

Crimes rise as gangland swings back into action

Top criminals coming out of their hideouts in India to organise networks; intelligence fears law and order to get worse

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Law and order has sharply deteriorated over the last few months in the capital and elsewhere, and the trend is continuing despite instructions from State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar to Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to contain it.

Babar himself recently acknowledged the rise in criminal activities and expressed concern to report-

ers.

Sources in the intelligence agencies said gangmen in the absence of their leaders have formed small groups to carry out crimes to make their position and role felt ahead of the election. Top criminals, who reportedly enjoy the blessings of some ruling alliance leaders, are directing their associates from outside the country.

Local teenage youths, who are

not on the police list of criminals, get involved in killing, toll collecting, abduction, mugging and other forms of criminal activities, police sources said.

Reports of intelligence agencies said such crimes may increase in the days to come.

Associates of top criminal Tanvir Ahmed Joy shot dead one person and wounded five others inside the office of a manpower agency at Hatirpool in the capital

on May 14. Joy called the owner of the agency from Singapore and India demanding a toll of Tk50 lakh and later, upon being refused, raised the amount to Tk5 crore.

Underworld sources said top criminals started visiting the country from their hideouts in neighbouring India as the law enforcers were more focused in their countrywide anti-militant drives in the past few months. On these short

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Right to information left in the cold

Law minister claims draft law sent to information, but information minister not aware of it

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The proposed right to information act, an essential and practical anti-corruption measure, has been kept on ice since 2002 while Bangladesh ranked the most corrupt country for the last five consecutive years.

The Bangladesh Law Commission in 2002 sent a working paper to the law ministry to formulate the proposed law based on it, recognising citizens' right to information. But the commission is yet

to know the fate of the proposal or the law drafting, a commission source said.

The Daily Star on Wednesday received three different versions about the status of the bill-preparation process from the authorities directly concerned.

"We have done our duty by sending a draft on the proposed right to information act to the law ministry," Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, who was on the commission when it prepared the working

paper, told The Daily Star. "Now, it is for the government to formulate a law."

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed on the other hand said his ministry did draft a right to information act based on the commission's working paper and sent it to the information ministry.

"The information ministry will now do whatever is necessary, as we have done our part," he said.

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144 imposed after Ahmadiyya area renamed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

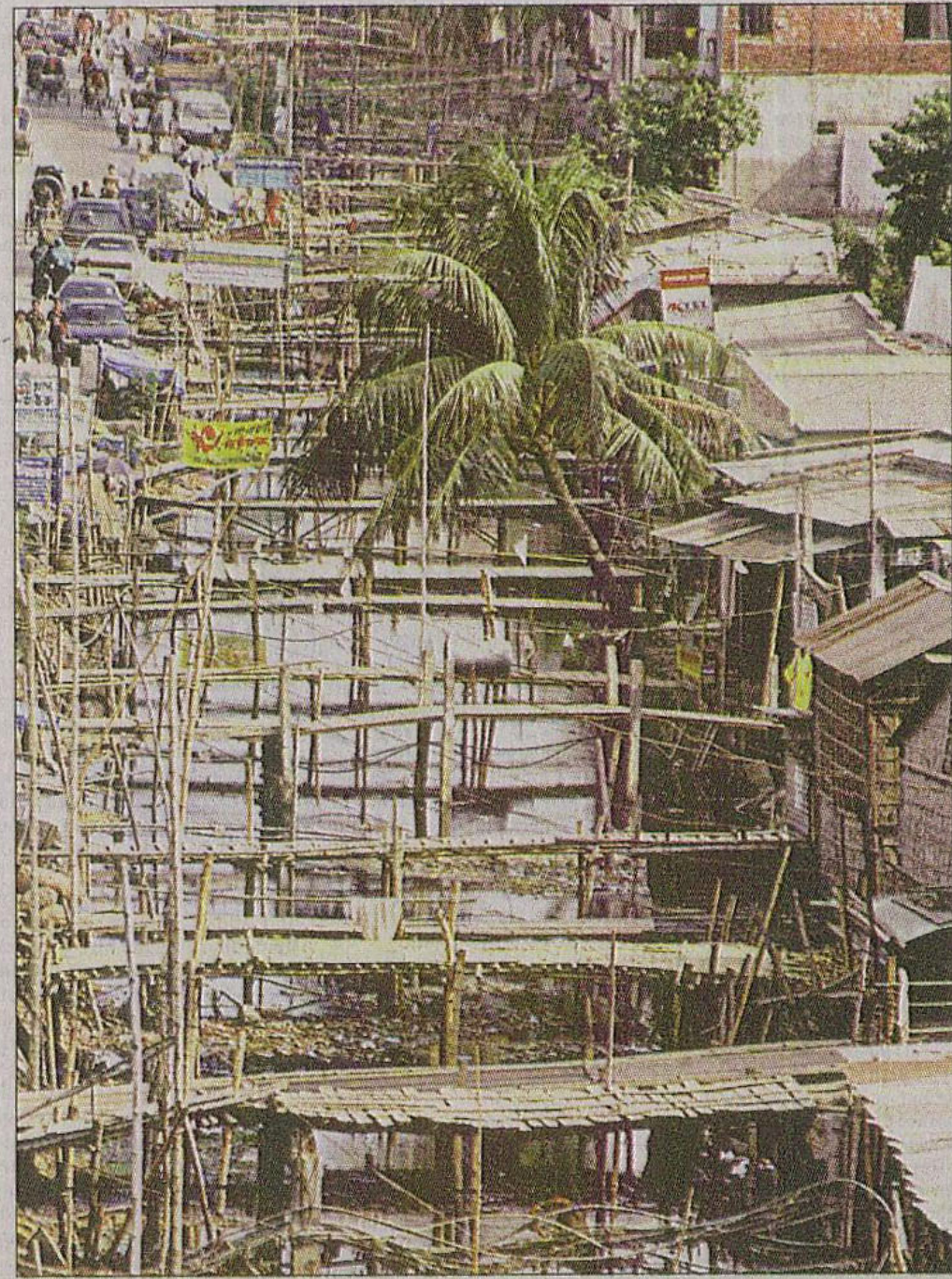
Local administration imposed section 144 in the district town yesterday amid high tension between the Ahmadiyya and Sunni communities over renaming of an area.

Sources said on the occasion of a traditional religious programme to be observed today, the Ahmadiyya community renamed the Kandipara area as Ahmadiyya Para two days ago.

Hearing the news, the students and teachers of local Jamia Islamia Yunusia Madrasa and local Sunni leaders vowed to resist the Ahmadiyya initiative.

The Sunni community also

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This canal in the city's Shanir Akhra, one of the two that drain water from the area inside the DND embankment, was freed from squatters last year. But locals are encroaching on it again, taking advantage of a slack supervision.

PHOTO: SHAKHAWAT JAMIL

Submarine cable landing station opens tomorrow

Access comes 1 month later as Cox's Bazar-Ctg link incomplete

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Cox's Bazar, the resort town that boasts of the world's longest sea beach, is all set to connect the country with the global information superhighway with a high-speed international telecommunication link.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to inaugurate the SEA-ME-WE-4 submarine cable's landing station at Zhilanga in the district tomorrow, sources at the local administration said yesterday.

An international consortium assigned Japanese Fujitsu and French Alcatel to install the half a billion dollar South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe-4

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N districts still without power although nat'l grid recovers

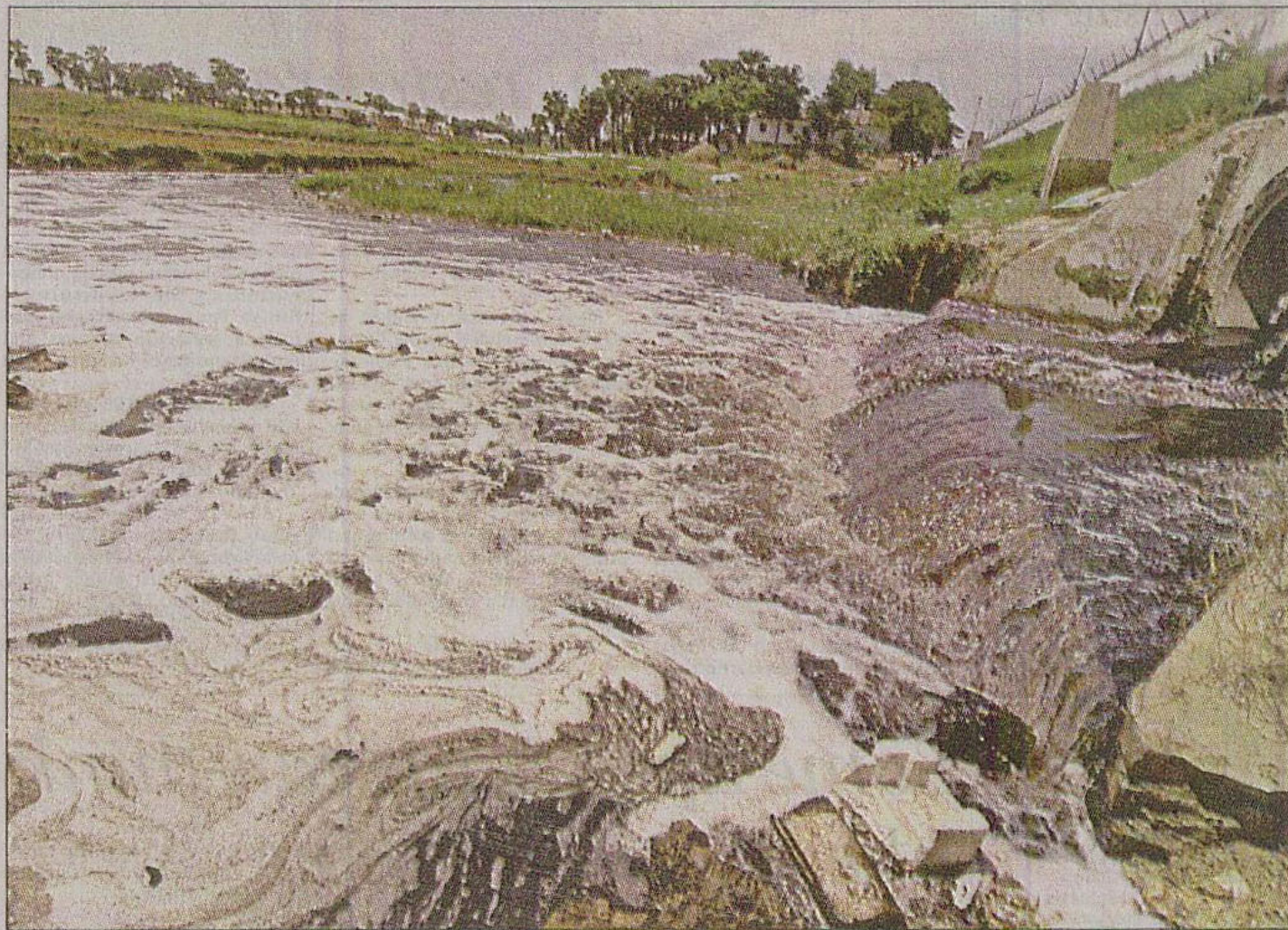
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The northern districts of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, and Panchagarh are still without power since Dinajpur power station became temporarily out of order following a lightning in the sky yesterday morning although the glitch in the national power grid that had plunged almost half the country into darkness on Thursday night was fixed.

Baghabari, Barapukuria, Sylhet, Mymensingh and Ashuganj power stations resumed power generation yesterday.

Due to technical faults in Bogra

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Liquid toxic wastes from Dhaka EPZ flowing into the cultivatable lands reduce their fertility and also cause serious health and environment hazards for the people of Ashulia, Zirabo, Yearpur, Dhamsona and adjacent areas under Savar upazila.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

6 killed in lightning

UNB, Dhaka

Six people were killed and 12 others injured by lightning in Dinajpur and Thakurgaon districts yesterday.

In Dinajpur, lightning killed four people and injured 12 others in four upazilas of the district.

Three of the dead were identified as Nur Nabi, 27, of Sundarban village in Sagar upazila, Nur Islam, 25, of Kanaibari village in Birol upazila and Manikchandra of Khansama upazila. The identity of another in Chirirbandar upazila could not be known.

Of the injured, four were admitted to Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital while the remaining eight to upazila health complexes.

In Thakurgaon, two people were struck and killed by lightning in Haripur upazila in the afternoon.

Locals said Samiruddin, 45, of Mirpur village was struck by

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Industrial wastes defile Savar environs

Toxic trash of 300 plants spread due to lack of sewerage facilities

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Around 300 industries set up in and around 20 square kilometre areas around Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) in Savar are causing serious environmental hazards due to lack of sewerage and drainage facilities.

The industries, mostly readymade garments set up in last eight years, are also facing multiple problems including electricity, transportation and security of workers, resulting in hampering production in these industries with around five lakh workers.

In absence of drainage system, the industry owners drain out the

wastewater and other wastes into underground tanks. But the tanks often overflow, causing serious health and environment hazards in Ashulia, Zirabo, Yearpur, Dhamsona and adjacent areas under Savar upazila.

Wastewater running into cultivated lands in these areas is hampering crop production.

There is no fire service station in the large industrialised area.

Lack of wide roads for plying of heavy vehicles including trucks and lorries carrying garment goods and other machinery adds to the problem of the industries.

Lack of streetlights poses threats of insecurity and accidents

at night, especially for the garment workers.

Han-Hong, a Korean investor who set up two garments at Zirabo, said they are badly facing sewerage and drainage problems in their industrial areas where there is not a single drain to pass out the industry wastes.

Han, managing director of Haesong Korea Limited and HS Korea Limited, said due to inadequate supply of electricity in the areas production is badly hampered. The Korean entrepreneur urged the government to solve these problems for industrial expansion in the area.

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Moudud tells of fake voters in his constituency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday alleged that the draft voter list has had fake voters in his constituency, adding to the controversy over the new voter list.

In an interview on private satellite channel ATN Bangla, he said some 400 people in Noakhali-6 constituency have been listed as voters simultaneously in three different places.

Moudud, who first came to know about the anomalies from

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AGARGAON VOTER LIST

EC busy on weekend to retrieve 899 forms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) Secretariat officials were busy even on the weekend yesterday trying to retrieve the controversial 899 voters' registration forms.

Assistant Registration Officer (ARO) of DCC ward No. 41 (Agargaon) Aminul Haq Bhuiyan could not return the forms to the EC Secretariat due to illness.

Meanwhile, during a visit to the

area yesterday this correspondent detected a number of anomalies in the 899 forms.

Locals in the area alleged that they were not included as voters whereas many of those whose names are on the list do not even exist. The addresses that have been used in the forms in fact belong to some locals left off the list.

Atikul Islam, who prepared the disputed 899 forms, was found to

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Legal experts accuse EC of committing crime

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Country's legal experts yesterday accused the members of the Election Commission (EC), including Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz, of committing criminal offences by making "false" voter list and demanded their punishment under the existing criminal laws.

Renowned lawyer and Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Bar

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One killed in 'encounter' with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A leader of Panna Bahini, the Padma char-based gang in Rajshahi, was killed in an encounter with police and his accomplices at Bangali Char in Bagha upazila early yesterday.

Jahurul, a close aide to the leader of the gang Panna, was in charge of the chars of Rajshahi and Kushtia districts, said Abdullah Al Mahmood, superintendent of

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MARITIME BOUNDARY, ROHINGYA

Dhaka, Yangon agree to resolve issues amicably

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday agreed to amicably resolve the outstanding issues as the foreign secretaries of the two countries discussed maritime boundary, Rohingya repatriation, border security and trade and investment.

The first-ever foreign secretary-level talks between the two next-door neighbours were held in Yangon. Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin led the Bangladesh side while Deputy Foreign Minister U Kyaw Thu led the Myanmar side.

Both sides have agreed that the outstanding issues should be

resolved amicably and if good understanding between the two countries prevails, resolving the issues are not so difficult," a communiqué of Bangladesh mission in Yangon said.

It said the two sides freely and frankly discussed all bilateral

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42 including Bangladeshis dead in Turkey truck crash

AP, Ankara

A lorry carrying illegal immigrants from Afghanistan and Bangladesh crashed into a parked transport truck in southern Turkey yesterday, killing at least 42 people and injuring six others.

The accident occurred near the southern city of Osmaniye, Governor Zubeyir Kemelek told private NTV television.

Kemelek said the driver of the truck carrying the illegal immigrants was believed to be dead.

"The front of the truck is compressed. We have not been able to reach that part yet," Kemelek said.

TV footage showed dozens of bodies lying on the road just behind the trucks.

Turkey is a major transit point for thousands of Middle Eastern and African migrants attempting to reach Europe illegally each year.

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