

Pakistan-bound ship with military supplies detained in W Bengal

STAR REPORT A Pakistan-bound vessel from Chittagong port with heavy military supplies, including explosives, was detained by West Bengal police at Diamond Harbour in the Indian state yesterday. Police, Coast Guard and navy were cordoning off the ship, searching it and verifying documents, reports our New Delhi correspondent Pallab Bhattacharya. Men aboard the ship were being interrogated. "Five tonnes of explosives, a huge quantity of arms and ammunition were found after police detained the vessel," said Director General of WB Police Bhupinder Singh said in Kolkata. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) however said it was a consignment of army supplies used by UN mission and being taken to Karachi for unloading. CPA Chairman RU Ahmed told The Daily Star that some equipment used by UN mission were unloaded at the port on June 15 under supervision. Asked which types of equipment, he simply said some vehicles and some other goods stuffed in containers. He said the equipment used by UN mission are usually carried in and out through this way. Pallab Bhattacharya quoted Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) S Karpurakayastha as saying the arms and ammunition were seized from two large containers aboard the ship registered in Liberia.

Char dwellers hardly get healthcare

MAHBUBA ZANNAT WITH NITYANANDA HALDER, back from Shibchar

Sixty-year-old Mansur Fakir got extremely surprised when he was asked whether any health worker comes to his village at Fazlul Sarkar Kandi in Shibchar, Madaripur, to provide health service. "What is health worker?" asked the elderly man who has never seen any health worker coming to his village where he has been living for 12 years. He even could not remember when he last visited a doctor. "They find it easier to suffer rather than going to the upazila health complex, as boat is the only mode of transport available for the people of this village. During eight months of a year when water level in the river remains low,

people have to wade through muddy water miles after miles to get a boat," said Bazlur Rahman Sarker, chairman of Char Janajat union. Even deaths of mothers during childbirth have become commonplace in the area due to absence of healthcare facilities, he said, adding that the impoverished people in the country's char lands are the most deprived in terms of healthcare, as the health and family planning programme is almost absent here. The family planning workers who are supposed to provide primary healthcare services, medication, counselling and contraceptives free of cost at the doorsteps of the people seldom visit these remote areas by crossing the river. There are only seven work-

ers in five Union Health and Family Welfare Centres responsible for providing healthcare services to around one lakh people living in the char lands at Faridpur and Madaripur. Only four community clinics have been established for the people of six unions recently, but they are yet to function properly. The health and family planning officials also admitted that the people living in Char Nasirpur, Diara Narikelbaria, Bandarkhola, Char Janajat, Kathalbari and Matbarer Char are almost deprived of healthcare. "To receive treatment, they have to cross the river by boat which takes hours to go to the upazila health complex," said Abu Bakar Mollah, civil surgeon of Madaripur district. Moreover, the health service delivery system at the health complex is very poor as there are only six doctors against 21 posts. The X-ray machine has been lying damaged since 2006. A survey conducted by Unnayan Shamunnay in association with the Concern Worldwide in 2008 revealed that more than 50 lakh people in Bangladesh live in char lands and over 77 percent of the char dwellers are extremely poor. It also revealed that 15 percent of diseases in chars are not treated. The reason behind it is poverty in more than 38 percent of cases. More than one fifth of diseases cannot be treated due to either unavailability of treatment facilities or unaffordable facilities. The survey conducted in 1,489 households of 14 island char communities found that most pregnant mothers in char do not receive any antenatal care and about 97 percent of deliveries take place at homes. Almost 37 percent of children under 5 years suffer from acute respiratory infection and 20 percent of them remain untreated, it added. "As per the constitution, the government is bound to provide health service to the people whether they live in char or other remote areas. If the existing infrastructure is not enough to reach out to those people, the government should think of alternative ways," said former president of Bangladesh Medical Association and President of Health Rights Movement Prof Rashid E Mahub. "If doctors and health workers don't want to go to remote areas, the government should hold health camps there frequently," he added.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offers sunajata after inaugurating the Sultana Kamal Bridge over the river Shitalakhya at Demra in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

SON MURDERED Mother not helping cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ayesha Humayra, mother of six-year-old Samiul Azim who was found dead in a sack left in Adabar on Thursday, is giving confusing information in remand interrogation. She was arrested Thursday night as one of the prime accused after KR Azam, the boy's father, had filed a murder case with Adabar Police Station. Investigation officer (IO) Kazi Shahana Haque said she gave wrong cellphone numbers and address of other prime accused Shamsuzzaman Arif. Based on her information, Humayra was taken to different areas of the city to catch Arif but on reaching there, she said that Arif never lived there, said the IO. According to him Humayra does not want Arif to get arrested. She told the interrogators that over the last three years Arif used about eight to 10 SIM cards to contact her. She, however, suspects Arif as the killer of her son. Samiul's uncle Sadrul Amin Habib said Azam and Humayra, daughter of doctor Sabbir of Kalabagan, got married seven years ago without her parents' consent. Therefore, Azam did not share any conflicts between them with her family. Habib said Humayra's family came to know about her extramarital affair with Arif and that the affair cost Samiul's life after the body had been found. Several teams of police are trying to arrest Arif, his wife Shathi and some others.

