

SHIP DISAPPEARANCE  
Pac terms probe body report 'incomplete'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Culprits in the disappearance of a ship with 12,000 metric tons of rice have yet to be identified even after seven years into the incident as a parliamentary body formed to probe the incident submitted its inconclusive report yesterday.

BNP lawmaker Manjur Qader, who heads the subcommittee, said there were no papers or document available to carry out a meaningful enquiry, and if the secretary of the ministry concerned helps him, he can still find out the reasons.

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# 4 outlaws killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Four outlawed political operatives were killed in three incidents of "shootout" and "crossfire" between their cadres and law enforcers in Pabna, Kushtia and Rajbari early yesterday.

Of them, two Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-red flag) cadres were killed in "crossfire" with the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Pabna, while two Gono Mukti Foj

(GMF) cadres were killed in "shoot-out" and "crossfire" with police in Kushtia and Rajbari.

According to Rab-5 in Pabna, the elite crime-busting force on Sunday arrested PBCP cadres Mujibur and Panu from Baroipara farm at Kaliakoir in Gazipur district with four other accomplices, who had been hiding there to evade arrest.

The Rab in a press release said the criminals were taken to Rajshahi and quizzed when they confessed

to possessing firearms hidden at different places in Pabna.

Following the leads, as the Rab team reached Daripara in Faridpur upazila of Pabna to recover the firearms, the PBCP men opened fire on them resulting in a gunfight at about 3:45pm.

The Rab said Mujibur and Panu got caught in the "crossfire" as they tried to escape from the Rab vehicle and died on the spot.

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PSC with Cairn Energy extended till 2008

UNB, *Dhaka*

Cairn Energy yesterday signed an amendment agreement with Petrobangla to extend its production sharing contract (PSC) until May 2008 to conduct three more drillings at block 16.

The PSC, first signed in 1994, was to expire this year as the UK-based international oil company did not conduct drilling in Magnama, Hatia and Manpura areas under block 16 located in the Bay of Bengal.

But through signing the amendment agreement, Cairn obtained the right to continue its operation for the block 16 that covers about 1,428

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SHAHIDULLAH MURDER

## Traders term it part of extortion master plan *Arrestee names Shahadat as mastermind*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists gunned down Mirpur businessman Kazi Shahidullah last Friday as part of a master plan to wrest crores of taka from local traders and factory owners by capitalising on the murder, alleged local businessmen.

Gripped with panic, they have confined themselves to home and cut phone connections fearing

death threats from anonymous callers. For instance, the owner of a cosmetics shop has never ventured out of his home since Saturday, with his cellphone disconnected, after callers threatened him to be their next target in line.

Meanwhile, Selim, a youth arrested the same day of the gory killing, in a confessional statement to a magistrate yesterday said

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Japan quake causes small tsunami waves

AFP, *Tokyo*

A powerful earthquake off Japan's Pacific coast yesterday injured at least 56 people, set off small tsunami waves and swayed towering buildings in the heart of Tokyo.

Bullet trains and a nuclear power plant were temporarily shut down after the quake, which measured 7.2 on the Richter scale, jolted the ocean floor off Miyagi prefecture 300km north of Tokyo.

In Miyagi's main coastal city of Sendai, the roof partially caved in at a sports gymnasium and injured at least 26 people, police said. Thirty other people were reported injured

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PHOTO: STAR

With the future uncertain, Maksuda holds the picture of her late husband Abul Kalam Azad, a victim of the August 21 carnage, while their two minor children stare with a grim look.

AUG 21 CARNAGE

## *Baby boy living with false hope*

BISHAWJIT DAS

Three-year-old Al-Amin still believes his father, Abul Kalam Azad, one of the 22 killed in the August 21 carnage, is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

The little boy does not know that his father, who received splinter wounds to the head and stomach, struggled for life for 20 days in a coma in a city hospital before succumbing to his injuries.

"Azad passed away but left the entire family in darkness," said Azad's 70-year-old mother, Anwara Begum, shedding tears while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

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ABANDONED GAS FIELD

## High-powered body to probe Niko deal

BDNEWS, *Dhaka*

In a dramatic move, the government has formed a three-member high-powered committee to probe the deal with Canadian Niko Resources Limited for developing the "so-called" abandoned gas fields.

The committee will look into on what basis Chhatak, Feni and Kamta gas fields were declared

abandoned and whether there was any flaw in the agreement with Niko for developing the Chhatak, known as Tengratila, and Feni fields, officials said.

M Shah Alam, director general-2 at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), has been made head of the committee while Bapex Managing Director M Jamaluddin member

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JAMAL ABDUCTION

## Rab not ready yet to nab MP Nizam

*Starts grilling Shahid Chairman but keeps mum about findings*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) cannot detain or quiz BNP lawmaker Sarwar Jamal Nizam, his brother Maruf

Nizam or any other person implicated by Shahid Chairman's initial confessions in the sensational abduction of local business magnate

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Musician Subal Das passes away

UNB, *Dhaka*

Leading music director Subal Das died of a cardiac arrest at a hospital in Kolkata yesterday. He was 78.

Family sources said the musician went to Kolkata where he was diagnosed cancer in his anus and had undergone an operation a few days ago. But he died of cardiac arrest.

Subal Das left behind two daughters, two sons and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death. His wife Aporna Das died in 1996.

Subal Das entered the country's

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# 160 killed in plane crash in Venezuela

AFP, *Caracas/ Paris*

A Colombian plane with 160 people on board crashed yesterday in the mountains of western Venezuela leaving no survivors.

All 153 passengers killed in a Colombian jetliner crash in Venezuela yesterday were French citizens returning to their homes on the Caribbean island of Martinique after a week-long vacation, officials at France's civil aviation authority and their tour company said.

The West Caribbean Airways plane, on a flight from Panama to Martinique in the French West Indies, came down in a remote zone in the Sierra de Perija mountains in the western state of Zulia.

French authorities in Martinique and the General Directorate for Civil Aviation (DGAC) in Paris put the number of passengers at 153.

It was the second accident in five months involving the Colombian airline, which was set up in 2000 to provide low cost flights within

Colombia and to the Caribbean region.

Venezuelan Interior Minister Jesse Chacon said the McDonnell Douglas MD-82 jet crashed between 3:00 am and 3:45 am (0700 GMT-0745 GMT) after the pilot had reported trouble with both engines.

Inhabitants of the town of Machique reported seeing an explosion in the mountains, Globovision television said.

The jet came down between the districts of La Cucharita and La Negra close to the Venezuela-Colombia border.

Colombian officials said most of the 152 passengers, who included one child, were French. There were also eight Colombian crew on the flight.

Carlos Monteleagre, head of the Colombian civil aviation authority, said in Bogota that rescuers who had reached the scene had confirmed there are no survivors.

The Venezuelan minister also

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SHRINE BLASTS

## 2 injured were carrying bombs, say investigators

STAR REPORT

The authorities suspect that two persons injured in Friday's bombing spree at Kharpur shrine in Akhaura were carrying bombs.

The three-member body probing the carnage is likely to interrogate today one of the two suspects, Kamrul, 25, son of Hiron Mia of Comilla, now under treatment at

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ATTACK ON AHMADIYYA

## Wounded woman shifted to Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

The lone victim of Monday's bomb attack on Ahmadiyya neighbourhood in the district's Bhadughar area was shifted to Dhaka yesterday as her condition worsened.

Hosne Ara Begum Hosena, 55,

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Prayer Timing		
August 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		