

Veerappan sets new deadline in hostage crisis

AFP, Bangalore

India's most-wanted bandit has set a 12-day deadline for sending an emissary to negotiate the release of former minister Hannur Nagappa, who has been held hostage for almost 90 days, an official said yesterday.

"In the audio cassette he has threatened to kill Nagappa if a negotiator he wants is not sent," Malleh Kumar, the minister's personal assistant, told AFP.

"The cassette was dropped at Nagappa's residence on Thursday and has been handed over to the government," Kumar said.

Bandit Muniswamy Veerappan, who is wanted for more than 100 murders and elephant-poaching, kidnapped Nagappa from his hometown of Kollegal in southern Karnataka state on August 25.

Veerappan, known for his hand-drawn moustache and who is a Tamil, wants a Tamil nationalist leader to be released from jail and be appointed mediator in the kidnap saga.

The Karnataka government has refused to release Kolathur Mani, who is accused of supply arms and ammunition to Veerappan.

"Maybe you think that if you delay further, I will give up, leave Nagappa and disappear. You will only get Nagappa's body if you do not send Mani within 12 days," Veerappan said in a 20-minute cassette.

The Karnataka government has offered a "free and fair trial" to Veerappan if he surrenders.

Indian police arrest "main culprit" in roadside rape

AFP, New Delhi

Indian police yesterday said that they had arrested the main accused in the roadside rape of a medical college student which has shocked the capital.

The arrest came a day after Indian lawmakers expressed anger in parliament over last week's incident.

The victim, a final year student at New Delhi's prestigious Maulana Azad Medical College, was dragged by three men into a Mughal-built arch straddling one of the city's busiest roads and raped at knife-point for more than an hour.

Assistant Police Commissioner Varsha Sharma said the main accused Rahul had been arrested and would be produced in court on Saturday.

"Rahul was arrested today after the victim identified his photograph in a dossier of bad characters and vagabonds maintained by the Delhi police," said Sharma.

"We have been questioning him for the past two days. He tried to get anticipatory bail on Thursday complaining that we were harassing him. His plea has been turned down."

The rape caused shock waves in Delhi, especially as the incident occurred less than a kilometre (a mile) away from police headquarters and the victim's screams for help were reportedly ignored by a police armoured car parked within earshot.

A day later in a separate case, a woman was dragged into a car and assaulted and on Wednesday two other similar incidents were reported in the city, home to 14 million residents.

On Thursday MPs in the upper house said New Delhi had turned into India's "crime capital" and called for the death sentence for rapists.

Black group sues Jesse Jackson

AFP, Los Angeles

A black organisation has sued civil rights activist Jesse Jackson for fraud and demanded he be barred from claiming to represent the black community, documents showed Thursday.

The suit, filed last week in Los Angeles by a new group called African Americans Against Exploitation, claims the veteran politician "intentionally misrepresented himself as an official of the African-American race."

"(Jackson) is knowingly misrepresenting himself as an official spokesperson in matters, which does not comply with the law or the plaintiff's own view," the group claimed. It has asked for a restraining order compelling Jackson to stop representing himself as a community spokesman.

"We are asking for a temporary restraining order for him to stop claiming that he represents the black community," the group's president, Dwane Knight, told the Daily Breeze newspaper here.

Attorney Tracy Rice of Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition dismissed the action as a nuisance lawsuit and said she would try to have it thrown out of court.

The suit was due to be aired in court January 7.

In October, a group of black barbers, dubbed the National Association of Cosmetologists, slammed Jackson and the Reverend Al Shapton for demanding an apology from the MGM studios over the movie "Barbershop."

The pair had said the low-budget independent comedy was offensive as it poked fun at two sacred cows of the black civil rights movement, Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks.

But the studio declined to apologize and the barbers came to the defence of the film saying it was "very funny" that no apology was necessary.

Hasina

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today, she mentioned. The former prime minister said the government is saying that none has died in army custody. "This is simply a bluff to the nation...cases will be filed for each death and the Prime Minister will have to take the responsibility for all these deaths."

She said the government denied the facts in parliament, and asked if the newspapers were publishing false reports.

Hasina alleged the Prime Minister was violating human rights and blamed her for the deaths in 'army custody'. The troops are arresting people according to lists supplied by the government, she added.

The AL chief said many "BNP terrorists" arrested by army personnel were set free at the directive of 'higher authorities'.

