

Ammunition haul

FROM PAGE 1
The two were linked to the Dinajpur blast earlier this year and an investigation was underway to find their involvement in Joypurhat firefight.

The Detective Branch of police was given the charge to investigate the militant activities as hunt for the militants continued under a joint drive of police and paramilitary BDR.

The investigation officer of the firefight, also the officer-in-charge of the Khetlal Police Station, was relieved of his duty.

Officials said he was served with a show cause notice for neglect of duty and was likely to face action for his 'mysterious absence' in the police raid on Uttar Maheshpur village, defying specific orders.

A senior police officer of Joypurhat yesterday reassessed that they had evidence the militants were plotting a major act of sabotage when police raided the house of Montajer Rahman.

"We are now sure they were planning destructive activities in the night of the firefight," a senior police official said.

Police said they would continue searches in Uttar Maheshpur as they believed the militants left many things in the area.

Thakurgaon police said they believed the arrested suspects Fazle Rabbi, 22, and Lutfar Rahman, 44, were trainers of the outfit. They were held on Thursday from Rani Sankail in Thakurgaon district.

Police arrested Rabbi, a college student of Gaibandha, for his suspicious movement as he tried to flee the scene kicking a policeman after being asked about his identity.

Police arrested him chasing nearly four kilometres and later captured Latifur, a businessman, from a nearby place basing on Rabbi's statement.

Police said Rabbi was earlier held by locals in Hibildarpa in the area when he was imparting "training" to some 20 youths. But he was released with the intervention of one "influential man".

The pair is now being interrogated. "They have already given important information about their activities," a police official said.

Police camp chief suspended, 2 others closed at Patuakhali

UNB, Patuakhali

Patuakhali police outpost in charge has been suspended and two other cops have been closed for negligence of duty.

The action against them followed the looting of a medicine shop near the camp.

Officials said Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury ordered the actions against Abul Kashem, the camp in-charge, and a havildar and a constable at a meeting on the law and order here yesterday.

Medicine worth about Tk 6.50 lakh were stolen from the shop, Dina Medical Hall, about 75 yards off the police outpost, on August 14.

Rob murder case transferred to Speedy Trial Tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The sensational SMA Rob murder case has been transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Khulna, court sources said.

Awami League leader Rob was gunned down in front of his residence at Sonadanga in the city at 1:30pm on August 11, 2000.

After investigation, ASP of CID submitted charge sheet on June 13, 2001 accusing 15 people of the killing.

Of the chargesheeted accused, six are now on bail, five in custody and the rest have been absconding since the murder.

The trial of the case was delayed as complainant Aribur Rahman Mithu, eldest son of the slain AL leader, and his wife did never turn up in the court for deposition.

AL leader, listed criminal killed in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An Awami League leader and a member of an extremist group were killed yesterday in two separate incidents in Pabna district, police said.

Akhtar Hossain, 38, was killed by fellow members of a local extremist group in Sripur under Ataikula Police Station after they called him out of his house on Thursday night.

Police recovered Hossain's body the following morning from a nearby village and suspect the killing might be linked to a feud within the group. The body was sent to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Akhtar Hossain was a listed criminal and had several cases against him, police said.

In another incident on Wednesday night, miscreants hacked to death Hazrat Ali, vice-president of Dhopadaha Union Awami League while he was on his way home in Halughar village under Sathia Police Station.

The miscreants severed his head and took it along.

Hazrat Ali was also a member of Dhopadaha Union Council and was on the managing committee of a local school.

Police said the killing might be a sequel to previous enmity and might have been carried out by an outlawed extremist party.

Two separate cases were filed for the murders but none was arrested till filing this report yesterday evening.

JCD men allegedly beat up BCL activist at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activist was beaten up allegedly by activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the ruling BNP's student wing, on the Jahangirnagar University campus on Thursday night.

ANM Mujibullah Rupom, BCL's student welfare secretary and a student of Philosophy department, has been undergoing treatment at the university's medical centre after he was beaten up allegedly by the JCD cadres for his BCL affiliation.

"Harunur Rashid, secretary of the JU unit of JCD, asked me to meet him at 9:30pm. When I went to him, he handed me over to a group of JCD cadres who took me behind the library and beat me up with iron rods and pipes," said Rupom.

