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**Trawler with 605 bags of rice looted in Khulna**

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 27: A big trawler with 605 bags of rice was looted from Skid Ghat by a group of miscreants on Monday night.

Police recovered the trawler from Sholmari under Digholia thana today.

According to police, the armed miscreants attacked the trawler belonging to a businessman of Barguna at midnight and took control of the trawler from its crew gunpoint.

They took the trawler to Sholmari river under Digholia thana and loaded the rice in another trawler which belongs to an accomplice of Ershad Shikder, said a source in Digholia thana.

Police could not recover the looted rice till 7 pm today despite a combing operation in all suspected areas of the city and the district.

The incident took place while a team of armed police of river outpost was on patrol duty there, witnesses said.

Mobs clash near polling station in Calcutta

CALCUTTA, June 27: Rival political groups today hurled home-made bombs at each other and police responded by firing in the air and used tear-gas to try to restore order in Calcutta, 48 hours after the city was rocked by a spate of explosions, reports Reuters.

Police said one person was injured during the clash, but political leaders said at least six people were hurt.

The incident occurred near a polling station in central Calcutta, where authorities ordered a revote after allegations of malpractices in the bitterly contested municipal elections on Sunday.

"We have arrested five people and seized 10 bombs. Maybe as many bombs were exploded by them," Deputy Commissioner of Police Nazrul Islam told Reuters.

Islam said today's violence was confined to one area, unlike Sunday's blasts in seven areas of the city.

Witnesses said trouble erupted when supporters of the ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) clashed with members of the rival Trinamool Congress, a regional ally of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party.

A spokesman of the Communist Party said one of its candidates for the local elections was injured by policemen who tried to disperse the crowd.

They (police) singled out our party workers and seriously injured our candidate and two other local leaders. We condemn the police action," he said.

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 27: The Indian woman who was arrested in the city yesterday was placed on seven days' remand today.

Taslim, 23, will be interrogated by a joint-interrogation cell in Dhaka during the remand.

Taslim will be taken to Dhaka tonight, police said.

She was arrested from near Chittagang Passpost Office at Katalganj under Panchlaish thana.

Indian Intelligence informed Bangladesh Intelligence that one Indian woman named Taslim was coming to Bangladesh through Benapole border to carry out some subversive activities including attempt on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's life. Such a news was also aired by BBC on May 11.

On receipt of the news, DB police became alert here. Special Branch of police arrested Taslim as her name and identity were similar to the Indian Intelligence report.

Taslim in her statement to police said she is daughter of one KK Ahmed of Kanu village of Kerala in India and was married to her cousin Sirajuddin, a businessman of Chittagong, who brought her here on May 14. Sirajuddin's father Bashir Ahmed settled here during Pakistan period and is a citizen of Bangladesh, she said.

She went to passport office yesterday to extend her VISA which expired few days back, she said.

Kibria may revise some tax proposals today

By Shahriar Karim

Duty on HDPE (film grade) and on polymer ethylene (except film grade), both used in plastic industry, may be retained at their earlier levels of 15 per cent.

Food items may be exempted from the proposal for two per cent VAT at retail level on all imported and locally manufactured goods, made in the proposed budget for fiscal 2000-2001, sources said.

These and some other changes in tax proposals in the proposed budget are likely to be announced by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria in his winding up speech on budget discussion at the Jatiya Sangsad today.

The other changes may include revision of taxes on some raw materials used in pharmaceutical industry, the sources said.

The changes are being made in view of demands by different trade and chamber bodies.

The budget is expected to be passed tomorrow.

The Finance Minister in his budget speech on June 8 had proposed, among other things, 37.5 per cent duty on HDPE (film grade), 25 per cent on polymer ethylene (except film grade) and two per cent VAT at retail level on all locally manufactured and imported goods.

In fiscal 1999-2000, more than 100 items and wholesale

trading of all products were brought under the VAT (value added tax) net.

As requested by different trade chamber bodies, the country may be divided into four zones to give recognition to top taxpayers of each zone as VIPs, the sources said. However, another source said, instead of dividing the country into four zones, top taxpayers of each division may be recognised as VIPs.

