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Pirates attack defence cargo: Ammunition intact

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, July 16: The foreign vessel 'MV Karen Cal' loaded with defence cargo, which came under attack from pirates at the outer anchorage Wednesday night, is now anchored at port jetty No. 11, port sources said.

Unloading of the cargo will begin soon, the sources said. The vessel is carrying 549 tonnes of ammunition imported from Romania for Bangladesh Army and Air Force, security source said. Of the total cargo, 63 tonnes of ammunition were imported for the Air Force.

But the pirates did not touch the ammunition kept inside the hatch of the small ship, 75 metres in length. They looted some goods from the store room of the ship, keeping the captain and other crew confined in the ship at gunpoint, port sources said.

Port thana police was informed about the incident but none of the pirates could be arrested so far, police said.

Myanmar FM arrives today

U Win Aung, Foreign Minister of the Union of Myanmar arrives in the city today on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The Myanmar minister is coming to Bangladesh as part of his visit to the countries of south and southeast Asia region, sources in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said.

Official talks between the two countries will be held today. Besides Rohingya issue, improvement of relations between the two neighbours will figure in the talks, sources added.

During his visit, U Win Aung is scheduled to call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He is likely to hold a meeting with Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, Minister for CHT Affairs.

Law ministry denies press report

By Staff Correspondent

The Law Ministry in a press release issued on Thursday in the context of press reports on transfer of operatorship of Cairn to Shell Oil, clarified that it did not 'approve' the change of operatorship.

The press release said that the Law Ministry was not authorised to approve matters relating to Production Sharing Contract (PSC) and it did not send any approval letter to the Petrobangla.

It further said that the Energy Ministry sought the Law Ministry's opinion on some specific legal issues (relating to the change of operatorship) and the Law Ministry gave its opinion after examining the PSC and relevant documents.

The opinion so given was not under the influence of anybody, nor it was uncalled for, the press release added.

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Prayer Timings

July 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:10	4:15
Johr	12:50	1:25
Asr	4:55	5:05
Maghrib	7:00	7:05
Esha	7:55	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Crackdown fails to stem rising crimes

1571 murdered, 490 abducted, 1264 raped, 53 acid victims in 5 months

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Despite a countrywide crackdown on criminals, incidents of crime including murder and rape marked a sharp rise during the first five months of this year compared to those in the corresponding period last year.

During January-May this year, at least 1,571 people were murdered and 490 abducted against 1305 and 461 during the corresponding period last year, according to police.

Incidents of rape rose to 1,264 from 974 and those of

acid throwing on women to 53 from 43.

A total of 3203 cases of repression on women were filed with police during January-May this year against 2515 in the corresponding period last year.

Incidents of dacoity rose to 447 from 443, snatching 801 from 719 and those of clashes rose to 1,771 from 1700, sources in police said.

A total of 4,315 incidents of burglary were also recorded in the first five months of this

year. Police said 1,058 arms were recovered and 179 policemen came under attack by criminals during the period.

A total of 50,242 criminal cases were filed with police during January-May this year, up from 44,928 in the corresponding period last year.

But the actual number of criminal incidents would be much more as many incidents are not reported to police, the sources said.

In the capital, 106 people

were murdered and 61 women violated during January-May this year. A total of 209 incidents of snatching and 30 of dacoity took place. The number of criminal cases in the city rose to 8,401 in January-May this year from 7,235 in the corresponding period last year.

Incidents of crime also marked a rise in Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna metropolitan cities.

The government launched the countrywide crackdown

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Country-wide crime figures

Type of Crimes	Jan-May 98	Jan-May 99	+/-
Murder	1304	1571	+ 266
Dacoity	443	447	+ 4
Women Repression	2515	3203	+ 688
Rape	974	1264	+ 290
Acid	43	53	+ 10
Child Repression	255	234	- 21
Snatching	719	801	+ 82
Clashes	1700	1771	+ 71
Abduction	461	490	+ 29
Attack on police	114	179	+ 66
Total crime occurred *	44928	50242	+ 5314

Compiled from police sources, *not all heads included here.

Gumti falls below danger mark

Fresh areas in Comilla flooded

By Special Correspondent

The Gumti came down below its danger level yesterday after wrecking havoc in a vast area in Comilla district but strong current in the river prevented engineers from repairing its damaged embankment.

"We are still waiting for further fall in the water level," said a senior official of Comilla district administration.

The water gushing through breaches in the Gumti embankment at Ebdarpur in Burichang thana spread across the flood plains and submerged part of the Comilla - Chandpur road near Lalmai and washed away a bridge at Paroara in Burichang, snapping road link

with Brahmanbaria. Traffic was, however, moving on Chandpur road, officials said.

