

# Police murder SI of Fakirhat PS suspended, OC asked to explain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, KHULNA

Sub-Inspector Saifuddinoula of Fakirhat police station has been closed to Bagerhat police lines and placed under suspension on charge of negligence of duty.

OC Nikhil Chandra Das of the police station has also been asked to explain why departmental action should not be taken against him on the same ground.

Police have so far picked up 12 people in connection with police murder and arms looting case. Of them, four including a woman have been shown arrested in the case.

They are Shukumar Halder, 22, Ramesh Chandra, 27, Mohiul Islam, 30, and Khadija Begum, 33. Mohiul Islam has been taken on

remand for three days suspecting him as an outlaw. He is being quizzed at Fakirhat thana.

Besides, Dhiren Biswas, 48, Aslam, 30, and Saidur Rahman arrested on Tuesday are also being interrogation by police.

On Monday midnight, police arrested, Ujjal Hossain, driver of the microbus used by the killers.

Police seized the vehicle from near Kendua bridge in Mollahat upazila.

Ujjal in his statement recorded in the court under Section 164 said that the outlaws rented the microbus (Dhaka-Metro-Cha-02-4137) from Rupsha bus stand.

Meanwhile, there is no headway in the investigation of the case recorded against looting of 20 rifles and 600 bullets from the storeroom of Daulatpur Jute Mill.

## SSKOP iterates demand for 6th Wage Board

BSS, Dhaka

Sangbadik Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) leaders yesterday urged the government and newspaper owners to take immediate initiative for implementing 7-point demand including announcement of 6th Wage Board for the newspapermen.

Announcement of a new wage board for the newspaper industry became very urgent as the lives of the newspapermen are extremely affected by unusual price hikes, the leaders said while addressing a rally of journalists, press workers and general employees in front of the daily Prothom Alo here.

President of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan presided over the rally. It was addressed by SSKOP leaders Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Akhter Ahmed Khan, Omar Faruque, Abdus Shahid, Fazley Imam, Shahjalal Miah, Abul Hashem and Motiur Rahman Talukder.

SSKOP leaders urged the Prothom Alo management to allow trade union activities and implement 5th Wage Board Award in all sections of the newspaper.

A large number of journalists, press workers and general employees from different newspapers and news agencies attended the rally.

## Death Anniversary

The 18th death anniversary of Seraj Uddin Ahmed, former president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries and founder chairman of Elite Group of Industries, will be observed today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil followed by Ziafat will be held at his family residence in Gulshan in the city.

Similar programme has also been taken up at Elite House, O R Nizam Road, Chittagong.

## Rage of 'rapist'

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were a prostitute", the victim told journalists.

The victim then lodged her complain with a magistrate court on March 11.

The court ordered the OC to record the case that the OC was denying on the plea of want of a forensic confirmation of the rape.

The forensic department of Rajshahi Medical College confirmed of the victim's sexual abuse in its report dated March 16.

Later, on April 22, Bagha police recorded her case after she complained to the superintendent of police in Rajshahi. Even then the OC threatened to give a false report if she did not compromise.

Fazlul Haq, OC of the Bagha Police Station, told The Daily Star that the victim's character was 'not so good'.

Haq, however, denied allegations of being influenced or pressuring the victim to compromise.

## 3 more Iraqis

A report from the Arabic television network Al-Jazeera said that 7000 demonstrators were rallying against the US presence in Iraq in the wake of the killings on Monday.

The demonstration was led by the Muslim Brotherhood in its first appearance after the collapse of the Iraqi regime, Al-Jazeera said.

The demonstrators chanted anti-US slogans while US helicopters flew over the city, it said.

When asked if he had information on a shooting in the town, Centcom spokesperson Stewart Upton said "the soldiers retain the right to defend themselves" but that he was "unable to confirm (a shooting) at this time."

Centcom said paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division were fired upon on Monday by 25 armed civilians mixed with a crowd of 200 protestors.

The paratroopers returned fire, wounding at least seven of the armed individuals.

However, witnesses in the town, west of Baghdad, said 13 Iraqis were killed by the US troops.

