

Rescue operations go on after disaster



PHOTO: STAR

1. Army personnel continue rescue drive in Chittagong Cantonment area for the second consecutive day 2. In Cox's Bazar, people clearing houses as mud swept down on those from hills cut for a housing project of the district administration at Kolaotoli 3. In Chittagong, relatives of the victims of mudslide from hills wailing for their near and dear ones 4. Army rescue operation in Chittagong continued for the second day 5. Navy's rescue drive at Shantibagh in Halishahar 6. Navy distributes relief among waterlogged people at Shantibagh.

Butenis for lifting ban on indoor politics

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Patricia Butenis has urged the caretaker government to lift the ban on indoor politics so that the parties can contribute to the electoral reforms.

"Longer the ban is kept in place, the more difficult it would be to enact reforms, it is as simple as that," she told reporters after a meeting with Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matir Rahman Nizami at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Butenis said political parties are the main ingredients of election and democratic process. "I once again would ask the government to withdraw the ban in the interest of political reforms and assisting the Election Commission for electoral reforms."

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Nadim Mostafa, wife sued for cheating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa and his wife Nurun Nahar Parul were yesterday sued for misappropriating Tk 12.5 lakh and issuing a false bank cheque.

Brick-kiln owner Ali Hossain in Natore lodged the case with the Court of First Class Magistrate Arif Pasha.

Accepting the case, the magistrate asked the officer-in-charge (OC) of Natore Sadar Police Station to take necessary actions in this regard.

Ali Hossain alleged that Nadim Mostafa, also a contractor, bought bricks worth Tk 12.5 lakh from his brickfield in 2004 and 2005 and paid only Tk 2 lakh.

As he mounted pressure on

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Verdict in gold smuggling case against Ershad deferred again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The verdict of the gold smuggling case filed against former president and Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad was deferred for the sixth time yesterday.

The newly joined judge Mohammad Abul Bashar of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court said he would hear again arguments of the case as he knew nothing about the case. He fixed July 15 for hearing on the arguments.

Ershad along with his party leaders and activists were present in the court during the hearing.

The gold smuggling case was filed with Cantonment Police

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Low quality foreign university branches 'selling' degrees

SURAJNITH DEABNATH

Due to a lack of specific rules and regulations, no action has been taken yet against 56 branches of foreign universities in the capital and in four other cities, which were declared illegal by the University Grants Commission (UGC) because of allegations of selling different degrees without imparting any quality education.

However, around 20 to 25 thousand students of those institutions, who pay around Tk 75 crore annually in tuition fees, are now very uncertain about their academic future because of the UGC declaration.

Due to a lack of specific rules, the caretaker government is not taking any stern action against those educational institutes either, UGC and education ministry sources said. Meanwhile, taking the opportunity, those allegedly masquerading educational institutes are continuing to post advertisements for attracting students, although some of them were found to have their

signboards removed while continuing to operate otherwise despite the UGC declaration.

UGC, the apex regulatory body overseeing private and public universities, published a list of 56 foreign university campuses through posting advertisements in different daily newspapers in the second week of May, where the commission claimed that the listed institutes are operating without valid documents of government permission or approval.

In the advertisement, the UGC mentioned that according to the Private University Act 1992 and Amendment Act 1998, no private university can be established or operated, or no graduation or post-graduation, diploma or certificate courses can be offered, or no degree, diploma or certificate can be issued in the country under the auspices of any foreign university without specific permissions from the government.

The advertisement signed by Acting Director of UGC M Khaled, also called upon students and their

guardians to avoid the branches of foreign universities officially declared illegal by the commission.

The UGC, academicians, and the authorities of some foreign universities stressed the need for new rules and regulations for setting up offshore campuses of foreign universities in the country and for running academic activities in those.

UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said those campuses of foreign universities were declared illegal because they do not have permissions from the UGC or the education ministry.

"Now we consider the campuses of foreign universities in light of the Private University Act but those are not private universities. New rules and regulations on campuses of foreign universities are needed so that the government can take stern actions against fake educational institutes," he suggested.

He alleged that the black listed institutions are selling certificates

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Kuwait may regularise irregular Bangladeshi workers

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh expects Kuwait to regularise Bangladeshi irregular workers or extend them the two-month amnesty period it declared in April allowing foreign illegal workers to leave the country without any penalty during May and June.

Bangladesh ambassador to Kuwait Mostafa Reza Noor is pursuing the Kuwaiti authorities to regularise Bangladeshi workers with irregular status, and they listened to him positively, said a foreign ministry official.

Moreover, the foreign ministry discussed the issue with the Kuwaiti embassy in Dhaka.

