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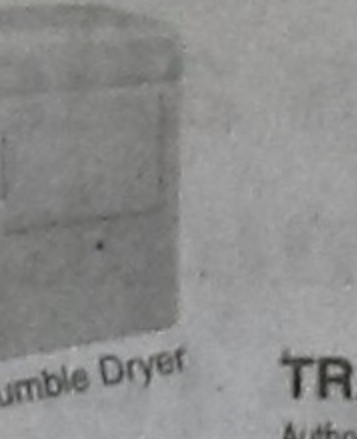
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Remembering Lalou
The two-day Baul Utsav (folk festival), organised by the Lalou Smriti Sangsad, began yesterday at the Public Library auditorium. —Star photo

Rob murder: 4 PBCP men on fresh remand

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 1: Four armed cadres of outlawed Purbia Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were taken on a three-day fresh remand in connection with AL Mayoral Candidate SMA Rob murder case.

They are Bitu, Moyeen, Saeed and Mehed.

CID police took them into custody on October 31 after they received positive report on ballistic test of two arms recovered from the four.

Police recovered two guns, one pistol and ten bullet, from the possession of the four armed cadres of PBCP during a combing operation in September.

CID police said the arms were used for killing SMA Rob as it appears from the positive report of ballistic test.

One of the interrogators said the four members of outlawed PBCP are used on hire for committing murders.

Businessman kidnapped in city

By Staff Correspondent

A businessman was kidnapped from the city's Mohammadpur area allegedly by his business partner on Monday.

Police quoting the FIR said Nazrul Islam alias Masud Rana and his gang abducted Khairul Alam, 35, while he was walking down Noorjahan Road at about 10 a.m.

The gang took him to some unknown place and demanded a ransom of Tk 1.95 crore from his family. They also threatened to kill Alam if the police was informed, family sources said.

Mohammad Nazrul Alam, brother of the kidnap victim, lodged a case with Mohammadpur police in this regard.

The whereabouts of the businessman could not be found till writing of this report late last night.

Police suspect that the abduction may be a sequel to some business feud.

Decision to ban Rickshaws was not in plan!

By Staff Correspondent

The decision of DMP's traffic department to ban rickshaws from Mirpur Road from yesterday was not in the plan of Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP), according to sources.

The decision to ban the three-wheelers from Mirpur Road by declaring it a VIP Road sparked off clashes between police and rickshawpullers at different points on the road on Monday, leaving at least 50 people injured.

According to sources, the authorities concerned have decided to postpone the ban to the middle of this month in the wake of Monday's clash. But neither DUTP officials nor DMP's traffic department could confirm till last night as to when the ban would go into effect.

Referring anonymity, a DUTP official told The Daily Star yesterday that the actual DUTP plan was not to ban playing of rickshaws on Mirpur road, but rather to create rickshaw lanes on both sides of the road.

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Sugar smuggling deprives govt of Tk 20 lakh revenue a year

By Raziur Rahman

The government is deprived of a revenue earning of about Tk 20 lakh a year as a huge quantity of poor quality sugar is smuggled from India, hindering the marketing of locally produced and imported quality sugar.

Sources concerned said at least one third of the requirement of sugar in the country was being met with the smuggled sugar, often containing inedible and toxic elements. Besides, smuggled sugar is transported and stored in very unhygienic condition.

According to an estimate of Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC), the quantity of smuggled sugar is around 60 tonnes a year on an average. This causes a revenue loss of about Tk 20 lakh to the government.

Sugar traders however claim that at least three lakh tonnes of sugar are smuggled every year.

Poor quality sugar is smuggled through the bordering areas of Rajshahi, Kushtia, Chapai Nawabganj, Dinajpur, Rangpur and some other districts through-

out the year, they said.

Price of imported sugar is around Tk 25 thousand per tonne on an average which includes Tk 5,000 as import duty.

People of bordering areas and some other parts of the country buy smuggled sugar as its price is around Tk 23 per kg, at least Tk 10 less than the price of imported sugar. Smuggled sugar is sent to Narayanganj, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, Narsingdi, Bhairab and other parts of the country by road.

The demand for sugar in the country is about 3.9 lakh tonnes a year, BSFIC officials said quoting a government estimate.

But sugar traders said the demand is much higher than that. The 15 sugar mills in the country produce around 1.5 lakh tonnes a year and usually 1.5 lakh to two lakh tonnes are imported per year.

A leader of Bangladesh Wholesale Sugar Merchant Association said that more import of sugar is necessary to stop smuggling.

