

BLACK SEA NAVAL BASE

Ukrainian sea drone hits Russian warship

REUTERS

A Russian warship was seriously damaged in an overnight Ukrainian naval drone attack on Russia's Black Sea navy base at Novorossiysk, two sources said yesterday, after Russia said it had fended off the attack.

The civilian port, which handles 2 percent of the world's oil supply and also exports grain, temporarily halted all ship movement before resuming normal operations, according to the Caspian Pipeline Consortium which operates an oil terminal there.

Russia's Defence Ministry said in a short statement that the Ukrainian attack by two sea drones had been repelled in the waters outside the base and that the drones had been destroyed. It made no mention of any damage.

A Ukrainian intelligence source said the Olenegorsky Gorniyak, a Russian Navy landing ship, had suffered a serious breach and could not conduct combat missions following a joint operation by the Ukrainian Navy and SBU intelligence service.

There was a crew of around 100 Russian servicemen on the vessel when it was attacked by a sea drone carrying 450 kilograms of TNT, the source said, without giving any information on any casualties.

Separately, a source with knowledge of the port's operations said a large Russian naval vessel had to be towed ashore because it could not move under its own power after being damaged.

The source, who did not name the vessel, said oil and grain loadings were still taking place at the port, which resumed normal operations hours after the attack.

Reuters was not able to immediately and independently verify the assertions about damage to the Olenegorsky Gorniyak warship.

Unverified video footage published on social media purported to show damage to the vessel. In one video, it was seen listing heavily to its port side.

Andrei Kravchenko, a Novorossiysk city official, said on the Telegram app that the Olenegorsky Gorniyak was one of two ships that had "instantly reacted" to fend off the Ukrainian attack.

Russian social media users had reported hearing explosions and gunfire near Novorossiysk yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defence Ministry said yesterday that its forces had also repelled an attempted Ukrainian attack on Crimea, which it annexed from Ukraine in 2014, using at least 13 aeroplane-like drones. It said there were no casualties or damage.

You may have been around Karwan Bazar countless times. But did you ever stop to notice that there is a Mughal mosque just sitting amidst the hustle and bustle of the area? Similarly, perhaps you go to Satmasjid Road frequently. But have you ever stopped for a few minutes to see the age-old Eidgah there?



PHOTO: SAAD ABDULLAH

Tourist in your own city?

MH HAIDER

"There is nothing in Dhaka that I have not seen before; no place of interest that I have not visited" – I naively used to declare. I was so wrong!

Ironically, locals are the ones who often fail to appreciate the beauty and the charm of their ownplace. Perhaps, it is due to the rush and monotony of everyday life or just general familiarity with the city that our eyes have become desensitized to it.

This may be true anywhere in the world although I reckon it is true for Dhaka because strangely it seems that our city likes to keep secrets. It does not reveal itself to those who are not interested. It will aptly gauge your curiosity and only offer a limited number of options if you actively do not seek more.

Or, in other words, the bitter reality is that the citizens and authorities alike are not doing enough to promote the city's culture, food, points of interest, heritage, etc.

I always like to play the pun that our city is called Dhaka: although not a correct etymology, our city is indeed "dhaka" – covered, veiled or hidden, in Bangla.

If an actual tourist asks about your recommendations of historical sites to visit, and your reply only consists of places like Lalbagh Fort and Ahsan Manzil, then how much of Dhaka are you really aware of? Also, speaking of the more prominent places, when was the last time, if ever, you actually went there?

The same goes for food. If your culinary excursions are limited to places such as Nazira Bazar, Banani II, and a few brands like Hajir Biryani, then how much of Dhaka have you really explored?

You may have been around Karwan Bazar countless times. But did you ever stop to notice that there is a Mughal mosque just sitting amidst the hustle and bustle of the area? Similarly, perhaps you go to Satmasjid Road frequently. But have you ever stopped

for a few minutes to see the age-old Eidgah there?

There are many such temples, churches, eateries, art galleries, parks, museums, and so on that you and I probably have never stepped into.

Moreover, what happens is that we usually just stick to our own radius or a set of routes and areas involving our own workplace, socialisation, recreation, and home, outside of which we hardly know much of.

To illustrate, I will admit that I am clueless when I go to Mirpur! The place is simply not in my radius or set of routes and areas.

But, shouldn't we change that?

Exploring Dhaka can be fun! Go on a "daytrip" in Dhaka, even though you live here. Start off by making a bucket list of the places you always wanted to explore. Then, with wanderlust in mind, set out to explore your own city, see it through the eyes of a tourist.

You will be pleasantly surprised with how much Dhaka has to offer!

