

Large blue whale found dead on Ctg beach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A dead blue whale was found on Kattali sea beach of Pahartali yesterday, which zoologists termed unusual for Bangladesh territory. "From the picture, I guess the whale could be around 50 feet long. I think it was swept away to Bangladesh water territory from the Indian Ocean after succumbing to its injuries," said Md Monzoorul Kibria, an assistant professor of zoology in Chittagong University. "It is a blue whale that is generally found in the Indian Ocean, South Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean and deep in the Bay of Bengal," he said. Local fisherman Sujan Jaldas, who first noticed the whale near the sea shore at around 1:30am, said, "I along with some fellow fishermen was fishing in the sea near the Kattali coast when I suddenly noticed something very big floating around our trawler. We got frightened and soon left the area for the shore."

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PHOTO: STAR

Curious onlookers watch a dead pigmy blue whale on Kattali beach in Chittagong yesterday. The giant sea mammal, which is not a native to Bangladesh waters, was possibly swept ashore from far away after it had succumbed to its injuries.

45 hurt as JCD, Shibir clash in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

Activists of Bangladesh Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) were locked in clashes at the Chittagong Polytechnic Institute leaving at least 45 members of both the groups injured early yesterday. The institute authorities shut down the dormitories and suspended all academic activities sine die following the clashes. Sources said that examinations of different departments would be held from August 2 as per schedule. The members of the two student wings clashed over managing the dining room of Siraj-Ud-Daulah Hall at around 10:30 pm on Sunday. The authorities immediately brought the situation under control. When the news spread on the campus, activists of the two student wings, armed with iron rods, bamboo and hockey sticks were locked in clashes, at about 1:00 am leaving at least 45 members of both the groups injured. Of the injured, seven had been undergoing treatment at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH). Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

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CA for body to ensure admin transparency

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday asked the authorities concerned to make public administration more dynamic, transparent, accountable and pro-people through necessary upgrading to deliver government services to the people. He also asked for constituting a committee headed by the establishment secretary to determine what to do to ensure transparency of the public administration. The chief adviser gave the direction in a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Public Administration Reform and Good Governance at his office, which observed that reform of the public administration should continue. The meeting, chaired by the chief adviser, elaborately discussed and gave approval in principle to implementation of some interim recommendations of the ATM Shamsul Huq Commission, known as Public Administrative Reform Commission (PARC). The PARC worked from 1997 to

June 2001 preparing a report with interim, short and long-term recommendations for restructuring the outmoded system of administration. The interim proposals discussed and approved include preparing a pending list of various correspondences and placing it up to advisers of the ministries concerned for disposal in due time. Modernisation of land administration, simplification of bill payment of various public utility services, simplifying the process of providing passport and driving licence, simplification of pension procedure and increasing accountability and standard of services of government organisations are on the list of priorities. A presentation on the PARC recommendations was made in the meeting. Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam, Education Adviser Ayub Quadri, Industries Adviser Geeteara Safiya Choudhury, cabinet secretary, secretaries of the ministries of finance, establishment, law and planning and CA's press secretary were present.

Dhaka to take part in ARF meet first time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury left for Manila yesterday for Bangladesh's first ever participation in the powerful Asean Regional Forum (ARF). Iftekhar will also accede to the grouping's non-aggression pact called Treaty of Amity and Cooperation there. "This will be a key meeting. This is the first time we will participate in the Asean Regional Forum (ARF). We have been accepted after years of efforts, and the event would be an important milestone in forging strong links with the Asean countries, many of whom are seen as tigers of the global economic scene," Iftekhar told.

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LOAN DEFAULT CA comes to the farmers' rescue

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday relieved two poor farmers of Cox's Bazar of their debt burdens by repaying their loans borrowed from an NGO. He directed Cox's Bazar deputy commissioner to make sure that Azam Khan and Belal Uddin, jailed for loan default, get justice, said an official of the CA's office. The head of the caretaker government came up with this humanitarian gesture for the bailout of the two indebted farmers of Chokoria upazila as the sad episode came to light through a report published yesterday in a national daily. The newspaper report says that the two poor farmers have been suffering in jail for last one month for failing to pay back peanut amounts of Tk 319 and Tk 2,305 respectively they borrowed from a local NGO.

Wife, grandma meet Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tarique Rahman's wife Dr Zobaida Rahman, his maternal grandmother Tayaba Majumdar and sister-in-law Shahina Khan Zaman met him at the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday. Tarique's wife and relatives entered the jail gate at 6:05 pm and stayed there for about 40 minutes. Tarique's grandmother and sister-in-law visited him at the jail for the first time. They talked to him in a room, adjacent to the jail superintendent's office. Sources said that Tarique inquired about his mother's health and also other family members. They talked in presence of jail officials and an official of the Special Branch of Police. Tarique Rahman, eldest son of former premier and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia, is facing several criminal charges against him. He was arrested from his mother's cantonment residence on March 7.

