

50 hurt as trains collide in Akhaura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

At least 50 people were injured as two trains collided head-on near Azampur Railway Station under Akhaura upazila of Brahmanbaria district in the early hours of yesterday.

According to railway sources, the Chittagong-bound inter-city Udayan Express from Sylhet collided with Sylhet-bound Surma Mail from Dhaka at around 2.50 am.

The engine and a compartment of Udayan Express and two compartments of Surma Mail slipped off the track.

Train communication in Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Chittagong routes remained snarled for six hours till 9 am yesterday, sources said.

When contacted, station master of Akhaura told this correspondent that Udayan Express entered the track, ignoring signal when Surma Mail was coming.

Eight of the injured were identified as Bulbul, 18, of Sylhet, Shiron, 16, of Daudkandi, Abdul Hakim, 24, of Gopalganj, Siddique Mia, 65, of Chokoria, Abul Khair, 27, of Comilla, Suleyman, 40, of Moulvibazar, Abdul Haque, 33, of Gopalganj and Sadeq Mia, 50, of Comilla.

They were admitted to Akhaura Health Complex.

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## Vajpayee formally invites Musharraf

Letter handed over to Pak foreign secy

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday formally invited Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf for landmark talks, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

The invitation for Musharraf and his wife to visit Delhi was made in a letter delivered yesterday by India's high commissioner in Islamabad, the spokesman said.

The formal invitation came two days after India first said it would invite the Pakistani leader for talks on Kashmir and other issues.

The initiative was announced as India announced it was scrapping its six-month-old suspension of combat operations against Islamic separatists in Kashmir.

Pakistan has already said it will respond positively to the invitation which analysts have hailed as a potentially major development in the troubled relationship between the two South Asian states, both of which have carried out nuclear tests in recent years.

"The letter signed by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was handed over by India's acting High Commissioner R. Vyas to Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Inamul Haq this morning," foreign ministry spokesman Raminder Singh Jassal said.

The letter said: "India has, through dialogue, consistently endeavoured to build a relationship of durable peace, stability and co-operative friendship with

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## 'Vested quarters & settlers out to scuttle accord'



CHT situation abnormal, says Larma

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Jyotirindriyo Bodhipriyo Larma, Chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC), has described the situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) as "abnormal", affecting every aspect of life due to "non-implementation of the CHT agreement".

"A vested quarter in the government is preventing implementation of the agreement. We have achieved it at the cost of our blood. People in the hills will not accept a situation for which the question of taking up arms has been raised", he told a questioner at a press conference at the CHTRC office at Banani in the city yesterday.

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newsmen drew his attention to his recent statement that if needed he would take up arms again.

"When all constitutional means are blocked, your back is pushed against the wall. If this situation continues, we will be forced to go for resistance", Larma said.

He also expressed concern at the prevailing situation in CHT, particularly the law and order situation, patronisation of terrorists by a "vested quarter", and non-withdrawal of arms.

"Three tribal women were raped at Khagrachhari on May 21 and 45 homes of tribal people were torched at Dighinala last week in presence of

His comment came when a

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Two sisters -- Sheuly, 14, and Liza, 7 -- suffered burn injuries when a plastic container of chewing ginger they were trying to open exploded at Manda under Sabujbagh thana in the city yesterday. Both were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

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## Mamun abducted garment trader in Oct, realised Tk 25 lakh as ransom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terrorist Mamunur Rashid Mamun of Chittagong had abducted a businessman of the port city in Dhaka in October last year and realised Tk 25 lakh from him, police said here yesterday.

This was revealed by Mamun's accomplice Didar during interrogation at Tejgaon thana yesterday.

The businessman, Narayan Chandra of Mirersarai, filed a case with Tejgaon thana on October 16 after he was released by the abductors.

Didar was arrested from Zohurul Islam market in Chittagong by a team of Tejgaon police on May 23 this year and produced in the CMM's court, Dhaka on Thursday. The court placed him on a two-day remand.

Tejgaon police said Narayan, a garments businessman and his friend Azad came to Dhaka on August 14 last year to receive a foreign business team and rented a room at Sonargaon Hotel.

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## Mystery shrouds death of a doctor's wife at BMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mystery shrouds the death of a doctor's wife at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital (BMCH) at Dhamondi in the city on Thursday night.

Julekha Akther's body was recovered from a first floor toilet of the hospital.

Her brother Nazrul Islam identified the body.

Wife of Dr Jalilur Rahman of anaesthesia department at BMCH, Julekha was a nurse at Marksul Clinic in Mohammadpur area of the city.

Employees of the hospital said they saw her coming to the hospital late Thursday evening and later her body was found in the toilet at about 8:30 pm by a cleaner, Ayesha.

On information, Dhamondi police went to the spot and SI Taimur Islam made an inquest report.

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## 46000 phones for new subscribers in city soon

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) is likely to provide 46,000 telephones to new subscribers under four exchanges in the capital shortly, a top official in the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (MOTP) said.