The Finance Minister in his budget speech declared that top taxpayers would be recognised as VIPs by the state and given some special facilities including invitation to different state functions.

Hearing of writ continues**'13th amendment affects independence of judiciary'**

Counsel of the writ petitioner challenging the 13th amendment to the Constitution senior Advocate M I Farooqi yesterday submitted his arguments saying that amendment affected the independence of the judiciary and dignity of the court, reports BSS.

Advocate Farooqi said that the 13th Amendment violated the people's right to choose their representative and that may face a political vengeance thus has damaged and jeopardised one of the basic structure of the Constitution.

He further argued that the preamble of the Constitution and the concept of the elected members of the legislature under constitution direct that the Republic would be run by elected representatives of the people as such there is no scope to create any non-representative government to rule the country.

"The Bill on the 13th Amendment was passed on March 26, 1996 and the President assented to the bill without referring it to referendum. Referendum is required under Article 142(A) of the Constitution, therefore the bill assented by the President is clear violation of the mandate of the Constitution", Farooqi contended.

In support of his arguments,

he showed some decisions of the Supreme Court before a High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani and Justice Latifur Rahman.

Advocate M Saleem Ullah filed the writ petition challenging the 13th Amendment as ultra vires of the Constitution.

The hearing will resume today and Attorney General Mahmudul Islam is likely to place his arguments.

Farooqi was assisted by the petitioner Advocate M Saleem Ullah and Advocate Mohammad Ruhul Qudus.

Deputy Attorney General Syed Mahmud Hossain appeared for the state.

Mayor Gold Cup missing from CCC office

CHITTAGONG, June 27: The Mayor Gold Cup, weighing 25 tolas, has been missing from the Chittagong City Corporation building, Mayor ABM Mo-hiuddin Chowdhury said here today, reports UNB.

The mayor disclosed it at a post-budget press conference at the CCC building.

Dacoity at Sayedabad : 4 arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits took away cash, gold ornaments and other valuables worth about Tk. six lakh from a residence at Sayedabad in the city yesterday.

Police quoting the FIR said, a gang of dacoits entered the house of one Mostafa Kalam at 20, Sayedabad cutting grill of the house.

Four persons were arrested for their alleged involvement in the dacoity. Of them, one was arrested by Demra police and the rest by Shyampur police, Demra police said.

One sentenced to death for murder in Ctg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 27: One person was sentenced to death in a murder case here today. The court of fourth Additional Session's Judge awarded death sentence to Babul Kumar Banik of South Mekhla village under Hathazari thana in Chittagong for killing Saktari Banik of the same village on March 25, 1992. According to the case, Babul stabbed Saktari following a dispute over construction of a house at the village.

9 to die for murder in Pirojpur

PIROJPUR, June 27: A court here today sentenced nine people to death for killing a couple six years ago, reports UNB.

The convicts are Abdul Latif, Mujibur Rahman, Abul Hasem, Altaf Hossain, Abul Rahim, Motaieb, Abdul Rob Sarder, Abdul Khaleque, and Abdul Rob of village Fuljhuri in Mothbaria upazila.

According to the prosecution, they hurled bombs on Abul Hossain Sarder, 48, and his wife Ambia Begum on Care Road on July 14, 1994 when the couple was fleeing the village fearing attempt on their life following a land dispute.

Ambia was killed in the bomb attack while Abul Hossain was chopped to death.

Their son, Anwar Hossain, escaped unhurt and later filed a case with the local thana. Additional District and Session Judge Alhaj Muhammad Anul Islam pronounced the judgement amid tight security.

Of the nine convicts Abdul Rob Sarder, Abdul Khaleque, Abdul Rob and Motaieb were tried in absentia.

US towel factory workers call off hunger strike

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 27: The agitating workers of the three towel factories of the US company Qualitex Group called off their fast unto death programme at 8 pm today after SKOP leaders assured them of supporting their movement.

They began the hunger strike at 10 am yesterday demanding reinstatement of 15 workers and reopening of the mills. Meanwhile, about 400 workers returned to their duties in those crisis-ridden factories and as a result, partial production resumed, CEPZ sources said.

Trouble began in those factories on June 11 after termination of 15 workers.

The workers staged sit-in in front of the factories demanding reinstatement their colleagues. Though trade unionism is banned in CEPZ.

