

JUDGES KILLING Charges framed against Rahman, Bangla Bhai

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A court in Jhalakathi yesterday framed charge against Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman, his deputy Bangla Bhai and six others for killing two judges in the district town last year.

The Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court framed the charges in presence of the JMB top brass who were produced before the court in handcuffs and bullet-proof vests at about 10:40am.

JMB military wing commander Ataur Rahman Sunny, Shura member Abdul Awal, Khalid Saifullah, suicide bombers Iftakhar Hasan Mamun, Sultan Hossain Khan, bomb makers Asadul Islam are the other ones charged with the murder of judges. Saifullah and Asadul

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4 killed in nor'wester

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and over 50 injured in storms that swept Jessore, Naogaon, Gazipur and Savar on Saturday night damaging houses and standing crops.

Two people were killed, seven others injured and huge crops damaged in a storm in Jessore, reports our correspondent from Jessore.

Amitya Das, 60, of Koneipur village under Sadar upazila died when a broken branch of a tree fell on his head during the nor'wester. Sulata Rani, 51, of Srirampur village under Bagharpara upazila, was killed in similar incident.

In Naogaon, Zobeda Bewa, 65, of Narayanpur village in Sadar upazila was killed and over 50 people were injured in a storm in Sadar, Badalgachhi, Akkelpur and Adamdighi upazilas, reports UNB.

The nor'wester damaged crops on vast tracts of land and hundreds of dwellings.

In Gazipur, Zohura Begum, 50, of Sardaganj village in Sadar upazila was killed in wall collapse during a storm.

Besides, a number of houses and standing crops on vast tracts of land were damaged in a storm in Savar and Ashulia areas.

Fire in Ghorashal power plant, 2 units trip

UNB, Narsingdi

Two units of Ghorashal power plant which generate 420 megawatts of power, tripped yesterday following a fire incident, official sources said.

The fire broke out at unit-3 and 4 at about 2:50pm and damaged valuable equipment.

"Firefighters from Narsingdi and Ghorashal stations rushed in and extinguished the fire after two hours' hectic efforts," says a spot account.

Production in the two units remained suspended following the fire.

"We are trying to resume operation of the unit-3 within tonight. The other unit will take some more time to mend," a PDB official in the capital told UNB.

Govt set to raise oil prices again

Cabinet to discuss it today

REJHAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is going to hike oil prices once again to cope with the soaring prices in the international market.

Energy Division along with Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation and oil companies has already started working on how and to what level oil prices can be raised, sources in the Energy Division said.

The cabinet will discuss the issue today. Yesterday Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and the day before yesterday Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman hinted at increasing oil prices shortly.

Apart from diesel and kerosene,

prices of petrol and octane may also be raised, the sources said.

According to present market price, the government is being forced to sell per litre diesel at a price Tk 20 less than its purchase cost. Both diesel and kerosene are now being sold at Tk 30 a litre. However the government is selling petrol and octane at their purchase prices.

Sources said if price of diesel is raised the poor would be hurt most. So the government is considering raising diesel and kerosene prices by small margin. Side by side the government is also considering dropping tariff rate to reduce BPC's loss.

However all these issues will be settled in today's cabinet meeting.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, emerging out of a meeting with the Planning Commission members, yesterday told journalists that raising oil prices right before the elections is a very delicate issue, so a decision to this effect will be taken after discussion with all cabinet colleagues.

Termining the ever rising oil prices in the international market the "most formidable challenge for Bangladesh," he said, "The decision will be taken in a way so that it is less harmful for the economy and less painful for the nation."

The gap between local and international oil prices is making BPC lose huge amounts. It owes Tk 11,000 crore to three state-owned

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FIGHTER PURCHASE Airforce says it made mistake in figures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) headquarters gave erroneous information to a parliamentary body about the recent purchase of 16 Chinese F-7 fighters, disclosed a BAF clarification on Saturday.

Responding to an April 21 report of The Daily Star, the airforce headquarters in a statement issued through the Directorate of Inter-Services Public Relations said inaccurate information had been quoted in its April 16 report to the parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry.

"In the budgetary offer, the quoted price of 16 F-7BG/FT-7BG was precisely 124.9 million USD including training, which was erroneously quoted as 120 million USD," said the BAF statement.

It said, after a series of negotiations between the government teams of Bangladesh and China,

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Govt confirms US citizen's deportation

A CIA plane might have been used in the task

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday confirmed the rounding up and extradition of Ehsanul Islam Sadequee, a 19-year-old US citizen of Bangladesh origin.

According to unconfirmed reports, a special chartered plane secretly took Sadequee back to the USA on Thursday, three days into his capture in Dhaka. He faces a charge of planning terrorist attack in the USA.

His father Sarder Mohammed Sharif yesterday gave some medicines to US embassy officials who promised to hand those over to his son.

