

Bangladeshi dies of fright in Saudi police custody

AFP, Riyadh
A Bangladeshi man died of fright after being arrested by Saudi Arabia's controversial religious police for washing a car instead of praying, a local newspaper reported yesterday.
The unnamed man died last week in the holy city of Medina after being detained by members of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, Al-Jazirah reported.
The Arabic daily said the man "convulsed in fear after he was arrested, leading to a drop in his blood pressure and causing his death."
The man was arrested by members of the commission, commonly known as the Mutawwa, for washing a car during a time of day when he

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Govt may ban private coaching by teachers

SURANJITH DEABNATH

The government is considering imposing a ban on private coaching or tutoring by school and college teachers.
The decision is aimed at fostering a sound teaching atmosphere in educational institutions and access of equally affordable education for all students.
"We hope that the decision, banning private coaching and tutoring by teachers, will be taken by this week. It will be applicable for both government and non-government teachers," Education Secretary M Mamtazul Islam told The Daily Star.
Following the directive of Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, top officials of different education

authorities including Ministry of Education, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) and secondary and higher secondary education boards held several meetings during the last week and discussed the issue. They are hopeful about coming up with a solution to the issue after a few more meetings, the education secretary added.
Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the first week of June directed education ministry to take effective measures for stopping private coaching and tutoring by the teachers as the practice distracts them from performing their duties effectively at their jobs and thus affects their quality of teaching.
There have been widespread allegations that teachers of both

public and private schools and colleges have been ignoring their duties in classrooms and getting themselves involved with private tutoring or coaching centres for extraincome.
Most participants during the meetings last week agreed that teachers' involvement with private tutoring or coaching centres is greatly harming the quality of education and financially disadvantaged students lose out in the process, said education ministry sources.
Officials from National Curriculum and Textbook Boards (NCTB), Teachers Quality Improvement (TQI) project and Non-Government Teachers

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MALAYSIA 15 Bangladeshi workers freed after weeks' confinement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 Bangladeshi workers were locked up for several weeks in Malaysia until the police released them on Friday after being alerted by Weekend Mail, a Malaysian newspaper.
During a visit to two single-storey and three-room houses at Desa Rasah in the Malaysian city of Seremban by the newspaper's correspondent and members of Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia, the workers were found confined and looking for help desperately.
Eight workers claimed that they were caged in a house for 23 days, according to a report of The Malay Mail Online published yesterday.

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PHOTO: STAR

Aggrieved workers of Cottage Fashions Ltd near New Market in the capital vandalise machinery of the factory yesterday in protest against non-payment of salary and overtime.

HASINA'S EXTORTION CASE

Court asks cops to submit probe report by Sept 2

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of Tejgaon Police Station to submit the probe report of a Tk 3 crore extortion case against detained Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina and her personal staff Manu Majumder by September 2.
Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ashraf Uddin passed the order when the general recording officer (GRO) placed the case before the court saying that Tejgaon police are yet to submit the report.
Earlier, the same court directed police to submit the report on several occasions but police did not complete the investigation.
Tajul Islam Farook, Chairman of Westmont Power Company, filed the case on April 9 under non-bailable sections of the penal code accusing Hasina of extorting Tk 3 crore while she was the prime minister in 1998.
Two more extortion cases were filed against Hasina with Gulshan and Tejgaon police stations on June 13.



PHOTO: STAR

A well-marked low formed in the Bay turns the sea turbulent. The photo was taken from Patenga in Chittagong yesterday.

CRESCENT JUTE MILLS LTD Laid-off, labourers try their hands at crime

EMRAN HOSSAIN, back from Khulna

At the dead end of night two workers of Crescent Jute Mills Ltd (CJML) went out of home to "earn" something for their family starving for the last couple of days. Tiptoeing to nearby railway tracks, they started to remove small iron plates. But a neighbour saw and identified them when they ran off in sheer shame.
Next morning the shabby labourers met the neighbour begging him not to tell anybody their story. But he could not hold himself back telling the story to the reporter only to make it clear that under circumstances a labourer may turn into a petty criminal. He fears some may become professional criminals if the situation does not improve.
This is not the picture of only two labourers. Though their crime seems light in its type, it is taking place at several places in the area almost every night. In the morning the light crimes become talk of the jobless people at tea stalls where many others happen to find a way of income.
There are thousands others like the two CJML workers retrenched

