

Motor workers clash in Rajshahi: 25 hurt

From Our Correspondent RAJSHAHI, Apr 29: At least 25 people were injured, five of them seriously, in a clash between the rival factions of Rajshahi Motor Sramik Union at Talaimart crossing in the city yesterday.

About 50 bombs were exploded during the clash. Later, police seized one pipe gun and eight hand-made bombs and arrested one Manik from the spot.

The Sramik Union members were in a meeting, but the clash erupted over the issue of toll collection.

The clash soon spread to the adjacent areas, creating panic among the people. Later, police rushed to the spot and resorted to baton charge to bring the situation under control.

The road communication between Rajshahi and Natore remained suspended for about two hours due to clash.

Seven terrorists held in city

Seven alleged terrorists were arrested from Jurain area of the city and police seized five bombs and bomb making materials from their possession, reports BSS.

A team of Shyampur police, acting on a tip-off, raided a building at Jurain Commissioner Road and arrested the alleged terrorists from its rooftop.

They seized five petrol and 40 homemade bombs and a huge number of bomb making materials from their possession.

The arrested are Iqbal, Motaleb, Delwar, Sumon, Sayeed, Nuruzzaman and Anwer.

Police suspected that Iqbal was the leader of a terrorist gang and Motaleb was involved in trafficking Phensidyl syrup in the area for a long time.

Shyampur police also arrested Monir Hossain and Ali Hossain from Jurain area and seized a country-made gun from their possession.

City AL spl meet today

A special extended meeting of the City Awami League (CAL) will be held today at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 6 pm, reports BSS.

General Secretary of City Awami League and State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya (Bir Bikram) has requested to all Parliament Members of the city, commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation belonging to Awami League, all CAL leaders, President and General Secretary of every Thana, Ward, Union and its front organisations of the party to attend the meeting on time.

Extortionists attack 2 in city

Two people were critically injured by unidentified extortionists in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Witnesses said a group of 5 extortionists stabbed Joydul Abedin, 35, of West Sheurapara in Mirpur as he denied to pay them toll.

In another incident, Sujon, 25, of Mautia village in Uttara Thana, was injured when some extortionists beat him up.

Another report adds: Some miscreants cut off the right-hand wrist of a housewife, Rehana Begum, 35, of Delpara village of Fatulla Thana in Narayanjan yesterday.

Witnesses said the miscreants chopped off her wrist as a sequel to past animosity.

The injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent. Morzina Khatun alias Modina Begum, mother of Masudul Hassan, a noted social worker, director of Peace for All, representative of International Peace Bureau (IPB) died of old age complications on Tuesday night. She was 69.

She was buried at Mirpur Hazrat Shah Ali (RM) mazar sharif premises at Mirpur.

A milad mahfil will be organised at the deceased's residence at 2/E, 6/1, Mirpur after Asr prayers.

Politician Deldar Ahmed dead

KHULNA, Apr 29: A H Deldar Ahmed, one of the senior most politicians in the country, died of cardiac arrest at his residence here at about 6 am today. He was 90, reports APB.

As the news of his death spread in the town, hundreds of people from all walks of life flocked to his residence to have a last glimpse at him and pay their respect.

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Talukdar Abdul Khaleque and City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman also visited the residence.

Deldar Ahmed, was a bachelor.

He was a front ranking leader of the Juktiafront, led by Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazul Haq. He was elected a member of the then Pakistan National Assembly in 1955 and was central food and agriculture minister in the Cabinet of Hussein Shahid Suhrawardy in 1966.

Qulqhwani held

The qulqhwani of Abu Naim Ahmed, former president of Pakundia Union, was held at its office in the city on Saturday last, says a press release.

A condolence meeting was also held on the day. The samity members expressed deep sorrow at his death and conveyed sympathy to the members of bereaved family.

A former joint secretary, Ahmed died on April 21.

Nazrul's birth centenary Last phase of celebrations begins today

"Nazrul Birth Centenary Conference" begins today afternoon in the National Museum Auditorium in the city as part of the year-long celebrations of the national poet's birth centenary, reports BSS.

