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Huge arms haul in CHT



A dozen of heavy firearms seized from Khagrachhari terrorist den.

Antiaircraft machine-gun, rocket launcher in Khagrachhari cache

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Army seized a high-profile haul of firearms and ammunition, including an antiaircraft machine-gun and a rocket launcher, in a raid on a haunt of terrorists deep into a forest in Khagrachhari Sunday night.

The terrorists melted into the thick forest under the cover of dark, leaving behind 12 firearms and huge ammunition, before the army demolished the hideout in Karangatali, army officials of Dighinala-Baghaihat zones said.

The raid that came amid firm-ed-up security watch on the region was described by senior army officials as their biggest success in the years since the end of three-decade bush war in 1997 after a landmark peace deal.

The haul is the latest in a series of

busts by the army personnel of the zone.

The army had also demolished another terrorist hideout in an outlying hillside village last month and seized a small haul of firearms and ammunition from the terrorist remnants.

Sunday's seized firearms include an antiaircraft machine-gun, a rocket launcher, a 7.62mm light machine-gun with two magazines, an AK-47 rifle with two magazines, two 7.62mm Chinese rifles, a 5.56mm automatic rifle, a 7.62mm sniper rifle, a 7.62mm SLR, a 7.62mm bolt-action rifle with a magazine, two 7.62mm Chinese pistols, a 7.62mm machine-gun barrel and a commando knife.

The recovered ammunition are: 734 bullets of 7.62mm machinegun, 834 bullets of 7.62 rifle, 1,406 bullets

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The Daily Star wishes its readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers a very happy Eid.

HOLIDAY

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed for three days from today on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr. Therefore, there will be no edition of the newspaper on November 26, 27 and 28.

However, if Eid is celebrated on Thursday, November 27, then the following day, Friday, November 28, will also be considered a holiday. In that case, the newspaper will not hit the stands on Saturday, November 29, as well. The Rising Star will also not come out this week.



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Launches overloaded with passengers leave for the southern districts from Sadarghat terminal. Thousands of Dhaka residents ignore the risk to their lives from overcrowding to head home to spend the Eid holidays with their loved ones.

Eid tomorrow if moon sighted today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated all over the country tomorrow if the Shawal moon is sighted today, which is highly likely.

If not, then the biggest religious festival of the Muslims will be celebrated on Thursday.

The possibility of sighting moon this evening is more than 90 per cent, sources at the Meteorological Office said. If Shawal moon is sighted today, the fasting month of Ramadan will end in 29 days.

The sky is likely to be less cloudy and the Shawal moon will be sighted

at the west-west and southern corner at 17 degrees altitude throughout the country, the duty officer at the Met Office in Dhaka told the Daily Star last night.

Sources at the Islamic Foundation said the National Moon Sighting Committee will sit this evening to see the moon.

Thousands of people have already left Dhaka for their respective village homes to celebrate the Eid with their loved ones. Still, trains, launches and buses witnessed a heavy rush of passengers yesterday as many headed home at

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Eid delicacies get dearer this year

STAR REPORT

People of the middle and low-income brackets have to dig their purses deep to relish Eid delicacies this year as the prices of most essentials needed to serve them on the platter have gone up as high as 40 per cent in a span of 10 days.

As more and more people dash off to the kitchen markets today to do the last-minute shopping for special Eid food, traders are set to push the prices up further, market sources said.

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Ahmedul Kabir passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahmedul Kabir, a pioneering media personality and the chief editor of the Daily Sangbad, died at 81 from old-age complications at a Kolkata hospital yesterday.

Kabir, also president of the Gonoantri Party, was admitted to Apollo Gleneagles Hospital in the eastern Indian city on November 18, where he died at 4:25pm local time (at 4:55pm BST). He left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Kabir had a brilliant and checkered career as a journalist, politician and business leader to his credit.

Born to a zamindar family in Ghorashal village in Palash upazila in Narsingdi on February 3, 1923, Kabir graduated in economics (Honours) and joined the Reserve Bank of India. Later, he joined as the chief of the East Pakistan Foreign Exchange Department.

Kabir served several banks and insurance companies as a director. He joined the Sangbad as its managing director in 1954. From 1972 to 2001, he served the daily as the editor and became its chief editor in 2001.

In his student life, Kabir was the first elected vice-president of Dhaka

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Moscow fire kills 32 foreign students

7 Bangladeshis, 4 critically, hurt

STAR REPORT

A fire, possibly caused by an electrical fault, swept through a Moscow dormitory early yesterday, killing 32 foreign students and injuring 139 others, including seven Bangladeshis, officials in Moscow said, according to Reuters.

With freezing temperatures outside, many casualties had jumped from windows to escape the blaze in the crowded five-storey building housing students from the developing world at Moscow's Patrice Lumumba People's

Friendship University.

