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People's Right to Know

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Assange arrested in UK

WikiLeaks founder refused bail, may have to fight extradition battle; US terms the arrest good news, but the website 'won't change operation'



PHOTO: REUTER

AFP, AP, London

WikiLeaks chief Julian Assange was arrested in London yesterday after surrendering to a Swedish arrest warrant, the latest blow to an organisation that faces legal, financial and technological challenges after releasing hundreds of secret US diplomatic cables.

Assange, 39, was detained after attending a London police station by appointment at 0930 GMT. Later he was remanded in custody until December 14 by a London court after he said he would fight extradition to Sweden where he faces rape allegations.

Appearing before a judge at Westminster Magistrates Court following his arrest, Assange was refused bail despite an offer by personalities including film director Ken Loach and socialite Jemima Khan to put up bail for him.

"Officers from the Metropolitan Police Service's Extradition Unit have this morning [yesterday] arrested Julian Assange on behalf of the Swedish authorities on suspicion of rape," the statement said.

"He is accused by the Swedish authorities of one count of unlawful coercion, two counts of sexual molestation and one count of rape, all alleged to have been committed in August 2010."

Assange denies the allegations, which his British attorney Mark Stephens says stem from a "dispute over consensual but unprotected sex." Assange and Stephens have suggested that the prosecution is being manipulated for political reasons.

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates, who was visiting Afghanistan yesterday, said when told about the arrest that it "sounds like good news."

The net has tightened around the Australian former computer hacker since his whistleblower website began releasing thousands of secret US diplomatic cables last week, infuriating Washington and other countries.

Since beginning to release the cables, WikiLeaks has seen its bank accounts cancelled, its web sites attacked and the US government launch a criminal investigation, saying the group has jeopardised national security and diplomatic efforts around the world.

It has also seen supporters come to its aid by setting up over 500 mirror sites around the world.

In a statement on Twitter, WikiLeaks said: "Today's actions against our editorin-chief Julian Assange won't affect our operations: we will release more cables tonight as normal."

A spokesman for the whistleblower website called Assange's arrest an attack on media freedom and said it won't prevent the organisation from releasing more secret documents.

"This will not change our operation," said Kristinn Hrafnsson told The Associated Press.

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Families live on nerves

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fear of the possible worst is eating up Shaila Farid, wife of Farid Ahmed, captain of hijacked ship MV Jahan Moni.

Unconditional belief in prayers and fasting is the only . thing keeping her alive. Shiala has been fasting almost: unceasingly since she heard about the hijack by the Somali pirates in the Arabian Sea.

The family got to know about the hijack only Monday morning through newspapers. The government has not : nautical miles an hour.

yet contacted the family. When The Daily Star visited Shaila and Farid's house in Mohammadpur yesterday, their daughter Faria politely : said, "Mother is not in a position to talk you now."

PROF YUNUS

Manmohan

said nothing

The Indian high commission

in Dhaka yesterday said

Indian Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh had not

made any comments about

Prof Muhammad Yunus or

In a statement on a local

news report involving

Manmohan and Yunus, the

high commission's spokes-

person said, "The reports that

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan

Singh criticised Nobel laure-

ate Prof Muhammad Yunus

are false and erroneous. No

such comments have been

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Grameen Bank of late.

States Indian HC

on media report

STAR REPORT

HIJACKED BANGLADESHI SHIP

Contact not made yet

STAR REPORT

· The government has no update on the hijacked Bangladeshi ship MV Jahan Moni except for its location. Officials could not make any contact with the crew members or the pirates till yester-

"We do not have any update on them," said Commodore Bazlur Rahman, the director general of shipping directorate, when asked. The operating company of the ship, Brave

Royal Ship Management is spotting the vessel via satellite. Last time the ship was tracked at 850 nautical miles off Somali coast.

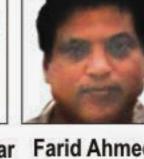
Brave Royal General Manager Meherul Karim said the ship was heading west at 10.8

He said they were repeatedly trying to contact the crew aboard over satellite phones.

The phones rang but nobody responded. Brave Royal Technical Manager Rahmat Ullah said they had sought help from Indian Coast Guard, Mumbai Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Dubai based UK MTO SEE PAGE 15 COL 4 · and Singapore based International Maritime







Matiul Mawla Rukhsana Gulzar (Wife of Matiul) (Captain) (Chief Engr)

Bureau immediately after the Sunday's pirate

Indian coast guard had assured them of sending gunboat but later stepped back fearing any assault on the hostages since any armed intervention could trigger bloodshed, he said.

Meherul said they have nothing to do but wait until the ship reaches any shore or the

pirates contact them. The foreign ministry sources said the government was keeping touch with different organisations, including those from India, Dubai, Singapore and in Somalia, who work on preventing sea crimes.