US Captain Jeff Wilbur, a civil affairs officer for the 1st battalion's 325 Airborne regiment, told Associated Press that US forces were investigating whether protesters had fired on troops. He said it was not clear whether any Americans were hurt in the incident.

City officials who witnessed the gunfire said they saw or heard no shooting from among the protesters.

## Suicide bomber

FROM PAGE 12  
Bank town of Ramallituous speech as the session opened, promised to tackle rampant Palestinian violence.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan condemned the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, but urged Israelis and Palestinians to stick to the peace process, his spokesman said.

"He strongly urges Israelis and Palestinians not to let this morally reprehensible act derail the resumption of the peace process," Annan's spokesman said.



Champions Surya Sen Hall and runners-up Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall of The Daily Star Second Inter-hall English Debate Championship-2003 yesterday pose with the judges and chief guest State Minister for Finance and Planning MA Kabir Talukder.

# Transport workers go on rampage at Magura, beat traffic policeman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Angry transport workers beat up an on-duty traffic policeman at Bhaina square in Magura town at around 10.00am yesterday.

Critically injured Momez Ali, 50, was admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital.

The incident followed the death of the organising secretary of the Magura district unit of the Transport Workers Union (TWU).

Police and witnesses said the organising secretary of Magura TWU, Md Khalur Rahman, was badly injured as he jumped from the roof of the TWU's two-storied office building to escape arrest, when a police team led by two magistrates ANM Abdus Sabur and Kamal Hossain went there at around 7.30 pm on Tuesday.

Khalil was admitted to Magura

Sadar Hospital and he succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Transport workers equipped with sticks chased some on-duty policemen on Magura Sadar Hospital premises at around 9.45 am yesterday. The policemen somehow managed to leave the area.

They also put up a barricade on Magura-Dhaka highway at around 2.00 pm yesterday. But after about 15 minutes police removed the barricade.

In a protest meeting at Bhaina square yesterday afternoon, leaders of the transport workers union set a five-point demand including withdrawal of the DC, immediate arrest of magistrate ANM Abdus Sabur and SI Moshir Rahman, compensation of Tk 5 lakh to the aggrieved family and withdrawal of false cases against Magura TWU leaders.

## BDR, BSF

FROM PAGE 1

Hundreds of people from border village of Boalmari, Chowdhurygachh, Mohigachh, Suvagachh, Danagachh, Mazjeepara, Chari-gachh, Moynaguri, Shalbahan and Pediagachh have fled homes because of heavy firing from across the border.

Road communication to Tetulia was closed to vehicular traffic because of border trouble.

BDR sources said BSF of Nayabari outpost opposite Majeepara opened fire in the morning as villagers obstructed Indian nationals backed by BSF from ploughing a 26-acre disputed land along the Berong river bordering the two countries.

Intermittent firing was going on till 5:30pm when BDR through the hailer asked BSF to stop firing and suggested flag meeting.

BDR Director General Major General Mohammad Jahangir Alam Chowdhury in Dhaka told UNB that he was aware of the incident and talked immediately to his BSF counterpart currently here for a four-day Indo-Bangla border conference.

He said BSF Director General Ajoy Sharma instructed his commander in West Dinajpur via telephone to cease fire immediately.

# How diplomatic can we get?

FROM PAGE 1

macy one doesn't offend anybody, leave alone a minister of another country. Diplomatic slap-on-the-face does happen but not without specific reasons and that too under special circumstances. Nothing like that exists between France and us. In fact our relations are very warm with her. So why this discourtesy?

Our foreign ministry is right when it says the appointment with our prime minister of the visiting French minister was not confirmed and so there cannot be a question of 'cancelling' it. But what was unconfirmed? The appointment itself or its timing? We understand that more than one possible slot of time was under discussion. It is quite normal for an appointment to be taken as fixed while the timing of it remains unconfirmed. Therefore, when the PM's appointment is printed in official programme with the word unconfirmed put within bracket, the French side could easily have understood that only the timing remained unconfirmed and not the meeting itself.

So why was it not made clear to the French side? Why was such an important meeting left to chance? Why wasn't it confirmed either way? Why was the French minister kept under an assumption that the appointment with the prime minister was on? How can a visiting state minister's programme remain unconfirmed till the very end and that too with no less a person than our prime minister? The programme should have clearly excluded the

meeting with the prime minister as it was 'not confirmed'.

