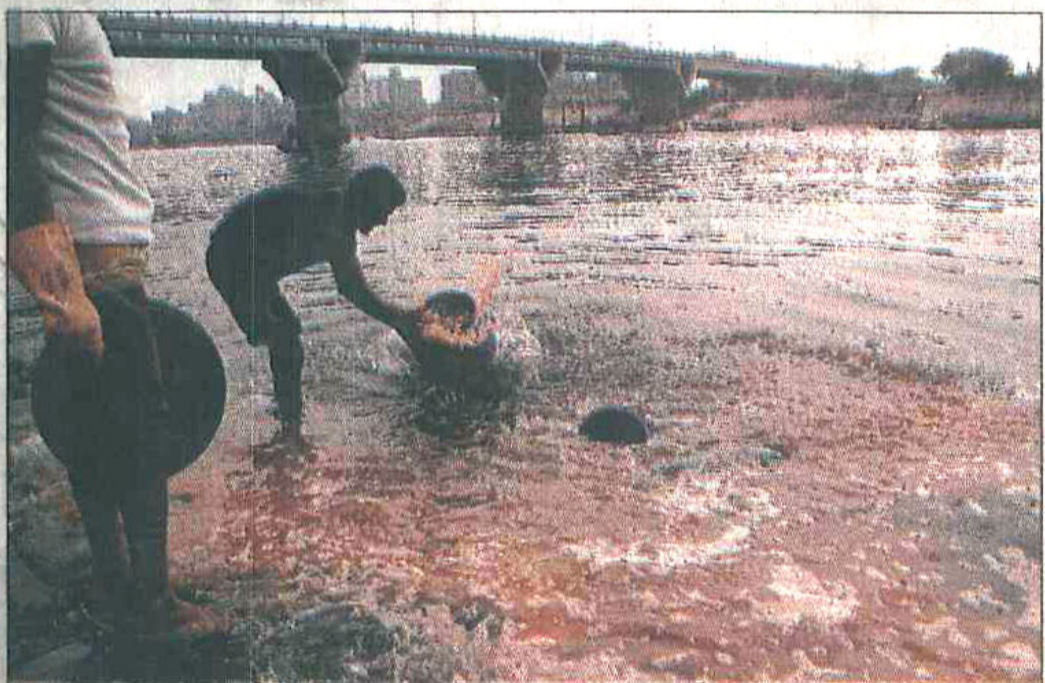


PHOTO: STAR

A man washes a drum that contained toxic chemical in the Buriganga near the second bridge on it yesterday as pollution level in the river already very high.

Mamun confesses to his, Tarique's involvement in Tk 81 lakh extortion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, a close friend of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, yesterday confessed to a magistrate that Tarique and he were involved in the extortion of Tk 81 lakh from a businessman.

He told the magistrate that he along with four others including Tarique, now in detention, had extorted Tk 81 lakh on different dates from Harun Ferdousi, managing director of Judge Distilleries Ltd.

The three others are Babul Kazi, Enamul Hoque and Giasuddin Quaiyum, he said.

Mamun was placed on a four-day remand yesterday in connection with another case for extorting

Tk 4.89 crore from the owner of construction firm 'Achren', a sister concern of Reza Construction and Al-Amin Construction.

Under heavy security, he was taken to the chamber of Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam around 2:30pm. The magistrate recorded his confessional statement for around four hours.

Of the Tk 81 lakh, Tarique took Tk 45 lakh, he took Tk 35 lakh and the three others shared Tk 1 lakh, Mamun said.

Earlier, he had made confessional statements to another magistrate on different dates in connection with six other extortion cases filed with Gulshan, Kafrul, Shahbagh and Dhanmondi police stations.

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Trial of Harris in graft case begins today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court starts trial of a graft case filed against Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, in absentia today.

The same court will also frame charges against three detained former state ministers in connection with three graft cases today.

HARRIS CASE
Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court will start trial with the deposition of complainant of the case, court sources said.

Earlier on April 30, the court framed charges against Harris in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

DU finds 24 more cases of forged admission

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University (DU) yesterday identified 24 more forgery cases in admission to the Faculty of Social Sciences, pushing the number to 76.

A probe committee yesterday submitted the list of 24 fake students before the syndicate.

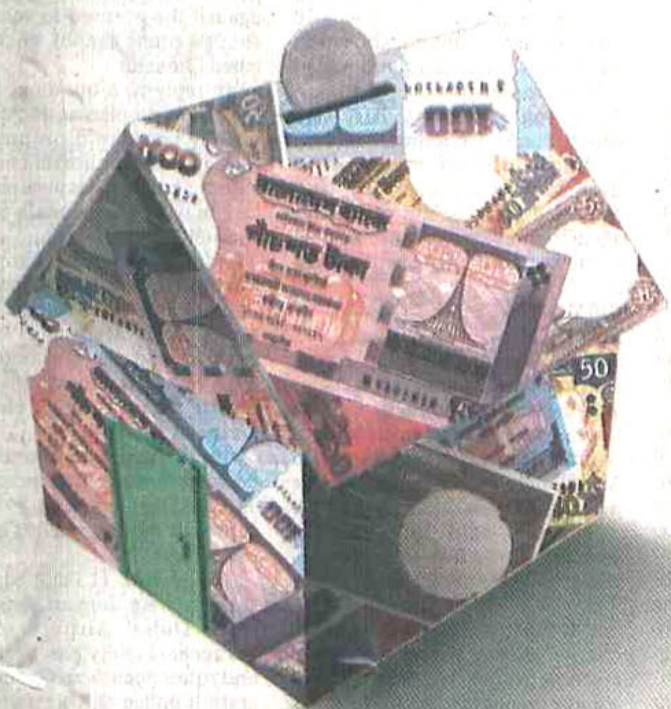
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আমানত সংগ্রহ মাস

৬ মে - ৭ জুন, ২০০৭

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