

Black money holders won't be allowed to contest polls

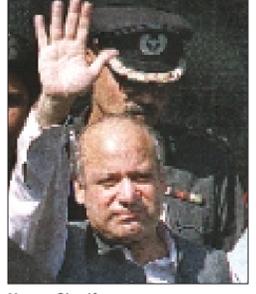
Says CEC UNB, Faridpur

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) will ensure that black-money holders cannot contest the next polls.

Nawaz free to return home, rules Pak SC

Lawyers move SC to restrain Musharraf from re-election

Pakistan's Supreme Court said yesterday that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif could return home after seven years in exile imposed by his embattled arch foe President Pervez Musharraf.



Nawaz Sharif

contest forthcoming general elections due by early next year. Sharif was ousted in October 1999 by Musharraf, who had him sentenced to life in prison on hijacking, tax evasion and treason charges.

RU VIOLENCE 2500 students sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A case was filed with Motihar Police Station yesterday accusing 2500 RU students of Wednesday's violence on the university campus and in its surrounding areas.

Sub-inspector (SI) Faruk Hossain lodged the case. Charges of a murder and damaging public

Erratum

In the Star Weekend magazine today August 24, on page 9, the designation of Chief of the General Staff of the Army Major General Sina Ibne Jamali has been wrongly mentioned as Major. It was a computer error and we regret the inadvertent mistake.

Flood death toll rises to 662

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 24 deaths reported yesterday, the number of people who died of flood-related causes reached 662, according to the control room at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the total, 585 people -- most of them children -- drowned, snakebite killed 44, 19 died from diarrhoea and 14 of respiratory infections.

The DGHS control room said diarrhoeal infections rose to 4013 yesterday from 3936 the day before while International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) reported 573 new diarrhoea patients at its Mohakhali hospital yesterday.

room, 1451 people were infected with skin diseases, 1313 with respiratory infections, 617 with eye infections, 107 sustained injuries and seven were snakebite victims, while 5210 were infected with other related diseases across the country till yesterday.

Meantime, various social and charitable organisations continued relief aid in various flood-hit areas.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) distributed relief materials and money to 200 flood-affected families at Jheutia village of Teutia union in Munshiganj's Louhajang upazila on August 22.

Bapa leaders Shahjahan Mridha

ISPR clarifies Moeen's remark on banks

UNB, Dhaka

Inter-service Public Relations (ISPR) yesterday termed "unwarranted" some newspaper reports stating that Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed brought allegations of blackmailing against all banks while addressing the AGM of Bangladesh Association of Bankers (Bab) on Tuesday.

The military press wing clarified that as chairman of the Trust Bank, General Moeen attended the Bab's annual general meeting at its office on August 21.

"Speaking as chairman of a bank, the army chief highlighted important issues of the banking sector as well as praised various

BANGLADESHI WORKERS

Foreign adviser asks Maldives to ensure security

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury has expressed concern over the alleged attacks on Bangladeshi workers in the Maldives, resulting in death of a worker.

In a letter to the Maldives foreign minister yesterday, the adviser urged him to take all necessary steps to ensure security of Bangladeshi workers in his country.

He also asked for "enhanced measures" in this respect, referring to the mutual trust and understanding that are the hallmarks of the bilateral relations.

The adviser talked to the Bangladesh High Commissioner in Male, Mijarul Quayes, and asked him to constantly monitor the situation and report thereon.

The envoy told the adviser that the Maldives government had assured him that the incident was being "thoroughly investigated" and the culprits would be punished.



Farmgate, one of the busiest spots in Dhaka, gave a deserted look during curfew hours yesterday. The photo was taken around 9:00am.

Internet, telecoms disrupted as fibre optic line snapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internet and international telecom services were disrupted from early Thursday as miscreants snapped the fibre optic line near Cox's Bazar that connects the country to the submarine cable, sources said.

The disruption deprives the line's owner--Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB)-- of a revenue of \$70,000 per hour.

BTTB sources said miscreants cut the fibre optic line at two points--about 60 metres off each other--in Lohagara, 76km off Chittagong city.

"Apparently this is an act of sabotage because nobody stole the cable," said an official.

Restoration of the line started yesterday morning. But due to rain, it was being delayed. The line was restored at around 7:30pm, sources said.

Since the submarine cable was launched last year, miscreants snapped the fibre optic line for more than a dozen times in the same area. But there had been no such incident after the change of government in January this year.

Due to lack of a backup system, the BTTB's internet and telecom services become disrupted every time miscreants snap the line, and it incurs huge financial losses.

The BTTB has been pursuing a

proposal for a back up fibre optic line for more than 18 months. According to its proposal, the BTTB has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) to use the PGCB fibre optic line as a back up. But without any genuine reason, the ministry is sitting on this proposal.

"PGCB's line is solid and there can't be any reason for delaying use of that line as a back up," said one source.

The BTTB has received a proposal from private phone company Bangla Phone to share its fibre optic line.

"But most importantly, the line now lacks supervision by experienced and efficient officials. The BTTB chairman recently made some important transfers against the opinion of BTTB members. One such case is transfer of BTTB director (satellite) Giasuddin to Dhaka from Chittagong. Another case is transfer of the official in charge of Cox's Bazar Submarine Cable Landing Station to Dhaka," noted the source.