DU exams postponed

DU CORRESPONDENT

All examinations of Dhaka University (DU) under course system scheduled to be held today have been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances, said Controller of Examination Bahalul Haque Chowdhury. Fresh dates of the postponed examinations will be announced soon. Several officials, however, said the examinations have been postponed due to the dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the main opposition BNP across the country today.

Police harass BNP leaders to foil today's hartal

Alleges Khasru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong City BNP President Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday alleged that police are arresting and harassing their leaders and activists in the port city to foil today's strike. Over 100 people, including 50 leaders and activists, were arrested in false cases in last 48 hours, Khasru alleged at a press conference at his Mehediabagh residence in the afternoon. He warned that his party would resist any attempt of the government to ply vehicles forcefully with the help of police and ruling party cadres in Chittagong during the hartal hours. He said police raided the houses of around 100 BNP leaders and activists, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jubo Dal, including Jubo Dal city unit President Abul Hashem Bakkar. The arrested leaders and activists include Pahartali thana unit BNP Joint Secretary Jashim Uddin Zia, Halishahar unit BNP leader Mohammad Harun, Shaheed Lane unit Jubo Dal leaders Jahangir, Shahjahan, Momin, Ripon and Kamal, Andarkilla ward JCD leaders Jashim Uddin Sagar and Faruq, said a press release. Khasru said they were arrested implicating them in false cases filed in connection with rampaging vehicles in front of the makeshift control room of Election Commission at MA Aziz Stadium on June 17 night. BNP city unit General Secretary Shahadat Hossain, former whip Syed Wahidul Alam, Dastagir Chowdhury, female ward councillor Monwara Begum were present at the press conference.

INT'L DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE OBSERVED 'Launch social movement against drug abuse'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation observed the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking yesterday as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of a society free of drug abuse. The theme of this year's anti-drug day was 'Youth and Health' and the slogan was 'Think Health Not Drugs.' In a message on the occasion, President Zillur Rahman said many youths have derailed due to drug abuse. It also hinders peace in families and leads to the rise in criminal activities. He urged all to come forward to stop drug abuse. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in another message, termed drug abuse and trafficking a multidimensional problem. She said that the government is determined to resolve this problem.

She also said that to implement 'Vision 2021' and build a digital Bangladesh, a confident, healthy and strong youth force is a must. So, the youths must be protected from drug abuse. Hasina also called on the people to come forward to launch a social movement against drug abuse. On the occasion, the Department of Narcotics Control has drawn up weeklong programmes, including discussion, seminar and human chain at district and upazila levels. It also organised a detoxification camp and a leaflet and poster distribution programme. An art and essay writing competition was also held. To mark the day, Agami Prokashani launched a book titled 'Drug Addiction and AIDS: Problems and Remedies' by Prof Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury at a publication ceremony at Birdem Hospital auditorium.

100 children awarded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 100 children were awarded at a prize giving ceremony of painting competition titled 'Mercantile Bank Baishakh-e-Chhahi Aka, Jyasthe Pradarshani' at the Teachers-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University yesterday, says a press release. Patua Qamrul Hasan Art School organised the event. Prof Emeritus Dr Anisuzzaman was the chief guest with Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui in the chair. Prof Samarjeet Roy Chowdhury, acting secretary of Housing and Public Works Dr Khandker Shawk Hossain and former secretary Moslehuddin were present as the special guests on the occasion. Greenfield School and College, Scholastica and Rajuk Uttara Model School and College were honoured for outstanding contribution to the field of Fine Arts education. Arya Priithu Pramanik of Greenfield School and College became the champion and received prize bond of Tk 20,000, champion golden trophy, a digital cheque and a certificate. Anika Islam Prima of Scholastica became the first runner-up and got prize bond of Tk 5,000, runner-up golden trophy, a digital cheque and a certificate. Eight became second runner-up and received prize bond of Tk 2,000, a golden trophy, a digital cheque and a certificate each. Ninety others received a golden trophy and a certificate each. A total of 4,352 children participated in the competition from across the country.

Strengthen Info Commission for enforcement of RTI law

JS body suggests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday suggested that the Information Commission should be strengthened further to ensure proper enforcement of the Right to Information (RTI) law. The commission still remains in its preliminary stage with severe shortage of manpower, the parliamentary standing committee on information ministry observed at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the city. The meeting was informed that only 12 people are now working in the Information Commission against the approved 66 posts. "The RTI law can be a strong tool to fight

corruption and crimes. Therefore, the law should be enforced properly through strengthening the Information Commission," Obaidul Quader, chief of the parliamentary body, told reporters after the meeting. Emphasising the need to raise public awareness, Quader, also the ruling AL lawmaker, said a campaign should be launched to make the people aware of the law. At the meeting, the committee also recommended including an article on the right to information in the textbook, he said. The committee also asked the ministry to appoint manpower to the vacant posts of the Information Commission.

