

Speedy Trial Tribunal set up at six divn HQ

BSS, Dhaka
The government has set up six Speedy Trial Tribunals at the six divisional headquarters in the country.

The formation of the tribunals was announced in a government notification here yesterday.

The tribunals, which were set up in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal will dispose of all criminal cases of the districts concerned within the shortest possible time, the notification said.

Shegunbagicha double murder: 4 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday arrested four persons in the city in connection with the double murder in the city's Shegunbagicha on October 5.

The arrested are Ariful Islam Suman, 22, Hanif Mohammad, 20, Selim Hossain, 19, and Jamil, 20. They were taken to the DB (Detective Branch) headquarters for interrogation.

Sources said a team of DB Police led by additional deputy commissioner Kohinoor Mia raided the city's Agamasih Lane and Rampura areas and arrested the four.

During interrogation, the arrested gave confessional statement to the police saying they had killed the two men, Mamun and Khairul, out of previous enmity.

Earlier police had arrested Tunda Jahangir, 23, in the city and Sohratul Islam Ripon in Mehendiganj, Barisal. Later, they gave confessional statements before a magistrate in the city.

During interrogation by police, Jahangir and Ripon had named the four men who were arrested yesterday.

On October 5, Mamun and Khairul were taken to a building near the Dhaka Reporters' Unity and subsequently gunned down.

Mother, two sons burnt alive in Lalmonirhat

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Mother and her two minor sons were killed in a fire at their home at village Sibram in Barabari union of Lalmonirhat district in the early hours of yesterday.

According to police, Momina Begum, 20 and her two sons -- Mominul Islam, 3, and Moshir Rahman, 2 were asleep at the house and could not escape as the fire engulfed them.

The cause of the fire could not be ascertained till filing of this report at 6 pm yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Communications Asadul Habib Dulu, DC, Lalmonirhat and Police Superintendent visited the spot.

Baghdad set to welcome UN inspectors back

US plans to deploy 250,000 troops in the Gulf?

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq was moving yesterday toward welcoming back UN arms inspectors in a bid to stave off war as the United States battle plans to deploy 250,000 troops were leaked in the press.

Baghdad was officially still "quietly studying" UN Resolution 1441, but the signs that it would accept before the November 15 deadline were growing despite the tough terms for disarmament.

But state television reported that President Saddam Hussein had summoned an urgent meeting of parliament to discuss the resolution.

State-run Sunday papers front-paged a terse report by the official INA news agency that the Iraqi leadership would "issue the appropriate signal... in the coming days."

Government daily Al-Jumhuriya stressed that Iraq had foiled US attempts to secure UN approval for automatic recourse to force and also hinted that

the resolution might be a stepping stone to secure a lifting of UN sanctions.

"Despite the adoption of the bad and unfair Resolution 1441... the growing popular Arab, European and world opposition to aggressive US schemes against Iraq... exposed the wicked US-British plot against Iraq and thwarted its first stage," Al-Jumhuriya wrote.

That first stage was the planned "automatic recourse to force and aggression against Iraq."

Arab leaders meeting in Cairo were confident of Baghdad's acceptance of the UN resolution.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told an Arab League foreign ministers' meeting that Baghdad had accepted the UN resolution after obtaining assurances from Security Council member Syria that it does not entail automatic recourse to military action.

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Joint forces seized 4,450 rounds of bullets in an anticrime raid on the Nikunja-2 area in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Arms pour through Ctg port, confess guards

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Some container vessels calling at the Chittagong port were used to carry smuggled gold bars and illegal firearms, as revealed by three security guards on remand.

An Awami League lawmaker controls the smuggling racket of 22, including ten security guards of the Chittagong port.

The racket also consists of Jahangir Alam, a former local ward commissioner, and his two brothers - Alo, the linchpin of a crime cartel, and Maiyur.

Arrested by the army on

November 7, the security guards - Aungshuman Barua of Raizan, Belayet of Feni and Jahangir of Chandpur - revealed the secrets during interrogation.

The smuggled goods are shipped mostly by three vessels of the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) and offloaded at the outer anchorage of the port to be carried to safety by mechanised boats. The vessels - Banglar Rabi, Banglar Moni and Banglar Shikha - operate on the Chittagong-Singapore-Chittagong route.

Two influential racketeers - Yakub and Iskander - were taking

care of smuggled gold, said the remanded guards.

Jahangir Arafat, a security staffer, Iskander, a guard, Rinku, a stevedore, Nasir of Nimtoli Mian Bari and Shahadat Hossain are active members of the smuggling racket, they said.

