



Workers unload pineapples from a truck at a wholesale market in Kadamtala of Khulna city. Brought from the hills of Rangamati, the seasonal fruit is in high demand and sells for Tk 1,500–3,500 per 100 pieces, depending on quality. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Joint forces camp comes under attack

FROM PAGE 1
the attack as meticulously planned.

Roads leading into the hilly terrain were dug up at three points to trap security forces inside and block reinforcements. Gunfire erupted from tin-shed houses on an adjacent hilltop, with barrels thrust through holes in the walls.

The Rab commander said the attackers fired weapons resembling AK rifles, forcing law enforcers to retaliate. No casualties were reported among the joint forces.

“The criminals pinned our personnel down with gunfire and seized the chance to vandalise the camp,” said Lt Col Hafizur.

Chattogram SP Masud Alam said joint forces used shotguns, Chinese rifles, and tear gas. “Police fired a total of 104 rounds. Due to strong resistance, the attackers failed to enter the camp.”

The brazen overnight attack comes just days ahead of the home

minister’s scheduled visit on May 31 to inaugurate the now-destroyed camp.

Lt Col Hafizur said a temporary security camp was being built at the far end of the Alinagar school compound, and about 90 percent of the work had already been completed. “The structure was almost entirely demolished.”

Earlier on March 9, joint forces seized control of much of Jungle Salimpur in a large scale operation that had driven out the Yasin Bahini without resistance.

Following yesterday’s attack, several suspects have been detained while joint forces – including BGB and army personnel – have launched sweeping operations to regain control of Jungle Salimpur. Chattogram SP Masud and Rab-7 chief Lt Col Hafizur are leading the operation.

Witnesses reported hearing the exchange of gunfire echoing through the hills for hours.

Yasmin Akhter of

Alinagar said, “I was preparing for Tahajjud Namaz around 1:00am when I first heard the gunshots. We immediately locked our doors and windows. The gunfire went on for hours before falling silent around 3:00am.”

She added that Rab men stormed her house in the morning, detained her son and husband on suspicion of being attackers and took them away to the camp for interrogation.

Another resident, Nasima Akhter, gave a similar account, saying her brother and husband were also detained.

Jungle Salimpur spans around 1,256 acres of hilly land under Salimpur union in Sitakunda, about five kilometres from Chattogram city.

Law enforcers say the area has long served as a safe haven for criminal groups because of its difficult terrain and isolation

According to district administration officials, around 3,070 acres of

khas land lie under five mouzas – Jungle Latifpur, Jungle Salimpur, Jungle Bhatiyari, Jalalabad and Uttar Pahartali – nearly 30 percent of which is hilly terrain.

Authorities say several armed groups operate in parts of the area, including gangs led by Yasin and Rokonuiddin, who reportedly maintain armed followers.

The groups are accused of cutting hills, occupying public land and developing illegal housing plots, which they later sold to buyers, earning crores of taka over the past two decades.

In the Alinagar and Chinnomul areas, Yasin is widely known as the “king”.

On October 4 last year, one person was beaten and hacked to death, and at least 14 others were injured in a clash between two groups over supremacy in Jungle Salimpur. The following day, two television journalists were attacked while reporting on the violence.

sector if needed, he said.

“In this situation, mobilising private capital is extremely important,” Kanda said.

POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH
Looking ahead, he said ADB’s priorities remain aligned with Bangladesh’s long-term ambitions, including building a diversified, job-rich economy and becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2034.

“What we want to see is the realisation of these ambitions. One of the things we need to prioritise is private sector development. There is huge potential, but because of the lack of policy predictability and consistency, private capital has not yet been fully mobilised.

“If we can trigger this dynamism, I expect huge and radical growth.”

Kanda, who earlier served as an alternate executive director for Japan at the World Bank, said Bangladesh has a significant demographic dividend because of its large youth population.

“We need to provide them with good jobs, which in turn will strengthen consumption and create a virtuous cycle.”

To achieve that, he said strategic investment is important, but sustainable and impactful growth also requires an enabling environment for private firms.

