

Bank dacoity bid : One held, woman remanded

Detective police took a woman on a four-day remand for questioning and arrested one person yesterday in connection with the murder of a bank guard during a foiled dacoity bid in the city's Sonali Bank corporate branch.

The woman, aged about 30 and identified as a prostitute plying her trade in the Motijheel area, has been in the Detective Branch's custody for interrogation for the last four days.

The woman, named Anju, has been questioned several times and she is now on our list of suspects," said a police source in the DB adding that during interrogation there were some inconsistencies in the statements given by her.

However, he said, the investigators have collected some significant information relating to the crime from Anju.

Police declined to disclose the name of the young man, aged about 22, arrested yesterday afternoon.

Anju was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) yesterday and taken on remand. The young man will be produced before the magistrate today.

Azizur Rahman, 38, the bank's security guard, was found murdered inside the

bank's WAPDA Bhaban branch premises Saturday morning when a sweeper opened the door of a bathroom adjacent to the Assistant General Manager's chamber. Rahman was believed to have been murdered between Thursday evening and Saturday morning when the bank was closed. He was strangled to death.

The criminals tried to break open the bank's vault containing some 35 lakh taka with a drilling machine, but failed.

The Detective Branch (DB) took up the case Saturday night and launched a massive manhunt for the killers.

Earlier, police interrogated several other prostitutes, shopkeepers and night guards in the Motijheel area.

A senior DB officer said the police have identified the shops from where the drilling machine and other tools used in the robbery were purchased. He said, the investigators are now sure that the criminals entered the bank with the help of one or more call-girls who might have tempted the guard or been hired by him.

"We've got evidence that some of the night guards in the area usually let in girls inside their buildings," said the police officer.

"The criminals, as we've found in our investigation so far, had elaborately prepared for the crime," said the officer.

JS summoned

The Speaker said the MPs who have submitted the resignation letters are still Members of Parliament since there has been no notification declaring their seats vacant.

"Legally they are still members," he said.

In reply to a question, the Speaker said he had no knowledge whether or not the Opposition MPs would attend the coming session of Parliament.

"So far I know there was no positive outcome of the informal negotiations between the two parties," he said adding "I will be the happiest person if the matter is resolved amicably."

In reply to another question the Speaker said, "There was good intention behind his delay in giving a decision on the resignations of MPs."

UNB adds: Asked about any conflict between parliament and the judiciary over the High Court's ruling the Speaker said, "I don't think so... there should not be any confrontation."

In reply to another question, he cited a similar incident in India when the Speaker of the Indian parliament refused to submit to the jurisdiction of the court.

He was also asked if the situation was further complicated by the High Court ruling, he declined to comment. He had not received the notice of the High Court till today (Thursday), he added.

When asked about the conduct of the next session without Opposition, the Speaker said there is a parliament and a Constitution. Parliament will run according to Constitution and Rules of Procedure. "The Speaker, Parliament and everyone should be guided by the Constitution and law."

Police SI sent to jail on embezzlement charge

By Court Correspondent

A sub-inspector of police, arrested for embezzlement, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday.

M. Ali Akbar Mia, a sub-inspector of Motijheel police station, who was arrested by the Detective Branch (DB) Wednesday, was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Dhaka yesterday. The DB's prayer for a five-day remand was rejected by the court.

The court also rejected the bail petition for Akbar, fixing Sunday for hearing on both remand and bail prayers.

An assistant commissioner of the DB, M Humayun Kabir, who lodged a case against Akbar, said the sub-inspector was found guilty of misappropriating Tk 8,500 when he was on duty in the store of the Dhaka Magistracy from December 12, 1992 to May 10, 1993.

When he took over charge from SI Nurul Haq in 1992, Akbar allegedly received the money as an exhibit of a criminal case. But during his tenure in the Dhaka Magistracy, Akbar neither deposited the money with the Bangladesh Bank nor handed it over to the officer Nur Md. Akhand who replaced him in the magistracy in 1993, the charge stated.

