

## Ulfa chief not held

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northeastern Meghalaya state of the country.

"Rajkhowa and another Ulfa leader Raju Baruah surrendered, and then they were arrested. They are now in Guwahati. A court," Indian Home Secretary Gopal Krishna Pillai told reporters yesterday.

The announcement by Pillai came three days after the Indian media had reported that Rajkhowa had been in the Indian government custody, while an Indian television channel in Guwahati claimed yesterday that Rajkhowa spoke to it denying his arrest or surrender.

The Indian government's announcement also contradicts media reports that he had been arrested in Dhaka on Monday and that the Bangladesh authorities handed him over to India on Wednesday night, following which he was taken to Delhi on Thursday.

Meanwhile, displaying a photograph of Rajkhowa on the screen, another Indian TV channel NDTV aired an audio track yesterday claiming that the voice was of the Ulfa chief, which said he was not arrested and was speaking from a place in Bangladesh from where he had spoken earlier as well. The media speculations have been going on for four days.

In response to a query whether the Bangladesh government will officially respond to the recent related reports, Sahara Khatun yesterday said the media published whatever they thought had happened, and her government has nothing to say about it.

Talking to The Daily Star, Bangladesh Rifles Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam said yesterday that he was not aware of handing over of any Ulfa leader to India by his government.

Asked if he knew whether Rajkhowa had been arrested in his country, the Bangladesh border security force chief said that is the job of the police, he would not know about it.

Asked whether he knew if Rajkhowa had crossed the

border from Bangladesh, he replied, "Nothing of that sort happened at the border."

Pallab Bhattacharya reported from New Delhi that the Indian government yesterday announced that BSF arrested Rajkhowa at Dawki of Meghalaya bordering Sylhet region of Bangladesh after being on the run from law for 17 years.

"They have just come. Everything will take place in due course. Wait for that," said Indian Home Secretary Gopal Krishna Pillai, adding that the Ulfa leaders, who surrendered, will have to face judicial process as several cases are filed against them. He also said talks with them will be held in due course.

53-year-old Rajkhowa, who has been out of India since 1992, faces several cases including on the charge of waging war against the nation, and his arrest would be a major setback to Ulfa which has been fighting for a separate nationhood for more than two decades.

According to Indian reports, Rajkhowa and his deputy commander-in-chief Raju Baruah, along with eight others including their family members, surrendered to the Indian government.

Among those who reportedly surrendered are Rajkhowa's wife Kaveri and two children, Baruah, his wife and one child, the wife of another senior Ulfa leader Sashadhar Choudhury, and their son.

The surrendered Ulfa leaders and their family members were then reportedly brought to Guwahati by a helicopter and were lodged at the 4th Assam Police Battalion headquarters in the city.

According to the Indian government's claim, last week, two other top Ulfa leaders Sashadhar Choudhury and Chitranab Hazarika, who had allegedly been in Dhaka, were arrested by BSF after they had been handed over by the Bangladesh authorities.

Another senior Ulfa leader Anup Chetia has been confined in a Bangladesh jail since his arrest in 1998.

## Youth beaten to death in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A youth was beaten by a band of miscreants to death at Hathazari upazila here early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nejam Uddin, 30, of East Mekhal under the upazila.

Police have arrested five persons from the spot for suspected link with the incident. The arrestees are Md Nurul Amin, Saidul Islam, Suman, Abdur Rahim and Nabi Nur.

Sources said a gang led by Khorshed Mehedy called Nejam out of his relative's house in Mekhal area and took him to nearby Subedar Pukurpur on Thursday around 10:00pm.

They severely beat Nejam leaving him seriously injured.

On information, police reached the spot and rushed Nejam to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his wounds around 3:30am.

SI Tajul Islam of Hathazari Police Station said the incident might have occurred following previous enmity. A case was filed, headed.

## 2010 WC

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Capello had reason to be happy as his men drew the United States, Algeria and Slovenia.

Ironically it was David Beckham, who plays for the Los Angeles Galaxy, who pulled out the ball, which paired up the Americans with England in the World Cup for the first time since 1950 when the United States pulled off a shock 1-0 win.

Host South Africa was given a tough assignment, getting 1998 winners France, Central America powerhouse Mexico and Uruguay.

Group B has Argentina, South Korea, Nigeria and Greece, with Germany, Australia, Ghana and Serbia making up Group D.

The Netherlands have Japan, Cameroon and Denmark in Group E. Italy has New Zealand, Paraguay and Slovakia in Group F while in the final Group H, European champions Spain go up against Honduras, Chile and Switzerland.