BSFIC officials however said

low price of smuggled sugar is a major reason behind smuggling of it.

Sources said smuggling of sugar increases when local sugar mills are out of production from the end of March to mid-October.

Price of local sugar and imported sugar was Tk 32 to 33 for the last few years. It soared up to Tk 40 in the last two months.

Import of sugar stood at 1.25 tonnes last year. This year, production target of the sugar mills is 1.3 lakh tonnes and the import target is two lakh tonnes.

Following the price hike of sugar recently, the government decided to import another 50 thousand tonnes to meet the increased demand during the month of Ramadan.

When contacted, a top official of BSFIC said the local production and the imported sugar are usually adequate to meet the demand for sugar.

He, however, said sometimes there may be temporary shortage and this might be a reason behind smuggling.

Withdrawal of cut-off time by CPA angers port users

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Nov 1: Withdrawal of cut-off time from today for container vessels by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) angered some port users including shipping agents and stevedores.

The shipping agents and stevedores lodged protests to port authority in this regard.

Cut-off time system in case of loading export cargo into container vessels was withdrawn in line with the decision of the Ministry of Port and Shipping in the backdrop of appeal from BGMEA, port sources said.

Bangladesh Master Stevedores

Association and Bangladesh Steamer Agents Association in separate letters to the CPA expressed their resentment and lodged protests for the withdrawal of cut-off time. They also demanded reintroduction of it.

The cut-off time was introduced one year ago at Chittagong port to ensure loading of export cargo within 24 hours after berthing of the container vessel at the port jetties as well as to bring an end in container loading to avert delay in departure of container vessels, port sources said.

Chairman of Stevedores Asso

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Rape of four aborigines protested

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Adivasi (aborigines) Jatiya Samannay Committee and Bangladesh Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad yesterday staged a demonstration at the foot of Aparajeo Bangla at Dhaka University protesting the recent incidents of rape of four hill women by Bengali settlers at Mirersarai and Lama of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Leader of Jana Samhati Samity (JSS) Sudhasindhu Khisa, Assistant Professor of History at Dhaka

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The national co-ordination committee of the aborigines in Bangladesh brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday to denounce repression on four tribal women at Mirersarai and Lama thanasin Chittagong. — Star photo

10 more villages in Satkhira inundated

BAGERHAT, Nov 1: The overall flood situation in Satkhira district deteriorated further with inundation of 10 more villages in Shreula and Khajura unions under Assasuni upazila today, reports UNB.

Some 14,936 people of 3110 families were affected as the floodwater entered the area through damaged Koraikhal cross-dam.

The affected villages are Kurikaonia, Sreepur, Nakol, Sonaton Kathi, Shirsha, Kalyanpur, Soalkathi and Madamaria and Shreula.

District Relief and Rehabilitation officer Ajit Kumar Pramanik told the news agency that six lakh people, including one lakh children, were suffering from cold in the affected areas and they have faxed a letter to the prime minister seeking blankets.

But they alleged that they have not yet received any government assistance.

Sources at Water Development Board said the damaged parts of Khatola cross-dam will be repaired within 10 days.

According to another source, floodwaters that rolled down from across the border also submerged two villages in Palkachha union near Satkhira.

Security stepped up Terrorists & killers at Khulna active again

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 1: Security has been stepped up at vulnerable points in the metropolitan city in view of reports that some top terrorists and professional killers absconding for long have become active following a change in police administration here.

The vulnerable points include Skid Ghat (river port) where Ershad Shikdar's accomplices have been trying to recapture their lost leadership for making money through smuggling, drug trafficking and pilferage of fuel and foodgrains.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner M Anwarul Iqbal handed over charge to Additional Police Commissioner Mokleshur Rahman yesterday.

He left Khulna this morning to take over as DIG in the headquarters after serving the KMP for 25 months.

He blamed intra-party rivalry in the ruling party for all murders committed during his tenure.

Admitting failure of police to ensure security of AL Mayoral candidate SMA Rob, Anwarul Iqbal said that no political murder was committed by rivals during the last 25 months.

He said "I have both failures and successes. I succeeded in putting top terrorist Ershad Shikdar in the dock, but failed to ensure security of life of AL leader SMA Rob."

Murders of AL Mayoral candidate and Jubo League leader Liton put sincerity of police under question mark. Because, police did not attach even little importance to a general diary filed by

Rob with Sonadanga thana seeking security of his life few days before murder on August 11 this year in front of his house.

