

Attack on cloth store Three BCP cadres held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna thana police arrested three activists of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (BCP) on Friday night.

The arrested were identified as Golam Dhal, 30, Nasim, 28, and Hasan, 30. They were arrested on charge of hurling bomb at a cloth shop at 'Akhter Chamber' few days back failing to get Tk one lakh as toll. They threatened to kill the proprietor when he refused to pay toll, police

Mystery shrouds death of BBA student at Narayanganj

UNB, N'ganj

Mystery shrouds the death of a BBA student in Narayanganj town on Friday night.

Police said body of Manjur Ahsan Bipu, 22, son of advocate Abdul Malek of Jamtala in the town, was brought to a private clinic at Bangabandhu road at about 11 pm.

They arrested his three friends Biplob, 25, Habib, 22, and Romel, 24, who fled away leaving the body at Medistar Clinic. They also seized the car the three used in carrying the body to the clinic.

Friends told police Bipu suddenly fell sick when they were gossiping at a rickshaw garage near Masdar Gudarhat and they rushed him to the clinic where doctors declared him dead.

Dipu was studying BBA at Bangalore in India.

Two murders

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released from jail 16 days ago, said the officer.

Fazlu's enmity with his rivals

over control of the area might have led to his death, sources said.

Mia, the elder brother of Fazlu, is in jail now. He is an accused in as many as 18 cases, including murder, mugging and robbery. His younger brother is also a criminal now detained in jail. He is also accused in several cases, said the sources.

A murder case was filed with Khilaqn thana.

In another incident, Nawab Mia, 37, a bus driver and son of Hashem Mia, was shot dead at Bashuganj Lane under Suratpur thana at 11 p.m. on Friday night.

His body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Babul Mia, brother of the victim, filed a case with Suratpur police.

Police arrested one Mukter from Lalmoni Shah Street in connection with the killing.

Journalists must unite

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way out but to unite the journalist community to ensure their security," he said stressing the need for a concerted movement against any attack on journalists anywhere in the country.

He asked why any step to punish the culprits is not taken when a democratic government is in power.

Nor in the past were journalists spared, said Dr Shakhat Ali Khan of Dhaka University, but it has taken a serious turn in recent times, which cannot be accepted in a civil society.

Refuting the division of journalists into many parts, he said, "We can easily tackle such situation, if we unite."

Poet Shamsur Rahman said journalists are very honest, but regretted that a section of them wins 'illegal favour' from various quarters, which might have led to this vulnerable state.

"A real journalist can never be tempted by any quarter, but what is very disappointing is that some

said.

Police got the mobile phone number the BCP men used and asked them to receive the money from a certain place near Azam Khan Commerce College on Friday night.

The arrested were identified as Golam Dhal, 30, Nasim, 28, and Hasan, 30. They were arrested on charge of hurling bomb at a cloth shop at 'Akhter Chamber' few days back failing to get Tk one lakh as toll. They threatened to kill the proprietor when he refused to pay toll, police

confessed to police that they were involved in hurling bomb at the cloth store failing to realise the toll.

Police prayed for seven days' remand for them when they were produced before the CMM's court for interrogation.

Golam Dhal, Nasim and Hasan are activists of Rashid group of BCP based at Rupsha and Terokheda upazilas.

They joined BNP in 1997 with a special mission assigned by BCP's Rupsha unit leader Rashid.

The mission was to murder some district, city and thana level leaders of BNP taking full advantage of intra-party rivalry. But they did not get the opportunity as private guards of the BNP leaders remained alert, a KMP official said.

A vice president of Chhatra Dal's district committee, Golam Dhal, was a chief bodyguard of a top city BNP leader. BCP assigned him to murder the city BNP leader, city BNP sources said.

Friends told police Bipu suddenly fell sick when they were gossiping at a rickshaw garage near Masdar Gudarhat and they rushed him to the clinic where doctors declared him dead.

Dipu was studying BBA at Bangalore in India.

Delhi tightens

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week "in the interest of national security."

It requires hotels, guest houses, families and individuals hosting foreign visitors to report their presence to police within 24 hours of arrival.