Jubo Dal men seize tenders for LGED road construction project in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Armed Jubo Dal cadres on Thursday stormed into the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) office and expelled 17 contractors waiting to submit tenders for a road construction project, sources alleged.

The LGED had invited tenders for the Tk 2.2 crore project and Thursday was the last day to submit tenders when a group of armed Jubo Dal cadres, reportedly backed by a ruling party lawmaker, approached and ordered the contractors to surrender their tender schedules.

When they refused to do so, the miscreants compelled the contractors to leave the LGED office building at gunpoint. They also snatched the tender schedules and tore those into pieces.

Eyewitnesses said armed cadres of the outlawed PBCP and NBCP of Rupsha and Dumuria upazilas assisted the Jubo Dal cadres in the attack.

LGED Executive Engineer Noor Mohammad said he was not sure about the hoodlignism over tender submission but admitted receiving a petition from the 17 general contractors seeking re-tender for the work.

Polls fair: BNP

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Election Commission deployed a class one officer and a class one magistrate in each polling centre alongside army, paramilitary BDR, police and ansars to maintain law and order.

As a result, no untoward incident was reported and the election was held peacefully. "Even a large number of Awami League leaders who stayed in the constituency for the last few days could not raise any allegation about the polls," he added.

Replying to a question, he said the AL calls polls fair when it wins but terms the same unfair and rigged when it loses. "After defeats in the 1991 general elections, the AL alleged subtle rigging and in 2001, it claimed the polls to have been overtly rigged. Now it is trying to say the by-election was invisibly rigged. But it termed the 1996 national election fair because it won it."

He said the AL held a press conference prior to the end of voting at Tarabo municipality and rejected the ballot, but after counting it found that the AL candidate had won.

The AL called a press conference at 9:30pm at the Netrakona Press Club Thursday night, but called it off as it did not receive any complaint from any place of the constituency, he added.

Bhuiyan, who is also the LGRD and co-operatives minister, said it is not true that the minorities could not cast their vote in the by-polls. There is no instance or allegation of obstruction to voters going to the polling centres, he added.

About the low turnout of voters, he said usually the voters' turnout is above 80 per cent, but the percentage of voters was nearly 63 in the by-

elections. "There was no long queue in Kendua-Atpara because there were large numbers of polling centres and booths and the voters cast their votes without any delay."

On the defeat of the AL candidate, Bhuiyan said the AL candidate was defeated in the last two general elections in the constituency and there were rifts within the party.

The BNP secretary general, however, thanked the main opposition party for participating in the polls and hoped that it would join the Jatiya Sangsad session.

He thanked the people of Kendua-Atpara for electing the BNP nominee. He also thanked the EC officials, troops, law-enforcement agencies and others concerned for ensuring a free, fair election.

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar, Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal President Nazrul Islam Khan and BNP central leader Ahmed Musa were present at the press conference.

Jamal

FROM PAGE 1
reported to be an associate of Abul Kashem Chowdhury, the prime suspect.

A special team of the Detective Branch and Chandgaon police nabbed Kader in a pre-dawn raid at the Bayezid area.

Twelve persons have been arrested so far, obviously to little effect.

The murder of another millionaire businessman Rezaur Rahman Zakir too remains to this day shrouded.

Israel vows more strikes

FROM PAGE 12

In September 2000. "We urge all our cells of fighters in Palestine to strike in every corner of the Jewish state," said a statement by Hamas, which like kindred group Islamic Jihad is sworn to Israel's destruction.

Reformist Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas had sought to curb violence through negotiations, rather than directly confronting Islamic militants, for fear of sparking a Palestinian civil war.

He broke off communication with Hamas and Islamic Jihad after Tuesday's bus bombing and pledged the crackdown on militants called for in the U.S.-backed "road map" to peace which aimed at a Palestinian state by 2005.

Abbas denounced the midday missile strike on Abu Shanab's car in Gaza City as "an ugly crime." Fourteen bystanders were also wounded.

Hamas lobbed more than a dozen mortar bombs at Jewish settlements in Gaza and at least two of its makeshift Qassam rockets hit homes in Sderot, a town in southern Israel, military sources said on Friday. There were no reports of casualties.

