

Tk 7 lakh looted in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted about Tk 7 lakh in cash from various shops and offices in a six-storied building at Topkhana road in the city's Ramna area yesterday.

When the employees of different offices arrived yesterday morning, they found the building gate open and the security guard absent. Police later arrested building security guard Mohammad Salek from the area.

An unidentified gang allegedly entered the building sometime during the night and looted cash from the shops at different floors.

Sources said about Tk 1.41 lakh from Sky Travels, Tk 3.70 lakh from Promise Air, Tk 55,000 from Al-Jarf International, Tk 42,000 from Union Associates, Tk 1.70 lakh from Rich Overseas and Tk 36,000 from Echo Associates had been taken.

They also tried to break into the offices of Al-Navin Travels, Bishwa Construction Private Ltd, Mark Media and Tamanna Corporation, RN Trade International and Sagane International.

Sources said the guard might have been involved with the gang members. A case was filed with Ramna Police Station in this regard.

Nafis Sadik

FROM PAGE 12 makes it difficult to create awareness about AIDS. Only 19 per cent of ever-married women and 33 per cent of currently married men had heard of AIDS. High infection rates among the drug users and unsafe blood transfusion are among the basic modes of HIV transmission, she added.

Dr Sadik pointed out that a large number of Bangladeshi citizens are vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, since they are working as peacekeepers in many countries with a high HIV prevalence rate. Also the close proximity to India, Myanmar and Thailand and the associated migration between them, make Bangladesh vulnerable to an HIV epidemic, she added.

Proper measures should be adopted to prevent prevalence of HIV, considering the risk factors. Education on reproductive health, culture and religion can reduce the risk, she said.

"People infected with HIV do not come forward to seek help since they think they will be stigmatised," said Dr. Sadik. "It is society that should extend help to the victims by not condemning them."

She also stressed the need for rehabilitating the HIV infected people.

Cold wave

FROM PAGE 12 The lowest temperature of the country was recorded at Dinajpur, five degrees Celsius, and the highest at Teknaf, 25.8 degrees Celsius. The capital experienced the lowest at 12.2 and the highest 15.4 degrees Celsius.

The Met Office forecasted that the night temperature might fall a bit. The weather might remain dry and dense fog may occur in the northern regions of the country and in the river basins.

"This mild cold wave may continue for two days, and after that another one may come," said deputy forecasting officer Kamrul Hasan.

Meanwhile, BSS reported that the cold wave claimed 15 more lives during the last 24 hours in Panchagarh and raised the overall death toll to 54. And in Tangail three persons died of cold-related diseases during the last one week.

Pro-hartal processions

FROM PAGE 1 laid siege to the AL headquarters on the Bangabandhu Avenue since yesterday afternoon and repeatedly stopped AL leaders and activists from bringing out processions.

Police shot out jets of cold and dirty water over a dozen of women activists of the AL amid the prevailing cold snap, as they tried to get to the party office in a procession under the banner of Sutrapur thana unit of the Mahila Awami League at about 4.00pm. Lovely Chowdhury, ward commissioner of the Dhaka City Corporation, was leading the procession.

Police also clubbed activists of the Jubo League, Dhaka City Awami League and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on the roads at Golap Shah Mazaar and Zero Point leading to the party office.

City AL President Mohammad Hanif led a procession, defying barbed-wire fences and clubbing and, at a rally, called upon countrymen to unseat the government to free the country from tyranny.

Later in the day, the BCL brought out another procession only to be chased by police.

In a statement last night, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil urged people to make the hartal a success.

44 more NGOs quit ADAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-four more non-government organisations (NGO) yesterday withdrew their membership from ADAB (Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh) accusing it of failing to protect the interest of its members.

A press release issued yesterday by the National NGO Coordination Committee (NNCC) said the 44 NGOs were quitting ADAB as they felt that leaders of ADAB were busy protecting their personal interests ignoring the collective interest of its members.

They said sectors like poverty alleviation, education, environment and human rights movement did not achieve the desired success due to poor leadership of ADAB.

Pre-polls violence leaves 20 hurt in Feni

UNB, Feni

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of two pro-BNP chairman candidates at Nawabpur Bazaar in Sonagazi upazila Tuesday night.

