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## Customer opens fire to foil dacoity bid

By Staff Correspondent

A customer opened fire on a gang foiling its bid to commit dacoity at an ice cream shop at Kemal Ataturk Avenue at Banani in the city on Thursday night.

Three of the five-member gang were bullet hit as the customer used his licensed revolver. Two with injuries were caught and three others including an injured managed to flee. Gulshan police said quoting the witness.

The dacoits first came to the shop in a car at about 8:30 pm but left after some time. Then they appeared at about 11:30 pm and asked for ice cream. Two of them immediately came out and forced the guard at gunpoint to enter the shop.

See page 11 Col 7

## Angry people lay siege to Keraniganj thana

Angry people laid a siege to Keraniganj thana yesterday protesting drug trafficking and deterioration of law and order in the upazila, reports BSS.

Witnesses said several hundred people of the upazila came in a procession and laid a siege to the thana at about 11 am. Later, they submitted a memorandum to the officer-in-charge.

The agitating people alleged that drug trafficking and its abuse had increased in the upazila recently due to negligence of duty by the police. Law and order has been deteriorated due to the same cause.

At least 30 godfathers are using Keraniganj as their sanctuary for drug trafficking and selling drugs by their local agents in Dha k'a, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and 12 unions of the

See page 11 Col 6

## Case under PSA Moveable property of 18 Rajshahi JCD men attached

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Oct 20: Bagha thana police today attached moveable property of 18 leaders and activists of Jatiyatabdhi Chhatra Dal (JCD) accused in a case under PSA.

Police said, office of Awami League Bagha Upazila Unit was ransacked during a clash between JCD and Bangladesh Chhatra League on July 20 this year.

Awami League Upazila Unit president Abdus Samad filed a case in this connection under Public Safety Act (PSA) accusing 23 leaders and activists of JCD including president Selim Arif and general secretary Mokhlesur Rahman Mukul of JCD Bagha Upazila Unit.

Four of the accused were arrested by police immediately

See page 11 Col 6

## Inside Today

### Article

#### Israeli and Palestinian Leaders Agree to 'Ending Violence'

Column: Spotlight on Middle East

By Muslehuddin Ahmad

Page 4

### Business

#### CDS operational framework rift surfaces

Oil prices hold at firm levels as ME violence flares again

Euro supported above \$ 0.84 by intervention rumours

Pages 6, 7 &amp; 8

## Authoritarian power of public servants generates corruption

PARC report suggests immediate appointment of Ombudsman

Monopoly and authoritarian power of the government servants help corruption take root, BSS quoting a report of the Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC) said.

Plenty of laws and regulations along with authoritarian power of the public servants is generating corruption in every sphere of society," the report said adding main causes of corruption in the country are poor socio-economic condition, lack of proper enforcement of law and inadequate punishment.

The PARC report identified poor salaries, insufficient service facilities, discrimination in promotion and misuses of official power for personal interest as the other reasons for corruption.

It said corruption also takes place through tender evaluation, tax settlement and other financial activities at the government level, which lack transparency and openness. The government employees also take advantage of the loopholes in their service rules.

The report said corruption has adverse impact on state, society and public life. Because of corruption, the report said, weak decisions are taken resulting in misuse of government money and affecting foreign investment in development activities.

It said corruption hampers government's revenue collection, destabilise macro-economy and create social imbalance due to unequal distribution of wealth among the people.

Bribery also plays an important role in launching new investment projects which ultimately turn into 'white elephant' making the nation overburdened with debt.

The report observed that corruption is not merely confined to the public sector. Private Sector entrepreneurs also bribe the government officials to get their projects okayed to derive undue benefit through over invoicing and under invoicing resulting in corruption in import business.

The report also identified a number of reasons for failure to check corruption in the society. These are: old rules and regulation, lack of transparency and accountability of the public administration system, absence of order in offices, lack of commitment to help people, and inefficiency originating in social and moral degradation.

Bureau of Anti-corruption of the country has already lost peoples' confidence and apparently it has become an 'ineffective' organization in preventing corruption.



## A common sight at DMCH

Dhaka Medical College Hospital

the biggest and the busiest one in the country, is always crammed with patients. On an average, over 1400 patients remain admitted to the 700-bed hospital. Every working day, at least 1700 patients, mostly referred from hospitals in neighbouring districts, come to the DMCH. But due to acute shortage of beds, many patients, particularly with burn injuries or urological problems, have to wait for months and even years. Patients with serious injury and heart ailment are admitted immediately but they have to share beds, sometimes risking infection. The photos show patients lying on floors at the male (left) and the female wards of the medicine department. It is more than nine months now that the Health Minister categorically said funds would be sanctioned for raising the number of bed to 1400. But that was all.

--Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

## No plan to sell gold, says BB

Star Report

In the wake of widespread speculation, a Bangladesh Bank source has categorically said it has no plan to sell gold.

"We have only 30 million dollars in gold reserve at the current price, most of which came from IMF in the mid-70s," the source said. "This gold is kept in the vault of the Bank of England". Another part of our reserve is made up of gold seized by Customs, which the central bank buys after completion of all legal procedures, he told The Daily Star on Thursday.

So, the gold reserve is so meager that selling it would hardly make any difference in the foreign exchange reserve.

However, another source said that there was once discussion about investing the gold, which otherwise yields no returns. "So, we thought that we could invest the gold by letting a third party rent it," said the source. "Accordingly, we took some spot quotations four months ago. But later, we discarded the idea as the return on such investment was only one per cent."

The source said that a better option was to sell the gold and invest the money in bonds, which usually have four to five per cent yield. This is what the Indian government and the Bank of England did a few months back.

