



2 ex-NSI chiefs held over Ctg ammo haul

Arrest follows former intelligence director's confession

STAR REPORT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday arrested two former chiefs of National Security Intelligence (NSI) for alleged links to the 10 truckloads of weapons seized in Chittagong five years ago.

Of the two, Major Gen (retd) Rezaul Haider Chowdhury was held at his residence in Dhanmondi and Brig Gen (retd) M Abdur Rahim at his in Banani DOHS during a two-hour drive beginning at 2:00am, said sources.

Less than 12 hours before the arrests, ex-NSI director Mohammad Sahab Uddin gave a confessional statement to a Chittagong court.

As soon as he finished making the statement at

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Arrested former NSI director generals Maj Gen (retd) Rezaul Haider Chowdhury and Brig Gen (retd) Abdur Rahim, behind, at the CID office in Malibagh in the capital.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Congress triumphs in Indian elections

Manmohan set for second term; BJP concedes defeat

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

Putting up its best performance in decades and bucking anti-incumbency, India's ruling Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) yesterday retained power coming within striking distance of parliamentary majority in vote counting from the staggered general elections.

Fresh from victory, Congress President Sonia Gandhi yesterday made it clear that Manmohan Singh will be the prime minister, and Manmohan said he would like to have Rahul Gandhi in his cabinet.

"The party and Rahul Gandhi has time and again made it clear that Manmohan Singh will be the prime

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INDIAN ELECTION SPECIAL
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Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi address a press conference at her residence in New Delhi yesterday following the Congress-led alliance's victory in the largest democracy in the world.

PHOTO: AFP

Tamil Tigers 'defeated'

Declares Lanka president; rebels reportedly surrounded, 'planning mass suicide'

AFP, Colombo

The president of Sri Lanka declared yesterday that the island's separatist Tamil Tiger rebels have been "defeated militarily" after decades of bitter ethnic bloodshed.

"I am proud to announce... that my government, with the total commitment of our armed Forces, has in an unprecedented humanitarian operation finally defeated the LTTE militarily," he said in a speech in Jordan.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have been fighting for an independent homeland on the ethnic Sinhalese-majority island since the 1970's.

"I will be going back to a country that has been totally freed from the barbaric acts of the LTTE," he said, adding that government troops had rescued some 210,000 civilians who were "being used as human shields by the LTTE."

Defence officials reported that sporadic fighting was still in progress in a

coastal area in the northeast, but only with pockets of die-hard rebel fighters.

Earlier Sri Lankan troops captured the last strip of beach held by the Tamil Tigers, leaving the rebels completely surrounded and allegedly planning to commit "mass suicide."

Defence officials said the massive offensive against the separatist army would be over "very soon," putting the entire island under government control for the first time in decades.

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Left's red fort in West Bengal falls

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

The red fort in West Bengal crumbled yesterday as the poll results came out there.

After being in power in the state for 32 years without a break, ruling Left Front suffered a severe drubbing at the hands of the alliance of Trinamool Congress and Congress, which swept the Lok Sabha elections.

Trinamool Congress-Congress alliance secured 25 of the 42 seats in the state, 19 of them going to Trinamool and 6 to Congress.

Trinamool's left ally Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) won one, while their rival BJP also got one seat.

Left Front is way behind Trinamool-Congress alliance as it won only 15 seats, 9 of which went to the Communist Party of

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Good chance to settle disputes

Experts see good omen for Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign policy experts yesterday said the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance's (UPA) victory in the Indian elections offers a fresh opportunity for Bangladesh to resolve the unsettled issues with its powerful neighbour.

Farooq Sobhan, former foreign secretary and president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, said the polls result could be a positive outcome for Bangladesh as it will give India a stable government and help maintain continuity in Indo-Bangla relations.

Sobhan said he expects the UPA victory to add momentum to the relations between the two neighbouring countries as the

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Huge quantity of fertiliser has been left like this under the open sky at Narayanganj Port for years, contributing to environmental degradation. It was imported privately during the last BNP-led government's tenure but farmers refused to buy it due to its poor quality.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

4 lakh rickshaws throng city roads

But DMP decides to go soft on the issue considering livelihood of drivers, owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers in the city will not seize the over four lakh rickshaws with fake documents considering the livelihood of rickshaw pullers and owners, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Shahidul Haque yesterday.

He said if the illegal rickshaws are seized all at a time, the people concerned might get involved with criminal activities deteriorating the law and order situation in the capital.

He said this in a views-exchange meeting with rickshaw pullers and leaders of different rickshaw owners' association at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

Speaking as the chief guest he said the government has made

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Move to revitalise dying jute industry

Govt agencies to use jute sacks in packing commodities

PORIMOL PALMA

The government is going to make it mandatory to use jute sacks in packing certain commodities handled by government agencies as part of its plan to revitalise jute industry.

"We have started work on framing a jute policy. We want to make use of jute sacks in packing food grains, fertiliser, sugar and such other goods mandatory," Jute and Textile Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

He mentioned that a commission has already been formed to draft a jute policy by October this year.

In the wake of around 21 percent drop in export of jute and jute products in recent times,

the government in its stimulus package for the sector increased cash incentive from 7.5 percent to 10 percent.

Jute mill owners welcomed this saying such incentives will help reopen the closed jute mills and create huge job opportunities. But banks should come up to reschedule loans of sick and closed jute mills, they said.

Of the 160 jute and jute spinning mills in the country, around 30 are closed, a similar number of those operate off and on and about 100 operate normally.

The mills produced 5.84 lakh tonnes of jute goods in fiscal year (FY) 2007-08 while around 40 percent of the 55 lakh bales of raw jute produced in the country annually is exported.

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JMB has at least 50 bomb experts now

All of them learnt the ropes from 'Boma Mizan'

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Law enforcers suspect there are at least 50 operatives in the militant Islamist organisation Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) who can make bombs, and almost all of them were trained by now detained Jahid Hossain Sumon alias 'Boma Mizan'.

'Boma Mizan', key-explosives expert of the banned outfit, has already admitted to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) that his prime job was to train the operatives in making bombs and grenades.

"We don't have the actual number of JMB members trained in explosives but information given by JMB members arrested on different occasions suggest the number is not less than 50," a top Rab official told The Daily Star yesterday.

"JMB has books for its members with bomb-making process described in those," he said.

Seeking anonymity, he said almost all of the JMB men arrested with bombs and explosive substances admitted to investigators that they

were trained by 'Boma Mizan'.

Mizan joined the JMB in 2000 and since then his main job was to make bombs and grenades, and train activists in the use of explosives. He is also an expert in small arms like pistol and revolver, the Rab official mentioned.

He has confessed to the crime busting force that he had eight pistols in his possession, of which two were seized by Rab during its raid on two JMB dens at Uttar Pireerbagh and Monipur of Mirpur in the capital on Friday and the day before.

He also told Rab during primary interrogation that he had given six pistols to JMB members.

"We're expecting vital information from Mizan as he has been placed on a seven-day remand yesterday (Saturday)," said the Rab official.

A Dhaka court granted the seven-day remand when Mirpur police produced him before it praying for a 10-day remand for interrogation in connection with the recovery of

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OnlinePoll

Do you support Finance Minister's statement of not having any provision of tax holiday for any sector in the upcoming budget?

Yes (39.24%)
No (36.01%)
No Comments (24.75%)

Total votes: 711

TODAY'S POLL

Does the government's ongoing crackdown on militants make you feel safe from terrorist attacks?

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