

PCJSS alleges gangrape of 9 indigenous women in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Nine indigenous women, three of a family, were gangraped and some others assaulted physically during a nearly eight-hour mob attacks on at least 10 villages in Mohalchhari upazila of Khagrachhari district on Wednesday, Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) leader Polash Khisha alleged yesterday.

More than 400 houses in those villages, two Buddhist temples and three shops were set ablaze and an elderly indigenous man was killed during the attacks, said Polash, PCJSS Rangamati district unit secretary.

Polash made the allegations at a protest rally in front of the deputy commissioner's office here at 11am

The rape victims included the wife and two teenage daughters of Shashodhar Chakma of Pahartoli village and six others of Dupoizza Neel village, he said.

Quoting a detailed report from indigenous villagers, the PCJSS leader alleged involvement of some

'Criminal' lynched after death threat to witness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An accused in a murder case was beaten to death by an angry mob at Shachibunia of Jalma Union under Batiaghata thana in Khulna district Friday when he threatened to kill a prosecution witness, police said.

Victim Johnny, 24, an FIR-named accused in the Mamun murder case under Batiaghata Police Station who was released on bail last month, had gone to Shachibunia to threaten a prosecution witness of the murder case when angry locals apprehended and beat him up severely. He died on the spot.

Son of Dr Mosharrif Hossain of Mohammadnagar in Khulna town,

Russian sub sinks

2 bodies recovered, 7 more feared dead

REUTERS, Moscow

A Russian nuclear-powered submarine sank in stormy Arctic seas on yesterday as it was being towed into port for scrapping and up to nine servicemen appeared likely to have been killed, defense officials said.

Defense officials said the K-159 sank to a depth of 510 feet in the Barents Sea but did not represent a danger since its nuclear reactors were shut down in 1989 when it was decommissioned.

A ministry spokesman said the bodies of two servicemen were recovered after the incident, which happened in an early morning storm, and one officer was rescued alive from the crew of 10.

But Russia's navy chief-of-staff Viktor Kravchenko said the chances

of finding the seven missing sailors alive were slim given heaving seas and a water temperature of 50 F.

"Unfortunately, the hopes of finding alive the missing are very slight," he said, though a sea and air rescue operation continued.

Kravchenko, in a televised exchange with Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, said both reactors had been switched off on the K-159 in 1989 and "put into a nuclear safe condition."

"At this site, the radioactive level is normal," he said.

Navy spokesman Igor Dygalo said all weapons, including torpedoes and rockets, had also been removed from the vessel when it was decommissioned. The 40-year-old former attack submarine was being towed along the coast of the Kola Peninsula to a scrap yard at

Polyarny when floating hulls supporting it broke apart.

It tipped over and sank three miles northwest of Kildin Island.

There were only 10 crew on board when the accident happened at 8 p.m. EDT.

The incident bore uncanny echoes of the Kursk disaster in which a nuclear submarine sank also in the Barents sea, three years ago this month, killing all its 118 crew and enveloping the then newly elected President Vladimir Putin in a political row.

Another similarity is that Putin is on holiday as he was when the Kursk went down -- this time in Sardinia with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

The Kremlin said Putin had been informed of the incident by Defense Minister Ivanov.



Sheikh Hasina at court yesterday in frigate purchase case..

Hasina, Mintoo get bail in frigate case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A court yesterday granted bail to former prime minister and opposition Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina in a corruption case regarding purchase of a South Korean frigate for the Bangladesh Navy in 1996 by the then AL government.

The bail was granted upon a bond of Tk 1 lakh with two guarantors. Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge Matir Rahman also relieved the AL chief of the obligation of court appearance during hearings.

Recently elected President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) Abdul Awal Mintoo, one of six people accused in the case, was also granted bail. Mintoo's Trans World Engineering and Trading Company Limited assisted in the DW 2000H frigate purchase from South Korea's Daewoo Corporation.

Four other accused had already been granted bail. They are former chief of staff of Bangladesh Navy

Nine-year-old Khokon is safely back in his father's arms after being abducted allegedly by their domestic help Badsha on the way home from school in Keraniganj Wednesday noon.



PHOTO: STAR

Abducted schoolboy rescued from Mymensingh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy abducted from Keraniganj on Wednesday was rescued from Bhaluka in Mymensingh yesterday and three youths abducted from the city about six months ago were rescued from Sonargaon in Narayanganj on Friday.

Nine-year-old Khokon, a student of class II at Kashi Malchha Primary School, was abducted by their domestic help Badsha while he was returning from school.

Badsha telephoned Khokon's father Ali Hossain on Friday demanding Tk 20,000 in ransom. He asked Hossain to come to Bhaluka tempo stand with the money if he wanted to get back his son.

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Weather gets into strange stride

PINAKI ROY

Weather this year makes itself manifest strangely although the weathermen would not call it unusual.

