



Two factions of Chatra League engage in a fierce clash yesterday under the cloud of teargas fired by the police. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: STAR

Man held 'with 19kg gunpowder'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chaitanayabganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a man with 19kg of gunpowder in Sadar upazila of Chaitanayabganj.

The arrested is Mohammad Mithun, 25.

Following a tip-off, a Rab team from Chaitanayabganj camp went to Sundarpur village around 8:30pm and arrested Mithun with the gunpowder, said ASP Enamul Karim of Chaitanayabganj Rab camp.

Unesco decisions

FROM PAGE 1
Unesco actually asked for all large-scale construction to be stopped until a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) was done.

Immediately after the discussions regarding the Sundarbans had ended in Poland, the foreign ministry issued a press release on July 6 claiming that the Unesco changed its stance on the Rampal plant.

Some top ruling party leaders claimed that the Unesco had 'approved' the Rampal power plant.

Returning from Krakow, Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the prime minister and who led the Bangladeshi delegation to the session, in a press conference on July 9 said there was no bar on building the Rampal plant.

The government would continue building the Rampal power plant and alongside do a Strategic Environment Assessment on the country's Southwest as per the condition of Unesco, he said.

But a number of environmentalists told The Daily Star that the WHC only extended the time for submitting a progress report on the state of the conservation of the Sundarbans by 10 months.

In the fourth point of the draft, the Unesco committee welcomed the government for agreeing to Unesco's condition for doing the SEA.

The committee requested the government "to ensure that any large-scale industrial and/or infrastructure developments will not be allowed to proceed before the SEA has been completed", they said.

It has also asked for the dredging to be stopped until an Environment Impact Assessment was done.

In point-10 of the draft, the committee expressed concerns about monitoring missions, the likely impact of the Rampal plant on air and water quality, increased flooding and dredging, and removal of freshwater.

It requested Bangladesh to ensure impacts were comprehensively assessed as part of the SEA, and adequate technological measures were put in place to mitigate those impacts in order to avoid damage to the world heritage site.

Before the discussions in Poland, the Unesco has requested the government to submit by February 2018 a progress report on what it has done to protect the Sundarbans and was also considering whether to put the Sundarbans on the List of World Heritage in Danger through the 42nd session of the committee in 2018.

But now the government would have to submit the progress report of the SEA by December 2018 for review in the 43rd session of committee in 2019.

Their sufferings

FROM PAGE 1

this cow. She is like a member of my family and more importantly, an earning member," he added.

With the floodwater entering on Saturday, his house is now under waist-deep water, as the Jamuna swelled up rapidly. "My family is suffering a lot in the flood. If the water keeps on rising, I have to bring them here on the embankment," he said.

"We are passing days in misery, either half-fed or under-fed. We cannot move to higher grounds in fear of losing our valuable and belongings," Rikta said.

Elsewhere, the condition of Morium Begum looked better.

With her husband Asgar Ali and eight other family members, the 56-year-old woman of Rahadaha area on Kamalapur union in the same upazila took shelter at the flood control embankment for the last one week after her house was flooded.

"A few days ago, she received 20 kg rice and some dry food once from the authorities. Her husband incurred a huge loss as their crops were damaged in the flood," he said.

"We don't know how my family would run when the water recedes from the area," he said.

Some people said they sold their domestic animal due to lack of accommodation. Parting was better than causing more suffering.

"I sold 10 hens and a goat at a low cost as the water submerged my house. There is no scope here to save them," said Somar Ali.

Flood-hit people of Gumergarh village are passing days amid hardships as almost all the houses have been flooded in the last four days. Apart from living on the embankment, many took shelter at the madrasa playground.

"The madrasa playground is crammed with the affected people. It's like we're living in a slum," said Abdul Mannan.

Many people send their family members to their relative's house outside.

The Jamuna river has swelled 67 cm above the danger level since yesterday, said Fazul Haque, sub divisional engineer of Sirajganj Water Development Board.

With the onrush of water from upstream, Jamuna has surged. But the floodwater entered into the low lying areas outside the flood protection embankment, Fazul said.

The poet-writer was found in a Dhakshin bazaar in his room in Neapara around 11:30pm the same day, around 18 hours after what he says was his abduction.

He gave a judicial statement the next day saying some unknown people forced him into a microbus and blindfolded him minutes after he came out of his Adabor house to buy medicines.

But a former colleague of Farhad in a judicial statement on Monday said he called her five to six times and she also called him two to three times on the day of the incident.

When she asked the writer if he was abducted, he said he was alright, the woman said in her statement.

