

3 killed in 'crossfire'

STAR REPORT

A Juba League activist, an outlaw and a robber were killed in separate incidents of "crossfire" in Savar, Jhenidah and Bagerhat early yesterday.

The dead are Iman Ali, a member of Dhaka district committee of Juba League, Nurul Islam alias Nuru alias Rocky, a top leader of the Janajuddho faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party

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Fire again at Ctg garment factory

2 more KTS victims die

OUR CORRESPONDENTS, Ctg

Properties worth over Tk 5 lakh were gutted in a devastating fire at a garment and sweater factory at the city's busy GEC intersection on Wednesday night.

However, there was no casualty since the incident occurred when the workers had left the factory after work.

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JAMAL UDDIN MURDER Family prepares burial after DNA confirmation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The family of Chittagong business magnate and BNP leader Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, abducted on July 24 in 2003 and later killed, is now preparing for burial of his mortal remains.

Members the family, traumatised for more than 31 months, yesterday accepted the DNA report which confirmed that the skeleton Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) dug out from a remote village in Fatikchhari on August 24 last year is of Jamal Uddin.

They would receive his skeleton today from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is investigating the case.

The DNA test was conducted at a Singapore hospital.

Family sources said they are likely to go for some religious rituals including namaj-e-janaza today and tomorrow and then bury his mortal remains at his village home in Anwara in the district tomorrow afternoon.

Earlier yesterday morning, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Sheikh Mobarak Hossain permitted CID investigation officer (IO) of the case Anwar Hossain to

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JMB behind attacks on Azad, Yunus

Rahman discloses to Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday disclosed that outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) carried out attacks on prominent writer Humayun Azad and Rajshahi University teacher Prof Yunus in 2004.

"Abdur Rahman told interrogators at Task Force Intelligence that he ordered his local commanders to carry out the attacks," Rab intelligence wing Director Gulzar Uddin Ahmed said at a press briefing at the police headquarters.

Lt Col Gulzar however said they are yet to interrogate Rahman to detect the militants, who carried out the attacks.

Unidentified assailants critically injured Humayun Azad with butcher's knives in front of Bangla Academy on February 27 in 2004.

Azad, also a professor of Bangla at Dhaka University and a noted

linguist, was found dead at an apartment in Munich in Germany on August 12. Invited by writers' association Pen, he went there on August 8 to do a research on romantic German writer Heinrich Heine.

Prof Yunus was knifed and hammered to death at Binodpur in Rajshahi city on December 24 the same year.

Yunus was a professor of economics and former registrar of Rajshahi University. A prominent left-leaning teacher, Yunus was the president of RU Bangabandhu Parishad and senior vice-president of Bangladesh Economic Association.

Abdur Rahman also admitted that the bomb blasts at four cinemas in Mymensingh were also carried out at his order. Col Gulzar told the press briefing.

The blasts at Ajanta, Chhayabani, Purabi and Aloka cinemas

on December 7, 2002 killed 27 and injured more than two hundred others.

Gulzar said Rahman admitted that JMB activists also carried out attacks on a number of jattras and cinemas, NGOs including BRAC, and different shrines following his diktats.

About JMB's huge explosives caches, he said Rahman admitted that they initially manufactured detonators and gel. But they later decided to smuggle explosives as manufacturing those was risky and not economically viable.

Rahman also said his son-in-law and JMB Shura member Abdul Awal and leader Adnan Sami were assigned to smuggle the explosives and detonators.

Gulzar however did not mention from which country the explosives were smuggled.

Rahman also claimed they

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Bangla Bhai now fit to be quizzed

Says Babar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dreaded militant leader Bangla Bhai, arrested wounded from Mymensingh Monday, is now fit for interrogation, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar said yesterday.

"The condition of Bangla Bhai is improving and he can be interro-

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Ctg court wants Rahman, Bangla Bhai on Mar 21

UNB, Ctg

The Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday asked the government to produce militant leaders Shaekh Abdul Rahman and Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, accused in two explosive cases, before the court on March 21.

AHM Mostaque Hossain, judge of the tribunal, gave the order after the investigation officer of the two cases filed with Pahartali Police

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Biman loses profitable routes to foreign airlines

Political decisions prevail over professional marketing plan

SHARIER KHAN

Political decisions overriding the professional marketing plans of Biman Bangladesh Airlines are helping foreign flag carriers eat up a few of its profit-making routes to the Middle Eastern destinations.

