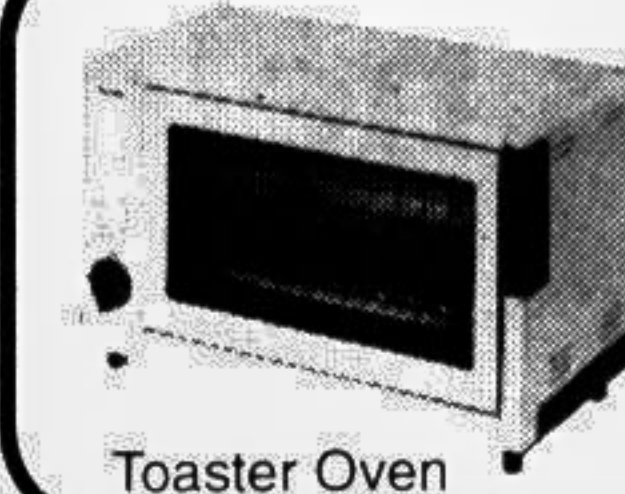


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PHILIPS

Shazneen murder

A sense of insecurity haunts people

By Staff Correspondent

More people expressed their grief and solidarity with the members of the family of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, a 15 year old school girl murdered in the city last Thursday.

A cross section of people including businessmen, doctors and housewives while talking to this correspondent yesterday said that the majority of crimes against women and children committed over the years went unpunished.

Several housewives expressing concern over the murder of Shazneen said, the gruesome murder must be properly dealt with and thoroughly investigated.

A housewife at the city's Gulshan area said, "Since the day I read about Shazneen's murder in the newspaper, I became very concerned about my 17-year old daughter going to college. I can no longer think of allowing my daughter to go to college on her own."

Tasneem Siddiqui, an associate professor of Political Science at the Dhaka University, while expressing her concern

about the murder said, "There is no effective mechanism for letting children know about child abuse. Mass awareness, opening up of parents with their children, and teachers with their students, are seen as forms of self-protection."

She also said, "Shazneen murder has been successful in touching the unorganised silent section of the society. This section does not have any stake in the partisan politics. Their major concern is security."

A doctor at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital said, "The society can no longer offer security to its citizens and frequent murders, as we learn about them reading the newspapers, is an evidence of it."

The physician blamed the law enforcing agencies for not taking proper action against the criminals.

A businessman, Mahmudur Rahman from Khulna while giving his reaction said, "I feel that violence against women and children over the last few years has at least tripled."



Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom speaking at a banquet hosted by President Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also seen.

Male to back Dhaka

From Page 1

cussed the progress of implementation of recommendations of the 9th SAARC Summit held in Male. A detailed progress report will be placed at the forthcoming SAARC Summit in Colombo. The two leaders agreed on carrying out informal consultations among the SAARC countries for formulating a guideline for the next summit.

The Maldives side agreed to consider Bangladesh's proposal for tariff concessions under the third round talks of SAPTA.

The Bangladesh side said it has decided to open a permanent resident mission in the Maldives.

President Gayoom assured of looking into problems of the 4000-member Bangladeshi workers community in his country.

The visiting dignitary said that Bangladeshi workers who along with Sri Lankan workers lost jobs with the closure of a garments factory there, will get compensation as per a court order.

The two leaders reviewed the six existing agreements signed between the two countries. These included agreements on

Flexible approach needed from ADB for institutional development: Kibria

Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria yesterday said that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) should adopt more flexible approach to pursue institutional development in the region's economic growth, reports BSS.

Addressing the 31st annual meeting of ADB in Geneva, the minister said the flexible approach with sensitivity to its qualitative dimensions was required so that institutional development can be pursued in a longer time-frame simultaneously with the medium term goal of economic growth.

The bank had chosen rightly broad-based institutional development as its strategy rather than simple project financing, Kibria said, adding that those would require a significant reorientation in the bank's approach to development and its perception about "institution", according to a message received in the city.

Kibria pointed out that some reform contingent lending programmes seek to bring about change at a rate that might engender further economic instability and exacerbate social and political tensions.

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setting up of air links, waiver of visa, cultural exchange programmes and cooperation on sound broadcasting.

The Maldives leader assured extending his government's co-operation to Bangladesh in protecting the low-lying coastal areas, in which his country has some expertise.

The Maldives side at the talks included Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Mohammad Hossain, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Salah Shihab and Personal Secretary to the President Adam Naem.

The Bangladesh side included Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman.

Nor' wester hits Lalmonirhat: One killed, 50 hurt

LALMONIRHAT, Apr 30: A severe nor'wester lashed the district Wednesday night killing one and injuring 50 other people, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Ramakant Roy, 38, of Guriadah village in Sadar thana.