But this did not prove a wise decision for Bangladesh because the current gold price is very low, sources said.

## A leader of 'Seven Star' group held

By Staff Correspondent

A leader of the infamous 'Seven Star' group, Bhuiyan Ripon, along with four accomplices was arrested yesterday from Shantinagar area in the city after an exchange of fire, police said.

"Five people were arrested during the drive," duty officer at Motijheel thana said without giving details.

But another police source said Ripon and two accomplices were 'shot'.

A police team raided a house at

See page 12 Col 4

## Police, DB & CID riddled with problems

### Poorly paid, manned and equipped

By Staff Correspondent

Successive governments failed to take any concrete step to strengthen the ailing law enforcing agencies although the crime rate continued to rise.

Police stations (thanas), Detective Branch (DB) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) are riddled with scores of problems. Poorly paid, inadequately manned and equipped, these vital sections are often forced into corrupt practices while doing their duty.

At 21 city police stations where incidents of murders, rape, robberies, burglaries, abductions and other crimes have rocketed over the last two years, police officials said they were inhumanly burdened with cases and are unable to do justice to investigations.

Ramna thana OC, ABM Sultan Ahmed who has 16 years of experience in the metropolitan area, said that 21 police stations and their 3,010 forces are grossly inadequate for a population of one crore. The existing thana areas should be reduced and more police stations with smaller boundaries set up, Sultan said.

Each of the investigating officers of the police station is burdened with dozens of serious cases to probe. At the same time, he is required

to do duties frequently assigned by the ruling party VIPs. In these circumstances it is humanly impossible for him to deliver his duties no matter how sincere he is, another official said.

"Even the chairs, tables and cupboards we are using in the thana office had to be bought by the police officials and with meagre salaries to back up, many were forced to seek contribution from public to procure the furniture," said a police official of Mohammadpur thana.

Sources at the DB office at Minto Road said that at any given time up to 50 per cent of their workforce cannot do their job of preventing and detecting crimes. Half of the 53 Sub-inspectors, 18 inspectors and 88 constables are constantly engaged in activities such as VIP duties, attendance at courts, training courses and holidays.

There are eight DB teams each comprising up to three men with 14 vehicles in running condition. The DB is burdened with 340 serious cases, which need to be investigated and dispatched, sources said.

Commenting on various constraints, some young DB officials who talked to this correspondent said that the system often forced them to indulge in 'fair means'.

When we have a suspect under detention, the

See page 11 Col 1

## Flood: Tk 40 cr property of 354 educational instts damaged

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 20: Floods have so far damaged property worth over Tk 40 crore of 354 educational institutions in Jessore district.

According to district administration sources 354 educational institutions in five upazilas of the district have been damaged by devastating floods.

The damaged institutions include seven colleges, 50 secondary schools, 14 junior high schools, 40 madrasahs and 263 primary schools.

Sharsha upazila tops the list as damages to institutions are concerned, the source said.

All these schools and colleges remained under flood water from September 16 to October 12.

Besides, many schools and colleges, not hit by floods, were turned into shelters for the affected people. The flood hit people have started leaving these shelters from Wednesday as flood water receded from their homes, said a high official of Primary Education Department.

The flood affected people damaged furniture of schools and colleges where they took shelters.

Besides, chairs and tables at these institutions were used by them as fuel wood, said an official of Jessore primary education office.

The official said UNICEF has assured to provide funds for repairing the damaged schools and colleges. Preparation is underway to assess the extend to damages, the official added.

Meanwhile, students, teachers and guardians of some schools, colleges and Madrasahs have started renovation work voluntarily so that classes can be held within the shortest possible time.

## Three members of outlawed PBCP arrested

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 20: Jhenidah Sadar thana police arrested three members of outlawed Burbo Banglar Communist Party on October 17 from Bakchar area.

The arrested are Asad, 30, Asma, 24, and Alexa, 25.

Asad is younger brother of Tapan Mahmood, Khulna Divisional Commander of PBCP, police said.

According to Jhenidah Sadar thana police, some important documents were recovered from the possession of the arrested which are vital for finding clues to several murders including SMA.

See page 12 Col 4

## More areas flooded in Satkhira as dam collapses in India

BEGERHAT, Oct 20: Gushing water from across the border today submerged five more villages in Showanil union of Assasuni upazila deteriorating the flood situation in the area, reports UNB.

Communication on Satkhira-Kaliganj road remained snapped since Thursday night as flood water was washed away 200-250 feet road.

"Waters are still entering the district through Ichhamati and Sonai rivers as the cross dam at Khotiota in India collapsed," said local people.

However, the situation in the district improved with slight recession of floodwaters.

Meanwhile, acute scarcity of pure drinking water has been prevailing in the flood-hit areas where diarrhoea and other intestinal diseases broke out.

Local people alleged that food supply in the area is also inadequate.

PHED sources said the department has so far installed 180 tubewells and set up 160 sanitary latrines in the affected areas.

District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Ajit Kumar Pramanik told UNB that he informed the higher authority to provide additional 50 mts of rice for the area.

Executive Engineer of Water Development Board Nurunnabi Chowdhury was stand released on Thursday for failing to face the flood situation.

Despite government directives to keep the government offices here open on the weekend all offices, except the flood control room and district relief office at Collectorate building, were seen closed till 3:30 pm today, hindering the relief activities.

According to the control room, the flood has affected some 534,035 people. Of them, 501,251 people took shelter in 430 flood shelters.

Officials confirmed six deaths in flood related causes, but unofficial sources claimed the number 16.

See page 12 Col 4

See page 12 Col 4