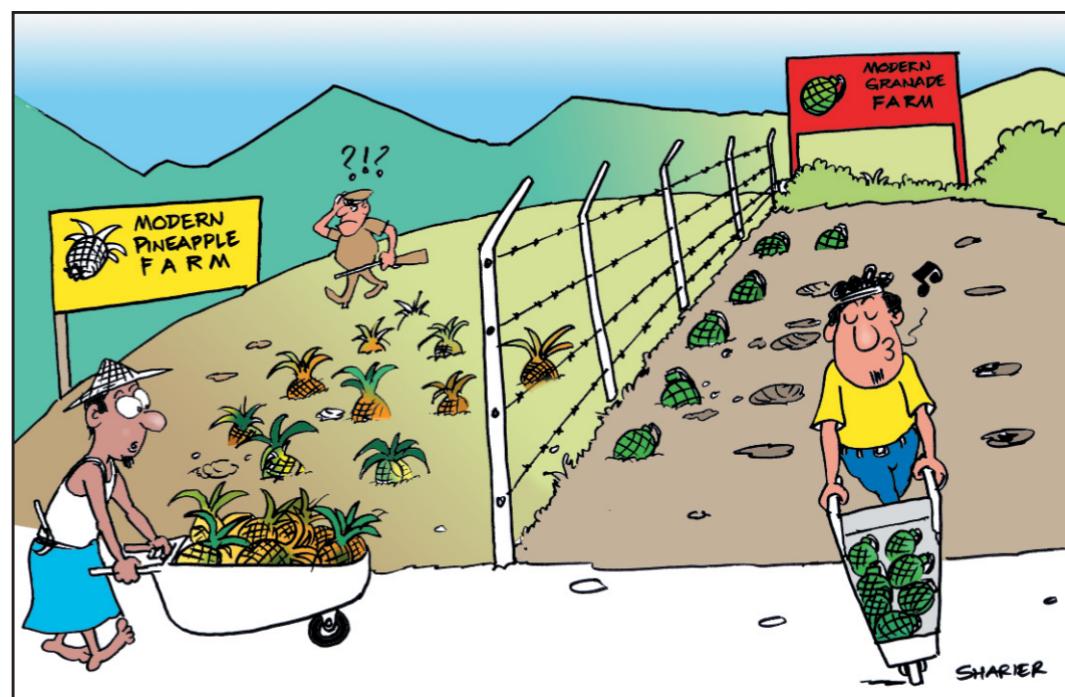
"BTTB would be able to provide 46,000 telephones to new subscribers by the first week of July if everything goes well," the source told this correspondent.

The new telephone connections would be given to subscribers under Uttara, Mirpur, Sher-e-Banglanagar and Gulshan exchanges.

Steps are underway for import of necessary equipment and 'cards' to be installed at those exchanges to increase capacity.

A BTTB official said capacity of

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## Beyond the long arm of law



### CHITTAGONG THE ARMS PORT-7

It was one winter night late December last year. Residents of Mozaffarabad under Patia thana in Chittagong noticed an engine boat navigating through a canal. There were several armed guards on board. The boat moored at a place where two were parked with the engines on. Within minutes, boxes were loaded on to the truck from the boat. The trucks then drove away for unknown destinations. Next morning, local people found fresh bullets on the ground there. Upon investigation, police came to learn that underneath sacks of spices, Chinese light bulbs and batteries, the smugglers had carried arms in their boat, including 16 brand new AK-56 rifles.

There are innumerable points in the 128 square-kilometre Chittagong City through which arms are regularly smuggled in. Nearly 96 square-kilometre area in the city has direct access to the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, the country's borders with

manufacturing factories that belong to cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Chhatra Shibir and other militant Islamist groups in Chokoria, Banskhali and even in Chittagong city also supply arms to local dealers.

Municipality chairman Shamsul Alam Master in Patia, Gorakhpura Union Parishad (Council) chairman Nazrul in Maheshkhali, Sarwar and Shahjahan of Maheshkhali work as dealers and control arms smuggling through the sea, underworld and police sources said. Meanwhile, Kamaila controls the land route along with Zafar Chairman in Raozan. There are many other 'godfathers' involved whose names could not be confirmed.

Former Shantibahini members also play a big role in arms supply, so do different rebel groups of Myanmar, and Rohingya smugglers. Besides, there are secret arms

manufacturers that belong to cadres of Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Chhatra Shibir and other militant Islamist groups in Chokoria, Banskhali and even in Chittagong city also supply arms to local dealers.

Last month, an Arakanese underground leader confessed to the government's joint interrogation cell that illegal arms enter Bangladesh from Myanmar. Rebel groups in Myanmar, who smuggle the arms in, have connections with different extremist groups in Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, and Thailand. Arakanese smugglers in the guise of fishermen carry these arms.

All arms dealers have some

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