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Father, son shot dead inside Pallabi house

Agitated locals besiege Pallabi Police Station, half-day hartal called in Mirpur Section-11 today

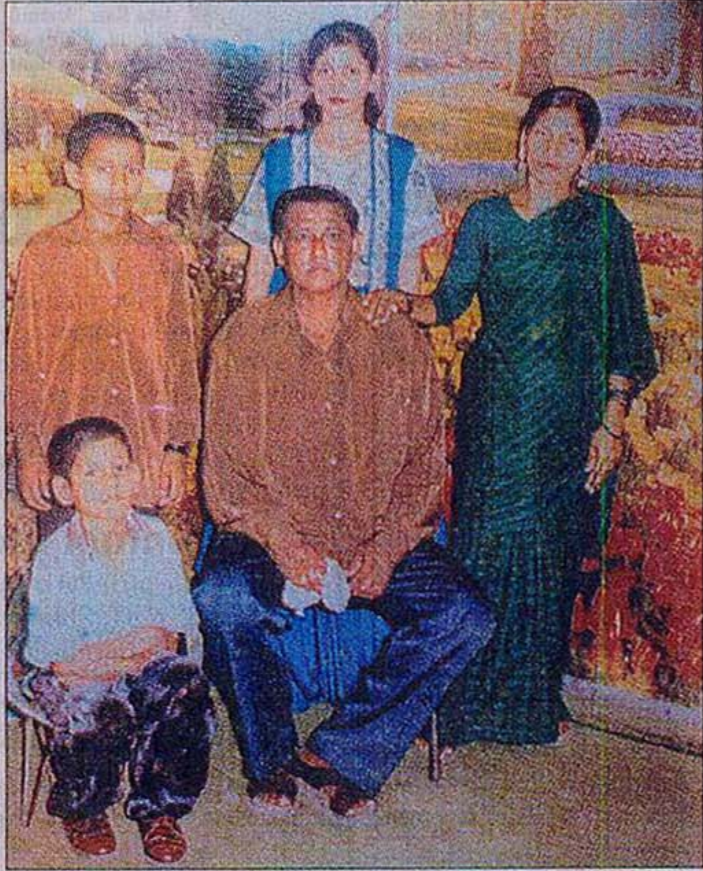
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified armed assailants shot and killed a stranded Pakistani trader and his teenage son barging into their house at a camp in Pallabi yesterday.

Following the killings of Fakhruddin Ahmed, 50, a salt dealer, and his son Miraj, 14, the Stranded Pakistanis' Youth Rehabilitation Movement has called a half-day hartal beginning from 6:00am today at Mirpur Section-11.

Agitated locals and traders also laid siege to Pallabi Police Station for about half an hour until Officer-in-Charge Nurul Amin assured them of an immediate arrest of the killers.

The family was about to have their breakfast at their tin-roofed house in Stranded Pakistanis Non-local Rahmat Camp at Block-B in Section -11 at 7:30am when two armed youths stormed into camp.



A file photo of the family of Fakhruddin Ahmed (middle) with their eldest son Miraj (top left). The two were gunned down at Pallabi by unidentified assailants yesterday.

Security agencies to pin down hoarders

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said the government had engaged various intelligence agencies against hoarders in a bid to contain price spiral of essential commodities.

Coming out of an inter-ministerial meeting at his office on unabated rise in prices of essential items, Mahmud informed newsmen of the matter.

"Intelligence agencies will keep a watchful eye on imports and sup-

plies to local market and they will arrest any trader, if found at fault," he said.

The meeting decided to use Department of Agriculture Marketing's facilities to assess demand-supply situation, including local production, of essentials in the market to help the government to act in time, he added.

The meeting also decided to keep track of international prices and supply sources of essentials to import those as and when required.

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JOURNALIST REPRESSION Overseas Press Club of America expresses concern to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Overseas Press Club of America has expressed concern to the president and the prime minister about the repression on journalists in Bangladesh.

In separate letters to the president and prime minister on December 11, it said although the

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TENDER HITCH 4,000 hospitals run without medicines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 4,000 health and family planning centers across the country are without medicine for the last six months because of a technical hitch in the tender process.

The parliamentary standing committee on health ministry was informed about this at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. The committee asked the ministry to provide medicine immediately to all the health and family planning centres.

The officials of the ministry said the process is on to provide medicine to the centres. They blamed World Bank for the delay in the purchase of medicine, citing difficulties in meeting the conditions set forth by World Bank in this regard.

The committee also recommended introduction of a law to make the job of third and fourth class employees of hospitals transferable.