The Times pointed to possible anomalies being thrown up by the new order, and asked whether President KR Narayanan would have to alert local police every time his daughter an American citizen comes visiting.

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Vajpayee-Musharraf talks

FROM PAGE 1

Chairman Mirza Omar Farooq yesterday urged Gen Musharraf to accept India's invitation for talks on Kashmir, saying the move could be seen as a beginning towards the settlement of the long-standing Kashmir problem.

"Gen Musharraf should accept Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's invitation and start the dialogue process," Farooq told the news agency.

However, the Kashmiri separatist leader said that for a permanent settlement of the Kashmir imbroglio, the third and the most important party the people of Jammu and Kashmir have to be involved in the negotiations.

"Sincere efforts by all the three parties India, Pakistan and the people of the state could help restore peace in the troubled-state," he added.

He said that if Gen Musharraf came to India, the APHC would try its best to impress upon both countries the need to pursue the path of friendship and peace. "We would

like to encourage them to continue their efforts for resolution of the problem," Farooq said.

"All the Kashmiris want now is to be allowed to live in peace. We also want the people of both countries to live in friendship and peace. It is unfortunate that because of Kashmir, two nations that share the same history and culture are at loggerheads," the Mirza said.

The Kashmiri religious leader said, "Let us hope and pray that good sense will prevail on both nations and they will try to resolve the problem once and for all, so that a new era of peace and economic prosperity is started in this region."

Meanwhile, Nepal has welcomed the move to initiate talks over disputed Kashmir issue, said a press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

"This is a positive development. It is hoped this will create a conducive atmosphere to promote peace and stability in the region," the statement said.

UNFPA official due today

UNFPA Director for Asia and the Pacific Division Md Nizamuddin arrives in the city today on an official mission, says a press release.

Nizamuddin during the mission is expected to meet officials of ministries for health and family welfare, youth and sports, women and children affairs and religious affairs. During these meetings he will discuss current and future UNFPA assistance to Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the highest recipient of UNFPA assistance.

Nizamuddin will also attend the wrap-up meeting of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNFPA Fifth Country Programme. The meeting will be held tomorrow.

Nizamuddin will also meet newsmen on May 29 at 11 am at the 17th floor of IDE Bhaban in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Jubo League

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Talukdar Khaleque to his residence under tight security.

The situation was brought under control by police. They asked both leaders to quit party office immediately. Security measures have been stepped up in and around the AL office.

Leaders of both factions filed general diary separately with Khulna thana in this connection.

3 Rakhain youths

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organised arms smuggling group and they brought the bullets here from Myanmar, police said.

Police said the arrested had admitted their involvement in bullet smuggling.

The Rakhain youths told newsmen that they had been involved in ammunition smuggling for an arms trader of Nila Rakhain Para in Teknaf.

They said they got Tk 2,000 each daily for carrying ammunition from Teknaf border to the town.

The arrested were produced before a first class magistrate who granted them a five-day police remand. An arms case was filed against them.

BDR on March 4 arrested a smuggler, Nurussafa, from village Nila in Teknaf, allegedly for smuggling in 125 rounds of bullet from Myanmar.

Peace a chance

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There are speculations here about the nature of possible revival of Indo-Pak dialogue at the Foreign Secretary level which has remained stalled for more than two and half years. The Composite Dialogue Process worked out by the two countries after several rounds of talks at the official and political levels since Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif came to power in 1998 includes eight outstanding issues, including Kashmir.

However, officials here are prone to feel that Musharraf is unlikely to make a fuss about composite dialogue worked out after considerable diplomatic negotiations and may not like to be seen as one putting a spoke in the wheel right at the start.

Mixed reaction

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of view of price compared to the product from Thailand and Vietnam, imports from India was still cheaper because of geographical proximity between India and Bangladesh and lower freight charge.

Exporters here say ordinary variety of Indian rice is outranked by 200 US dollars vis-à-vis the commodity from Thailand and Vietnam. This, they said, would have an impact on every tonne of rice exported to Bangladesh or to any other country.

With the quality of rice being almost the same in the two neighbouring countries, India had been eyeing Bangladesh to reach its target of exporting three million tonnes. Bangladesh's share in 500,000 tons of basmati rice from India every year is very low, export experts point out.

