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2 JMB men get life for blast at Ctg court

CU CORRESPONDENT

A Chittagong court yesterday sentenced two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants to life imprisonment in an explosives case filed for blasting bombs on the Chittagong court premises in November, 2005.

The convicts are JMB Chittagong region commander Javed Iqbal alias Mohammad and Jahidul Islam Sumon alias Boma Mizan.

Chittagong Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Shafiqul Karim pronounced the verdict in presence of Javed Iqbal while the other convict, Sumon, is on the run.

According to case proceedings, JMB cadre Abul Hossain carried out a suicide bomb attack on the Chittagong court premises on November 29, 2005 killing police constable Rajib Barua and local footballer Shahabuddin on the spot.

Abul Hossain, who was seriously injured in the blast, later

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Car bomb at bus stop in Baghdad kills 63

US blames Shia militiamen for the attack

AFP, Baghdad

A car bomb at a bus stop in north Baghdad killed at least 63 people and wounded 75 on Tuesday in one of the deadliest attacks in the capital in months, security officials told AFP.

The attack took place in the mainly Shia Al-Hurriyah neighbourhood at around 5:30 pm (1430 GMT), at the peak of the evening rush hour, the officials said.

Several nearby buildings and vehicles caught fire in the aftermath of the explosion that was so powerful it could be heard more than five kilometres away.

The casualties, many of them women and children, were taken to several city hospitals, officials said.

The car bombing came just hours after a bomb hidden on a

motorcycle exploded at a checkpoint in another area of north Baghdad, killing four fighters of a group battling al-Qaeda militants.

That attack took place at around 10:00 am (0700 GMT) at a checkpoint run by the US-backed militia in the Al-Sulek neighbourhood, security officials said. Four other members of the group were wounded, along with two civilians.

al-Qaeda has repeatedly targeted such groups whose members were once its allies but in late 2006 turned against the radical Islamist group and sided with the US military.

In recent months, insurgent attacks such as car bombs and suicide strikes have dropped significantly in Baghdad amid improved security following last year's deployment of extra US

troops. Tuesday's attack in Baghdad was the biggest since March 7, when 68 people were killed in twin bombings.

The deadliest in the Iraqi capital this year was a February 1 attack in which two female bombers blew themselves up at two pet markets, killing at least 98 people and wounding more than 200.

The biggest strike in recent weeks was on May 1 in the city of Baquba, north of Baghdad, when two suicide bombers killed 35 people and wounded dozens more.

Baghdad has seen a decline in violence in recent months but the city was rocked by intense fighting between security forces and Shiite militiamen loyal to the radical movement of Moqtada al-Sadr.

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Gen Moeen asks army cadets to be ready for supreme sacrifice

UNB, Dhaka, Ctg

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed yesterday called upon the military cadets to remain prepared even for supreme sacrifice for safeguarding country's independence and sovereignty.

He also advised them to uphold the image, honour and glorious tradition of Bangladesh army by dint of firmness of personal character, professional efficiency and skill.

The chief of army staff made the call during the passing-out ceremony of cadets of Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) here.

Some 100 cadets formally passed out yesterday. Of them, 84 cadets, including five females, were from the 58th BMA Long Course and 16 cadets, including two females, from the 29th BMA Special Course.

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Visitors throng the city's Khamarbari area to have a glimpse of fruits on display at the 3-day National Fruit Festival, organised by the Department of Agricultural Extension, on its closing day yesterday.

University student hit as bullets sprayed on her car

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A student of North South University (NSU) and her car driver were wounded when criminals opened fire on their vehicle at Lalmatia in the capital yesterday, police said.

Ishitha Akhter Shyama, 22, a sophomore at business administration department of the university, and her driver Hiron Sheikh 40, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Bullets hit Shyama in the right thigh while Hiron in the right arm.

Officer-in-charge (OC) at Mohammadpur Police Station said unidentified criminals fired at the car soon after it made a turn at Block C of the neighbourhood at around 12:30pm.

Shyama and Hiron at first told police that they were injured in road accident while doctors maintained that they were hit by bullets.

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India may lift ban on export of rice in Nov

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has hinted that it may consider removing the ban on export of non-basmati rice after November this year, when a fresh crop reaches the market.

"I do not think there is any proposal to relax the export ban now. If anything, we will see after the new crop becomes available", Indian Commerce Secretary G K Pillai told reporters in New Delhi on Tuesday.

With inflation touching new highs in the past few months, the government banned export of non-basmati rice as one of the measures to contain its rising prices in domestic market.

Pillai said "if we have a production of 94 million tonnes in crop year 2007-8, we may have 3-4 million tonnes of surplus rice, which would then be available for exports".

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

4 US copter engines go missing in Pakistan

AFP, Kabul

The US-led coalition in Afghanistan said yesterday that four US helicopter engines worth more than \$13 million had gone missing while being transported by a Pakistani truck company.

Four helicopter engines transported by a Pakistani truck

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Prayer Timing		
June 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation authorities bulldozing illegal structures at English Road Kitchen market in the city's Jatrabari area yesterday.

23 top cops transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major reshuffle in police administration yesterday 23 top police officials were transferred and assigned to new postings.