Sadequee's activities were suspicious; so he was sent back to the USA, State Minister for Home

Lutfuzzaman Babar told reporters yesterday emerging out of a meeting with the new US ambassador to Bangladesh, Patricia A Butenis.

"No extradition treaty is needed for that," he said, adding, "We have deported many people. Every year we extradite five to seven people to the USA."

"He was handed over on the basis of sufficient information and evidence about his involvement in militancy," BBC Bangla Service quoted the state minister as saying.

"If the government considers him persona non grata, it can very well deport him. Not only our government, any government can do that," was the comment of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed to

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BSF kills 1 in Naogaon

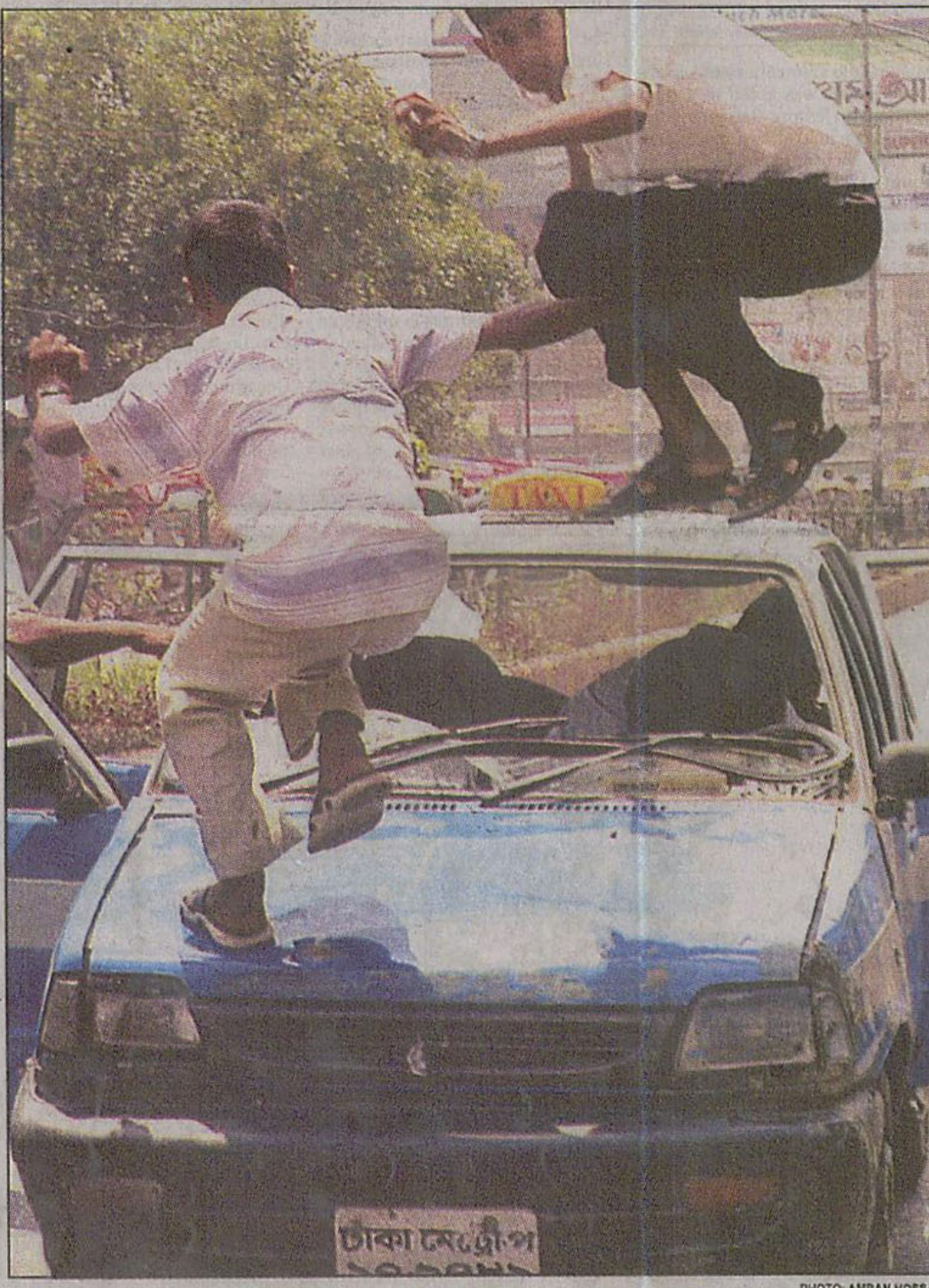
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi farmer on Hapunia border of Sapahar upazila in Naogaon early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Hanif Ali, 32, of Sada Krishna village of the same upazila. BDR sources said, BSF personnel of Parbat Danga camp shot Hanif without any provocation at around 11:30am while he was working on his cropland inside Bangladesh territory between two Hapunia border pillars.