UN peacekeepers

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Asst. Secretary General said. Asked if the UN would set up a regional peacekeeping centre in Dhaka and not elsewhere in the region since Bangladesh was the biggest peacekeeper, Hedi Annabi said, "It was not unlikely." He however added that the matter will be decided at "a higher level."

Earlier, speaking at the inaugural programme for the Asian journalists, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan appreciated the role of Bangladesh and its leadership in the decision-making process on various peace-keeping missions by the United Nations.

Bangladesh's support for the reform of the UN Department of Peacekeeping operations in the Security Council and the General Assembly as well as the UN Special Committee on Peace Keeping Operations has also been appreciated by all UN officials concerned here.

They are: cessation of aggression and hostile activities by Israel, restarting the peace process picking up from where it broke off, ensuring



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Parishad brought out a procession in the city yesterday to mark the beginning of their 2-day long national conference.

Mamata wants to get back into NDA?

BSS, Kolkata

In small but significant steps towards a possible reunion, Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee has started to send feelers to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to get back into the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) as is evident from the Advani camp's strong reservations about Mamata. One of key aides also confirmed that

to work during his visit to Malaysia last week.

Mamata is also keeping her "go alone" option open because she knows that the BJP is still a divided house regarding her return to NDA as is evident from the Advani camp's strong reservations about Mamata. One of key aides also confirmed that

Extortion

BCL leader held under PSA at Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Police arrested a BCL leader from Sirajganj town yesterday on charge of extorting.

Ariful Islam, Shipon, Assistant General Secretary of Sirajganj University College Students Union, demanded Tk 500 as toll from Abu Sayed Akand, assistant professor of the same college on May 13.

As Akand obliged to do so, the BCL leader threatened to kill him.

Akand filed a case with Sirajganj sadar thana under the Public Safety Act. Police sent the BCL leader to jail hajat with one month's detention.

the current talks cannot be construed as "smooth" and a sure sign of a grand reunion.

"We have just started to touch and feel each other's sentiments. But it is difficult to say at this point how things would finally work out for ground realities are shifting every day for both of us," says a Trinamool legislator, back in Mamata's good books after the polls debacle.

"The Congress has betrayed us in the elections and it is now clear that the Congress is a spent force here. Most of their supporters have either changed loyalties to the Trinamool or the BJP in West Bengal," he told BSS.

The pro-Mamata faction in the BNP finds its job a bit easier now that the Samata Party, the biggest stumbling block to her return, is coming round to the idea. Samata leaders like Nitish Kumar have indicated to Vajpayee that they would not mind Mamata's return to the NDA coalition government if it did not mean giving up the Railways Ministry.

If things go right, Trinamool will offer support to the NDA from outside for a few months, after which the issue of joining the ministry will be addressed.

Devaluation: Will it work?

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"At the same time, the government should arrange a BOP stand-by facility from either IMF or other development partners," said Dr Bhattacharya. "This is something vital because if the next government embarks on some reform measures, it will result in higher subsidy component in revenue expenditure. Besides, at least 100 million dollar payment for Sangu gas and MIG is knocking at the door, which will also have to be paid in hard currency."

As the country moved away from commodity aid because of an earlier improved trade balance, there is hardly any scope to get balance of payment support from this. Policy-based lending, another support programme when forex is low, is also absent giving little hope for immediate relief.

But more to worry about is the impact of this devaluation on internal balance, which is now characterised by low inflation, good agricultural output, more than targeted revenue collection and strong real sector performance. One of the targets of the devaluation is to control "unnecessary" imports.

"But tariff rates on such luxury items are the highest now and when such imports will be curtailed, the government will lose revenue from import duty," said Dr Bhattacharya. "On the other hand, escalation of raw material prices will affect competitiveness of domestic industries and domestic revenue collection may also be hit."

And with the government's borrowing now creeping up, the

revenue slide could only mean more fiscal deficit and more borrowing. On the other hand, the government's other dilemma will be incurring higher costs for import fuel while keeping the administered price fixed, at least until the elections, which will result in higher subsidy component in revenue expenditure. Besides, at least 100 million dollar payment for Sangu gas and MIG is knocking at the door, which will