

Arges all available

Sherpur operation seized grenades for the first time from criminals other than Huji men; all recovered Arges 'manufactured in Pakistan'

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The recent recovery of 10 Arges grenades in Sherpur is an eye-opener for the law-enforcement agencies as for the first time criminals other than Islamist militants are held with such deadly weapons.

Besides, investigators suspect apart from the militants, local criminals are also smuggling and trading in the Arges grenades in the country.

An official from elite Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), which recovered the grenades Sunday, says they had earlier recovered over five dozens similar grenades, all from banned Harkat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami (Huji) men, in last three years.

Earlier, Rab had the impression that only Huji in the country had excess to smuggling of Arges grenades to use those for their terror activities.

The crime busters have primarily



confirmed that the recently recovered grenades have no links to the militants.

The Rab recovered 10 Arges grenades during a drive in a bordering village of Sherpur Sunday night and arrested three

people including two indigenous youths. Rab sources say the name of the manufacturer was deleted from the grenades but they have been confirmed through

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Chief whip terms it 'political bankruptcy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Coming down heavily on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid yesterday termed the opposition leader's decision not to attend the anti-poverty rally 'political bankruptcy'.

At a hurriedly organised press conference at the Jatiya Sangsad media centre Shahid outright rejected the BNP chairperson's allegation saying that it is an excuse for not attending the rally.

"Her allegations are baseless, cooked-up and fictitious which will create only confusion among people," Abdus Shahid said.

"The opposition chief whip on behalf of her leader

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Khaleda won't join anti-poverty rally

Asks govt to meet 4-point demand to 'create environment for nat'l consensus'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a surprising reversal of a decision, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last evening announced that she will not attend today's anti-poverty rally after all, on the occasion of 'International Day for the Eradication of Poverty'.

On Thursday at a press briefing Speaker of the Parliament Abdul Hamid flanked by the chief whips of the ruling party and the opposition announced that today Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia would address the rally at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital from the same stage, he also anticipated the moment to be an



'unforgettable' one.

Thursday's announcement gave rise to much enthusiasm about the event among observers and the common people of the country, since the moment, if happened, would really be the first of its kind in the careers of both leaders.

At a crowded press briefing at her Gulshan office yesterday after giving a rundown of the government's misdeeds, Khaleda said, "Considering the present circumstances it is not possible for us to attend tomorrow's rally, as we think efforts of unilateral cooperation will be tantamount to supporting crime, anarchy, repression, and violations of human rights."

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Landowners of Chunkutia mouza formed a human chain on Teghuria road at Khejurbagh, Keraniganj yesterday protesting land grabbing and filling by Bashundhara Group.

PHOTO: STAR

Nasaka abducts 7 Bangladeshi fishermen

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Members of Nasaka, the border security force of Myanmar, kidnapped seven Bangladeshi fishermen and took away their boat from the Naf River at Teknaf of Cox's Bazar.

The abducted are Md Alam, 22, and Monir Ahmed, 30, sons of Sona Ali of Pallan Para village, Abdur Razzaq, son of Abdus Hossain, Karim Ullah, 25, son of Abdus Sukkur, Hamid Hossain, 30, son of Abul Bashar, Hafez Ahmed, 40, son of Noor Muhammad, and Nozim Ullah, 22, son of Shamsul Alam of the same village.

Four other fishermen Ismail, 32, Jakaria, 20, Noor Kabir, 25, Kamal, 25, jumped into the river and swam to the shore. Returning home they informed the families and BDR about the abduction.

They said they were fishing within the Bangladesh boundary on Thursday at around

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MYANMAR BORDER Bangladesh makes diplomatic moves to calm tension

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Apart from mobilising reinforcement, Bangladesh is also making diplomatic efforts to calm the tension sparked last week following Myanmar's heavy military build-up in the border areas, said sources.

The foreign ministry has already talked with the Myanmar ambassador in Dhaka while Bangladesh ambassador in Yangon is discussing with the country's government for a peaceful solution of the latest border crisis between the two neighbours, the sources said.

"We want a peaceful solution and discussion is going on in different forums," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star yesterday. He said Bangladesh as before would try to resolve the current problem through discussions.

He said home ministry would call the Myanmar ambassador in Dhaka within a day or two to discuss the border situation.

Sources in the foreign and home ministries said Bangladesh is also negotiating with China, a close friend of Myanmar, to resolve the crisis.

Asked whether Bangladesh is negotiating with China or any other third party to mediate the matter, the home secretary declined to say anything.

Meanwhile, Chief of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Maj Gen Mainul Islam is expected to visit Myanmar soon to talk with the

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Akbar Ali quits RRC

Blames govt for making commission ineffective

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan has resigned for what he claimed non-cooperation of the government in running the commission.

"I tendered resignation letter to the prime minister's principal secretary on Thursday and mentioned there that it would be effective from Sunday," Dr Akbar, also former finance adviser to a

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2 killed in 'shootouts'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two criminals were killed in "shootouts" with law enforcers in the capital and Noakhali early yesterday.

They are Kala Badsha, 45, of Nijhum Dwip in Hatiya upazila, Noakhali, and Jinnah Chowdhury alias Ratul, 30, one of the listed criminals of the capital's Mirpur area.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team cordoned off a place at Dholaikhal around 3:45am where members of a gang gathered. Sensing their presence, the criminals opened fire on the Rab personnel. The members of Rab-10 fired back causing Ratul's death on the spot.

His accomplices, however, managed to flee the scene.

The body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College

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Owners protest 'land grabbing' by Bashundhara

Form human chain at Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around two hundred affected landowners at Chunkutia under south Keraniganj formed a human chain yesterday in protest against alleged land grabbing by Bashundhara Group, one of the country's largest conglomerates.

Bashundhara has been filling earth illegally for the past five months in a bid to take around 500 bighas of arable land and fish breeding centres in Chunkutia and Khejurbagh areas apparently for a housing project, alleged the protesters.

The locals under the banner of Chunkutia Mouja Land Owners' Samiti held a rally at Teghuria Bazar to protest the land grabbing and formed a human chain on the Chunkutia-Khejurbagh road demanding government intervention.

Calling upon Bashundhara Group to stop 'grabbing lands,' President of the Samiti Abdur Razzaq said, "Otherwise we will go for tougher movement from next Friday."

"The government must come forward to save us," said Razzaq.

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Bangladesh leads South Asia in fighting hunger

Ranks 13 among 29 vulnerable nations

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has ranked 13th among 29 vulnerable countries in terms of combating hunger by successfully reducing its rate over the last few years.

Scoring 41 points in the global scorecard on hunger situation, Bangladesh has outpaced its two neighbouring countries—India (22nd) and Nepal (19th).

Marking the World Food Day, ActionAid International yesterday published the scorecards in its UK based research titled 'Who is Really Fighting Hunger.'

"Bangladesh has made a good progress in reducing the number of chronically food inse-

cure citizens—from 40 million to 27 million—over the last decade," said the research report.

It, however, said Bangladesh has the third highest number of hungry people in the world after India and China partly because of its large population.

The report also said that though Bangladesh has improved the status of nutrition of the under-five children in the last two decades, it still has a long way to go to combat malnutrition.

"Providing hot cooked school meals to its 20 million school-going children could potentially make a huge impact in this regard," it said.

It lauded the government for its budgetary allocations for the absolute poor through

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