KSA orders

FROM PAGE 16 June 2012 and charged with cybercrime and disobeying his father - a crime in the Arab state, local media has reported.

His website included articles that were critical of senior religious figures such as Saudi Arabia's Grand Mufti and allegedly insulted Islam and religious authorities, according to Human Rights Watch.

Prosecutors had demanded Badawi be tried for apostasy, a charge which carries the death penalty, but this was dismissed by the judge.

Badawi was originally sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes in July last year, but an appeals court overturned the sentence and ordered a retrial - which then earned him a more severe sentence.

Badawi's lawyer, human rights activist Waleed Abu al-Khair, will not be able to represent him in an appeal because he has also been jailed and is currently awaiting trial on criminal charges that include "breaking allegiance with the king," and "making international organisations hostile to the kingdom".

His retrial led the judge to impose a harsher punishment and fine him one million riyals (£157,000).

In April, the Kingdom introduced a series of new laws which define atheists as terrorists, according to

Pranab won't

FROM PAGE 16

franchise, following his predecessors.

"To express his neutrality in the political fray, the president has decided not to cast his ballot," Venu Rajamony, press secretary of the president, said.

Mukherjee had ordered a postal ballot to cast his vote in South Kolkata Lok Sabha parliamentary seat where he is a registered voter. It goes to the polls on May 12.

The decision was taken for maintaining the tradition of most of his predecessors, Rajamony added.

India's national election this year has so far showed a record number of voters' turnout, and is expected to be historic in that respect when the last phase of staggered polls, which had begun on April 7, is held on May 12.

Dispute

FROM PAGE 2

Assistant Commissioner Mahmuda Afroz Lucky, whose team is probing the case, said the gang hired a car first to dump the body. Driver Farid was told that he would carry a patient. After driving a while, Farid guessed that it was a body of a murder victim.

Sensing danger, Farid scrambled an ambulance for the group at Mohammadpur. Ambulance driver Mostafa forced them to get down with the body near the cinema at

Bhogra. The gang left the body there and

Traders

FROM PAGE 2

trader was not rescued

Talking to The Daily Star, Mazeda said she and her three children had been passing sleepless nights since Tuesday.

Mokhlesur Rahman, officer-incharge of the police station, said the law enforcers had been trying to find the trader. "We hope we will be able to rescue the trader soon."

Traders' leaders Khandakar Abdul Jalil and Abbas Ali, union parishad member Shamsul Alam, headmaster of a local school SM Kamrul Hasan, among others, addressed the rally.

Dhaka woman's

FROM PAGE 16

abducting her daughter.

Mirpur police with help of the

Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) later arrested four of the accused --Suborna's father-in-law Arman Ali, his wife Rahima Begum, daughter Sheuli Begum and Sheuli's husband Younus Ali Bokul. Victim's husband

Palash has been on the run. During quizzing by cops, Sheuli admitted that Suborna has been murdered and her body was dumped into the septic tank at the

latter's in-law's house in Adarshapara village under Joypurhat Sadar upazila.

A police team led by Mukta Dhar, senior assistant police commissioner of Women Support and Investigation Division of the DMP, went to the village yesterday noon and recovered the body.

Police said the victim's hands and legs were tied with ropes. They suspected that the woman was murdered about 40 to 45 days ago.

(Our correspondent in Dinajpur

contributed to this report)

The body was sent to Joypurhat Modern Hospital for an autopsy.

JESSORE CORRECTION CENTRE

NHRC finds 11 underage children

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

At least eleven children under the age of nine are incarcerated at the Jessore Correction Centre in clear violation of the law, an investigation by a National Human Rights Commission team revealed yesterday.

According to existing laws, no child under the age of nine can be arrested, said Kazi Riazul Haque, chief of the child rights committee of NHRC.

The committee visited the centre Friday morning following the unrest at the centre on May 3 when inmates staged violent protests against misbehaviour of a policeman on duty there and irregularities at the centre.

The team talked to juvenile inmates at the centre and later briefed journalists about their visit.

"Some of the children's age is registered as nine with the police. We have advised the authority to ascertain the inmates' age medically, and if need be, return them to their families," Kazi Riazul told The Daily Star.

