

US closes mission

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five militants suspected of links to Saudi-born Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda movement were killed since Monday.

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The statement published on the embassy Web site said: "We judge that there is a high threat from terrorism against Western, including British, targets. We are particularly concerned about potential threats to places where Westerners might gather."

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on the outskirts of Riyadh and protected by armored vehicles -- was unlikely to reopen on Sunday and that its position would be reviewed on a daily basis.

One Western diplomat said the latest US step "reflects further receipt of information which reinforces the information behind the earlier notices."

Drug queen Jyotsna held in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet

Drug queen of Sylhet Jyotsna was arrested from her Vatpara house on the outskirts of the city and recovered 450 grams of heroin Friday night.

Tipped-off, a police team cordoned off the house when some addicts were taking drugs.

Sensing presence of the police, the addicts managed to flee. Police arrested Jyotsna and seized the heroin worth about Tk 40 lakh.

Daughter of Majid, a notorious robber, Jyotsna, 45, was earlier arrested several times but she managed to come out of the custody.

10 JCD men

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Police picked up Imran, vice president of the JCD hall unit, following the clash. A tense situation was prevailing at the hall and additional police force was deployed at the hall gate.

Sources said the hall unit JCD president and general secretary asked two JCD workers not to stay in the same room as they had strained relations.

One of them then locked the room at about 10:00pm Friday to occupy it alone.

This led to the clash between the rival groups -- one led by JCD hall unit president AKM Mezba Uddin and General Secretary SM Younus Ali and the other led by unit leaders Kamruzzaman Biplob, Anisul Islam and Mohammad Apel Mahmud.

Seven hall unit JCD leaders including its president and general secretary have been asked to give a written undertaking to the DU unit JCD president and general secretary that they would no more be involved in intra-unit clashes.

"Those expelled from the JCD hall unit are responsible for the clash and the JCD would not bear any responsibilities for them," DU unit General Secretary Hasan Mamun said.

Earlier, at least 10 leaders and workers of the JCD and two police constables were injured in a clash between two factions of the student body at Shahidullah Hall of the DU.

GP plans

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the package will be around Tk 20,000 with basic handsets.

The service will have network mobility and international roaming. The GP may offer pre-paid recharge card in foreign currencies to allow international roaming.

The subscribers will enjoy "my easy prepaid number" facility to talk to a certain GP number at a flat rate of Tk 3 a minute, 24 hours a day.

When contacted, GP's Director (sales and marketing) Mehboob Chowdhury confirmed the launch of the package.

"The package is the GP's endeavour to provide cellphone connectivity with all standard facilities," Mehboob said.

Tk 6 lakh looted from garment factory in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed robbers allegedly looted Tk 6 lakh from a garment factory injuring two officials in Nisarabad industrial area of the port city yesterday.

A seven-member gang halted a car of Marks Apparel Limited inside the factory boundary and asked audit manager MA Taher and accountant Debabrata Bhattacharya to hand over Tk 6 lakh brought from Arab Bangladesh Bank's Agrabad branch. Being refused, they stabbed the officials and snatched three bags containing the money, police said.

The money was brought for payment to employees, factory sources said.

Both officials were admitted to a private clinic with head injury. However, owner of the factory Mohsin Ahmed, who accompanied the pair, escaped the attack, police added.

"The gang equipped with gun and lethal weapons hit Taher and Debabrata with choppers and snatched three bags of money brought to pay the employees", Ahmed said.

Later, police went to the garment factory but failed to arrest anyone till filing of this report at 6:00 last evening.

Mob beats

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He is receiving treatment under police custody.

In another incident at Mirpur, a youth yesterday suffered bullet injuries when criminals shot him in the head, neck, chest and abdomen.

Quayum Talukder, 24, is undergoing treatment at the DMCH in a critical condition.

Police said Quayum was shot by two of his five fellows at one stage of an altercation when they were watching a film inside an under-construction building Friday night.

Police arrested Iqbal alias Tera Iqbal and Salahuddin alias Sohel.

Quayum claimed himself as a construction material supplier and said local criminals shot him as he refused to pay tolls.

No case was filed with Mirpur Police Station till last evening.

Court orders

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also asked the accused to appear before it on December 6. Meanwhile, the case was transferred to Magistrate Shafiq Anwar for trial, though the time fixed for appearance of the accused -- December 6 -- did not expire.

