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5 AK47s, ammo seized after gunfight in CHT

MONIRUL ISLAM MONU, Bandarban

Security forces seized huge arms and ammunition from Naikkhanchhari after a gunfight with a band of criminals in the early hours yesterday.

The forces could not arrest any of the gunrunners but seized five AK47 rifles, 10 magazines with 300 bullets of machinegun and several sets of military uniform.

The army-BDR joint force started the operation on Friday night in Baishari area. When the team raided a den of criminals in a deep forest, the criminals opened fire on the

security forces who retaliated with shots, army sources said.

During the shootout more than 300 rounds were exchanged. At one stage, the criminals fled leaving the arms and ammunition behind.

"The terrorists fired from machinegun on the security forces. In reply, the BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) jawans also fired. But the criminals managed to flee in the deep forest," said an army source at Bandarban.

"Nobody was hurt in the gunfight," he added.

Lt Col Abdul Awal Bir Pratik, zonal commander of the security

forces at Naikkhanchhari, led the operation.

This is for the second time in the last eight days the security forces fought armed criminals in the remote bordering area in Bandarban.

On July 9, after exchanging 250 shots with the criminals the joint force seized eight 12-bore rifles, 60 bullets and huge number of empty magazines.

Three days earlier (July 6), the BDR jawans had seized one bag and two cartons of TNT explosives, 199 bullets of AK47 rifle and 91 bullets of pistol.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Awful cost of protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A garment factory director suffered multiple broken bones as members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) allegedly tortured him for protesting their assault on an elderly man on Friday night.

Abu Bakar Sultan Bidhan, executive director of Harness Level Industries Ltd, alleged the elite force picked him up from Uttara in the capital and tortured him for three hours at the Rab-1 office.

"I have escaped death in crossfire only after the intervention of a high police official," he told reporters yesterday at hospital bed.

Sultan said he saw three men (plainclothes Rab members) beating up an elderly man before his wife

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Forex reserves dip by 8.3pc in a day

Dollar turns even costlier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a severe dollar scarcity, the country's foreign exchange reserve yesterday slumped to \$2.9 billion, even after receiving a \$97 million Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The reserve was \$3.169 billion on Thursday, marking a \$263 million or 8.29 percent drop in just one working day.

A Bangladesh Bank (BB) source said a \$353 million bimonthly payment to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) resulted in the fall.

A sharp rise in imports in the

recent months has swollen the ACU bill to \$353 million, which usually amounts to around \$200 million.

The import rose by 26.64 percent in the first 10 months of the last fiscal year (FY) against a 13 percent rise in the corresponding period of FY 2003-04.

Consequently, the trade deficit also rose to a record high of \$2.882 billion in July to April in FY05. In the corresponding period in FY04, the deficit was \$1.737 billion.

The import rise has also seen depreciation of taka. So, the price of dollar against taka has been increasing day by day. Yesterday the dollar

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

ELECTORAL REFORMS AGENDA AL, allies plan agitation over govt rebuff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition combine is mapping out a fresh spell of agitation programmes to drive home its demands for caretaker government and electoral reforms, as the government has all but rejected its reform agenda.

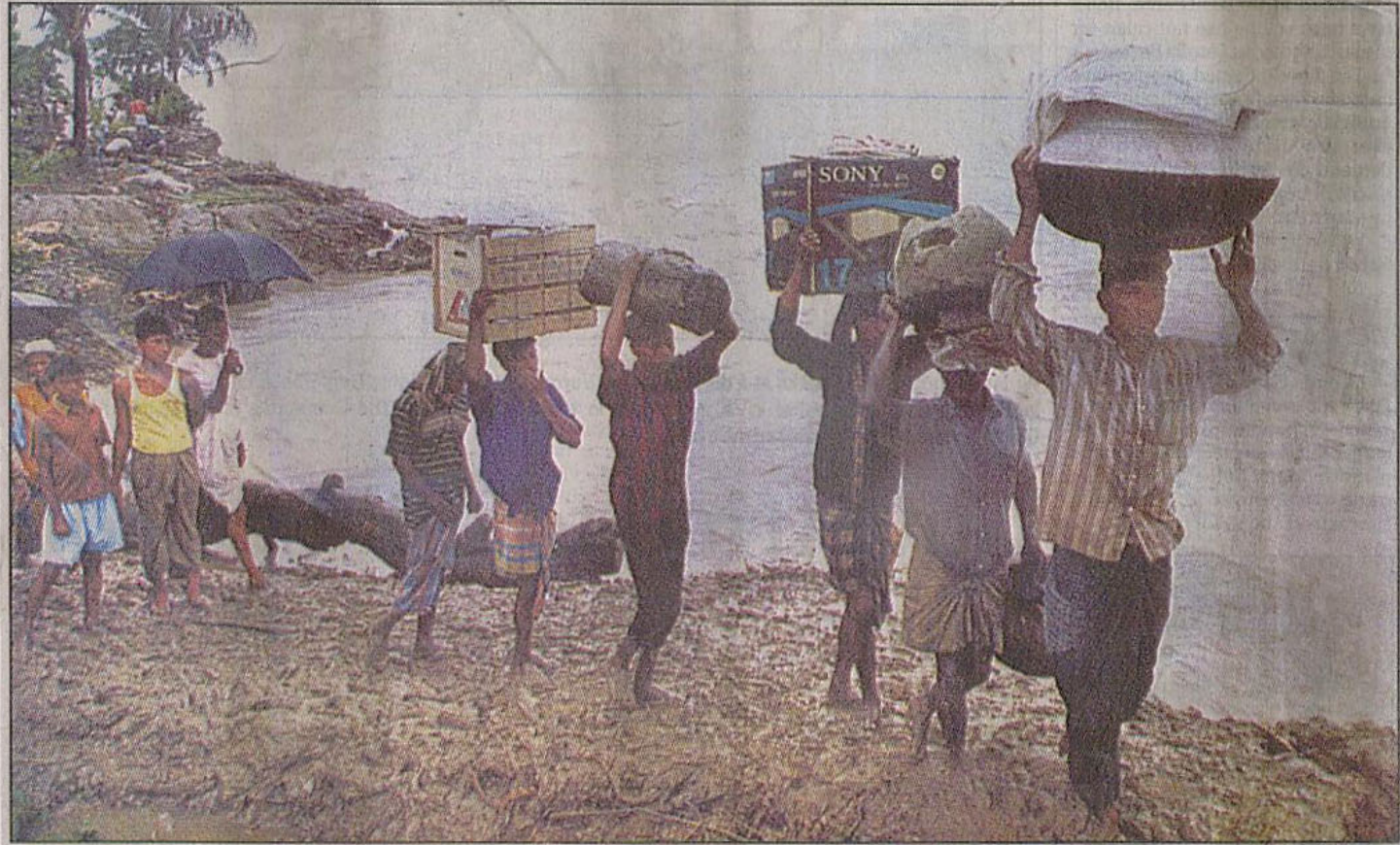
Senior leaders of the Awami League-led combine will sit today to plan the next steps in order to hammer at their 31-point reform proposals announced Friday, sources in the

