

'Bomb plot' uncovered in Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's ruling junta said it had arrested 12 people who were plotting to assassinate five members of the regime as part of a campaign to create civil unrest and seize power.

Deputy military intelligence chief Major General Kyaw Win said the campaign was mounted by armed rebel groups and exiled dissidents in support of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

The groups had intended to mobilise monks, students, workers, intellectuals and opposition parties in a military and political campaign

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AL plans consensus candidate in Netrakona by-polls

SHAMEEM MAHMUD

The main opposition Awami League (AL) is planning to field a candidate on the basis of understanding with like-minded parties for the Netrakona-3 by-election scheduled for August 21.

"We have already initiated a dialogue on the matter with the leaders of the political parties opposing the government," said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil without naming the parties. "And the response on fielding a common

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Philippine army on hunt for 'coup plotters'

REUTERS, Manila

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ordered the military and police to capture up to 70 rogue junior officers and armed deserters yesterday, following days of rumours about a brewing coup attempt.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff

Narciso Abaya met Arroyo before expressing the military's loyalty to the country's democratic institutions and support for the president.

Abaya told reporters 20 army and navy officers and 40 to 50 servicemen, engaging in an "un-constitutional adventurist exer-

cise," were somewhere in the general area of Manila, the capital of 10 million people.

They were armed with high-powered, hand-held weapons and had "associated themselves with some groups with personal and/or political interest," he said without

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Petrobangla shovels 37pc more into exchequer on rising gas demand

SHARIEF KHAN

The Petrobangla rode on a dramatic gas consumption rise to pump a further Tk 600 crore or 37 per cent more into the national exchequer in the last fiscal, taking its total contribution to Tk 2,261.37.

In the fiscal 2001-2002, the Petrobangla gave the government Tk 1,633.73 crore.

A top Petrobangla official said in the fiscal 2002-2003, the Petrobangla paid Tk 1,557.64 crore in supplementary duty and VAT, Tk 149.98 crore in dividend, Tk 339.59 crore in debt

service liability (DSL), Tk 145.68 crore in income tax and Tk 68.47 crore in customs duty and VAT.

In the previous fiscal, the Petrobangla paid Tk 1,054.13 crore in supplementary duty and VAT, Tk 142.39 crore in dividend, Tk 332.73 crore in DSL, Tk 91.71 crore in income tax and Tk 12.26 crore in customs duty and VAT.

The contributions were made by nine affiliates of the Petrobangla involved in gas production, distribution and transmission.

Sources in the Petrobangla said gas consumption between 2002 and

2003 shot up by over 100 million cubic feet a day (mmcf/d). Presently, the country consumes over 1,270 mmcf/d gas.

Despite marking a huge contribution, the Petrobangla incurred a gas trade loss of Tk 440 crore in the fiscal 2002-2003 by buying gas from international oil companies operating in Sangu and Jalalabad fields at high prices and selling the same at low prices.

The loss was, however, offset by free 'profit gas' of Petrobangla in both Sangu and Jalalabad and also

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PHOTO: AFP

HOWZZAT! Bangladesh speedster Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza appeals for leg before wicket against Australia opener Mathew Hayden on the second day of the second Test match at Cairns yesterday.

Oneshot dead, 6 hurt as robbers fire on villagers in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

One person was shot dead and six others were injured when robbers opened fire on villagers at Fordnagar in Singair upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead was identified as Yunus Ali, 35.

Police and local people said a gang of 20 robbers stormed into the houses of Erum Mollah, Bakkar Ali, Harun Matbar and Solaiman Mollah of the village at about 1am and started looting valuables at gunpoint.

As the inmates cried for help, the neighbours rushed to the spot and encircled the robbers. Sensing trouble, the robbers opened fire,

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Rickshawpuller killed in road mishap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A road accident killed one and sparked traffic disruption and pitched battles with police in Azimpur yesterday.

A bus from Gabtoli smashed into a rickshaw in front of Azimpur Orphanage at about 9:30am, killing its puller Fulu Akand, 40, a resident of 166, Bagh Mosque Road, on the spot.