The French minister arrived on Saturday; he had an official meeting with our state minister on Sunday forenoon. Following that he had official lunch with our foreign minister. All this while the visiting minister was never informed that his 'unconfirmed' meeting with the prime minister was not to take place. Our information is that the French minister was told that the meeting was not to be, when he boarded his car to start for the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Is that a way to inform an honoured guest?

Then there is a more fundamental question. Why was it impossible for the PM to find time for the French minister? The visit must have been prepared weeks in advance and there must have been numerous discussions on how to get the best out of the visit. So why was it impossible to find time during the two days and two nights (this was definitely not one of those flying visits that we so often see from western leaders) that the French minister was in Dhaka?

We think the foreign minister should have personally intervened and got an appointment. If he tried and did not succeed then it becomes clear that his clout with the PM leaves much to be desired. To cite just one example, there was the farewell call of the Japanese ambassador on that day, which was a courtesy call, and could easily have been shifted to another day. The Japanese ambassa-

dor is still here and we are certain that he would have easily understood the reason for the change.

Our understanding is that the responsibility for this diplomatic fiasco lies in the wall that has been created between the PMO and all line ministries. Communication is virtually impossible with the PMO and the officials there behave as the overlord of the whole government. They have completely isolated the PM and access to her is virtually impossible. We are certain that officials at the PMO kept the PM in the dark about the importance of the event and may have also not brought it to her attention till such time when it became impossible to adjust. The PMO should have clearly informed the foreign ministry that an appointment was impossible. That would have saved the French minister from personal embarrassment and us from a diplomatic blunder.

Here we recall that this was the first ministerial level visit after 12 years. Was it not important enough for us to have prepared more seriously? We must also recall that Khaleeda Zia, during her first term in office, cancelled at the last minute, her official visit to France due to a local election. The French took that cancellation as a snub and since then no high visit took place till this visit. We have definitely mishandled the visit and have hurt a faithful and steady friend. This is no way of improving our image and gaining or even keeping friends. Surely this is no way of conducting diplomacy.

# Investment-friendly fiscal policies

FROM PAGE 1

the disbursement of foreign aid was one of the major factors to the implementation of ADP. Absorbing foreign aid is also crucial in this context, he added.

Muht observed that there should be some standard in the inflow of foreign aid in the context of gross domestic investment (GDI).

"If the foreign aid component is 20 per cent of our GDI, then we are self-reliant," he said.

The amount of public debt should be ascertained at the beginning of the year, he added.

Muht noted that five per cent increase in the government salary structure would require around Tk 3,300 crore annually. It would also raise salaries in other sectors like banking and private jobs.

Hafizuddin said the performance of the Planning Commission was not satisfactory.

He observed that the government should adequately compensate for government officials' salaries, eaten away by inflation.

Motilul Islam said revenue

expenditure should be lower than revenue earning. He stressed the need for private participation in the ADP.

People do not want to see any new tax in the coming budget, said Syeduzzaman. He underscored the need for policies and programmes in the budget to breathe life into the capital market.

As foreign aid is on the wane, the government must give proper attention to mobilisation of internal resources, he added.

He also underscored the need for access to foreign capital and productive use of foreign aid.

Dr Kaniz Siddiqui said public expenditure should be looked in qualitative terms. There should be some sort of macro-economic analysis on the basis of government expenditure.

There should also be some mechanism so that the benefit of public expenditure goes to the poor, she observed.

Mamtauddin said the private sector should be in the saddle of investment as it adds a fillip to growth.

Omar Haider said many projects in the ADP stood unimplemented for lack of sufficient foreign assistance.

He contradicted the idea that the self-reliance depended on the availability of domestic resources.

Giving an overview of the economic condition, Debapriya said Bangladesh's public finance was plagued by low revenue efforts with marginal share of direct tax, rigid revenue expenditure structure along with low-quality ADP.

Weak export performance, decreasing disbursement of foreign aid and drying up of foreign direct investment have kept the balance of payment vulnerable to external shocks, he added.