Meanwhile, several ICTC footage, said to be taken from New Market area in Khulna city, show Farhad walking alone with a white shoulder bag and a bandana on his head.

The footage, said to be of 4:41pm, 5:17pm, 6:23pm and 6:44pm, were circled by the police. It is not clear in the footage whether he was being abducted.

The footage has caused confusions since Farhad's wife Farida Akter told reporters an hour before his loss that "her husband had called her around 7:30pm and asked her to manage ransom money asked by his abductors."

Farides, Farhad told police that the abductors gave him a ticket of the bus before releasing him around 7:30pm in Khulna.

Contradicting this claim, Nazmus Sadat Shadi, manager of the bus company in Khulna, said Farhad bought the ticket himself under the name of Gafur around 4:00pm.

Farhad, 37-year-old mother of two,

remains inundated.

Relief was yet to arrive and her husband was trying to earn money by transporting people in his small boat.

Her children - all students of a govern-

ment primary school -- stayed at house amid miserable conditions. With water on the ground, they raised their bed by placing bricks underneath.

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Whose

FROM PAGE 5

was still senseless. Yesterday, they had tried to shift her to ICU for better observation, but failed as there was no seat vacant.

Someone tried to kill her by strangling during the process, the brain did not receive enough oxygen, leading to this senseless state, said Asgar.

As there is no acquaintance around, the hospital authorities are trying to provide the girl with better care on humanitarian grounds, he said.

On the other hand, till yesterday, police could not ascertain her identity.

Imamul Haq, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohammadpur Police Station, said they had succeeded in collecting her fingerprint yesterday.

Now they will match the girl's fingerprint with those stored in the database of National ID to confirm her identity, he said, adding that they had tried to collect her fingerprint on Tuesday but failed.

Earlier on Tuesday, Azizul Haque, sub-inspector (SI) of the police station, said they took photograph of the girl and sent it to different police stations.

On Saturday evening, the authorities of Tazil hotel heard a groaning sound from inside a room and informed Mohammadpur police. On Sunday morning, a team of police led by SI Azizul Haque and his wife went to the room and saw marks in the face and around the neck, and took her to nearby Shahed Subhrawardi Medical College Hospital.

As her condition remained unchanged, she was shifted to DMCH Sunday early hours.

Quoting the hotel authorities, OC Jamaluddin said a youth - enlisted as Ashraf - along with his girl had checked in the hotel on Saturday morning, identifying themselves as husband and wife.

Police authorities could only say that the youth had left the hotel on that evening. Jamal said, adding that it might be a murder attempt.

They also reinstated 13 wide-ranging demands they had earlier submitted to Qatar, the world's biggest producer of liquefied natural gas, as a condition for removing sanctions but later said were void.

The demands include curbing Qatar's relations with Iran, closing the Al Jazeera TV channel, shutting a Turkish military base in Qatar and halting the construction of designated "territories" on its territory.

Speaking to reporters in Bratislava, UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdulla bin Zayed Al-Nahayan said Tillerson's visit was not likely to resolve the dispute.

"I think it will ease tensions, but it's just postponing the problem, which will grow in the future."

The crisis goes beyond the financing of terrorism, said Jean-Marc Rickli, a risk analyst at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, pointing to Gulf fears about the role of Iran, internal instability and the regional influence of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as competition for regional leadership.

"Whatever the outcome is, one of the two sides will lose face and losing face in the Arab world is something important. The consequences for the future will be negative for at least one camp or the other."

France said its foreign minister would visit the Gulf, including Qatar and Saudi Arabia, on July 15-16 as part of its own efforts to overcome the rift.

In a statement on Tuesday, the four boycotting countries and they are United States of America in fighting ISIS.

"But this step is not enough and they will closely monitor the seriousness of Qatar in combating all

Inu downplays

FROM PAGE 1

Rahman's supplementary question.

Fazlur asked the information minister what steps the government took so that journalists were not suppressed by the ICTC act.

According to The Daily Star tally, at least 23 journalists were sued under section 57 of the ICT act since March.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on several occasions said the section would be scrapped.

On Monday, he said the government would decide on the section next month while finalising the draft of the Digital Security Act.

The federation demanded the immediate release of the arrested men and called for reviewing the accident to bring all responsible persons under accountability.

The other demands include issuance of appointment letter, identity card and service book for all workers by the owners; an end to the harassment of workers by filing cases against them for accidents, overloading of boats and other charges; and prevention of extortion and robbery on waterways.

ATM Shamsul Huda-led commission

had initiated talks with the registered political parties ahead of the 2008 national polls, with all the parties responding positively.