The draw, which saw the 32 qualified teams split into eight groups of four for the first round stage of the June 11-July 11 tournament, laid down the battle lines for what will be the first World Cup to be played on African soil.

With the eyes of the footballing world firmly focused on this historic city perched on the southern tip of the continent, it was an evening full of symbolic significance both for Africa and for South Africa, coming as it did just 15 years after the end of the apartheid era.

After a show that featured both traditional and modern African music, the stage was handed over to South African-born Academy Award winning actress Charlize Theron who took on the duties of main presenter to be joined on stage later by other sporting celebrities including Beckham.

First, as pre-arranged, out of the seeded Pot 1 were hosts South Africa who will be playing in just their third World Cup and who, at 86th in the world, are the lowest-ranking team in the competition.

They were followed in turn by heavyweights Argentina, England, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Brazil and Spain.

It was then a question of who would go up against them from the three remaining pots which had been carefully assembled to ensure that teams from the same continent would be kept apart as far as possible.

The four Asian qualifiers, three North and Central American teams and minnows New Zealand, representing Oceania, came out of Pot 2. First out was Mexico putting them into the opening match against South Africa in Johannesburg on June 11.

The five remaining African sides and three remaining South Americans were allocated from out of Pot 3 leaving the remaining eight European teams from the final Pot 4.

The latter contained the two most dangerous floaters in the draw - France and Portugal - and when Portugal were flung in with Brazil the atmosphere turned electric in the main auditorium of the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

## Three women

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spot and another on way to hospital.

Eight of the injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and the rest to Puthia health Complex and other local clinics.

District AL president and former MP Advocate Tajul Islam Mohammad Farook visited the hospital to see the injured and district BNP president and former MP Nadim Mostafa conveyed his sympathy to the bereaved family members.

## BNP Council

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Sources said a few party leaders plan to get a proposal placed by field-level councillors for creating the post of 'co chairperson' or 'senior vice-president' for Tarique in the council. They are confident that the proposal will be accepted unanimously.

Hundreds of BNP leaders, workers and supporters have been gathering at the party's central office in Nayapalton and the chairperson's Gulshan office for the last few days.

Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been holding a series of meetings at her office till midnight to review the progress of the council.

Party's Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain and the conveners are monitoring the activities of sub-committees directly to make the council successful.

Congratulating Khaleda, Delwar said, "She [Khaleda] has created history through her uncompromising leadership to uphold the country's independence and sovereignty."

Leaders and activists of the party and its associated bodies last night congratulated Khaleda at her Gulshan office on her getting re-elected.

Party insiders said eight new leaders might be included in the national standing committee as six posts in it remains vacant while two leaders might lose their posts because of ill health.

Since the number of posts in the central executive commit-

tee will be increased to 351, many former student leaders are trying to persuade the party high command to include them in the committee.

Khaleda Zia, RA Gani, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, M Shamsul Islam and Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubuddin Ahmed are members of the standing committee.

Of them Khandaker Mahbubuddin and Matin might be dropped from the committee while leaders like TH Khan, Nazrul Islam Khan, Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, MK Anwar, Abdullah Al Noman and Mirza Abbas might be made its members.

Party insiders said a post in the standing committee might be kept vacant primarily for Tarique Rahman. If the post of 'co-chairperson' or 'senior vice-president' cannot be created for him, he will be made a standing committee member after his return from abroad.

A number of reformist leaders will be ousted from party committees. However, some reformists like Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman and Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed will continue with their current posts.

Mahbub is a standing committee member while Hafiz is the vice-president of the central executive committee.

## Land commission

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the forest department planted trees in their ancestral land saying those were state-owned properties.

Garos leaders said there are many cases in which land grabbers took their ancestral land or bought it in exchange for a small sum of money, which was no less than cheating, since the Garos did not have documents of land.

"I assure you that we can establish their right to land by settling disputes so that they can live a better life," the food minister said calling for building a society where people of all religions and ethnicity live harmoniously.

"We are human beings and that is our identity. No effort of vested quarters who want to use religion in politics will work," Razzaque said, lauding the Garos' tradition of thanksgiving to the Almighty.

The Garos believe fruits and roots collected from the jungles were their main food thousands of years ago and they did not have seeds to grow any food. One day they prayed to their god for seeds and the next day they found two types of paddy. They preserved them and started cultivating on the hills.

After harvest they did not consume the rice without thanking their god and celebrating the occasion. Wangala gradually became their major annual festival.

Hundred-and-five-year-old Garo leader Janik Nokrek said, "With the decrease in jhum cultivation on the hills and deterioration of the Garos' financial condition, very few Garos can now celebrate the festival."

