

Rivers of discord

Delhi's plan to divert common water makes Dhaka anxious, seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India's move to set up floating check-posts on common rivers with Bangladesh to divert flow of water towards it is a threat to Bangladesh's internal security, speakers at a seminar yesterday said.

They took a swipe at India for making the move and urged both New Delhi and Dhaka to reach an agreement on sharing water within the purview of international norms.

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised the seminar on 'Law and National Security of Bangladesh' at

its auditorium.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, who was chief guest, said the move to occupy rivers by India poses a threat to Bangladesh's internal security. If India does so, the Brahmaputra will dry up soon, he added.

"We should form an integrated water management strategy to realise our share of water from common rivers," he said.

"We should concentrate on raising the economic growth which ensures internal security and minimises external threat," he said.

Former ambassador Dr M Afsarul Qader in his paper themed "Internation

Law and National Security" said international law has not lost its credibility despite the fact that it was flouted in a massive manner in the case of war against Iraq.

On the Indian move to set up floating check-posts on common rivers, he said, "What the Indians are going to do will be disastrous for the people of South Asia".

He suggested setting up of a legal commission under the Prime Minister's Office to overcome major flaws in the country's strategic response to national security problems.

Speaking on 'Domestic Law and National Security', former ambassador

Muhammad Zamir suggested six steps to bolster supervision of the national security and uphold the legal and constitutional process.

The steps include tightening border security, undertaking a review of the resources available within the intelligence agencies and ascertaining whether they are functionally in an optimum state, reorganising magistracy, providing law enforcers a proper wage and necessary logistics, and invigorating the police force with suitable training and equipment.

Mufleh R Osmany, chairman of the board of BISS governors and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Asma Jahangir meets Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chairman of Pakistan Human Rights Commission and co-chairperson of the South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) Asma Jahangir called on Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday at the latter's residence in the city.

They discussed the human rights situation in Bangladesh.

The opposition leader narrated the 'atrocities and tortures' on her party men since the general election on October 1, 2001, AL sources said.

Hasina's political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury and Press Adviser Jawadul Karim were present at the meeting.

2 get life term for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Speedy Trial Tribunal of Barisal yesterday sentenced two persons to life imprisonment for raping a minor girl.

Judge Abdul Kuddus Mia of the tribunal also fined the two convicts -- Md Altaf Taluqdar, 25, and Babul Howlader, 30, -- Tk 25,000 each, and instructed the deputy commissioner of Barisal to realise the money from the convicts and hand it over to the rape victim.

According to the prosecution case, Fatema Begum, 13, of Mehendiganj upazila was returning home on 26 July, 2002 from her uncle's house in Muladi upazila. As Fatema was crossing a river on a boat, she was raped by the two men.

Both men were arrested following a case lodged with the Muladi police. Police submitted charge sheet on October 10, 2002 and the case was sent to the Speedy Trial Tribunal on 13 January this year. Sixteen witnesses were examined by the prosecution before the judge pronounced the verdict yesterday.

4 charge sheeted in Shahnaj rape, murder case in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Four people have been charge sheeted in Shahnaj rape and murder case.

The accused are Rakib, Mahtab, Dalim and Dalim's mother Saleha Begum.

CID Sub-Inspector Prodig Kumar Barua submitted the charge sheet to the first class magistrate's court here yesterday.

Rakib, 22, a BNP cadre and nephew of Puthia Union BNP president Shahjahan Ali, and his accomplices kidnapped Shahnaj Khatun Shahina, 18, an SSC examinee and daughter of Rustam Ali Sheikh of Krishnapur village in Puthia upazila on the night of September 26, 2002.

The miscreants raped Shahnaj by turn at one of their neighbour's house and strangled her. They then dumped the body in a pond near her house.

Rakib, a JCD leader of Puthia Degree College, confessed to killing Shahnaj to hide his illegal affair that led to her pregnancy.

Shamsur Rahman murder Supplementary charge sheet likely in May

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Supplementary charge sheet in Journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case is expected to be submitted by the first week of May.

Meanwhile, court has rejected prayer for taking accused Hirok on remand. Hirok is now in Khulna district jail.

Janakantha Journalist Shamsur Rahman was gunned down at the Jessore bureau office of the daily at 8-20 PM on July 16, 2000.

His wife Selina Akhter Lucky lodged FIR on July 17 with Jessore Sadar thana. CID police submitted charge sheet after completing investigation on May 22, 2001.

Sixteen people were chargesheeted in the case with former KCC ward commissioner Asaduzzaman Litu as prime accused. Three out of 16 chargesheeted accused are still at large. They are Litu, Pagla Selim and Fakir Shawkat.

The supplementary investigation has been started on an order of the Home Ministry, CID sources said.

Sleepless at Atrai

Lawlessness grips people with panic

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The Atrai-Raninagar-Naldanga belt in greater Rajshahi has turned into a place of deep insecurity, as outlaws have been on the killing spree over the last few years.

Police seem to have failed in fighting operatives of a banned outfit blamed for the spate of murders, especially of political leaders and activists, in recent times.

At least 20 people, many belonging to local units of major political parties, were killed in the last two years.

The latest killing of six BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) workers at Naidighee in Atrai last Friday sent locals panic-stricken and brooding over who is next on the hit list. A gang of more than 100 killed the six and escaped with slogans for the banned P u r b o

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Low goes law and order

ABUL KALAM AZAD

The law and order situation has nosedived with crime rates shooting up alarmingly in the last two weeks across the country.

An overdose of crimes like gruesome murders, rapes, looting of firearms from police and daring mugging in such a short span of time left people in a state of deep insecurity.

Reemergence of banned parties like Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and Biplabi Communist Party in the southwestern region also made the situation all the more vulnerable.

One of the most horrendous crimes of recent times was the slaughtering of six persons at the Noidighi village of Atrai upazila, Naogaon on Friday. More than 100 armed assailants of the PBCP stormed into four houses at the dead of night and butchered them. The blood-happy outlaws then shouted

slogans of their party while leaving the village.

On Sunday night, two constables were killed also by operatives of the same party. They opened fire on a patrol police team at Fakirhat Bazar in Bagerhat that killed two constables instantly. The criminals left the spot happy with their loot, one self-loading rifle (SLR) and a 303 rifle.

Three days back on Thursday, another group of outlaws raided the Daulatpur Jute Mills to take away 20 rifles and 600 round of ammunition from its storeroom. Police so far arrested 26 ansars, one of whom is believed to be linked with the looting.

Noor Hossain, a BNP leader of Khulna, was shot dead by unidentified attackers on April 21. He was killed while returning home at village Tartipur from Phultala Bazar.

Cases of eve teasing and rape are also spiraling up, leading to suicide by victims. In Khulna, within a span of 24 hours, two young girls commit-

ted suicide after being repeatedly teased and humiliated by unruly youths.

Bina Rani Mondal, a 17-year-old schoolgirl, found no other way but suicide to save herself from ultimate ignominy by some youths. The tragic incident took place at a village of Paikgacha upazila on April 17.

Nineteen-year-old college girl Farzana Afrin Rumi, only daughter of Abdul Bari of Pabla upazila, Daulatpur also committed suicide on April 16.

Drug addict Rony and his accomplices allegedly went to Rumi's house and proposed to marry her. As she refused, some of them tried to violate her in front of her family members. Shattered and shamed, Rumi hanged herself from the ceiling fan in her bedroom. Rony is still in hiding.

In Feni, a schoolgirl committed suicide after being gang-raped at Hasanpur on the night of April 17.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

BDR-BSF meeting goes on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The director general (DG) level meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) rolled into the second started, yesterday, at the BDR headquarters.

The delegates discussed the issue of Bangladeshis being killed by the BSF; the bid to push in Bangla-speaking Indians into Bangladesh; construction of illegal structures within 150 yards of the zero line; women and child trafficking etc.

According to sources, more than 57 push-in attempts were made by India in recent times.

The relations between India and Bangladesh were strained because of some sensitive issues like illegal migration. Tension ran high for a week over 213 victims of Indian push-in along the border with Cooch Behar early this year.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

Vehicles plough through stagnated rainwater on a stretch of the road in front of Malibagh rail crossing, as blocked sewers are not letting the water out.

US immigration applications available online from today

BSS, Washington

The US Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) will offer electronic filing of certain application forms from today, a US Embassy press release said yesterday.

