

46 grenades recovered from Satkhira village

Raid follows arrest of Huji militant?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday recovered 46 grenades from Shimulia village under Debhata upazila of Satkhira district.

Sources said a team of Rab intelligence went to the district on

Thursday night following confessions of Mufti Moin Zandal, a top leader of Mufti Hannan led Harkatul Jihad (Huji), arrested in Dhaka earlier.

They said three groups of Huji are active in the country. After the arrest of Mufti Hannan, Zandal, who hails from Narail district, had been controlling the militant.

In Satkhira, they picked up Nazrul Islam Gharami, 55, of Shimulia village from Nalta Bazar, five kilometres off the village.

On the basis of Nazrul's statement, members of the intelligence team set out for Simulia with

Ex-state minister Ziaul Huq sued for corruption

UNB, Laxmipur

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has filed a corruption case against former state minister Ziaul Huq Zia and four others with Ramganj Police Station.

Monjurul Alam, assistant director at the ACC headquarters, filed the case against them on Thursday night.

In the case statement, the complainant said the accused misappropriated 320 tonnes of rice

Hasina refuses to take treatment in country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday rejected the jail authorities' proposal for her treatment in any hospital in the country.

The jail authorities agreed to send the ailing former prime minister to any hospital in the country for medical check-up and eye treatment according to her wish.

"We will arrange her treatment in any hospital in the country if she wishes but she did not let us know her decision in this regard," DIG (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told The Daily Star after a 90-minute meeting with the AL chief at the special jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

IG (Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan and the DIG Prisons along with Hasina's personal physician Dr ABM Abdullah met her and requested her to choose any hospital for her treatment.

The DIG said, "We took her (Hasina) personal physician to the jail for advising her to go to a hospi-



tal for treatment. But she refused to be hospitalised."

Dr Abdullah prescribed some medicines for her to keep her blood pressure under control.

Haider said Sheikh Hasina needs some important medical tests now.

Quoting Hasina, Dr Abdullah said she did not agree to have treatment in the country.

Talking to The Daily Star, Abdullah said Hasina has become

EDITOR'S NOTE

17 years of 'journalism without fear or favour'

Beginning in 1991 with our "Commitment to People's Right to Know" we have completed nearly two decades of journalism serving our readers with dedication, sincerity and commitment to public interest. During this period the country witnessed many upheavals, some natural and quite a few man made. Throughout it all we stood by our readers giving them the most authentic and timely reports, features, articles and editorials to enable them to form informed opinions. In addition we have tried to provide a variety of supplementary publications, four weeklies, one fortnightly and one monthly, to meet their rising expectations.

We have, through our journalism, tried to strengthen democracy and all the institutions that give it a strong foundation. We fought for press freedom, human rights, minority rights and all the fundamental freedoms for the betterment of our people. We steadfastly struggled against all forms of corruption and mis-governance for economic development and to provide a level playing field to our innovative entrepreneurs.

In celebrating our 17th anniversary we have prepared a 164-page supplement which will be distributed in three separate sections today (16th), tomorrow (17th) and the day after (18th). The supplement is focused on the theme "For a Democratic and Middle-Income Bangladesh". The three separate sections, named differently, are:

1. Strengthening our democratic foundations;
- 2) Towards a Middle-Income Bangladesh; and finally
- 3) Tasks Ahead. In the last section we identify six tasks that need to be addressed immediately for Bangladesh to realise her potential. These tasks are:



A man takes a picture of his children at the Ekushey Boli Mela at Bangla Academy in the capital after buying them books yesterday. However, a lot of children in the country are deprived of elementary education like this girl sitting next and counting her earnings from selling chocolates at the fair.

DIG (PRISONS) ON KHALEDA'S LETTER Jail won't despatch it if content is political

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique yesterday said the jail authorities would not despatch any letter by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia if the content is political.

"A prisoner has no right to make a political decision as the jail code does not provide for that," he told The Daily Star last evening.

Maj Siddique said they did not get any letter from her, and neither did they receive any request from

her for writing materials.

"After examining the content of the letter that we are yet to receive, we will take a decision in this regard," he added.

Earlier on Thursday, the former prime minister's lawyers Nawshad Jamir and Sanaullah Mia said she had handed the jail authorities a letter meant for the chief election commissioner (CEC). There, she declared the October 29 standing committee meeting illegal.

The controversial meeting

GRAND ELECTORAL ALLIANCE Discord among key leaders of Awami League, allies

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Awami League's (AL) move to form a grand electoral alliance is facing differences of opinion among key leaders in the party as well as in the AL-led combine.