The racketeers carry the gold bars in special jackets they wear all the way from the restricted area of the port. Around 45 gold bars, each weighing 10 tolas, can be carried in each jacket.

If the racketeers sensed danger lurking ahead, they

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PHOTO: STAR

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid speaks at an Awami League sit-in in front of the Speaker's chamber at the Sangsad Bhavan yesterday, demanding release of the MPs arrested in the anticrime clampdown.

Verdict in Ruma rape case in Rajshahi today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The judgement in the Ruma Khatun rape case will be given today.

Abu Hanif, Judge of the Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Rajshahi, will pronounce the verdict.

Nayan and Shafi of Dharmahata village in Paba Upazila raped Ruma at gunpoint at a house in the village on February 11, 1999. They also took photographs of the rape scene and threatened her to kill if she disclosed the incident to others.

Ruma Khatun, 14, daughter of Anwar Hossain, tried to conceal the incident following the threat.

But the incident came to light when the two rapists went to a studio at Darusa Bazar for printing the nude photographs of Ruma.

The authorities concerned suspended the then officer-in-charge of Paba thana, Abu Bakar, for his denial to record the case and for insisting victim's father to settle the issue through arbitration.

Later, Paba police recorded a rape case accusing the two and arrested Nayan.

At least 29 witnesses were examined in the case.

Defamation case Arrest warrant against Jugantor editor, publisher & Jamuna Group chairman

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, yesterday issued arrest warrant against the editor and publisher of the daily Jugantor and the chairman of Jamuna Group in a defamation case.

Magistrate Mohammad Emdadul Haq passed the order after Mirza Abbas alias Abbas Uddin Ahmed, former Dhaka Mayor and present Housing and Public Works Minister filed the lawsuit.

The accused are Jugantor Editor Golam Sarwar, Publisher Salma Islam and Chairman of Jamuna Group Mohammad Nurul Islam Babul.

In the complaint, Mirza Abbas alleged that the accused in connivance with each other published two news items in Jugantor on

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Indian HC handed Dhaka's rebuttal to Advani's remarks

UNB, Dhaka

The Indian High Commissioner ML Tripathy was yesterday summoned to the Foreign Ministry and handed a rebuttal to Indian Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani's comments about Pakistani military intelligence outfit ISI and al-Qaida networks in Bangladesh.

Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury handed Tripathy an aide-memoire venting concern over such remarks.

The diplomatic note said Bangladesh never expected such aspersions made by a responsible leader of the Indian government.

He also noted that all allegations of insurgency and intelligence activities allegedly carried out

motivated," it said.

Last Thursday, LK Advani reportedly told PTI that "after the change of government in Bangladesh, there has been an increase in the activities of the al-Qaida and Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) there".

Advani also said Dhaka is providing "cover" support and refuge to separatist rebel groups operating in the northeastern states of India.

The foreign secretary categorically said Bangladesh does not allow its territory to be used for the purpose of support, shelter or training of insurgents against any of its neighbours, including India.

He also noted that all allegations of insurgency and intelligence activities allegedly carried out

against India from Bangladesh territory had been thoroughly investigated and found to be without any basis.

"Bangladesh rejects any accusation that al-Qaida elements are getting refuge in Bangladesh," Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury said, reiterating Bangladesh's position on terrorism.

He reaffirmed the commitment of Bangladesh to remain fruitfully engaged with India and other neighbours to promote mutually beneficial interactions in the region.

"Dhaka strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," says the aide-memoire.

The Bangladesh authorities

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Argument in Bappi murder case Nov 16

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Third Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, yesterday fixed November 16 for argument in the Bappi murder case.

The accused pleaded not guilty after the charges were brought against them. Rubayet Ahmed Bappi, 8, a student of class III of Armanitola Government High School, was abducted by his maternal cousin Shipon from their Becharam Dewri residence in the old city on August 5 for ransom.

Later, Shipon and his four accomplices -- Ripon Kumer Roy, Sanjit Sarkar, Sankar Rajbanshi and Shariful Islam alias Badal -- took Bappi to Demra. They strangled Bappi the same day and dumped the body in the river Sitalakhya.

Aifu Miah, victim's father, filed an abduction case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Kotwali thana accusing Shipon and four others the same day.

Bappi's decomposed body was found floating on the river near Kutubpur Gudara Ghat on August 14.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet on August 21 against Shipon and four others.

The court framed charges against the accused on September 21.

The trial of the case began on September 25.

Accused Shipon, Ripon, Sanjit and Sankar are now in jail custody while Badal is still at large.