



OFFICE COPY
CIRCULAR

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Star Insight & 4 pages Star Sport Euro 2008 Special



TO COMMITTEE
People's Right to Know

JAISITHA 24, 1415 BS • JAMADUIS SANI 2, 1429 HIJRI • 28 PAGES PLUS STAR INSIGHT PRICE: Tk 10.00

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 142

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 7, 2008

www.thedailystar.net



TRICKERY TRADE... Harun Sardar, a talisman seller, uses his charisma to sell stuff to young men at Gulistan in the capital yesterday. Harun cheats people claiming that the metal talismans with "herbal roots" inside, costing Tk 15-20 each, have magical powers to solve their problems. Running the business inherited from his father and grandfather, Harun earns around Tk 400 a day.

GRAFT CHARGE Ex-AL MP Ali Reza Raju of Jessore held

UNB, Dhaka

Former Awami League lawmaker Ali Reza Raju was arrested at Birdem Hospital in the capital yesterday in connection with a corruption case filed against him by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The law enforcers from Jessore Kotwali Police Station with the help of Ramna police arrested Raju, also the president of AL district unit, at about 11:15am following an arrest warrant issued against him by a district court on June 1.

"Ali Reza Raju was arrested and kept under medical treatment under police custody," Abul Bashar, officer-in-charge of Jessore Kotwali Police Station, told the news agency over telephone.

Earlier on January 3, the ACC filed a case against Raju, the former lawmaker from Jessore-3 constituency, with Katwali Police Station on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Historic June 7 today

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) observes the historic 7th June today to commemorate the six-point movement it launched 42 years ago demanding autonomy of erstwhile East Pakistan.

The six-point movement, marked by the supreme sacrifice of Sramik League leader Manu Mia, Shafiq and Shamsul Haq, paved the way for the Bengalees' final struggle for independence in 1971 under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

See article on page 11

Awami League chalked out a programme to mark the day. On the occasion, national and party flags will be hoisted atop all Awami League offices across the country at 5:30 am.

AL central leaders will garland the portrait of Bangabandhu

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

DIGHIPARA COAL ZONE Petrobangla bid for quick exploration hits snag

Process shelved till policy approved

SHARIEF KHAN

Instead of encouraging Petrobangla to find a strategic partner quickly to explore and develop Dighipara coal zone -- given the on-going energy crisis, the energy ministry has decided to shelve the process till approval of the coal policy.

The chief adviser's special assistant on energy recently said coal policy would be placed before the council of advisers for approval within 10 days but officials are not

yet sure about this. "Coal policy has become a political issue, and the caretaker government may not be interested to handle such political matters," says a high official. "This means Petrobangla spearheading a modern coal project has to wait indefinitely."

The Bureau of Mineral Development (BMD) on February 27 this year granted Petrobangla licence to explore the 4,000 hectare Dighipara zone where high quality coal has been discovered.

The energy ministry's permission to Petrobangla to find a partner that has the finances, technology and experience came in June last year. Back then, the ministry had said Petrobangla would go for finding a partner on completion of the draft coal policy. It was then presumed that the policy would be approved by now.

But the government is yet to approve the coal policy that was first drafted three years ago.

According to highly placed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

MAJOR LABOUR MARKETS STOP RECRUITMENT Remittance, overseas jobs to mark fall in 2 years

Experts suggest urgent steps

PORIMOL PALMA

The rise in remittance and overseas employment is on the verge of witnessing a downward trend in the next two years, as major labour markets in the Middle East and Malaysia banned fresh manpower recruitment or reduced quotas for Bangladesh.

The government target of reaching fresh overseas employments to nine lakh this year is also likely to fall flat, experts observe.

Economists suggest immediate actions fearing that this trend will soon hit the overall remittance.

