

Mishuk driver gunned down in Mirpur

Staff Correspondent
A mishuk (three-wheeler) driver was gunned down by armed terrorists at Madhya Monipur in the city's Mirpur area yesterday afternoon.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Manik, 25, son of late Abdul Barek and a resident of 1157 East Monipur.

Police said two men, Alam and Raffel, called Manik out of his house before Jumma prayers. They took him to a nearby spot and shot him in the head. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the body from the spot at about 3 pm and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsies.

Manik was engaged in extortion in the area and belonged to a gang of five, said a police officer of Mirpur thana. He was an accused in an extortion case recorded with Mirpur police station.

Alam, Raffel, Mokhtar and Sumon are the other members of the gang. Mirpur police arrested Sumon on Thursday and Mokhtar the day before.

Family sources said Manik might have been killed by two of his accomplices in a feud over arrest of the two other gang members.

No case was filed with Mirpur thana till filing of this report last night.

JCD activists ransack office of a Chinese firm at Satkhira

Staff Correspondent, Khulna

Armed activists of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) ransacked office of a Chinese construction company in Satkhira town on Thursday.

They beat up cook Habib who was hospitalised with severe injuries. The JCD activists damaged all valuable articles including two TV sets.

According to Satkhira Sadar thana police, Satkhira Chhatra Dal Secretary Masum Billah Shaheen led the operation along with ten others of the ruling party backed student organisation.

Police said Masum demanded a huge amount of toll from officials of the Chinese construction firm now engaged in the installation work of digital telephone lines in Satkhira.

The attack came when Manager Wang and Assistant Manager Lee refused to pay toll as learnt from FIR lodged with Satkhira thana on Thursday night.

The construction company has stopped work yesterday fearing reprisal by JCD terrorists. They will leave Satkhira this morning, Police said.

40 hurt as rival groups clash in Sunamganj

UNB, Sunamganj

A violent clash between two groups of people near Kabilakhai Primary School in Sadar upazila left around 40 people injured yesterday.

The injured people were admitted to Sunamganj and Sylhet hospitals. They are Rustam Mia, Surat Mia, Mustafiz, Abed Ali, Romiz Ali, Ayaz Ullah, Tajab Ali, Saad Mia, Abdul Kadir, Goyos Mia, Moizul and Aziz Ullah.

Witnesses said the clash erupted at about 7 am when supporters of one Rustam Ali tried to erect a fence on a disputed road and were resisted by the supporters of Somsu Mia.

The warring groups used firearms during the clash.

Police, being informed, rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Table with 3 columns: Sun Rises, Sun Sets, Dec 1, Dec 2.

Prayer Timings table with columns: Azan, Jamaat, Fajr, Zahr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.

46 murdered in the capital last month

Mugging, extortion are also on rise

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

Murders in the city registered a sharp rise in November totalling at least 46 up from 30 in October, presenting a dreadful scenario of the capital's law and order situation.

The most sensational of the killings were the double-murders at Mirpur and another at Mohammadpur. Terrorists in the early hours of November 2, killed two brothers, Mizanur Rahman, 30, and Ziaul Haq, 25, at Mirpur, by slitting their throats. They were killed for their refusal to pay extortion money.

The other twin murders took place at Mohammadpur's Khilji Road on November 18. Kamal Hossain, 55, a customs employee, and his wife Sultani Begum, 48, fell prey to terrorists' bullets as they were caught in the crossfire during a gunfight between two rival terrorist groups. The couple was on their way back to their Adabar residence after visiting an ailing relative

at Suhrawardy Hospital. Ironically, during the time when the unfortunate couple died, the home minister himself was present at the Mohammadpur police station. The two rival groups responsible for the couple's death traded around a hundred rounds of gunshots creating panic among residents in the area.

Following the incident, all police personnel of Mohammadpur thana were transferred but no action was taken against any one of them for negligence of duty.

