

4 dacoits beaten to death in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: Four dacoits were beaten to death after they had committed dacoity in a Chittagong-bound bus at Shantirhat, a group of dacoits under the disguise of passengers stopped the bus at gun point and decamped with cash and other valuable goods from the passengers.

On hearing the shouting of the passengers, people caught red-handed four of the dacoits and started beating them indiscriminately.

As a result they died on the spot.

The dacoits also used daggers and opened fire several rounds of shots. About fifteen passengers were injured. The driver was also stabbed by the dacoits.

One pipe gun and two big daggers were recovered from the possessions of the dacoits.

A squad of the police from Kalarpool outpost rushed to the spot.

Two of the dead were identified as Mohammad Akhter Hossain, 40, and Mohammad Mujib, 30.

The rest could not be identified immediately.

A case was filed with Patiya police.

Pakistan cancels passports issued to Afghans

ISLAMABAD, Feb 26: The Pakistan government has cancelled all passports issued to Afghan nationals, foreign Minister Sardar Asf Ali said here Friday after a series of anti-Pakistan incidents, reports AFP.

All told a news conference the Afghans, mainly refugees, will now have to follow the normal administrative procedure if they want their Pakistani passports renewed.

On Thursday, Afghans attacked the Khyber Pass border checkpoint. On Wednesday, they stormed the Pakistani embassy in Kabul, the Afghan capital.

Earlier in the week, three Afghans held Pakistani schoolchildren hostage at the Afghan embassy in the Pakistani capital.

Most of the children were released. Those who remained were rescued unharmed late Monday by commandos who killed their captors.

About 200,000 Afghans received Pakistani passports on special instructions from the late military ruler, Mohammed Zia Ul Haq, after the Soviet's occupied Afghanistan in 1979.

The Afghans used the passports for religious pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia and travel to other Islamic countries.

3 held with 500 grams of heroin

Sutrapur police on Friday recovered 500 grams of heroin during a raid at a hotel in the older part of the city and arrested three persons in this connection, reports BSS.

The police, acting on a tip-off conducted a raid at the Hotel Venus at Nasiruddin Sardar Lane and nabbed Abdullah Faruq, Babul Akhtar and Delwar Hussain. They seized the said quantity of heroin from their possession, a police press release said.

Govt college teachers go on strike from Apr 2

Some 12 thousand teachers of the 233 government colleges of the country will go on an indefinite strike from April 2 demanding promotion, removal of service anomalies and higher pay scales.

The decision of the strike was taken at a meeting of the BCS General Education Association recently.

Earlier, a meeting of the Departmental Promotion Committee of the Education Ministry on February 8 stalled promotions of more than 1000 teachers.

The leaders of the Education Association decided that if their 16-point charter of demands were not met by March 22, the government college teachers would launch the strike.

Mayors to take oath

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due to malpractices, would be announced only after the EC receives a copy of the judgement of a High Court Division Bench that justified the repolling in the three centres under Ward No. 57.

The EC failed to hold re-elections in these centres following an injunction by the HC bench. The court's order was issued as the BNP-backed commissioner candidate of the Ward filed a writ petition challenging the cancellation of the results of the three centres on the Dhaka University campus.

The Division Bench, after a three-day hearing, discharged the petition and also vacated the stay order it had issued on February 8 on the repolling.

According to sources in the court, it will take at least a week for the EC to get a copy of the judgement delivered last Tuesday.

The EC officials, on the other hand, said they were waiting for the court's verdict for announcing the schedule of the repolling. On receipt of the copy of the verdict they pointed out one more week would be required to complete the repolling consolidate the total results of the DCC and publish the same in an official gazette. The issue of oath-taking of the DCC mayor and commissioners would be decided after the official publication of the results.

The BNP commissioner candidate, Abul Ahsan Talukdar, who lost the writ petition, is planning to appeal in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the High Court judgement. If the Appellate Division accepts the appeal and also issues a stay order on the repolling, senior lawyers say the announcement of the DCC results would be further delayed.

Meanwhile, it is still undecided as to who would administer the oaths to the mayors and commissioners elect.

A source said a proposal of the LGRD Ministry for the Prime Minister to administer the oaths was being considered by the policy-planners.