"But at the same time the government should also make overseas jobs cost-effective. Because of bad competition sponsored by manpower exporters, workers pay too much money. This should be addressed," said Prof MG Kibria of Morgan State University who

recently conducted a study on Bangladesh's manpower export and remittance. "We can't feel the blow of the bans or cut in overseas employment immediately, but after two to three years remittance will definitely dry up if no major changes take place," said Syed Ashraf Ali, former executive director of Bangladesh Bank.

An estimated 50 lakh Bangladeshis are working abroad around the globe. Of them, about 30 lakh living in the Middle East send approximately 70 percent of the remittance.

They are helping tremendously the Middle Eastern economies grow through their cheap labour since the mid-seventies.

The number of workers went abroad for jobs during 2000 to 2005 ranges between 1.8 lakh to 2.5 lakh, while about 3.8 lakh workers flew

abroad in 2006 and 8.32 lakh in 2007, according to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training.

Bangladesh also witnessed good growth of remittance, which was \$1.88 billion in 2000-01 financial year and with gradual growth it stood at \$5.97 billion in 2006-07.

But from May 27, Bahrain stopped issuing work permits to Bangladeshis, excepting the professionals, while thousands are leaving Saudi Arabia because it unofficially stopped renewing residential permits to Bangladeshis, who want to get new jobs on expiry of job contracts.

Bangladesh's largest labour market Saudi Arabia, home to around 15 lakh Bangladeshis, imposed a ban on recruitment of Bangladeshis at households and agriculture sector.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



Citing administrative reasons, the BDR authorities fix a notice to a bamboo pole of a fair price outlet on Dhanmondi ground, saying it would remain closed until June 9. The prices of rice would go up when the outlets reopen.

BDR-run outlets shut: Many return home empty-handed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many people of low-income group yesterday returned home empty-handed after finding the BDR-run fair price outlets closed in the capital as the BDR authorities decided to keep them shut for four days from June 6.

There was no noticeable impact of the closure on the rice market on the first day yesterday as prices of most varieties remained almost unchanged.

Meanwhile, the prices of edible oil and baby milk powder shot up in the last week while the price of flour came down in the city's kitchen markets.

A large number of people who

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

HOTEL BLAST Injured Sri Lankan bank official dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sri Lankan bank official, who was injured in the mysterious blast in the capital's Hotel Orchard Plaza on June 1, succumbed to his wounds yesterday raising the death toll in the explosion to three.

AR Samanthilake, 43, a high official of the Commercial Bank of Ceylon in Sri Lanka, who arrived in the capital on May 30, died at 7:20am at the City Hospital.

Hospital sources said the Sri Lankan national had sustained burn injuries all over his body. Earlier, Ali Azam, an executive of Hotel Orchard Plaza at Naya Paltan, died on June 2 at the City Hospital while Mir Hossain, a room-service attendant, died on June 4 at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The body of the Sri Lankan citizen was sent to the Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy yesterday.

The body has been kept at the Square Hospitals mortuary after autopsy and might be flown to Sri

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

A DAY AFTER HASINA, KOKO Medical board examines health of Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an apparent revival of the much talked about 'minus two formula' of the caretaker government, a process has been initiated again to send two detained former premiers Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia abroad for treatment.

Highly placed sources hinted that AL President Sheikh Hasina and BNP chairperson's son Koko, who is also in detention, will leave the country soon for treatment abroad, while BNP chief Khaleda's departure remains uncertain as she is unwilling to leave the country.

A five-member medical board, formed by the government, examined BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in a makeshift special jail yesterday afternoon as the government authorities claim that she is suffering from various health complications.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told reporters that the

newly formed medical board led by Prof Saleh Ahmed, an eye specialist, examined Khaleda in the afternoon in presence of prison guards.

The doctor said the board also inquired about her health complications during almost an hour of medical check up beginning around 4:00pm.

On Thursday, the government

formed two other five-member medical boards, one led by Dr Syed Maruf Ali for AL President Sheikh Hasina, and the other led by Dr Mustafizur Rahman for Arafat Rahman Koko.

