

### AL leader murdered in Pabna

**UNB, Pabna**

A ruling party leader was murdered in Hadal union of Faridpur upazila in Pabna district yesterday.

The assailants swooped on Rezaul Karim Sabu, the Hadal union president of Awami League, near his home at village Balughata while he was going to the upazila town about 10 in the morning.

"He was beheaded with sharp weapons," police said.

A case was filed with Faridpur thana, but nobody was arrested in this connection.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area.

Pabna district AL president M Saidul Karim Chunnur condemned the killing.

Police said the killing might be a sequel to previous enmity.

### Aziz, Bunty get bail in Sohel murder case

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

Five accused including Aziz Mohammad Bhai and Bunty Islam in film star Sohel Chowdhury murder case were granted fresh ad interim bail yesterday.

The court of Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal granted them bail upon a bond of Tk 40,000 each with three guarantors including a lawyer of the case.

The court asked all the accused to appear in the court on May 3.

Sohel, a film star was shot dead by a group of assailants in front of the Club Tramps under Gulshan thana at about 8:00 pm on December 18, 1998.

Tawhidul Islam Chowdhury, brother of the victim, filed a murder case with Gulshan thana in this connection the same day.

The Investigation Officer of the case submitted a charge sheet to the CMM's court, Dhaka against the nine on July 27, 1999.

### Jute worth over Tk 50 lakh gutted in Bogra

**UNB, Bogra**

A devastating fire in two jute godowns at a jute mill at Bujruk Baria, three kms off the Bogra town, gutted raw jute worth over Tk 50 lakh yesterday.

Fire service sources said the fire first originated in a godown of the BJMC-controlled Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills at about 7 pm and soon engulfed the other.

Firefighters from Bogra and Joypurhat along with the local people brought blaze under control after two hours of efforts.

The cause of fire could not be known immediately.

Sources said there was some 10,000 mounds of jute in the two godowns.

### Warrant against complainant in ULFA leader case

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The First Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judges Court, Dhaka yesterday issued a non-bailable warrant against the complainant of the case filed against ULFA leader Anup Chetia and his two associates on charges of possessing a satellite telephone set.

Judge Rafi Imam issued the warrant as the complainant Sub-Inspector Farid Ahmed did not appear in the court despite issuance of summons on him for a long time to be present in the court.

The court adjourned the proceedings till March 29 following a time prayer by the prosecution lawyers.

Chetia and his two associates Babul Sharma and Laxmi Prasad Goswami were arrested at Adabar under Mohammadpur thana on December 21 in 1997, for possessing forged pass ports, foreign currencies of 16 countries and a satellite telephone set.

Four separate cases were filed with Mohammadpur thana against them in this regard.

Chetia was awarded six years rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk. 6,000 by the CMM's court, Dhaka, on October 25 in 1998 for possessing forged pass ports and illegal stay in Bangladesh.

In another case Chetia was awarded three years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing foreign currencies of 16 countries on February 18, this year.

# Pak hope for Annan's mediation in Kashmir dispute dashed

**DPA, Islamabad**

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan concluded a two-day visit to Pakistan yesterday and left for Nepal, the next leg of his tour of South Asia which will also take him to Bangladesh and India.

Before leaving, he visited an Afghan refugees camp and the Khyber Pass on Pakistan's border with the turbulent Afghanistan.

In his comments in Islamabad, Kofi Annan dashed Pakistan's hopes that he would play a mediator in resolving its Kashmir dispute with India.

But he said he would encourage the 'traditional rivals' to resume the peace process they began in Lahore in February 1999 that was derailed by a near-war they fought three months later in the territory.

Kofi Annan promised more than encouragement to the Afghan refugees however.

"My presence here should confirm that the international community has not forgotten you," he told the resident refugees of the Shamshatoo Camp, which he visited yesterday to get a glimpse of the plight of the more than 1.2 million

Afghan refugees living in such camps in Pakistan.

"You are not alone. You have friends who are determined to help Afghans inside and outside Afghanistan," he said.

Kofi Annan, who is on a tour of South Asia, said he got promises of help from the representatives of 24 donor countries whom he met in Islamabad on Sunday. "We will see how much (they donate)."