Previously, the President had conducted the oaths giving the mayor of Dhaka the rank and status of a cabinet minister and the mayors of three other cities the status of deputy ministers. But the government is yet to decide the status of the mayors, elected through direct voting for the first time.

Meanwhile, there is a demand from the opposition that the previous practice of giving the DCC mayor the rank and status of a cabinet minister and the three other mayors the deputy ministerial rank should continue.

A rule is also being drafted to provide for reserved seats for women commissioner. The women representatives are likely to be chosen by the elected mayors and commissioners.

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The Bhasa Sainik-o-Rajbondhi Parishad yesterday honoured 21 personalities for their remarkable contribution during the Language Movement at the Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Reappointment of PIO opposed

BCS (Information) Association yesterday gave a 7-day ultimatum to the government to cancel the re-appointment of Abdur Rahim as Principal Information Officer (PIO), reports UNB.

Otherwise, it will take up action programmes, said a resolution of an emergency meeting of the association held Friday with its President Golam Panjatan in the chair.

A press release issued in Dhaka yesterday said the meeting criticised the re-appointment of an outsider as PIO for one year on contact basis ignoring the demand of the association to adorn the post with one of its senior members.

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The relatives of the victim said, Nurjahan who along with her son came to Dhaka Saturday morning from their home at Kaziarpur. Cox's Bazar met the accident while crossing the road.

Police seized the bus (No Dhaka Metro BA 01-0469) but the driver managed to escape.

In another incident, an electrician was electrocuted while working at Gulshan at about 10 am yesterday.

The victim Mohammed Siddique Rahman, 45, died at the DMCH at about 1 pm.

One Saifunnesa, 45, was electrocuted at her residence at Razia Sultana Road, Mohammodpur while she came in contact of live wire at about 10 am Saturday.

Saifunnesa was rushed to the DMCH in a serious condition but died before being admitted.

In another incident, a

7 killed in mishaps, 2 commit suicide

By DMCH Correspondent

At least seven persons were killed in separate mishaps while two reportedly committed suicide in the city and its outskirts Saturday.

A woman was killed when a speeding bus ran over her at Fakirapool bus stand yesterday morning.

The victim Nurjahan Begum, 70, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where she succumbed to her injuries.

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Namaz-e-janaza of Mahfuzur Rahman, a valiant freedom fighter was held at the National Edgah in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Mahfuz laid to rest

Valiant freedom fighter and former Chairman of the Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Central Command Council Sheikh Mahfuzur Rahman was laid to rest at the Muktiyoddha Graveyard at Mirpur yesterday, reports BSS.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the National Eidgah Maidan where ministers, freedom fighters, particularly from the Sector Two of the Liberation War, were present.

The qulkhudhi of Mahfuz will be held tomorrow after Asr prayers at the Muktiyoddha Sangsad office. All concerned have been requested to attend.

State honour demanded

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solid unity of the pro-liberation forces to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War.

Chaired by Noor-e-Alam Siddiqi, the meeting was also addressed by Abdur Razzak, MP, Tofael Ahmed, MP, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, MP and former DUCSU VP Akhteruzzaman of the Awami League, State Minister for Relief Haroon-ur-Rashid of the BNP, ASM Abdur Rab of the JSD, Shahjahan Siraj, MP of Gano Forum, ex-GS of the DUCSU Enayetur Rahman, Kazi Aref Ahmed of the JSD, Ahmad Choudhury of the Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Munirul Haq Choudhury, MP of the Jatiya Party, Prof Abdul Mannan Choudhury of Dhaka University and others.

In his presidential speech, Noor-e-Alam Siddiqi, who had been distancing himself from politics for the last 13 years, called on all concerned to sink petty political differences while dealing with national issues like the War of Independence. He also said the architect of independent Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, should be kept above all controversies and the names of great personalities should not be used for partisan politics.

Regarding the demand for burial of the freedom fighters with state honour, Siddiqi said that to get the demand fulfilled the freedom fighters must give up their partisan attitude.

Abdur Razzak confessed that the freedom fighters were themselves responsible for the ill treatment they were receiving from the governments. 'We must apologise to the nation for our failures in maintaining our unity and upholding the spirit of the Liberation War'.

