



Rifle looting in Khulna Ansar commander arrested, three absconding

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Ansars were involved in Thursday's looting of arms from the now-closed Daulatpur Jute Mill in Khulna, on interrogation people told police yesterday.

Khulna Sadar Thana Ansar Commander Sheikh Haroon-or-Rashid was arrested yesterday on an order of Director General of Ansars Major

General (ret'd) Manzurul Alam who arrived in Khulna from Dhaka.

Meanwhile, District Ansar Adjutant Nirmalendu Biswas filed an FIR (first information report) with the Khalishpur Police Station with mention of three ansars as accused along with 35 unidentified others. Shahabuddin-1, Shahabuddin-2 and Kamruzzaman are staffers of the ansar department under the Khulna Ansar Adjutant's Office.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahudul Haq told BBC Radio last night that outlaws looted the arms in connivance with the ansars.

The Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) and district police launched combing operations to recover 19 out of 20 rifles and 600 bullets looted by operators of the banned Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP)

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Woman with pistol arrested at Tejgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tejgaon police arrested a woman with criminal records and recovered a pistol from her possession at Tejgaon yesterday.

A team of police raided Shaheenbagh area and arrested Parveen, 25, wife of Sailla, a notorious drug peddler of Tejgaon area.

The police team recovered a foreign made pistol with seventeen bullets in two magazines.

Drug peddler Sailla is in the Dhaka Central Jail and his wife was running the illegal business in the locality.

Police brought charges against Parveen under the Arms Act and investigation is under way in this connection.

A South African day

HASAN MASOOD from Chittagong

Bangladesh's bowlers toiled under the sun as South Africa took a firm grip of the GrameenPhone first Test at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

By the close of play, the tourists had reached 364 for two, a lead of 191 runs, replying to the home team's first innings total of 173.

The story of the second day was the application and mental fortitude displayed by Jacques Rudolph and Boeta Dippenaar (131). The third wicket pair who came together with the score 41 on Thursday, added another 323 runs without being separated.

Along the way the left-handed Rudolph (170) became South Africa's highest scorer on Test debut. He eclipsed Andrew Hudson's 163 scored against the West Indies in 1992.

Earlier, after surviving a stumping chance off the bowling of leg-spinner Mohammad Ashraf, the 21-year-old batsman had to wait until tea before pushing a single to backward point to bring up the magical three figures. Rudolph had then faced 223 balls and hammered 14 boundaries.

Dippenaar, the right-hander, completed only his second Test century after the interval with a straight drive for four off leg-spinner Alok Kapali. His ton took 266 balls

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Cargo share row dogs Chittagong port

RAFIQ HASAN

Conflict over share of cargo between two groups of local ship owners has dogged the Chittagong port.

The two groups are Singapore-based Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC) and Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners Association (BOGSOA).

The CFTC is creating pressure on the government to scrap the Bangladesh Flag (Protection) Ordinance, 1982 while the BOGSOA is demanding full enforcement of it.

Container handling was hampered at the port from April 5 to 8 as the government made waiver certificate

for all foreign vessels mandatory as per provision of the ordinance.

The situation eased following exemption of five major foreign flag vessel operators from the waiver certificate for 60 per cent cargo due to a High Court stay order.

"We are pressurised by both the groups," said Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Commodore Zulfiqar Ali. "We need an immediate solution to the crisis," he said.

The CFTC claiming itself as foreign flag carriers is led by a local ship owner, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, who is chairman of QC Container Limited. Salahuddin is also parliamentary

affairs advisor to the prime minister.

Out of 18 vessels under the CFTC, six are owned by QC. On the other hand, 30 per cent share of PIL having four container vessels is owned by Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

The other main members of the CFTC are Sea Consortium, APL (NOL) and Orient Express Limited (OEL). There are 13 container vessels under BOGSOA with nine of those owned by its chairman Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury alone.

Three ships belong to Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) and the other one to Midland

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PHOTO: STAR

I'VE JOINED YOU: South African batsman Boeta Dippenaar (R) embraces fellow centurion Jacques Rudolph after reaching his century against Bangladesh yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of about 200 large and small launches on a fourth day strike against a new government schedule is enough to say how many passengers are suffering for the suspension of ferrying service from the Sadarghat Launch Terminal to different districts, mainly southern.

Unusual rise in Buriganga water level

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Unusual rise in the Buriganga water level has puzzled flood-forecasters.

Although the level is far below danger level, experts said the "timing" of the rise is 'very unusual'.