Moreover, the magistrate issued several orders including declaration of the accused as an absconder, attachment of his property and ban on his leaving the country. Such orders are irregular, illegal and arbitrary since the date of his appearance was on December 4, the metropolitan sessions judge said.

Meanwhile, accused Jinnah appeared before court and prayed for bail on November 1. The court, however, rejected his bail petition and sent him to Dhaka Central Jail though the charges brought against him merit bail.

The lawyers for the accused filed a criminal revision with the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge on November 3 against impugned order of the magistrate.

After a hearing, the metropolitan sessions judge granted the revision and directed the magistrate to release the accused on bail.

The judge observed that the magistrate was abusing the laws and the motives and intentions of the court were illegal. He also found the sending of the accused to custody illegal. The judge also observed that Magistrate Shafiq Anwar's knowledge of law is very poor and so his magisterial power needs to be seized at once.

SL PM

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A Norwegian-brokered cease-fire has mostly held since February 2002, but Kumaratunga said Wickremesinghe's handling of the peace process was faulty.

"During the last two years, the sovereignty of the state of Sri Lanka, its territorial integrity and the security of the nation have been placed in grave danger," said Kumaratunga, who was seriously wounded by a rebel suicide bomber in 1999.

But Kumaratunga denied she was trying to scuttle the peace process, saying the cease-fire would stand and that Wickremesinghe would continue pursuing peace.

The LTTE had no immediate comment, spokesman Daya Master said Saturday. But Friday, LTTE military leader Colonel V. Karuna called for calm. "We have to observe the political turmoil in Colombo quite soberly...We can remain patient as long as we are strong," he was quoted as saying by the pro-rebel Tamilnet Web site.

Political observers said the political standoff could end in a general election, the third in four years.

Red Cross shuts

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A Black Hawk helicopter there, killing six American soldiers.

The two 82nd Airborne Division soldiers died when a homemade bomb exploded beside their vehicle about 8:30am in Fallujah, a center of Sunni Muslim resistance 40 miles west of Baghdad, the military said.

Their deaths brought to 34 the number of American soldiers who have died in Iraq this month as resistance escalated during the Ramadan.

At Geneva, ICRC spokesman Florian Westphal yesterday said their Baghdad and Basra offices were closing given "the extremely dangerous and volatile situation" in the country.

"We did decide that we will temporarily close offices in Baghdad and Basra but remain present in the north of Iraq," International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) spokesman Florian Westphal said.

"We do want to make it clear that part of the reason we are doing this because we are deciding against military protection, the two things are connected," he said.

He said the ICRC had received no direct threat but had taken its decision on the basis of an overall assessment of the situation.

"We are still discussing what to do with our foreign staff. The situation is extremely dangerous and volatile," he said.

The blast on October 27, which killed among others two ICRC guards, wrecked the Baghdad office. It prompted the organisation to reduce its foreign staff and forced the remaining employees into temporary accommodation.

The ICRC has faced a difficult choice about its role in Iraq where it has been operating for 23 years, through the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war in 1991 and the US-led invasion earlier this year.

"We must painfully acknowledge that the ICRC as a large humanitarian organisation has become a target of attacks for a group of people," ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger said in an interview with a Swiss daily newspaper, the Tages-Anzeiger/Zurich.

The ICRC has been forced to reconsider how to carry out its humanitarian work while protecting its employees, Kellenbergersaid.

"In the coming weeks we will have to

redefine our modus operandi, the way we are deployed," he said.

At Tikrit, the US response to helicopter attack was swift. Warplanes swooped over Tikrit, dropping several 500-pound bombs near the helicopter crash site. Then raids were launched around the town -- a hotbed of resistance to the US-led occupation.

F-16 fighter planes and troops backed by Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles destroyed several houses which the US military believed had been used by insurgents.

Lieutenant-Colonel Steve Russell of the 4th Infantry Division based in Tikrit confirmed the Black Hawk which crashed Friday had been brought down by guerrillas. "We do believe it was brought down by ground fire," he said.

Soldiers said the Black Hawk was probably hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. It was the third US helicopter to be shot down in Iraq in the last two weeks.