Replying to a question about the parliament, the opposition leader said the ruling party did not allow any AL member to ask questions during the question-answer session of the Prime Minister. "This was an arranged game."

JU teacher

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hit a lorry parked on a highway at about 2:30 am yesterday, injuring all boarding it. They were rushed to nearby Karnal Government Hospital where doctors declared Hosne Ara dead.

Her body was kept at the hospital and the injured students were admitted there.

Later, the four critically injured were shifted to Chandigarh PGI Hospital.

The study tour has been cancelled following the accident.

The Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi yesterday sent a team to Chandigarh to arrange sending home Hosne Ara's body and look after the injured students, JU sources said.

Chairman of the Archaeology department Prof Mozammel Haq will leave for Chandigarh this evening. He is being sent by the JU authorities to bring back the teacher's body and the injured students.

Hosne Ara Motahar had joined Archaeology department as an assistant professor in 1998 and became associate professor recently. She was doing research for a doctorate degree.

She left behind her husband and a son aged 17.

Meanwhile, JU Vice Chancellor Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmad has expressed deep shock at the death of Hosne Ara.

Besides, President of JU Teachers' Association Prof Amin Muhammad Ali and General Secretary Shamsul Alam Selim and Chairman of Archaeology department Prof Mozammel Haq have condoled her death.



Leaders and activists of the Bangladesh Environment Movement form a human chain on the second Buriganga Bridge in the city yesterday with calls for an end to encroachment on rivers.

Myanmar's leaders should "hang their heads in shame"

AFP, Washington

Myanmar's leaders should "hang their heads in shame" over their broken economy, a senior US official said Thursday in the Bush administration's most fiercely critical outline yet of its policy towards the military-ruled state.

James Kelly, the State Department's senior Asia policymaker, said that signs of tentative progress in a UN-brokered government-opposition dialogue over the past six months stood out only because the country's plight was so "bleak."

Kelly granted the regime marginal credit for allowing democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to travel, but savaged the Yangon junta's treatment of dissidents and handling of claims that its

troops were involved in mass rapes.

He told a closed door reception of academics, scheduled to include Myanmar's ambassador to the United States Kyaw Win, that he had hoped to attend with "significant good news to share and even new acquaintances to make."

"But it was not to be. I think it fair to say that Burma represents a most frustrating challenge for American diplomacy," Kelly said, according to a copy of his speech to be delivered at the School of Advanced International Studies.

Sources in Yangon said earlier this week that Myanmar Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win and junta spokesman Colonel Hla Min would travel to Washington

for the forum among other officials.

But they did not arrive, and US officials refused to confirm or deny whether they had been refused visas. The junta's US-based lobbying firm also declined to comment.

"I break no new ground when I observe that Burma was once poised to be one of the most prosperous countries of Southeast Asia," Kelly was due to say in remarks obtained by AFP.

"Now its broken economy has trouble feeding itself. This is a man-made, not a natural phenomenon, and Burma's leaders should hang their heads in shame," he said, using Myanmar's former name.

Young man dies in N'ganj

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car while trying to steal car parts from the house at Masdair on Monday night. But the owner of the car could not be identified, they said.

A case was also filed with Fatullah police against Masum and Aziz. Masum's death pushed the toll during the countrywide crackdown on criminals to 27 since it began on October 17.

Our Chittagong correspondent reported that naval forces recovered one sophisticated 9mm Sub-machine Gun (SMG) from a cave at Kalamrath in off-shore Monehshkhali island in Cox's Bazar. None could be arrested.

Meanwhile, Jubo League leader Chandan Dhar who was admitted to Chittagong General Hospital on Thursday night was once again taken into army custody.

Dhar was first picked up by army on October 17. He was released from Chittagong Jail on Wednesday evening. Army arrested him again from in front of the jail gate.

On Thursday evening, army took him to hospital, but arrested him again after a few hours, his family sources said. Dhar is also an official of People's Insurance company.

Meanwhile, Dhar's family lodged a complaint with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. The court directed the prison and the police authorities to

update the court on Dhar's condition.

Meanwhile, the army arrested 111 people including 26 'listed criminals' from different areas of the country and recovered 29 firearms along with 32 bullets during the last 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

Police headquarters Dhaka in a press release yesterday said they arrested 1448 people including four 'identified criminals' and 788 'wanted criminals' from direct areas of the country during the last 24 hours. They also seized six firearms along with eight bullets.

On the other hand, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in a special operation arrested 276 people from different areas of the city and recovered two firearms.

