

Falu sent back to jail after check-up

UNB, Dhaka

Detained BNP leader Mosaddek Ali Falu was brought to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital from Kashimpur jail for medical checkup yesterday morning.

BSMMU sources said Falu, former lawmaker from Dhaka-10 and political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, was suffering from dental problems.

He was brought to the hospital at about 9:45am and sent back to the jail at 11:00am.

The joint forces arrested Mosaddek Ali Falu at his residence in the city on charge of corruption on February 5.

Youth shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of unknown criminals gunned down a young man at Pallabi in the city yesterday.

The dead Mohammad Shaon, 18, was a Benarasi sari weaver at Mirpur.

Locals found his dead body at around 6:30am on road and called the police, who recovered the body and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue.

Morgue sources said they found a bullet mark on his forehead.

Police could not give any information about the mastermind of the murder.

According to Mohamad Roman, deceased's uncle, Shaon left his house at around 11:30pm on Tuesday night and did not hear anything from him since then.

He also said Shaon had an altercation with a group of young men recently.

Shaon's mother, Hasina Begum, lodged a murder case with Pallabi Police Station yesterday.

MECHANICAL GLITCHES

BAF chopper makes emergency landing on char

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An air force helicopter made an emergency landing on a char in Buriganga river in the city's Adabar area yesterday due to mechanical problems.

However, the three crew members on board were safe.

"Hearing sound, I looked up in the air and saw a helicopter descending slowly. Moments later, it landed on the sand at about 11:15am," Monir Hossain, a staff of the Chandrima Housing Project working nearby, told The Daily Star.

Witnesses said that within a few minutes, another helicopter carrying air force engineers, reached the spot. After they fixed the faulty one, both the helicopters took off some half an hour later.

A large number of army, air force, Rab and police personnel rushed to the spot soon after the landing and cordoned off the area.

Officer-in Charge (OC) of Adabar Police Station Salahuddin Ahmed said that the helicopter was forced to land following mechanical problems and flew away sometimes later after the air force engineers repaired it.

Bush says Laden ordered attacks outside Iraq

AP, Washington

Seeking to rally support for the war, President Bush released intelligence asserting that Osama bin Laden in 2005 ordered creation of a terrorist unit to hit targets outside Iraq, including the United States.

The information, which Bush was to cite yesterday in a commencement address at the US Coast Guard Academy, was declassified by the White House on Tuesday. It expands on a classified bulletin the Homeland Security Department issued in March 2005.

The bulletin, which warned that bin Laden had enlisted Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, his senior operative in Iraq, to plan potential strikes in the

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Prayer Timing		
May 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Iraq attacks kill 9 US troops

20 killed in café blast

AFP, Baghdad

Nine US troops were killed on a single day around Iraq, the US military reported yesterday, bringing to 85 the number of servicemen killed in one of the most violent months of the war so far.

All nine of the soldiers and marines were killed on Tuesday in a series of incidents, some of them in an area where the troops were searching for three of their comrades who were captured 11 days ago.

Three soldiers were killed when their patrol was hit by a roadside bomb attack south of Baghdad, one was shot dead in the capital and another hit by a booby trap as his unit operated near where the men went missing.

Two more soldiers were killed by another roadside bomb north of Baghdad, while two marines died in

action in the restive western province of Anbar, according to statements from US command in Baghdad.

Since the March 2003 US-led invasion, 3,433 US troops have died according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures.

Iraqi police yesterday found what they believed was the body of an American soldier floating in the Euphrates river south of Baghdad ,11 days after three US troops were snatched by al-Qaeda.

Thousands of US troops were scouring orchards and waterways south of Baghdad for the three missing soldiers captured by al-Qaeda militants in a pre-dawn ambush on May 12 that killed four US soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter.

"We found the body of a man wearing a US military uniform with a tattoo on his right arm," said Captain

Muthanna Hassan of the police in Mussayib, which is a short distance from the town of Mahmudiyah, the epicentre of the search.

The US military later confirmed it had received the body.

"Iraqi police did find the body of a man whom they believe to be one of our missing soldiers," spokesman Major General William Caldwell told reporters.

"We have received the body and we will work diligently to determine if he is one of our missing soldiers, but we have not made any identification yet.

Meanwhile, at least 20 people were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up yesterday in a crowded cafe in a predominantly Kurdish town near the Iranian border, police said.

"There were 20 killed and 15

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Mobile phones banned in main customs office

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladesh authorities have banned use of mobile phones in the nation's main customs house to stop traders offering bribes to government officials, an official said yesterday.

Traders have been told not to bring phones to the customs house in the southeastern port city of Chittagong to curb "unlawful activities," said Chittagong customs commissioner Farid Uddin.

"The move was taken to remove the possibility of bribing the (government) officials during the assessment of imported items," he said.

Everyday some 10,000 to 12,000 traders and their agents visit the customs house. Many use mobile phones to seek to bribe government officials to speed up the entry of goods, Uddin said.

The traders pay bribes to reduce duties on imported goods, according to media reports.

The move came just a week after the Bangladesh chapter of graft watchdog Transparency International said traders paid 9.43 billion taka (137 million dollars) in

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KILLING IN RAJSHAHI 'RAB ACTION' Autopsy report finds marks of torture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday submitted the autopsy report of Quamrul Islam Majnu, killed in a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) action on May 18, to a Rajshahi metropolitan court that says injury marks were found on the victim's body.