On the other hand, Jubo League leader Shahidul Islam Liton was gunned down in police custody in front of the Judge's Court while being taken to district jail last year.

Non recovery of illegal firearms of Ershad and other most wanted murderers and listed top terrorists and political godfathers is among other reasons for being extremely scared, said some leaders of the ruling party and the opposition and also some eminent lawyers of Khulna District Bar Association.

These arms were used for committing several political murders during last 25 months, they said.

Meanwhile, leaders of SMA Rob

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Liquor poisoning in Laxmipur kills 6

LAXMIPUR, Nov 1: Six people died after drinking rectified spirit at south Raipura village in Raipur upazila here early today, reports UNB.

Three of the dead were identified as Ratan, 45, Bokul, 40, and Mozammel Huq, 36. They died late Tuesday night.

Of the victims, an unidentified man was admitted to hospital where he died later at night. Two others died this morning.

S'pore Boeing crash kills 79



Rescue workers enter the wreckage of a Singapore Airlines Boeing 747 that crashed shortly after take-off from Chiang Kai Shek Airport in Taipei on Tuesday. The crash left 79 people dead, 85 injured and 16 unhurt. — AFP photo

TAIPEI, Nov 1: Emergency workers today pulled the last bodies from the wreckage of a Singapore Airlines plane which crashed on takeoff at Taipei's airport, leaving 79 dead, 85 injured and 16 unhurt, reports Reuters.

The Los Angeles-bound Boeing 747-400 airliner, flight SQ 006, was carrying 179 people, including 20 crew, when it crashed during a typhoon at 11.18 pm (1518 GMT) on Tuesday.

There are 79 dead, 16 escaped injury, and 85 were hospitalised, an official with the Civil Aeronautics Administration of Taiwan told reporters.

The toll could rise since many of the injured suffered serious burns. One foreign passenger burned over 100 per cent of the body had little hope for survival, a doctor at Chang Gung Memorial Hospital said.

AP adds: Singapore Airlines defended its pilot's decision to take off in heavy wind and rain, saying today he did not endanger the lives of the passengers.

Early speculation pointed to gusting winds from an approaching typhoon as a possible factor in the Los Angeles bound Boeing

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Angolan plane explodes after take-off: All 48 killed

LUANDA, Angola, Nov 1: A Russian-built plane exploded shortly after takeoff in northern Angola, killing all 42 passengers and six crew members, reports said today, reports AP.

The Antonov 26 aircraft burst into flames Tuesday at about 7.30 pm, minutes after it left the town of Saurimo, 800 kilometers east of the Angolan capital, Luanda. Angola's Civil Aviation Authority confirmed the crash in a statement Wednesday.

Saurimo is located in an area of thick jungle in one of Angola's main diamond-mining regions. The area has been a focus of fierce fighting between the army and the UNITA rebel group, which have been engaged in a two-decade civil war.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said the crew were

Ukrainian, though the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported they were Russian.

The names of the crew were not immediately available and the identities of the passengers were not released.

The plane reportedly was on a domestic route in the southwest African nation, which is a former Portuguese colony. It left Luanda on Tuesday morning and was flying between rural cities before heading back to the capital at the end of the day, according to Lusa.

It was unclear whether the plane was chartered or commercial outside Saurimo, Lusa said, citing officials. The name of the company that owns the plane was not known.

The Civil Aviation Authority statement said it was unclear what caused the crash. It said a

team of civil aviation investigators was on its way to the crash site.

The UNITA rebel group has in the past shot down civilian planes. Also, several crashes in recent years have been blamed on poor aircraft maintenance at Luanda airport.

The government and UNITA, a Portuguese acronym for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, began fighting after the country's 1975 independence from Portugal.

There are dozens of Russian-made Antonov planes in Angola used by private companies to charter passengers and cargo across the vast, southwest African country. Road travel is often impossible due to land mines and skirmishes between the army and rebels.

10 injured as JCD-BCL clash at Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 1: At least 10 people were injured, two of them seriously, in a series of clashes between the activists of BCL and JCD at the Barisal Polytechnic Institute last night and today.

According to police and witnesses, as a sequel to previous rivalry JCD leader Aminul was attacked and manhandled by BCL leader Rubel and his supporters in the campus.

Later Aminul, along with his men, also assaulted Rubel yesterday.

Following the incident, teachers of the institution called both of them and settled these dispute. But BCL leader Rubel and his followers attacked Aminul in his hostel room at night and also ransacked the room.

Seriously injured Aminul was admitted to Barisal Medical College Hospital last night.

The JCD activists following yesterday's incident attacked and damaged two hostel rooms of the western block and beat up some BCL activists. Then at one stage caught one BCL activist Masum, 21, and beat him. Masum fled the scene and later returned to the institute along with a BCL leader

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Israeli army kills 3 more Peres to hold talks with Arafat

JERUSALEM, Nov 1: Israel and the Palestinians today tried to arrange their first high-level direct talks in six weeks but rock-throwing clashes and gun battles persisted and three Palestinians were killed by Israeli army fire, reports AP.

In the West Bank village of Al Khader, a Palestinian policeman died in a firefight between Palestinian gunmen and Israeli soldiers. Gun battles also erupted at the Karni crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, scene of intense clashes for the past two days.

In all, six Palestinians were killed as Karni four on Tuesday and two on Wednesday and more than 20,000 mourners joined a mass funeral for five of the victims. The crowd repeated slogans shouted over a loudspeaker mounted on the lead truck "Good-bye, martyrs, we will meet in paradise," they chanted. "We will take revenge against the Israelis, and this will happen soon."

Despite the renewed violence, Shimon Peres, Israel's elder statesman, said he will hold talks with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Wednesday or Thursday to try to clear the air after 35

days of fighting that has left 151 people dead, the majority Palestinians.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Arafat both attended a US-sponsored Mideast summit in Egypt on Oct. 17, but refused to meet face-to-face.

Peres, who as the architect of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking has spent many hours negotiating with Arafat, said he did not have high expectations for his meeting with the Palestinian leader. Nonetheless, "I just think that, even when there is shooting, we need to talk," Peres told Israel army radio.

He said he expected Arafat to give a clear commitment to a truce agreement arranged at the Mideast summit by US President Bill Clinton.

Israel's top peace negotiator, Gilead Sher, will also participate in the talks, expected to be held in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem.

Arafat met today with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Gaza City, saying he was grateful for the visit "at a time when we are subjected to military attacks."



The way of the city... construction materials on the pavement and part of the Topkhana Road reflect sheer negligence on the part of the city authorities. — Star photo

KFAED DG calls on Hasina

KUWAIT, Nov 1: Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) Bader Al Homaidi called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Bubiyan Palace here on Tuesday evening, reports BSS.

Homaidi told the Prime Minister that 265 million US dollars had already been provided from KFAED for financing 12 projects in Bangladesh. In addition, further 100 million dollars had been sanctioned in 1995 for six projects. Besides, three more projects are under study of KFAED.

The DG of KFAED informed the Prime Minister that it would provide Bangladesh 125 million dollars including 40 million dollars sanctioned for greater Chittagong power supply and distribution during the 2000-2003 period.

She told Homaidi that Kuwait fund may assist Bangladesh in some important sectors like river dredging, banking and other financial institutions.

'280 murdered, 85 raped last month'

By Staff Correspondent

At least 280 people were murdered and 85 women and children raped last month in the country, according to a survey-report by the Institute of Democratic Rights (IDR).

On an average nine people were killed a day. Of 85 rape incidents, 40 were gangraped and nine killed after rape. Thirty-four minor girls were raped.

Sixty-five people were abducted and 87 committed suicide. Five died in jail while three in police custody.

At least 242 people died in road, railway and waterway accidents.

Theft at Khulna jewellery shops

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 1: Gold ornaments worth over Tk 20 lakh were stolen from 'Padma Jewellers' and 'Ritu Gold Corner' near KDA New Market on Tuesday night.

The thieves also took Tk 20,000 in cash from a garment shop the same night.

They also made abortive attempt to commit theft in Manasha Jewellery Shop.

According to Sonadanga police, a gang of six thieves entered the Western Plaza area making two night guards unconscious by serving sweatmeats mixed with sedatives.

The thieves broke locks of the shops with the help of crowbars. Two persons Sohrab and Zakir were taken to custody for interrogation in this regards.

Three separate cases were recorded in this connection.

EC to print new voter list for Khulna-5

Star Report

The Election Commission is going to print a new voters' list of the Khulna-5 constituency for conducting by-election in this seat that fell vacant on October 6 due to the death of Minister Salauddin Yusuf.

But the EC is yet to fix the date of the by-election, said an official, adding that the schedule will be announced after Chief Election Commissioner MA Sayed returns from the United States. The CEC is now in the USA on an official visit. He is likely to return home

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