

Businessmen shot dead

FROM PAGE 1
elder brother Farhad Hossain. "Sayem told me that he will be back within 10 minutes."

Body of Sayem was seen at 9:00am floating just 100 yards away from where Shahidul's body was found at 6:30am.

Police said conflict between friends might have led to the killings, but declined to elaborate.

In the other incident Mirpur, a gang of three shot garment waste trader Shaikh Shahid, 40, in front of his warehouse on the Major Road at 4:30pm, injuring him fatally.

"Three young men ran towards Shahid when he was talking with a man. One of them pulled out a pistol and shot once in the forehead point blank," said Liton, a hired hand at the warehouse.

He was rushed to the DMCH where he died from his wounds at 6:00pm.

Mannan, the victim's younger brother, said an unknown caller phoned Shahid yesterday and asked him to give some money to a boy he was sending.

"A few hours later a boy came to my brother and he gave him only Tk 500. Later, the caller threatened to kill my brother as he was unhappy with such a small amount given as extortion,"

Two criminals nabbed with arms, bullets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

District police yesterday held two from notorious Didar Bahini with two firearms and 68 bullets in separate raids in Fatikchhari.

A police team arrested Mohammad Sayem Uddin in Yeasin Nagar at around 4:00am and recovered one foreign shotgun and 37 bullets. The same team arrested Jan-e Alam in Azimpur and recovered one DBBL gun and 31 bullets at around 6:00am, sources said.

Two separate cases were filed with Fatikchhari Police Station.

Sylhet transport strike called off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Sylhet Division Transport Owners and Workers Unity Council (SDTOWUC) called off the indefinite transport strike in Sylhet division Saturday night after a meeting with the divisional administration.

The four-hour meeting between the divisional authorities and the SDTOWUC ended at 11:15pm with the decision to withdraw the strike that began from Saturday morning as the divisional commissioner assured transport owners-workers that proper measures would be taken to meet their demands.

The meeting also decided to restrict plying of BRTC buses in the city and put an end to toll-collection on Sylhet-Tamabil highway within a fortnight, meeting sources said.

The SDTOWUC called the strike to realise their 20-point demands. All modes of transport remained off the roads during the strike.

The divisional commissioner chaired the meeting at the deputy commissioner's office while deputy inspector general of Sylhet police, deputy commissioner of Sylhet, additional deputy commissioners, representatives of political parties and the SDTOWUC leaders attended the meeting.

WB, IMF ask govt

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Relations Division (ERD) said.

The General Economic Division (GED) of the Planning Commission has already initiated the preparation of the full PRSP. It has already established a Poverty Focal Point as part of the preparation of the document as suggested by the IMF, sources said.

The main purpose of the full PRSP is to alleviate poverty, attain rural development, spur GDP growth, empower women, broaden health facilities and enhance literacy rate, according to the sources.

The I-PRSP set the GDP growth at 6.5 per cent by 2006-2007 and halving the poverty by 2015.

The I-PRSP also lays out a broader vision for the future along with a medium term economic strategy like achieving growth with a poverty focus by building on macro-economic stability, implementing a set of long overdue structural reforms in the banking and energy sectors, investing in human development and improving quality and access to education and health services, especially for poor and women.

"Bangladesh's I-PRSP constitutes a cohesive policy framework to increase growth and reduce poverty. However, some weaknesses remain to be addressed in the transition to the full PRSP," the report observed.

Elaborating, the report said it will be important to sharply prioritise near-term policies in key sectors and anti-poverty programmes, and incorporate their full cost into the medium term budget framework.

There is a need to meaningfully address capacity constraints for effective implementation and monitoring of the strategy. It will also be crucial to design a more cohesive strategy for human development.

On political governance, the latest joint report said greater emphasis is needed to be given on political govern-

Mannan said. He however did not mention anyone's name.

Police also suspected Shahid might have been killed by extortionists, who used to collect tolls from garment waste traders.

Son of Abdul Aziz, Shahid was a resident at Uttar Bisil in Mirpur.

At Shantinagar, extortionists shot and critically wounded a young cable network provider for his refusal to pay tolls.