Of the total 46 murders, 13 took place in the Mirpur thana area, nine in Mohammadpur, four in Demra, three each in Motijheel, Uttara and Shyampur, two each in Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Pallabi, and one each in the Khanrangirchar, Tejgaon, Sutrapur, Hazaribagh and Badda thana areas.

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Ramzan Ali, a victim of extortion, is now on artificial respiration in the Intensive Care Unit of Bangladesh Medical College Hospital at Dhanmondi in the city.

Ramzan struggles for life as the 'extortionist' goes scot-free

STAR REPORT

Md Ramzan Ali, a victim of extortion, is now on artificial respiration.

The 35-year-old businessman, father of a three-year-old son and one-year-old daughter, is now in a critical condition in the Intensive Care Unit at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital at Dhanmondi in the city.

Ramzan and his brother Md Asgar Ali rented a commercial space from one Khokon at Sukrabad on Mirpur road and were running a sweetmeat shop Bikrampur Mishmento Bhandar over the past three and a half years.

In mid-October, Abdul Latif, Ward Commissioner and President of Dhanmondi thana BNP, summoned the two brothers at his office.

He told them if they want to do business they have to pay him Tk 10 lakh at a time and Tk 20,000 per month, Asgar Ali told this correspondent.

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News Analysis

Now Iftar diplomacy to forge Indian opposition unity

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Beginning December today, Indian political analysts are readying to monitor some Iftar parties to be hosted by key opposition leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, and birthday functions in order to catch signals they might send for possible realignment of forces.

The interest in the coming religious functions has suddenly gone up after the politically-loaded dinner hosted by Marxist leader Sonmath Chatterjee a few days ago which saw Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar meeting Sonia Gandhi, sweeping under the carpet their differences with her.

The dinner meeting was considered as ice-breaking in relations between Congress, Samajwadi

Party and NCP after Mulayam had put a spanner on Sonia's efforts to put together an alternative government following the fall of Atal Behari Vajpayee ministry in April 1999 and Pawar quit Congress questioning Sonia's credential to become Prime Minister because of her foreign origin.

Sonia, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Congress party chief, is likely to throw an iftar on Dec 11, two days after her birthday, where she is expected to invite Pawar and Mulayam Singh. Pawar is likely to organise a function in Bombay on December 12 to mark his 61st birthday where Sonia is likely to be invited.

Samajwadi Party sources said that unlike in the past few years, Mulayam Singh too might invite Sonia to his iftar party on Dec 5. Sonia, Congress sources said, is keen to seize the initiative to forge

opposition 'unity' beyond floor coordination in Parliament, which was agreed to during the dinner at Chatterjee's residence, and leave behind her previous abortive attempts in this direction. Each of the coming Iftar parties and birthdays are, therefore, likely to be seen if the Opposition parties succeed in achieving that objective. There are signs that Congress, Samajwadi Party and NCP are more than willing to warm up to each other in the coming days, the main considerations being grabbing power and keeping Bharatiya Janata Party at bay.

Despite Pawar's differences with Sonia, Congress and NCP have been sharing power in the western state.

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Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bangladesh Environment Movement) brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding ban on production and use of polythene bags.

ASM NURUNNABI

The city life is undergoing a rapid transformation in a wide range of spheres with housing complexes, shopping outlets, fast food joints, fashion houses and a plethora of other private businesses cropping up here and there.

The increasing population of the city has made it necessary for high-rise apartment buildings to take precedence over single unit houses. Presently, these apartments are catering mostly to the needs of the affluent section of the society and the idea of expanding such housing facilities to a wider section of the society is gaining momentum.

Some quarters feel that the emphasis should be on low-cost housing outside the city for accommodating low-income people in order to ease the pressure on the city.

To this effect, real estate companies are trying to attract investment in suburban housing in places like Savar, Joydevpur, Ashulia, Nabinagar, etc. However, development of such real estate will obviously take time on account of inad-

2 killed as bus, truck collide in Comilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Two people were killed and seven others injured when a passenger bus collided head on with a truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Batabaria area under Kotwali thana of the district yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Ziaul Haq Zia, owner of Zia Saw Mill at Gangchar, and Shahera Begum, 35, wife of Shaiful Islam of Sriramtapur village under Burichang thana. They died in the hospital. Of the injured, the condition of three were stated to be critical. They are Alok, 28, Selim, 28, and Abul Kalam Azad, 38.

