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Zawahiri now heads al-Qaeda

REUTERS, Dubai

Veteran militant Ayman al-Zawahiri has taken command of al-Qaeda after the killing of Osama bin Laden, an Islamist website said yesterday.

"The general leadership of al-Qaeda group, after the completion of consultation, announces that Sheikh Dr Ayman Zawahiri, may God give him success, has

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Deal signed for deep-sea exploration

ConocoPhillips gets two blocks in the Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday made its first ever step into exploring for gas and oil in the Bay of Bengal through signing a production sharing contract (PSC) with US oil company ConocoPhillips.

William G Lafferrandre, vice-president of ConocoPhillips Asia Pacific, Imam Hossain, secretary of Petrobangla, and A K Mohiuddin Ahmad, deputy secretary of the energy ministry, inked the deal at the Petrobangla headquarters in the capital.

The company won two deep-sea blocks DS-08-10 and -11 at an offshore block bidding floated by Petrobangla in 2008. The PSC allows exploration of the undisputed part of the blocks and that covers an area of 5,158 square kilometres.

The blocks are located about 280 kilometres from the port city of Chittagong.

"This is our first attempt to explore Bangladesh's hydrocarbon prospect in the Bay," said Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who attended the signing ceremony.

He said he hopes the US oil giant would make headway

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

The only playground of the Madhya Bashabo area is turned into a fair venue for the cottage industry depriving the children of the ground for over a month. Locals say children do not even get their ground back in playable condition when fairs such as this one ends.

Depression in Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The monsoon depression over the Northwest Bay and its adjoining area had moved to a north-northwest direction and was expected to cross Bangladesh-West Bengal coast near Raimangal river by yesterday night.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mogla had been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

Barisal port

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More casualties luckily averted

Casual Rab raid at notorious drug den in N'ganj comes under serious question

SHARIFUL ISLAM and FAISAL PARAG

Rab conducted a poorly-planned drive Tuesday night inside a well-organised drug den in Narayanganj and barely averted more casualties than one schoolboy dead and two others injured, according to an investigation by The Daily Star yesterday.

It is almost everybody's knowledge at Pagla, Narayanganj, that

gangs of drug-peddlers carry arms and run an unchallenged business, thanks to a nexus of criminals, some influential local ruling party leaders and law-enforcers.

On that night at 8:30, only two under-cover Rab personnel rode their motorbike to the drug den at a densely populated shanty area of Boubazar Battola. One of them, Sergeant Zakir, was caught by the

gang members and then beaten up and stabbed.

According to spot accounts, while Zakir was being beaten up in an alley, Shuvo and his younger brother Sohag came out of their house, around 10 yards from the spot, on their way to a shop to buy puri. Shovo's classmate Badal also accompanied them.

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JSD backs caretaker in next 2 polls

Citizen rights group prescribes new formula

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu), a partner in the Awami League-led alliance government, has suggested the next two parliamentary elections be held under non-partisan caretaker governments.

The suggestion came in a dialogue the party held with the Election Commission yesterday, its leaders said.

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HC refrains Bogra judge from duty

Orders probe into role of 3 PPs in out-of-court settlement of murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the district and sessions judge of Bogra to refrain from performing judicial functions for next one month for dismissing a sensational murder case on the basis of an out-of-court settlement.

During a hearing on a suo moto rule, the HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore also asked District and Sessions Judge M Mofizul Islam to explain why he would not be dismissed from service.

The bench directed the law secretary to investigate the

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Five more infected with anthrax

STAR REPORT

Five more persons have been infected with anthrax in Sirajganj and Pabna districts, upazila health office sources confirmed yesterday.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: Four persons -- Abdul Momin, 35, Marium, 60, Hazera, 65, and Sabina, 25, -- of Char

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A kitchen market flourishes on the rail lines of Tejgaon in the capital while inter-city trains whizz by. The railway and the Dhaka City Corporation seem to care little about the risky business going on in the slum-dominated area.

Domestic helps get ILO recognition

PORIMOL PALMA

International Labour Organization (ILO) yesterday adopted a new Convention that will enable domestic workers to enjoy rights and benefits available to other workers.

Terming it a historic event, ILO Director General Juan Somavia, said "We are moving the standard system of the ILO into the informal economy for the first time which is a major breakthrough".

Millions of domestic workers contribute to the households and the labour market, but remain outside the scope of labour and social protection.

The standards in the new ILO convention supported by Bangladesh in the International Labour Conference (June 1-17) in Geneva include reasonable working hours and a weekly break of at least 24 consecutive hours.

It also says the employee must have clear information on job's terms and conditions, right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, said ILO in its statement yesterday.

As the convention is adopted, the ILO member countries will ratify it and consequently enact new national laws or add chapters in the laws recognising the domestic workers, said Syed Sultan Uddin

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Corporal punishment goes on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

A middle-aged woman's hair was forcibly cut off after a beating by a school-teacher at Chilmari upazila of the district yesterday.

Victim Hashi Banu, 55, is the widow of Esabbar Hossain of Fakirerkuthi village.

Police said an altercation began on Wednesday afternoon when Maulana Motiur Rahman, assistant teacher of AU Pilot High School,

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The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with prime minister that only the elected representatives of the people should decide under what mechanism and whose authority the next parliamentary election should be held?

Yes (29.6%)
No (68.2%)
No Comments (2.3%)

TOTAL VOTES: 513

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think BNP chief's condition for talks with the government on caretaker government issue is justified?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT
www.thedailystar.net

No hartal till June 27, please

Urge O, A Level examinees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of O and A Levels and their guardians want no more hartal during their examinations that will continue until June 27.

On Monday night, students of A Level had to sit for their examinations at midnight when the BNP-led opposition called a 36-hour hartal.

Meantime,

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DRUG PEDDLING Female jail guard among 3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion arrested a female guard of Dhaka Central Jail and her two accomplices on Wednesday on charges of peddling illegal drugs in and outside the jail.

The detainees are jail guard Nadira Begum Alo, 36, Shahnaz Begum, 28, of Sabujbagh, and Rumana Akhter, 30. Detained Nadira is sister of the deputy jailer of Kashimpur Jail and sister-in-law of a bodyguard of the inspector general (IG) of prisons.



Nadira Begum Alo

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PRAYER TIMING June 17

Fajr	4-05	4-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Sources: Islamic Foundation