

Court orders de-listing of graft case against Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday ordered de-listing of a graft case filed against former prime minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and three others.

In December 2001, the now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) filed the case against Hasina and the three accusing them of misappropriating about Tk 18 crore from the Meghnaghat Power Plant when she was in power.

The High Court stayed the proceedings of the case pending with the trial court in December 2002, accepting a petition for quashing the case.

The court order came yesterday following an application moved by

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Wanted JMB leader with life term held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A fugitive Jamaat-e-Islami leader-turned JMB commander, evading life sentence for the August 17 serial bombings, was arrested yesterday in Joypurhat.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested the offender, Montejar Rahman of Uttar Moheshpur, from Nischintapur village of Kalai upazila in Joypurhat.

Montejar, one of the most wanted JMB (Jama'at ul Mujahideen, Bangladesh) leaders, was sentenced to life in the August 17 serial blast case of Joypurhat. He was also accused in the assault on police and arms looting cases in the same district in 2003, said a Rab

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Prayer Timing		
May 15		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Growth of banks nose dives

Anti-graft drive a contributing factor

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Credit and deposit growths of commercial banks fell drastically in the first quarter of the current calendar year as the ongoing anti-corruption drive significantly hindered the use of 'black-money' by bank clients.

Between December 31 and March 29, overall deposit in commercial banks grew by 1.08 percent while credit grew by 0.19 percent. Usually, the first quarter deposit and credit growth rates hover around six to eight percent.

Former central bank deputy governor Khandakar Ibrahim Khaled said, several investors include their 'black money' as part of their equities when they apply for loans.

However, in fear of coming under the government's ongoing crackdown on corruption, these investors are reluctant to include their 'black-money' as a portion of their equities and are refraining from applying for loans as they would not meet the equity standards.

Another top executive of a private bank said many business-

men who used the clouts of politicians to gain businesses and who were involved in corruption are at the moment trying to avoid getting caught in the anti-corruption dragnet, and as such, they are more interested in covering up past footprints rather than investing in new ventures.

Admitting to low credit and deposit growths, the high level executive said, "Yes, we [banks] are going through a rough patch right now, but this situation is temporary, and ultimately it'll benefit the

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US soldier shot to death in Pakistan

Strikes paralyse country amid fresh political violence

AGENCIES, Islamabad

Militants opened fire yesterday on a convoy carrying US and Pakistani military officials near the Afghan frontier, killing one American and one Pakistani soldier, the Pakistani army spokesman said.

At least two Americans and two Pakistani soldiers and were wounded.

Meanwhile, strikes called by opposition parties brought Karachi and other cities to a standstill

yesterday as gunmen killed a top court official in further violence over the suspension of Pakistan's top judge.

Maj. Gen. Waheed Arshad said "miscreants" -- usually a byword used by Pakistani officials to describe Islamic militants -- fired at the convoy carrying military officials who attended a meeting in the northwestern town of Teri Mangal.

Afghan military officials also attended the talks to discuss recent fighting between Afghan and

Pakistani forces that the government in Kabul says has killed at least 13 people inside Afghanistan -- inflaming already poor relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan said it could confirm ISAF casualties but not the exact number of injured or killed.

Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesman at the US military base in

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Law enforcers searching people entering Barisal court premises following copies of a letter in the name of Barisal Divisional Al-Qaeda were found in different rooms of the court compound on Sunday.

Rab officer bullet-hit in fight with robbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A top official of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) received bullet injuries yesterday during a tussle with a suspected robber whose gang was preparing to rob a money exchange office at Moghbazar in the capital.

The wounded, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) BM Nuruzzaman, is an assistant director of Rab.

He was rushed to Shamorita Hospital soon after the incident. He was later transferred to Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka where he underwent surgery in the abdomen. He is now out of the woods, said Rab officials.

Rab officials added that Rab has arrested the robber who shot at Nuruzzaman.

Upon receiving secret information that a gang of robbers is set to commit robbery at a money exchange office near Piasi Bar at Moghbazar, nine undercover Rab personnel took position at strategic points in the area at noon.

ASP Nuruzzaman challenged a suspicious group of six youths in front of hotel Parosh near the

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A Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) member examining hands of people held after a Rab official was shot while nabbing an alleged robber at Moghbazar in the capital yesterday.

Detained Ctg mayor taken to hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detained Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday after he fell sick in prison.

He was rushed to Chittagong from Bandarban Jail as he complained of heart complications and difficulties in urinating at around 12:30am.

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Mahathir hospitalised

AFP, Langkawi

Malaysia's former premier Mahathir Mohamad has been admitted to intensive care on the resort island of Langkawi after suffering from breathing difficulties, his son said yesterday.

"It appears to be so. I have been informed that he is now in the intensive care unit at the Langkawi hospital," Mokhzani Mahathir told AFP.

"It is unfortunate that it had to happen," said Mokhzani.

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New import policy relaxes restrictions on most items

UNB, Dhaka

Announcing the import policy 2006-09 at a press conference in his office Finance and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam expressed the hope that it will help industrialisation, create employment and thus reduce poverty. The policy came into effect yesterday.

"The policy has been simplified further in the changed scenario of globalisation under WTO and free market economy," said the adviser.

Ealier, the Council of Advisers at

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Ex-MPWadud Bhuiyan's properties frozen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A cognizance court yesterday ordered freezing of all the movable and immovable properties of former lawmaker from Khagrachhari Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan until disposal of the cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and others.

First Class Magistrate Ahmad Kabir gave the order under the

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No pressure on me to leave country Says Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Former president Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said the present caretaker government is not putting pressure on him to leave the country.

"I would not leave the country due to pressure, even if it was from the government," he said yesterday noon while talking to journalists at Bogra Tourists Motel. He was staying there during a stopover on his

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Cyclone threatens Ctg ODI

MOHAMMAD ISAM, from Ctg

Persistent rain due to cyclone Akash is set to completely washout the third and final one-day international between Bangladesh and India at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium today.

As the depression over east central bay intensified yesterday afternoon, the light drizzle, which began on Sunday night, continued and developed into heavy rain during early evening. As a result, the ground condition at the stadium deteriorated.

The Chittagong maritime

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