Both the director (satellite) and the other official are experienced and specially trained to handle

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Judgment in case against Huda couple not delivered

UNB, Dhaka

The anti-graft special court yesterday could not deliver the judgment in two cases against former minister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda, and Rabeya Siraj, wife of former minister Shahjahan Siraj, due to unscheduled closure of courts.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Prosecutor Mosharrif Hossain Kjal yesterday told the news agency that the court would set a new date for pronouncement of judgment in the cases.

In one case, detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda along with his wife Sigma is facing a Tk 2.40-crore bribery charge.

In the other case, Rabeya Siraj, wife of former jute minister Shahjahan Siraj, is charged with income tax evasion.

Rabeya is being tried in absentia, as she went into hiding following the launch of the anti-graft drive.

25 killed in Brazil prison fire

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Some 25 inmates of a Brazil prison burned to death yesterday after prisoners set fire to mattresses in the jail during a clash between rival gangs, officials said.

The fire broke out during a dawn riot at the prison in Ponte Nova, some 180 kilometers (110 miles) southeast of the city of Belo Horizonte.

"We can confirm the death of 25 prisoners," a spokesman for the Minas Gerais state told AFP.

A group of prisoners escaped from one part of the prison and entered another wing of the jail where they surrounded a rival gang, setting the mattresses in their cells on fire, he said. The blaze ravaged the top floor of the building.

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A sick woman being taken to hospital on a rickshaw as her attendant holds the saline bag. The photo was taken from Malibagh during curfew hours yesterday.

Media men need to show curfew pass

BSS, Dhaka

All media men, working both in the print and electronic media, have been requested to collect their curfew pass for movement on an emergency basis during the curfew hours.

The home ministry in a notification issued yesterday urged all concerned, especially the media men, to collect their curfew pass from the respective metropolitan police commissioner's office.

WHO warns over global epidemic risk

AFP, Geneva

Infectious diseases are emerging faster than ever before, the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned in a report on Thursday, urging closer global cooperation to tackle the growing health threat.

The report warned of the threat from epidemics, foodborne diseases, chemical, biological or nuclear accidents or attacks and industrial pollution.

It also evoked climate change "that may put millions of people at risk in several countries."

Open sharing of medical knowledge, technology and supplies between rich and poor countries is also crucial, and "one of the most feasible routes to global health security," it said in the 2007 World Health Report "A Safer Future".

Since the 1970s new diseases have been identified at the "unprecedented" rate of one or more per year, the report said.

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23 killed in Iraq violence

Two car bombers attack US, Iraqi outpost

AFP, Baquba/ Baghdad

Suspected al-Qaeda fighters clashed with police and members of a rival militant group on Thursday after an attack on the homes of tribal sheikhs that left 23 people dead and another 15 kidnapped.

Brigadier General Ali Dilayan, chief of police in Baquba, capital of the restive province of Diyala, told AFP that 200 fighters from al-Qaeda's Iraqi affiliate attacked the small town of Kanan at dawn.

"The first attack was against a mosque," he told AFP. "They blew up the mosque, then they bombed houses crowded with family members."

Three houses were attacked, including those of two sheikhs who support Iraqi police and US troops in their fight against al-Qaeda, he said.

Police counterattacked with the support of gunmen from the Brigades of the 1920 Revolution, a Sunni insurgent group which was once allied to al-Qaeda but which has become one of its fiercest rivals.

In one house, Sheikh Yunis al-Tae and an unknown number of his sons were killed, Dilayan said, adding that 17 people were wounded.

Among those killed were 22 civilians and a police officer and Dilayan warned that the toll could rise as emergency workers dig

through the rubble. "We have arrested 22 al-Qaeda suspects," he said, adding that they were detained south of Kanan, 50km from Baghdad, in an area known to be a stronghold of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The US military blames the militant group for much of the violence besetting Iraq. In recent months al-Qaeda has begun attacking the increasing number of Sunni Arab tribesmen who support US-led forces in fighting the militants.

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INDIAN NUKE DEAL WITH US Left ally threatens again to quit govt

AFP, New Delhi

India's communists stepped up the pressure on the minority Congress government yesterday with a new threat to withdraw their support if it implements a civilian nuclear deal with the United States.

The row over the pact, seen as the cornerstone of deeper ties with Washington, has left Premier Manmohan Singh facing his biggest test since taking power in 2004.

The latest warning came at the end of a two-day meeting of the central committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI(M),

in New Delhi. "We will withdraw support to the government if it goes ahead with operationalising the agreement," a statement by party leaders said.

"The Central Committee has endorsed the stand of the (policy-making) politburo in this regard and authorised it to take an appropriate decision at an appropriate time," the leaders said, according to the Press Trust of India.

The communists, who prop up the minority ruling coalition in parliament, have rejected the deal,

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BSF kills 1

UNB, Benapole

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was killed and another injured when Indian Border Security Force (BSF) sprayed bullets on them at Putkhal frontier early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Abdul Alim, 30, son of Hanif Ali of Abhaybas village.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources said the Indian border

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Table with Prayer Timing for August 24, including Azan and Jamaat times for Fajr, Juma, Asr, Maghrib, and Esha.