In Khulna, joint forces arrested Ashraf Shaikh, a ringleader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) from his Patla village home in Terokhada.

They also arrested BNP leader Sultan Ahmed from Rupsha Stand Road in the city. Sutan, known as 'Captain Sultan', was wanted in some criminal cases.

The joint forces also raided a BNP office at Rampal in Bagerhat while a party meeting was in progress and arrested a party activist - Hanif Mallick.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent

reported that joint forces arrested a 'listed criminal' - Aminul Islam Tiger, 28. Islam is a local leader of Jubo Dal, youth front of Awami League.

In Magura, army arrested one Kabir Hossain, a member of Raghobdaye Union Parishad in Sadar upazila from his house at Pucca Kanchanpur village. He was handed over to police.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reported that joint forces arrested three 'listed criminals' from Sadar and Kazipara upazilas and recovered a pipe gun along with some bullets. They are Al-Amin 18, Habib, 18, and Nurunnabi, 38.

The joint forces so far arrested 63 people from different parts of the district since the drive began on October 17.

In Rajbari, the army arrested one 'notorious criminal' - Shaheed Mia - from his house at Kajibanda village. They also recovered two guns from Surjunagar area of the town.

Our Khagrachhari correspondent reported that joint forces arrested five alleged criminals in the last three days. Three of them are wanted in murder cases. They recovered 191 bullets from the possession of one of them named Dulal.

2 notorious criminals

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which Liaquat and his men opened fire, killing four people on the spot. Liaquat was last arrested in June 2001 but he was released within hours following telephonic message to police from some 'high-ups'. His brother Kamrul Hossain alias Hannan is also a listed criminal of the city.

Once Liaquat was an accused in dozens of cases. He was however acquitted of most of the cases over the years. He is now an accused in a couple of cases, police said.

Arman Khan
Arman Khan is known as the 'second-in-command' to Liaquat. Son of SM Ainul, he is a permanent resident of the city's Moghbazar area. In the 80s, Arman had introduced himself to a criminal based at the Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, Ashish.

He took Arman to the crime world and trained him on firearms. At a stage, Arman got involved in a feud with Subrata Bain Shuvra, a listed top criminal of the city and ringleader of the notorious 'Seven Star' gang. Arman some times joined hands with some other top criminals to save himself from the wrath of Shuvra.

Winter has announced its sure presence in suburbs and villages too.

Winter vegetables roll in the city markets every day. But people of the low-income bracket cannot afford them.

Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) cadre Murad. He worked as an accomplice of Murad for long and used to take shelter under another top criminal, Sweden Aslam, at times of danger.

He came close to Sweden Aslam (now in jail) following the killing of Murad in 1992. After a few years, he joined hands with Liaquat and became his 'second-in-command'.

Arman and Liaquat fled the country and took shelter in Kolkata after the BNP government prepared a list of most wanted criminals of the city and announced award for their arrest in December last year.

Cold climes

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degrees Celsius in northeastern, northwestern and southwestern regions of the country until the end of November.

"In some regions, mercury has reached 14.2 degrees Celsius," an official told The Daily Star. He, however, did not make any long-term forecast on intensity of cold.

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US, British planes bomb targets in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

US and British warplanes bombed two air defence radar sites in southern Iraq yesterday in the latest of a series of strikes in the no-fly zones, the US military said.

Iraq said the planes were driven off by anti-aircraft fire in the second consecutive day of Western strikes.

The Western warplanes first struck a radar near Ash Shuaybah about 400 km southeast of Baghdad at 4:20 am local time. Then they bombed a radar near Tallil, about 270 km southeast of Baghdad about 6:30 am, US Central Command said.

US defence officials said the strikes were in retaliation for Iraqi air defences attacking US and British planes that patrol no-fly zones in southern and northern Iraq.

"They responded to Iraq moving a surface-to-air missile battery into the southern no-fly zone," said Lt Col Dave Lapan, a Pentagon spokesman.

An Iraqi military spokesman, quoted by the official Iraqi News Agency, said Western planes bombed "civilian and service installations" in the provinces of Thi Qar and Basra, southeast of Baghdad.

Thursday's strike came after US and British warplanes bombed three air defence communications facilities in southern Iraq on Wednesday in response to Iraqi missile attacks.

Iraq does not recognize the flight exclusion zones set up by Western powers after the 1991 Gulf War to protect a Kurdish enclave in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south from attack by President Saddam Hussein's military.