"We are targeting those areas where we have had attacks on coalition forces," Russell said. "We want to eliminate those threats."

Last Sunday, guerrillas shot down a US Chinook west of Baghdad as it carried troops on a rest and recreation break, killing 16 American soldiers in the deadliest single strike on U.S.-led forces since they invaded to oust Saddam.

On October 25, guerrillas brought down a Black Hawk in Tikrit, hitting one of its engines with an RPG. The helicopter made an emergency landing and all five crew members escaped before it was engulfed in flames.

Fresh raids

FROM PAGE 1

be forced to release Jamal if the government hammers on them," she said.

She also alleged that police and other government agencies are aware of Jamal's whereabouts.

Valuable information could be gathered from Union Parishad chairmen Abul Kasem and Shahid if police arrest them, she said.

An armed gang kidnapped Jamal from city's Chawkbazar on July 24 and the abductors later demanded Tk 1 crore in ransom.

Monga-hit

FROM PAGE 1

The starving population has often clashed with local administrators protesting the irregularities. Ministers have also been booed during their visit to monga-stricken areas.

Asadul Habib Dulu, deputy minister for disaster management and relief told newsmen in Nilphamari that 13.5 tonnes of rice has so far been distributed among the VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) cardholders in eight affected districts.

"Tk 9.55 crore has been allocated for food for work programmes to be launched soon to provide jobs to the people of the north," he said.

"A sufficient relief was allocated to control the monga, but local people have alleged that irregularities and corruption by ruling BNP men are eating up a major portion of the allocated materials," said Jamshed Mian, a schoolteacher at Haragachha in Rangpur.

Villagers at Talukpohua of Kalyani union in Rangpur said union BNP president Aftab Hossain got a VGF rice card under his mother's name; Hossain said his mother is poor and needs the rice.

On Friday, Alamgir Kabir, state minister for housing and public works affairs, caught four people including sub-assistant engineer of upazila Public Health Department Ilias Ali for misappropriation of relief materials at Boro Beel union council of Gangachhara in Rangpur.

A case was filed against six people including UP members for giving less than the allocated amount of rice to VGF cardholders in the union.

UP chairman and BNP leader Abdul Aziz Chowdhury were exempted from the charge and authorities were forced to call riot police when people protested their exclusion from the case.

In Peerganj upazila, a group of hungry people confined Parul UP chairman in protest against irregularities and accused Ramnathpur union parishad chairman Badsha Mia of distributing VGF cards among his own relatives.

Aleya Begum, a female UP member, alleged that Badsha Mia sold 55 VGF cards on black market. Badsha has denied the allegation.

Lioness' day out

RU CORRESPONDENT

A lioness the Rajshahi Central Zoo roamed at large for an hour yesterday due to the negligence of a doctor and staff of the zoo.

Sources said the doctor and his attendants left the cage open after treating injured leg of the lioness. She came out of her cage at 3:00pm, they added.

The doctor had to fire a tranquilliser at the animal before the zoo staff along with locals of Bhatpara captured her at 4:00pm.

None of the zoo authorities was available for comment.

Indian editor, four journos face jail over articles

AFP/PTI, Madras

Indian media expressed outrage Saturday after a state assembly sentenced five journalists of a top daily to 15 days in jail and sent police to the newspaper office over articles critical of the government.

The assembly in the southern state of Tamil Nadu late Friday ordered the jail terms against top journalists of The Hindu after the paper ran articles and an editorial that said the provincial government showed "rising intolerance."

The Hindu yesterday said it would approach court "as quickly" as possible, challenging the Tamil Nadu Assembly's decision awarding 15 days' simple imprisonment to five of its journalists including two top editors.

Journalists from various newspapers and magazines yesterday decided to observe a day's fast here today to condemn the Tamil Nadu Assembly's decision, awarding 15 days' simple imprisonment to six journalists on charges of breach of privilege.

After the vote, more than 20 police entered the newspaper's headquarters in the state capital Madras, but an editor told them he would not let them enter without a warrant, newspaper staff members said.

Police returned with a warrant and looked into the offices of top editors, but did not carry out the arrests.

The state assembly ordered jail for The Hindu's publisher, editor, executive editor and two other journalists for "breach of privilege" over articles and an editorial about Chief Minister Jayalalitha Jayaram's government.

