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HR records inconsistent, contradictory
Says Ain o Salish Kendra
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra, a human rights and legal service commission, in its annual report on human rights in Bangladesh, 2007 says the government's record has been inconsistent and contradictory.

The report has been summarised mentioning that human rights violation, marginalisation of minority communities and harassment of indigenous communities in different areas including Chittagong Hill Tracts continued like previous years. Moreover, the role of army and intelligence agencies in rights violation remained opaque and officially undocumented.

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4 YEARS OF OPERATIONS
Rab recovers image as 'crossfire' marks fall

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has apparently been careful in the last one year to improve its image marred greatly at home and abroad because of the huge number of deaths in "crossfire" as such extrajudicial killings have reduced significantly during the period.

Thirty-four incidents of crossfire took place since June 2007 while the figure was 179 during the 10 months from August 2006 to May 2007.

Rab officials said for the first time since its inception there was

no incident of crossfire throughout the month of February this year.

A total of 472 alleged criminals have so far been killed in the name of "crossfire" or "encounter" between associates of the criminals and Rab members.

Meanwhile, the elite force, which has made significant achievement in containing the slide in law and order and bringing activities of the Islamist militants under control, steps into the fifth year today with new commitment to play more successful role to curb crime and ensure people's security by introducing more modern

technology and equipment.

Sources said the initiative to restore the Rab's image was taken in the wake of strong criticism by the human rights groups both at home and abroad for the extrajudicial killings.

Former adviser and Executive Director of Ain o Salish Kendra Sultana Kamal said, "Death in so-called crossfire is unconstitutional and whatever the number it is a matter of grave concern to me as a right activist."

The US Department of State in its annual report "Human Rights

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COLD STORAGE
Good news for Munshiganj potato farmers

MUNSHIGANJ

Munshiganj district administration yesterday decided to cancel the advance reservation system at cold storages to ensure preservation of potato grown by genuine potato farmers.

The decision came at a time when the potato farmers were being refused storage spaces in the cold storages as a section of middlemen and hoarders had been booking cold storage spaces in advance.

The decision was taken during a meeting of farmers, cold storage owners, Department of Agriculture Extension officials and journalists

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OVERSEAS LABOUR MARKET
Brokers make visas, job papers costlier

PORIMOL PALMA

Middlemen and employers are extorting high prices for visas and job approvals from jobseekers in the Middle East and Malaysia, gradually destroying the overseas labour markets—lifeline of the country's economy.

In addition to paying extra amount, the workers also get low wages, which create in them a tendency to switch jobs, do part-time work in violation of laws and even commit crime.

Such activities highly irritate the employers and the host countries, ultimately creating obstacles to sending workers abroad, say officials and industry insiders.

According to them, these practices are the major reasons that Kuwait stopped recruiting workers from Bangladesh in late 2006 and Malaysia imposed restrictions on hiring Bangladeshi workers in late 2007.

Saudi Arabia on Sunday announced it has limited recruitment of Bangladeshis to establishments that need qualified personnel in the medical and engineering fields. Besides, the Kingdom has set workers' quota at 20 percent in cleaning and maintenance jobs only for establishments having contracts with government.

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MiG-29 case
charge-framing hearing Apr 9

COURT CORRESPONDENT

After getting clearance from the Supreme Court, a Dhaka court yesterday fixed April 9 for hearing on charge framing against detained former premier Sheikh Hasina and six others in connection with the MiG-29 corruption case.

Judge Golam Mortuza Majumder of the Special Court for Dhaka Division passed the order after the prosecution informed the court about the March 18 Supreme Court judgement that finally cleared the way for resuming the stalled trial proceedings.

The court directed the jail authorities to produce Hasina, now under treatment at Square Hospital in the capital, before the court on the scheduled date.

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5.16cr registered as voters so far
Another 3cr to be enrolled by June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One crore people have been registered as voters with photographs in last 20 days, raising the number of those on the electoral roll to 5.16 crore as of March 22.

Another 3 crore are expected to be listed as voters till the end of June, the time Election Commission's (EC) roadmap stipulates for the field level task to be wrapped up.

According to EC estimates, there will be around 8 crore electors on the register being prepared for the long-stalled ninth parliamentary polls planned to be held

by the year-end.

With voter listing picking up momentum across the country, senior officials of the EC and the armed forces are confident of finishing the job well within the time frame.

"On average, four lakh people get registered as voters every day. We have directed the officials to complete the registration by June," a senior official told The Daily Star yesterday.

Last week, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Islam said registration of 5

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The Saudi Arabian Airlines' Boeing-747 on the south taxiway of Zia International Airport after it suffered an engine fire while landing yesterday afternoon.

Saudi plane catches fire at ZIA
All passengers, crew survive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Passengers of a Saudi Arabian airliner had a close shave yesterday afternoon when an engine of the Boeing 747-300 aircraft caught fire during landing at Zia International Airport (ZIA).

Air Commodore Sakeb Khan Majlis, chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said, "About 307 passengers and crew on board the aircraft were safely evacuated through emergency exits of the aircraft."

However, about 15-20 panic-stricken passengers suffered a few cuts and bruises during the half-hour-long ordeal of descending

from the emergency exits, said a security official of ZIA while speaking with The Daily Star.

The Saudi Arabian Airlines aircraft (flight number SV 810), leased from Air Atlanta, arrived in Dhaka from Jeddah via Madina, a flight operations official at Biman Bangladesh Airlines said.

The CAAB chairman told The Daily Star that an enquiry committee headed by Wing Commander Kamrul Hasan, director of flight safety, has been formed to investigate the incident and submit its report within the next seven days.

A team of experts from the Saudi Arabian Airlines is also on their way

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Correction

A report published in The Daily Star Tuesday mistakenly quoted Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam as saying that average spending of the ADP in the last few years' budgets shows that real implementation is not more than 17-18 percent.

Actually, the finance adviser said average spending of the ADP in the last few years' budgets shows that real utilisation is not more than Tk 17,000 crore to Tk 18,000 crore.

Prayer Timing

March 26

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation



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