Israeli forces have flooded Hebron -- the home town of Tuesday's bomber -- and other West Bank militant bastions, conducting searches for weapons and roundups. The army said 15 suspects were arrested on Friday.

The Gaza Strip, which is densely populated and fenced-off from Israel, has not been subject to broad ground

Allahr Dal

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Their remand will end today while fresh remand will be sought. Three of them were caught from Sunamganj and two from the Sylhet city.

The arrestees are Sohul Ahmed, 25, from Dargah Mohalla of Sylhet city and now living in Hasonnagar of Sunamganj town; Sohul, 20, of Badhonpara in Sunamganj and Siddiqur Rahman Sohul, 20, of Pallabi in Dhaka, Ramzan Ali, 22, of Sardarpara under Bhangura thana of Faridpur, and Rafiqul Islam, 22, of Bhagalpur under Sujanager thana of Pabna.

They were held as police were probing the missing of a boy from Sunamganj town recently. Police also recovered some papers, diaries, and letters from their possession, sources said.

When contacted, the deputy inspector general of police, Sylhet Range, said yesterday the arrestees might be sent to Dhaka for further interrogation by the joint interrogation cell.

Rigging

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The AL leaders made the allegations at a press briefing at the party's Dhanmondi office.

In the past, as in the much criticised 1994 by-election in Magura, the BNP had captured polling stations to win the election, the leaders recalled.

Though the voter turnout in Netrokona was 25 to 30 per cent, it was shown to be 62 per cent, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said.

The party would meet foreign polls observers and discuss this, he said.

AL President Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury later told The Daily Star that the party would decide its next course of action on the by-election fraud after the party chief returns from abroad today (Saturday).

AL Acting President Abdus Samad Azad alleged that the government failed to ensure security of the voters.

Party leaders Zillur Rahman MP, Sajeda Chowdhury, Dr Abdur Razzak MP and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin were also present at the press conference.

operations. That could now change, the Israeli security source said.

"We are not ruling out major action in Gaza," he said. He named Rafah, a town straddling the Gaza-Egypt border and favored by Palestinian gunrunners, as one likely target.

Faced with the prospect that the peace "road map" could fold under the weight of new violence, Secretary of State Colin Powell turned for help on Thursday to Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian president whom Washington has tried to sideline and a pariah to the Israelis.

AFP adds: The Palestinian militant groups Islamic Jihad and Hamas issued a joint statement Friday formally ending their seven-week-old truce because of an Israeli air strike that killed a top militant leader.

The statement blamed Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for wrecking the truce that the Palestinian militants declared unilaterally on June 29 and which Israel considered dead after a massive suicide bombing in Jerusalem Tuesday.

Hamas effectively called off the truce Thursday after Ismail Abu Shanab, one of its top officials, was killed with two bodyguards in a hail of rocketfire on his car in central Gaza. But Islamic Jihad waited until Friday.

"We announce together today that Sharon assassinated the truce and delivered the final blow in killing political leader Ismail Abu Shanab," the joint Hamas-Islamic Jihad statement said.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians were expected to jam the streets of Gaza for Abu Shanab's funeral Friday as anger mounted over the latest Israeli airstrike.

Nearly 20,000 Palestinians held impromptu rallies in various parts of Gaza Thursday crying for vengeance, and more were expected for a funeral likely to turn into an outpouring of grief and anger.

One gets life for murder in Naogaon

BSS, Naogaon

A court here on Thursday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for killing a rickshaw-van worker union leader Azhar Ali Sarder in 1997.

Additional District and Sessions Judge-2 SM Solaiman also fined the convict, Zillur Rahman, Tk 10,000, in default he is to suffer one more year in jail.

The judge acquitted four others as charges brought against them were not proved.

According to the prosecution, Azhar Ali, 40, of Rampur village under Manda upazila of the district was killed by the convict and his accomplices on June 19, 1997 as they could not extort money from him. Azhar's body was found hanging from the ceiling of a local club.

Ametun, the victim's wife, filed a murder case with Manda Police Station on June 21 the same year.

After investigation, police submitted chargesheet to the court accusing five persons.

1971 war

FROM PAGE 1

made public for over a decade now.

Sources said the external affairs ministry is against the publication of these accounts considering the possible effects it might have on India's relations with its neighbours.