The government had contacted Somalia, **SEE PAGE 15 COL 6**

Edn not served rightly by state

PM tells JS discussion on national policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday the state did not perform properly its constitutional duties to ensure free and compulsory education for the people.

Participating in the discussion on the national education policy 2010 in parliament, the premier read out the constitutional provision on free and compulsory education, and made the comment.

Article 17 of the constitution says, "The state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law; relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens

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Stalker's acid threat ruins her **HSC** exams

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

A college girl in Dinajpur could not sit for her HSC test examination yesterday, as a stalker threatened to throw acid on her face on way to the college.

She is a candidate of the upcoming HSC examinations from Pachbari Degree College.

Ujjal Chandra Sarker, 22, son of Gokul Chandra Sarker of Umarpoil village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila, has long been stalking the girl, her family members told The Daily Star requesting not to disclose her name for social reasons.

When she was going to the

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CHEMICAL WORRY

Fire in Old Dhaka again

2 badly burnt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In yet another chemical fire in Old Dhaka, two youths were badly burned yesterday while refilling cigarette lighters at a building storing liquid petroleum gas and lighter refill canisters on Nazimuddin Road.

The injured--Mohammad Sujan Ali, 30, an occupant of the four-storey building, and his relative Ripon, 28--were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where they are undergoing treatment at the burn unit.

Sujan and Ripon had burns over 42 and 28 percent of their bodies, hospital sources said.

Sujan told The Daily Star that it was around noon and they

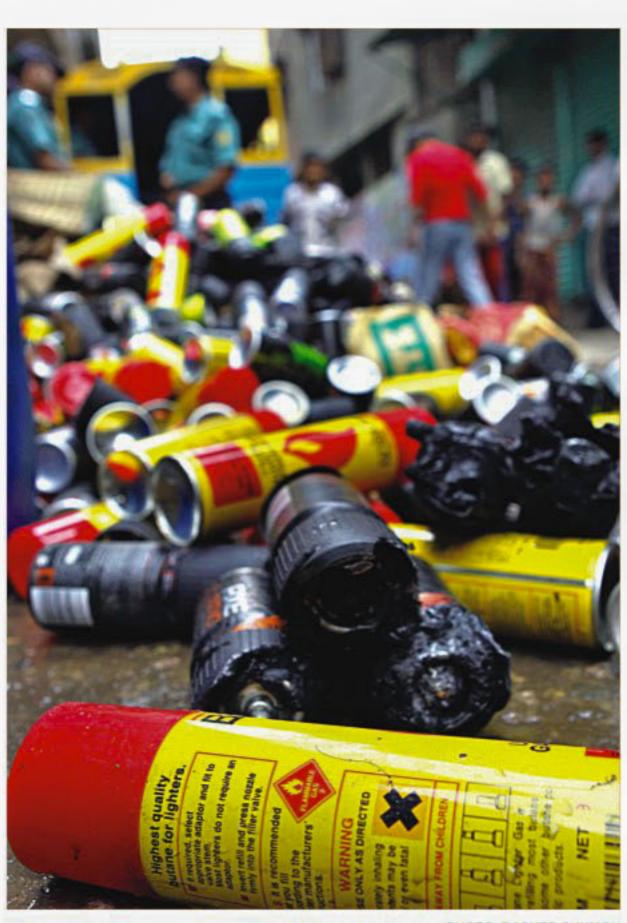
were refilling lighters. As one of them lit a cigarette, a huge ball of fire engulfed the room. Locals doused the flames before they could spread to other

Police said the two used to refill butane lighters on the

ground floor and sell those at Chawkbazar. They would do the refilling with the doors locked, as they did not want the neighbours to know what they were doing.

Earlier on October 6, at least 10 workers were burnt to death at a chemical factory in the capital's Dakkhin (South) Jatrabari. Four others, including three women, were severely injured.

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Police gather lighter refill canisters from a Nazimuddin Road house yesterday. Two youths were badly burned in a chemical blast while refilling cigarette lighters at the house.

Mega projects in huge mess

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most projects the Awami League government has taken up to improve the traffic situation in Dhaka failed to meet deadlines due to lack of coordination between different ministries and agencies.

Although construction of the Jatrabari-Gulistan and cantonment flyovers has begun recently, the projects of the elevated expressway, metro rail, a few underpasses and overpasses are

facing delays.

Against this backdrop, an interministry meeting was held at the communications ministry yesterday where a committee was formed to coordinate quick implementation of the projects.

A Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) official will lead the committee, which will also have representatives from the communications, public works and planning ministries, Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Dhaka City

Corporation (DCC) and the army. Construction of first metro rail from

Uttara Third Phase to Sayedabad, chalked out in the Strategic Transport Plan (STP), is still in the primary stage and the government requires at least a year to complete all the procedures.

In the first phase of the construction, the metro rail will be built between Pallabi and Hotel Sonargaon intersection between 2013 and 2015.

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