opposition camp said.

They have decided not to table their reform agenda in parliament, as advised by the ruling BNP, unless the government assures them of implementing the proposals. Instead, the 14-party line-up will bump up street agitation to force the ruling coalition into meeting their reform demands, sources said.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday spoke in the same line. "Awami League, 11-party

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



People of Hasail and Panchgaon unions in Munsiganj district trek bag and baggage looking for shelter as the Padma river has devoured their houses and property.

PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Govt to withdraw another criminal case against Pintu

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to withdraw another criminal case filed against ruling BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

Earlier, the government had withdrawn two other criminal cases filed against Pintu—one for robbing at gunpoint bidding documents for auction of the property of a bankrupt company, and the other for injuring a number of Awami League (AL) men and police.

In the present case filed with the Lalbagh Police Station (PS), Sub-Inspector (SI) Syed Monaemul Islam alleged that some cocktails and bombs exploded in the yard of Pintu's 25 Moneshwar Road in Lalbagh at about 8:24pm on October 4, 1997, leaving "Murgichhila"

Kamal, Biju, Mishuk, Koli and four others seriously injured.

The injured were making the bombs to use during a street and railroad barricade programme called by the then opposition BNP. Soon after the incident, Pintu, the then president of Dhaka city unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), took them to Islamia Pharmacy and Babil Medicine Store for treatment.

Of the injured, Kamal succumbed to his injuries while under treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the FIR (first information report) said.

The home ministry in a letter on March 18 last year informed the district magistrate of Dhaka that it had decided to take back the charges against Pintu and the two others as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

3 'London bombers' visited Pakistan

2 suspects nabbed in Lahore

AGENCIES, Islamabad/London

Three of the London suicide bombers recently visited Pakistan, top security officials said yesterday, and investigators are probing whether they met with al-Qaeda-linked militant groups.

British police, meanwhile, confronted doubts in Egypt yesterday about whether an Egyptian biochemist, arrested in Cairo during a visit from England, was involved in the plot.

The Egypt police arrested a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Suicide bombing kills 55 in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

A suicide bomber in a fuel truck killed 55 people in a town south of Baghdad last night, the latest in a series of spectacular guerrilla attacks to rattle Iraq.

The bomb, which exploded near a Shia mosque and market, also wounded 82 people.

The frenzy of suicide attacks suggests the government still has a long way to go before stamping out

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

CHINA EASTERN AIRLINES

Further Announcement

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Workers clash over strike, 40 hurt

Hartal observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal and a 24-hour strike in mills and factories were observed peacefully yesterday, barring some stray

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Taiwan Trade Meeting

Date: 18th July, 2005, Time: 9.00 am-6.00 pm

Venue: Ballroom, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel

An Event to Bring Bangladesh and Taiwanese business Together

Taiwan External Trade Development Council, the foremost trade and investment promotion organization in Taiwan, will lead a delegation to visit Bangladesh.

Most up-to-date products from 26 leading manufacturing companies to be presented including:

Industrial Equipments & Parts

- Machinery
- Turn Key Project
- Power & Electrical Equipment etc.

Electronics

- Consumer Electronics
- Peripheral & Component
- Computer Hardware
- Safety Products etc.

Metal, Hardware & Hand Tool

- Various Hardware/ Metal Products
- Hand Tool & Power Tool
- Mold & Die etc.

Houseware & Kitchenware

- Sanitary Product
- Water Treatment
- Kitchen Equipment
- Curtain & Bedding etc.

Auto & Motor Parts

- Various Auto / Motor Parts
- Bike Chains

Others

- Artificial Fabric; Stylish Fabric
- Barber Scissors
- Plastic Molds/Parts
- Laser Line Projector, Diaper
- Tissue and Paper



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