But they try to keep the tradition alive by having a token celebration, he said. Addressing the Garo people, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said she was very happy to attend the programme and that the government will gradually meet the demands made by the Garos.

Garo leaders demanded increasing indigenous people's quota in universities and assisting them in building two hostels for students of their community in Dhaka.

Garo leaders Albert Mankin, Johnson Mree and Babul Nokrek, Banani Bidyaniketan Headmistress Ummu Kulsam Nargis Begum also spoke.

## 1.42cr farmers

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owner) and amount of land they own.

"We have showed the samples to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who advised us to make it more easily visible and understandable for the farmers," said Matia, who initiated the step a few months ago for the benefit of the farmers.

She said the premier has appreciated the proposal of introducing the agricultural cards.

The minister said both database and the cards are very important to provide the farmers with various incentives and subsidies. "If we don't have it now, there will be always a scope of irregularities and misuse of the government facilities meant for farmers," she said.

She added her ministry has yet to fix the name and size of the cards.

"This is another step that also proves how the present government is serious about the country's farmers and the agricultural sector," comments an official.

According to the plan, the cards will be used to distribute fertilisers, agricultural loans and diesel and other subsidies. In case of a missing card, farmers will get a new card from the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) concerned.

The cards will have a separate section for giving subsidy to farmers. Names of the agricultural inputs and crops and the amount of money a farmer is taking would be put on it with dates.

Terming the move a new one, Matia said the Awami League-led government would do everything to encourage and help the farmers so that all kinds of agricultural production increase to meet the soaring demand.

"We will use the cards whatever we do for our farmers," said Matia, adding, from now on the agricultural loans will be given through only the banks using the cards.

Sources in the agriculture ministry say each card will cost about Tk 3.

## JRC discusses

FROM PAGE 1  
The Daily Star that they complained about not getting sufficient water according to the Ganges water sharing treaty.

In reply, the Indian side said water is being distributed according to the deal. They also claimed that water flow in the river is lesser this year.

On the remaining days of the talks, the two sides will discuss the proposed Teesta water sharing deal, for which Bangladesh already drafted an agreement that its delegation want to hand over to the Indians ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to India, with the hope that the treaty will be signed then, according to Bangladesh government sources.

The matter of dredging the Ichhamoti river and bringing the Feni river under an irrigation project are also expected to come up in the talks, said the Bangladeshi delegate.

Although Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers, so far only the Ganges water sharing treaty has been signed between the two countries.

The meeting is scheduled to continue today.

## US Marines

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Base in Now Zad, Pelletier said. Combat engineers were forcing a corridor through Taliban minefields with armored steamrollers and explosives, Pelletier said.

In all, about 1,000 Marines as well as Afghan troops were taking part in the operation, known as "Cobra's Anger," he said.

There were no reports of casualties.

The operation began three days after Obama announced that he was sending 30,000 reinforcements to Afghanistan to help turn the tide against the Taliban. America's European allies will send an estimated 7,000 more troops to Afghanistan next year "with more to come," Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen announced Friday.

Most of the new troops are expected to be sent to southern Afghanistan, including Helmand, where Taliban influence is strongest.

The new offensive aims to cut off the Taliban communication routes through Helmand and disrupt their supply lines, especially those providing explosives for the numerous lethal roadside bombs that litter the area.

Pelletier said several arms caches and at least 400 pounds of explosive materials had been found so far Friday.

"Right now, the enemy is confused and disorganised," Pelletier said by telephone from Camp Leatherneck, the main Marines base in Helmand. "They're fighting, but not too effectively."

Pelletier said insurgents were caught off guard by the early morning air assault, the first using Ospreys, an aircraft that combines features of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

## DCC starts

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"Drivers could be arrested without warrants in special cases," said DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque talking about traffic rules violation.

The DMP will conduct various awareness-building campaigns till December 7.

## 2 workers

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they succumbed to injuries in the afternoon, hospital sources said.

An unnatural death case was filed in this connection with Panchlaila Police Station.

## Rice export

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The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said the department set a target of cultivating transplanted Aman on 5.4 million hectares of land across the country this season. This year's production target is set at 12 million MT.

As delayed monsoon forced farmers to transplant aman seedlings late aman harvesting is being delayed too, said officials concerned adding that it would take at least two more weeks to get a clear view of whether the aman output would be anywhere near the projected target.

Due to porous Indo-Bangla border, shortfall of grain productions on either side of the border always act as a pull-factor for trans-border rice trading.