"It is not easy to understand the situation of a refugee," he said. "Intellectually we can. But you have to go through it put yourself in their shoes."

Officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Pakistan took the UN Secretary General around the Shamshatoo Camp where 60,000 refugees live in poor conditions.

Winding up the debate on the President's address to the joint sitting of the two houses of parliament here, the prime minister told the Lok Sabha the UN Secretary General's statement for solution under the Lahore Declaration was evidence of the support India had won internationally on Kashmir.

The international community is now convinced that India is sincere in its efforts to restore peace and interested in resolving the Kashmir issue, he said.

Vajpayee urged Pakistan to change its attitude and stop abetting cross-border terrorism.

The house adopted the motion of thanks to the president's address moved by BJP member Vijay Kumar Malhotra and seconded by TDP member S Venugopal.

The discussion on the motion was held on March 7 and 8 and all major leaders including leader of the opposition Ms Sonia Gandhi participated in it. The prime minister noted that the cease-fire declared by his government had been widely appreciated by the international community and said the government was ready to talk to everybody concerned to find a permanent solution to the Kashmir issue.

# Pre-polls showdown at DU feared

## BCL, JCD busy consolidating positions

**ABUL KALAM AZAD**

With general elections under a caretaker administration in the offing, the ruling Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chatra League (BCL) and main opposition BNP-supported Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal (JCD) are now busy consolidating their positions on the Dhaka University campus.

Observers fear that JCD and BCL may go for a face-off during the tenure of the caretaker government.

According to campus sources, the JCD is planning to regain their dominance at the DU while the BCL

is determined to foil any such move.

At present, all the residential halls are currently under the BCL's control. It established absolute supremacy on the campus after Awami League came to power in 1996.

On the other hand, the JCD, which suffered a serious setback within the organisation after its leaders and workers were ousted from the DU campus in 1997, are regrouping.

All the DU halls, except Jagannath Hall, were in the grip of the JCD during the BNP regime. But the BCL started their hall-occupying

mission immediately when the AL took over. After a series of armed clashes, killings and bloodshed, they managed to capture all the halls displacing JCD activists along the way.

The JCD loyalists, however, are returning to the campus from January following the formation of a new elected body.

The JCD is now frequently organising various programmes, including processions and rallies on the campus with a view to revitalise their position. And it wants to be at full strength before the showdown



Thatched houses being built less than two months after a devastating fire gutted Bashpatti slum near Moghbazar rail crossing in the city. As the slum regenerates, fresh fears sprout over yet another round of clash over its control that resulted in the fire killing a woman.

# Supply still inadequate Textbooks printed with low quality paper, ink

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Over two months into the academic year, textbooks for secondary level are now available in markets but most of those are printed with low quality paper and ink harmful to eyesight, sources concerned said.

This happened due to lax monitoring by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), they claimed.

The type of paper and ink specified in the tender was not used for printing the books, they claimed. Forged 'security papers' are often found in the books. Each textbook must contain some 'security papers' supplied by NCTB, the sources said.

Old edition books with new covers are also found in bookstalls. Pustaka, a concern of Beximco,

was awarded the job of printing and distributing about 2.5 crore textbooks of 60 categories for the current 2001 academic year.

However, it is still difficult to find all of the 60 categories of books in a bookstore due to inadequate supply.

"I had to search in bookstalls from Nilkhet to Bangla Bazar wholesale market in the city to find all the books," a student of class VIII of Government Laboratory School told this correspondent yesterday.

NCTB failed to ensure quality as it was under pressure from different quarters to ensure supply of books as Pustaka could not maintain the printing and supply schedule, the sources said.

NCTB's prime concern was to make books available in the market

# Charge sheet in Janakantha journalist murder case this month

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

The CID will submit charge sheet against 25 persons in Janakantha journalist Shamsur Rahman Murder Case this month.

The accused include KCC ward commissioner Asaduzzaman Litu and his armed cadre Mushfequr Rahman Hiraq. Journalist Shamsur Rahman was gunned down on the night of July 16 last year in his Jessore office.