However, the BNP boycotted the dialogue organised by Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed-led commission ahead of the January 5, 2014 national election demanding parliamentary polls under a non-partisan caretaker administration.

The next Jatiya Sangsads polls are due between late December next year and early January 2019.

Workers

FROM PAGE 2

missing in November 2009. One of them died later.

The family demanded the immediate

SL president

FROM PAGE 16

key areas of agriculture, coastal shipping, information and communication technology, and cooperation between the media of the two countries, foreign services and central banks.

"We expect that the visit will expand ties between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and create new avenues of cooperation," State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahid Alam told journalists at a press conference at the foreign ministry yesterday.

A Sri Lankan Airlines flight carrying President Sirisena and his 73-member entourage comprising ministers, state ministers, deputy ministers and business community members will land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 11:30am.

President Hamid will receive his Lankan counterpart at the airport, a 21-gun salute will be fired in the air to welcome the Sri Lankan dignitaries.

During his visit, Sirisena will hold talks with the prime minister and the president. The foreign minister, health minister, the Speaker and the Opposition Leader will also call on the Sri Lankan president.

This is Sirisena's first official visit to Bangladesh since he was elected president in January 2015. He, however, visited Bangladesh in 2013 and 2014 as the minister of health of Sri Lanka.

Diplomatic sources in Colombo told The Daily Star that the Sri Lankan

president would hold extensive bilateral discussions regarding ways to strengthen cooperation in the fields of management, education, tourism, fisheries and health as well as ways to strengthen investment between the two countries.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold official talks with President Sirisena at the Prime Minister's Office tomorrow morning, which will be followed by signing of agreements and MoUs.

President Hamid will host a state banquet in honour of the Sri Lankan president at the Bangabhaban tomorrow evening.

The programme schedule, the Lankan president will be taken to Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel where he will be staying. In the afternoon, he will visit the National Martyrs' Monument in Savar to pay respect to the martyrs of Liberation War.

From Savar, he will visit the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi Road 32 to pay homage to the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

President Sirisena will address an economic dialogue Saturday morning to be attended by Bangladesh and Sri Lankan business and industry representatives.

He is scheduled to leave Doha on Saturday at 1:00pm by a Sri Lankan flight. Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali will see him off at the airport.

forms of funding, supporting and fostering of terrorism," the statement said, according to the UAE state news agency WAM.

Anwar Gargash, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said that the dispute was rooted in an absence of trust and that any solution must address the four states' grievances.

The United States will the crisis could affect its military and counter-terrorism operations and increase the regional influence of Iran, which has been supporting Qatar by allowing its air and sea links through its territory.

Qatar hosts Al-Udeid Air Base, the largest US military facility in the Middle East, from which US-led coalition aircraft stage sorties against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Some Gulf Arab media took a critical stance towards Tillerson's visit to Jeddah. "What makes Wednesday's meeting in Jeddah difficult is that Tillerson has since the beginning of the crisis, appeared to be taking the Qatar side," a commentary in the Al-Arabiya English-language news channel said yesterday.

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Meanwhile, Brac launched an awareness campaign to contain the disease as chikungunya continues to spread.

Based on recent experiences and available information, Brac has been disseminating information on the symptoms, preventive measures and treatment. It led leaflets among one lakh employees and their families, said a press release.

The leaflet is being distributed among students and their parents in 45,498 Brac schools across the country.

Social media sites are also being used to spread the message. The message reached thousands of Facebook users, said the release.

In addition to this, preventive measures are being strengthened in all Brac offices across the country. It also started collecting data on chikungunya-infected patients.

According to epidemiologists, Bangladesh has been witnessing a rapid rise in the number of dengue cases in recent years. For example, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) received reports of 3,162 dengue cases in 2015 and 6,020 last year.

Until May 14 this year, at least 194 dengue cases were reported alongside chikungunya, DGHS said.

Female Aedes mosquitoes breed all year round but require stagnant pools of clean water. Early and frequent rains this year and stagnant water on dug-up roads are the primary factors behind the spread of dengue and chikungunya, health experts said.

"We suspect that many people have developed immunity to dengue... some of them are being infected with chikungunya," said Prof Saifulullah of BSMMU.

Though many people come to the hospital with chikungunya symptoms, not all are diagnosed with the disease, he said.

"This may be because they show up two to three days after they have fever. Usually, it takes five days for the chikungunya virus to develop in the body and only then can it be successfully diagnosed," Saifulullah said.

EC sends

FROM PAGE 2

level-playing field for all political parties from the polls by amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO), holding dialogues with political parties, demarcation of parliamentary constituencies, updating the voter list, registration of new political parties, setting up polling centres and training of EC officials.

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