He said the committee was satisfied with the preliminary initiatives taken by the local administration in controlling the situation after the protests.

However, the committee recognised some of the demands of the inmates as valid and suggested what the authority should do about them and how to avert future rebellion.

The committee suggested keeping the children in separate rooms based on their ages. It also advised the authority to transfer inmates aged over 18 to regular jails.

Riazul said the authority must ensure adequate and healthy diet for the children along with arrangements for entertainment and games. The commission would urge the minister concerned to form a committee to monitor transparency at the centre and standard of the food served.

"They must be allowed to meet their parents four times a month and be able to talk to their parents over the phone at least once a week. You cannot deprive children of their parents' love," said Riazul. On May 3, on-duty policemen beat

up inmates at Jessore Kishore Unnayan Kendra when they staged a violent protest following an alleged abuse of a visitor by policemen. They vandalised windows of the

dormitory, prison van, library and

dining room after the centre authority

paid no heed to their complaints. They also attacked the police camp at the centre and assaulted two policemen. Police fired five shots in the air to

disperse the children. At one stage, at least 12 inmates arted hurting themselves, gashing Trader kept started hurting themselves, gashing their wrists, arms and chests.

The inmates said their protest was actually an outburst of discontent over deprivation of their basic rights. They said they were subjected to verbal abuse by policemen and officials of the centre regularly and the meals served were of poor quality.

State loses Tk 7cr

FROM PAGE 1

metals in them. The American Oak wood used as casings for the shields were also of poor quality and some of them got bent. The investigation committee led by

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner

Zillar Rahman submitted the report to the Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque on Thursday. Zillar told The Daily Star, "I was asked to find out whether there was any proof of the news reports on fraud

and if so, who were the people responsible? I have done my job." Asked why the committee did not recommend any punishment for the

people it held responsible, he said it

was not the committee's job. The ministry formed the committee after the media, referring to a Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) test of the shields, reported that the BSTI in 2012 found that each shield only had 2.363 grams of gold and 466.237 gram of brass.

The policy for making the shields which was signed by AB Tajul Islam himself on September 9, 2012, says every shield would be made with 22.5 grams of gold and 339 grams of silver.

The government ended up giving foreign friends poor quality shields even though it had paid a high price to have a good quantity of precious metals in them.

Quoting the probe report, a source in the probe committee said the government incurred a loss of Tk 7.04 crore. The ministry had paid over Tk 11.2 crore for 338 shields given to foreign friends.

Only one of them, the one given to the Indian former prime minister Indira Gandhi, had all the precious materials it was supposed to have.

Contacted, former state minister ABM Tajul Islam said the purchase committee of the ministry monitored the whole process of purchasing the shields.

"I was not in the purchase commit-

tee. So, I cannot be held responsible," he told The Daily Star.

The former minister also said the shield given to Indira Gandhi was tested under his supervision. "I asked the ministry officials to test the other crests. I did not get any report on those tests," he added.

Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission had tested the shield, worth Tk 1.42 crore, given to Indira Gandhi.

Of the 338 shields, Amecon supplied 278 and M/S Mohasinul Hasan supplied the rest 60.

Ministry sources said that according to a bill prepared by Amecon, it got around Tk 2.94 lakh for each crest and M/S Mohasinul Hasan was paid Tk 1.79 crore for its 60 shields.

After assuming office in 2009, the government initiated a move to honour foreign friends and organisations for their valuable contributions to the Liberation War in 1971 and the initiatives started with honouring Indira Gandhi.

The government honoured 337 more people and organisations in seven phases.

The Daily Star tried several times to reach Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque but he did not receive the phone calls.

The 12 others blamed by the probe body include Secretary of Liberation War Affairs Mizanur Rahman, former secretary KH Masud Siddique, Additional Secretary Golam Mustafa, Joint Secretary Abul Quasem Talukdar, Deputy Secretary Enamul Quader Khan and Senior Assistant Secretary

Babul Mia. Golam Mustafa and Babul Mia were made Officer on Special Duty (OSD) before the probe report was submitted. Abul Kashem Talukdar was made OSD allegedly for obtaining fake freedom

fighters' certificate. The post OSD is regarded as a punishment post.