At the same time, Biman is being forced to operate on some loss-incurring routes, sources said.

For instance, the government in August last year allowed Qatar Airways to increase its weekly flights between Dhaka and Doha to seven from four.

The decision spearheaded by former civil aviation minister Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin ignored Biman's report that the increased facility to Qatar Airways would devour an annual potential revenue of Tk 26 crore, said a source.

Added to such marketing error is the national flag carrier's high operation cost caused by high insurance premium and very costly

procurement.

Because of Biman's poor technical performance in recent times, it now pays insurance premium of 3.2 percent of the hull value of each aircraft instead of a normal range of 1.2 percent to 1.5 percent. Biman's pay is one of the highest in the world.

Though Biman incurs heavy losses every year due to mismanagement, corruption and lack of aircraft, all of its 40 flights to eight Middle Eastern destinations are making profits.

These routes bring over 60 percent of Biman's revenue. Biman gets at least 80 percent of its passengers on these routes -- Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Maskat, Bahrain and Kuwait.

On the other hand, most of its flights to other destinations including London, New York and Japan are incurring heavy loss. The decisions to operate Biman on the New York and Tokyo routes are again not

driven by any marketing plan.

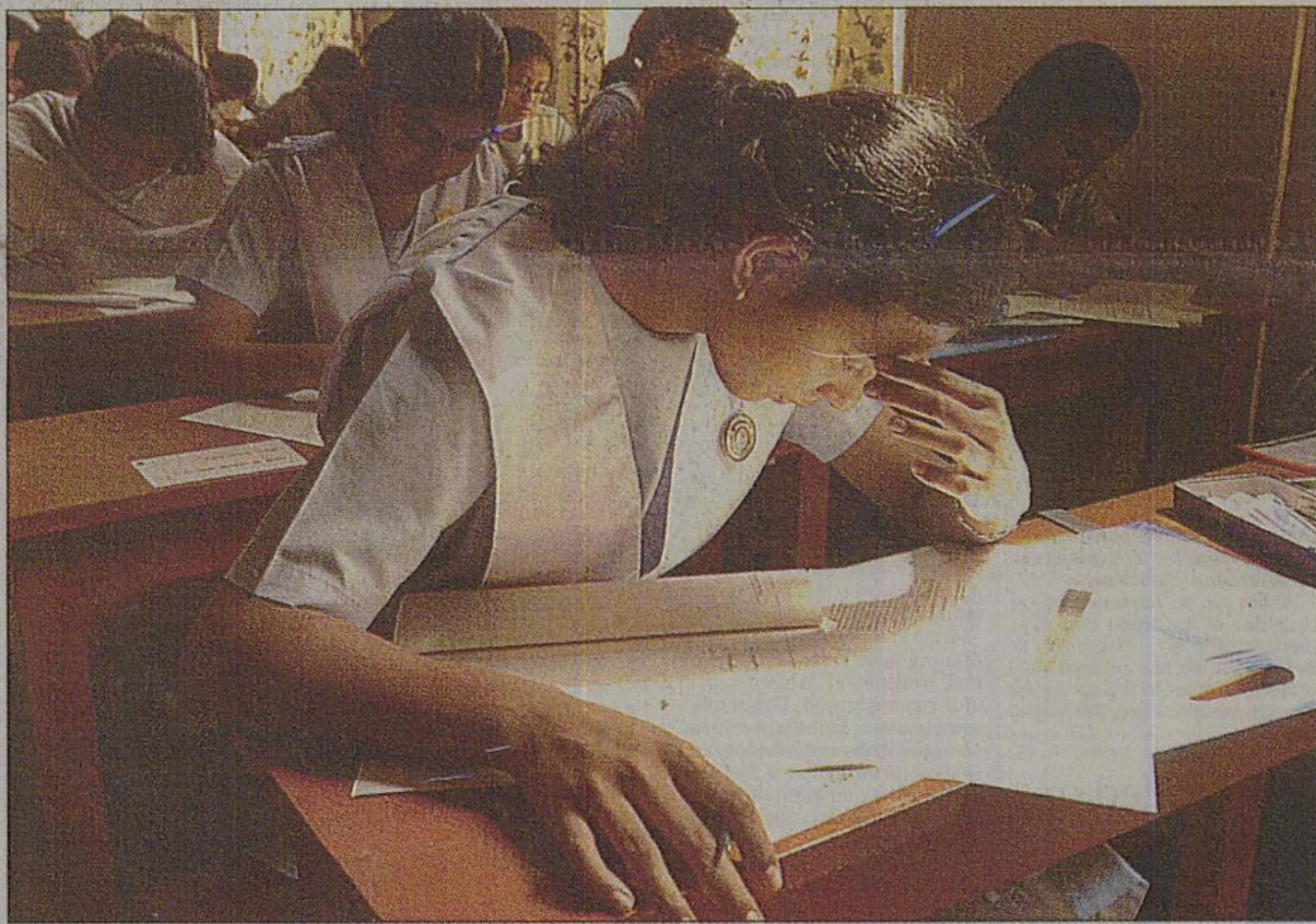
Besides, bowing to the political wishes, Biman operates its wide-bodied aircraft -- DC10 and Airbus -- on domestic routes of Chittagong and Sylhet incurring huge loss. These aircraft fly to Chittagong twice a day and Sylhet once a day at least.