Dr Maruf, chief of the board formed for the AL chief, said yesterday that they will recommend

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



1,820 more held across country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces arrested 1,820 people, including 229 in the capital, during the last 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday in the ongoing special anti-crime drives across the country.

Of them, 1,157 were arrested on warrants, 634 on various charges, three under the Arms Act while 24 are convicts and two are listed criminals.

With the latest detainees, the number of people picked up since the launching of the crackdown on May 28 stands at 15,285. The detainees include some grassroots leaders and activists of different political parties.

The law enforcers also recovered six firearms and 270 bullets during the drive.

Delwar's proposal to AL purely personal, says Hannan Shah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The crisis plaguing BNP has taken a new turn following pro-Khaleda faction leader also secretary general of the party Khandaker Delwar Hossain's proposal to archival Awami League (AL) for launching a 'united movement to restore democracy in the country'.

BNP, already embroiled in a factional feud, slid into further chaos yesterday, when detained party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's adviser Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah came out strongly against Delwar's proposal to the archival.

Talking to reporters in his Mohakhali residence in the capital yesterday, Hannan Shah said the proposal was 'purely a personal one, not based on any party decision'.

"No such decision was taken in any forum of the party," Hannan Shah added.

But the party's Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan, also a Khaleda loyalist, said Delwar put out the call after getting a green signal from the chairperson.

"This is not his own proposal, he followed the directive of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

SIX-POINT DEMAND AL signature campaign starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) starts a campaign today for collecting signatures across the country, except for the capital, to press home its six-point demand including release of detained former premier and party chief Sheikh Hasina.

The campaign will continue throughout this month and after collecting signatures the AL will submit those to the upazila and district administration concerned.

"Our mass signature collecting campaign is for preparing the ground for the movement to press home our demands," AL

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



A child waits with mother at the gate of Dhaka Central Jail yesterday to visit his father who was arrested in the ongoing mass arrest drive.

Rumours fly as Obama, Hillary hold private talks

AFP, Washington

Democrats Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton held a private meeting late Thursday, their campaigns said, amid feverish speculation over whom he will choose as his vice presidential running mate.

Senator Clinton and Senator Obama met tonight and had a productive discussion about the important work that needs to be done to succeed in (the election in) November," their campaigns said in a joint statement, US media reported.

No further details were given on the talks, but the news -- and the secrecy -- only fuelled rumours about a possible Clinton role in Obama's campaign.

The former first lady had earlier

sought to quash any suggestion that she was agitating to be picked as Obama's vice president after he won their epic battle for the Democratic Party's White House nomination on Tuesday.

After promising to throw the full weight of her formidable support behind Obama at a farewell event on Saturday, Clinton disowned an orchestrated drive by some of her followers to force her onto Obama's ticket.

"She is not seeking the vice presidency, and no one speaks for her but her," said her campaign. "The choice here is Senator Obama's and his alone."

The brief statement made no mention of whether the New York senator would be willing to accept the job if it were offered.

With scant information about Thursday's hush-hush meeting made available, speculation was rife.

According to the New York Times, Clinton initiated the meeting in Washington after a day of talks between their aides. Obama was campaigning in Virginia and cancelled a planned flight home to Chicago to be there.

The Washington Post reported that Obama and Clinton met at the home of Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein in the US capital. CNN suggested the gathering was just the two of them and a few close aides.

On Tuesday, as Obama clinched enough delegates to represent the party in November's election,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An underground operative was killed during a "shootout" between his cohorts and police at Durgapur village under Jhenidah Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Harun-ur-Rashid alias Khoka, 38, was a regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Janajuddha). He was accused in Ganna Union Parishad Chairman Sharaf murder case.

Acting on a tip-off, police arrested Harun at Abdullahpur in Dhaka on Thursday. On his confessional statement, they took him to Durgapur to recover hidden firearms and arrest his cohorts.

When they reached near a playground at the village at around 3:00am, Harun's accomplices opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3