“That includes regulatory reform, policy reform, quality infrastructure and human capital development. There are many things we need to work on together with the government, partners and the people on the ground.”

Dhaka all set for Eid-ul-Azha

FROM PAGE 3
male worshippers, and one for women. Seven exit gates have also been designated – including one for VIPs, five for male worshippers, and one for women.

Among the 121 prayer rows, five have been reserved for male VIPs and

one for female VIPs. There will also be 65 large rows for general male worshippers and 50 smaller rows for women.

Authorities have taken extensive security measures around the congregation. Fire Service and Civil Defence

personnel will be deployed with firefighting equipment. Facilities including first aid, mobile toilets, rainwater drainage, and waterproof canopies have also been ensured.

Meanwhile, five Eid congregations will be held in phases at the Baitul

Mukarram National Mosque.

According to the Islamic Foundation, the first congregation will begin at 7:00am, the second one at 8:00am, the third one at 9:00am, the fourth one at 10:00am and the fifth and final at 10:45am.

DNCC, DSCC gear

FROM PAGE 3
Khan confirmed the development.

Meanwhile, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) plans to transfer 33,942 tonnes of waste to landfills during the three Eid days, including 15,935 tonnes on Eid day alone. DSCC sources said 60 percent of the waste generated at temporary

cattle markets will be removed on the first day.

A total of 13,453 cleaning workers will be deployed while 2,117 vehicles and machinery have been prepared.

The DSCC said 140,000 biodegradable bags, 40 tonnes of bleaching powder, and 1,050 litres of disinfectant are being

distributed among residents through their respective ward offices and Primary Collection Service Provider (PCSP) operators. A live monitoring system will remain active at Nagar Bhaban, along with a 24-hour hotline service.

DSCC Administrator Abdus Salam called upon residents to place sacrificial

animal waste in the designated bags and leave those at specified locations for cleaning workers to remove them promptly from 12:00pm on Eid day.

“Under no circumstances should waste be thrown into drains or sewers to prevent the spread of pathogens and waterlogging during rainfall,” he added.

Cox’s Bazar schools reel

FROM PAGE 4
posts are filled. Ram Mohan Sen, head teacher of Cox’s Bazar Government High School, said managing multiple sections has become increasingly difficult, as many teachers who join from other districts later get transferred.

“Teacher numbers sometimes drop further.

We regularly send updated information to the department, but no appointments are being made,” he said.

Anupam Das, acting head teacher of Cox’s Bazar Govt Girls’ High School, echoed him.

“We need at least six mathematics teachers for 10 sections, but we have only two. How can two

teachers handle so many sections?” he said.

As a result, teachers from other subjects are often assigned to take mathematics classes, depriving students of quality learning, he added.

Md A Mannan, deputy commissioner of Cox’s Bazar and also president of the school management

committees, said the issue of vacant teaching posts would be raised with the relevant authorities.

“If more local candidates succeeded in competitive recruitment examinations, it would have been easier to post them in their own areas, allowing them to serve their communities,” he added.

Quick deal hope fades

FROM PAGE 12
and the US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, in exchange for Iran taking steps to ensure safe transit through the strategic waterway, he said.

At present, the talks are not on the nuclear issue, which will be negotiated over a 60-day period if the framework accord is agreed, Baghaei said.

Oil prices fell nearly 6 percent to two-week lows yesterday as optimism grew that the United States and Iran were moving closer to a peace deal.

Baghaei said the potential accord contained no specific details on management of the strait, through which about a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied gas flows.

Iran will not charge tolls for ships to pass through

the strait, Baghaei said. However, he added that there would be a cost for services to be offered, such as navigation and steps to protect the environment, under a protocol to be agreed with Oman, which shares the opposite shore of the waterway.

However, a senior Trump administration official told CBS Sunday morning that Iran had agreed in principle to dispose of highly-enriched uranium.

The official said the US believes Iran’s supreme leader has approved the template for a deal, but a final agreement still needs to be made before anything is signed. They said it is still an open question as to whether that will come to fruition.

The official added that any final agreement that

is reached would take several days to work its way through the system.