Former Chief Justice and Head of the Caretaker Government Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman will inaugurate the conference, first programme of the last phase of the year-long celebrations which began on Jaistha 11, 1405 (May 25, 1998), the 100th birthday of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to attend the concluding and main function of the birth centenary as the chief guest scheduled to be held on Jaistha 11, 1406 (May 25, 1999) at the Osmani Memorial auditorium.

This was disclosed at a press conference of the National Committee on Celebration of the Poet's Birth Centenary held in the Nazrul Institute yesterday afternoon.

The experts include Dr Henry Glassic and Dr Winston Langley from United States, Dr Kiyuka Niwa from Japan, Dr Hans Horder, Dr Monika Karbe and Dr Cristian Weive from Germany, Mrs Theodora Kis from Greece, Azhar Uddin Khan, Dr Bramhamon Thakur, Dr Madhusadhan Basu and Dr Anup Ghosal from India.

Buddha Purnima celebrated

The Buddhist community of the country yesterday celebrated their biggest religious festival with due respect fervour, marking the advent, enlightenment and "nirvana" or passing away of Lord Gautam Buddha, reports BSS.

On this day 2500 years ago, Lord Gautam Buddha was born in a grove called Lumbini in Kapiyastu (Nepal), attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35 in Gaya (Bihar, India) and passed away at the age of 80.

To celebrate the day, Buddhists carried out a number of rituals including lighting lamps, "Bodhibrikhaya Sanchaya", "Buddha Puja", "Punnaya Dan", "Panchashila and Asta Shila Graham", presented special yellow robes to the monks, and took part in religious discussions.

This year Bangladesh Buddhist Federation and several other Buddhist organisations, including Sammlita Buddha Purnima Ujjapan Parishad (SBPUP), observed the day through holding peace march, rallies, discussions, and prayers seeking world peace.

Bangladesh Buddhist Federation organised a number of programmes at the International Buddhist Bihar at Merul Badda, Gulshan in the city.

Minister for Civil Aviation, Tourism and Works Engineer Mosharrar Hossain attended the programmes as the chief guest and State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam was present as special guest.

Among others, A K M Rahmatullah, MP, Chairman of Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) Prof M Mustafa Chowdhury, and Chairman of RAJUK Azizul Huq were also present on the occasion.

Meanwhile President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed hosted a reception for the members of the Buddhist community on the occasion of Buddha Purnima at Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam was present on the occasion.

Diplomats of Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan were present on the occasion.

The members of the Buddhist community thanked the president for arranging such a graceful reception.

Earlier, President Shahabuddin welcomed the guests and exchanged pleasantries with them. He also enquired about their welfare.

Eid reunion of Dhaka Dist Rover today

The Eid reunion of Dhaka Zilla Rover Scouts will be held in the city today, says a press release.

An award distribution ceremony and cultural programme have also been arranged on the occasion.

National Commissioner (Organisation) of Bangladesh Scouts and LGRD Secretary Badir Rahman, President of Dhaka Zilla Rover and Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka MA Mobarak, Commissioner of Dhaka Zilla Rover Dr QATM Habibur Rahman will attend the function at the Eden Girls' College auditorium.

Teachers urged to be vocal against AL govt

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleida Zia yesterday urged the teachers' community to raise their voice against the "autocratic" government to rid the country of a serious crisis, reports UNB.

Teachers always protest against any misdeeds and injustice. The country is now plagued by widespread terrorism. People are disappointed with worsening law and order and economic slowdown as well," she said.

The opposition leader made the call when 54 teachers of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) called on her at her 29 Minto Road official residence in the evening.

Newly elected president Prof Moinuddin Ahmed and general secretary Prof Idris Mia of the BAU Teachers Association led the delegation.

BNP-backed Sonali Dal bagged eight posts out of 11 in the teachers' association elections.

Begum Zia said "state terrorism" and politicisation were vitiating academic atmosphere of BAU as of other universities.

She said the agricultural university was established to introduce state-of-the-art technologies in the country's agriculture.

