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JMB patrons sued in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Rajshahi

A torture victim of Islamist militants filed a case against about 70 people including two former BNP ministers and a lawmaker yesterday with the Rajshahi court in Bagmara upazila in 2004.

The accused include former post and telecommunication minister Aminul Haque, former deputy minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu and former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa.

Abad Ali, an UP member of Mirjapur village, lodged the complaint against them for abetting militants who maimed him as he denied paying them extortion.

They have already been

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MIGRANT WORKERS

Measures pledged to protect rights, welfare

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acknowledging serious malpractices in the overseas employment sector in absence of a strong regulatory framework, the government yesterday pledged strengthening of labour migration rules to protect migrant workers' rights and welfare.

It also promised to establish 34 additional vocational training centres, building of a gangway at Zia International Airport for inbound passengers, and formation of welfare committees with expatriate Bangladeshis in labour receiving countries to address the problems of migrant workers.

The assurances came at a high-level

PLEDGES

Strong overseas recruitment policy
Set up 34 additional training centers
Gangway at ZIA
Expatriates' welfare committees abroad
Centers abroad for female migrants

policy dialogue on "The Global Economic Crisis: Impact on Bangladesh's Overseas Employment Sector", jointly organised by The Daily Star and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Hotel Sonargaon of the capital.

"Migrants send home so much money, but we have done little for them. This is the time we should do something,"

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandoker Musharraf Hossain said.

It was the Bangladeshi agents or brokers who pushed up the cost of migration, putting the poor people in trouble, he said.

"If an employer says he or she needs 20 people, our people say 'why don't you take 200'. If an employer says 'I cannot pay levy for the workers', the brokers say 'we will pay it', the minister quipped referring to the malpractices in labour recruitment in Malaysia.

"We should not trade in the miseries of people," Musharraf Hossain said, adding that he already started working to frame a

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Wake up call to world leaders

Climate conference says sea level
to rise 1m within this century

PINAKI ROY from Tromsø, Norway

Scientists' recent finding that ice sheet of the Arctic and glacier of mountains may disappear by mid-21st century causing the sea level to rise up to one metre within this century is a matter of great worry for the world, said Nobel laureate Al Gore on Tuesday.

Making a wake up call to world leaders, the former US vice president said, "We can do only what we decide to do."

He was speaking at a press briefing during a conference titled, 'Melting Ice: Regional Dramas, Global Wake-Up Call' in Tromsø, Norway.

Al Gore and Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre jointly hosted the conference, first of its kind on the eve of the 'Arctic council' conference.

Jonas Gahr was also present at the press conference at Rica Hotel in Tromsø.

Al Gore said human civilization has technology. All it needs now is the political will to reduce carbon emissions.

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Arctic study to get more intense

PINAKI ROY
from Tromsø, Norway

The Arctic Council, a forum for climate issues and environmental protection, agreed on close and increased cooperation in carrying out research on the Arctic and identified a number of measures, including a binding guideline for ship operation and revising the guidelines for oil and gas exploration in the Arctic.

The council sat in its sixth ministerial level meeting yesterday when Arctic has been melting faster than anticipated in the past. Experts at the meeting predicted that it might be vanished within middle of this century if proper measures are not taken immediately.

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Immigration officers on duty at Zia International Airport wear protective masks yesterday as incoming passengers travelling from regions with confirmed cases of Swine flu are being asked to report to a health support desk.

PHOTO: STAR

Swine flu claims first victim outside Mexico

Several cases reported in Europe;
WHO to sit for solution

AGENCIES, London

A Mexican child has died of swine flu in Texas - the first death from the virus outside Mexico, where it may have killed as many as 159 people.

Officials say the 23-month child had been visiting relatives in the Houston area when he became ill.

The United States has confirmed 91 cases of swine flu in 10 states, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday, up from 65 cases in six states the day before.

Most of the US cases have been relatively mild, with only a handful of sufferers requiring hospital treatment. Health authorities stress that roughly 35,000 people die annually in a regular US influenza season.

Nevertheless, Obama urged schools with suspected swine flu cases to close and called on local officials to be vigilant in tracking suspected infections, after declaring a public health emergency at the weekend.

"This is obviously a serious situation, serious enough to take the utmost precautions," the president said at the White House, adding that "more extensive steps" may be required.

"Every American should know that the federal government is prepared to do whatever is necessary to control the impact of this virus," he said, after requesting emergency funding of 1.5 billion dollars from Congress.

President Obama urged local authorities across the US to be vigilant and shut schools if necessary.

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Screening to start at land, sea ports too

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has urged the people to be cautious but not panicked about the worldwide spread of Swine flu virus that killed at least 159 people in Mexico.

"There is no reason to be panicked since no case has been detected in the country. But be cautious," Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque told reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting on the deadly flu at his ministry yesterday.

With the deadly flu spreading around the globe, the government has started health screening at the Zia International Airport for inbound passengers.

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Fugitive JMB man held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged suicide squad member of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was arrested at city's Shyampur early yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Sheikh Shahjahan, 43, son of late Sheikh Fayed.

A police team led by Officer-in-charge (OC) Alamgir Hossain of Shyampur Police Station arrested

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Pak troops retake Taliban-held town

AP, Islamabad

Helicopter-borne commandos took back a key town from the Taliban on Wednesday as warplanes pounded militants to halt their advance toward the Pakistani capital, the army said.

Pakistan is acting under intense US pressure to take a tougher line against Islamist militants expanding from strongholds along the Afghan border, where al-Qaida leaders including Osama bin Laden may also be hiding.

In recent days, government forces have begun trying to drive the Taliban back into the Swat Valley, from where they had pushed out under cover of a creaking peace pact struck in February.

Helicopters dropped troops near Daggar, the main town in the Buner district, and in neighboring areas early on Wednesday morning, an army statement said.

The commandos secured the town and were linking up with police and paramilitary troops already in the area, the statement said.

It didn't say how many troops were involved or whether they clashed with militants who overran the district earlier this month.

However, a Pakistani military official said army jets and

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Security upped in Bihar, Bengal

Third phase voting
starts in India

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA,
New Delhi

Hundreds of security personnel were deployed yesterday in naxal-infested constituencies of Bihar and West Bengal as parts of these two states along with other areas go to parliamentary poll in the third phase today.

There are ten constituencies in Bihar and West Bengal which have been categorised as naxal-affected in the third phase. Two helicopters would be used in West Bengal and one in Bihar in view of the naxal menace in some areas there.

The naxals had unleashed violence in parts of Jharkhand,

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Prayer Timing		
April 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		