Mujibur Rahman, 22, was struck by three bullets in the abdomen and two in the right leg. He is undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

The bill was passed on September 17 incorporating some reforms and including certain changes in election procedures of Bar Council.

"The act has been passed with a design to cripple the judiciary system," said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil at a press conference at the party's central office.

He claimed that the provision of debaring candidates from being elected for three terms on a trot was made as the pro-government aspirants had been defeated by rivals in the Bar Council polls.

The AL leader also said the Civil Procedure Code (Amendment) Act, passed on July 19 in the Jatiya Sangsad, was introduced by the government to make justice costly for the poor.

Referring to the amendment, he said, anyone seeking time extension will now have to pay Tk 5,000. Poor people do not get benefit of justice because they can not pay for legal battles, he observed.

The AL also criticised the change brought about in the Bar Council election process, under which seven regional representatives would be elected through the franchise of the voters from their respective constituency instead of voters from across the country.

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Trial of Nurul Islam murder adjourned till October 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

The trial of the Laxmipur BNP leader Nurul Islam murder case has been adjourned till October 7 following a Naraji petition filed by the defendants.

Judge M Hasan Imam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong adjourned the trial as the defendant's lawyer Advocate Ranagan Das submitted a Naraji petition under CrPC 526 and expressed doubt about the fair trial in the tribunal.

The advocate also informed the court that the defendant would file a fresh petition before the High Court Division to transfer the case from the tribunal.

On hearing the petition, the tribunal adjourned the hearing of the prosecution witnesses for next 15 days and fixed October 7 for next hearing in case of failure in obtaining the High Court order within the time.

So far, only two hearings were held on September 15 and 20.

Meanwhile, prosecution lawyer, also Special Public Prosecutor and the murdered BNP leader's brother, Tajul Islam said the postponement was to delay the case further. Such postponement had already delayed the case twice, he added.

Grenade found at orphanage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A powerful hand grenade was recovered from an orphanage at Sonadanga yesterday morning.

The hand grenade could have claimed several lives at the Home of Blessings, an orphanage aided by Christian Service Society (CSS), a non-government organisation.

Police recovered the grenade from near the administrative building of the orphanage that hosts 800 orphans. Fortunately, it did not explode, said the officer in-charge of Sonadanga Police Station.

Police and the CSS sources said activists of an unidentified Islamic militant group had threatened to blow up the orphanage.

Panic gripped the residents of the orphanage. A general diary (GD) has been filed with Sonadanga Police Station.

Ansar kills himself in accidental fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

An ansar killed himself by accidentally firing his rifle into his chest in Sylhet Osmani International Airport area yesterday.

Airport sources said Afsar Ali, 22, was on duty in the car parking area at about 1:30pm and was giving instructions to his colleagues on proper use of a rifle.

He was rushed to MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, where the physicians declared him dead.

Afsar hailed from Moskapur village under Golapganj upazila of Sylhet. Officials said his body will be sent to his village today after autopsy.

AL demands cancellation of Bar council act amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday protested enactment of the Bangladesh Legal Practitioners and Bar Council (Amendment) Act, 2003 and demanded its cancellation saying the amendment was made to politicise the judiciary.

The bill was passed on September 17 incorporating some reforms and including certain changes in election procedures of Bar Council.

"The act has been passed with a design to cripple the judiciary system," said AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil at a press conference at the party's central office.

He claimed that the provision of debaring candidates from being elected for three terms on a trot was made as the pro-government aspirants had been defeated by rivals in the Bar Council polls.

The AL leader also said the Civil Procedure Code (Amendment) Act, passed on July 19 in the Jatiya Sangsad, was introduced by the government to make justice costly for the poor.

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South Talpatty

FROM PAGE 1
on high or low tides, the total land area of the island varies between 13,000 and 30,000 square kilometres.

Oceanographic, geographic and hydrological data clearly prove that the island falls within Bangladesh's maritime boundary, according to a study by Dr Mohammad Abdur Rab, a professor of geography at Dhaka University.

The island emerged during the destructive cyclone that ravaged the southern Bangladesh in 1970, then East Pakistan. But the then government and also the government of the newly liberated Bangladesh did not take any concrete steps to control the land, which was later annexed by India.