TRANSSHIPMENT

Traders of India's northeast get 4 routes from Ctg, Mongla ports

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Traders and businesses in Tripura and other northeastern states of India can now use four routes to get their goods from Chattogram and Mongla ports.

The Bangladesh government has permitted traders in Tripura and other northeastern states of India to use four routes for transportation of goods, said Santana Chakma, Tripura's industries and commerce minister.

The four routes are Chattogram Port-Akhaura-Agartala, Mongla Port-Akhaura-Agartala, Chattogram-Bibirbazar-Srimantapur and Mongla Port-Bibirbazar-Srimantapur.

"India and Bangladesh have signed an agreement, allowing Indian traders to use Chattogram and Mongla ports in Bangladesh for transportation of goods," Santana told a press conference in Agartala yesterday.

Santana also said Tripura plans to set up nine "border haats" for bilateral trade at the local level.

At present, Tripura has two "border haats" – Kamalagar in Sepahijala district and Srinagar in South Tripura district. Work is underway on two more "border haats" at Dharmnagar in North Tripura and Kamalpur in Dhalai district, officials said.

14-party to hold protest rally on August 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League-led 14-party alliance has announced a rally for August 7 protesting the "terror and anarchy" by BNP.

The decision was made at a meeting at the AL central office yesterday, with party presidium member Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya in the chair.

The rally will be held in front of the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue at 3:00pm.

The alliance leaders in the meeting said from now on the 14-party men will be on the streets across the country to "confront any conspiracy by BNP-Jamaat".

Maya, also the coordinator of Dhaka city 14-party alliance, said, "We want peace in the country, but BNP-Jamaat wants to destroy peace. They want to create chaos."

Jamaat to stage demos in cities tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Failing to get permission from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Jamaat-e-Islami has postponed its rally at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday and announced that they would stage demonstrations at all divisional cities tomorrow.

Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher, nayeb-e-amir of the party, announced the fresh programme at a virtual press conference yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, Jamaat's leaders and activists brought out processions in Motijheel and Mirpur of the capital yesterday afternoon protesting the DMP's denial of permission for the party to hold a rally at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

Focus on unity, resolving feuds

FROM PAGE 1

last such meeting was held on June 23, 2017 ahead of the 2018 parliamentary polls.

Insiders said PM Hasina will send out a strong message about the party's internal feuds. She will instruct the leaders and activists to work unitedly for the party nominees in the next general election. She will issue a clear warning that there would be no room for dissidents in the party.

The PM is going to convene the meeting to boost the morale of her party leaders against the backdrop of the new US visa policy, statements by some foreign envoys and delegations and BNP's anti-government movement.

At the meeting, the AL chief will give a guideline about the party's strategy to conduct election campaigns highlighting the government's achievements, and

differences between the rules of AL and BNP governments, said party sources.

She will instruct the leaders on how to woo voters and convince them to vote for AL and also how to tackle BNP on the streets if it tries to foil the general election.

"The special extended meeting will centre around the 12th parliamentary polls. From the meeting, our leader Sheikh Hasina will give instructions to the party grassroots," AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star.

The PM will also hear from the grassroots leaders to get a clear picture of the grassroots. She will seek suggestions from them regarding the election and tackling the anti-government movement.

According to sources, reuniting the AL rising above all differences will be Hasina's main message to her

party colleagues as infighting still remains a major concern for the party high-ups when the national election is only about five months away.

Rifts within the party have grown over the years. Grassroots leaders' desperation to win party posts or polls nominations, establishing supremacy, disagreements between lawmakers and local party leadership, among others, are the main reasons behind the intra-party conflicts.

Leaders of AL's national committee, central executive committee, advisory council, presidents and general secretaries of district, city, upazila, thana, and municipality units, party lawmakers, party-nominated chairmen of district councils and upazila parishads, AL-backed mayors of city corporations and municipalities, and presidents and general secretaries of the party's front organisations will be present at the special extended meeting.

Don't use excessive force

FROM PAGE 1

police, have been injured," he said, adding that "senior opposition leaders have been beaten in broad daylight, and their homes raided by people claiming to be law enforcement."

"Hundreds of opposition leaders and supporters have been arrested before and during the rallies."

Bangladesh's next general election is due before the current parliament's term expires in January.

The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and dozens of smaller allies have called for protests throughout the country demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina step down and the polls take place under a neutral caretaker government.

Hasina has rejected the demand, saying it is unconstitutional.

Laurence stressed that Bangladesh authorities "must abide by their human rights obligations and allow people to exercise their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of opinion and expression."

The UN rights office, he said, was calling on "police to ensure that force is only used when strictly necessary", insisting that any "excessive use of force must be promptly investigated, and those responsible held to account."