Of the injured, Sujon 18, Deenesh, 22, and Biddut, 14, of the same village were admitted to sadar hospital.

Grameen phone

Subscribers protest move to impose incoming call charge

By Staff Correspondent

The Grameen Phone Subscribers Forum yesterday protested a reported move by the company to impose charges on incoming calls on its cellular-phone subscribers.

Addressing a press conference, leaders of the forum alleged that the Grameen Phone authorities failed to keep their earlier commitment of not imposing charges on incoming call.

Architect Mobassher Hossain, convenor of the Forum, addressed the press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium.

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Grameen Phone Trond Moe in a statement last night said that no formal decision was taken regarding imposition of charges on incoming calls.

Magurchara blow-out and failure of the company to fulfil the work obligations outlined in the Production Sharing Contracts (PSC) with the government.

The US company's work schedule for Jalalabad-1 well was delayed as it had brought in a faulty rig last year. Occidental's PSC for blocks 13 and 14 expired on January 11 for its failure to fulfil its work obligation. At that time, it did not apply for an extension of the PSCs two months prior to the expiry but it had applied for a full three-year extension on January 6.

The government had decided to extend the PSC after amending some clauses and on condition that Occidental would produce a full compensation for the damages it had done to the Magurchara gas structure. It had previously agreed to pay for the damages done to its natural surroundings.

The decision came after negotiations when Petrobangla proposed some amendments to increase Bangladesh's share in the PSC to recover the compensation. Occidental accepted the government's demand to increase Bangladesh's share by 5 per cent if gas was found in the Magurchara structure. The amendment included a definition of the costs recoverable in a blow-out.

However, earlier this month, Occidental disagreed with a proposed amendment to the PSC that Bangladesh would have the sovereign authority to protect the public interest — implying that it could cancel an operation of the oil company if it threatened public interest.

Occidental argued that this clause was contradictory to the spirit of the PSC while the government said that it had been incorporated in the model PSC approved in 1997 and therefore Occidental must accept it.

The issue of the PSC extension remained unresolved till date. Experts are now saying that the PSC should not be extended because Occidental has once again proved to be an inefficient operator. Its operation might lead to further disasters and the country would stand to lose its valuable gas reserves in the process.

Occidental noted with satisfaction that no fire explosion or injury has caused during the leakage for which it credited the skill and well-performed procedures at the well site.

Occidental Oil and Gas Company has expressed its sincere apology for the disruption caused to the people by Tuesday's gas leakage incident in Jalalabad gasfield, reports UNB.

In a statement issued in the city yesterday, the company also congratulated the local authority and police for smooth and rapid action they took to secure safety.

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'Informal political talks to promote confidence among SAARC members'

Visiting Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom yesterday called for gearing up the activities of SAARC and bolstering cooperation among the member states, reports UNB.

Addressing the banquet hosted by President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, the Maldives President said SAARC decisions should consolidate the decision of holding informal political consultations to expedite the delivery of tangible benefits to the common people.

"We broke new ground at the last summit in Male where we decided that holding of informal political consultations would be an important avenue for building confidence in our region and promoting the aims of SAARC," the Maldives President said, hoping that the process would be consolidated further.

Describing his visit of special significance, Gayoom said SAARC has opened up a new path for the South Asian countries to pool their efforts and build a common future in peace and friendship for the betterment of more than one billion people of the region.

He said, "Many years have passed... the world has changed in many ways. But these have only confirmed that we must continue to cooperate ever more closely."

He said the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement has become a reality and SAARC now set its sight firmly on a South Asian Free Trade Area.

College student murdered in Jessore

JESSORE, Apr 30: A college student was murdered by a group of miscreants at a village under Monirampur thana here this morning, reports BSS.

Police said, Mohammad Alauddin 18 was chopped to death at about 10 am.

Alauddin, a student of first year of Monirampur Degree College, was taking tea at a roadside tea stall. The miscreants left the place just after the killing.

Police arrested two young men from the village for their alleged involvement in the killing.

Occidental blames faulty sealing

From Page 1

On the night of the incident thousands of people in the adjacent areas started fleeing fearing a major blow-out. All flights to and from Sylhet were suspended till the leakage was sealed off later at night. None was injured in the incident.

High pressure gas started leaking out unexpectedly when Occidental was perforating the plug cemented by Scimitar. At one point, water started coming out of the well, thus minimising the risk of a major blow-out, sources said.

Part of Block 12, this well was drilled by Scimitar in 1989. It then tested the gas, sand and finally abandoned it by applying cement plug and "kill-string".