Young man, woman murdered in Demra

By Staff Correspondent

Two people were murdered in separate incident in the city's Demra area yesterday.

A young man was shot dead by unidentified men at Par Gandaria in Demra area in the early hours of yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mahbub, 25, son of Abdul Rob of 13/B Dayaganj in Demra.

Demra police found the bullet-hit body of the victim on the road in front of a house at 14 Par Gandaria yesterday morning. They sent it to Mitford Hospital for autopsy. The body also bore marks of stab injury, police said.

Hospital sources quoting family members said Mahbub came out of his residence at about 11 pm on Monday saying that he would be with his relatives at Par Gandaria for the night.

Mahmuda Begum, mother of

the victim, filed a case with Demra police station accusing Aloke, Samar and six others of the area.

None was arrested in connection with the killing till filing of this report last night.

Body of an unidentified woman was found in front of Badhuya community centre at Sayedabad in the city yesterday morning.

Police quoting the inquest report said there were marks in injury in different parts of the body.

Police recovered the body at about 10-30 am and sent to Mitford Hospital for autopsy.

Police said miscreants murdered the woman and threw the body in front of the community centre.

A case was filed in this regard.

Pvt container terminal**CCC Mayor gives alternative proposal**

CHITTAGONG, June 27: The Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation has put forward an alternative proposal for building a private container terminal under a self-financed project of the CCC, reports UNB.

Addressing a post-budget press conference here today, Mayor ABM Mo-hiuddin Chowdhury said if the government permits, the CCC would construct the terminal in Patenga-Fauzdarhat area.

This is an alternative to the proposal of US company SSA which is going to make a deal shortly with the government to construct a container terminal at the estuary of Karnaphuli river.

The mayor sought government's permission to build the terminal with an approximate cost of Tk 2500 crore under same terms and conditions formulated for the American company.

He said the proposed SSA terminal would threaten the Chittagong Port and lead to increased smuggling.

The CCC mayor also demanded government approval for six other self-financed development projects undertaken by the city corporation at a cost of more than Tk 2000 crore.

The projects include a modern tourist centre at Patenga, garments village at Hathazari and adjoining areas, a five-star hotel at Tiger Pass and a ring road in the port city.

"If the government does not provide fund, we'll implement the projects with our own resources," he said adding "We sought Tk 136 crore development allocation last year, but got only Tk 34 crore."

The mayor said the CCC has taken up a five-year master plan that includes a Tk 5 crore development project for each of the 41 wards.

Stevedores at Ctg Port threaten strike from today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 27: Bangladesh Master Stevedores Association (BMSA) has threatened to go on strike at Chittagong port from 8 pm tomorrow if the proposed bill in the budget for forcing stevedores to take licence from customs authorities is not withdrawn by 4 pm tomorrow.

BMSA took the decision in its emergency meeting yesterday, association sources said.

Monjur Alam, Chairman of BMSA, wrote a letter to the Chairman of Chittagong Port Authority to take steps for withdrawal of the bill.

The stevedores work under the port authority after taking licence from it. So, question of taking licence from customs authorities by the stevedores does not arise, BMSA said.

UK minister asks royal family to quit palace

LONDON, June 27 : A high-profile British Cabinet minister has called for the royal family to move out of Buckingham Palace into a more modern abode in an interview published today, reports AFP.

Cabinet Office Minister Mo Mowlam told the Saga magazine that she was also in favour of Britain changing its constitutional monarchy system of government.

"I don't suggest that the Royal Family should close down and shut up shop, but if people want a monarch of the new century they should have a palace of the new century, in line with the architecture you see around London," said Mowlam.

"I am not a great fan of the monarchy, even though I like Prince Charles and I like Princess Anne, and exchanges I have had with the queen have been very pleasant," she said.

"But in terms of constitution, I would support a change. The public aren't of a like mind yet, so it won't happen yet. But it will come. It will evolve. I think the Queen realises this."

SQ Chy challenges Speaker

From page 1

ter A S M Rab and Fazle Rabbi of Jatiya Party also participated in it.

For Chowdhury in the all empty Opposition Bench, it was almost a lone battle while two ruling party giants earned applause from the Treasury Bench. Rab only added humour to the lively discussion.

