

Lobi's wife arrested

Babar's case transferred to sessions court
COURT CORRESPONDENT

The arms case against detained former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar was transferred yesterday to the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court for trial. Khushnud Asgar, wife of detained former BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi, was arrested yesterday from a city hospital in connection with a graft case while a DCC ward commissioner Chowdhury Alam was placed on a two-day remand in an extortion case. After scrutinising the case dockets and documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam passed the transfer order of Babar's case filed in connection with possessing illegal firearms and ammunition. SI Helal Uddin of Gulshan Police
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Advisory body for more urea price hike

Approves forming North-West Power Co

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming the industry ministry's proposed price hike of urea as insufficient, the advisory committee on economic affairs yesterday sent back the proposal to the ministry for a revision. In another decision the same meeting approved in principle formation of North-West Power Generation Company Ltd. The advisory committee advised the industry ministry to revise its proposed hike in the price of urea in line with the real market scenario and to submit it again to the advisory committee by July 15.

The proposal of the ministry sought to raise the price of urea by 51 percent per ton in a bid to minimise the loss of government run fertiliser factories. Meeting sources said the advisory committee predicts that the proposed price hike might help only to recover the loss already incurred but will not ensure profit. According to the projections of the government, the six government run fertiliser factories might lose Tk 350 crore in the current fiscal. If the government adopts the proposed price of urea, the predicted loss of the factories will be minimised, but if the government

increases the prices of power and gas in the near future, the fertiliser factories might slide back into the realm of loss again, the committee observed. The committee thinks that fixing the price time and again is not viable rather it should be fixed for a long period of time. Following the logic, the committee suggested fixing the price of urea for a long period after examining the production costs and capacities of all factories. The current price of a ton of urea at the factory end is Tk 4,800, which
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Blair lauds reforms in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has praised Bangladesh's efforts in socioeconomic reforms and pledged his government's continued support to these measures. "I recognise and congratulate Bangladesh's efforts in social and economic reforms. The UK government continues to support these efforts," said Blair in a letter to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed. The letter dated June 25 was in response to Fakhruddin's May 22 letter to him highlighting trade issues faced by the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) like Bangladesh in the context of the Doha negotiations of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Blair has also referred to a recently pledged support of his
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PHOTO: STAR

Fatema, a patient at Birdem hospital, places saline bag herself as the doctors on contract continue their strike for the second consecutive day yesterday demanding regularisation of their jobs.

Two SUVs of Bashundhara Group seized

One sold illegally by ex-state minister
Anwarul Kabir
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized two SUVs (sport utility vehicle) from Bashundhara City in the capital on Monday night. Both owned by Bashundhara Group, one was sold illegally by former state minister for power Maj Gen (ret'd) Anwarul Kabir Talukder while the other was imported through under-invoicing. Following up a tip-off, a team of Rab-2 raided the car park of the shopping mall at Panthapath at around 10:30pm and seized a Hummer H3 3500cc and a Lexus LX 470.
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PHOTO: STAR

The Rapid Action Battalion seized two SUVs (sport utility vehicles) -- a Hummer H3 and a Lexus LX 470-- owned by Bashundhara Group from Bashundhara City shopping mall in the capital on Monday night.

Nine ex-camel jockeys get compensation

UNB, Noakhali

Nine children of the district, used as camel jockeys in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), received Tk 9.36 lakh as compensation. Deputy Commissioner M Habibul Kabir Chowdhury distributed cheques for the money, given by the UAE government, among the children on Monday. Of the nine, four children belong to a same family from Companyganj upazila while four from Sadar and one from Begumganj upazila. Each of them has received cheque for Tk 1.04 lakh. Some 168 Bangladeshi children have been brought back to the country from the UAE recently by the government, Unicef and Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA).

ADB okays \$465m power sector grant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) yesterday approved \$465 million loans for further development of Bangladesh's power sector. The power sector programme has two financing components, programme loans and project loans, says an ADB press release. This programme is in line with ADB's country and strategy programmes for Bangladesh. Of the \$465 million, project loans comprise \$400million, programme loans \$60million and the rest special loans. The project loans with a 25-year term including a five-year grace period will be sourced from ADB's ordinary capital resources, while the \$5 million loan from its special funds resources will have a 32-year term including an eight-year grace

period. The \$400 million project loans will be used for expanding clean fuel generation capacity, enhancing transmission network reliability and efficiency and improving the quality of supply in the capital Dhaka and its surrounding areas, which make up the majority of the country's power demand. The \$5 million loan is meant for capacity development of the power sector to improve utility performance and promote sustainable operations. "The project loan is expected to reduce system losses and improve quality of supply, leading to more efficient use of energy and making more power available to support sustained economic growth, while offsetting growth in greenhouse gas emissions," Pii-Bae Song, head
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Abducted Danida staff yet to be rescued

A CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The two kidnapped Danida (Danish International Development Agency) staff could not be rescued as of yesterday evening, 24 hours into their abduction. Project Officer Mohammad Suman Sharif and his driver Abu Hanif were kidnapped on Monday afternoon from Kyaburi Para, a village of indigenous people under Thanchi upazila, some 100 kilometres from the district town. The joint forces have been conducting combing operations in search of them, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said. Locals said that 10 to 12 masked gunmen in black, picked up the two Danida staff at about 4:00 pm and took them to some unknown place in the deep forest. The criminals could be rebels from Myanmar, they added.
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Israel to set free 250 Palestinian prisoners

AP, Sharm el-Sheik

Israel's prime minister promised Monday to free 250 Palestinian prisoners and promised to improve life in the West Bank in an attempt to boost Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas after Hamas' takeover in Gaza. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made the pledges at a summit in this Egyptian Red Sea resort with Abbas and the leaders of Egypt and Jordan. The Arab leaders hope the high-profile gathering can lead to a resumption of the long-blocked peace process, rally Palestinian support behind Abbas and isolate Hamas after the Islamic militant group's stunning and bloody victory in Gaza. Hamas' new power has raised fears the Mediterranean coastal

strip will become a breeding ground for extremism, and a series of messages released by militants ahead of the summit underlined the turmoil swirling around Gaza. Hamas-linked militants holding an Israeli soldier for the past year released an audiotape of him urging Israel to strike a deal for his release. A British journalist kidnapped in Gaza appeared in a video wearing an explosives belt that his captors threatened to detonate if security forces try to free him. And al-Qaeda's deputy leader tried to woo Hamas into an alliance and called on Muslims to attack American and Israeli interests in support of the group. Abbas told the Sharm el-Sheik gathering, "It is time to relaunch the peace process" to tackle the toughest, central issues of the
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PHOTO: STAR

A man taking drug in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, the International Anti-Drug Day.

Taskforce raids house of Khaleda's assignment officer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The anti-corruption task force yesterday raided the residence of Khaleda Zia's assignment officer Firoz Mahmud's father in Bogra. A task force team conducted the raid at Abdus Sattar's house at Malotinagar in Bogra town at around 8:00am with the assistance from Bogra police and seized a few documents. They also raided Sattar's village home at Aiarhat under Shibganj upazila in Bogra at noon. Sources said the task force started investigation about the corruption allegations against Firoz, his wife and his brother Ashik Mahmud, who have already left the country. Firoz was an influential figure in Hawa Bhaban, used to be dubbed as the alternative power centre of the immediate past government. A number of corruption allegations were brought against him.
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WEALTH REPORT
Tarique's wife, mother-in-law seek time from ACC

UNB, Dhaka

In response to the Anti-Corruption Commission's directive to appear in person before a team, the wife and mother-in-law of Tarique Rahman have sought more time to substantiate the information provided by Tarique about his
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Prayer Timing		
June 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		