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TRANSFORMER ELECTRONICS

Tarique's spinal cord 'broken', says doctor

UNB, Dhaka

Spinal cord of Tarique Rahman is 'broken', causing acute pain in his waist and neck, a physician at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) said yesterday.

Private TV channel i quoting Prof Yunus of BSMMU reported that Tarique, who is undergoing treatment at BSMMU Hospital prison cell, is also suffering from pain in his right hip-joint. "His condition has deteriorated," the doctor said, adding that he needs treatment abroad.

Earlier, detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia had blamed the government for worsening health condition of her detained son Tarique Rahman. She called for sending abroad her two detained ailing sons - Tarique and Koko - for their proper treatment.

About Khaleda Zia's health, DIG (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said she developed swelling in her left wrist and was also suffering from pain in her knees due to arthritis.

Nepal plunges into crisis as Maoists quit govt

They ask PM to resign

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal was thrown into political limbo on Saturday after the Maoists quit the interim government of the newly republican nation and demanded the prime minister's resignation.

Nepal's former Maoist rebels stormed out of the government late on Friday, accusing a rival party of clinging to power despite being defeated in landmark elections in the Himalayan country two months ago.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala must resign to open the way for the formation of a new government," senior Maoist official Dinanath Sharma told AFP after the ultra-leftists announced their resignations.

Nepal abolished its monarchy three weeks ago, but the country's two most powerful parties -- the Maoists and the prime minister's Nepali Congress party -- have been unable to reach a deal on power-sharing.

The Maoists, who dominate the new assembly elected in April, say they have the right to lead the government and choose a new president.

They say the wrangling is preventing the assembly from starting work on its chief task of rewriting Nepal's constitution.

"The constituent assembly has not been able to begin drafting a new constitution because of these power-sharing problems," said Sharma.

Nepali Congress officials say Koirala -- regarded by many as the architect of a peace deal that ended a deadly civil war waged by the Maoists and led to the creation of the new republic -- deserves to be Nepal's first president.

"The Maoist decision has shocked us, the political impasse has deepened but that doesn't mean we are out of solutions," said Nepali Congress spokesman Arjun Narsingh Khatri Chettri.

The Congress, Nepal's oldest political party which has half as many seats as the Maoists in the 601-member assembly that will chart Nepal's political future, said the Maoists' move to leave the government was premature.

"Talks with the Maoists were going positively and yet they resigned from the government just when we were nearing a conclusion," said the Congress spokesman.

The president's role is a crucial one because the person occupying

Indian national found dead in city hotel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Indian national was found dead in his hotel room at Kamalapur in the city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Paritosh Dutta, 63, resident of Biddyswar in Kolkata. He came to Bangladesh on June 6 with a one-month tourist visa.

Motijheel police said they went to Hotel Sealand at North Kamalapur, after the hotel staff called them, and found the body of Paritosh on a sofa in sitting position.

He boarded the hotel Friday afternoon.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Morgue sources said they found signs of heart failure in his heart. The authorities will carry out viscera tests for further examination.

Born in Bangladesh, Paritosh left the country around 30 years ago, Officer-in-Charge of Motijheel Police Station Fazlur Rahman told The Daily Star. He said before boarding the hotel, Paritosh was staying at his relatives' houses.

TARIFF STRUCTURE CHANGE
Duty slash to make 3,540 items cheaper

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

Change in tariff structure in the proposed budget for fiscal 2008-2009 will cut down duty on 3,540 imported commodities but raise it on 45 items, according to an analysis by the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The duty slash on items mostly industrial raw materials, intermediate goods, capital machinery and consumer goods will bring down cost of local production and make export trade more competitive, NBR officials noted.

But prices of refined sugar, finished diamond, gold, mandarin, grapefruit, lemon, table and kitchenware, silk fabrics and finished marble tiles will go up due to the raise of import duty.

The government has replaced the existing three-tier slab with four-tier one to simplify the tariff structure and provide support to importers of raw materials and intermediate goods.

In this case, the highest slab on finished products -- 25 percent -- has been kept unchanged. The existing 5, 10 and 15 percent customs duty will be reduced to 3, 7 and 12 percent respectively.

As a result, import duty on 1,723 items will come down to 12 percent, that on 1,281 items to 7 percent and 506 items to 3 percent, said NBR sources.