In the first eight months, the country has weathered an unusually severe cold wave in January, an equally unbearable heat wave in May, an early flood in May, and an unusual cyclone. And now the monsoon is having a deficit rainfall, which the Meteorological Office terms a 'bad monsoon', which is not 'unusual'.

"We are yet to carry out any study regarding this (the strange nature of weather). So we cannot say the weather has been unusual. It is actually inter-annual variation of the weather," said Samarendra Karmakar, deputy director of the Met Office.

But he said both temperature and rate of rainfall in the country are showing an upward trend despite this year's deficit rainfall.

A study of weather from 1961 to

WTO settles drug pact for poor nations

AP, Geneva

The World Trade Organization on Saturday sealed an agreement to allow poor countries to import cheap copies of patented drugs for killer diseases like AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The WTO's supreme General Council gave formal approval to an agreement reached by a lower body late Thursday. The agreement had run into political wrangling that took intensive intervention from governments to resolve.

"This is a historic agreement for the WTO," Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi said.

"The final piece of the jigsaw has fallen into place, allowing poorer countries to make full use of the flexibilities in the WTO's intellectual property rules in order to deal with the diseases that ravage their people," Supachai said.

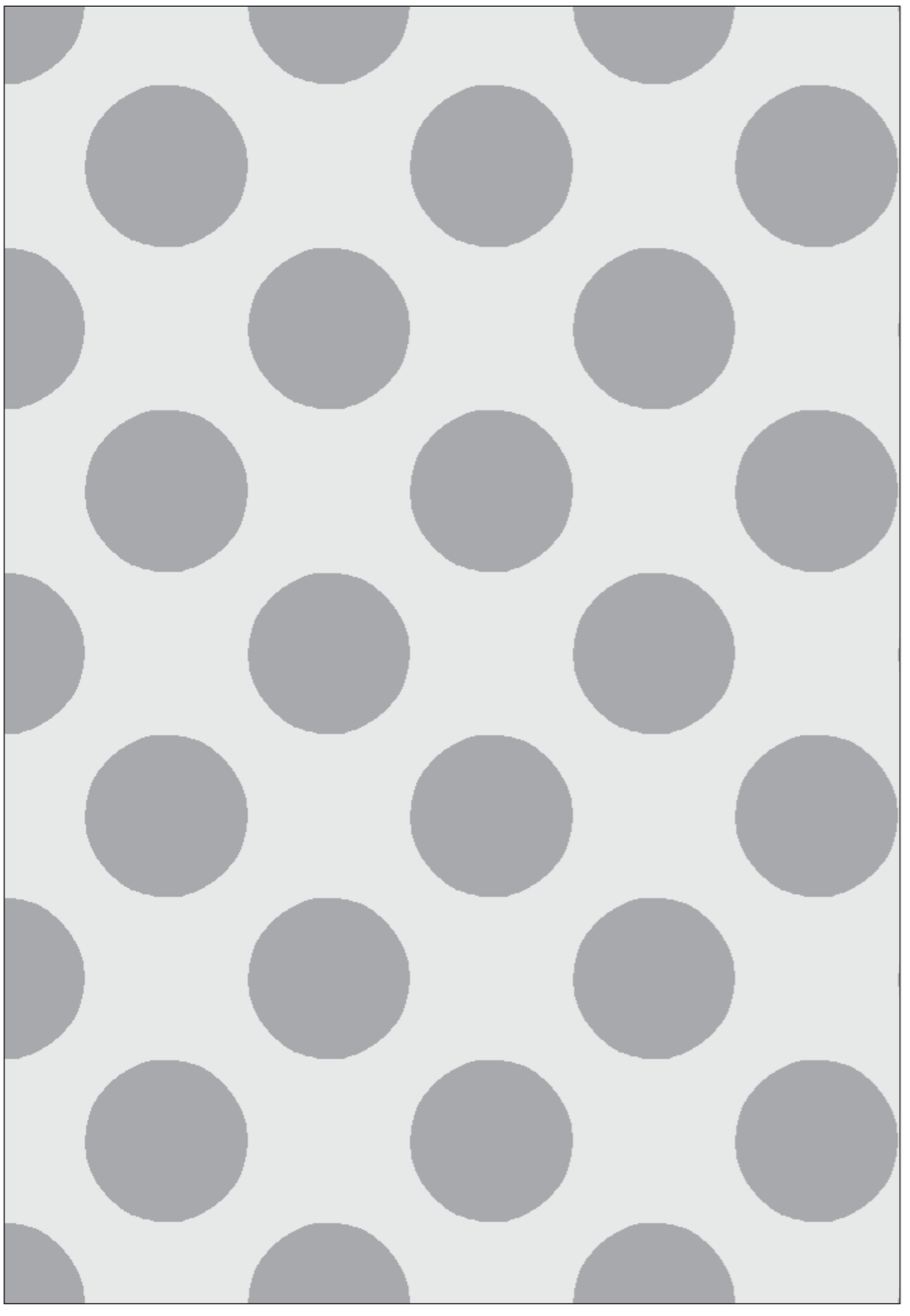
The deal was finalized on the sixth straight day of meetings by diplomats in the 146-nation body.