From April 13 to April 18, the water level rose at least two feet and has remained steady so far. The rise is the highest in lean period since 2001.

"The rise in water level this year is quite unusual. Normally the river starts to swell in June and July," said an official.

The surge has forced the Water Development Board engineers to stop work along the flood protection embankment.

Allaying fears of an imminent flood, the engineers said the rise could be due to some natural effects in the tidal process. The Buriganga does not have much influence on

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
April 26		6-25 pm
April 27	5-27 am	

Prayer Timings		
April 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-31	6-37
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

US wants to end UN controls on Iraq oil

REUTERS, United Nations

After extending until June 3 emergency arrangements for Iraq's oil-for-food plan, the UN Security Council faces contentious US demands that UN controls be struck entirely from the multibillion-dollar plan.

President Bush has said several times he wants the sanctions, imposed in 1990, lifted entirely and diplomats said the United States was crafting a resolution that would guarantee that proceeds from future oil sales be held in trust for an interim Iraqi authority rather than the United Nations.

The consequences of any resolution

would be to free oil sales and give the United States firm control over contracts and expenditures until an Iraqi government is in place, they said. Without Security Council endorsement, no oil firm will sign a contract with an entity that has no legal standing.

On Thursday, the Security Council renewed emergency procedures, first instituted on March 28, for the oil-for-food plan until June 3, the end of the program's current phase.

Currently, the program has some \$14 billion in funds. The council authorised UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to expedite emergency health and food supplies to Iraq. Some \$400 million

worth of goods are en route to Iraq and an additional \$130 million are expected by June 3.

The oil-for-food program, originally designed to ease the impact of the sanctions, puts Iraq's oil revenues into a UN escrow account, which pays suppliers of food, medicine and a host of civilian goods that Iraq ordered.

Russia this week floated its own informal plan that would leave the United Nations in firm control of Iraqi oil revenues until a new government was recognised. France suggested that sanctions be suspended but not lifted immediately

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AL plans to hold councils by June

REAZ AHMAD

The Awami League (AL) plans to hold long overdue councils of its grassroots level units and form their new committees by June before launching a movement for midterm parliamentary polls.

Sources in the main opposition party said specific programmes to press home the demand for midterm polls would be announced after forming fresh committees of district and thana units of the party by June 30 at the latest.

The issues came up prominently at last Tuesday's meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) and also at a meeting of the AL Secretariat on Thursday.

Following the ALCWC meeting,

party general secretary Abdul Jalil told newsmen, "We will chalk out programmes demanding midterm election to free the people from the clutches of the present autocrat government."

The AL overcame the initial shock of its debacle in the last general elections and started revamping it bringing in younger and dynamic leadership. But due to some intra-party problems and alleged political harassment of its grassroots level leaders and workers by the ruling alliance, the AL failed to complete holding of councils of its district and thana units as scheduled, by October last year, sources

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Abducted youth's body recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decomposed body of a young man, who had been abducted by assailants two months ago, was recovered from an under-construction building site in the city's South Paikpara area yesterday.

Meanwhile, police found the severed head of Sarifuddin Safu, 38, joint secretary of Mirpur thana unit of BNP, in a dustbin at Pisciculture Housing Estate at Mohammadpur on Thursday night.

Safu was an enlisted contractor of Dhaka City Corporation and the Department of Housing.

Police said Farhad Hossain was abducted by a gang allegedly led by Arif on February 13 from Agargaon.

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DOWN TO EARTH

Low standard residential hotels mushrooming

ASM NURUNNABI

The concept of residential hotels operating on a large scale is a recent phenomenon in our context. This is mainly due to the steady surge in city population. Previously, the city had a limited number of residential hotels which met the demand that was not so large.

The situation radically changed in recent times with the manifold increase in the number of new arrivals in the city, looking for temporary accommodation during their stay

here for various purposes. That has given impetus to the growth of new residential hotels in the city.

According to observers, these new hotels are run with no fixed principles or standards. Once the owners of these mushrooming establishments start their hotel business with a trade licence issued by the City Corporation, they don't care about taking any further measures for running them according to specific rules of hotel management. On account of utter indifference of the authorities concerned, these estab-

lishments are running their business without any control from any quarter. There is even no system for ensuring whether the payment of VAT and other government dues payable by them is duly made.

It is learnt that licences for conducting hotel business are issued by the deputy commissioner's office. Previously, the Parjatan Corporation was the issuing authority of such licences. The deputy commissioner's office, which currently exercises

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