President Ziaur Rahman took the initiative to recover the land from India, but with his death the process stalled.

The standing committee observed that Bangladesh Navy is currently short-staffed and lacks necessary arms and logistic support in the context of modern-day warfare, and emphasised the need to equip the navy to ensure sovereignty of the country's maritime territory.

Navy Chief Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba informed the meeting that most of the ships of the navy are 20 years or older, meeting sources said.

Navy officials also told the meeting that the navy is facing difficulty in discharging its duties due to insufficient manpower and logistic support, and recommended sanction of modern equipment and more manpower to strengthen the force.

Tigers chase 303

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On the field, Pakistan played with Shabbir Ahmed and Yasir Hameed in place of dropped fast bowler Junaid Zia and opener Imran Nazir, while Bangladesh retained the same team which lost the fourth match by five wickets at Rawalpindi.

Inzamam gave the final touches with a 54-ball 52 that included three boundaries and a six to help Pakistan add 87 runs in the last 10 overs and post a winning total.

Opting to bat after winning the toss, Pakistan were given a sound start of 95 by Hameed and Mohammad Hafeez by the 23rd over as both handled Bangladesh bowling with ease.

Left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique's introduction provided the tourists with the first breakthrough when Hafeez was stumped for 44, studded with seven boundaries.

Youhana continued his good form with a whirlwind 52 off just 32 balls spiced with three towering sixes and six boundaries. He helped Hameed add 74 runs for the second wicket off just 66 balls to lift home team's run rate.

Bangladesh pacer Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza helped his team by striking twice, trapping Youhana leg before wicket in the 34th over and then dismissing Younis Khan for nine.

3 US soldiers wounded by mortars

US Brigadier General Janis Karpinski told reporters on a tour of the facility last week that "four nights out of seven we get attacked with mortars, rocket or AK-47s".

Military police patrolled the streets of the nearby town of Abu Gharib as several helicopters flew low over main highways and deserted industrial sites.

Barely a half hour before the mortars fell, a soldier of the US 3rd Armored Cavalry died after an attack by an improvised explosive device in Ramadi, 110 kilometres from the capital.

CPA conference

FROM PAGE 1

tively to the reasonable demands of the opposition in time," Hasina's political secretary, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, told The Daily Star by phone last night.

"We gave the government the benefits of time and doubt, but unfortunately they chose not to respond to us appropriately."

"We made it clear to the Commonwealth envoys that the Awami League wanted the event a complete success. We had thought the forum would present an excellent platform for the government and the opposition to work together."

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid told the envoys that Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar informed him earlier on the day that the CPA conference steering committee would retain Harris Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali, the two non-parliamentarian political secretaries of the prime minister, as members.

Saber said it was not just a question of retaining the pair on the committee, but a mirror to the government's mindset of acting on its own, un mindful of the opposition role.

Amid growing concerns of the Commonwealth, including its member nations Britain and Australia and the CPA secretariat, over boycott threat of the conference by the opposition, the government offered to allow Hasina's speech in the launch or close of the event.

It also agreed to co-opt more opposition deputies in the steering and other sub-committees.

The government, however, dug its heels on the Harris-Mosaddek case, an option totally unacceptable to the AL that even disregarded the speaker's proposal that they would not join any meetings of the steering committee.

The AL also raised questions about transparency in the expenditure of Tk 5 crore allocated to host the conference.

JCD men threaten

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seven medical officers in the emergency ward -- to pay the JCD cadres.

"As I refused to pay the money Dr Jahangir threatened me with dire consequences during an altercation. Later, two JCD activists came to the emergency ward on Saturday morning and threatened to kill me when I refused to pay them tolls."

"They also declared me unwanted and asked me to quit the hospital immediately," Dr Farhad added.

"The JCD activists left the scene when policemen came. Later, I filed a general diary (GD) with Panchlaish Police Station and sought the help of police to ensure my safety and security," Farhad added.

He said a written complaint was also submitted to the director of the CMCH in this connection. "But hospital authorities are yet to take any action," he added.

Sources said a number of complaints of irregularities were submitted to the hospital authorities earlier against the resident surgeon (general). But no action was taken on the basis of complaints.