"Agriculture contributes lion's share to our national economy, but the university is lagging behind its main objective following state terrorism and politicising," Begum Zia observed.

She said many efficient and qualified teachers of the university were losing interest in teaching profession due to politicising.

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Withdrawal of 'false cases' against BNP leaders demanded

BNP secretary general Abdul Manannar Bhuiyan yesterday demanded withdrawal of "false cases" filed against the central party leaders, reports BSS.

He also called for formation of judicial enquiry committees to probe the cases where his party leaders and workers are implicated.

Addressing a rally at Muktaghara here in protest against the filing of 'conspiratorial case' against former minister and BNP Vice Chairman Tariqul Islam, Bhuiyan also demanded immediate release of all political detainees including K M Obaidur Rahman MP, Alamgir Kabir MP and Nurul Islam Manzur.

Bhuiyan alleged that Tariqul Islam had been implicated in the Mukul murder case only to harass his party and weakening the BNP, party MP Alamgir Kabir, he said, was also implicated in another murder case.

Presided over by convener of Dhaka City BNP Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, the rally was also addressed, among others, by BNP standing committee member Abdul Matin Chowdhury and BNP joint secretary general Abdullah Al Noman.

Other leaders of BNP reiterated their demand for resignation of the government and holding of fresh elections under a caretaker authority.

The rally was followed by a procession.

Committee formed to recommend policy support for garments industry

The leading trade bodies in the textile and garments sectors yesterday formed a committee to recommend policy support for the overall development of the industry, reports APB.

A 17-member committee was formed at a joint meeting of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, Bangladesh Textile Mills Association, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters' Association and Bangladesh Teri Towel and Linen Manufacturers and Exporters' Association at the BGMEA conference room.

Ahead of the next budget, the committee will identify problems facing the textile sector, find solutions and recommend policy support to the government to increase its competitive edge, keeping in view the withdrawal of the Multi-fibre Agreement in 2005.

Chaired by BGMEA president Anisur Rahman Sinha, the meeting was attended by BTMA president Salman F Rahman, BKMEA president Monzurul Haq, BTMLMEA president Hujjaj Islam and other members of the associations, said a BGMEA press release.

Gonoshasthaya protests road accidents

The officers and workers of Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK), teachers and students of Gono Bishwabidyalaya and Gonopathsala brought out a silent procession in protest of the tragic death of Anu Chowdhury in a road accident, says a press release.

Anu popularly known as Babu, the only son of Dr Qasem, executive director of GK, received serious head injuries on Nabilah road at Savar when a speeding rickshaw truck knocked down his rickshaw. Anu succumbed to his injuries at Bangabandhu Hospital (former IPGMR) on April 17.

The seminar organised by Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT) was presided over by Ataur Rahman, Theatre Director and Secretary General to ITC, Bangladesh-Kamaluddin Nilu, Secretary General, (CAT) delivered welcome speech in the inaugural session of the seminar.

The seminar discussed functions of popular and folk theatre and dance for the public at large, in everyday life, as well as in religious or secular festivals and holidays. Dr Christina Nygren, theatre scholar from the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences pointed out that popular theatre is integrated in society and in people's life, not only as an aesthetic experience or as entertainment for the common people, and the performances are often significant for a feeling of community or serve like unifying events for certain groups in the social structure.

The day-long seminar was participated by outstanding theatre directors, actors and actresses, writers, academicians, theatre scholars and theatre critics of the country.