Thailand in fresh

FROM PAGE 16

Six people were taken to hospital after the incident at the police club.

With protesters back on the streets after a relatively quiet few months, fears are again simmering of street clashes between rival political groups.

The situation remains highly combustible with pro-government "Red Shirts" due to mass in Bangkok's suburbs today, as Thailand's political crisis lurches into a dangerous new phase.

supporters and Thailand's recent ciate professor at the Centre for history has been scarred by bouts of political violence. At least 25 people have been

killed and hundreds more left wounded in gun and grenade attacks linked to six months of antigovernment protests.

Constitutional Court's removal of Yingluck on abuse of power charges on Wednesday, the current Puea Thai

administration has staggered on. But the Red Shirts are outraged at Yingluck's removal from power, accusing the court of acting in

cahoots with the street mob to boot

out a third premier linked to their hero Thaksin.

The ruling Puea Thai party has replaced Yingluck with Niwattumrong Boonsongpaisan and is targeting July 20 elections to end the six-month political crisis, which has left the kingdom without a fully functioning government and chiselled away at the Thai economy. "It seems like the same forces are

united against the government... The courts and independent agencies and the street are working together," Both sides have hardcore armed said Pavin Chachavalpongpun, asso-Southeast Asian Studies at Japan's Kyoto University. On Thursday the government won

a legal reprieve as the kingdom's antigraft panel stepped back from hauling more cabinet members into a separate indictment against Yingluck Although buffeted by the overa costly rice subsidy scheme. There were fears the agency could

have moved against the remainder of the government to complete a "judicial coup" and create a power vacuum that could have been filled by an appointed leader, as desired by the anti-government protesters.

Maya denies

FROM PAGE 1 Narayanganj.

He came up with the statement following media reports on his son Dipu Chowdhury and his son-in-law Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Rab-11 commanding officer dismissed three days ago, having alleged links with the crimes.

Neither Dipu nor Tareque is accused in the case.

The six accused in the case are Nur Hossain, Haji Yasin, Iqbal Hossain, Hasmat Ali Hashu, Aminul Islam Raju and Anwar. In the statement, on the minister's

official letterhead, Maya said the media reports linking his family to the seven-murder "saddened" him and "defamed" his family. "I believe that the truth will defi-

nitely come out through investigation. But I would like to state boldly that none of my family had ever been linked or involved in any business dealings, connection or communications with any of the accused in the murder case," the statement read. Meanwhile, Awami League

Advisory Council Member Suranjit Sengupta yesterday at the Institution of Diploma Engineers said the prime minister has taken a firm stance on the issue and those responsible, irrespective of their party affiliation and influence, would not be spared.

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Police arrested Srijon Ghosh Sajeeb, deputy sports secretary of the BCL, and Arfan Patwary.

Five other leaders of the BCL's university and hall units had been detained but were later released as police found no evidence of their involvement in the incident, Shibli Noman, assistant commissioner (Ramna zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

They only tried to prevent the police from arresting their leader Sajeeb, he added.

According to Farhad, his friend Akhter borrowed Tk 5 lakh from Arfan, a childhood friend of Farhad, around six months ago. Farhad was the guarantor. Akhter was supposed to pay back the money in monthly instalments.

However, Akhter stopped paying the instalment after three months and Arfan started asking Farhad to pay the rest of the money from his pocket, Farhad told The Daily Star at Shahbagh Police Station.

On Thursday night, Arfan along with 10 to 15 youths, including the BCL leader, picked him up from Shahbagh, took him to the DU hall and kept him confined to Sajib's room in Govinda Chandra Dev building.

They made Farhad phone his family and tell them to come with Tk 5 lakh for his release. The family informed the police right away.

Around 12:00noon yesterday, as his family members went to the Central Shaheed Minar area to give the money, police nabbed Arfan. On Arfan's information, police

rescued Farhad from the dormitory, a few hundred yards from the Shaheed Minar, and detained Sajeeb from there.

Farhad alleged that he was beaten up with iron rods and burnt with cigarette butts during his confinement.

Farhad's family has filed a case against Arfan with Shahbagh Police Station in this connection.