The deal agreed to in principle will be a two-step process, with the immediate opening of the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for lifting the US blockade, followed by negotiations on a mechanism for Iran to give up various parts of its nuclear program, the official said.

Officials were still working through details of the mechanism for how the uranium would be disposed of with the people who have been empowered by the supreme leader to negotiate.

No decisions have been made yet on unfreezing Iranian assets, according to the senior official, but any sanctions relief would be commensurate with

the actual delivery of what the US asks for in terms of meeting the president’s national security objectives.

Meanwhile, Trump said yesterday negotiations with Iran were “proceeding nicely” and said he asked countries including the UAE, Qatar, Pakistan, Egypt and Jordan to sign the Abraham Accords as part of US efforts to reach a deal with Iran.

Trump said those countries would be honoured to have Iran as part of the accords, a set of agreements to normalise relations with Israel.

Separately, two sources said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told his confidants that Israel now has little ability to influence Trump’s decision-making over the Iran conflict.

Bangladesh has potential

FROM PAGE 1
a huge market because of its large population, while its geographic position further enhances its prospects of benefiting from regional cooperation.

Regional cooperation was one of the issues he discussed with the prime minister and finance minister, said Kanda, who assumed leadership of the ADB in February 2025.

They recognise that Bangladesh has the ‘great potential’ to benefit from regional cooperation and contribute as a regional hub for transportation, logistics, energy and digital connectivity, he said.

However, South Asia lags behind in terms of integration because of factors such as weak transport networks and congested borders caused by bureaucratic requirements.

“Transport, trade and logistics costs are therefore quite high, jeopardising cross-border integration,” he said.

“But despite these challenges, I am very optimistic. There is huge potential in this region for a radical increase in regional cooperation and integration.”

Kanda, who previously served as special adviser to Japan’s prime minister and finance minister, said regional cooperation and integration is one of his priorities as ADB president.

“This is an effective tool for encouraging economic growth because it improves efficiency across borders, creates broader markets, and generates economies of scale.

“Another thing is that countries can build collective resilience. One country alone may be

vulnerable, but together with neighbouring countries they can become more resilient against external shocks like last year’s trade war or this year’s Middle East conflict,” he said.

He added that ADB supports Bangladesh’s efforts to engage in regional initiatives such as the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC).

‘CONSTRUCTIVE, MEANINGFUL’
In the interview, Kanda also discussed the fallout of the Middle East conflict on Bangladesh and his meetings with top government officials, including the prime minister.

He described the visit to Dhaka as “constructive and meaningful” and said ADB wants to deepen its partnership with Bangladesh.

The ADB chief said the lender had signed four loan agreements worth \$1.42 billion, including budget support and financing for transport and urban development projects.

“The results were quite significant. We produced very tangible and concrete results,” he said. “More importantly, we agreed on many things, and ADB committed considerable support.”

Kanda presented to the prime minister the Integrated Growth Network Development Initiative, a comprehensive development plan under which ADB plans to provide \$5 billion over five years.

“This is quite significant.”

The Manila-based lender is increasing its annual lending to Bangladesh by 20 percent to \$2.4 billion

annually.

Kanda said ADB wants to support the preparation and implementation of a five-year reform framework by the government.

It will provide \$2 million in technical assistance for this initiative, and capital market development is likely to be included in the package.

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS
He acknowledged that the Middle East conflict could place strain on Bangladesh’s economy.

“The price hikes in energy, fuel, fertilisers and other spin-off costs are really serious,” he said, adding that the impact would gradually spread to food prices and agriculture.

Mentioning Bangladesh’s heavy reliance on remittances from Gulf nations, he said ADB was “very much concerned” about the potential consequences of prolonged instability in the region.

The multilateral lender has increased its budget support to Bangladesh by an additional \$250 million, bringing total budget support this year to \$1 billion to help maintain macroeconomic stability.

“I believe this is quite a significant fiscal buffer, particularly for protecting the most vulnerable segments of the population,” he said.

“Still, the impact may continue or even worsen, so we are closely watching the situation.”

ADB remains in daily contact with the government and development partners and is ready to provide additional support, including mobilising co-financing from the private