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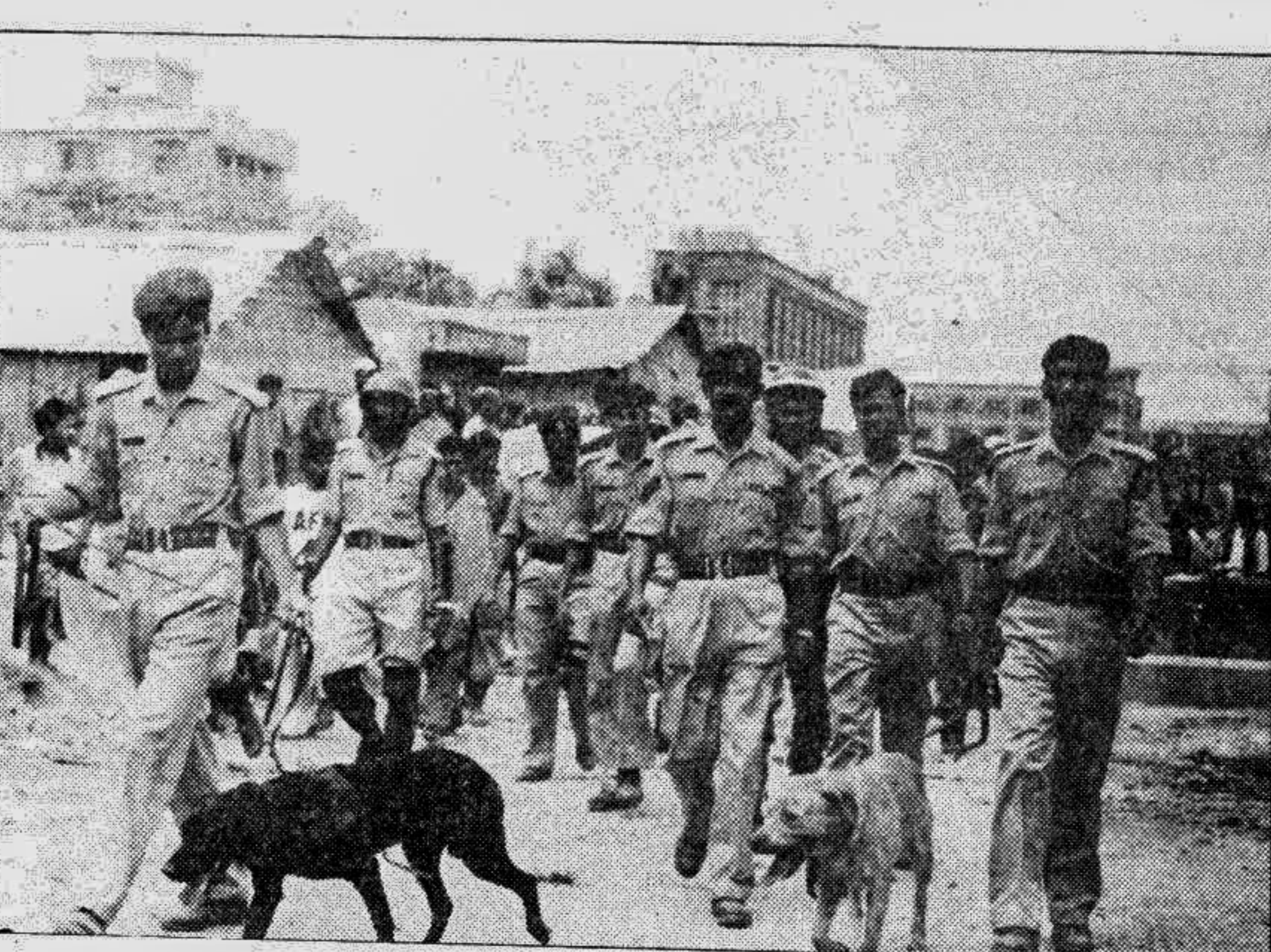
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The day-long seminar was participated by outstanding theatre directors, actors and actresses, writers, academicians, theatre scholars and theatre critics of the country.



A police team aided by a dog squad raided TT Para slum at Kamalapur in the city yesterday. Five bottles of phensidyl were recovered and four people arrested during the raid. —Star photo

Spl police drive in Khulna 122 criminals rounded up

KHULNA, Apr 29: A review meeting on special police drive against criminals in Khulna Division and Khulna Metropolitan area was held yesterday with the Additional Inspector General of Police (Administration) Abdur Rahim Khan at the Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioners conference room, reports BSS.

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner Anwarul Iqbal informed the additional IGP of the updated result of special police drive in the city and said that during the last seven days the metro-police had recovered 25 arms and 26 rounds of ammunition and arrested 122 criminals from the city area.