Due respect to the valiant freedom fighters like Makhan could only be shown by implementing the ideals of the Liberation War, he added.

Tofael Ahmed said, Makhan's name will shine in the national history for his glorious role during the independence movement.

The defeated forces in the Liberation War could not stage a comeback in the national politics if the war-time unity of the freedom fighters continued during the post-liberation period, he said.

ASM Abdur Rab said, Makhan's death without medical treatment was a shame for the whole nation and regretted his burial without state honour. 'We must take lessons from Makhan's death otherwise our deaths would be marked by more disgraceful events', he warned the freedom fighters. Makhan will remain as an integral part of the national history for his contributions, Rab said.

The JSD leader regretted that the people's hopes and aspirations which led them to the war of independence were yet to be fulfilled.

Shahjahan Siraj said the nation failed to show due respect to the national hero Makhan.

Just before the take-off!

By RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Feb 26: A man wearing a lungi and a shirt, hurried into the airport runway at noon today shortly before the take-off of a domestic ATP flight BG 482.

It was 12:05 and the engines were on when all of a sudden the man came near the aircraft with a plastic packet in his hand. After some quick words with him, the airport men arranged delivery of the packet reportedly to a foreign passenger on board.

The packet bearer was later identified as a gardener of a local missionary hospital and the packet reportedly contained some photographs, airport sources said.

"Considering the time constraint and knowing it was just a packet of photographs, we permitted the delivery of the packet, without security check, justified the Station Manager."

China reaffirms

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extend US dollar 8.5 million dollars to Bangladesh as project assistance.

Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman and the visiting Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of China Qian Qichen signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments.

The interest-free Chinese credit will be used as project assistance.

China has been providing assistance to Bangladesh to different sectors since 1976 in the form of project, commodity and technical assistance. China has also provided suppliers credit.

Before the signing of the agreement, two minister exchanged views on bilateral co-operation and other related matters when Qian called on Saifur Rahman at his office in the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

The Finance Minister termed China as a close and good friend and expressed the hope that the relations between the two countries would continue to grow in the days ahead.

The Chinese Foreign Minister reciprocated the sentiment and expressed the hope that ties will grow to the mutual benefits of the two friendly countries.

He also expressed satisfaction at the economic and technical cooperation agreement.

Senior officials of the two sides were present.

26 Rohingyas rescued

PABNA, Feb 26: BDR rescued 26 Rohingya refugees from traffickers at Kashiathpur checkpoint in Bera thana Friday night, reports UNB.

The Rohingyas, including six children and 11 women, were rescued from a bus 'SR Paribahan' at about 2:30 am, officials here said today.

They told BDR men that they were being taken to Dinajpur on way to Pakistan through India.

Traffickers were not in the bus and its driver managed to flee away, the sources said.

The Rohingyas were handed over to Bera thana.

26 abducted

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They fired 11 shots and took away the fishermen and their boats.

Owners of the four boats—Azizullah, Nurul Hakim, Nurul Alam and Nur Amin of Shahpur Dip in Teknaf—lodged complaints with the BDR 39 Battalion guarding the Teknaf border areas.

The abduction took place a day ahead of the 16th Bangladesh-Myanmar official level meeting on the Rohingya refugee issue. The three-day talks began at Akiyab in Myanmar today.

The local fishermen said the Myanmar border guards intensified their activities during the last week and Thai fishermen are often seen fishing to the Bangladesh territory.

The Midnight File

Bosnia peace talks begin in US

WASHINGTON, Feb 26: Feuding factions renewed their quest for a peace settlement in Bosnia on Saturday, but the Clinton administration had only limited expectations of quick progress. The three-way negotiations, involving Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic, Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic and Bosnian Croat leader Kresimir Zubak, are being held in Washington under the watchful eye of American diplomats, reports AP.

Plane crash in Peru kills 31

LIMA, Feb 26: At least 31 people were killed when an airliner crashed in the Peruvian jungle in the western Ucayali department that borders Brazil, police reported today. The plane, travelling between Tingo Maria and Lima, went down Friday near Carpi Hill near Tingo Maria, police said. No further details were available, reports AFP.

HBFC borrowers' ultimatum

By Staff Correspondent

The Association of the Borrowers of House Building Finance Corporation has threatened to go for a greater movement after March 25 if its ten-point demand is not fulfilled by then.

The association at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday demanded reduction of the interest rate in conformity with the latest bank rate. It suggested the formation of an expert committee to make recommendations to ease the problems of the borrowers.

The press conference was addressed by its Secretary General Md Fazlul Huq. He demanded that the loan instalments against the principal amount be realised first and then the accumulated interests. He observed that the present system of loan realisation turns in interest on the loan into compound interest, although the HBFC claims it to be simple interest.

Fazlul Huq said, the overwhelming majority of the borrowers from the HBFC are willing to repay their loan but the 'irrational system' of the corporation compelled them to be the defaulters.

He said the corporation has provided Tk 1200 crore from 1978 to 1989 for the construction of houses among 48,000 borrowers, of which 32,000 became the defaulters. Tk 200 crore remains to be realised, he added.

The Secretary General of the association called upon the HBFC not to add interests during the rescheduling of defaulting loans and said the provision of depositing four instalments together should be simplified.

He also demanded extension of the time limit for payment of rescheduled instalments in the district towns considering the low house rent there.

Huq demanded raising the ceiling of loans for completion of the under construction houses. He said the authorities should fix various taxes and bills at a reduced rate and introduce rebate for those who are paying the loan instalments regularly. MA Mohaimen, Chairman, Abdur Rashid, Abdul Wadud and Abdul Baten Khan were present.

One to die for killing mother

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Feb 26: Natore District and Sessions Judge today awarded one Jamal death sentence for murdering his mother.

Judge A K M Fazlul Karim pronounced the verdict for matricide in a packed court room.

Khaleda, Hasina

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The world community, she said, was now required to be more active and alert so that the Middle West peace process was not jeopardised.

The Prime Minister reiterated solidarity of the people of Bangladesh for the Palestinians.

Sheikh Hasina

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has expressed deep shock at the Friday's killing of Palestinians at a mosque in Hebron.

"It's a barbaric attack," said Hasina in a statement yesterday.

The opposition leader prayed for peace and salvation of departed soul and expressed sympathy for the members of bereaved families.

Laudable

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This is for the first time that a visiting Foreign Minister or such a high ranking dignitary is calling on the Leader of the Opposition in a programme that has been scheduled officially by the government.

Earlier R Raphael, US Assistant Secretary of State also called on Sheikh Hasina but the programme was reportedly at the Secretary's own initiative and was not on the official agenda.

Reliable sources said that the Awami League approached the Chinese Embassy to arrange a meeting with the visiting Foreign Minister after it was known he would be coming to Bangladesh. However, Chinese Embassy officials did not respond. At this stage, the AL high command approached the Foreign office to arrange a meeting.

The AL request prompted the Foreign Minister to take a personal initiative to fix an official appointment between the visiting dignitary and the Leader of the Opposition. He sought and readily received the approval of the Prime Minister to make arrangements for the meeting. The schedule of the meeting was also incorporated and circulated in the official itinerary of the four-day visit of the Chinese leader.

The initiative of the Foreign Minister is a positive step towards institutionalising parliamentary norms and it will no doubt contribute to a more harmonious relationship between the ruling and the opposition parties, observers feel.

Accord on JMB

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Jamuna Bridge project which aims to achieve the strategic objective of connecting eastern and western parts of the country now separated by the Jamuna river.

IDA will provide 247 million dollar for the jute sector adjustment credit aimed at restructuring of the jute manufacturing industry to restore its profitability and viability.

The programmes, inter alia, involves training and rehabilitation of excess manpower, and restructuring of jute sector's accumulated debt.

It also aims at privatisation of at least 18 of the remaining 20 public jute mills in accordance with Bangladesh's commitment to private sector development. The project will be completed by 1997.

Pay scales

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PROKRICH agitation last month. But shortly after the announcement, lower and mid-level officers of BCS Administration cadre expressed their resentment and demanded upgradation of their scales also.

They formed an action committee and announced agitation programmes including rally and strike to realise their demand.

Several other cadre and non cadre organisations have also demanded upgradation