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China fights to stave off disease amid miracle quake rescues

AFP, Shifang

China ramped up efforts yesterday to stave off disease for millions of earthquake victims, as more miracle rescues amid the rubble offered hope in an increasingly desperate battle to save lives.

Five days after the enormous earthquake that the government estimates killed more than 50,000 people, there were rising concerns over potential disease outbreaks among the nearly five million people who have lost their homes.

Anwar Choudhury bids farewell

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anwar Choudhury left Dhaka yesterday ending his four-year stint as British high commissioner to Bangladesh.

Choudhury, the first Bangladeshi-born British high commissioner here, told reporters before his departure, "Farewell Bangladesh. Staywell."

He had arrived in Dhaka in May 2004 and his tenure ended in May last year but it was extended to May 13 this year. He will be replaced by Stephen Evans.

Choudhury will join Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office as director of international organisations.

During his eventful tenure here, Choudhury survived an attempt on his life. He was the target of a grenade attack in Sylhet that left him seriously wounded and three others killed.

2 die jumping off train in panic

UNB, B'baria

Two people died and two others were injured as they jumped from a moving train at Sadar Rasulpur on Dhaka-Chittagong route yesterday morning.

Police and witnesses said passengers of the Dhaka-bound inter-city train got panicked as it suddenly jerked at about 10.30am.

They said four of the panicked passengers jumped from the train and two of them died on the spot while the rest received injuries.

One of the deceased was identified as Nayem, 12, while the other, aged around 30, could not be identified.

The injured, Taslim Sheela, 7, and Shamim, 30, were admitted to Akhaura Hospital.



PHOTO: STAR

Seven large trees felled by Roads and Highways Department on the road linking Farmgate and Manik Miah Avenue as the authorities feared those were 'threat' to pedestrians during storms.

Lankan army bombs rebel air strip

Clashes leave 16 Tigers dead

AP, AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan air force jets bombed an air strip used by Tamil Tiger rebels, while 16 insurgents were killed in ground clashes in the north, the military said yesterday.

The attacks Friday came after a suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle into a bus carrying riot police in the heart of the capital, killing 10 people.

A military statement said pilots confirmed bombing the runway in rebel-held Iranamadu village. It gave no details of casualties or damage. The air force has claimed to have bombed the same strip several times in the past.

The air sorties were carried out over the rebel-held Iranamadu area on Friday, the ministry said in a statement.

The offensive came hours after a suicide bomber rammed into a police bus in the capital of Colombo, killing 11 people and injuring more than 80.

Troops advancing into rebel-held areas killed at least 16 guerrillas in Vavuniya on Friday, the statement said, without detailing the casualties suffered by government forces.

Friday's fighting brought the number of rebels killed by security forces since the start of the year to 3,16 while 276 soldiers have died

Editor: MAHFUZ ANAM • Published by the Editor from Transcraft Ltd., 229 Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208 on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd. 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Tel: 8124944, 8124955, 8124966, Fax: 8125155, 8126154, GPO Box No: 3257, www.thedailystar.net, E-mail: editor@thethedailystar.net, reporting@thethedailystar.net

Official car registered in PGCL staff's name

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A microbus purchased by Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited (PGCL) has been found registered as a private vehicle to the company's Manager (Service) Kazi Nowfel Anwar.

A preliminary investigation has also found an alleged suppression of an incident of fire over five years ago in which the microbus along with two other vehicles of PGCL was burnt inside the company garage on the PGCL head office premises at Nilkain Sirajganj.

It is also alleged that Nowfel gave a PGCL official a vehicle of the organisation for his personal use and kept fake logbook to hide the private use and purchase fuel for it.

The irregularities were informed to the PGCL authority

after being discussed in a meeting of the PGCL Officers' Welfare Association executive committee on February 19.

The minute of the meeting was also recently sent to Petrobangla, which asked the PGCL authority to investigate the allegations.

Nowfel Anwar claimed that the microbus was registered to him "mistakenly" and that the mistake was corrected.