Meanwhile, Amnesty International yesterday urged Bangladeshi authorities to urgently end the use of excessive force against protesters, after verifying evidence of reports of violent attacks against protesters and opposition party leaders during the recent protest on July 28 and 29.

Amnesty International's researchers and Crisis Evidence Lab reviewed 56 photos and 18 videos from the protests, and the organisation also collected nine eyewitness testimonies to corroborate the findings, it said in a press statement.

According to the press release, eyewitnesses said the protests were largely peaceful prior to the police

attacking them.

"The videos and images that Amnesty International has verified shed light on the human rights violations by the Bangladeshi authorities. We call on the Government of Bangladesh to guarantee strict adherence to the law by the law enforcement agencies, as well as full respect for the people's right to exercise their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, in order to avoid further harm to people's physical integrity and possible escalation of this crisis," said Smriti Singh, interim Regional Director for South Asia at Amnesty International.

"Police should not use tear gas, rubber bullets on peaceful protesters. The fact that the Bangladeshi police is resorting to using tear gas inside a hospital reveals their alarming disregard for international law," said Smriti Singh.

"The government must ensure that the police respect international human rights law and follow the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials," she added.

Quoting witnesses, Amnesty said that the police barricades were manned not only by law enforcement officials but also by people in civilian clothes purportedly to be the supporters of the ruling party.

Amnesty International also verified at least seven photos and two videos that include footage of these individuals beating up protesters 'side by side' with police personnel or branding batons and sticks at protesters.

"It is just unacceptable for civilians to join in with the police as they attack protesters. ... The government must ensure that all those suspected of criminal responsibility are held to account, and impartial, independent, and swift investigation is conducted against the police officers that failed to prevent such breaches of the law," said Smriti Singh.

Shishu Hospital having to turn away patients

FROM PAGE 1

cases the health care workers were failing to accommodate all patients due to the limited number of beds.

The health directorate yesterday reported that at least 10 dengue patients had died and 1,757 new cases were recorded.

The death toll from the disease this year reached 293 and cases 61,473, said the directorate in a statement.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said, "The wards dedicated for dengue patients are full. Most of the beds in general wards are also occupied by people suffering from dengue."

"We are giving treatment only to patients who are in a critical state or at serious risk."

Cyberattack alert

FROM PAGE 1

June 24, another hacker group defaced the website of a Bangladesh health organisation and shared a web archive supporting their claims.

On June 21, the group claimed a DDoS attack on the website of Bangladeshi military organisations. On June 20, the group claimed to have compromised a state-owned investment company, and took data of over 100,000 investors and investment applicants. The threat group shared a single screenshot as proof of compromise and planned to release the data.

CIRT requested all organisations in the country to take the some measures to ensure security of their infrastructures.

This include ensuring strict network and user activity monitoring 24/7, especially during non-office hours, watch out for any indication of data breach and ensuring implementing load balancer solutions to make sure that no single server is overwhelmed during an attack.

Low revenue collection limits disbursement

FROM PAGE 1

"The whole world is passing through a crisis period. In such a period, the government is trying to fulfil all the sectors' demands at once. The power sector is getting less, but it's not a big deal – we are trying to cope with the situation," Mohammad Hossain, director general of Power Cell, told The Daily Star.

Given the limited subsidy disbursement, Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) is unable to pay the private power plants' dues.

Subsequently, it is unable to put pressure on the power producers to increase power generation, The Daily Star has learnt from PDB officials with knowledge of the matter.

As a result, PDB has no other option but to go for load-shedding, they said.

Currently, Bangladesh has the capacity to produce 24,911 megawatts

(MW) of electricity in a day. But about 14,000MW to 14,500MW is being generated.

As a single buyer, PDB has an arrangement with power plants that they would get a fixed payment called the capacity charge even if they do not produce electricity. PDB has to pay the capacity charge against the 24,911MW, which is increasing day by day.

In fiscal 2021-22, the power plants' capacity payments amounted to Tk 23,000 crore, which is expected to be upwards of Tk 25,000 crore in fiscal 2022-23.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue thinks the capacity charges are cannibalising the power sector's subsidies.

"As much as one-fourth of the subsidy allocations go to the power sector. But the capacity charges of the private power plants are

skyrocketing, which is difficult to accommodate even with subsidies, and PDB is becoming a white elephant," said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD.

PDB has been increasing the power generation capacity only without any proper forecast of demand.

By 2025, overcapacity will reach 50 percent, which means PDB will have to pay more capacity payments for the extra capacity, he told The Daily Star.

In this fiscal year, the government has allocated Tk 32,500 crore as subsidy for the power sector.

From January onwards, the subsidy demand would be lower given the three electricity tariff hikes by 5 percent each time in the first quarter of 2023, according to power division officials.