Speaker Humayun Chowdhury recently ruled that a member must sign the register and stay in the House at least for sometime to confirm his/her attendance during a sitting.

His ruling was prompted by signing of the attendance book by an Opposition MP in the lobby, without attending the proceedings.

As per the Speaker's directive, attendance registers were brought inside the House from the lobbies.

Yesterday's debate began when Fazle Rabbi of the pro-government faction of JP rose on a point of order and demanded a review of the Speaker's ruling, saying the attendance register should not be kept inside the House.

Termining Rabbi's point very important, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury strongly opposed

the Speaker's ruling which made signing of the register mandatory.

Chowdhury argued that the JS Rules of Procedure do not make signing the attendance book compulsory. Quoting the Kaul, he claimed, no parliament in the world has the practice of compulsory signing.

The BNP legislator observed that the Speaker was not properly guided in interpreting the rule, and pointed his finger at Suranjit Sengupta.

Sengupta jumped on his feet to defend the Speaker's ruling. He argued that Chowdhury should not raise any question about the Chair's decision after the Opposition leader, going by the ruling, signed attendance register inside the House.

Sengupta also quoted from the Rules of Procedure and spoke about the Chair's authority to conclude that signing the register was the official confirmation of a member's attendance.

Sengupta criticised BNP for "failing to stick to its political decision to resign from parliament" and attending the session to "protect personal interests only".

Replying to Sengupta's comment, Chowdhury said,

"Only the fools can afford to show such bravery".

He also refused to accept that the Opposition leader accepted the Speaker's ruling. "She came here to protest the ruling", Chowdhury said.

Tofail Ahmed joined the debate to protest Chowdhury's comment regarding resignation of AL MPs from the Fifth Parliament.

"We surrendered all government facilities soon after we resigned from the Fifth Parliament. Our leader Sheikh Hasina did not even use the official car when she left the parliament building after we submitted resignation letters," To-fail said.

He also supported signing of attendance register.

A S M Rab rose to thank the BNP MP for his participation and generating the debate.

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury however did not sign the attendance register during his stay in the House although his participation was recorded in the proceedings.

Earlier, the Deputy Speaker said he allowed Chowdhury to speak even on the Speaker's ruling to disprove the Opposition allegation that they were not given the chance to speak.

Sharif's challenge to court's jurisdiction rejected

KARACHI, June 27 : A Pakistan High Court today rejected Sharif's challenge to its jurisdiction over an appeal against his conviction for hijacking and terrorism, reports AFP.

The application is dismissed, a three-judge bench of the Sindh High Court said in its brief order.

It will now meet on August 15 to start hearing Sharif's appeal against the April 6 guilty verdict handed down by Karachi's anti-terrorism court.

Sharif's lawyer, Azizullah Sheikh, had challenged the court's jurisdiction, saying the appeal should be heard by a normal two-judge appellate court which is already handling cases of terrorism.

"We have to wait for the details of the decision before we decide whether to challenge it or not," Sheikh said.

The same court will also hear two prosecution appeals seeking the death penalty for Sharif and challenging the acquittals of six co-defendants including his brother Shahbaz Sharif.

Meanwhile, AFP says, Sharif's wife Kulsoom Nawaz today demanded military ruler General Pervez Musharraf be tried for "high treason" and bulldozing the constitution.

"He should be tried for high treason and punished according to the clause mentioned in the constitution for violators," Kulsoom said.

Article six of the 1973 Con-

stitution, which has been "held in abeyance" since the October 12 coup, allows capital punishment for treason.

"You know what is written in it and Musharraf violated it on October 12, 1999, when he dismissed the elected government," she said.

Kulsoom, a former housewife turned outspoken opponent of the military-led regime, has become a key figure in Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML) since Sharif's imprisonment.

But her role in the former ruling party, which Sharif still leads from his prison cell, is aggravating factional tensions between Sharif stalwarts and those wanting to break from the past.

Some PML members are concerned she is being groomed to take over the helm of the party and have reportedly threatened to walk out if she does.

On the weekend she delivered an order from Sharif amounting to a major party reshuffle designed to reinforce his control.



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