The representatives had nearly reached a deal by 1 a.m. Friday after a marathon session, but it fell through minutes later. That failure was a surprise, since the same officials earlier accepted the agreement after the United States ended an eight-month holdout.

Negotiators said the deal had stumbled over demands by some countries to make statements before the WTO's General Council formally approved the deal. Those statements can be used to spell out limits countries will place on their adherence to the accord.

Philippines ambassador Edsel Custodio said his country was ready to accept the agreement as it stood, but still wanted to make a statement.

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Bhuiyan lambastes Hasina for hinting at PM's hand in Imam murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) issued a statement yesterday strongly condemning the remarks of Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina during a recent speech where the opposition leader accused the prime minister of having a hand in the killing of Khulna AL leader Manzurul Imam.

Terming Hasina's remark as being "devoid of common sense", BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the statement accused the AL chief of peddling falsehood against the BNP chief and its other leaders through her "indecorous statement".

"It is an utter lie that Imam was killed because he vied with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the last general election," he added.

"We don't have the language to respond to such rubbish. People are well aware that such false remarks are customary of Sheikh Hasina. Even the highest court had advised her to be more sensible and exercise more restraint while making statements," Bhuiyan said.

He said it is common knowledge that the AL wants to make political gains even through killing its own men. "Sheikh Hasina's accusation against the prime minister is merely

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 31		6-18 pm
Sept 01	5-40 am	

Prayer Timings		
August 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-25	6-29
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

4 held for suspected link to Najaf blast

AFP, Najaf

The suspects detained by police in connection with the Najaf bombing are two Iraqis from Saddam Hussein's fallen regime and two Arab nationals, described as Sunni Muslim radicals, Najaf Governor Haidar Mehdi Matar told the news agency yesterday.

"Two were Iraqis from Basra, who belonged to the former regime, while the other two were Arab Wahhabis," Matar said. "They confessed to the bombing."

Wahhabi is a byword for those subscribing to the puritanical vision of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terror group.

Matar said the four were apprehended by a crowd minutes after Friday's blast outside a mosque in which prominent cleric and politician Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer al-

Hakim and 82 others were killed. Another 125 were wounded in the attack. The death toll yesterday rose to 87.

"People in the street thought they looked bizarre, captured them and handed them to police," Matar said.

The attackers communicated by mobile phone in the minutes before they detonated two cars packed with explosives.

"The explosion occurred at 2:10pm (local time) when a mini bus and another car were detonated by remote control. The vehicles were packed with a total of 700 kilograms of dynamite, mortars and hand grenades," Matar said.

The blast ripped through the area at the very moment. Hakim, considered a stabilising influence on Iraq, left the mosque compound after delivering his weekly sermon to a sea of faithful.

Earlier, a police source had told AFP all four detainees were foreign Arab fighters and that three others had escaped.

The London representative of Hakim's political party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), said the arrests lent credibility to suspicions of an alliance between al-Qaeda and veterans of Saddam's regime.

"I suspect there was a collaboration here between al-Qaeda and Saddam's people, as well as in the blasts at the UN headquarters and Jordan embassy (in Baghdad)," said Hamed al-Bayati.

Discussing the three devastating attacks in a short span of three weeks, Bayati said: "They are using new tactics - car bombings, suicide bombings that have the fingerprints of al-Qaeda."

Medicine depot looted of Tk 5.25 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Robbers again looted medicine worth Tk 5.25 lakh from a depot in Barisal City.

This is the fifth in a series of such robberies in the past two months.

Police arrested two staff of the depot.

According to police, some eight armed dacoits entered the premises of Transcom Distribution Company, a wholesale medicine depot at Saleha Cottage on Barisal Polytechnic Road Saturday.

They tied up night guard Majibur Rahman and looted only the valuable medicines.

The robbery was discovered next morning when office assistant Mizanur, who resides at an upstairs apartment in premise, came down and recovered the night guard.

Abdullah Al Mamun, the depot manager, filed a case and Barisal Kotwali police arrested Majibur and Mizanur.

Savar municipal polls today

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) at a meeting yesterday reiterated its request for deploying army personnel during today's Savar Pourasava election.

Repeating its August 26 request, the EC asked the Armed Forces Division to make necessary arrangements for deployment of forces at Savar without delay to avert untoward incident during election hours. The polls are being held after nine years due to a High Court stay.

"The EC did not receive any answer from the Armed Forces

Division till date regarding the earlier request," the meeting disclosed.

A total of 77,033 voters including 35,011 females will cast their votes from 8:00am to 4:00pm today.

Refat Ullah of the ruling four-party alliance, Ashraf Uddin Khan Imu of the Awami League and Mozammel Hossain of the Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) are running for the chairman post. Forty-seven

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