Witnesses said swirling water from river Gumti poured into Chandina, Debidwar and Daudkandi thanas through three breaches in Ebdarpur area.

The officials told The Daily Star that over 35,000 flood-affected people were now staying in 46 flood shelters and army personnel in cooperation with civil administration were distributing dry food among the flood-hit.

Elsewhere in the country, the major river systems barring

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Garments workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding adequate fire safety measures in the factories. — Star photo

Safety measures in garments factories demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of Garments Workers' Unity Forum have demanded adequate safety measures for garments factory workers to reduce risk to their lives and to avert further industrial accidents.

The demand was made at a rally in the city yesterday, organised by the Forum in protest against the recent fire in a garments factory in Gazipur, in which two workers were killed.

The rally held at Mukangan was addressed by, among others, Forum leader Abdul Alim Swapan, Yusuf Ali, Sahana Akhtar, Amena Akhtar and injured garments worker Mintu Miah. President of the organisation Mohsarefa Mishu presided.

They attributed frequent accidents in garments factories to owners' irresponsibility and negligence.

They said the BGMEA failed to ensure installation of ade-

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Barak promises to implement all accords reached with Arabs

WASHINGTON, July 16: Emerging from the solitude of Camp David where a landmark Mideast peace treaty was forged 21 years ago, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak promised today to implement all agreements reached with the Arabs, including a pullback on the West Bank, reports AP.

Just to make sure, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said she would go to the region next month and "do what I believe is important to make the peace process work."

At Camp David, President Bill Clinton brainstormed with Barak for 2-12 hours over how to revive long-stalled Arab-Israeli peace talks. "We are approaching the moment of truth," Barak said.

In an unusual gesture, Clinton drove Barak around the grounds in a golf cart and took him to the villa where Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1978 initiated the first peace treaty between

Israel and an Arab country.

This morning, after a helicopter ride back to the capital, Barak continued talks on pursuing negotiations with the Palestinians, Syria and Lebanon over breakfast with Albright at her home in Washington.

Barak said he had "reaffirmed to the secretary our commitments to abide by international agreements signed by our government."

Albright, confirming this approach, told reporters that "the Prime Minister is prepared to work broadly on all the tracks involved," including pursuing peace with Syria and Lebanon.

Barak then went to the Pentagon where he was greeted by a cannon salute and military bands as he arrived under heavy security for a meeting with Defence Secretary William Cohen.

Barak and Cohen walked smartly past scores of US military personnel standing at at-

tention in the oppressive mid-morning heat and haze, as security forces hovered nearby.

The two men did not speak to reporters as they entered the building.

Barak told Clinton Thursday at the White House he would approach Damascus with an offer in a few weeks and that he was preparing for a "painful compromise," suggesting Israel would give up most if not all of the strategic Golan Heights that the former Israeli chief of staff had once said must be retained for Israel's security.

And, the prime minister told reporters in Hebrew that while he would like to withdraw Israeli troops from southern Lebanon, where they guard the border, a pullback should be part of an agreement and not a unilateral step.

Clinton and Barak flew to the Camp David retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains for an overnight stay after two and a half hours of talks

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Megawati's party wins majority



Megawati Sukarnoputri clenching her fist while addressing supporters on the penultimate day of campaign before the June 7 elections. — AFP file photo

Indonesian elections

JAKARTA, July 16: Indonesia's largest opposition grouping won a majority in the first free parliamentary elections in 44 years, trouncing the ruling Golkar Party which underpinned decades of authoritarian rule, election officials said today, reports AP.

Led by Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia's founding president, the Democratic Party of Struggle won 33.74 per cent of the vote in the June 7 ballot. Golkar placed second with 22.44 per cent, according to unofficial results.

Two other parties loosely allied with Megawati, the National Awakening Party and the National Mandate Party won 12.61 and 7.12 per cent of the vote respectively.

"Vote counting has essentially been completed," Borna Sumandira, a member of the National Election Committee (PPI) said today. "I do not think the officials' results will be any different from what PPI has counted."

Golkar chairman Akbar Tanjung conceded defeat Friday and congratulated Megawati's party.

"We from the Golkar Party declare that we accept the result of the vote count," Tanjung told a news conference. "We congratulate Megawati Sukarnoputri, whose party... has gained the people's support and won the election."

While the long-delayed final tally will not be available until next week, the outcome has con-

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Election of Sylhet dist BNP today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, July 16: The much awaited biennial conference and election of Sylhet district BNP will be held tomorrow.

The activists of the main opposition party and its front organisations here are very enthusiastic about probable new leadership and they are busy in lobbying.

The last Council and election were held on September 24, 1993. Despite repeated attempts, the Council could not be held earlier due to different reasons.