The PGCL authority, however, said the late project manager Azizul Haque Chowdhury sent an official letter to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority to register the vehicle in favour of the Gas Supply to West Zone Project.

An instalment of the vehicle's insurance premium was paid at the time of registration.

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SC to publish annual report for first time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) for the first time in its history is going to publish its annual report for the year 2007.

The report is scheduled to be published on May 31 -- the day before incumbent Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin goes into retirement on June 1 this year.

Sources at the SC said the report will contain the history of separation of the judiciary from the executive, statistical and personnel data of the SC and district courts, data on all sorts of cases, salient features of the amended code of criminal procedure (CrPC), and

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Clarification

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in a clarification of a report published in The Daily Star said the trend of migration of semi-skilled and skilled workers has been positive over the period of successive years in number.

The clarification comes following publication of the report titled "Skilled workers' job abroad marks a dip" published on May 13 that said the percentage of Bangladeshi skilled workers going abroad decreased over the years.

The government instructed recruiting agencies to recruit 30

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Gatco case to be faced politically
Says Nizami

UNB, Dhaka

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Matiur Rahman Nizami, a charge-sheeted

in the Gatco corruption case, said yesterday his party will resort to legal and political means to fight the case he termed politically motivated.

"When the court process will start in the case, my lawyers and the party will definitely face it legally. But since it does not seem merely a legal matter, rather politically motivated, political workers will obviously face it politically besides the legal means," he said.

Talking to UNB at Jamaat central office, Nizami, who was the agriculture and industries minister

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GATCO GRAFT CASE
Arrest warrants reach police stations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Arrest warrants against the 12 'absconding' accused in the Gatco graft case reached the police stations concerned in the city last night, said police sources.

Officers in-charge however declined to say anything about the matter.

Earlier on Thursday, a Dhaka court issued the warrants against the 12 including former BNP ministers M Saiful Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MK Anwar, M Shamsul Islam and Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, and Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami.

Contacted yesterday afternoon, none of the police officials could say if the accused would be

arrested on receipt of the warrants or would be allowed to surrender before the court during the next hearing of the case due on May 22.

Meanwhile, family members of Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told reporters on Friday that he may surrender before the court today if his lawyers suggest.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on May 13 pressed charges against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko and 22 others in the graft case.

Of those charge-sheeted, Khaleda, Koko, former health minister Shahidullah Mosharraf Hossain, former state minister for energy AKM Mosarraf Hossain, and

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Storm kills 3, damages over 2,000 houses

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and 220 others injured yesterday as storms lashed different parts of the country damaging over 2,000 houses.

The dead are Subarna, 10, daughter of Shahabuddin Bapari of Char Gobindapur village, Kabir Uddin Sikdar, 45, of Charnachana village in Madaripur and Nabir Uddin, 3, son of Sirajul Haque in Noakhali.

Our Madaripur correspondent reported that Subarna was killed as a tree fell on her while playing in a field near her house during a storm at Char Gobindapur village at

about 12:00 noon. A lightning struck Kabir Uddin Sikdar while working in a field at Charnachana village at about 11:00 am. He was killed on the spot.

Meanwhile, three-year-old Nabir Uddin was killed as the roof of his house collapsed during a storm at Hatiya in Noakhali.

About 200 people were injured and over 300 houses were damaged in the storm that battered several parts of the district.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna reported that around 2,000 makeshift houses were damaged as a storm battered Southkhali union in Bagerhat in the afternoon.

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POWER PLANT CASE
Court order today on charge-framing against Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

The special court will give its order today whether charges will be framed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and seven others in the barge-mounted power plant graft case.

After closing arguments by both the prosecution and the defence lawyers on Thursday, Judge M Firoze Alam fixed Sunday for its ruling.

The special court took up the case on February 7 for hearing.

On September 2 last year, ACC Deputy Director Sabir Hasan filed

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Prayer Timing

May 18

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-36	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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