"We are therefore expecting Kuwait to extend the amnesty period for Bangladeshi irregular workers or regularise them considering their plight following their return home, and the friendly relations between the two nations," the official told The Daily Star.

The workers will face dire distress if they return home at this

stage, he said, hoping Kuwait would consider the issue on humanitarian grounds.

Several thousand Bangladeshi workers living in the oil-rich Arab state with irregular status fear that they have to return home voluntarily or face deportation on expiry of the amnesty period on June 30.

According to the amnesty declaration, if foreigners staying in Kuwait in violation of residency laws leave the country within the amnesty period, they will be exempted from any penalty or fine. The decree is not applicable to those who entered the country after its issuance, The Kuwait Times said.

"The violators who will not leave the state within the period will be subject to legal punishments as applicable under the law and will not be granted residencies. They will also be deported from the state and will never again be allowed to return," the newspaper reported.

Foreign ministry officials say there are around 5,000 Bangladeshi illegal workers in Kuwait but man-

power recruiting agencies estimate the number is around 30,000.

Sources in the foreign ministry and expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry said workers become illegal due to various reasons including change of jobs for higher wages and for living there without renewing job contracts.

Manpower agencies point out that high cost of migration, low wages and decline of other facilities force many migrant workers in the Middle East countries including Kuwait to change jobs and become illegal.

In many cases employers also do not pay as per their commitments prompting workers to leave their jobs and join new ones leaving their passports with former legal employers.

Kuwait stopped hiring workers from Bangladesh in the last quarter

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Babar, Mamun sent to jail after remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar and Giasuddin Al Mamun, close friend of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, were sent to jail yesterday on completion of their remands.

New Market police yesterday pressed charges against Awami League (AL) leader and chairman of Shimpukur Holdings Limited Salman F Rahman and his brother Ahmed Sohel Fashir Rahman in two cheating cases.

Gulshan police produced Babar before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Quamrunnahar at 4.15pm on completion of his three-day remand in connection with an arms case.

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Tarique granted division in jail

UNB, Dhaka

Detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman was yesterday given division in Dhaka Central Jail.

DIG (Prison) Major Shamsul Haider told the news agency that Tarique Rahman, who had been staying in jail as an ordinary prisoner since his arrest in March, was given division after receiving the High Court order.

On June 7, the High Court upon an application ordered the jail authorities to comply with the lower court's previous order relating to the division for Tarique.

Tarique Rahman, eldest son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, is facing a number of criminal cases.

Ex-minister Zia owns Tk 11cr properties

Wealth report placed to ACC

UNB, Dhaka

Former state minister Ziaul Haque Zia, one of the 21 corruption suspects served with notices on May 29, submitted his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday.

In the statement, Zia claimed that he possesses wealth worth about Tk 11 crore in addition to nearly 5.5 bighas land.

Although the deadline to submit wealth statements within seven working days expired, eight of the summoned corruption suspects, including Ziaul Haque, applied for time extension.

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Deadly fighting drives Gaza closer to civil war

Mortar shells slam into Hamas PM's home, 18 killed in fighting

AFP, Gaza City

Hamas fighters armed with guns and rocket launchers besieged two Fatah security headquarters yesterday as deadly clashes threatened to topple the government and drive Gaza closer to civil war.

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7 Afghan cops killed in gunfight with US troops

Two dozens Taliban killed in air raids, attacks

AFP, Jalalabad

Seven policemen were killed in a gun battle with US soldiers after troops attacked their post in eastern Afghanistan following a "misunderstanding," government officials said Tuesday.

The US-led coalition said however its soldiers had come under fire first while trying to conduct a raid against a suspected Taliban safe house in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

The deaths come amid mounting anger among Afghans about the number of civilians killed in military operations against the Taliban, which has stepped up an al-Qaeda-backed campaign against the government and its allies.

The gunfight erupted at midnight Monday and the US troops called in air power, Afghan officials said.

"As the result of a misunderstanding, the coalition forces attacked a police post in Nangarhar

US 'war on terror' suffers yet another judicial setback

AFP, Washington

The US government's "war on terror" suffered a new legal setback Monday when judges ruled that an alleged al-Qaeda sleeper agent could not be held without charge on US soil.

The federal appeals court in the Virginia state capital Richmond, one of the country's most conservative courts, ordered the release from military detention of Qatari national Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri, 41.

Marri does not have to be set free. He can be tried on criminal charges in a civilian court, or be deported, the panel of three judges ruled in a split two-one decision.

"But the government cannot subject al-Marri to indefinite military detention," the majority opinion said.

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Prayer Timing

June 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation