

Sigma Huda's physical state normal

Confirm jail authorities
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The jail authorities through a news briefing yesterday confirmed that the physical condition of former communications minister Nazmul Huda's wife Sigma Huda is normal.

"Although Sigma Huda was suffering from diabetes and cardiac problems, her physical condition is now normal," said Deputy Inspector General (DIG - Prison) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui during the briefing.

The news briefing was arranged in the wake of an allegation that the

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Man dies in police custody

UNB, Cox's Bazar

An accused was allegedly tortured to death in police custody in Majheepara village under Sadar upazila of the district on Friday night.

Following a court order, a police team from Idgao outpost arrested Kala Mia, 52, raiding his at the village at midnight. Family members alleged that the cops tortured him to death and left the body in front of the house.

On information, Cox's Bazar police went to the spot yesterday morning and took the body to Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Refuting the allegation of torture, Idgao police outpost in-charge Nuruddin Zahed said Kala Mia died of heart ailment.

Housewife strangled to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a housewife and rescued her minor daughter from a hotel room at Motijheel in the capital early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Parveen Begum, 25, wife of Abdus Salam.

After recovering Parveen's body at around 1:30am from a room on the first floor of Sylhet Boarding, Motijheel police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Parveen's daughter 4-year-old Sumi, who was found unhurt in the

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Prayer Timing		
July 15		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Pak Red Mosque militants hit back

18 troops killed in suicide blast

AFP, Miranshah

At least 18 Pakistani soldiers died and 28 were wounded when a suicide bomber rammed an explosives-packed car into their convoy yesterday in an Afghan border region, the military said.

The convoy was heading to Miranshah, the main town of the North Waziristan tribal district, when the bomber attacked it at around 11:30 am (0630 GMT), top military spokesman Major General Waheed Arshad told AFP.

"The number of soldiers martyred in the attack has risen to 18," Arshad said, updating earlier reports. "Twenty-eight soldiers

were wounded.

"More bodies were recovered from the badly mangled wreckage of the vehicles which were hit in the suicide attack."

The attack came days after President Pervez Musharraf, a US-backed military ruler, fuelled Islamist anger with an army assault on the pro-Taliban mosque complex in Islamabad that left 86 dead, most of them militants.

Thousands of Islamic protesters Friday called for Jihad (holy war) and burnt effigies of Musharraf and a puppet of "Uncle Sam," the icon of the United States, which has backed Musharraf as an ally in its "war on terror."

Musharraf has warned he would root out extremists and has deployed thousands of extra troops to northwestern border areas with Afghanistan, remote and lawless regions that have become hideouts for the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

"Troops have been deployed in Swat district and in Dera Ismail Khan following instructions by President Musharraf to beef up security to counter the threat of extremist forces in the region," a military official said.

In another attack in North Waziristan Saturday, two soldiers were wounded by an improvised explosive device that hit their

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PHOTO: STAR

Students seeking admission to class XI gather in front of the main entrance of Dhaka City College at Dhanmondi yesterday as high scorers in this year's SSC examination rush to reputed colleges in the capital for admission.

Russia pulls out of arms-control treaty

AP, Moscow

Russia yesterday suspended its participation in a key European arms control treaty that governs deployment of troops on the continent, the Kremlin said.

President Vladimir Putin signed a decree suspending Russia's participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty due to "extraordinary circumstances ... which affect the security of the Russian Federation and require

immediate measures," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Putin has in the past threatened to freeze his country's compliance with the treaty, accusing the United States and its Nato partners of undermining regional stability with US plans for a missile defence system in former Soviet bloc countries in Eastern Europe.

The treaty, between Russian and Nato members, was signed in 1990 and amended in 1999 to reflect changes since the breakup

of the Soviet Union, adding the requirement that Moscow withdraw troops from the former Soviet republics of Moldova and Georgia.

Russia has ratified the amended version, but the United States and other Nato members have refused to do so until Russia completely withdraws.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia could no longer tolerate a situation where it was complying with the treaty but its

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Korean sweater plant gutted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Korean sweater factory was gutted when a raging fire broke out in the 6-storied building in the Badda area, destroying all the machinery and goods in the early hours of yesterday.

According to local and police sources the fire started at 1:40am in the new building of the sweater factory Chun-Ji Knit Ltd. located at Uttar Badda Shatakool.

Police said the fire started in the storehouse of threads located on the ground floor of the factory and quickly spread through the entire building.

Fourteen fire brigade units from four stations, Khilgaon, Tejgaon, Baridhara and Ramna fire brigade headquarters, rushed to the spot and managed to tame the fire by 3:40am.

Garments sources alleged that all the apparel machinery and

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PHOTO: STAR

Knitwear and wool burn on the top floor of Chunji Knit factory at Purba Badda in the capital early yesterday as a fire allegedly destroyed everything in the six-storey factory building.

CHANDPUR PLANT
Govt seeks legal opinion

UNB, Dhaka

After failing to make a final decision on the 100MW Chandpur power project, the power ministry has sought legal opinion of the law ministry.

The power ministry's move will cause further delay in deciding the fate of the project, official sources said.

According to the sources, the ministry sent a file to the law ministry a week ago seeking clear opinion on different aspects of the 100MW Chandpur power plant.

The ministry was in dilemma over hiring of a Chinese firm as the contractor for the project, as the firm has since declined to enter into a deal because of cost-overrun due to inordinate delays.

The sources said after completion of the tender process, the PDB awarded the contract to the lowest bidder, Chinese Harbin Power Engineering (HPE), to develop the project at a cost of \$45 million.

The PDB also issued the Notification of Award (NOA) on January 26 last year, but failed to sign an agreement within the

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13 killed, 40 hurt as bus plunges into Ctg ditch

UNB, Ctg

At least 13 people died and 40 others were injured when a bus plunged into a ditch, breaking railing of a bridge in Fatikchhari upazila of the district yesterday morning.

Police said the Ramgarh-bound bus from Mirersarai smashed through the railing of Jorashetu Bridge in the hilly area at about 9:55am and tumbled 150 feet down, killing five passengers on the spot and injuring 50 others.

On information, police, Ansar and BDR personnel rushed to the spot, rescued the injured bus passengers and took them to different hospitals in Feni, Chhagalnaiya and Mirersarai.

Of them, four succumbed to their injuries at Mostannagar Hospital in Mirersarai and another four at Feni Sadar Hospital.

Ten of the dead were identified as Sadia Begum, 60, Sohel, 30,

Helauddin, 34, Mohiuddin, 32, Aliyar, 32, Abdul Mannan, 38, Babul Hossain, 32, Shefali Das, 40, Manju Das, 21, and Shamsuddin Ahmed, 31. Identity of the remaining three could not be known.

A crane was brought to the spot to salvage the bus. Paramilitary BDR, police, Ansar, and firefighters joined the salvage operation, which was continuing as of yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, a motorcyclist was killed in a road accident at Iterpool in Laxmipur Sadar upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Sumon, 25, son of Momtajuddin of Banchanagar village in the upazila.

Police said a speeding bus rammed a motorcycle near BSCIC Industrial Park at about 1:45pm, leaving bike rider Sumon critically injured.

Sumon was taken to Sadar Hospital where he died at about 2:15pm.

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VoIP tools seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized a large quantity of highly sophisticated equipment used for running illegal Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) business from Westecs Bangladesh Ltd (Bay Phones) in Chittagong on July 12 and arrested two of its officials in this connection.

The recovery, worth about Tk 15 crores, was presented before the

press at a press briefing held in the seminar room of Rab headquarters yesterday afternoon.

The recovered equipment includes eight Nuera Gateway, 12 VoIP Gateway, three Mux, two Vsat modem and gateway, ten CISCO switch (Media gateway), four channel bank, one server, two access channel bank and two excel switch.

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