But the defence ministry is now learnt to have addressed the concerns of the external affairs ministry.

Sources said the official history of 1971 war contains information on, among other things, the Mukti Bahini.

Hasina returns home today

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina returns home today from the United States.

She left Dhaka for Montreal, Canada, on August 7 to attend a ceremony where her daughter Sayma Wazed Putul received the prestigious "Certificate of Merit for Excellence in Student Award" for research work. Then she went to Miami, USA.

Sheikh Hasina will return to Dhaka from Miami via London, party sources said.

2 killed in Bogra road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Two people were killed and a physician was critically injured in a road accident involving a private car and a truck on the Bogra-Dhaka Highway under Sherpur upazila yesterday morning.

One of the deceased is car driver Shaheen Alam, 28, while the other person could not be identified.

Seriously injured Bangladesh expatriate in London Dr Gias Uddin, son of late Kasim Uddin of Nataram village under Badorgon upazila in Rangpur district, was first taken to Bogra Mohammed Ali Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at about 12:30pm yesterday. He is a relative of former home minister Dr MA Matin and State Minister Iqbal Mahmud Tuku.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred near the Ghoga Bridge at about 6:30am when a Bogra-bound truck (Bogra-TA-11-0204) hit a Dhaka-bound private car (Dhaka-Metro-GA-13-3861) smashing the vehicle.

A case was filed with Sherpur Police Station.

Merchant's son

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ransom of Tk 30,000 at around 1:30pm Thursday.

Another source said the abductors demanded Tk 30 lakh for release of Simon, who has recently returned home from Darjeeling in India.

Simon's family could not be contacted to confirm it.

BRTA

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heavy vehicle like bus, a driver must have a three-year experience of driving light vehicles such as car, pickup and microbus," said a traffic sergeant.

"But most public transport drivers don't have even a one-year experience let alone three years," said the traffic sergeant on condition of anonymity.

"If I find a driver without driving licence, I can fine him only Tk 200 which is not enough to check such a malpractice," he said.

"And if I find any vehicle unfit, I can fine its driver only Tk 700 which is too inadequate for a penalty. The drivers or owners pay the fine and get back to the street," the sergeant went on.

Asked why police do not take action against the drivers without valid papers, he said, "Our law has so many loopholes and offenders can escape punishment easily."

Another traffic sergeant said police often do not penalise fake licence holders, mindful of their poor economic condition. "I understand such sympathy encourages them to use fake licences," he said.

A top BRTA official admits to the presence of the fake licence rackets. "We have formed a mobile team to check the proliferation of fake fitness certificates and licences. If any BRTA official is found guilty, the authorities will take stern disciplinary action against him," said the official requesting anonymity.

Poverty

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PRSP by December 2004. This will help the government get loans from donors.

"But we believe the conventional structure of the government will not help eradicate poverty," said a Perc member.

The Perc in its latest report maintains that there are already four similar technical projects being implemented by the Planning Commission at a cost of Tk 50.22 crore of which Tk 20.36 crore has already been spent. The budget for the projects in the current fiscal is Tk 4.87 crore.

"Undertaking several technical projects for the same purpose creates unwanted duplication and wastage of public funds," a Perc member observed. "When the Planning Commission already has a huge number of computers, cars and air-conditioners under the existing projects, what could be the justification for buying more under another project?"

In addition, the technical project prescribes a structure for implementation of the PRSP that is altogether different from the possible structure. The structure also did not follow the one suggested in the IPRSP.

Moreover, it has suggested that one person -- a member of the GED -- will head all the three committees, which the Perc feels will create imbalance and make the committees non-transparent.

Ozone hole may get to record size

REUTERS, Sydney

The ozone hole over the Antarctic is growing at a rate that suggests it could be headed for a record size this year, Australian scientists say.

A study by Australian Antarctic bases attributed the development to colder temperatures in the stratosphere where the ozone hole forms.

"The growth at the moment is similar to 2000 when the hole was a record size," Australian Antarctic Division scientist Andrew Klekociuk told Reuters on Friday.

Ozone is a protective layer in the atmosphere that shields the Earth from the sun's rays, in particular ultraviolet-B radiation that can cause skin cancer, cataracts and can harm marine life.