The director of the CMCH was unavailable for comments.

Dr Md Jahangir however said, "The allegation raised against me by Dr Farhad Hossain is totally false. I was never involved in collection of tolls for the JCD cadres, as I don't belong to them. I belong to Bangladesh Medical Association."

"Dr Farhad cooked up a story

Block 9 sellout

FROM PAGE 1
oil companies during the second round block bidding, the sources claimed.

"But everyone excepting Niko refused," said an industry insider. According to him, Chevron-Texaco did not ask the block's operator Tullow whether it wanted to buy the stakes although the Irish company reserves the first right to buy the share if the deal was transparent.

Uncomfortable with Tullow as a partner, Chevron-Texaco believed that Tullow alone could not carry out all the responsibilities of block 9 due to its financial constraints, the source said.

Niko, on the other hand, is even weaker than Tullow in financial and technical terms. But a very powerful political lobby promised Chevron-Texaco a "smooth transition" of the deal should one be struck with Niko.

Another industry insider observes, "When Cairn sold its shares in blocks 15 and 16 to Shell, it brought in a big company. When Occidental sold its concerns to Unocal, it was also a competent spouse. Again, when Shell sold its shares back to Cairn last month, we could accept it because Cairn is the original owner of the shares," said the source.

"But Niko taking place of Chevron-Texaco does not fit any rationality. Niko was disqualified in the second round bidding and it's not even half the strength of Tullow," the source notes. "And the PSC does not allow such sale of shares."

The PSC's section 31.3 that allows the PSC partners to assign any part or all of its rights, interests and obligations to a non-affiliated third party clearly demands prior

written approval of the government and Petrobranga.

One of the conditions for such a deal suggested by the PSC says, "The proposed assignee or assignees must produce reasonable evidence to Government of its or their financial and technical competence."

The PSC points out, "Petrobranga shall have the right to assign any or all of its rights, interests and obligations under the Contract to any company or enterprise under its control."

Even the lone clause that allows transfer of interest to any party seeks government approval. "... any transfer of all or any part of a Party's interest in the PSC... shall not be subject to any preferential rights by the other Parties. The Party transferring its interest at its sole discretion may elect to assign all or any part of its interest to any party of its choosing. Approval of the Government will be needed for any such transfer."

But the Chevron-Texaco's Wednesday's letter to Petrobranga states that the sale of its shares to Niko is effective from that day. The American company also sent a similar letter to Tullow that enraged the Irish company.

In a letter to State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Mosharraf Hossain, Tullow writes, "We do not accept that they have the right to transfer their interest in this manner and at this time and we would request the full support of the Ministry and the Government in preventing the implementation of this action."

Petrobranga is currently scrutinising the legal aspects of the Chevron-Texaco letter.

After the Advisory Council meeting, Jalil said: "We find no logic in attending a conference in which the government totally ignores the main opposition."

"The government did not want our active participation, it expected our ceremonial presence in the conference."

On the government overtures, he said it was too late to invite the opposition. "Can you get back the meetings of the steering committee which were held without our representation?" he asked.

Replying to a question if the Commonwealth envoys asked the AL to join the programme, Jalil said, "We have taken the final decision and there is no scope to change it."

Earlier on September 14, coming out of an AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) meeting, Hasina threatened to skip the conference.

Hasina is likely to undertake a US visit when Dhaka will host the conference.

2 vessels collide

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The accident occurred when an HRC ship MV Bangabiraj and a Panama flag carrier MV Eagle Strength collided head-on at the Bandar Channel near BNS Flotilla at around 6:30pm. MV Bangabiraj was leaving the port with some 300 containers, while MV Eagle Strength was entering the port from the outer anchorage with around 750 containers.

MV Eagle Strength rammed into the naval ships, causing huge damage.

The naval ships that were damaged in the collision include BNS Jamuna, Surabhi, Shagor, Shapla, Barkat, Anirban and two other ships, sources said.

N'ganj fire

FROM PAGE 1
chairman and other high officials, Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haq ordered the formation of the inquiry committee with a three-day deadline for submission of its report.