Import duty on 30 other items will also be cut by issuing a separate SRO (statutory regulatory order), according to the sources.

Meanwhile, customs duty has been increased on 19 items including diamond, both rough and polished, liquid paraffin, paints and varnishes, carbon steel strips, LP gas cylinder, electrical apparatus and children's drawing books.

Supplementary duty on 20 items has been increased. The items include mandarin, grapefruit, lemon, malt/milk food preparation, tableware, kitchenware, silk fabrics, finished marble tiles, diamond and chair.

Specific duty has been increased on three items. The duty on refined sugar has been raised to Tk 6,000 per tonne from Tk 5,000 while duty on 11.69 grams of gold has been increased to Tk 150 from Tk 125.

As VAT exemption has been withdrawn from children's drawing and picture books, raw silk and dupion silk yarn, prices of these items will also increase.

Due to change in the duty structure slab, the country will face a Tk 2,000 crore loss of duty.

ASIA CUP
Tigers leave for Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team left the city for Pakistan yesterday to play the Asia Cup.

The regional meet will be held in two Pakistani cities -- Lahore and Karachi.

The Tigers have been pitted in Group A along with United Arab Emirates (UAE) and defending champions Sri Lanka while hosts Pakistan, India and minnows Hong Kong comprise the other group.

Mohammad Ashraf's men left with a hope to make the second round berth in the competition as a -win against UAE in their first group match at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on June 24 will give them a second round place.

The second and final group matches will take place at the same venue against Sri Lanka on June 25.

The final of the six-team meet will be held on July 6 at the National Stadium in Karachi.

Bangladesh will desperately miss all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan who kept away from cricket due to HSC examinations and Aftab Ahmed, who is out of cricket for at least four weeks due to injury.

So far Bangladesh have played 21 matches in the event and won only one match against Hong Kong, against seven losses each to Pakistan and Sri Lanka and six defeats to India.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) members Ahmed Sajjad Alam and Gazi Ashraf Hossain were at the Zia International Airport to see off the 15-member Bangladesh squad who flew by a Thai Airways flight.

Hilla marriage still in full force in Bogra

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Shafiqul Islam was unable to make his wife Nilufa Begum stop during a quarrel with his parents and in a fit of rage he threatened to throw her out of his house and uttered the word "talak" thrice.

The village headman immediately declared the couple divorced through this action, according to Shariah law.

As Shafiqul and Nilufa settled their argument, the headmen declared that they could no longer live together. He cited Shariah law to declare that Nilufa was not eligible to marry Shafiqul till she goes through a "hilla marriage" -- marriage with a third person -- before she would be allowed by Islam Shariah law to marry Shafiqul again.

The couple however don't accept the fact since that they were 'divorced' by the mere utterance of the word "talak", as that doesn't complete the procedure of a divorce.

Shafiqul and Nilufa from village in Bogra have since got back together but local preachers have called on villagers to boycott the couple socially as they are deemed to be "living in sin".

According to Muslim Family Law, there are other procedures, including documentation of the divorce, to be completed before a divorce is finalised. The utterance of "talak" thrice in quick succession when someone is in rage, is not recognised or accepted as the basis of a divorce by law.

The Family Law Ordinance 1961 prohibits "hilla" marriages. Forcing people to such marriages is punishable by law. According to legal and Islamic experts, the concept of hilla marriage is considered, but not mandatory, only when a man tries to re-marry the same woman for the 4th time. The ordinance of 1961 was passed in order to stop the misuse of the hilla marriage concept.

Muslim Family Law does not prohibit a man from remarrying the same woman he has divorced, and vice versa.

Like Shafiqul, Dhalu from



Coops in Aqua Land Agro Complex in Savar remain empty as the farm failed to resume production months after the bird flu outbreak. Many poultry farms demand a waiver of interest on loans so they may resume production and recover from the losses.

Hasina comes down with high fever

STAR REPORT

Awami League (AL) President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina has been suffering from high fever for the last two days since travelling from Boston to Washington DC.

Dr AKA Momen, adviser to the US chapter of AL, told the American News Agency (ANA) that Hasina fell sick during her long journey to Washington by car on June 19.

Her temperature rose very high and she was given medication, he said.

Hasina has not communicated with or taken any calls, including from Bangladesh, since then.

AL's assistant secretary for international affairs Abdus Sobhan Golap, who is accompanying Sheikh Hasina, also told the same to the news agency, adding that she will be taken to a doctor if her fever doesn't subside.