In 2000, Nasa said the ozone hole expanded to a record 28.3 million sq km (10.9 million sq miles), three times the size of Australia or the United States, excluding Alaska.

"This is in contrast to the situation in 2002 when unusually warm conditions produced the smallest ozone hole since 1988," Klekociuk said.

The ozone hole in 2003 presently covers all of the Antarctic.

Klekociuk said scientists at Australia's Davis Antarctic base saw the first signs of cooling of the lower stratosphere, 15 to 25 km (nine to 15 miles) up, about six weeks earlier than usual.

In a visual sign the ozone hole would grow rapidly this year, scientists at Australia's Mawson base have reported the early appearance of stratospheric clouds, which create a spectacular lightshow by defracting sunlight around sunset.

Chemical reactions in these clouds convert normally inert man-made chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into ozone destroyers. CFCs are commonly used as propellants in spray cans.

The 1997 Kyoto treaty set in place a global process to reduce greenhouse gases which deplete the ozone layer, but the world's biggest polluter the United States has yet to sign.

Clouds do not usually form in the stratosphere due to its extreme dryness, but during some winters temperatures become low enough to allow their formation.

"In 2000 we didn't see the stratospheric clouds until the beginning of July. This year we saw them about the middle of May which is the earliest we have seen them," Klekociuk said.

The full extent of the 2003 ozone hole will not be known until the end of September, as August and September are the coldest months for the South Pole.

Temperatures begin to warm by early October and the ozone layer will then start to recover.

Now it's river staff's turn to threaten strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

River transport employees and workers have put forward a 26-point demand with an ultimatum that if the authorities do not meet their demands by September 24, they will go for an indefinite strike from the next day.

The Noujan Sramik Federation, an organisation of the employees and workers of eight types of river transport, gave the ultimatum at a rally at Barisal launch terminal Thursday night.

The river transports include passenger launches, cargo vessels, fishing trawlers and oil tankers.

Federation President and oil trader Golam Mowla chaired the rally, which was addressed by Khwaza Iqbal, district unit president of the pro-government Jatiyatabadi Noujan Sramik Karmachari Dal, and federation leaders Abdul Malek, Sheikh Abul Hashem, Abul Bashar and Abul Hamid.

They said a memorandum containing their demands was submitted to the ministries concerned on March 15 this year but a response was yet to be received. Their demands include increase in pay and other benefits of the employees and workers, an end to toll collection, enforcement of relevant laws for operation of launches, filling up of all vacant posts of master and driver of vessels, modernisation of river transports as per rules, steps to ensure navigability of river routes and marking the danger points in the routes.

An indefinite strike by launch owners from August 12 to press certain demands ended on its seventh day without any of the demands met.

Test day

FROM PAGE 1
bowler Shoaib Akhtar for 13. Sanwar Hossain also departed with a LBW decision to paceman Shabbir Ahmed 10 runs later.

The morning also started brightly for the Tigers, who took only 23 overs to remove the remaining five Pakistan wickets, conceding 45 runs. The hosts were bundled out for 346 in their first innings giving them a 58-run lead.

Bangladeshi bowlers showed real discipline and bowled according to the field placement, and just three runs were scored in the first half an hour. Fast bowler Mashrafe bin-Mortuza gave the breakthrough when he trapped Misbahul Haq plumb in front with the score on 304.

In his hostile first spell, Mashrafe bowled seven overs and conceded seven runs with two maidens while his new-ball partner Taposh Baishya supported him with figures of 5-3-2-0.

Mashrafe and left arm spinner Mohammad Rafique were the most successful Bangladeshi bowlers, evenly sharing six wickets among them. However, the biggest cheer of the day was reserved for captain Khaled Mahmud, who at last claimed his elusive Test wicket by taking the return catch of Danish Kaneria.

It was only Mahmud's second wicket in eight Test appearances.

The only resistance came from Pakistan captain Rashid Latif, who was unbeaten on 54.

5 Barisal AL men

FROM PAGE 12
Station yesterday morning as complainant.

In the FIR, the BNP worker alleged that the five AL men led by Siraj and Jalal Sikder stormed into Sikderpara Club in Alekanda area of the city late Wednesday night and damaged the portraits. Police could not nab any of the accused till yesterday evening.