

1 nabbed in Bandarban with 1,200 M16 bullets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday arrested an alleged criminal with 1,200 bullets of M16 rifle from Tarabunia in Naikhangchhari upazila.

Acting on a tip off, a BDR team led by Lt Col Auwal, Bir Pratik raided a hideout in the deep forest and seized the ammunition.

The BDR, who also seized 10 sets of uniforms, did not give details about the arrestee.

Ex-cabinet secy Akbar tipped to become first tax ombudsman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Akbar Ali Khan, alternative executive director of the World Bank and former cabinet secretary, may become the first tax ombudsman of the country while incumbent Commerce Secretary Siddiqu Rahman is going to be the finance secretary.

The tax ombudsman bill was passed in the last budget session.

Akbar Ali Khan, who earlier served as cabinet secretary, finance secretary, and NBR chairman, is expected to complete his present assignment as the alternative executive director of the World Bank this month.

He is under consideration as the most potential person for appointment to the post of tax ombudsman

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BNP moves to rid leaders of criminal charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The high-ups of ruling BNP have decided to gather information on the cases, which they termed "politically motivated", filed against BNP leaders and activists during the immediate past Awami League (AL) government, in a bid to relieve them of criminal charges.

BNP leaders including lawmakers, who witnessed the framing of charges against BNP men during the last AL government, will accumulate necessary information and forward it to the home ministry. The home ministry will then apply to the law ministry, which will finally proceed to the court for the withdrawal

of the cases, BNP lawmaker Syed Moazzem Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting at the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) ministry on Monday with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

The meeting asked the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs to initiate the release process on an urgent basis.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar, BNP standing committee member Advocate

Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed, BNP city unit General Secretary Abdus Salam, SA Khaleque, Salauddin Ahmed, Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, a few public prosecutors (PP) of Dhaka courts, local ward commissioners and lawyers of BNP-backed Jatiyatobadi Aijibhi Oikya Parishad attended the meeting.

"Thousands of false cases framed by the Awami League government with political motivation are still pending in the courts due to lack of party efforts and we have asked the ministries concerned to look into the matter immediately," Moazzem Hossain, who also attended the meeting, said.

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11 militants brought in Dhaka for quizzing

Primary probe reveals existence of more dangerous outfit

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The 11 militants arrested from Puthiapara village in Pabna upazila on Tuesday were sent to a joint interrogation cell (JIC) in Dhaka last night after a primary analysis of a recovered diary confirmed the identity of the suspected combative-trainer.

Following a home ministry directive, the militants were sent to Dhaka escorted by huge police guards at

around 11:00pm. The JIC team will start its interrogation from today morning.

The militants were arrested in a joint block raid to a newly constructed house of one Mozammel Haque Mozam at Puthiapara village.

Four groups of police and intelligence agencies comprising deputy inspector general (DIG), superintendent of police (SP) and senior offi-

cials interrogated the militants on Tuesday night and the following day, but could not bring out any remarkable information from them.

Combat trainer Aslam identified Golam Mustafa, one of the arrestees, as the suspected combat instructor Aslam after matching his handwriting with that of a hand-written diary recovered from the militants.

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World Bank VP Praful due today

UNB, Dhaka

Praful C Patel, vice-president of South Asia region of the World Bank (WB), arrives in Dhaka today on a four-day visit.

The visit is intended to further strengthen the partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank in meeting the development challenges of the country, said a World Bank release.

Praful C Patel, an Ugandan national, assumed his current position as regional vice-president, South Asia, in July, 2003. He oversees the World Bank's operations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

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Five souls in dowry hell

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Nupur, Sufia, Aleya, Shilpi and Shamima -- they were five young brides whose dream of a happy conjugal life has been shattered by a cruel greed for dowry of in-laws and husbands.

They are now four, as Shamima died of severe burn injuries on June 10.

Of the surviving quartet, doctors at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in the last week of June released Shilpi repeatedly stabbed by her husband, while a severely burn Nupur left the hospital Monday exasperated at the lack of food and accommodation for her attendants.

The remaining two touched by the hellfire of dowry are still languishing at the DMCH, looking with horror to the bleak future awaiting them like an never-ending winter.

THE HARROWING

TALE OF NUPUR

Nupur Begum, 20, was admitted to Ward 33 of the DMCH on June 29 with acute burn injuries inflicted by her husband.

Almost half of her body, from waist upward, scorched and banded, she sees interminable flow of pus from the burnt areas soaking the thick bandages.

The journalists said Shahidul and his party men are threatening to kill them for writing news against their criminal activities.

The complainants are MA Razzal of the Amar Desh, Tariqul Haq of the Prothom Alo, Mustafizur Rahman of the Ittefaq, Hasan Jahid, staff reporter of the Manabzamin, Jamal Uddin Haideri, acting editor of the Ajker Alo, Sakhawat Ibne Monoyee in Sarker Kumukamari village in Sarker.