A senior CID official said involvement of Litu and Hiraq in the murder has been proved by evidences. So, they won't be spared from being charge sheeted within this month. The charge sheet is now at the final stage and will be submitted to the court next week or a little later, the CID official said.

Fifteen out of 25 accused have so far been arrested in connection with this murder case. Ten are still absconding. According to evidences recorded by CID, Litu and Hiraq

# Charge sheet in Karim new envoy to US, Gyash HC to UK

**UNB, Dhaka**

Former Bangladesh High Commissioner to South Africa Ahmad Tariq Karim has been appointed Ambassador to the USA.

Karim who graduated in English literature, Political Science and Philosophy from Dhaka University in 1965, joined the erstwhile Pakistan Foreign Service in 1967 and Bangladesh Foreign Service in 1972.

Presently, Karim is a visiting scholar at the University of Maryland, College Park, USA since 1999 as a distinguished international executive in residence.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to appoint present ambassador to the Netherlands Gyash Uddin as High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the UK.

# Hasina, Annan to receive Personality Award tomorrow

**UNB, Dhaka**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will be handed over the prestigious "Personality Award" by the Afro-Asian Lawyers Federation for Human Rights at a function here on Wednesday.

Kofi Annan, who arrives here today as part of his South Asia trip, will grace the ceremony at the ICC.

The Cairo-based Federation has chosen Sheikh Hasina and Kofi Annan for the Personality Award 2000.

Hasina has been adjudged Person of the Year for Human Rights from Asia for 2000 for her contribution to human development, peaceful settlement of all conflicts, religious harmony, institutionalising democracy and upholding the ideals of freedom and the rule of law.

# Sikder's family still being threatened

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Family members of industrialist Nurul Haq Sikder are still in panic despite a "settlement" with Chief Whip's son Sadik Abdullah and withdrawal of the complaint with Gulshan thana against him, sources claimed yesterday.

They are still being threatened not to file any case or talk to newsmen, the sources claimed. The family members refused to talk to The Daily Star yesterday.

Shots were fired on Shikder's Pajero jeep from Sadek's car and the vehicle was chased up to cantonment from Gulshan in the city on Friday night, allegedly to kidnap Shikder's daughter. The driver of the jeep was injured and one of its windows damaged in the firing, the family members had said on Saturday.

The sources said Sadek is very disappointed and angry over newspaper coverage of the incident involving him. He held Sikder's family responsible for the newspaper reports, they said.

Meanwhile, Gulshan police neither arrested Sadek nor seized his gun.

When contacted, Gulshan police said Gulshan thana was not the



BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan addresses a rally of the four-party opposition alliance at Muktangan in the city yesterday.

# Step down immediately, make way for polls by May

## Opposition rally in city asks govt

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Leaders of the BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday asked the government to step down immediately and make way for holding general election by May 30.

As part of countrywide rallies and demonstrations in all city and district headquarters, the alliance yesterday organised a rally at Muktangan to press for immediate resignation of the government. City BNP President Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP chaired the meeting.

Speakers said people's dissatisfaction over AL misrule compelled the government to announce that it also wanted election before June 12.

Addressing the gathering, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan asked the government to resign right away and hand over power to a caretaker government in order to hold general election by May 30.

He said as the power base of the AL government has been badly shaken, it is only left with the formalities of resignation. He said the entire government, law and order and police administration have collapsed and

advised the Prime Minister not to delay the resignation.

He said the AL since assuming power killed several hundred opposition activists, wounded an unspecified number of others and looted people's wealth. Also AL ministers, MPs, leaders and their sons and relatives forcibly occupied people's properties, grabbed lands, killed people and still continue to do so, he said.

He said the son of AL chief whip on Friday opened fire at a vehicle carrying a businessman and his family, forcing the victims to take shelter inside the Cantonment.

Bhuiyan called upon the people to join the March 21 grand public meeting at Paltan Maidan to be addressed by Khaleeda Zia.

Jatiya Party secretary general Nazir Rahman Manjur asked the AL government to apologise to the people and resign at once and demanded release of HM Ershad, IOJ Chairman Azizul Haq and secretary general Fazlul Haq Amini and others before March 21.