VOTER LIST

EC preparing to amend law to avoid clash with SC directive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just days before the commencement of the field level work of preparing the voter list with photographs, the Election Commission (EC) is now searching for options to avoid a conflict with a Supreme Court (SC) directive regarding the electoral roll. The SC in the last one year declared null and void two voter lists, which had been prepared without complying with electoral laws and court directives. The present EC decided to

prepare a voter list with photographs afresh but the SC had asked the main election office several times to update the voter list prepared in 2000. Amid such a situation the current EC, which was reconstituted on February 4, is now re-examining the existing electoral rolls ordinance and the court directives regarding the voter list, although it had decided to start the field level work in early August. Sources said the EC in the last two days held hectic meetings to review the proposals for amending

the Electoral Rolls Ordinance 1982, which had been approved in principle by the council of advisers to the caretaker government on July 21. On Thursday, the EC also consulted with Justice Quddus Chowdhury about the matter, whose expertise in preparing drafts for all kinds of laws is well regarded. "We are seriously examining the existing laws and the Supreme Court's directive to avoid any conflict with it regarding the voter list," Election Commissioner

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Bombings, attacks kill 58 in Iraq

AP, Baghdad

A minibus exploded yesterday in a Baghdad market, killing at least six people a brutal reminder of the dangers facing Iraqis, who only hours ago were joyously united after their underdog national soccer team won the prestigious Asian Cup. The US military also said three soldiers had been killed in fighting in Anbar province west of Baghdad last Thursday. The deaths raised to at least 3,651 members of the US military who have died since the

start of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. In all, 58 people nationwide were killed by bombings and attacks. In political developments, the largest Sunni Arab bloc said the government's response to its demands and threat to pull out of the Cabinet this week slammed the door to reforms. The Iraq Accordance Front, which has six Cabinet members and 44 of parliament's 275 seats, has suspended its membership in Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's

government and threatened to quit altogether this week if he doesn't meet certain demands. The move would plunge the US-backed government deeper into crisis as parliament prepares to begin a monthlong break in August without passing key legislation demanded by Washington to promote national unity and stem support for the Sunni-led insurgency. The government has called the threat blackmail and said the Sunni bloc had contributed in

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PHOTO: STAR

A physically challenged man sits at the entrance to a local bus at a terminal in Tongi. The handicapped often face problems as buses usually try to avoid taking them.



PHOTO: STAR

Black fumes billowing from the knitting unit of John Sunshine Textiles at new Export Processing Zone at Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital.

India focuses on security of train service

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, Kolkata

India yesterday said it wanted to ensure foolproof security arrangements for the Kolkata-Dhaka train service before the date of starting of the service is agreed upon. "We have the experience in the vulnerability of cross-border train service [an apparent reference to the blast in Samjhauta Express with Pakistan last year]. Rather than starting the [Kolkata-Dhaka] service in a hurry, we want to ensure complete security safeguards," Additional Secretary (Border Management) in the Indian Home

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Security alert in Khulna for jute mill closure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Security forces including Rapid Action Battalion were put on high alert since yesterday evening fearing violence before finally closing down the state-owned Peoples Jute Mills of the district today midnight. A huge number of personnel of different intelligence agencies were also deployed at all vulnerable points of the entire Khalishpur industrial belt to observe movement of the workers and the CBA leaders. The jute mill was earlier laid off on April 21.

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'Musharraf may quit army to seal Benazir deal'

Pak SC to hear president's army role case

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf may hang up his army uniform to pave the way for a pact with former prime minister Benazir Bhutto after the pair met in Abu Dhabi, a minister said yesterday. Military ruler Musharraf and Benazir held secret talks in the Gulf emirate on Friday for talks on a pre-election power-sharing deal, but reached no agreement on two key issues, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sher Afgan Niazi told AFP. The sticking points were the issue of Musharraf's dual role as president and head of Pakistan's powerful armed forces, and a barn that prevents Benazir having a third term as premier, Niazi said. Benazir, who has lived in self-imposed exile in London and Dubai since 1998 due to corruption claims against her, insisted Sunday she would not strike a deal with Musharraf as long as he remained the army chief. "The two met in Abu Dhabi on Friday to hammer out a political understanding so that moderate forces can join hands to defeat extremists in the coming general

elections," Niazi said. General elections are due by early 2008. Officials have said Musharraf aims to be re-elected separately by parliament as president-in-uniform, ahead of a constitutional deadline for him to quit the army by the end of this year. But Niazi said he believed that Musharraf "would be willing to shed his uniform if he has the PPP (Benazir's Pakistan People's Party) and the ruling Pakistan Muslim League behind him." The secret Benazir-Musharraf meeting has still not been officially confirmed by their spokesmen. The talks come as Musharraf faces trouble on all sides, from a wave of Islamist attacks sparked by the army's storming of a radical Islamabad mosque to a bruising defeat in his row with the country's chief justice. Benazir Bhutto, who served as prime minister from 1988 to 1990 and again from 1993 to 1996, told Sky News on Sunday that she would likely return from exile to stand in Pakistan's next general election.

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Alamgir Kabir sued for patronising JMB militants

UNB, Naogaon

Another case was filed against former BNP state minister Alamgir Kabir, now a leader of LDP, along with 12 suspected activists of the banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) with a Naogaon court yesterday. Anjuara Begum, wife of Jahurul Islam of Bisha village in Atrai upazila, filed the case against Kabir and 12 JMB men for patronising other JMB cadres in toll collection, ransacking and looting at a village in the upazila. The accused JMB cadres are Abul Hossain Master, Abdus Sattar, Jamiruddin, Masud Rana, Jahangir Alam, M Sattar, Gopal, Mukul, Shukur Ali, Khokon, Saiful and Kanu. Judge Sheikh Noor Mohammad ordered the officer-in-charge of Atrai Police Station to conduct further investigation into the case. Earlier on Sunday, an extortion case was filed against the former state minister and 36 JMB suspects with the same court.

Prayer Timing		
July 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		