Sources said the wide-bodied planes are very expensive to operate short-haul flights and the cost is invariably much higher than the earning.

"Biman bears extra cost for tire, fuel and brakes in every short-haul flight of these aircraft. This is not justifiable. The smaller F28 flights are good enough on these domestic routes," said a source. Biman operates five flights a day to Chittagong and three to Sylhet with F28s.

To achieve a break-even point, Biman must have at least 75 percent passengers in each of its flights. For most other airlines,

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Students of Vigarunnisa Noon School sit for English first paper examination at Motijheel Government Boys' High School centre as SSC exams began yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

EC extends time for voter list preparation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) Secretariat has again extended the deadline for collecting and scrutinising information of prospective voters for preparing the controversial fresh voter list, keeping the two senior election commissioners in the dark.

An EC Secretariat press release yesterday said the field level task for collecting and scrutinising information about voters will be

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BB PROBES JMB BANKING Islami Bank staffs ignored norms

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

A Bangladesh Bank (BB) investigation has found some lapses of banking norms in eight money transfers that law enforcers suspect were meant for funding JMB militant activities.

Five BB teams probed five militancy-linked accounts held with

three banks-- Islami Bank Bangladesh, Rupali Bank and Janata Bank.

In a brief report submitted to BB Governor Salehuddin Ahmed yesterday, the probe teams said the anomalies were detected in seven TTs from Islami Bank Gazipur Branch and one from its Savar

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FENI GAS FIELD

Niko resumes supply, only insignificantly

Experts see it a pressure tactic on govt

SHARIER KHAN

Although Canadian oil company Niko Resources has bowed to government pressure to resume gas supply from Feni field on Wednesday, it is actually supplying

less than one-fifth of the quantum it is supposed to.

Sources said Niko's gas supply from the field now stands at only 4.3 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) instead of 23 mmcf.

"There is no valid reason for not

supplying 23 mmcf gas from this field," said an energy ministry source. "It appears that Niko still continues its pressure tactics on the government."

Power Development Board

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JMB's covert operation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) emerged with its militant activities by sending trained Muslim Rohingya rebels to Afghanistan and Kashmir war fronts in the 1980s through covert chains of Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab) and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Using the same financial resources, Ahab, its youth wing Ahle Hadith Juba Shangha, Jamaat and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir were always used

for recruiting Rohingya, Harkatul Jihad and JMB militants, investigators observed.

Most arrested JMB militants have been found somehow linked either with Jamaat or Ahab, they explained.

However, considering the losses at foreign war fields, the militants then started dreaming of a separate Islamic state--consisting of Arakan and Hill Tracts of Chittagong, which they later discarded for spearheading an Islamic revolution in the country.

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BANGLA BHAI TORTURE

Cry for life goes in vain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

"My hands and legs are broken. You've left me paralysed from the waist down. Please take me to a hospital. I want to live," Yasin was yelling at militants of Bangla Bhai.

"Defying his cries, they forced him into a three-wheeler and kicked him to death inside the vehicle," Nargis Parvin was narrat-

ing how his brother-in-law Yasin died.

Yasin Ali Mridha, publicity secretary of Maria union unit Awami League, was killed on June 30, 2004.

A poor mason, Yasin returned home after working 16 days in Rajshahi city. Militants of Bangla Bhai-led Jagrata Muslim Janata

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