Call to start trial of war criminals without delay

DU CORRESPONDENT

Various socio-cultural organisations observed the 16th death anniversary of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam yesterday with a call to start the trial of war criminals immediately. Jahanara Imam, who became the symbol of mother of martyrs (Shaheed Janani), initiated a movement for the trial of war criminals through forming Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee in 1992. She passed away due to cancer two years later. To mark her death anniversary, the Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam Memorial Museum arranged a power-point presentation on her life and works at the museum in the city. To pay tribute to Jahanara Imam, visitors through the museum where books written by Jahanara Imam and her memorabilia, photos of family members and memorabilia of her son Shafi Imam Rumi, who was martyred during the liberation war, are being displayed. Shariful Islam, a master's student of Dhaka University, who came to visit the museum yesterday, said the new generation should know about the contribution of Jahanara Imam and her family members to the war of liberation in 1971. He also said the government should hold the trial of war criminals immediately as Jahanara Imam had carried out a massive campaign for the trial. Susmita Shikdar, curator of the museum, said Saif Imam, the youngest son of Jahanara Imam, established the museum in 2007. It remains open from 10:00am to 5:00pm on Saturdays. Young boys and girls who visit the museum are very interested to know about Jahanara Imam and her martyred son, she said. The museum officials placed wreaths at the graveyard of Jahanara at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard in the morning. Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee and Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal also placed wreaths. Placing wreaths at her grave, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote held a commemorative meeting where the speakers demanded immediate start of the trial of war criminals to fulfil the dream of Jahanara Imam. Besides, Dhaka City Tanti League, Bangabandhu Nagorik Sanghati Parishad, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Parishad, Prajonnno '71 and Jatiya Hindu Parishad also observed the day.

POLICE RECRUITMENT Rules were followed during BNP govt

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All recruitments in the police force during the previous BNP-Jamaat alliance government were made on the basis of rules and regulations, Home Minister Sahara Khatun told parliament yesterday. The home minister made the claim in written answers while replying to lawmakers' queries. But her claim contradicted the present government's allegations that the recruitment process is tainted by nepotism, irregularities and corruption. Even the present government cancelled a number of recruitments on charges of irregularities. Sahara said a total of 32,499 constables, 1,475 sub-inspectors and 268 sergeants were appointed during the previous BNP-led alliance government from 2001 to 2006. About secret killings and kidnappings, the home minister said law enforcement agencies are doing their best to stop such practice. She also said measures were taken to amend the policy for issuance of arms licence.

Sitakunda AL leader shot dead

UNB, Chittagong

A local leader of ruling Awami League (AL) was shot dead by a gang of miscreants at Sitakunda upazila headquarters last night. The victim was identified as Nurul Alam, 43, vice president of pourashava unit AL. Sitakunda Upazila Chairman Abdullah Al Baker Bhuiyan told UNB that some miscreants, who were in a procession of BNP brought out in support of Sunday's hartal, chased Nurul at about 9:00pm. Later, they fired two shots - one in his chest and another in leg near the pourashava Bhaban, leaving him dead on the spot.

Review amendments to ACC Act: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday strongly demanded that the government review the proposed amendments to the Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2004. If such amendments are brought to the Act, they will create obstacles to effectively combating corruption and establishing good governance in the country, TIB members said at their annual meeting in the city. The members urged the government to take effective steps to contain corruption at all levels of society, especially in the education and health sectors, in line with the election pledges of the ruling party. They also stressed the need to eliminate political interference in recruitment, promotion and transfer in these two sectors. They also demanded investigation into the allegations of political interference in appointment of doctors and in the preparation of the list of Monthly Payment Order (MPO). The TIB members thanked the government for enacting the Right to Information (RTI) law, reconstructing the National Human Rights Commission and for taking a firm line in implementing the detailed area plan (DAP) for Dhaka city. Presided over by TIB member Dr Nuruddin, the meeting was also attended by TIB Trustee Board Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid and Prof Muzaffer Ahmad. TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekaruzzaman moderated the meeting.

Shraddha

METRO DESK

Shraddha (funeral rites) of Manish Kumar Ghosh, senior executive vice-president of Prime Bank Limited, will be held at Probhu Jagatbondhu Mohaprokash Moth, 42/2 Tahapola Road, in the city at 1:30pm today, says a press release. He passed away due to a massive heart attack during his morning walk on June 15. He left behind his parents, wife, a daughter, a son and host of relatives to mourn his death.



Sajib elected Rotaract representative

METRO DESK

Ilmul Haque Sajib has been elected the Bangladesh Rotaract representative of the Rotary International 3280 for the year 2010-11, says a press release. He will officially take over the responsibilities on July 1. Sajib is working as an engineer in one of the leading telecom companies. He was the past president of Rotaract Club of Notre Dame College.

WEATHER TODAY Thundershowers likely UNB, Dhaka

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.