BCIS, formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service, issued a fact sheet explaining the programme, said the press release.

The fact sheet says each year the BCIS receives approximately seven million applications for immigration benefits. BCIS has now developed the technology to accept electronic filing of certain applications for immigration benefits.

This technology improves both customer service and BCIS's ability

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

China battles SARS, Vietnam provides ray of hope

AFP, Hong Kong

China was keeping nearly 9,000 people under quarantine Monday as SARS claimed new victims in Asia and Canada, while Vietnam became the first country to successfully contain an outbreak of the disease.

Indonesia also reported its first suspected death from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and the Asian Development Bank warned the health crisis would hit economic growth in East and Southeast Asia.

With new deaths and scores of SARS

cases being reported every day in China, Premier Wen Jiabao vowed the country would defeat the epidemic as he tried to reassure a jittery public that is fliriting with panic.

"I believe the Chinese people will be even more united, and the Chinese nation will emerge from the SARS disaster stronger than ever," said Wen as he made high-profile visits to public places in Beijing.

The new virus first emerged in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong five months ago and has

spread around the world killing at least 318 people and infecting over 5,000.

The World Health Organisation believes controlling the outbreak in China is a key step towards calming global anxiety over SARS, and after months of delays the Chinese authorities have begun taking decisive steps.

Nearly 8,000 people in Beijing and 128 medical facilities are quarantined in Beijing, the worst hit city in China with at least 64 deaths, while over 1,000 people in the east

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Army personnel man hosepipes to supply water to South Sayedabad residents yesterday in the wake of a water crisis sweeping almost all across the city.

PDB glitch breeds brownout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six power generation units of the Power Development Board (PDB) that add about 750 megawatts (MW) to the national grid went out of order over the last few days, causing countrywide frequent brownouts.

The setback has lowered PDB's capacity to 75 per cent of its normal generation. It supplied 3,400 MW to the national grid yesterday.

PDB officials said two units of Ghorashal Power Plant that produce 210 MW power each, two units of Ashuganj which jointly generate 206 MW, one unit of Bherama that produce 20 MW and one unit of Baghamara, which produce 100 MW power went out of order in last 20 days.

The power cut plunged Narayanganj, Manikganj, Narsingdi, Munshiganj, Savar, Barisal, Projpur, Patuakhali, Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur into darkness repeatedly.

However, PDB yesterday claimed that the production of power almost matched demands now and surplus generation would be possible with the repair of the closed units soon.

PDB sources, however, said they had nothing to do with frequent power cuts in Dhaka as they contributed required

amount to Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA).

They said power outage in the city was bred by DESA's poor supply line. DESA officials also admitted their faults.

"All old distribution lines, transformers and grids have to be replaced to meet the growing demand," said a DESA official.

He said with the advent of summer demand for power increased, but the old lines and transformers could not bear the overload, some had to be closed down. It resulted in the power cuts, he added.

He said crores of taka were needed for infrastructural development and new supply lines. "The situation will continue in the city for two to three more years, as we have

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

One confesses links to Srikanta killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Dipok Datt alias Bhola, one of the accused murderers of lawyer Mridul Rakkhit's son, Srikanta confessed to his involvement in the murder before the court here yesterday (Monday).

In a statement, was made before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Monwarul Islam under 164, Bhola identified three persons as the killers. They were FIR enlisted criminals Azim Uddin alias Mahmudya, Jahangir and another criminal named Titu.

DB Police arrested Jahangir, 30, in front of the Sitakunda police station in the afternoon.

A special team of DB police lead by SI Mohiuddin made the arrest and brought Jahangir to the DB Office in the city for interrogation.

During the interrogation Jahangir admitted that he had been arrested while he was trying to flee to Dhaka via Feni by local bus.

Earlier, in a confessional statement Bhola told the court that taking the advantage of previous familiarity with Srikanta he managed to take him to the killers from Srikanta's Hazari Lane residence.

However, he denied his presence in the scene of Srikanta's murder inside one Hazi Shafi's building at Ice Factory Road under the Double Mooring Police Station. Jahangir said that Mahmudya, Jahangir and Titu were inside the house at the time of murder when he was waiting in a car in front of the building.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
April 29		6-26 pm
April 30	5-26 am	

Prayer Timings		
April 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-31	6-37
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation