

Mobile jammer at Dhaka jail not working

Cellphone towers in the vicinity blamed

KAILASH SARKAR

The cellphone jammer installed in Dhaka Central Jail to prevent unauthorised phone calls of inmates does not work properly due to the jail's close proximity to several cellphone towers.

Inspector General of Prisons (IGP-prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan told The Daily Star, "We would write soon to Bangladesh Telephone Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and different cellphone operators informing them about the problem."

Detecting use of cellphones by inmates violating the jail code, the government decided to install cellphone jammers in all 67 prisons across the country.

During the first week of this month, the Dhaka Central jail authorities installed a powerful cellphone jammer. The authorities found out the problem after they installed the device.

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TUESDAY'S BLASTS 40 Bangladeshis rounded up in Rajasthan

PTI, Jaipur

Illegal Bangladeshi migrants in Rajasthan will be identified in 30 days and could be deported as they came under the scanner of the state government after the serial blasts while a hotelier claimed he saw one of the suspects in Udaipur two days before the attack.

Investigators got fresh leads like ten bicycles having been bought about two to three hours before Tuesday night's blasts that left 64 dead but a breakthrough eluded them.

With the Bangladesh-based Hujj being suspected to be behind the blasts, state PWD Minister Rajendra Singh Rathore said the state government is on a hunt for Bangladeshis with suspected criminal background. Forty such Bangladeshi nationals have been rounded up so far and are being interrogated, he said. Eight of them were detained in Ajmer.

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Army recovers arms, ammo in 2 CHT dists

STAR REPORT

Army personnel recovered firearms, ammunition, firearms-making equipment mobile phones, medicine and surgical equipment from two hideouts of criminals at Ugoichhari of Rangamati and at Ujirchhara of Khargachhari early yesterday.

Our correspondent from Rangamati reported that security personnel, led by Lt Col Masud Razzak, cordoned off a forest at Ugoichhari, some 11-km from the district town, on Thursday night.

They searched a den of criminals in the forest throughout the night and recovered two pistols.

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Anwar Choudhury leaves today

UNB, Dhaka

Wrapping up his four-year assignment in Bangladesh, British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury leaves this morning for London by a British Airways flight.

Choudhury was not only an eyewitness to the twist and turns of the country's politics but also appeared as a troubleshooter with former US ambassador Patricia Butenis ahead of the state of emergency last year.

He also made his lively presence in sports and cultural arena and appeared on television screen as a singer.

During his tenure, as many as four British ministers visited Bangladesh while a summit meeting between Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown took place.

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Announcement

The Daily Star carries a four-page special supplement on Bangladesh Business Awards 2007 on Monday (May 19). Ask your hawk for your copy.

DHAKA-KOLKATA TRAIN SERVICE

Long waits for customs job discouraging passengers

SHAMIM ASHRAF

Launched amid much enthusiasm and fanfare over a month ago, Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train service now sees not even one third of seat capacity of the carriages used.

Passengers attribute poor show of

the Maitree Express service to long stops at the border stations--Darshana in Bangladesh and Gede in India--for immigration and customs formalities, twice-a-week only (Saturday-Sunday) schedule and hassles in ticket purchase in Kolkata.

Sources said necessary efforts to popularise the train service are yet

to be made by the ministries concerned in both the countries, their business communities and cultural and tourism organisations, contributing to its present state.

Bangladesh officials however said the two countries have already worked out solutions to passenger sufferings and are

making passenger-friendly schedule for the train service.

"We hope to see a rise in the number of passengers with some steps taken shortly," ATKM Ismail, additional secretary of communications ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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These file photos show Maitree Express having a locomotive change at Darshana Railway Station and, right, passengers inside the train get weary of the delay of over two hours there. The number of Dhaka-Kolkata train passengers is decreasing day by day due to lengthy immigration checks.



FILE PHOTO

BNP reunification move on the rocks again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just when reunification of BNP seemed only a matter of time, a cloud of uncertainty formed over the process again.

The uncertainty was created by pro-Khaleida faction chief Khandaker Delwar Hossain's intransigence over making a joint public statement with the rival faction, and his insistence that pro-Saifur faction makes a public announcement nullifying its founding meeting, even before the next reunification meeting of the feuding factions, according to sources.

Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed,

acting secretary general of pro-Saifur faction, yesterday at a news briefing in his Banani residence said a scheduled meeting between the two factions did not take place on Thursday because Khaleida loyalists cancelled the meeting at the eleventh hour, saying the reunification process had been 'suspended' on their part 'for the time being'.

Detained Chairperson Khaleida Zia's Adviser Brig Gen (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah, who is also a key leader of Delwar-led faction, however claimed yesterday that senior leaders of both factions had reached a consensus for reunification over the phone. "Some formal-

ities still remain to be taken care of, but reunification is now only a matter of time," he told reporters in his New DOHS residence in the capital.

"Some doubts might still be there in a few leaders' minds, which will also be dispelled soon. Reunification is a must before the death anniversary of party's founder Ziaur Rahman on May 30," he added.

Meanwhile, Hafiz said seven leaders from pro-Khaleida faction and five from his group were scheduled to meet in a restaurant in the capital at 3:00pm on Thursday for hammering out the

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Free Hasina before dialogue

AL reiterates demand

UNB, Dhaka

The key leaders of Awami League yesterday said the party will not participate in the government-proposed dialogue and the parliamentary election without detained party chief Sheikh Hasina.

They asked the government for immediate and unconditional release of Hasina before the dialogue to make it fruitful.

The AL leaders were addressing the Dhaka divisional representatives' council of Jubo Mohila League at the party central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

Jubo Mohila League President

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FULL TEXT OF SC JUDGMENTS

Timely availability to serve justice better, say experts

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Some senior lawyers and former judges believe quick and full delivery of the Supreme Court (SC) judgments, particularly the ones of crucial importance, would allay concerns among the litigants and lawyers.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, they said they are interested to know observations and findings of the Appellate Division of the SC in the judgments it pronounced of late only by saying "appeal allowed".

Describing the judgments as

important for the nation, they said people have a right to know on what arguments and laws the decisions were based.

In its judgments on April 23 and May 8, the apex court has cleared the way for trial of all cases under the emergency power rules (EPR) and declared the High Court (HC) has no authority to grant bail in those cases.

The lawyers concerned said they have yet to receive a copy of the judgments and have a look at the content.

They, however, said workload of the judges and time constraints

can often cause delay in readying the judgments.

Attorney General (AG) barrister Fida M Kamal said the Appellate Division's taking time in issuing full text of a judgment is quite normal and there is no alternative to this practice.

He said, "All opinions, submissions and views made by counsels for both the sides in a case are included in the complete judgment and so taking time in doing the job is natural and inevitable."

"The media can publish the apex court judgments only on

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PHOTO: STAR

The 19th century buildings of Chittagong Central Jail, built during the British era, are being torn down to make way for a new jailhouse.

50 hurt as KU students clash with transport workers and police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least 50 people, including six policemen, were injured as students of Khulna University (KU) clashed with transport workers at Sonadanga bus terminal at Thursday midnight and then with police on Khulna-Satkhira Highway yesterday.

Three KU students injured in the clashes are now undergoing treatment at a local clinic and Khulna Medical College Hospital.

They are Manotosh, Asad and Maruf of computer science department of the university.

Following an emergency meeting, the university authorities asked the students to vacate their dormitories by 2:00pm yesterday. The university is scheduled to go on a month-long summer vacation from tomorrow.

Female students vacated their hall by 4:00pm yesterday, but the male students were seen staying at

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Prices of eggs, battery chickens spiral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of eggs rose sharply in the city's kitchen markets in the last two days while the price of battery chicken also witnessed a fresh hike.

Meanwhile, prices of rice varieties, pulses and edible oil remained stable in the last one week.

The price of eggs rose to Tk 23-26 a hali (four pieces), which was sold at Tk 21-22 two days ago.

Egg seller Zakir Hossain at Karwan Bazar kitchen market said he sold eggs for Tk 21-22 a hali two days ago but suddenly its price increased to Tk 24 yesterday. The

sale of eggs came down due to the sudden price hike, he added.

Wholesalers of the wholesale egg market at Tejgaon Railway Station blamed poor supply for the price spiral of eggs. They said the price of eggs has been rising steadily for the last one month.

Replying to a query, they said the supply of eggs remains poor following the culling of thousands of birds during the outbreak of bird flu in the country. Besides, the poultry farms, affected by bird flu, are yet to recover the losses, they added.

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Financial grants for 224 DU students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 224 students of Dhaka University (DU) were awarded financial grants yesterday in recognition of their outstanding academic results.

Eastern Bank Ltd (EBL) in cooperation with Dhaka University Alumni Association (DUAA) awarded the meritorious students of all 56 departments of DU, four of each department, at a ceremony at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium as part of their five-year financial grant programme.