BTB sources hinted that the fire could be sabotage: in case of short-circuit, the fire is generated in the battery section and spreads, but yesterday's flame started in the MDF room.

The sources added: The fire originated at about 5:30am but firefighters were informed one and a quarter hours later.

The MDF room is a restricted area, but a set of "middlemen has an easy access there", one of the sources said.

But an on-duty ansar in Narayanganj said Kamal Uddin, a telecoms operator, first found the flame and informed him about it, but they could not douse the fire as the MDF section was locked.

Failing to call the fire brigade because of the damage to telephone lines, they informed firemen about it reaching their office on foot, another ansar said.

Shamim Ahsan, the fire brigade station officer, told The Daily Star that they were informed about the fire at 6:47am and extinguished it by 7:30am.

This was the second fire here this year, with the first blaze having severely damaged the BSCIC telephone exchange at Panchabati.

BNP team

FROM PAGE 12
the goodwill tour.

The other members of the delegation are BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council Member MM Rezaul Karim, State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar, Deputy Minister for Land Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, BNP lawmakers Helaluzzaman Talukder Lulu, Zahiruddin Swapan and Sarwar Jamal Nizam, BNP's Information and Research Secretary Mofiqul Hasan Tripty, Jatiyatabadi Sechchashebak Dal President Rezvi Ahmed, Assistant Office Secretary of BNP Syed Emran Saleh Prince, JCD President Shahabuddin Ahmed Laltu, Bogra district BNP leader Atiqur Rahman, and two personal aides of Tareque Rahman -- Raquibul Islam Bakul and Sajjadur Rahman Knight.

Hawa Bhaban sources said most members of the delegation are close associates of Tareque Rahman and are also on good terms with Bhuiyan.

The selection has reportedly annoyed several senior leaders based in Hawa Bhaban who were left off the list. They contended that the delegation should have had more important and senior party leaders on it and that more than one people on the delegation are currently not in any position with the BNP, but were chosen only because of their close association with Tareque Rahman.

Party sources said despite CPC's repeated requests to expedite the tour programme, strong lobbying by ministers, lawmakers and party leaders to include them on the delegation and the SARS scare following outbreak of the epidemic in China delayed the selection process.

Details of the tour programme in China including names of Chinese leaders the delegation will call on during the visit has remained a closely guarded secret; even names of the delegates were not disclosed until last night.

Rich countries have pledged to increase foreign aid, and poor countries have pledged to improve their policies and institutions, to try to reach the Millennium Development Goals, he mentioned.

Unaid Kamal Ahmed cited the example of the Rural Electrification Board (REB), saying electricity is being delivered in rural areas of Bangladesh through the REB, while the Power Development Board is incurring losses.

Army personnel arrested nine miscreants from different areas of the district and recovered several firearms and 1,500 bullets during the last one and a half months.

Reviewing the existing manpower and logistics of the navy, the committee recommended providing it with latest arms and equipment.

"We've recommended building the navy as a three-dimensional force, bringing air, land and water under its reach," Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, water resource minister and a member of the committee, said.

The committee also discussed the activities of the Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) and the survey directorate.

Committee members and officials concerned were present.

Caretaker govt

FROM PAGE 1
recommendations on how the caretaker government can run impartially."

The AL general secretary alleged that in the last general elections, three persons -- president Shahabuddin Ahmed, chief adviser of the caretaker government Latifur Rahman and Chief Election Commissioner MA Sayeed -- failed to play an impartial role. "These three persons were purchased and they betrayed the people," he added.

He said the AL introduced the concept of caretaker government to establish people's voting right, but it failed to fulfil people's expectations during the last general elections.

Yesterday's meeting formed three wings of the AL advisory committee -- political wing with Shamsul Huda Harun as its chairman, economic wing headed by former finance minister SAMS Kibria and the social wing with former education minister ASHK Sadique as the chairman.

The meeting also reviewed in detail the latest political developments.

Former finance minister AMA Muhit, Mazharul Islam, Amir-UI Islam, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University AK Azad Chowdhury, Krishak League President Mirza Jalil, Mustafizur Rahman, Shafiqullah, Golam Maola and former secretary to the government Mohammad Ali also attended the meeting.

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