from the four state-owned jute mills including recently closed Peoples Jute Mills Ltd (PJML) who had been remained unpaid for seven months.
The salary unpaid for each labourer on an average stands at Tk 22,400 except the benefits. They owe money to shopkeepers, who have stopped selling their goods including rice on credit.
"We've heard the incident from locals and on roadside but could not get reported," said Bikash, duty officer of Khalishpur Police Station.
"I'm gripped with fear as the pretty crimes are increasing overnight. What would be the scenario if half of the starving community turns to this way or is induced to crime by any extremist faction of Sarbaharas," said Anisur Rahman, who had noticed the iron plate theft.
As the government has not paid their wages, arranged rehabilitation or managed them alternative jobs, the workers are getting involved in small-scale crimes to

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Workers ransack RMG factory for arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers agitating for arrears yesterday ransacked their factory opposite to Dhaka College on Mirpur Road and took position on the road for one and a half hours creating huge traffic congestion in the vicinity.
Workers of the garment factory, Cottage Fashions Ltd, said the owners did not pay their salary for one month and overtime for two months. Having missed on several dates, the authorities fixed yesterday for payment of the arrears, they said.
Waiting till 4:30pm, the workers got impatient and started ransacking the factory.
They kept occupying the adjacent road from 5:00pm to 6:30pm.
New Market police went to the spot and persuaded the workers to free the road by giving assurance of making arrangement for payment of their dues.

5 of a family killed in Ctg bus crash

CU CORRESPONDENT

Five members of a family were killed and 10 others injured when a city service bus and a microbus collided head-on in the port city's Customs Bridge area yesterday morning.
Sources said the accident occurred at around 7.30am when an airport bound microbus rammed into the bus from opposite direction.
The victims were going to Shah Amanat International Airport to receive their expatriate relative Mohammad Naser, who was scheduled to return home from Oman after five years.
The deceased are Naser's daughter Joynob, 5, mother Mollika Begum, 60, nieces Lutfa Akhter, 7, and Kamrunnahar, 17, and nephew Abu Toiyab, 32.
Of them, Mollika, Toiyab and Joynob were killed on the spot while Kamrunnahar and Lutfa died after they were taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital with other injured, sources said.
Naser broke into tears and remained speechless for a few minutes when he came to know about the accident. "The least prepared I was for the news," he told reporters.
Police seized the bus while its driver managed to flee.
A case has been filed with Bandar Police Station.

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Power generation drops by 600MW

Several plants shut for mechanical glitches, maintenance, problem in gas pipeline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country has suffered 600 MW less power generation since August 2 following temporary shutdown of several power plants and units due to technical glitches, regular maintenance work and problems in gas supply line.
Power generation at three power plants and three units of different power stations remained suspended since August 2, causing frequent power cuts and load shedding in different areas across the country every day.

Production at Baghabari 100MW power station and Westmont 90MW power plant stopped on August 2 because gas supply to the stations remained snapped as the pipeline developed cracks under Nalka Bridge on Karatoa river.
Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) in a press release yesterday said Petrobangla is expected to repair the pipeline by August 17.
The Tongi 80MW power plant was shut down on August 10 due to technical problems and was expected to resume operation yesterday.

Barapukuria 125MW power plant's unit-1 was shut down on August 10 for scheduled maintenance. The unit is expected to resume operation on August 31.
Unit-4 of Ghorasal 190MW power plant is expected to resume operation on August 14.
Power generation at unit-2 of Chittagong 180MW power station has been suspended since August 9 for the task of developing data acquisition system. The unit is expected to get back on operation on August 25.

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Mother, 2 kids die in boat capsizing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A woman and her two children died yesterday as their boat capsized in a swamp in Bajurbagh area in the district.
The deceased were identified as Jahanara Begum, her daughter Rifat, 8, and son Zahirul, 6. Locals recovered the bodies.
Locals said a group of 12-15 people of Bajurbagh area went on a boat journey in a local swamp yesterday afternoon. When the boat reached middle of the swamp it all of a sudden overturned with all the passengers, locals said.
Apart from the three, rest of the people managed to swim ashore.