Moreover, most of the 14 parties in the combine have reservations about bringing Jatiya Party (JP) and any religion-based party in the

proposed grand alliance.

AL acting President Zillur Rahman on February 8 told reporters that they are thinking of a grand electoral alliance and would soon start talks in this regard.

-But a number of influential senior leaders apparently involved in a move to form a government of national consensus before the next parliamentary election did not take his statement positively, AL sources said.

Zillur spoke of a grand alliance on instructions from detained AL President Sheikh Hasina in a bid to divert attention from the move to form a government of national consensus before the election. The reason behind the move for a grand electoral alliance is to ensure victory in the polls and then form such type of government, the sources pointed out.

Some senior AL leaders suggested that the acting party chief leave the issue of forming a grand alliance now, and move forward to

Bus plunge at ferry ghat kills five

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Five people died when a microbus plunged into the river Padma at Daulatdia ferry ghat under Rajbari district early yesterday.

The dead are Momotaz Khatun 27, wife of Jhumur Malitha, his son Nayan, 9, younger sister Swapna 10, sister-in-law Tagar 18 and brother-in-law Laltu 22. They all hailed from Dighirpara area of Meherpur town.

Jhumur's another brother-in-law Zillur, who was also in the microbus, managed to swim ashore.

Police said the incident occurred at around 3:30 am as the driver of the microbus lost control over the steering while it was embarking the ferry and fell into the river.

Family sources said Momotaz along with 12 on board the microbus left Meherpur town for Dhaka to receive her husband Jhumur Malitha, a Bangladeshi expatriate in Kuwait, at Zia International Airport (ZIA) in the morning.

Six others, including Jhumur's younger brother Pintu, brother-in-law Dulu and nephew Imran escaped the accident as they got down from the vehicle before it got onto the ferry, the sources said.

Fire brigade personnel from Rajbari and a rescue team from Dhaka reached the spot at 6:00am and recovered the bodies at noon. The microbus driver remained missing since the incident.

Ferry service at the ghat remained suspended for a few more hours.

The bodies of the five reached Meherpur town at around 4:30pm. Jhumur Malitha landed at ZIA at around 9:00am and reached Meherpur at 3:30pm by a bus.

BSS adds: Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) yesterday formed a three-member committee to probe the accident at Daulatdia ferry ghat.

The committee, headed by a general manager, has been asked to submit its report in a week, a BIWTA press release said last night.



Fire Brigade personnel yesterday try to salvage the vehicle that plunged into the Padma at Daulatdia ferry terminal under Rajbari district early yesterday, killing five people. All the victims hailed from Meherpur in Kushtia.

2,054 Dhaka Jail inmates made voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has so far listed 2,054 inmates of Dhaka Central Jail as voters, said sources.

The voter-listing inside the jail began Thursday. The EC staff and army personnel have been doing the job with assistance from 25 convicts serving rigorous imprisonment.

On the opening day, 1,002 prisoners hailing from Dhaka district

Announcement

Today's 76-page edition of The Daily Star includes a 52-page first instalment of the three-part special supplement on the 17th anniversary of the daily.

Wholesale rice prices mark fall without impact on retail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an increase in supply of rice, prices of coarse varieties on wholesale markets in the capital came down a little yesterday, but no impact of it was seen on retail markets.

Importers however said there is no possibility of rice prices coming down in the near future, as they are currently importing rice at hiked up prices of \$505 to \$510 a ton, up by more than \$80 a ton from the prices they paid a week ago.

Meanwhile, prices of other essentials including fish, beef, mutton, edible oil, and sugar also shot up further on different mar-

kets.

Visiting Karwan Bazar and Mohammadpur Krishi Market yesterday, it was found by The Daily Star, although wholesale prices of Indian rice came down by Tk 30 to Tk 40 a maund, interestingly on retail markets the prices went up by Tk 1 a kilogram (kg).

Indian swarna that had been sold for Tk 1,120 a maund two days ago was being sold for Tk 1,070 to Tk 1,080 a maund yesterday. Local coarse rice guti which had been sold for Tk 1,050 to Tk 1,060 two days ago was being sold for Tk 1,020 to Tk 1,030 yesterday.

Coarse rice was being sold for Tk

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Tariqur Rahman Milan, Managing Director, ARTISTI COLLECTION LTD receiving the trophy for the BEST STALL in DITF 2008 from the honorable Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman.

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