Occidental claimed that it was following all standard methods during the workover. It was drilling the cement plug properly and the hole was balanced when the leakage occurred. Occidental reported to Petrobangla, before the leakage, that the drilling crew was unable to "stab a valve into the drilling cap." Occidental further said that none of the equipment used by Occidental caused the accident.

Sources said that further investigation into the incident was being undertaken. Occidental's inefficient and negligent operation in blocks 13 and 14 had resulted in the deaths of some five workers during the seismic operation, the

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President visits ailing Shawkat Osman, Dr Wazed

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday visited ailing litterateur Shawkat Osman at the Combined Military Hospital in the city, reports UNB.

He stayed there for some time and inquired about his condition and treatment.

The President also visited ailing Justice B B Roy Chowdhury, Dhaka District Judge Gollam Rasul and former Air Chief Sultan Mahmud who are undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

Later, President Shahabuddin also visited scientist Dr M A Wazed Mia at the Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases. He stayed there for some time and wished him early recovery.

It all ended in laughter

By Staff Correspondent

BNP lawmaker Fazlur Rahman Patal has blamed Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf for replying in some "common words" whatever question he is asked in the Jatiya Sangsad.

"Project has been taken up. It's implementation is subject to availability of fund" and "We're making all-out efforts to resolve the problem" are the common replies the minister give in the House," the BNP lawmaker said during the question-answer session yesterday.

The opposition MP then went on to ask the minister three questions. As of now, how many projects have been taken up? What's the amount of money made available? How far the minister has succeeded in turning his all-out efforts into reality?

In response, the health minister said, "I see, he is very wise. He knows what replies I'll give. As he was in the government too, I guess he also had managed to escape in a similar manner".

Claiming that there was transparency in his replies, the minister became a bit angry to say, "How can I implement a project without having the necessary funds?"

The health minister termed Patal's questions irrelevant and assured the Opposition member of replying to those if prior notices were given.

The House plunged into laughter when the health minister suddenly shouted "stop" at another BNP MP, Abdul Wahab, who attempted to help him to answer the questions.

When he found that everybody including the Deputy Speaker in the chair, were laughing, the minister himself also started laughing.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid then told the minister: "Honourable minister, nobody wants to stop."

74 rescued while being trafficked to India

SATKHIRA, Apr 30: BDR personnel rescued 74 people including women and children from war Kulia bridge in Debhata thana here while they were being trafficked to India on Tuesday, reports BSS.

Of them, 29 were children, 20 women and the rest were men.

Sources said, a team of the Bangladesh Rifles intercepted a bus near the bridge and rescued the people who were travelling in it.

Acid thrown

From Page 1

were sitting inside a room of the house.

Suddenly the attackers threw a plastic glass containing acid through a window of the room at about 9:15 pm.

Police arrested a young man, Aslam, 26, as a suspect in the incident. He was produced before the CMM's Court yesterday.

Nasir, brother of Mona, filed a case with Kotwali thana in this connection.

Hartal in Ctg

From Page 1

With deployment of riot police and BDR, tight security was maintained in the city.

Most of the vehicles except rickshaws stayed off the roads. Rickshaws were kept outside the purview of hartal because of the ongoing SSC examinations.

Road communication from Chittagong and Cox's Bazar to other parts of the country, was disrupted during the half-day hartal. Most of the shops and offices, both private and public, were shut during hartal.

Port officials said cargo handling inside the jetties continued as usual through the delivery of goods to and from the port remained suspended due to nonplying of trucks.

In Chittagong Export Processing Zone, all the mills and factories functioned normally, officials said.

Police arrested 15 people on charge of picketing during the hartal hours.

Meanwhile, Shibir threatened to observe a full-day hartal in Chittagong division on May 5 if the outsiders from the university campus were not ousted immediately.

Shazneen murder case

From Page 1

have been lots of blood on the white floor. But the floor was clean when the body was discovered. Only there was blood under the body in front of the toilet of the bed room leading to the belief that the floor was wiped clean after the murder.

2. The sodium lights in a lawn on the south side of Rahman's residence were off in that evening. A CID official said the security guard at the residence, Humayun Kabir, till yesterday said the power line was disturbed following a short circuit due to pouring of water in a point of the line.

3. It was reported that Shazneen was talking to one of her friends, Abed, over phone when the killer entered her room. Abed told police that he heard the scream of Shazneen over the phone.

While continuing to listen to hear groans over one phone, he used a second phone at their Banani residence to call another number at Rahman's residence. Abed heard a male voice on the second phone and he requested the person to urgently inform Latifur Rahman or any other member of the family that Shazneen was screaming in her room. But the phone was put on hold. The CID is also investigating who was this person.