Speaking on the occasion Abdur Rahim Khan said that police had launched a special drive against the criminals successfully nabbing illegal arms and ammunition. He further said that the present government is determined to establish a crime-free society at any cost and the police is relentlessly working to make the drive successful.

Referring to the steps already taken to contain crimes the additional IGP said that 150 permanent police camps were being set up in Khulna Division of which ten such police camps would be set up in Khulna Metropolitan police area. He also said that five police camps would be set up immediately. He sanctioned Tk five lakh for setting up of Mistripara Bazar camp and approved police camps at Labanchora, Rayermohal, Arang Ghata and Pathar Bazar in the Metropolitan city.

The meeting was attended by the officers-in-charge of all the three thanas of the district and high officials of the police department.

Earlier, the additional DIG visited several places in the metro-city and exchanged views with local people. Speaking on the occasion Abdur Rahim Khan sought the cooperation of the people in apprehending criminals of their respective areas.

During the visit Abdur Rahim Khan was accompanied by Awami League leaders including Shamsur Rahman Mani, member of Awami League Presidium, Awami League nominated Khulna city mayor candidate S M A Rob and members of local police officials.

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Help sought for treatment of Bir Bangalee

Leading personalities and different socio-political organisations of Sylhet yesterday sought government's help for providing medicare services to freedom fighter Saidur Rahman Mahtab, popularly known as 'Bir Bangalee', reports BSS.

Mahtab, an injured freedom fighter who had long been suffering from different diseases and is now in a serious condition from diabetes and infection in his kidney and pancreas, needs help for treatment.

The Bir Bangalee so far himself bore the expenses of his treatment but now financially broken.

The signatories to the statement included Shajahan Siraj, A F M Mahbul Haq and Nazrul Islam.

Diarrhoea claims 14 in Feni, Noakhali

FENI, Apr 29: Diarrhoea that has broken out in an alarming rate in the char areas of the district and neighbouring Noakhali claimed at least 14 lives, reports UNB.

The victims, including 10 children, died during the last two weeks, said the local sources.

The worst affected areas are Char Mujlshipur, Char Chandia and Sonagazi unions in Feni and Nabagram, Char Majid, Char Mahiuddin, Char Nalua areas in Noakhali district.

The number of deaths in Noakhali 13 includes 10 children.

At Feni Sadar Hospital, 10 to 15 people are getting admitted with diarrhoea everyday, most of them are children and old people.

The spread of the water-borne disease is mainly due to the prevailing drought and scarcity of drinking water.

Official sources said medical teams are working in the affected areas but the local people alleged that they did not find any member of the teams in their areas.

Hot spell claims 3 in Pabna

PABNA, Apr 29: A prolonged heat wave sweeping most parts of the district left three people dead over the past week, hospital sources said, reports APB.

Those killed in the heat-stroke were identified as Ganganarayan Dhar, 55, of Shalgharia and Masud Ali, 60, of Hamchapur in sadar thana, and Afzar Mollah, 42, of Nayanpur in Bera thana.

The district had been reeling under scorching heat for the last few days and according to records registered by the local administration, the temperature soared to as high as 40 degrees Celsius in some places.

Although some places in the country experienced a little rainfall in the recent months, Pabna has been hit by a severe drought.

The district experienced no rain since a 20 mm rainfall was recorded here on November 17 last, concerned sources said.

Meanwhile, several thousand people joined in a special prayer in the town today seeking divine intervention for rain.

Road accident in Gaibandha: One killed, five hurt

GAIBANDHA, Apr 29: A man was killed and five people were injured in a road accident at Gobindaganj on Dhaka-Rangpur highway here today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Jaifur Islam (35), son of Hossen Ali of Valuk Kanpur village in the thana and the injured were Major Faraj of Syedpur Cantonment, his wife Salma Begum, son Musfiqur Rahman, daughter Tasmina Tanjim and driver Sekendar.

Police said the accident occurred at about 1 pm when a car carrying Major Faraj and his family members turned turtle into a roadside ditch after hitting pedestrian Jaifur from behind.