Two deputy inspectors general (DIG) were assigned to the police headquarters as additional inspector general. They are Syed Shahjahan Raj, DIG of the police headquarters and Muhammad Aminul Islam, DIG of Barisal Range.

Barisal Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khan Sayeed Hasan was made DIG of Barisal Range.

Amulya Bhushan Barua, additional DIG and commandant of DTS (Detective Training School) of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was made joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police

(DMP) while CID's Special Police Superintendent Mokbul Hossain Bhuiyan was promoted to additional DIG and made commandant of DTS.

Mozammel Hossain, assistant inspector general (AIG) of the police headquarters, was posted to Dhaka Range as additional DIG.

Besides, Zillur Rahman, deputy commissioner (DC) of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) was posted to Moulvibazar as superintendent of police (SP), SM Monir-uz-Jaman, commandant of Range Reserve Force (RRF) of Rajshahi as SP of Gaibandha, Md Rezaul Karim, commandant of 10th Armed Police Battalion (APBn) Sylhet was posted as SP of Bandarban.

Khandaker Golam Faruq, AIG of the police headquarters was made

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EU adopts tough rules on illegal immigrants

AFP, Strasbourg

Members of the European parliament adopted tough new rules yesterday on illegal immigrants, allowing detention for up to 18 months prior to expulsion.

The measures, which could come into force in 2010, have been criticised by human rights groups, as well as the UN's top human rights official.

Adopted in Strasbourg by 367 votes to 206 with 109 abstentions, the new rules focus on illegal immigrants -- visa-overstayers are the biggest category and estimated at some 12 million people -- but not refugees who want to seek asylum in Europe.

They will oblige authorities in EU nations to choose between

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Nato, Afghan troops launch anti-Taliban offensive

23 militants killed in massive "clean-up" operation

AFP, Arghandab, Afghanistan

Afghan and Nato troops backed by helicopter gunships launched a massive "clean-up" operation yesterday to drive Taliban militants from villages near Kandahar, leaving 23 rebels and two soldiers dead.

The huge offensive came as Britain announced the deaths elsewhere of four soldiers, reportedly including the country's first female casualty in Afghanistan, underscoring fears that the Taliban are making a major resurgence.

Clashes broke out and helicopters swooped low overhead as Canadian armoured vehicles pushed into the southern district of Arghandab, considered by the militants as a major prize in their

increasingly bloody insurgency.

Hundreds of Taliban swarmed into Arghandab late Monday and blew up bridges and laid landmines, just days after a mass jailbreak from nearby Kandahar's main prison that embarrassed the government of President Hamid Karzai.

A Taliban spokesman told AFP the militia wanted to capture the district in order to launch attacks on Kandahar itself -- the southern city where the Taliban first rose to power in the 1990s.

An AFP reporter saw Canadian troops driving armoured vehicles through Arghandab, a lush area surrounded by pomegranate orchards, while two helicopters swooped very low overhead and

dropped flares.

Sporadic gunfire could be heard from nearby villages.

Afghan defence ministry spokesman General Mohammad Zahir Azimi said the "clean-up" operation started in Arghandab district at 8:00 am (0330 GMT).

A defence ministry statement said that a group of Taliban was "targeted by Nato air force" in Tabeen village in Arghandab, killing 20 "local and foreign terrorists", while three more rebels were shot dead in Arghandab.

Two soldiers were also killed in the operation, the ministry said.

General Carlos Branco, a spokesman for the Nato-led International Security Assistance

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Noble Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus shakes hands with Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the OFID Ministerial Council Meeting in Isfahan, Iran on Tuesday. Yunus was awarded the OFID Annual Award for Development at the meeting.

COURTESY: GRAMEEN BANK

Rice prices up again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rice prices went up in the city's wholesale and retail markets yesterday while prices of fish have been on the rise in kitchen markets for more than a month now.

Most rice rose by Tk 1 a kg in retail markets. A kg of coarse rice like Irri sold at Tk 33-34 yesterday which had been Tk 32-34 the day before.

Prices of mid-quality Parija and BR-28 rice rose to Tk 35-37 per kg from Tk 34-36 a day back while a kg of Miniket and Nazirshail jumped to Tk 38-43 per kg from the previous day's Tk 37-42.

Abdur Rahman, a rice trader at Karwan Bazar, said prices of rice hiked by Tk 2-3 per kg in the retail markets in the last week. He said he sold a kg of Parija at Tk 36 yesterday, which he had sold for Tk 33 last week.

The retailer sold Miniket at Tk 40-41 per kg yesterday which he had sold for Tk 38-39 throughout last week.

Rahman noted that the price of

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ILL-GOTTEN WEALTH Ex-state minister Zia, family charged

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday pressed charges against former state minister Ziaul Haque Zia, his wife Nasima Haque and their son Mashfiqul Haque Joy in a case filed for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in the wealth statement submitted to the commission.

Meanwhile, two witnesses yesterday gave statements to a magistrate against former flight engineer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Eshamim Eskander in a graft case filed for concealing information in the wealth statement submitted to ACC.

ZIAUL HAQUE CASE
ACC Assistant Director Monzur Alam, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the

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