The newspaper had written that the government made "crude use of state power" by arresting a leading political opponent and allegedly harassing independent media.

The action against The Hindu made the front-pages of most Indian newspapers, which called the raid a violation of India's constitutionally-protected right of free speech.

The Hindu in a front-page editorial denounced the legislature's use of privilege law "as a crude instrument to threaten the independent media and trample on the fundamental right of free expression, which includes fair comment and criticism."

Frigate case

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unable to hear the petition. The case record was then sent to the Chief Justice (CJ) and the CJ will send it to another bench to resolve.

According to the prosecution, the Bureau of Anti Corruption (Bac) filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station on August 7 last year against Sheikh Hasina and four others for their alleged corruption in purchasing a frigate from South Korea.

The bureau alleged that Hasina and the others accused misappropriated \$ 99.97 million amounting to about Tk 511.17 crore in purchasing the frigate for the state.

After investigation, charges were pressed on August 3, 2003 against six including Hasina.

The case is now pending with the Special Court of Dhaka Division. The hearing on charge-framing is likely on November 20.

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud appeared on behalf of the petitioner Sheikh Hasina in the court.

DMCH

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Tejgaon, has now lost a lot of blood, and is almost unconscious. The only technician at the blood bank tells the writers of this report that he has no supplies for emergencies. "The blood in the freezer is for routine operations tomorrow," he says, refusing to give more information.

The man, who clearly needs emergency surgery, is left on a bed. "We have to wait until the surgical team in the operating theatre finishes," says Dr Ziauddin, one of the interns. "They are operating on a stab injury patient."

His colleague, Dr Rakib Uddin Ahmed, explains, "We started duty at 10:00am on Thursday and almost 24 hours later we are still on duty and have had no rest. How can patients expect us to have a sense of urgency?"

Minutes later, at 3:50am, the operating theatre closes until a new shift takes over at 8 o'clock. The waiting patients, in varying degrees of desperation, can only pray to God for relief.

"I have no idea when would Hossain will go to the theatre. But we will hand our admission cases to those taking over from us on the next shift," says Dr Uddin.

While the patients continue to groan and cry out, the main emergency room and the passage is temporarily shut for cleaning. A group of men slosh buckets of water on the floor.

Emergency patients are asked to use a different passage, creating confusion among both patients and staff.

Hossain continues to scream in agony while attendants from other wards peep in to see what the fuss is about.

Army swings

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showroom at Barutkhana to the city's Bandarabazar area on a rickshaw at about 9:00am.

JCD cadre Habib Ibne Islam alias Chamak and Lovelu along with some others were in a private car in the Barutkhana Lane behind the rickshaw. As there was a traffic jam on the road, the car driver was honking horn.

The army officer asked the driver not to honk horn. It angered Chamak, who along with others got down from the car and locked in a heated argument with the officer. The officer gave his identity but Chamak wielded his pistol and misbehaved with him, knocking him in the cheek, the sources added.

Later, at about 11:00pm, a team of army men riding motorcycles, jeep and a lorry cordoned Barutkhana and Puran Lane area and started a thorough search.

The army men also raided the residence of Chamak in Mirabazar, but failing to find him they picked up his father Ohidul Islam Tofa, an Awami League leader.

Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran was passing by the area when he saw the army vehicle in which Tofa was being carried away. The army men released Tofa on his request.

However, they picked up another suspect Hakim. Meanwhile, the additional superintendent of police (SP) and some other police officials went to

Saarc talks

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during a meeting of Saarc editors and journalists in Dhaka from November 1-2. The meeting prepared a set of recommendations to be submitted in New Delhi.

The recommendations include a proposal for ensuring free movement of media professionals, their preferential access to member countries and relaxation of visa regime.

The meeting also recommended enhancement of training, scholarship and fellowship programmes among member countries, and raising of \$1,00,000 to launch the proposed Saarc media development fund.

M-16 haul

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Assistant Superintendent of Customs Idris Ali. He said the sealed locker was meant exclusively for keeping whisky and beer.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Abdul Baten said the M-16 rifles were manufactured in the Philippines and licensed in the US, not in Bangladesh.

Highly placed sources in the intelligence agencies, who have already launched an investigation into the incident, said even law-enforcers do not have such sophisticated arms.