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PHOTO: STAR

Mariam Begum tends to her daughter Nupur, with 3-year-old Rabbi sitting beside his mother, after her admission to DMCH Ward 33 on June 29 with severe burn injuries inflicted by none other than her husband.



SAVAR EPZ 200 agitating workers hurt in clash with cops

BDNEWS, Savar

Over 200 workers of a garment factory at Savar EPZ (Export Processing Zone) were injured, five of them seriously, in a police action yesterday.

The seriously injured workers are Mahmuda, 20, Zahirul, 20, Shahna, 22, Billal, 25, Wasim, 22 and Sujon, 20.

Police swung into action when hundreds of workers of Ring Shine factory were enforcing a strike for the fourth consecutive day demanding withdrawal of false cases against some workers of the factory and to realise their "legitimate demands".

The injured workers alleged that police swooped on them in front of the EPZ gate and at different entry

points and charged baton without any provocation.

"Police also fired rubber bullets," said one of them.

The injured workers said many of them did not go to any hospital, fearing further police harassment and arrest.

The workers of the factory alleged that police raided Gazirhat, Pallibiduy, Bhadail and Dhamrai early yesterday and picked up about 70 innocent workers.

Later, police released 48 of them.

Meanwhile, protesting police attack, the National Garments Workers Welfare Association held a meeting at their Baipali office in Savar in the afternoon.

Among others, Rafiqul Islam

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Octane price should be raised by another Tk 10
Says energy adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The price of octane should be raised by another Tk 10 a litre, Mahmudur Rahman, adviser to the energy ministry said yesterday, a day after the government raised the prices of octane and petrol.

"Although most of the consumers of octane in our country are rich, the price of octane has not been increased since January 2003. But the prices of diesel and kerosene were raised several times," he said.

The energy adviser was speaking at a meeting organised by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) in Dhaka. "We need a pro-people policy in the pricing of fuels to ensure equal distribution of

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3 more districts inundated

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Floods have engulfed three more districts and fresh areas of the affected ones, worsening the situation further.

With inundation of three districts Natore, Naogaon and Faridpur the number of flood affected districts now stands at seven.

The low-lying areas of Natore, Naogaon and Faridpur have gone under floodwater, marooning hundreds of people and damaging standing crops on vast tracts of land.

Meanwhile, the overall flood situation in Sirajganj, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Gaibandha deteriorated further, as fresh areas of the affected districts have been inundated.

According to Flood Forecasting

and Warning Centre (FFWC), the prevailing flood situation of Kurigram, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Netrakona are likely to deteriorate further.

The flood situation in the low-lying areas in and around Dhaka and Narayanganj remained unchanged.

In Gaibandha, the flood situation in the district deteriorated further, as the rivers Ghagat, Korota, Teesta continued to rise and many fresh areas went under water.

According to local water development board sources, the Ghagat marked further rise by 27cm, Korota by 16cm and Teesta by 11cm in the last 24 hours.

Fresh areas in Sirajganj went under floodwaters in the last 24 hours.

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Britain mulls global talks on terror

Pakistan arrests over 200 Islamist militants in raid following London attacks

AFP, London/Islamabad

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said yesterday Britain was mulling an international conference on Islamic extremism following the London bombings, while Pakistan detained more than 200 suspected Islamic militants in response to international pressure to crack down on extremists after the London bombings, officials and police said on Wednesday.

In the aftermath of the July 7 attacks, Blair also emphasised his confidence in the country's security services following news that Britain had lowered its threat assessment level as a result of a confidential intelligence report just three weeks before the blasts.

The British leader said an international response was needed to confront terrorism at its roots, which were deep and widespread.

He noted as a priority the need to share, Blair said, by the government of Pakistan -- to crack down on hardline religious schools, or madrassas, across the country after

London bombers are thought to have attended.

"We are also looking at the possibility of holding a conference, which will bring together some of the main countries who have various concerns and who have been closely involved in the issues, in order to try and take concerted action across the world to try to root out this type of extremist teaching," Blair said during his weekly question session in parliament.

"Though the terrorists will use all sorts of issues to justify what they do, the roots of it do go deep, they are often not found in this country alone therefore international action is also necessary," he said.

Blair noted that about 26 countries had suffered al-Qaeda-linked attacks since 1993, adding: "There is obviously a huge well of support and understanding of the problems that we face in this country."

Meanwhile Pakistani security forces raided Islamic schools or madrassas across the country after

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Prayer Timing

July 21

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Magrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

CAMELIA 'MURDER'

Fresh autopsy performed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A second autopsy on the body of Camelia, allegedly killed by her husband and in-laws on July 5, was performed yesterday after exhuming it on Tuesday.

Forensic specialists at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), however, denied disclosing the findings to the press.

Halima Begum, mother of Shahin Akther Camelia, on

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