He stressed the need for changes in the areas. "Otherwise there is a high possibility that the macroeconomic stability will deteriorate once again."

Debapriya also underlined the need for forming parliamentary standing committees on ministries including finance and broadening people's participation in public resources allocation.

# UCEP fears fund crisis

FROM PAGE 12

sations (NGOs) to increase income from internal sources.

While briefing reporters at UCEP head office in the city, its Executive Director Aftab Uddin Ahmad urged local donors to extend assistance to the project.

UCEP officials yesterday were sceptical about positive response from foreign donors for the fifth phase of the programme scheduled to begin next year. They said they were assessing expenditure of the programme, and would send an estimate to donors soon.

Working for children living in urban slums, shanties and squatter settlements, UCEP has successfully completed three phases of its programmes and is going to complete the fourth phase programme this year. The organisation depends on foreign donors for 93 per cent of total programme expenditure and meets the rest from its internal resources.

The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Department For International Development (DFID) have been providing funds for regular UCEP programmes over the previous years.

Operating since 1972 for the underprivileged urban working children aged between 5 to 14 years, UCEP has imparted educa-

tion to 1,14,107 children and managed jobs for 17,332 of them till 2002, the officials said.

Of them, 14,591 have taken vocational training and 3,664 para-trade (electrical, embroidery, screen printing etc.) training.

There are 14 general schools, one technical, and four para-trade schools in Dhaka, eight general, one technical and one para-trade schools in Chittagong, six general and one technical schools in Khulna and two general and one para-trade schools in Rajshahi.

## SARS screening

FROM PAGE 12

medical check-up of crews and officials of foreign vessels calling at the Chittagong port.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna reports: Adequate precautionary measures have been taken at all sea and landports and border transit points of Khulna division to prevent the spread of the SARS virus.

Two separate committees and four medical teams have been formed and will be headed by the Khulna divisional health director Dr. Shamsuddin. A seven-member special medical team comprising four medical officers and three senior staff nurses has also been formed to carry out screening at the Benapole landport.

In addition, a separate ward has been opened at the Infectious Diseases Hospital at Shiromoni of Khulna City for treatment of SARS patients.

Dr. Shamsuddin said similar medical teams will also be sent to Bhomra border of Sathkira and Darshana border of Chuandanga to watch out for SARS-infected persons, adding that no person would be allowed inside the Bangladesh territory without a medical clearance certificate.

The civil surgeon of Khulna said a 10-member high-level committee has been formed with deputy civil surgeon as its head to ensure quick medical treatment of SARS victims. The health director and principal of KMCH will advise the committee.

## SARS scare

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Staff shortage at the hospital delayed the X-ray tests on Jamil Ahmed, the other suspected SARS patient admitted to the hospital delaying diagnosis.

Indian Medical Association (IMA) Kolkata branch secretary Sudipto Roy told PTI that the medical staff were feeling 'positively scared' since the ID Hospital lacked basic protection gear like WHO-specified masks.

"The staff have been given common surgical masks to protect themselves while treating suspected SARS patients. This is not enough to protect them from the virus," he said.

## 13 dacoits

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Rafiqul Islam, 22, who was given first aid, was arrested. He confessed to reporters that they committed dacoity in nearby villages.

Bhaluka police suspect that the gangsters were the operatives of an inter-district syndicate of robbers.

Local deputy commissioner and superintendent of police visited the spot.

A case was filed.

## Final Test

FROM PAGE 12

1-0 lead in the two-match GrameenPhone Test series after their innings and 60-run victory in Chittagong last week.

Bangladesh made one change to the squad that played in Chittagong with left-arm spinner Enamul Haque making way for Mohammad Rafique.

On the other hand, South Africa are also likely to make a change. Robin Peterson is set to make his debut at the expense of left-arm seamer Charl Willoughby.

Both sides had their final nets at the match venue yesterday.

# May Day today

FROM PAGE 1

Police fired on a crowd of workers agitating for their rights, including eight-hour workday, leaving scores killed.