The investigators said that in the primary inquiry it was found that Akbar had embezzled the money.



Buddhist monks gather outside the Presidential Secretariat yesterday in Colombo to protest Pope John Paul II's recent remarks critical of the Buddhist faith. About 100 monks took part in the peaceful protest, one day ahead of the Pope's arrival in predominantly Buddhist Sri Lanka. — AFP photo

A look into Bangladesh Railway

From Page 1 Col 6

Looking around me I could well justify what he meant. But I kept insisting on a ticket.

"You won't need a ticket," he said assuredly, "put yourself anywhere you like, we are leaving in five minutes."

The moment I got into the compartment, I realised how honest the man with a book had been. I was straightway repulsed by the stink of the overflowing toilet. The filthy floor was occupied by crippled beggars, while the other fellow passengers, mostly destitute slum dwellers with shabby belongings, looked on at me with a sort of disbelief.

Some took me as a BR official and warned others of the consequences of travelling ticketless.

The floor had a huge hole in the middle, looking extremely dangerous. Windows did not exist: walls bore the numerous obscene remarks with chalked out illustrations.

It was no place for me. I decided to try elsewhere. The time was 3:10. The train huffed and puffed to start the journey.

As I walked on the platform trying helplessly to find a bearable place, the driver of the locomotive waved to me. "Come over, you may sit with us," he shouted.

Inside the small engine room the two drivers had two seats facing the track. Both my hosts were friendly and I had no problem sharing one of the seats.

The train moved on with a sharp creaking noise as one of the drivers pulled a lever. A sharp pull of a rope let out a deafening siren. We were on our way.

Alas, my joy did not last long. The locomotive jerked so violently that it was hard to keep seated. I looked at the driver across the levers for a possible explanation.

"From Dhaka to Tejgaon the tracks are very dangerous," he said chewing pan. The maximum speed is 15 to 20 km per hour," he continued, "then you see the slums around us. These people do a lot of damage to the tracks."

Along the tracks near Kawan Bazar the slums grew dense. People walking haphazardly, women washing clothes, children playing and even a bazaar was in full business on the tracks.

Both the drivers used extra caution frequently blowing the hydraulic horn to warn the careless mass on the tracks. Within 10 minutes we made our first stop at Tejgaon Station.

The hustle and bustle of the waiting passengers, most climbing onto the roofs and the engine body, lasted five minutes.

We were again on our way, the last leg of my journey. The slums along the way now thinning out. Looking outside, I was probably a little unimpressed when, suddenly a burning smell engulfed the engine room. A thick smoke rose from somewhere beneath us.

I felt a cold sweat over me. The smoke was quite intense. The drivers continued their gossip with mouthfuls of 'Pan'. They didn't look the least bothered about the fuming situation.

By now we were crossing the Mahakkhal crossing where a huge afternoon traffic was held up to let us pass.

"Another few minutes and I am there," I whispered to myself.

As we approached Banani Station, I could see the waiting mass moving toward the platform. In the engine room the driver pulled the brake lever. The train refused to stop. The drivers looked at each other and pulled again. The carriages rolled on and on. "The brakes are gone," said one of them without the slightest concern.

The crowd at the station started running after the train. Some even managed to climb as the slow moving train was losing its momentum.

By the time the train lost all its impetus and came to a slow stop, we were 200 yards past the station platform.

I gave a big sigh of relief and asked my brave hosts whether they were going to repair the brakes before setting off. "Don't worry about it," was the answer. It was the answer. I thanked both of them and said, "Mind as you go." They laughed and waved to me. I walked back to the station and looked back. The train was gone! I was the only person left on the small station.

I lit a cigarette and walked across the airport road. This time I took a bus back home.



Inside a passenger compartment of a Bangladesh Railway train. — Star photo

Opposition barricade

From Page 1 Col 6

In the city, Kamalapur Railway Station sources said that all inter city trains which left the station on schedule were detained at Tongi until noon.