Police and witnesses said the clash erupted at about 8pm when the followers of Sarwar Alam attacked an election procession brought out by the supporters of Nazrul Islam Tipu.

Eight of the injured were identified as Selim, Sohag Master, Mamun, Nasir, Moshlehuddin, Mosharrif, Gias and Mahub.

The supporters of Sarwar confined chairman candidate Tipu and later they set him free.

A tense situation has been prevailing in the area following the clash. Both chairman candidates lodged complaints with local police.

Prisoner dies at MMCH

UNB, Mymensingh

An under-trial prisoner of the district central jail died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital early yesterday.

Police sources said Sirajuddin, 45, of Kishoreganj district suddenly fell sick in the jail and taken to the hospital where attending doctors declared him dead at 3:25am. He was an accused in a robbery case.

Doctors said Sirajuddin died of heart attack. His body was handed over to his relatives after autopsy.

18 fall sick

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Students said two similar incidents took place at the institute earlier. They also alleged negligence of the administration in maintaining proper class condition.

Mostafa Kamal, principal of the institute, told newsmen that the incident took place because of a faulty generator.

Tofail, Saleem

FROM PAGE 12

On Tuesday, the court declared illegal the detention of Tofail and Saleem, now in the Kushtia jail and in the Kashimpur jail.

Contacted yesterday, the authorities of both jails told The Daily Star that they did not get the court order yet.

Tofail was arrested on December 8 and Saleem on November 29. Earlier, both were granted bail in other cases.

Gold ornaments worth Tk 35 lakh looted in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Armed miscreants looted gold ornaments worth about Tk 35 lakh from a jeweller in the city on Tuesday night.

The victim, Mohammad Sowdagar, 40, owner of Ishaque Jewellers at Bandar Bazar came under attack near Abu Torab Mosque while he was returning home from the bazar carrying the gold ornaments in a bag.

The miscreants beat Mohammed Sowdagar mercilessly and took the bag containing the gold.

They left the place firing shots and exploding crackers.

Mohammad Sowdagar was admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital.

A case was filed with the Sylhet Kotwali police.

Mimi's killers still at large

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police failed to arrest the killers of Monica Afroz Mimi, a third-year architecture student of Ahsanullah University, even after 12 days of the attack on her.

Mimi's boyfriend cricketer Shafiqul Babu and his friend Arif allegedly poured petrol on her and set her on fire in front of her hostel at West Raza Bazaar on January 4.

She died at a city hospital Monday morning after fighting for her life for nine days.

Mimi's brother filed a case with the Tejoan Police Station, accusing Babu for the attack.

Jahangir Hossain, investigation officer of the case, told The Daily Star yesterday that a high-powered team involving the Tejoan and Ramna Police Stations, the detective branch and the Criminal Investigation Department raided Motijheel T&T colony residence of Babu on Tuesday. But he was not there.

The IO said Babu's sister has assured the police to hand him in within four days.

The police also warned his sister that unless Babu gives himself up, his family members would be arrested after Saturday.

Rajuk

FROM PAGE 12

Rajuk has also taken up a Tk 24 crore project to build six bridges over the lake at different points in Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara areas. Such isolated moves are 'dubious.' And in the process, Rajuk has simply brushed aside the question of public participation, which the prime minister had emphasised during her meeting with the officials in June last year the sources said.

A top Rajuk official said the project concept for a Tk 70 crore scheme for lake development is awaiting approval of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works.

Meanwhile, a construction firm - Development, Design, Consultant - engaged about three years ago, has nearly completed the Detail Area Planning (DAP) for Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani.

"While the project proposal is awaiting approval, we are trying to make the walkways on the basis of the DAP," said an official requesting anonymity.

Benapole

FROM PAGE 1 including import of goods from India without declaration.

The strike will cause the government a loss of about Tk two crore a day in revenue earnings, sources at the Benapole Customs House said.

The joint commissioner could not be reached for his comment despite several attempts to contact him over phone.

Security measures have been stepped up at the land port where tension prevailed.

CEC

FROM PAGE 1 decide on troops deployment and a tug of war developed between the government and the EC. As of yesterday, the government did not officially communicated with the EC on the issue.