All 224 students received a onetime grant of Tk 2,500 and a Certificate of Excellence at the ceremony for their outstanding academic achievements in 2007. The students would also get free career counselling, the organisers said.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, Chairman of EBL Ahmed Qamrul Islam Chowdhury OBE, and DUAA President Syed Manzur Elahi handed over the grants to seven students yesterday.

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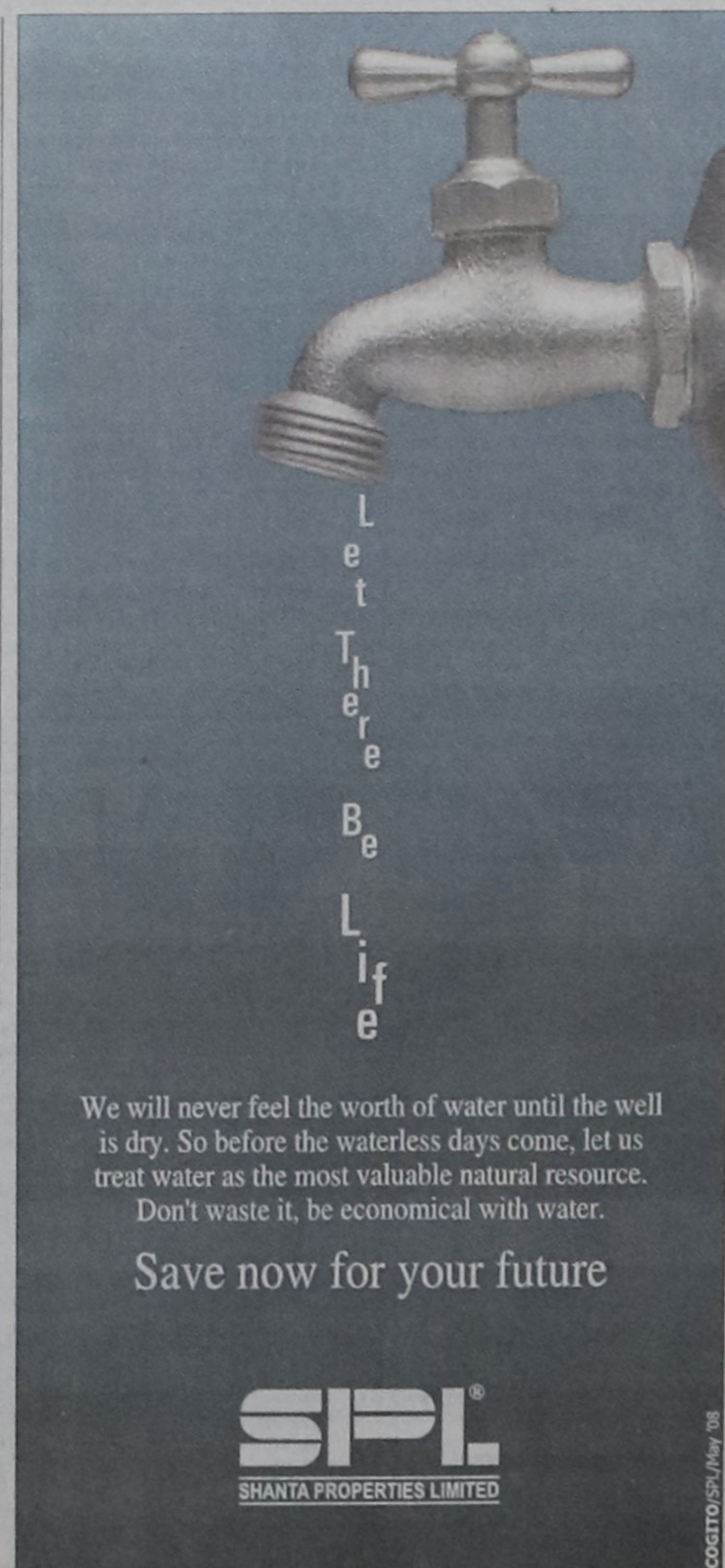
Probe identifies 7 reasons behind Nikli disaster

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

One of the two probe bodies formed to investigate last week's launch capsized in Ghorautra river in Nikli upazila submitted its report yesterday, identifying seven reasons behind the disaster that claimed at least 46 people.

Nikli Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Kazi Saiful Islam, who is a member of the probe body, submitted the report to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sultan Ahmed, saying the structure of the ill-fated launch was tampered and

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