Indonesian vice president testifies in corruption case

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia's vice president testified Friday at the trial of a former official accused over a controversial bank bailout, renewing attention on a case that rocked the government just weeks before elections.

Prosecutors allege that the 6.76 trillion rupiah (\$590 million) used to bail out Bank Century in 2008 was far too high, and that some of the money was siphoned off by well connected depositors. There have been claims that some was redirected to President Susilo

Bambang Yudhoyono's party, and Vice President Boediono, who was central bank governor at the time, has also been implicated for authorising the move. The president vehemently denies any wrongdoing over the bailout of

the bank, which has been renamed Bank Mutiara. The trial of then central bank deputy governor, Budi Mulya,

charged with malfeasance over the bailout, comes ahead of July presidential elections, with Yudhoyono's party already deeply unpopular and struggling to find a successor. His ruling Democratic Party saw

its support fall by half to around 10 percent at legislative elections last month.

Victorious ANC pledges 'radical' change for SA

turnout.

AFP, Pretoria

South Africa'a ruling ANC pledged to "radically" boost black economic power as counting of the final votes yesterday showed the party headed for a resounding election victory.

With fewer than two percent of voting districts still counting by midday Friday, the ANC had garnered a thumping 62.2 percent of the popular vote, spelling a parliamentary majority big enough to hand embattled President Jacob Zuma a second fivevear term. But it would still fall short of the

two-thirds majority needed to amend the constitution and will see its winning margin reduced for a second

consecutive election, down from 66 percent at the last poll.

The main opposition party, the centrist Democratic Alliance, made gains boosted by a strong urban

Its share of the vote rose to 22.2 percent, up from 17 percent at the last election in 2009, according to the incomplete results.

Julius Malema's populist Economic Freedom Fighters was in third place with 6.2 percent of the vote, less than a year after the party was formed. It garnered more than one million votes.

Public Enterprises Minister Malusi Gigaba told AFP the ANC will use its fresh electoral mandate to "radically" boost black business.

Living in a hole...

FROM PAGE 1

changed, said Noimi's father Ratan Rishi, 28, a bicycle mechanic.

Daily Star correspondent saw the child in a small hole and struggling to keep balance holding the earth around. When Noimi was one-year-old, she got high fever accompanied by seizures. Afterwards, she started salivating all the time. She could neither speak

nor stand on her own, said her

mother Ranjana Rishi, 22. She can feel from the waist down but cannot The child was then taken to a local quack doctor. Seeing no improvement, the poor couple took her to kabiraj Sona Mia in Boda upazila of Panchagarh district and gave him Tk 10,000 in advance on condition of

But massaging the girl with some times black viscous oil and giving her some tablets as per the suggestion of the kabiraj brought no result. He then prescribed keeping the

the night, saying that it would make her back strong and gradually cure her. Since then her parents have been

putting her in the hole every morning

child in a narrow hole, except during

after feeding her and they briefly take her out of the hole for lunch and bathing. She is taken out in the evening. At Ratan's home on Wednesday, The Noimi may be suffering from

cerebral palsy caused by post-delivery complexities, said Dilip Roy, paediatric consultant at a Nilphamari hospital. Treatment, including regular exer-

cise at a specialised hospital in Dhaka, may improve her condition, he added. The parents said they could not afford it and so relied on the kabiraj.

Sona Mia told The Daily Star by phone that his treatment was the only way and the best way to cure her of the disability.

Asked about how she would be

inhuman procedure, he said it was the natural way of treating her and that it

cured through the unscientific and

father said. "We don't have any other option because of financial constraints and so

Nur 'controlled'

it went on a full scale until he went into hiding on April 30 following the

office at the Shimrail truck stand where The sources said Hossain set up close circuit cameras in this office and

their "share". The sources include members of law enforcement agencies, locals and even aides of Hossain. They spoke on condition of anonymity to protect be known as a crime-prone area

In his illegal trade, Hossain went unchallenged and even came to be known as a "godfather" in Siddhirganj, where there is no other known drug trader. He maintained such a close link with law enforcement agencies that there has never been a raid in his office

Not until yesterday when law enforcers seized 3,000 bottles of Phensedyl, 37 cans of beer, nine bottles of foreign liquor and five sharp weapons raiding several of his store-

Locals said drugs were sold openly from these storehouses and other spots till April 30, the day six bodies of the seven abductees were found floating in the Shitalakkhya river.

additional superintendent of police (SB) in Narayanganj, said he joined the office three months ago and was not aware of any raid in Hossain's office. "I cannot speak about other mat-

exchange for money. up or rented at least 20 shops to store various drugs.