US officials say that continued firing at Western patrol jets by Iraqi defences is a direct violation of the Nov 8 UN resolution, aimed at ridding Iraq of any nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has disagreed with that

Tax evasion

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Under the exiting system, tax officials can not question if a taxpayer hides his actual income and pays a less amount. They normally raise question only when somebody submits a written allegation of tax evasion by a taxpayer.

According to Bangladesh Bank (BB), the total number of directors of the 30 private commercial banks would be around 500.

When those private banks were set up there was no criteria for a person to be a director. Anybody who had money could be a director of a private bank.

That's why there is a number of bank directors in the country who do not have any sort of educational background or experience in bank business. Many housewives and underage people became bank directors.

A high official of BB told The Daily Star that they are going to introduce a guideline for the directors and set a criteria for a person to be a director.

The main objective of the criteria will be to set some standards like sound educational background, experience in banking, non-defaulter status and other qualifications for a person to be director of a bank, the official said.

interpretation, saying Iraq's firing on the aircraft did not violate the resolution.

The United States accuses Iraq of amassing weapons of mass destruction and has threatened military action to force disarmament if it does not cooperate with UN arms inspectors who resumed work in the country this week after a four-year absence.

Signals

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different intersections, particularly on the Mirpur Road, to 'educate' road users to respect the lights. But the traffic policemen admit that it would require more efforts to grow awareness among the road users about the traffic lights.

Deputy Police Commissioner (traffic) Abu Musa Faqur Islam Chowdhury acknowledged that the lack of traffic signals, road signals (Zebra crossing and so on), run-down roads and huge number of rickshaws are clogging the traffic system.

Traffic signal light was introduced in Dhaka in the mid-1980s. At that time, 58 signal lights were set up. Later, under the DTCB project, 10 more signal lights were set up between Russell Square and Shyamoli Cinema Hall, and at the Panthapath crossing.

Moshiur Rahman, assistant engineer (signal) of the Dhaka City Corporation, said the project aided by the World Bank was designed with the concept that rickshaws would not be plying the Mirpur Road. Rahman also added that electronic signals would not be installed at the intersections until June 2004, the deadline for the completion of the project.

Zinjira: Bad image

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name in the market.

Apart from textile products, some well-known brands of tar, washing soaps, aluminum products, nuts and bolts are also manufactured here.

On the other hand, it seems that to some extent, there is substance in the general notion that Zinjira-made products are synonymous with fake and low-quality goods.

Some unscrupulous people trying to make a quick buck are said to be behind the large-scale racket for producing spurious commodities of many kinds and marketing them all over the country. We often read newspaper reports about existence of factories at Zinjira making large-scale adulterated and spurious commodities of many kinds including vegetable ghee, dry-cell batteries, soyabean oil and even antibiotics. In the absence of any effective supervision from authorities concerned, these spurious and adulterated commodities find easy market with the simple rural people. Also, some people resort to producing low-quality products due to lack of funds to spend on strict quality control.

Following assurances by the government that no one would be stoned, some 90 contestants arrived in Nigeria last week, with many voicing support for Lawal and other women sentenced to death by courts enforcing Islamic sharia law.

The newspaper ran its third apology for the report on Thursday's front page since it published the story. It said the story went out in error.

The Miss World contest, which Nigerian officials hope will showcase the country and add to its tourist appeal, initially ran into trouble amid worldwide publicity over Amina Lawal, a 31-year-old woman who was sentenced under Islamic law to death by stoning for bearing a child out of wedlock.

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We thus find that Zinjira is as much a source of high quality goods as of spurious and low-quality ones.

However, the overall situa-

tion at Zinjira has been undergoing rapid change for the better.

The road communication there has improved with the opening of the Bangladesh China Friendship Bridge over the Buriganga and construction of another bridge. The internal road network has also reportedly improved with the result that land price in those areas has substantially increased.

With the rapid pace of development in these areas as new industries and businesses of standardized products begin to emerge, the bad image of Zinjira is gradually beginning to wear off.

The government may help in this process if it pays more attention to the development of genuine industries in this area with a liberal policy covering all aspects of development. At the same time, observers also feel that the authorities concerned should take stern measures to check with a heavy hand the growth of any enterprise that may be engaged in the production of spurious and adulterated goods of any kind.

If such a situation can be brought about, it is felt that there is no reason why Zinjira cannot develop into an important industrial zone, contributing to the economic advancement of the country.