

Six of Natore killers identified

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A group of nine criminals are suspected to be directly involved in the brutal murder of Awami League (AL) leader Mamtaz Uddin while seven others helped them from behind the scene, sources said.

Investigators came to know about the identity of the six of the group but the other three who are believed to have executed the murder could not be identified yet, said intelligence sources. All the criminals have remained at large since the killing.

On the fateful Friday evening, the six --- Shamim, Sujon, Faruk, Alam, Babu, Moti and their accomplices Arif, Aslam and Aynal --- all hailing from Arbab union of Lalpur and alleged to be linked to the ruling Party BNP, gathered at

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UPDF office torched in Rangamati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The district unit office of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in Kutukchhori area was torched yesterday.

Police said the fire gutted all official documents and furniture.

The UPDF activists barricaded RangamatiMahalchhori highway following the incident.

Additional army was deployed to prevent untoward incidents.

The UPDF Rangamati district Convener Sachib Chakma alleged the Parbatya Chattagram Jono Songhoti Samity (PCJSS) was behind the incident.

Incidentally, the torching of the UPDF office took place a couple of days after the torching of the PCJSS office at Panchchhori upazila in the Khagrachhori district.

On May 11, the UPDF's Khagrachhori district office was also torched.

Table with 3 columns: Date, Sun Rises, Sun Sets. Rows for June 11 and June 12.

Table with 3 columns: Time, Azan, Jamaat. Rows for Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.

5 corpns in the red owe banks Tk 10,450cr

Units privatised, but manpower not shed

STAR REPORT

Five state-run loss-making corporations owe Tk 10,449.9 crore to foreign financiers and local banks, according to a report of the Public Expenditure Review Commission (PERC).

The corporations are the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation, Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation, Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation and the

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation.

The report said that the jute and textile ministries are obsolete and suggested their abolition.

The PERC report submitted to the finance ministry this month said these five corporations had 330 industrial units, which were later reduced to 223 by privatising the rest. But the corporation head offices did not undergo manpower reduction in line with the privatisation effort. As a result, their expenditure could not be brought

down.

Because of continuous losses, the corporations have completely run out of their capital. To overcome the crisis of running capital, they had to take bank loans.

The accumulated loans of the five corporations till June 30, 2002 was Tk 8,033.57 crore, which is 80 per cent of the amount invested in them. The debt-equity ratio of most of the industries has turned negative, the report said.

Many 'unnecessary' state organi SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Iran challenges US to show nuke evidence

AFP, Tehran

The head of Iran's atomic energy body asserted yesterday that the country was not concealing any of its facilities from UN nuclear inspectors, and challenged the United States to back up accusations to the contrary with hard evidence.

"There are no remaining facilities that should be declared under the provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," Gholam Reza Aghazadeh told a press conference.

He was responding to an IAEA report to member states last week ahead of a Vienna meeting on June 16 with agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei, which found Iran to have made some technical violations of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The United States, which has accused Iran of using civil atomic

energy programmes as a cover to develop nuclear weapons, said the IAEA findings were "deeply troubling" and a cause for world alarm.

But Aghazadeh challenged Washington to come up with hard evidence to back up its mounting pressure, and took a swipe at its failure to uncover any weapons of mass destruction following its invasion of neighbouring Iraq.

"I tell the Americans that this reports contains nothing that can be used as a pretext against the Islamic republic," he said.

"I want to tell the American leaders that one day you will have to give evidence to prove your accusations against us. But first clear up your embarrassment in Iraq before being embarrassed again over your accusations against Iran."

In the light of US pressure, he said the IAEA had a responsibility to

AL asks workers to get ready to resist coalition 'repression'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) has urged the party workers to prepare themselves to resist the 'repression' of the ruling coalition.

"The oppressors will not be able to escape justice," AL General Secretary Abdul Jaill told a rally in the city yesterday.

He said, "Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will be brought to justice for repression on opposition activists during her 20 months rule." Jaill accused the ruling BNP of killing, in a planned way, probable candidates of the AL for the next general elections.

As part of a countrywide programme, the City Awami Jubo League organised the rally in front of the party office at the Bangabandhu Avenue to protest the killing of former AL lawmaker Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed at Natore.

Jaill said, "Just within three days of Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed's killing, the hoodlums of the ruling BNP

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PHOTO: STAR

Incessant rain yesterday left many areas of Chittagong city reeling under water due to drainage problem. This picture was taken at Chawkbazar.

UN HR body concerned at RAB formation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) has expressed concern over formation of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and expressed the fear that this new force might have excessive authority leading to "widespread abuse of power".