Officials in Dhaka said most conservative estimates, so far, showed India would suffer from a 15 million MT of shortfall in rice against its current reserve of eight million MT in the granaries.

India is now looking forward to the prospect of a good wheat yield in winter.

## 40 killed

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Interior Minister Rehman Malik told the private ARY television channel that the men disguised themselves as worshippers before launching their attack.

"There were two suicide bombers and the roof of the mosque collapsed.... They are taking revenge for the Pakistan army's successful operations in Swat and Waziristan regions," Malik said.

Ameer-ud-Din, a retired military captain, told AFP that he was in the mosque when the gunmen struck.

"I saw several people firing Kalashnikov rifles and throwing grenades from the sides of the mosque. I was the first to come out of the mosque and I saw at least ten bodies lying in a pool of blood," he said.

"Then I saw that between five to seven attackers rushed into the side lanes and some of them climbed to the roofs of the buildings."

In the aftermath, security forces set up a perimeter around the site and helicopters circled overhead, while survivors told of their ordeal inside the stricken mosque, an AFP reporter witnessed.

"It was a terrible scene.... They were firing on whoever was there. There were bodies on the road. I was hiding behind the trees nearby," Nasir Ali, the son of an army officer, told the private Dawn television channel.

"After a while I could see three grenades were thrown inside the mosque and I could hear only the shouting of the people. There were also children lying dead.... We were helpless. We could not do anything. It was hopeless."

Pakistan is in the grip of a fierce Islamist insurgency, with more than 2,570 people killed in attacks in the last two-and-a-half years. Taliban fighters frequently target security forces and military installations.

In October, militants stormed the army headquarters in Peshawar.

The event came ahead of the international climate change conference next week in Copenhagen, Denmark, and was intended "to get the world's attention on the impact global warming is having on underdeveloped countries like Nepal," Environment Minister Thakur Sharma said.

Nepal's negotiation team in Copenhagen will push for wealthy countries to commit 1.5 percent of their earnings to help poorer nations protect the environment, he said.

Local residents welcomed their guests with cream-coloured silk scarves used for auspicious occasions.

"The hills and mountains used to be covered with snow even during the summer. But now snow can be seen only on the higher peaks," said Ngyendon, 66, who like many in the region uses only one name.

"We are glad the government is taking initiatives before it is too late. Usually authorities tend to act only after accidents. We are now hopeful that something might be done," said Mingma, a 47-year-old inn keeper at Syangboche.

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## Launch operators

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Quoting sources in the launch owners' association and passengers, our Barisal correspondent reported yesterday that Dhaka-bound MV Suravi-7, Suravi-8, MV Dwipraj, MV Parabat-7, MV Parabat-11, MV Sundarban-7 and Sundarban-8 left Barisal Thursday night with each carrying 3,000 passengers on average while they have capacity of accommodating only 1025 to 1300.

A mobile court formed by local administration led by Ahsan Habib, nezarat deputy collector (NDC), fined Sundarban-7, Suravi-7 and Parabat-11 Tk 5,000 each for carrying passengers beyond their capacity.

A correspondent from Madaripur reports: Several hundred launches and other water transports are plying the Mawa-Kawrakandi route with passengers in much higher numbers than their capacity and the allegation is rife that launch operators are doing this in connivance with a section of officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Sources in BIWTA, however, said as a lot of people after Eid vacation are returning to Dhaka and other places around the capital, the launch operators are taking the advantage of the rush.

A total of 82 launches, more than 300 speedboats and over 50 engine-run trawlers are

plying the route. All of them are carrying excessive passengers. Even, speedboats and trawlers were found plying at night without lights though they are not allowed on the longroute.

"An official of Kawrakandi Port charges Tk 200 illegally from each launch," said a high official of the jetty committee of Kawrakandi. The officials also take money from the launch owners association, he said requesting anonymity.

When asked Kawrakandi Port official Babul Baidya denied such allegation and said there are manpower shortage and the apprehension of locals' attack, which is why they cannot check overloading.

The trawlers should be refrained from plying, he said, adding that he has asked the administration concerned to check overloading but the response is yet to come.

Shibchar Police Station Officer-in-charge Abdul Jalil said police were deployed to check overloading but the fact is that the number of transports is simply inadequate for huge number of passengers.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reports: A huge traffic gridlock was created at the Mawa jetty in Louhajang causing immense sufferings to the passengers returning from their village homes after spending Eid vacation.

## PM returns home

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the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and other senior leaders, diplomats, chiefs of the three

services, and high civil and military officials.

During the CHOGM events, Sheikh Hasina exchanged pleasantries with British Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Australian Prime Minister