An official at the Bangladesh Embassy in Moscow told The Daily Star last night only seven Bangladeshis students were injured in the incident, four of them critically. The rest were either released after first aid or kept at the hospital for further treatment.

"The critically injured have been kept under observation at the intensive care units," the official said.

He added that Simon Pal, who was badly burnt, was to be taken to Kifasoskey Institute, a specialised burn hospital in the Russian capital.

The other three critically injured students are Shishir Rozario, Sheikh Hasan Masud and Mazharul Islam.

"Twelve Bangladeshi students used to live in the building that caught fire. Five of them escaped injury. The injured students got hurt trying to jump out of the window from the second floor of the building. Some suffered burn injuries while some others broke their legs in the process."

The official said the Bangladesh envoy in Moscow and other officials rushed to the hospitals where the

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Jamal's family doubts fresh ransom letter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The family of abducted Chittagong magnate Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday doubted the senders of a letter demanding a hefty ransom for his release while police said they were scanning it.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Sabbir Ali said: "We are now trying to verify whether the letter came from the real abductors. We'll take due efforts to rescue Jamal."

Talking to The Daily Star, Jamal's wife said: "My husband was not released earlier although we paid Tk 25 lakh through police. We're doubtful whether the letter came from the abductors."

"We're at a loss now," Jamal's family received the letter, posted to Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry office, on

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7 more die of dengue fever

337 affected since April

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven more patients died of dengue fever until November 24 out of a total of 337 people affected since April this year across the country, officials at the Directorate of Health Services said yesterday.

Last month as many people died of the dreaded disease at different hospitals.

Two died at Dhaka Shishu Hospital on November 12 and 13, two others died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on November 14 and 16, one each died at Chittagong

Medical College Hospital on November 9, Suhrawardy Hospital on November 22, and Bangladesh Medical College on November 2.

Out of 337 dengue patients, 256 have been released from various hospitals while 81 are under treatment.

Sixteen more dengue-infected patients have been admitted to the DMCH, Suhrawardy Hospital, Holy Family Hospital and Chittagong Medical College Hospital until midday of November 24. Ten people fell sick to dengue fever on November 23.

On November 19, ten dengue patients were admitted to Suhrawardy Hospital, four to the DMCH, five to Holy Family Hospital, and two to the CMCH.

Five patients were admitted to the CMCH, Suhrawardy Hospital, and the city's Metropolitan Hospital on November 22.

Over a period of 15 to 20 days in November, a total of 70 dengue patients were treated at Holy Family Hospital, 19 remaining hospitalised until November 22.

Director of the hospital Dr. SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

OC closed in Khulna on graft charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police Headquarters has closed officer-in-charge (OC) of Mollarhat Police Station and sent to Bagerhat Police Lines for unauthorisedly releasing a listed criminal.

Khulna police have also started departmental proceedings against OC Sultan Ahmed on graft charge.

Ahmed held Chanchal, an activist of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party and listed criminal, in Nagar Kanda union. He took

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Cabinet trimming on the cards

REZAUL KARIM

The government is planning to downsize the cabinet after the Eid-ul-Fitr in an effort to restore people's confidence in the administration, highly placed sources in the ruling BNP said.

Policy-makers of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party believe a sense of frustration, bred by widespread crime, corruption, price spiral of essentials and comments of former president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, is assailing people's mind.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, several influential ministers said some urgent steps including downsizing the cabinet and checking the ills could erase the disquiet.

Senior ministers and BNP policymakers said they would sit with the prime minister, either individually or in groups, to discuss the issues with her.

A top leader with close ties with the premier said her attention was drawn to the issues before she left for Saudi Arabia.

"It won't be possible to discuss the issues in detail with her before the Eid. I think we'll sit together after

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Eid jamaats, timings in city

BSS, Dhaka

Preparations are complete for holding Eid congregations in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country.

In Dhaka, the main Eid congregation will be held at National Eidgah Maidan on the High Court premises at 8:00am under the auspices of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

According to the Islamic Foundation, five congregations will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 7:30 am, 8:30 am, 9:30 am, 10:15 am and 11:15 am.

Special arrangements have been made for women devotees at the main congregation.

Besides, Eid congregations will

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Opposition parties eye anti-govt unity after Eid

REAZ AHMAD

Student and youth fronts of opposition political parties are planning to forge a greater anti-government unity in the post-Eid political configuration.

They are already in a process to join hands against what they peg as misrule, slide in law and order and rise of fundamentalism under the four-party coalition government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

On the sidelines of an iftar party

on November 18, six opposition youth fronts had a preliminary discussion on exploring the possibility of a 'Youth Movement Council' to collectively fight the 'misrule'.

Leaders of the Jubo Union, Jubo Gono Forum, Jubo Moitree, Jubo Oilkya and Jubo Samity joined the party responding to the Awami Jubo League's invitation.

On November 19, leaders of the AL-backed Chhatra League (BCL), Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU),

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Eid Mubarak

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