He said the alliance will unitedly participate in the

# Jail Killing Case adjourned for sixth time

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The trial of the Jail Killing Case was adjourned for the 6th time yesterday. The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka fixed April 1 for next hearing of the case.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the proceedings following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers.

Metropolitan PP Quamrul Islam submitted a time petition before the court stating that Kazi Abdul Awal, the first prosecution witness as well as the complainant of the case could not appear in the court due to illness. So he urged the court to summon the three prosecution witnesses including the complainant.

The court then fixed April 1 for next hearing.

However, a bail petition moved for the two accused K M Obaidur Rahman and Nurul Islam Manzoor was opposed by the prosecution side.

After hearing both the sides, the court rejected the bail petition.

Eight of the 21 accused Taher Uddin Thakur, Shah Moazzem Hossain, K M Obaidur Rahman, Nurul Islam Manzoor, Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooque Rahman, Lt Col (Retd) Sultan Sharif Rashid Khan, Maj (Retd) Bazlul Huda and Maj (Retd) Khairuzzaman are now detained at the Dhaka Central Jail. They were produced in the court during the hearing.

Four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, A H M Quamruzzaman and Captain Mansur Ali were killed in the Dhaka

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# Trial of Jalal Murder Case begins

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The trial of the Jalal Ahmed Shafi Murder Case began at the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday.

Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal recorded deposition of Sub-Inspector ASM Ali Azam Siddiqui, the first prosecution witness as well as the complainant of the case.

The court adjourned the proceedings till 2.00 pm today. Four witnesses including victim's wife were present in the court. But the court (in-charge) could not record deposition of all the witnesses due to time constraint.

Siddiqui in his statement said he was in Ramna thana on March 25, 1999. He recorded an unnatural death case on the basis of a written information, submitted by Havildar Jakir Ahmed of DB office. The OC of the thana handed over the charge of investigation of the case to him, Siddiqui added.

Then, Siddiqui along with constable Delwar went to the DB office at Minto Road in the city. On the basis of information and identification by Havildar Jakir, he found a decomposed body of a male person in the roof-top water-tank of DB office, the witness said.

Siddiqui submitted a prayer on March 25, 1999 before the CMM's Court, Dhaka to appoint a magistrate to prepare an inquest report of the body. The Metropolitan Magistrate Abdus Salam and Siddiqui went to the place of occurrence at 4 pm on the day and made inquest report, he said. All necessary alamsats and other things were sent to the forensic department to determine the cause of death.

He also told the court that DC (South) directed him (Siddiqui) to investigate the unnatural death case. Accordingly he recorded statements of some people including Havildar Jakir, the complainant of the unnatural death case.

After scrutinising all documents and circumstances, it was proved

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# 'Killers of FF Mannan moving freely'

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad and local people of the city's Agargaon area yesterday demanded trial of the killers of Abdul Mannan, a freedom fighter, who was shot dead by drug peddlers in his shanty at the Agargaon BNP slum on March 6.

At a press conference held at the National Press Club in the evening yesterday, speakers said that the killers were moving freely in the area while police turned a blind eye.

They also alleged that police deliberately omitted the names of seven culprits as reported by the complainants and booked four innocent people instead in the FIR in order to obstruct justice.

Sangsad leaders and area residents strongly urged the Prime Minister to intervene and sought her good offices in order to ensure proper investigation into the matter and mete out exemplary punishment to the killers.

"They killed my husband right in front of me, I want justice" said Salma Begum, wife of the victim.

Mannan sold vegetables in the

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# South Asian business confce in Delhi today

**UNB, Dhaka**

Business leaders from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India are gathering at a conference in New Delhi today to see how better the private sectors can cooperate with each other.

The conference titled "South Asian Growth Quadrangle-emerging opportunity for economic partnership" will focus on expansion of mutual trade and investment.

Leaders of prime chambers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India will also look for prospective areas of joint ventures.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil left for New Delhi, last night to attend the inaugural session of the conference as a guest of honour.

President of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) Yussuf Abdullah Harun will lead a trade delegation to the conference.