PAK-AFGHAN MEET Tribal leaders pledge to fight terror

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan and Pakistan pledged yesterday to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries in their respective tribal regions and fight the opium trade financing Islamic militants.
Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, addressing 700 tribal delegates at the end of a landmark "peace jirga" aimed at defeating the common threat of al-Qaeda and the Taliban, called for an urgent "rescue" from Muslim extremism.
A statement at the close of the four-day tribal council also agreed to push for reconciliation with the "opposition" -- a reference to Taliban who agree to accept the rule of law.
Participants pledged they would "not allow sanctuaries/training centres for terrorists in their respective countries," according to the declaration text.

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Rule of law vital for ending political divides

Says president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday called for a capable, honest and accountable administration and patriotic and responsible leaders, otherwise risk facing a dysfunctional and immature democracy.
Iajuddin said a proper functioning of democratic norms and values and the establishment of rule of law are necessary to mitigate growing political divides and unite a fractured civil society.
He was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural session of a five-day workshop styled "Democracy, Governance and Security

Reform" at a city hotel. The workshop was jointly organised by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) and the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies (APCSS) from the United States.
US Charge d'Affaires Geeta Pasi, who also addressed the session, said the caretaker government's efforts to lay the foundation for a corruption- and violence-free government is crucial.
"But the foundation must support the finished structure...If the foundation is laid with elements that are themselves undemocratic, the future of the democratic system

itself will be jeopardised," Pasi said.
President Iajuddin said, "For strengthening the base of democracy, there is no alternative to attain good governance...If we can ensure proper functioning of democratic system and unhindered practice of democratic culture, the attainment of good governance and development would be easier."
He said although freedom, prosperity, security reforms and transition to democracy are challenging tasks, the masses demand it because of recent political turmoil that has divided the society.
"In these circumstances, we

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Cargo vessel sinks in Meghna

UNB, Bhola

A cargo ship, carrying 800 sacks of urea fertilizer and 50 sacks of rice, sank due to inclement weather in the Meghna River in Borhanuddin upazila yesterday.
Sources said the ship, 'Baba Lichu Shah', anchored near Hakim Uddin Bazaar in Borhanuddin upazila at about 2:00 am. The ship sank after it was suddenly caught by a violent storm.

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5 US soldiers killed in Iraq

6 Iraqi cops die in separate attacks

AFP, Baghdad

Five American soldiers were killed in fighting around Baghdad, including four in a single attack, the US military said yesterday, as hundreds of Iraqis mourned an assassinated provincial governor.
The Americans were killed on Saturday and all belonged to Task Force Marne, which was deployed in the southern belt of the Iraqi capital four months ago as part of the new US counter-insurgency troop "surge".
An explosion killed four of the soldiers and wounded another four during fighting south of Baghdad. The fifth was killed by small arms fire

while on foot patrol southeast of the capital, the military said.
At least 29 American soldiers have now died in Iraq in August, and the latest deaths took US losses in the country since the 2003 invasion to 3,684, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures.
Sergeant First Class Craig Zentkovich said Task Force Marne deployed to what was an insurgent safe haven outside Baghdad on April 1, part of the massive thrust billed as a last-ditch plan to stabilise Iraq after four years of war.
"Their mission is primarily to stop the flow of insurgents and weapons into Baghdad," said Zentkovich.

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority employees knock down illegal structures to recover Basil Lake near Mirpur Mazar Road in the capital yesterday.

Hardline group rallies for world Islamic rule in Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta

More than 70,000 members of a hardline Muslim group held a rally in Indonesia that heard calls for a caliphate -- or Islamic rule -- to govern the world.
The supporters of the Hizbut Tahrir group filled up most of an 80,000-seat sports stadium in the capital Jakarta, waving flags as they heard fiery speeches saying it was "time for the caliphate to reign."
The meeting was held as part of "civic education" for Indonesian Muslims, said Muhammad Ismail Yusanto, a spokesman for Hizbut Tahrir.
The organisation advocates Islamic rule and is banned in several Middle Eastern countries.

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