Mob blocked the Chittagong-bound Mahanagar Inter-city express train at Tejaon station at about 8:30 am. They also damaged window-shields of several coaches of the train as well as the engine.

No train could reach and leave the Khulna station till 2 pm since pickets put up barricades on the rail track.

Disruption of railway communication was also reported from Narayanangj, Mukundapur in Sylhet and Bonarpara in Gaibandha districts.

Sadarghat terminal sources said that movement of launches and steamers were normal during the barricade hours. All the watercraft of the ITWA arrived at and left the terminal on time, they confirmed.

Movement of vehicles in the city was less than that of any normal day.

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation officials said their city services operated normally during the programme hours while a vehicle carrying newspaper was damaged at Feni.

No other outward incident was however reported.

Rickshaw and auto-rickshaw fares shot up in the absence of adequate number of public transports in Dhaka.

Authorities deployed police and BDR at key-points in the city.

Most of the markets and business centres were unaffected but many educational institutes remained closed on the day.

Opposition political activists brought out processions at different places in the city and elsewhere in the country. They raised slogans demanding immediate resignation of the BNP government.

In the city Jatiya Party and Jamaat held separate rallies at the south and north gates of the Baitul Mukarram mosque.

In a statement, Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina congratulated the people for "making the barricade programme a success."

Our Staff Correspondent adds from Chittagong: The barricade programme was observed as elsewhere in the country.

Barricades were put up at different places causing disruption of road communication between Chittagong city and other parts of the country.

Witnesses said some rickshaws were damaged by pickets at Bahaderhat crossing during the programme hours while a vehicle carrying newspaper was damaged at Feni.

No other outward incident was however reported.

Railway sources here said movement of trains to and from Chittagong was as usual.

The Midnight File

Bangladeshi abducted by Indians, killed

LALMONIRHAT, Jan 19: A Bangladeshi citizen was kidnapped and later killed on Indian soil Wednesday, reportedly by a group of Indian miscreants, local people and official sources said here today, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Mafruddin, 45, of frontier Srirampur village in Patgram thana. His body is yet to be rescued.

Villagers said, a group of Indian miscreants, with the help of BSF personnel, kidnapped Mafriz from his village home in the morning. Later they killed him brutally.

The 15 BDR battalion in the district protested the killing and demanded return of the body at two flag meetings.

A meeting was held today between DC of Lalmonirhat and DM of Kuchbihar of India on the matter.

The body of Mafriz was not recovered till midnight today.

4 shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI, Jan 19: Four people were killed in violence in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi today, police said. Two men were shot dead by gunmen at a mosque in the north Nazimabad area, police said. A Muslim preacher was shot dead in the same district and the bullet-riddled body of a man was found in the Khwaja Ajmer Nagri town area, reports Reuter.

Israeli troops kill five Arabs

LEBANON, Jan 19: Israeli soldiers killed five guerrillas who entered the Israeli-occupied enclave in south Lebanon on Thursday and appeared headed for a northern Israeli town, security sources said. It was the deepest guerrilla penetration into the security zone this year, and four Israeli soldiers were wounded in the 30-minute shootout in the afternoon, the sources said, reports AP.

Zia's birth anniversary

From Page 1 Col 4

BSS adds: President Abdur Rahman Biswas gave a message on the occasion calling upon all to work unitedly to establish a happy and prosperous Bangladesh as dreamt by President Zia burying all differences.

Ministers, members of Parliament, central leaders of the BNP, leaders and workers of different front organisations including the Juba Dal, Chhatra Dal, Zia Parishad, Shechhasebak Dai visited the mazar and paid respect to their leader.

Meanwhile, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury inaugurated the second Zia international children painting competition and exhibition Wednesday at the Shishu Academy. The Zia Shishu Kishore Sangatha organised the competition where paintings of 3,500 children from 17 countries are on display at the exhibition.

The exhibition will remain open for all from 10 am to 5 pm everyday till today.

Begum Khaleida Zia is expected to distribute prizes among the winners of the competition. Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh put up special discussion programmes on Shaheed President Zia to mark the day.

Hartals observed in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 19: An eight-hour hartal was observed partially in the south Surma area of Sylhet town today in support of January 22 municipal elections.

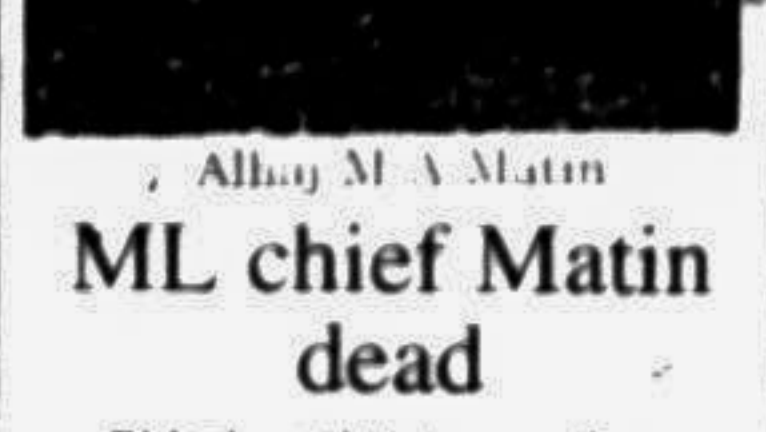
The Dakshin Surma Sangrami Chhatra Parishad, Islamj Samaj Kallyan Juba Federation and Juba Unnayan Parishad called the hartal.

The call was also made to demonstrate people's rejection of those opposed to the inclusion of the area in the pourashava last year.

A section of people have threatened to boycott the polls and have called for a 48-hour hartal on January 21 and 22, the days scheduled for the elections.

Today, at least twelve people were injured during chases and in exchanges of bricks between pro and anti hartal activists.

The pro-hartal activists erected barricade near rail-gate area on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway causing obstruction to traffic movement while their rivals took up position on the entry-point of the Keane Bridge.



Alhaj M A Matin

ML chief Matin dead

Elderly politician and president of the Bangladesh Muslim League Alhaj M A Matin died of a heart attack yesterday afternoon at the Suhrawardy Hospital in the city. He was 73, reports BSS.

He is survived by his wife, five sons, two daughters and a number of grand children.

The namaz-e-janaza for M A Matin will be held today after Jumma prayers at the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque.

Born in Sohagpur of Belkuchi under Sirajganj district in 1926, Matin joined politics during his student life. He actively took part in the Sylhet Referendum Movement and the Language Movement in 1952.

Matin, a veteran parliamentarian, was first elected a member of the Provincial Assembly of the then East Pakistan in 1954. He was also a member of Pakistan National Assembly in 1964.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia have expressed deep sorrow at the death of M A Matin.

Nirmul body observes founding day

By Staff Correspondent

The Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee on its third founding anniversary yesterday renewed vow to eliminate the killers and collaborators of 1971.

A new committee for the year 1995 was also formed yesterday with Mushtari Shaif as its convener. Shahriar Kabir as executive convener and Mia Abul Hashem as member secretary.

In observance of the founding anniversary, the Nirmul committee accorded a reception to the judges of the 'Gono Adalat' at the Engineers Institution.

Earlier in the morning, a convention was held. Later the committee brought out a procession that paraded the main city thoroughfares.

Asad Day today

By Staff Correspondent

Shaheed Asad Day will be observed today in the country.

Asad, leader of the then East Pakistan Chhatra Union (Menon), was killed in police firing on January 20, 1969, leading to the anti-automation movement towards a mass upsurge.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations have arranged discussions in observance of the day.

Kendrio Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya will place wreaths at Asad memorial monument in front of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at 8 am today.

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