He added that the former premier had been worried about her health, including conditions of the heart, ear and eye, which have been ailing her lately.

Rab recovers AK-47 rifle, ammo in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Rab personnel recovered an AK-47 rifle, two magazines and 23 rounds of bullet on Friday night at Fatehabad of Hathazari upazila.

Sources said acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-7 led by Flight Lieutenant Mizanur Rahman raided a place near Ki Society Government Primary School at Fatehabad where a group of armed criminals assembled at around 9:00pm.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the criminals fled the scene.

The Rab personnel recovered the AK-47 rifle and ammunition near a tea stall in Fatehabad area.

Mizanur Rahman said the rifle was in possession of a BNP cadre in the area. But the Rab official did not disclose his identity.

He said they would hunt him down.

Govt urged to protect Madhupur, Lawachhara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday called on the government to restore the natural forests at Madhupur and Lawachhara by retrieving forestland from the grabbers, planting native trees instead of exotic ones and stopping disturbances to wildlife there.

They also called for people's movement in order to keep the government from allowing foreign oil-and-gas companies to damage the natural forests in the name of "scientific survey and protecting the forestland."

They were speaking at a roundtable on "Madhupur and Lawachhara: Stolen Forest, Threatened Heritage", organised by the Society for Environment and

Villagers beat man-eater tiger to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Villagers yesterday beat a Royal Bengal tiger dead after it killed three people including an elderly man at Dakkhin Kadamtala of Shyamnagar upazila in Satkhira.

Sources said local people, who had been wary of the tiger since Friday night, finally tracked it down at a nearby garden yesterday morning.

At one stage, the tiger took shelter on the roof of Animesh Mandal's thatched house. The villagers surrounded the house and beat the big cat dead.

The tiger killed three people and injured two others after entering the Dakkhin Kadamtala village, which lies close to the Sundarbans, at about 9:00 pm on Friday.

Israeli pilots trained for possible airstrike on Iran

AFP, Dubai

UN atomic watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei warned that any attack on Iran would transform the region into a "ball of fire," in an interview with Al-Arabiya television broadcast yesterday.

His comments come after US media reported that Israeli jet pilots trained for a possible strike on Iranian nuclear sites.

A major military exercise carried out by Israel earlier this month seemed to be a test-run for any potential strike against Iran's nuclear facilities, the New York Times reported, citing US officials.

Iran on Saturday said it considered an attack by arch-enemy Israel as "impossible" after US media reported military exercises by the Jewish state were a possible practice for a strike against Iran.

"Such impudence and audacity to have an aggression against our national interest and integrity is an impossible action," the Iranian government spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham told reporters.

"A military strike (against Iran) would in my opinion be worse than anything else... It would transform the Middle East region into a ball of fire," said ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Should a strike be carried out, he told the Dubai-based channel, he would find it impossible to continue as head of the IAEA.

An attack, he added, would do nothing but harden Iran's position in its row with the West over its nuclear programme.

"A military strike would spark the launch of an emergency programme to make atomic weapons, with the support of all Iranians, including those living abroad," ElBaradei said.

He did not believe, he added, that there was any "imminent risk" of proliferation given the current status of Iran's nuclear programme and made it clear he would "not have a place" as head of the IAEA in the event of a military strike against Iran.

Mayawati's party withdraws support for Indian govt

AFP, New Delhi

An ally of India's coalition government yesterday withdrew its support to protest high inflation, adding to the woes of Premier Manmohan Singh, under fire from leftist partners over a nuclear deal.

School teacher-turned-politician Mayawati, who uses one name, announced she was ending her backing for Singh's Congress party-led government after accusing the coalition of failing to insulate the poor from spiralling prices.

"The Congress party has neglected poor workers as well as the Dalits (low-caste Hindus) and so my Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is withdrawing support from the government," said Mayawati in Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh state.

"This government has failed miserably to check inflation and the rise in prices of essential commodities -- especially food items -- and is pursuing policies which are not in the interests of the people," she said.



Villagers of Dakkhin Kadamtala in Satkhira, on the edge of the Sundarbans, killed this tiger after it had slain three people there on Friday night. The photo was taken yesterday as forest guards were taking the carcass away on a boat.

Prayer Timing
June 22

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-52	6-57
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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