The Cabinet on Sunday approved the decision to form the RAB.

As the RAB is expected to consist of members of the armed forces and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Asma Jahangir, special rapporteur on extrajudicial summary or arbitrary executions, conveyed anxiety in a letter to the foreign minister.

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More than 5,000 Bangladeshis behind bars abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 5,000 Bangladeshis are behind bars and in concentration camps in 60 countries, said a report by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) yesterday.

The government officials, attending a press conference on the release of the World Migration Report 2003, said they initiated a process to bring back home the Bangladesh nationals.

According to the report presented by IOM South Asian Regional Representative Shahidul Haque, over 200 Bangladeshis are convicts and the rest were arrested for illegal migration or stay without

valid documents. Daliluddin Mondal, secretary of the expatriates welfare and overseas employment ministry, who attended the press conference as chief guest, demanded relaxation of the restrictions on movement of workers in line with trade liberalisation under the World Trade Organisation.

"A process for release of the Bangladeshis is underway. But it is very difficult, as many of them do not have any document and some do not want to return home," he said.

Nine Bangladeshis were caught in the Philippines a few days ago but refused to come back when the government wanted to help them out, he said to cite an example.

A group of 25 Bangladeshis came back from Egypt two days ago, as they had no valid document, he added.

The UN body report, released worldwide yesterday, says the current global international migration is around 175 million people a year, and around 1.4 million people migrate from the South Asian countries, mainly Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

More than two lakh people go to the Middle Eastern countries for employment every year from Bangladesh alone, and around 3 p e SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Varsity student killed in road mishap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An honours final year student of Jagannath University was killed in a road accident at Senpara Parbata in Mirpur Tuesday night.

The accident occurred when a physics department student Najib Ahmed Rony, 25, was chatting with his friends near Rokeya Sarani at 11:30pm.

A Mirpur-10 bound speeding truck knocked him leaving fatally injured.

Being informed about the incident, Rony's father Shajahan Ahmed rushed to the spot and took him to nearby Al Helal Clinic and later shifted him to the Orthopaedic Hospital. As his condition deteriorated

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Fakirhat AL president gunned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Atahar Ali, 60, president of Fakirhat upazila unit of Awami League and chairman of Bahirdia Union parishad under Bagerhat district was gunned down by unidentified miscreants in front of his residence on Monday night.

According to his wife, a gang of ten armed miscreants called Atahar out of his house at around 11 pm on the pretext of discussing a matter relating to the development of Bahirdia union and shot him in the head and chest. He died on the spot.

The killers immediately left the scene on motorbikes.

According to the locals, the slain UP chairman helped joint forces arrest six armed cadres of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) during the 'Operation Clean Heart'.

Atahar played a leading role in fighting against criminals in his union which is a stronghold of outlawed PBCP, said OC of Fakirhat police station.



PHOTO: STAR

Lawyers brought out a procession from the High Court premises yesterday demanding an end to a unilateral move to amend the Bar Council Order.

'Stop unilateral steps to amend Bar Council Order'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Bar Council yesterday urged an end to a unilateral government initiative to amend the Bar Council Order in a memorandum of six-point demand, submitted to the speaker.

The council also accused the government of delaying the separation of the judiciary from the executive in the memorandum submitted for hearing by the parliament petition committee.

One of the most important demands is the execution of a High Court verdict for amendment to Sections 54 and 167 of the Criminal Procedure Code to stop arrest without warrant and repression by police after arrest and on remand.

The memorandum, submitted by a delegation of the council led by its Vice-Chairman Barrister M Amir-ul Islam, also demanded that revision power be given to district judges through an amendment of Section 115 of the Civil Procedure Code.

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No evidence of structure below Babri Mosque site Archaeological survey report reveals

HINDUSTAN TIMES, New Delhi

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has found no evidence of any structure below the disputed Babri Masjid site at Ayodhya, TV channel 'NDTV 24x7' reported yesterday.

ASI is carrying out an excavation of the site to confirm if a temple existed there before the masjid built five centuries ago.

It has submitted a progress

report to the Lucknow High Court, saying, "While checking the anomalies indicated in the GPR survey report... there were confirmed/partially confirmed in eight trenches. However no structural activities were noticed at the spots of reported anomalies in 15 trenches," the channel said.

In February, Tojo Vikas carried out a ground radar survey and spoke of several anomalies. It also

claimed there was evidence that some structure existed below the surface. However, the excavation is not confirming Tojo Vikas international's claims, the ASI report says.

AFP adds: A move is afoot to defuse the Ayodhya row through talks rather than law courts, according to government and ruling party sources.

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