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JAMUNA BRIDGE CRACKS Reconsider decision to sue Hyundai Seoul urges Dhaka UNB, Dhaka

South Korea has requested Bangladesh to reconsider its decision to go to international court against the Korean construction company Hyundai for the expanding cracks in the Jamuna Bridge. After a meeting with Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Ghulam Quader yesterday, Korean Ambassador in Dhaka Suk Bum Park told reporters that Bangladesh seemed to have taken the decision a bit hastily on going to international court against Hyundai. He requested the adviser to reconsider the decision. The ambassador said Hyundai is a reputed company of the world and "it's not fair to blame the

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Jalil goes to Singapore tonight for treatment

Govt decides to release him on 1-month parole

STAR REPORT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil will fly to Singapore tonight for treatment as the government yesterday decided to release him on a 30-day parole considering his critical condition. Suffering from heart and kidney problems compounded by diabetes, he was undergoing treatment at LabAid Cardiac Hospital. Straight from there, he would be taken to the airport to board a Singapore-bound flight at 11:45pm today. Expenses for treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital would be borne by his family, Inspector General (prisons) Brig Gen Zakir



Hassan told The Daily Star last night. The ailing leader will be accompanied by his wife Rehana Jalil, said sources close to the family.

Earlier in the day, a special meeting of the cabinet decided to parole the AL general secretary for treatment abroad following recommendations of a high-powered medical board. Meanwhile, family members and party colleagues went to LabAid at around 8:00pm to take him to his Gulshan residence, but doctors said his health does not permit even a night's stay off hospital. "We were ready to release him as we knew that he would fly tomorrow [today]. But doctors said it would not be a good idea to let him leave hospital since he is on a life support system," said the IG (prisons).

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Contempt of court ordinance okayed

ASHFAQ WARES KHAN

The cabinet yesterday approved in principle the much-talked about Contempt of Court Ordinance to clarify the definition of contempt, enhance accountability of judges and reduce chances of future arbitrary rulings. The council of advisers also approved in principle the long-awaited Anti-Money-Laundering Ordinance, 2008, an ordinance to make the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) a private company, and an ordinance to establish a public university in Rangpur. "The contempt of court ordinance has been designed to ensure people's rights as it will enable the press to hold the courts and judges accountable and it is for everyone's benefit," said the Chief Adviser's

Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim in a press briefing after the weekly cabinet meeting. The ordinance, once promulgated after vetting by the law ministry, would replace the Contempt of Court Act 1926. "Any wilful act, statement or expression through words or signs which is interpreted to violate or undermine a verdict, decree, order, writ or warrant issued by a court will be considered a contempt of court," Fahim said. It will also consider any obstruction of justice, slander or libel of a court and personal criticism of a judge while performing judicial functions as contempt of court. A contempt of court would be punishable by six months' imprisonment or a Tk 20,000 fine. The ordinance allows the press

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Swindler NGO men flee with Tk 250cr

2 lakh cheated of their last penny

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Mozahar Hossain was enthusiastic about being a member of local NGO Freedom Unnayan Sangstha in Natore depositing only Tk 6,400, as the return seemed very promising. Initially he was asked to bring two more members to start getting Tk 570 a week until Tk 29,540 in 57 weeks. Mozahar, a rickshaw-puller from Mominpur, Naldanga borrowed Tk 70,000 mortgaging his only piece of land and put down the money. He was planning to deposit more when he got back Tk 16,000 in weekly payments. Housewife Sabiha Begum of Mollapara in Puthia, Rajshahi borrowed Tk 38,000 from Karitas, Grameen Bank and Padakkhep and credited those with the NGO. She was getting Tk 3,990 per week. Thousands of ignorant people from remote villages in Natore, Rajshahi and neighbouring districts were enthusiastic about making quick money, even by selling everything they had and taking loans. But to their utter despair,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Freedom director Ishaq Mia and other officials disappeared overnight with nearly Tk 250 crore closing its 2,000 branches on Thursday. The NGO collected the money from about 2 lakh members saying they were doing garment business. Four members have been dead so far, three of them died of heart attack and the other committed suicide. A huge contingent of police was deployed at villages in Naldanga following angry gathering of thousands of disarrayed NGO members. Furious people damaged and torched Freedom central office and 10 branches on Friday and assaulted a number of employees available on the scene. Based in remote Nasratpur village at Naldanga in Natore, Freedom activities were spreading to other areas including Bagha, Charghat, Durgapur, Puthia, and Bagmara upazilas in Rajshahi, Naldanga, Sadar, Lapur, Bagatipara of Natore, Kahalu of Bogra, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Dinajpur and Kushtia.