The BSF members took away his body intruding into Bangladesh territory. Other farmers working in the field at that time fled the scene.

The incident sparked tension among the locals prompting senior officials of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) to rush to the scene and instantly lodge an official protest to their Indian counterpart. The BDR asked for a flag meeting as well as returning the body of the farmer in the letter, a senior BDR official said. However, no response came from the Indian side as of evening yesterday.



Pro-hartal activists damage a cab at city's Bangabandhu Square near Gulistan during the dawn-to-dusk hartal enforced by 14-party yesterday.

Pickets fight with cops during hartal hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brickbat throwing opposition activists yesterday fought pitched battles with the police, burned litters on streets and damaged vehicles at different places in the capital and other districts during the second hartal in four days, which left at least 150 people injured.

The police charged pickets with batons and teargas shells and picked up at least 35 people from different spots of Dhaka including Mohakhali, Paltan crossing, Bangabandhu Avenue area, Noor Hossain Square, Mirpur and Dhanmondi. Violence was also reported from Narayanganj, Rangpur, Netrokona, Rajshahi and Jhenaidah.

The injured included law

enforcers, photojournalists, and opposition leaders and activists.

Clashes erupted as the police attempted to picket in support of the hartal and they responded by hurling brickbats at the law enforcers.

Presence of opposition leaders and activist on the streets was high during yesterday's hartal compared to the last one and the police were mild mannered.

The hartal was enforced by Awami League (AL) led 14-party coalition protesting Wednesday's police atrocities on opposition leaders and activists during their bid for a sit-in at the Prime Minister's Office. The 14-party coalition, however, kept Chittagong out of the hartal

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CTG PORT Long queue of ships for berthing dearth

RAFIQ HASAN

Chittagong seaport is facing tremendous ship congestions with highest ever number of ships waiting at the outer anchorage for getting berthing space.

Last night 21 big ocean going vessels were waiting at the outer anchorage of the country's premier port to get berthing permission when all the berthing space at the port were occupied as 13 ships were loading and unloading goods, sources said.

Of the 21 ships waiting at the outer anchorage, 15 are container carriers and the rest are carrying general cargo including wheat, cars, scraps and oil.

Each ship has to count \$10,000

to \$20,000 as cost for waiting per day.

"The long congestion at the premier port will give a negative signal to the outside world and increase the price of commodity as the feeder operators will think of imposing extra surcharge for ships coming to Chittagong," a shipping agent said yesterday.

The situation has so worsened that the port authorities do not respond to a shipping agent in the first 24 hours after reaching his ship at the outer anchorage, he said, adding that the discharge time has also recently increased to five days from earlier three days.

The situation will not improve unless the port authorities increase

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JCD leader held for beating up reporter

DU CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Jagannath Hall unit general secretary Sagar Mojumdar for his involvement in beating up Dainik Aker Kagoj staff reporter Minar Baidya on Friday.

Sagar was arrested at Shyamoli in the city at around 1:30pm.

Meanwhile, a five-member probe committee formed on Saturday and headed by Jagannath Hall Provost Prof Dr Nim Chandra Bhoumik to investigate the matter was asked to submit an interim report by today and a full report within two weeks.

At present, Minar is receiving treatment at the Trauma Centre with fractures in legs and

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£10m heroin entered UK in 3 months

Says British newspaper report on drug smuggling from Bangladesh

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

A frontline UK newspaper in an investigation report yesterday said in just three months, 10 million-pound heroin coming from Bangladesh has been intercepted at British ports.

The report published in The Observer said the traffickers used new techniques to send the drugs to 'ghost' companies in UK. They used one of the most respected businesses of Bangladesh to mask their deadly trade.

Following interception of the heroin consignments, Rivington House, home to scores of legiti-

mate small businesses in London, was revealed to be a conduit for the drugs coming from Bangladesh.

Up to last year, Rivington House was the headquarters of an obscure company called Ocean Line Foods. Then in April last year the firm disappeared.

The Observer report says there is no record of Ocean Line Foods at Companies House, the official government register of UK companies. The company has no website and left no forwarding address. It is not even clear whether it has ever existed, other than on paper. But the company's name came up in a

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US wants to work together with Bangladesh to check bird flu

UNB, Dhaka

The United States wants to work with Bangladesh to prevent bird flu in the country.

Stewart Simonson, the visiting US Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Resources Division, said this when he called on Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain at the minister's office yesterday.

The health minister welcomed the initiative and informed the US official about the steps taken to combat bird flu in Bangladesh.

He informed that the ministries of fisheries and livestock, health and family welfare, and environment and forest have jointly chalked out a national plan of

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The First Ever Quality Management System Showcase In Bangladesh

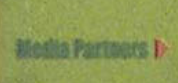
Quality Fair 2006

Venue : Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Center - BCFCC
Date : 26, 27 & 28 May 2006

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