The International Labour Conference in Paris decided on July 14, 1889 to make the day memorable. It declared that May 1 would be observed as the day of international workers' solidarity and establishment of working people's rights. The day has been observed around the world since 1890.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleeda Zia and President of the main opposition Awami League Sheikh Hasina gave messages on the International Labour Day.

Today is a public holiday. Newspapers will run special supplements and electronic media will broadcast programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

Major political parties, including the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Awami League, Jatiya Party and left-leaning parties, have taken up programmes.

Socio-political and cultural organisations and trade unions have planned out rallies, discussions and

musical events today.

The Sex Network of Bangladesh will bring out a procession, demanding rights of sex workers.

The Bangladesh Garment Workers and Employers Federation will stage a rally and a red-flag procession in the city.

A committee against rickshaw ban will organise a protest rally at the Central Shaheed Minar and a procession.

The Karmojibi Nari will submit a memorandum to the labour directorate with a demand for equal wages.

The Blood Donors Federation will organise a blood donation programme at a community centre in Dhanmondi.

The Bangladesh Communist Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, National Hawkers Federation, National Home and Domestic Women Workers Union, Dhaka City Cab Drivers Association, Bangladesh Trade Union Kendro, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Muslim Dal and Bangladesh Nagorik Samaj, among others, have organised programmes to mark the day.

## 4 chargesheeted in Rumi suicide case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four youths have been chargesheeted in college girl Farzana Afrin Rumi suicide case.

The accused are Sajjad Hossain Rony, Hasan Howlader, Mizan and Tayebur Rahman.

Of them, Rony and Mizan have surrendered to the CMM's court while Tayeb and Hasan are still at large.

Police submitted the charge sheet to a magistrate's court here yesterday, 16 days after the case was recorded with Daulatpur police station.

Rony and his associates went to the residence of Farzana Afrin Rumi at Pabla in Khulna city on April 14 and threatened to kill her for not accepting the proposal to marry Rony.

They also made an attempt to violate her chastity. Rumi committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan in her bedroom the same day.

## Ex-student leader assaulted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Mainul Islam Moin, the former vice president (VP) of Sir Salimullah Medical College Students' Union and former president of the college unit of ruling Jatyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), was beaten up severely on the campus yesterday by a fellow JCD leader.

Severely injured Dr Moin is now taking treatment at the Mitford Hospital.

About 10 to 15 outsiders led by the former JCD general secretary, Ershad Ahsan Sohel, assaulted Dr Moin in his room at the intern doctors' hostel at around 4:00 pm with sticks and some blunt weapons.

The attackers took away Tk 25,000, two mobile phones and a wristwatch. Before leaving, they vandalised the room and left Moin in a bad condition.

The attack was followed as Moin had accused Sohel of stealing Tk 5000 sent by Moin's parents by introducing himself as Dr Moin a week ago.

## 50 injured as train derails in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

At least 50 passengers were injured, 10 of them seriously, when four compartments of the Dhaka-bound Ekota Express train from Dinajpur derailed at Pirgachha at 5:30am yesterday, sources said.

A salvage train from Lalmonirhat began rescue operation at 11:00am but rail communications could not be restored till filing of this report at 6:00pm.

The injured were rushed to hospitals at Pirgachha. Divisional Railway Manager of Lalmonirhat Abu Taher along with Pirgachha Upazila Nirbahi Officer visited the spot.

Local people alleged that the accident occurred as sleepers at places of the rail track were stolen and never replaced.



### Browsing fair

The inaugural ceremony of a three-day browsing fair, organised by Cyber Café Owners Association of Bangladesh, will be held with Science, Information and Communication Technology Minister Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan as chief guest. Venue: Rifle Square, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.00am.

### DUJ discussion

Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) organises a discussion on the occasion of historic May Day. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3.00pm.

### Film show

Academy Film Society will screen two films titled 'Leela' and 'Gangs of New York'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 3.30pm and 6.00pm.

### Photography exhibition

The Goethe Institut organises a fortnight-long photography exhibition titled 'Die Neue Mitte'. Venue: Auditorium and exhibition hall of the institute, Dhanmondi. Time: 2.00pm to 8.00pm daily.

### Discussion

Drishitipat Natya Dal organises a discussion and cultural function on the occasion of May Day. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 4.00pm.