The second phone was located in the corner of the corridor outside Shazneen's room, 20 to 25 feet away.

4. Police sources said there were some footprints inside Shazneen's room. The investigators were yet to determine whose footprints were those.

Meanwhile, CID sources said the information which the investigators got from confessions of Shahid and Parvin, a maid at Rahman's residence, were 'effective' in continuing the investigation till yesterday.

However, they did not get much useful information from about 30 others so far been interrogated.

Besides, the investigators' suspicion centred the kameez worn by Shazneen. A CID official said the probe team was thoroughly examining the light pink colour kameez which was soaked in blood.

Two DMP officials, who in preliminary stage investigated the murder, said there were some perforations in the back side of the kameez. But those were so small that it could not be visible easily.

The edge of the kitchen knife which was used in the murder was about five inches while the width was about half an inch. "It could not make any big cut in the kameez," said a DMP official.

The goods which were seized from Shazneen's bed room and attached toilet as 'evidences' are the kameez, a salwar, a bed sheet, undergarments, tissue paper and tissue paper box. Besides, the knife was recovered from near a boundary wall two days after the incident.

CID investigators till yesterday thought that Shahid's story of kidnapping was false. Quoting Shahid's confession, a CID official said "the accused invented the story to protect himself."

CID investigators have plans to visit Tongi, Mymensingh, Bhairab and Chittagong, the places mentioned in Shahid's story of travelling to Chittagong where he surrendered before police on Monday morning.

May Day

From Page 1

The day is a public holiday. Government as well as various socio-cultural organisations, professional groups and political parties have drawn up programmes to mark the day.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television will put up special programmes while the national dailies are carrying special articles highlighting the significance of the day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address a discussion meeting to be organised by Labour and Manpower Ministry at Osmani Memorial Hall at 3 pm today.

It will also be addressed by Labour and Manpower Minister M A Mannan, ILO, Dhaka office Director M A Hasnain, Employers' Association president Rokeya A Rahman and labour leader Abdus Salam Khan.

The Prime Minister will also address a workers' rally at historic Paltan Maidan at 5 pm today.

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia will address a discussion meeting of the Jatiya Samik Dal at Engineering Institution Auditorium at 4 pm today.

JP chairman H M Ershad will attend a workers' gathering to be organised by Jatiya Samik Dal at Konabari industrial belt at Tongi at 4 pm today.

Some influential leaders of various other parties including BNP, JSD, LDF and Jamaat-e-Islam were also trying to work-out a common platform to protest the incident.

No progress in talks

From Page 1

JCD also demanded that the university authorities should issue statement condemning "inhuman" behaviour of police with the students.

The JCD delegation further demanded that police should play a neutral role, otherwise they should be withdrawn from the campus. April 23 should be declared as 'Jasimuddin Hall Tragedy Day'.

Blaming internal feud of BCL for the killing of its leader Partha, JCD demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident and exemplary punishment of those involved.

The VC assured that he would take steps to rehabilitate the ousted students after checking their identity cards as early as possible.

"I will try my best to ensure security of the students and teachers on the campus", he said while talking to journalists.

Regarding JCD's demand for release of its leaders and activists the VC said, "I have nothing to do with it, the home ministry is the authority in this regard. What I can do is to forward the demand to the home ministry".

Replying to a question, the VC quoting the provosts of halls

said that there were no outsiders or terrorists in the DU halls.

He, however, added that provosts of certain halls reported that some outsiders might come to the halls at night.

The VC said he hoped to meet the leaders of BCL and JCD at a joint meeting today for reaching a solution.

A meeting with the BCL leaders was in progress at 9:10 last night, sources said.

Meanwhile, the female activists of JCD yesterday brought out a silent procession on the Dhaka University campus protesting terrorism by the activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

The female JCD activists participated in the procession wrapping their faces with black clothes.

The procession which began at around noon from in front of the residence of the DU Vice Chancellor was the first political programme of the JCD on the campus since April 23.

The JCD activists submitted a memorandum to the Vice Chancellor demanding restoration of normal academic atmosphere in the university, ousting the terrorists from the campus and rehabilitating the genuine students in their respective halls.

Couple held for torturing maid placed on remand

By Staff Correspondent

The couple, arrested for torturing a maid, were placed on a one-day police remand yesterday.

The maid, Nurjahan, was under treatment at a city clinic till last night, police said.

Meanwhile, Mohammapur police said last night that they were investigating to ascertain the actual relation between Ayesha