"Give us proper protection, we will give you a transparent election," Shajahan Kabir, returning officer of Sylhet Sadar, told the election commission. "If something goes wrong, the lower-level officials are always blamed."

Tajul Islam Prohdan, UNO of Habiganj, observed that the situation has deteriorated after the army pullout. "Why was the army pulled out immediately before the elections? We must know the circumstances."

Other election officials clapped, as Prohdan said criminals were in hiding as long as the army was in operation. He observed that the army should be deployed in the streets, if not in the election centers.

As the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, Abul Hossain, took the floor and said the situation was conducive to holding peaceful polls and army deployment was unnecessary, other officials vehemently protested him.



PHOTO: PID

Dr Nafis Sadik, special envoy of the UN secretary-general on HIV/AIDS in Asia, meets with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Death row in acid crime

FROM PAGE 1

tim, 21-year-old Hasan Murad as compensation, and directed the district collectorate to realise the money.

The 25-year-old convict, son of Abdul Quader of Marium Nagar Village in Ranguia, was found guilty as he seriously burnt Hasan Murad and Hasan's cousin Shawkat Hossain Aquib, throwing acid on them in connection with an extra-marital affair.

According to the deposition of the case, Hasan Murad along with his cousin Shawkat fell victim to the acid attack on August 5, 2002, evening for protesting Alamgir's extra-marital affair with his (Hasan Murad) aunt.

Hasan Murad had been taking care of the family of his maternal uncle Abdun Nabi, father of Shawkat and an expatriate to Dubai.

Alamgir, a distant relative of Abdun Nabi, developed an extra-marital relationship with Nabi's wife Ayesha Bibi. Having learnt of the affair, Nabi requested his elder sister Sabura Khatun to send her son Hasan Murad to stay with his

family at Jaliapara village under Ranguia upazila.

Since Hasan Murad arrived to stay with his uncle's family, he became an enemy of Alamgir, who sprayed acid on Hasan while he was returning from a nearby shop on that day (August 5, 2002). The acid also burnt Aquib, Hasan's cousin and the only son of Ayesha.

The victims were first admitted to the local health complex and later shifted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH). Both of them are now undergoing treatment at the Acid Survivors Foundation in Dhaka.

Following the incident, Hasan's uncle Md. Rafiqul Alam filed a case with Ranguia PS on August 6 and the accused, Md. Alamgir Hossain was arrested from Lohagara on August 17.

Ranguia police submitted the charge sheet against Alamgir to the Ranguia Upazila Magistrate's Court on September 9.

The case was transferred to the newly formed Acid Crime Control Tribunal in Chittagong on October 21 where the charge was framed on

October 24.

The Tribunal recorded evidences of 14 witnesses including that of the two victims, and disposed off the case after twelve hearings, within two months of the beginning of the trial.

The judge in his 32-page verdict said that the accused badly maimed Hasan Murad. Young Hasan is now a burden to his family and he even might die. So, the court awarded the death penalty to the accused.

The death penalty was given so that such crimes do not destroy any more lives.

District PP advocate Mohammad Kafil Uddin Chowdhury moved the case for the state, while former PP advocate Alhaj Nuruchhafa Talukder appeared for the accused.

The lawyers of the Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR), Chittagong unit, Advocate Zia Habib Ahsan and Advocate Sharif Uddin monitored the case while the BSEHR, Ranguia unit, investigated it.



PHOTO: STAR

Fire fighters rush to douse the fire that gutted valuables worth Tk 7 lakh of the Sananda Jeweller's at the city's Baitul Mukarram Market yesterday.

Eradicate mosquito

FROM PAGE 12

ings, timely removal of banners, and not allowing to place construction materials and pushcarts haphazardly on roadsides.

Emphasising the need for regular monitoring of all development activities of the city and services to its dwellers, Khaleda Zia asked the DCC and metropolitan police authorities to strictly apply the rules and regulations to keep the city clean and remove other hazards to enhance its beauty and safety.

The meeting decided to form a coordination committee comprising all officials concerned of different departments headed by the mayor of DCC to coordinate and supervise the development activities of the city to help city-dwellers avert any inconvenience.

The coordinating committee, among other things, will look into the matters of road repair and sewerage system and control of the mosquito menace to ensure that those activities are properly coordinated.

The prime minister directed the authorities concerned to be careful so that the city's bio-diversity and environment are not affected while carrying out aerial spray and other programmes for mosquito control.

Khaleda Zia also asked the authorities concerned to place a proposal to create new graveyards to meet the death of burial grounds in the city.

At the beginning of the meeting, DCC Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka made an introductory speech, outlining the importance of the capital city and its problems and the

necessary measures to be taken for its development.

Those who took part in the discussion were Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Public Works and Housing Minister Mirza Abbas, Post and Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Huq, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Musharrif Hossain, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, PM's political secretaries Haris Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali, and LGRD secretary AYBI Siddiqui.

The prime minister also asked the authorities to place a proposal for enhancing financial power of the DCC mayor to help strengthen the local government system by ensuring development at the local level.

N'ganj polls

FROM PAGE 12

Jinnatul Huq ruled out the possibility of any rigging, saying elections would be free and fair.

Meanwhile, two army patrol jeeps went round the town yesterday but no one could say anything about army deployment during the elections.

WB warns

FROM PAGE 1

It expressed concern over the composition and quality of this fiscal ADP.

"The government's ADP rationalisation process could allow pruning the revised FY03 ADP to around Tk 140-150 billion, compared with the Tk 192 billion proposed in the original FY03 ADP. An ADP of Tk 150 billion would still be over 10 per cent higher than the actual FY02 ADP expenditure of Tk 136 billion," the WB said.

"Irrespective of size, ADP resources should only be allocated to projects that meet strict quality standards and satisfy a minimum rate of return criteria," it further said.

It also said rationalisation and prioritisation of the ADP and stronger domestic resource mobilisation are top priorities to enable the government to better contribute to achieve the national poverty reduction target.

"The composition and quality of ADP remains a concern. Also, the investment portfolio supported under the FY03 ADP is large in relation to implementation capacity. It includes too many low priority projects of poor quality."

A very large proportion of projects is in initial stages of implementation with very thin allocations. Investment projects that are new, unapproved or have zero implementation are natural candidates for dropping, deferring or restructuring," said the WB.

Int'l confce for greater role for local bodies in health matters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at the end of a two-day international conference demanded that local bodies and people's representatives should be empowered to implement and manage all health-related policies in the country.

They also put forward an eight-point recommendation in this regard.

Emphasising on the role of communities, speakers from home and abroad said policies are designed and implemented without the knowledge of the local bodies.

Some of the speakers pointed out that given the scope, locally managed programmes are often better than the top down approach.

They also said before implementing a new health policy, the makers should carefully consider the risks, long-term effects and benefits.

"We would like to see private sector offering better healthcare services in collaboration with the government. This will ensure quality as it would allow competition," said a speaker.

The highlights of the eight-point recommendations include decentralisation of some government bodies, management of most health programmes by local bodies, and discussion in the parliament in case of bringing changes against any major health programme.

Local bodies must be empowered to supervise and identify irregularities and if necessary, must have adequate power to investigate into any alleged corruption or mismanagement.

Senior health experts, economists, member of parliaments,

Unicef, DFID and other donor representatives, government and non-government organisation officials gathered yesterday at Dhaka Community Hospital in the city in the two-day international conference on 'Sustainable Health Systems in Developing Countries'. It was jointly organised by Dhaka Community Hospital and Institute of Community Health, Bangladesh.

Zahir Uddin Swapan, MP, Professor Ahmed Kamal of Dhaka University, Dr Atiur Rahman from the BIDS, Sultana Kamal from Ain-O-Shalish Kendra, Professor Muzafer Ahmad, Farhad Mazhar, Janet Jackson from the UNFPA, Dr S Dasgupta from India, Professor Khurshid Jahhan from Dhaka University addressed different sessions of the conference.

Doors shut

FROM PAGE 12

some of the freedom fighters at the sanatorium at Mohammadpur in the city.

Most of them stressed on a fully-fledged hospital and rehabilitation centre. "While the government is spending a good amount of money to maintain a closed hospital, there is no effort towards creating better medical facilities for us," noted Mohammed Belaluddin, a wounded freedom fighter.

There were several legal complications about the hospital, said State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Redwan Ahmed. "We are almost done with those," he added. He said the government has decided to reopen the hospital soon.

Shazneen case

FROM PAGE 1

money), to rape and kill Shazneen.

"Shahid told us that Shaniram helped him in escaping from the spot after the incident," said Simeen in her statement as recorded by the investigation officer of the Shazneen murder case on May 2, 1998.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Latifur Rahman filed a murder case with the Gulshan Police Station on April 24, 1998, accusing Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, a domestic help at his residence.

ASP of the CID Mojibur Rahman filed a rape case with the same police station accusing Shahid, Hasan, Shaniram, Badal, Minu and Parvin, after six months of investigation into the Shazneen murder case.

All the six accused, Shahid, Hasan, Shaniram, Badal, Minu and Parvin, now in jail, were produced in the court yesterday during the cross-examination by the defence lawyers.

Special public prosecutors (PPS) Arfan Uddin Khan, Mahub Ahmed, Saima Khanam and Assistant PP Anisur Rahman appeared for the state, while advocates Mosharrif Hossain Kajal, Mohammad Hanif, Mizanur

Rahman, Anwarul Kabir Babul, MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam and Abdus Salam Bhuiyan appeared for the accused.

The Shazneen murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka was earlier stayed by an order of the High Court. The stay order will remain valid till disposal of the rape case.

Meanwhile, Shehzi, another sister of the victim, and fourth prosecution witness in the case, appeared in the court yesterday to face cross-examination by the defence lawyers.

Hosts win

FROM PAGE 12 Bangladesh custodian Biplob, but only to be denied by the woodwork.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH: Biplob, Firoz Mahmud Titu, Nazrul, Motiur Munna, Mahmudul Hasan, Abdul Kaiyum Sentu, Saiful Islam (Parvez), Monwar Hossain (Rokonuzzaman Kanchan), Saifur Rahman Moni (Alifaz), Mehdi Hasan Uzzal and Ariful Kabir Farhad.

BHUTAN: Jigme Singey (Puspala), Passang, Irishna Subba, Bhim Kumar, Kinley Dorje, Pema, Dinesh, Chopla (Ygyen), Namegy (Khandu), Tenzin and Jamtsho. Referee: Balu Sundar Raj (India).

CGVC: University

FROM PAGE 10

in the initial stage even after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia announced the allotment of 9 acres of land while she was inaugurating the college in 1996. But the sincere support of its well-wishers like Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and the Chittagong Dairy and Poultry Association president and Probokone Ltd. Chairman Mohammad Chowdhury helped the college win the struggle.

However, Prof Bishwash said though the college started its journey only seven years back yet it is duly deserved a university status. The college has created an environment and a few logistic supports might be required to turn it into a university.

CGVC sources said the college started its journey on 4.9 acres of land and later another 2.4 acres were added. But rest two acres of land could not be acquired as per announcement of the prime minister.

They said the additional land required for turning the college into a university could be acquired from the adjoining land of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) Centre. Only two acres of land out of its 39 acres would not harm the activities of the BARI centre in the city, they added. The BARI regional office is located in Hathazari.

Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury while addressing on the second day of the ceremony on January 3 he said proper utilisation of agricultural, fisheries and livestock resources

and flourishing of export-oriented industries through inclusion of newer items from these resources could build a strong economic structure for the country. In this respect he called upon the private investors, veterinary colleges and the future veterinarians for playing a pioneering role.

Khoka addressed the opening session of the ceremony on January 2. He underscored the need for introduction of modern technologies in consistency with the local environment and shunning the conventional technologies for the development of agriculture and fisheries and livestock sectors of the country. He said government was adamant to promote these sectors and had already taken massive programmes in this regard.

Mezban fiesta

FROM PAGE 10

pare the mezban feast must have a pair of magical hands. Otherwise, how does the feast become so memorably tasty! The late Jamal Baburchi (cook) was greatly revered by people for his exceptional gift in cooking. The rib-bones plus lentils dish was his innovation. Now the noted cooks of Chittagong are Rashid, Hasan and Abul respectively. All of them are now owners of multi-storied houses and community centres.

The best time for mezban is the winter season. That in such deep dewy nights cows after cows are perishing at various mezban tables of the city is an index of the great appetite of the Chittagonians for beef. Long live the cows of Chittagong!!!