The meeting was told that being posted at a place for a long time a large number of hospital employees become more powerful than the administration of the institutions concerned. Since employees cannot be transferred, they not only

become influential but corrupt. Considering this, the parliamentary standing committee has asked the ministry to submit a proposal at the next meeting for making their jobs transferable.

"After scrutiny of the proposal the committee will send recommendations to the ministry for making those into law," Moshir Rahman, chairman of the committee, told newsmen after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"Their jobs will be transferable like other government officials, so that none can be more powerful in their place of employment," the chairman said.

The committee raised questions of irregularities in the maintenance work in hospitals and health institutions carried out by the Public Works Department (PWD) and health ministry.

The JS body formed two sub-committees to investigate into the allegations.

The committee was also informed that in FY 2001-2002 and 2003-2004, over Tk 200 crore was allocated to the PWD and to the CMMU, a wing of the health ministry, for the maintenance of hospital

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NOAKHALI CARNAGE Bandits thrive to serve corrupt forest officials

NURUL AMIN in Noakhali, SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHARIER KHAN in Dhaka

Vigilante violence that has left over 37 alleged robbers dead in Noakhali since December 6 stemmed from systematic corruption of some forest officials who used the bandits for personal gains, allowing them to control vast swathes of deep forest.

Also, opportunists wanting to get

parts of the forestland in the name of shrimp farms contributed to the emergence of bandits, say locals on the district's three-decade-old chars and government officials.

Controversies are trickling in over the way the government handled the situation and the local administration threw its weight behind the mobs who killed the forest robbers in the rampage.

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Delhi wants Dhaka to crack down on 'Indian rebels'

AFP, Guwahati

New Delhi yesterday stepped up pressure on Bangladesh to take action against Indian separatists amid a crackdown by fellow neighbour Bhutan in which more than 130 people have been reported killed.

The calls came as the three Indian rebel groups Bhutan is trying to evict called a strike against the offensive, shutting down much of the Indian state of Assam and some of West Bengal province.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee met his cabinet late Friday to discuss the drive against

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Rejoinder

The deputy commissioner (DC) of Noakhali in a rejoinder to a report The Daily Star ran in its December 15 edition headlined "Noakhali char people fear to land in the middle of nowhere," said it contained some factual errors.

He said after declaration of 11,955.59 acres of land as 'shrimp mahal' by the Ministry of Land, applications were invited from the entrepreneurs through an open

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Libya to part with WMD

Bush, Blair pledge reward

REUTERS, Tripoli/Washington

Libya, a pariah state for decades, said Friday it would abandon its weapons of mass destruction programmes and allow unconditional inspections, drawing praise from Washington and London for its move toward rejoining the international community.

Britain said Libya had been close to making a nuclear bomb and US officials said Libya's nuclear programme was "much further advanced" than believed, and it had acknowledged cooperating with North Korea to develop Scud missiles.

Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi said the "wise decision" showed Libya was committed to "building a world free of weapons of mass destruction and all sorts of terrorism."

President Bush immediately praised Libya for taking "essential steps" on the weapons programs and said: "Its good faith will be returned." He also said the United States and Britain would work to ensure Libya, which said it made the decision "of its own free will," lives

up to its commitments. "Today's announcement shows that we can fight this menace through more than purely military means; that we can defeat it peacefully, if countries are prepared in good faith to work with the international community to dismantle such weapons," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, a staunch US ally.

Perhaps with an eye on North Korea and Iran and their nuclear programs, Bush added: "I hope that other leaders will find an example in Libya's announcement today."

A US official said Libya approached the United States and Britain in mid-March, close to the time of the Iraq invasion that overthrew Saddam Hussein, who was captured last Saturday.

This approach led to visits to weapons sites in October, and early December by US and British teams.

A US official said Libya had acknowledged a chemical weapons programme and an interest in acquiring biological weapons equipment. On Libya's nuclear aims, the official said, "My under

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FFs central to nat'l unity: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government wants to involve the heroic freedom fighters in development process of the country they have liberated for the common good.

She clarified her view that the present government does not want the Liberation War heroes serve partisan interest.

"A lot of politics has taken place in the country involving the freedom fighters, who have been used in cases of partisan interest. But they have never been involved in nation-building programmes," she said at a government-sponsored reception of the freedom fighters.

Khaleda said the real evaluation of and paying proper homage to the

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday presents freedom fighter Bir Pratik Taramon Bibi a gift at a reception accorded to freedom fighters by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs marking Victory Day at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

এলো
ক্রাউন এনার্জী ড্রিংক
শক্তির গুরু

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