Locals and rickshaw pullers ransacked at least 15 vehicles in Azimpur and Palashi areas and blocked the road for about an hour, witnesses said.

Police charged baton on the rampaging mob to restore traffic.

Lalbagh police seized the bus and arrested its driver Shafigul Islam Babu.

Fulu's body was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH)

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One given death sentence for murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Speedy Trial Tribunal Court (STTC), Rajshahi yesterday sentenced the prime accused in sensational Abul Bashar murder case to death and three others life imprisonment.

Jahurul Islam, son of Kohil Uddin of Baroipara in Puthia, was awarded death sentence.

Asadul of Char Kajla, Chahar Uddin of Jahajpara and Mohirul Islam of Baroipara were ordered life term. Each of them was also fined Tk 10,000 or six more months in jail in default.

Of the accused, Mohirul Islam is absconding since the murder.

ASM Aminul Islam, judge of the court convicted the four accused under Sections 364, 302, 109 and 34

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Gunfight leaves three hills people killed in Naniarchar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Three persons were killed and another was injured in a gunfight between activists of two organisations of indigenous people at Jurappara village in Naniarchar upazila of Rangamati yesterday morning.

Police and army sources at the district headquarters confirmed the incident.

The shootout took place between two armed groups allegedly belonging to the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity

(PCJSS) and the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), which opposes the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace accord.

Troops and police identified those killed as Shanti Chakma, 45, Utpalendu Chakma, 40 and Adhikanta Chakma, 22, all from nearby villages.

The injured, wearing an olive green uniform and identified as Sumati Ranjan Chakma, 32, was admitted to Naniarchar Upazila Health Complex.

Some sources however said the

number of deaths might be higher. Three bodies were recovered and some more taken away by other fighters'.

More than 30 armed youths reportedly belonging to the PCJSS swooped on the village in a bid to take control of it. On information, a group of UPDF activists turned up there and resisted them, sources in the locality said.

The two sides exchanged fire for about an hour. Bodies of the three killed in the gunbattle were

b r o u g h t

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CityCell to invest \$250m in next two years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Limited (PBTL), service provider of CityCell Digital cellular phone, yesterday said it will invest \$250 million for network expansion till 2005.

"With this investment, we will bring the entire country under CityCell network coverage," Managing Director of the PBTL Faisal Morshed Khan told reporters at a briefing.

The PBTL has so far invested \$120 million in network building, he said.

PBTL officials said the funds will be raised from profits and a syndicated bank loan.

Currently, CityCell has some 215,000 subscribers and network coverage in 46 districts.

"We have a plan to expand the network to 50 districts by August this year, 54 districts by September and entire Bangladesh by the middle of 2004," Khan said.

He said there is huge potential for the growth of cell phone in the country, but high tariffs for mobile handset, microwave link, network lease and so on have been hindering its growth.

Khan said the microwave link charge in Bangladesh is 10 to 20 times higher than that in neighbouring Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan.

"If we don't bring down the prices, people will not get the service

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7 die in Liberia church blast

REUTERS, Monrovia

Seven people were killed when a mortar bomb crashed into a church in the Liberian capital yesterday, a day after President Bush ordered US troops into position off the West African country.

Residents and aid workers said at least 30 seriously wounded civilians were taken to Monrovia's main hospital from the church, where scores of terrified refugees had been sheltering from fighting between government forces and rebels.

At least 23 people were killed

and some 200 wounded on Friday in similar mortar attacks on two schools and near a hospital.

Heavy gunfire also resounded from areas around three key bridges where fighting between government troops and rebels bent on toppling President Charles Taylor has seesawed for more than a week.

Before dawn, one mortar bomb hit the Greater Refuge Temple church compound. Another landed a few yards from the church. Two bodies lay on the street outside, waiting for burial.

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| | Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| July 27 | | 6-44 pm |
| July 28 | 5-25 am | |

| Prayer Timings | | |
|----------------|-------|--------|
| July 27 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fair | 4-15 | 4-50 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-50 | 6-55 |
| Esha | 8-15 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation