Criminal killed, 3 cops hurt in shootout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A suspected criminal was killed and three policemen were wounded at Baruihati in Bagmara upazila early yesterday in a shootout between the terrorists and members of the law enforcement agencies in Bagmara of the district.

The dead was identified as Zahangir Alam, 30, son of Abdul Matin Chowdhury of Bargachha in

The police in Rajshahi said Zahangir might have links with the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) while Natore police said, he had robbery and mugging

Among the injured, constable Abdul Karim was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with serious head injuries and constables Abdur Rahman and Susan Chakma were given first aid.

Rajshahi Range Deputy Inspector General Naveem Ahmed told The Daily Star that the special drive was part of the ongoing operations that had begun on August 12 after Chowbaria police murders.

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NCBs fail to catch top 20 Ioan defaulters

3.62pc target achieved in six months

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) in the first half of the year have attained only 3.62 percent of the target they set for recovering loans from the top 20 defaulters.

The rate was 3.90 in cash recoverv from the other defaulters.

The information came up at a meeting between Bangladesh Bank (BB) and the NCBs to review the latter's performance in the last six months in achieving the targets they set in their memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Earlier this year, four NCBs--Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali Bank--had committed themselves to recovering Tk 232 crore from their top 20 defaulters in the first half of the year while they have managed to recover only Tk 8.40 crore.

The central bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed, who presided

over yesterday's meeting, expressed discontent over the poor performance of the NCBs, said meeting sources.

Officials of the NCBs, on the other hand, spoke about their helplessness in the face of the defaulters' persistent non-compliance with the bank instructions.

BB officials suggested that the NCBs take the opportunity in the build-up to the upcoming general election when the defaulters must reschedule their loans if they are to contest the polls

The banks should step up their efforts to recover default loans before the election slated for January 2007, they observed.

The central bank officials also instructed the NCBs to strictly oversee the rescheduling of loan payments so that no defaulter could gain undue interest waivers.

NCB officials, however, were

somewhat downbeat as they noted that the number of prospective candidates is very low among the defaulters of their banks.

They argued that they have already had a huge sum of money owed to the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the amount is

Sonali Bank officials said that half of their loans are with the stateowned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

NCB officials urged the BB to take measures to stem the trends.

Sonali Bank had a recovery target of Tk 154 crore, whereas it recovered only Tk 30 lakh. Janata Bank recovered only Tk 10 lakh against a target of Tk 25 crore, Agrani Bank Tk 5 crore against Tk SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

BDB won't take part in polls without reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) will not participate in the next general election unless 'minimum reforms' in the Election Commission (EC) are carried out, its President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury said yesterday.

"The chief election commissioner and two election commissioners (EC) are controversial. And the newly appointed EC is also controversial since he came from the defence ministry and hails from Gabtoli of Bogra district, " he said without explaining this. "So, these people need to be removed."

Badruddoza was speaking as chief guest at a discussion on 'Role of political leaders in protecting the country's mineral resources, and in industrialisation,' organised by Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI) at its office in the capital.

The BDB president said his party is in favour of reviewing all the controversial deals in energy sector, including that with Asian Energy, to protect the interest of the country.

The deal with Asia Energy was SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Mehendiganj Jubo Samaj holds a rally at Muktangon in the capital yesterday demanding immediate stoppage of Jatka (young hilsa) fishing.

Results of **HSC** exam tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Results of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examinations and its equivalent examinations held this year under all the education boards of the country will be published tomorrow.

The examinees have been advised to collect their results from respective centres or institutions said an official release

It said the results will be available websites. www.educationboard.gov.bd and nttp://result.bteb.gov.bd

2 killed in shootout with Rab

STAR REPORT

A regional leader of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PRCP) was killed during a shootout between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices early yesterday in Pabna while a criminal was killed in 'crossfire' during another shootout in the capital's Mirour area.

The dead PBCP leader was identified as Saved Ali Mandal, a correspondent in Pabna reports.

Rab sources claimed they were informed about a gang of robbers SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

High-level meeting today to discuss local firm's metro rail bid

The Private Sector Infrastructure Committee (PICOM) headed by the principal secretary to the prime minister's office will sit today for discussing the proposal of a private company for constructing a metro rail system in the capital.

The Contech Limited, a local firm, has been selected in the prequalification bid for constructing the subway and the communications ministry has forwarded the proposal for approval of the committee.

The 10-member committee is considered the apex body for approving proposals of constructing infrastructures by private and foreign investors

Secretaries from the ministries of finance, economic relation division (ERD), law and president of Federation of Bangladesh Industry (FBCCI), president of Foreign Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) and representatives from Bangladesh Bank and Board of Investment (BoI) usually attend the meeting for discussing all aspects of investment proposals.

The committee may approve the proposal and give green signal to the communications ministry for issuing letter of intent (LoI) in favour

of the company or it may send it to the cabinet for final approval,

If the PICOM passes the proposal, a formal agreement explaining terms and conditions of the project would be signed between the government and the company concerned.

Meanwhile, the company submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report to the government last month on the project of constructing underground rail system. The company proposed to construct 52 kilometre-long subway spending Tk 5,200 crore on build, operate and transfer (BOT)

The Japan Bank of International Co-operation (JBIC) has agreed to provide soft loan for constructing the subway that will create an easy transport system in the densely According to the communica-

tions ministry sources, the ministry forwarded the proposal after getting confirmation of the Japanese assistance in this regard. The JBIC representatives called on the high officials of the ministry several times and confirmed their SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

REUTERS, New Delhi Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

said yesterday that intelligence agencies had warned more terrorist attacks were likely, possibly on economic and religious targets as well as on nuclear installations. Singh's comments came nearly two months after a series of bombs

Indian agencies

warn PM of

terror attacks

on commuter trains in Mumbai India's financial hub, killed 186 people. The attack was blamed on Islamist militant groups with links across the border in Pakistan. India has since been on a heightened security alert, with fears of more attacks across the country,

Mumbai, and at airports after British police last month said they foiled a plot to bomb trans-Atlantic flights. "Concern about the increasing activities of externally inspired and directed terrorist outfits in the coun-

particularly in New Delhi and

try is justified," Singh told an internal security meeting. "Intelligence agencies warn of a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Correction

In our yesterday's report headlined "Bol chief again takes a swipe at 5 eminent citizens" it was inadvertently mentioned that foreign currency reserve is \$3.6 million instead of \$3.6 billion. We regret the mis-

Prayer Timing

September 6

Azan

4-35

12-45

4-30

7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Jamaat

1-15

4-45

6-25

8-15

ADULTERATED DRUGS IO summoned to explain final report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed an investigation officer (IO) of a criminal case to appear in person before it on September 19 to explain why and how he submitted a final report against three people arrested for their alleged involvement in preparing adulterated medicines.

The three people -- Shahjahan, proprietor of Anirban Medical Industry, Saiful Islam, its chemist and accounts officer Mafijul Islam -were arrested during the Anti-Adulteration Drive while they were making adulterated medicines in unhygienic and dirty conditions.

Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court issued the order on the IO Saidur Rahman following an oral plea of an assistant public prosecutor (APP) for further investigation into the matter.

During the hearing on the final report, APP Farid Halder told the court that the three people were arrested red-handed while preparing adulterated medicines in the medicine manufacturing plant and the IO could not have submitted the final report praying for discharge of the accused if he had investigated the case properly.

This is why the APP prayed for issuance of a show cause notice upon the IO for his negligence in conducting the probe

The IO submitted the final **SEE PAGE 15 COL 2**

Iraq extends state of emergency for a month

Insurgents kill 3 GIs, 20 Iraqis in attacks

Autorickshaws and CNG-driven vehicles wait in long queues at a filling station in the capital yesterday as frequent power cuts delay refilling of vehicles.

AP, AFP, Baghdad

Parliament voted yesterday to extend a state of emergency for a month, and Britain's foreign secretary emphasised the importance of transferring control of security from the US-led coalition to the Iraqi

The state of emergency has been in place for almost two years and covers every region except the autonomous Kurdish region in the north. It grants security forces greater powers such as implementing curfews and making arrests without warrants

British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett, on her first trip to Iraq since taking her post in May, met with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh and discussed the transfer of security control from the US-led coalition to Iraqi authorities. "There has been responsibility

that has been transferred already

Israel to lift its air and sea blockade

answered. "Because we are all

working very hard and with a bit of

goodwill and reasonableness, we

"Yes, within 48 hours," he

and we hope and believe that that is a process that will continue, Beckett said. It is "absolutely key that we see that responsibility being able to be exercised by the representatives of the elected government of Iraq.'

British forces handed over control of the southern Muthana province to their Iraqi counterparts in July, and Prime Minister Nouri SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Lebanon blockade to end in 48-hr: Annan

of Lebanon.

Hezbollah, Israel accept UN mediation on prisoners

AFP. Alexandria/ Jeddah

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said yesterday in Egypt that he expected Israel's blockade of Lebanon to be lifted within 48 hours. Annan was asked by reporters

after meeting Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit in the city of Alexandria if he expected

Man held with 2.5kg gold **UNB**, Munshiganj

Police yesterday arrested a man with five gold bars weighing 2.5 kg on a Dhaka bound bus from Chittagong at Gazaria of the dis-

Acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers intercepted the bus and challenged its passenger Narayan Karmakar, 40. They searched Narayan's body and found the gold bars tied to his waist.

should be able to resolve it within Police said Narayan, son of the next 48 hours.' Niranjan Karmakar of Anwara Israel imposed its air and sea Chittagong, is involved in gold SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Slave traders dump them in China

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN, PORIMOL PALMA

Cheated by modern "slave traders", a few hundred Bangladeshis have been languishing and leading inhuman life in secret cells and jails in different states of China.

Recently, about 200

Rangladeshis were seen living in such condition in Kun Ming and Guan Zhu provinces and along the China-Laos borders.

These victims, lured by the slave traders' promises of highsalary jobs in countries like Sudan, Libya and China, had paid money ranging from Tk 1.8 lakh to Tk 2 lakh, selling land or other valuable properties

Once in China, the cheats escaped leaving them behind in an utterly helpless situation.

The once-fortune-seekers now desperately want to return to their motherland, but the process is complex as there are no Bangladeshi consular offices in those states

> Kawsar Hossain of Gazipur SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



The five Bangladeshis cheated by unscrupulous manpower agencies are now leading inhuman life in Kun Ming, China.