"The death occurred due to hemorrhage resulted from injuries which are homicidal in nature," reads the report signed by a three-member medical board.

According to the report, nine injury marks including one in the stomach were found on Majnu's body.

The report corroborated the investigation report prepared by First Class Magistrate Jonendranath Sarkar on May 20 that also found innumerable torture marks on the victim's body.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police

(RMP) Deputy Commissioner Mahbubur Rahman said, "It has been proved in the report that it was a murder. Our next investigation will be to find out the killers."

Meanwhile, the five-member probe committee comprising Magistrate Jonendranath Sarkar and Asif Ansari, intelligence director of Rab headquarters, will submit its report on Saturday.

The victim's brother, Piarul Islam, in a case filed with Boalia Police Station alleged that Majnu was killed due to torture by Rab members and their associates at Chhotobongram Purbopara in Rajshahi town on May 18.

Majnu's family members demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident. They alleged that the investigation team talked neither to them nor the eyewitnesses. But they met some selected people of other areas.

Mamun's wife brought to court to stand witness against him

Court does not take her deposition

UNB, Dhaka

Shahina Yasmeen, wife of businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, was yesterday brought to the special court to stand witness against her husband detained in a graft case, but the court couldn't take her deposition for objection from the defence counsel.

Mamun is facing trial for not submitting his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) within the deadline given by the commission, which is an offence punishable by three years in jail or fine, or by both.

Barrister AKM Fakhru Islam, the counsel for the accused, submitted an application challenging the admissibility of Shahina as prosecution witness in the case.

Raising the pertinent question, Fakhru submitted that the court must look into the matter, in the context of legal interpretation for dispensation of justice, whether a wife or her husband can be

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ADMISSION FORGERY

Culprits at large as no legal action yet

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Dhaka University (DU) authorities are yet to untangle the nexus behind the large-scale admission forgery incidents that a university probe committee recently detected.

The authorities, however, served show cause notices to most of the students found to have submitted faulty admission papers and suspended five DU staff for their involvement in the admission forgery.

In its first report on March 15, a

probe committee headed by Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof AFM Yusuf Haider recommended legal actions against a number of suspects that the committee found involved with the admission forgery racket.

Following the recommendation, DU authorities sent a letter to the inspector general of police (IGP) requesting for legal actions against the suspects and the IGP issued a letter to Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner for necessary steps in this regard, sources said.

The university authorities' also

sent to the police a few lists containing the names of several DU staff, a few coaching centres and consultancy firms on the basis of findings of the probe committee.

The university authorities did not file any case with the concerned police station, DMP Commissioner Naim Ahmed said, adding, "For the legal process, the authorities have to file cases first, otherwise police cannot take any action. Making a request is not enough."

The latest and fourth report of

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US-led 'war on terror' dividing world Warns Amnesty in annual report

AFP, London

Fears stoked by the post-9/11 "war on terror" are increasingly dividing the world, Amnesty International said yesterday, while rapping rights abuses from China to Darfur and Russia to the Middle East.

The gap between Muslims and non-Muslims notably deepened, fueled by discriminatory counter-terrorism strategies in Western countries, warned the rights group in its annual report.

Human rights are also routinely flouted in Iraq and Afghanistan, on the front line of the US-led crackdown on international extremism since the September 11, 2001 attacks which triggered a profound geopolitical shift.

"The politics of fear is fueling a downward spiral of human rights abuse in which no right is sacrosanct and no person safe," said Amnesty International chief Irene Kahn.

"The 'war on terror' and the war

in Iraq, with their catalogue of human rights abuses, have created deep divisions that cast a shadow on international relations," making it harder to resolve conflicts and protect civilians.

The 320-page report, covering rights abuses worldwide in 2006, focused particular attention on violence against women, as well as torture, terror and the death penalty, which Amnesty fiercely opposes.

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Many people travel by locally made three-wheeler 'bhotbhoti' on Tongi-Savar route regularly risking their lives.



PHOTO: AFP

This Nasa image of Mars shows a patch of bright-toned soil so rich in silica that scientists propose water must have been involved in concentrating it.

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Wet past on Mars found

AP, Pasadena, California

The Mars rover Spirit has uncovered the strongest evidence yet that the planet used to be wetter than previously thought, scientists reported Monday.

The robot analysed a patch of soil in Gusev Crater and found it unusually rich in silica. The presence of water would have been necessary to produce such a large silica deposit, scientists said.

"This is a remarkable discovery," principal investigator Steve Squyres of Cornell University said in a statement. "It makes you wonder what else is still out there."

Spirit previously found clues of ancient water in the crater through the presence of sulfur-rich soil, water-altered minerals and explosive volcanism. But the latest find is compelling because of the high

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US Navy sends aircraft carriers near Iran

AP, Dubai

The US Navy staged its latest show of military force off the Iranian coastline yesterday, sending two aircraft carriers and landing ships packed with 17,000 US Marines and sailors to carry out unannounced exercises in the Persian Gulf.

The carrier strike groups led by the USS John C. Stennis and USS Nimitz were joined by the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard and its own strike group, which includes landing ships carrying members of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

The Navy said nine US warships passed through the narrow Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday. Merchant ships passing through the busy strait carry two-fifths of the world's oil exports.

Aircraft aboard the two carriers and the Bonhomme Richard were to conduct air training while the ships ran submarine, mine and other exercises.

The maneuvers came just two months after a previous exercise in March when two U.S. carrier

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