Election to three important posts will be held tomorrow and nomination for the other posts will be made by the central leadership. The three posts are that of President, General Secretary and Organising Secretary. Councillors and delegates from 13 organisational units

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Kailashtila LPG plant shut since June 11

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, July 16: Production of liquefied petroleum gas in the Kailashtila LPG plant is suspended since June 11, creating a serious crisis of the cooking fuel in the region.

The suspension has been attributed to different reasons by different sources.

One source in the plant said production was suspended due to stoppage of NGL supply from the Kailashtila gasfield.

Another source said, the LPG plant and the nearby bottling plant are closed due to some technical reasons. Some leakage was detected in the Molecular Sieve Turbo Expander (MSTE) plant which processes raw gas for separation of dry gas and NGL.

We are expecting to overcome the problem within this month. Some spares were

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Khulna BNP: 2 convenors expelled

From Staff Correspondent

replaced Isa as new convenor. Termining Syed Isa's expulsion as illegal a meeting of the 'Isa faction of BNP' was held this evening with Syed Isa in the chair.

The meeting in a resolution decided to expel two joint convenors Advocate Ghazi Abdul Bari and Shaharuzzaman Martuza — from the party.

A copy of the resolution has been faxed this evening to BNP chairperson seeking her approval, says a press release. Syed Isa was made the con-

venor of the district convening committee on July 21, 1997.

A 45-member committee was formed with three joint convenors with an instruction from the central committee to hold district conference within three months. But the committee failed to hold conference within 21 months from July 21, 1997.

Meanwhile, supporters of both the factions were flexing their muscles against each other in front of party office today.

KCC 'Dual Water Supply' project shelved

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 16: The Khulna City Corporation's (KCC) 'Dual Water Supply System' project is yet to be approved by the government although two years have passed since it was planned for solving the chronic water crisis in the metropolitan city.

An estimated three-crore-gallon of water is needed everyday in the metropolis to meet the demand of about 15 lakh dwellers in the city. But the KCC currently supplies 85 lakh gallons of water only, which is one-third of the requirement.

The project undertaken in 1997 by the KCC was sent for inclusion in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) with an estimated cost of Tk 3.90 crore.

One of the component of the project is 'Safe Drinking Water Supply System', while the other is 'Unfiltered Water Supply System'.

When implemented, the Dual Water Supply System project will ease pressure on underground water being extracted through 50 production tube-wells and 6000 shallow and deep tube-wells.

The idea of Dual Water Supply System was taken from Cuttack City Corporation during the visit of a KCC delegation to Calcutta in 1996. Later, a project profile was submitted for its early implementation.

Movable property of terrorist Kader attached in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 16: Police in a raid today attached movable property from the residence of Abdul Kader, one of the top terrorists in Agrabad area.

Kader is involved in some criminal cases, including murder in Agrabad commercial area, police said.

Police could not arrest him despite several raids on his residence.

As he remained absconding, police attached property from his residence at Tk 100 as per court order.

Earlier, police had attached movable property from the residence of another top terrorist Abu Bakar, known as Kana Bakar, at Devapur in Lakhna bazar area in the city.

Stabbed Tangail BCL activist dies at DMCH

TANGAIL, July 16: Chhatra League activist Imam Hossain Nixon, 16, who was stabbed by his opponents on Thursday, died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon, reports UPI.

Another injured, identified as Babul, is undergoing treatment at Tangail General Hospital.

Police said armed miscreants stabbed Nixon and Babul indiscriminately in front of Nixon's house in the town at around 5 pm on Thursday.

Seriously injured Nixon was rushed to DMCH while Babul to Tangail General Hospital.

A case was filed with police in this connection.

Body to examine demands of APBN men formed

The authorities yesterday formed a one-member committee to examine the demands of APBN members and make recommendation for settling their grievances, reports UPI.

Officials said DIG of the Armed Police Battalion (APBN) Moinuddin Chishti has been entrusted with the task and asked to submit report within seven days.

"I would submit my report ahead of the time," the DIG told the news agency when reached by telephone.

The step was taken after the Armed Police Battalion members sought intervention of the Home Minister to reframe their service rule that created discontent among its some 8,000 personnel, the sources said.

They approached the Minister during the Darbar of APBN headquarters at Uttara on Wednesday when he assured that the demands would be considered within the purview of

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Clarification

DIG of Armed Police Battalions M Chisty in a clarification to a Daily Star report on procession inside the barrack yesterday said that the report was not based on facts.

Besides, the DIG claimed that there was no tension in the barrack after the departure of the Home Minister and the Inspector General of Police.

According to the DIG, Darbar Parade is a regular programme at the Armed Police Battalion barrack and the parade on Wednesday was a special one as the home minister attended it. The Daily Star report was published on Friday.