Voter listing progress hailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator Renata Dessallien yesterday called on the caretaker government to complete its proposed reforms, the political parties to adopt democratic practices, and voters to choose competent candidates in the upcoming elections. The caretaker government must complete the most vital element of its good governance, the reforms agenda, the political parties must put their best foot forward and play their part constructively while internalising democratic practices," said Renata while speaking at a programme at a city hotel titled "Celebrating the Halfway Mark of Voter Registration".

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Seven bodies of Thursday's launch capsiz victims were recovered by their relatives using this innovative tool after the government called off search operations. The photo was taken on the Buriganga near Mokampara yesterday.

LAUNCH TOLL STANDS AT 46 Relatives retrieve six more bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The relatives of missing passengers in Thursday's launch capsiz in Buriganga recovered six more bodies from the river yesterday, raising the death toll to 46. They began their search on Saturday as the authorities wrapped up rescue operation Friday morning that utterly frustrated them. The relatives dragged specially crafted hooks along the riverbed within a radius of one kilometre. They pulled one body Saturday using the innovative technique.

The victims, whose bodies were found yesterday, are Ridoy, 7, Jhumka, 18, Rajib, 8, and Habibur Rahman, 30. A man, aged around 50, and a one-year-old girl could not be identified. The relatives of two more passengers, presumably dead, continued their search till yesterday afternoon. Humayun Kabir is one of them who was scouring the waters for his brother Habibur Rahman. Habib, along with his five-year-old son Noor Nabi, was on board the launch on his way to an in-laws

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Gen Moeen's India visit successful Says Iftekhar

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said Army Chief of Staff General Moeen U Ahmed's week-long visit to India has been "extremely successful" for expanding cooperation between the two close-door neighbours. "It seems to me this visit has been extremely successful. Through this visit cooperation among us will expand further," he told reporters responding to a query on Gen Moeen's visit to India at the invitation of the Indian Army chief. Gen Moeen, who returned home from Kolkata Saturday night, had discussions with Indian Defence Minister AK Antony, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and chiefs of the Indian three services on bilateral issues of mutual interests in New Delhi on February 25. Iftekhar said this visit would help bring stability to the bilateral relations with India as Bangladesh

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Five die of Nipah virus

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Five people including three members of a family died of Nipah virus at a hospital in Faridpur on Saturday evening. The dead are Aleya Begum, 30, wife of Kamal Mollah of Borohilla village in Rajbari, their sons Jewel, 14, and Robiul Islam, 9, Dipu, 28, son of Ohab of Chardubail of Sadarpur upazila in Faridpur, and Nasima Akter, 9, daughter of Alauddin of Borohilla village under Baliakandi upazila in Rajbari. Sources said they were admitted to Faridpur Medical College and Hospital (FMCH) for better treatment on Saturday following advice of doctors in Rajbari. Civil Surgeon of FMCH Motiur Rahaman said two other patients Alamin, 19, of Rajbari and Harun Mollah, 30 of Vobukdia in Faridpur suffering from encephalitis caused by the deadly virus had been receiving treatment at the hospital. He said two separate beds for such patients have been arranged at the FMCH. In reply to another question, he said any medical team is yet to be sent there from Dhaka to assist them.

We Mourn



The sudden demise of Mr. Imran Rahman, Managing Director and CEO of BRAC Bank Ltd, on February 28, 2008 has deeply shocked us all (Inna Lillaha.....Rajeun). We express our most profound grief and sorrow at the untimely irreplaceable loss of his death. May Allah the Almighty bless his departed soul with eternal peace.

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