"Ask anyone in the area, and he will tell you how openly the illegal trade was run for years under the nose of law enforcement agencies," said a tea vendor at Shimrail truck stand. At this stand alone, about 10,000

day. Most of these drivers and helpers are Hossain's regular customers, the A truck helper claimed to have seen uniformed police and Rab members

truck drivers and helpers gather every

times. The drugs, hidden among other goods, come from Comilla in trucks.

Nasir alias Kala Nasir used to look after the business. Several groups were assigned to ensure the smooth operation of the trade and collect the money. Even some women were engaged in carrying drugs in the area. "The points of sale, known as

Hossain might be killed to hide the facts.

for 24 hours," a trader at Shimrail crossfire. But we want to know the

would take a lot of time. curing her completely, Ratan said. Meanwhile, the girl fell sick several "She often gets fever, cough, or even pneumonia. The kabiraj has recently stopped communicating with us," the

we have continued this treatment in the hope that she will be able to stand one

"Hossain's cadres, who always

carried firearms, kept eyes on custom-

ers. Cops were not a problem for them,

but they were watchful about their

legal and illegal firearms, and they

used those in drug peddling, extortion

licences of 11 firearms of Hossain and

infamous for drug trade, extortion and

tender business. In recent years, it

turned into a commonplace for abduc-

Nazrul Islam, panel mayor of

Narayanganj City Corporation. The

two also had a fierce competition over

winning government tenders, accord-

Islam and his four associates and

senior lawyer Chandan Sarker and his

driver -- were kidnapped separately,

but around the same time from the

Shitalakkhya river three days later and

Islam on Sunday alleged that Rab men

killed Nazrul in exchange for Tk 6 crore

fired over their alleged involvement in

Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt

officer of Rab-11 in Narayanganj when

the abductions and killings happened.

He is also the son-in-law of Disaster

Management and Relief Minister

influential AL lawmaker brokered the

deal between Hossain and the Rab

men. The Daily Star could not inde-

pendently verify the claim and there-

fore kept from naming the AL law-

was appointed as commanding officer

after 83 cops of Siddhirganj and

Fatullah police stations and detectives

Shahidul yesterday called for not

Narayanganj, he said he feared

Talking to journalists at his house in

of Narayanganj were transferred.

putting Nur Hossain in crossfire.

'DON'T KILL NUR HOSSAIN'

Meanwhile, Lt Col Anwar Latif Khan

His appointment came only a day

maker and his son.

of Rab-11 yesterday.

Shahidul later said a son of an

Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

Commander SM Masud Rana.

from Nur Hossain and other accused.

Six bodies were found in the

Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul

Three top officials of Rab-11 were

The three are Lt Col Tareque Sayeed

Tareque was the commanding

Dhaka-Narayanganj link road.

another the next day.

the crime.

On April 27, seven people -- Nazrul

Hossain had political rivalry with

Hossain and his aides had both

Last week, the authorities cancelled

For long, Narayanganj has come to

rivals," the trader added.

and other illegal activities.

tion for money as well.

ing to the sources.

his associates.

crossing told our Narayanganj corre-

spondent.

FROM PAGE 1

seven-murder in the city. He ran the trade from his head

the transactions used to take place. if the footage can be collected, it will reveal who visited his office to collect

themselves from retribution.

or any of his storehouses.

houses.

Contacted, Mohammad Zakaria,

protected Hossain's business in Across Siddhirganj, Nur Hossain set

ters," he said, when asked about the

allegation that some law enforcers

visit Hossain's office there several

The sources said Hossain's cousin

counters locally, would remain open

"The culprits will remain out of reach if Nur Hossain is killed in