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AFGHANISTAN

Taliban attack parliament

Six gunmen killed in two hours' fight

REUTERS, Kabul

A Taliban suicide bomber and six gunmen attacked the Afghan parliament yesterday as lawmakers met to consider a new defence minister, and another district in the volatile north fell to the militants as they intensified a summer offensive.

The brazen assault on the symbolic centre of power, along with territorial gains elsewhere, highlight how NATO-trained Afghan security forces are struggling to cope with worsening militant violence.

Fighting has spiralled since the departure of most foreign forces from Afghanistan at the end of last year. The insurgents are pushing to take territory more than 13 years after U.S.-led military intervention toppled them from power.

Monday's attack began as lawmakers met with the new acting defence minister, Masoom Stanikzai. He is the third candidate so far for the key security post, and his appointment must be confirmed by parliament.

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Smoke and flame rise from burning vehicles at the site of an attack in front of the Afghan Parliament building in Kabul. Taliban militants attacked the Afghan parliament yesterday with gunfire and explosions rocking the building. Inset, lawmakers run for cover inside parliament.

PHOTO: AFP/BBK

Oil cleanup efforts on

Spillage spreads, seen in Halda river too

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, Ctg

Three days into the oil spill from sunken train wagons in a Boalkhali canal, the local authorities yesterday put an oil-boom in the water body to collect oil slick.

The oil-boom (floating barrier) was being handled manually due to heavy currents in the canal, locals said.

Meanwhile, the oil slick has spread about five to six kilometres inside the Halda river, about 10-km upstream from the accident spot.

A furnace oil-carrying train derailed and three of its wagons plunged into the canal on Friday.

Staff of Chittagong Port Authority

(CPA) put the barrier in place after hours of hectic pursuit.

During low tides, the height of the barrier was being maintained with rope swings tied to a bridge in the military pole area.

Captain Nazmul Alam, chief conservator of CPA, said a floating barrier is used in water bodies where the flow is low.

"As the canal has a high flow of water, our men are maintaining its height manually and trying to stop oil from spreading," he added.

Four vessels equipped with oil extraction equipments explored the Karnaphuli in last two days, but didn't find any oil slick, said Nazmul.

Fisherman Mansur, who depends on the Halda for his livelihood, yesterday said he found oil layers on river-side plants.

"Locals noticed a layer of oil in the Halda at Modunaghat area, some six km off the Karnaphuli, and informed me," said Manzoorul Kibria, associate professor of zoology at Chittagong University.

The Halda is a major breeding ground for sweet water carps in the country, he said, adding that the oil slick might damage its biodiversity and cause irreparable damage to various fish species.

Visiting the military pole area yesterday afternoon, this correspondent

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An oil-boom, used for containing oil spill, hangs from a bridge in Shakpura area of Chittagong. The barrier was placed two feet above the water level two days after three oil wagons of a train fell into a canal at Khatibchar. The oil-boom was installed to prevent oil from flowing into the Karnaphuli river, but it was of no use as oil had already spread to the river.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Fakhrul not freed yet

Govt appeals against HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is unlikely to get released from jail soon as the government yesterday moved against his bails.

The Supreme Court fixed June 25 for hearing the government petitions against the High Court orders of bail to the

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ARSON ATTACK ON BUS

Arrest warrant for Rafiqul, 32 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants against 33 leaders and activists of BNP, including Rafiqul Islam Mia, in a case filed for a bomb attack on a bus in the city's Mirpur area on January 25.

The attack, carried out during the BNP-led 20-party alliance's nonstop blockade and hartal, had left 10 people, including three policemen, injured.

Judge Kamrul Hossain Mollah of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka issued the arrest warrants after accepting the charges against 36

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Robber killed in 'gunfight' with police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An alleged robber was killed during a gunfight with police in Magura Sadar Upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Alfu Biswas, 37, son of Lokman Biswas of Paka village under Sadar Upazila in Magura district.

He was a top leader of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and head of a robbery gang, police said.

The victim's family however said that though once a PBCP activist, Alfu had been leading a normal life for some time now and was picked up from his house on Sunday afternoon by some men in plain-clothes.

"We came to know this morning that my brother was killed during a gunfight with police," the victim's brother Majba Uddin said yesterday.

Sudarshan Kumar Roy, assistant superintendent of Magura Circle Police said on receiving information that a gang of robbers was preparing for a robbery on the Magura-Jhenidah highway at Rautara area, a joint team of district DB and Sadar Thana police conducted a drive around

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SEHRI, IFTAR TIMINGS			
Ramadan	June	Sehri	Iftar
5	23		6-53
6	24	3-39	6-53
7	25	3-39	6-53

PRAYER TIMING			
JUNE 23			
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN	3-39	12-45	5-00 6-52 8-17
JAMAAT	3-49	1-15	5-15 6-62 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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POLLUTED AIR IN SANTIAGO

Chile suspends heavy industry

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Chilean government has suspended much heavy industry and taken cars off the road in the country's capital to curb an environmental emergency in there.

Air pollution in Santiago has got so bad that the country's Environment Ministry has had to issue an environmental state of emergency warning.

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Indigenous boy killed in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

An indigenous boy was killed and five others injured in a clash over a land dispute at Akbarpur village of Potnitala upazila in Naogaon yesterday.

The boy was identified as, Mithu Oraon, 12, son of Sonu Orao of Akbarpur village under Potnitala upazila in Naogaon.

Police said the clash was a result of a dispute between one Abdul Matin and some indigenous families over a khas land at Akbarpur village.

Abdul Matin and his men went to the khas land - a pond over one acre - at Akbarpur at around 9:00 am. Armed with sharp weapons, bamboo sticks and a gun to force grab the land, they attacked the people of indigenous community who opposed it. Abdul Matin opened fire from his licensed gun, leaving Mithu Oraon dead on the spot.

At least five others were also injured.

On receiving information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also recovered the body and sent it to Naogaon Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

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