Police and witnesses said the accident took place at about 7-50 pm, as the bus tried to overtake another vehicle on the road.

Jubo League leader murder: 6 held at Netrokona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

Police arrested six persons from different areas of Netrokona town yesterday in connection with the killing of Swapan Joarder, president of Jubo League district unit.

Swapan was gunned down by unidentified assailants in front of the district AL office on Wednesday night.

The arrested persons were identified as Jewel, Wares Ali, Gazi, Mostafa, Abu Samad and Aili Noor.

Meanwhile, the district unit of Awami League has called a half-day hartal in the town tomorrow (Sunday) protesting the killing of Jubo League leader.

One killed in crossfire at Badda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A former garments factory employee was killed in crossfire between two terrorist groups at Madhya Badda in the city on Thursday night.

The victim Mesher Ali, 30, was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Mesher Ali lost his job two months ago, family sources said.

His brother Abbas Ali filed a case with Badda police in this regard.

DOWN TO EARTH

Fast changing urban lifestyle

quate transport and communication facilities.

Another noticeable trend is the flourishing fast food restaurants in the city. There are hardly any neighbourhood where the fast food culture has yet not made its mark. Beef burgers, chicken sandwiches, vegetable rolls, potato fries, milk shakes and soft drinks feature in the menu in these places and Dhakaites are fast developing a taste for these western eats. Nonetheless, Chinese food is still very popular and many Chinese restaurants are seen in the capital.

With people's confidence in public management of affairs dwindling, privatisation of different sectors is commonplace nowadays. Men employed by private agencies

may be seen directing traffic in place of regular traffic police at many road intersections and even at some thoroughfares. The appalling traffic jams in many parts of the city has greatly hampered normal business so much so that it has prompted such private initiatives.

Security of private property is another sphere where city dwellers can no longer rely on solely government agencies. Many owners of houses and apartments are now hiring security guards from private firms providing security services.

The introduction of courier service for mail and package delivery within and even outside the country is another example of private service replacing the postal service of the government. This is

due to the fact that government service has in many cases failed to live up to the expectation of the public.

The telecommunication sector has also undergone large-scale privatisation with still more to come. At present, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) is not in a position to meet the huge demand for private telephone connections due to various constraints. In such a situation, the private telephone companies have come forward to provide cellular phones. Lately, the cost of getting a mobile connection has come down considerably and more and more people are subscribing to the ser

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AL likely to expel more party renegades

Letters to MPs, units seeking list of names

REAZ AHMAD

Awami League has issued letters to its leaders and units seeking names of party renegades who acted against its interests during the recent general election.

In the last two days, letters were sent to party MPs and those defeated in the polls and also to presidents of all thana units asking them to send names of leaders and workers who 'betrayed' the party in the election.

Sources in AL said, once the list of renegades is ready, the party would serve showcause notices on them. Disciplinary action including expulsion from the party would follow if the replies are not satisfactory.

Before AL embarks on an anti-government movement, this 'home cleansing' move is considered very crucial. The party also plans to launch a drive for taking in new

members.

Overcoming the initial shock of polls debacle, the 52-year-old party is now moving fast to rebuild itself by picking up fresh and dynamic leadership, replacing the ones who betrayed it in the election.

Earlier, the party had hinted at tough stance against renegades when it expelled 24 rebels including a presidium member for contesting the polls without its approval.

Talking to The Daily Star following the expulsion of 24 rebels, AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman had said the party would go tough against all of them whose replies to the show cause notices would not be satisfactory.

Meanwhile, angered by some recent government moves, AL has already started various agitation programmes against the less than two-month-old BNP-led alliance government.

As the alliance government is moving fast to scrap a special law ensuring lifelong security for Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, daughters of the Father of the Nation, AL called a hartal in Dhaka tomorrow.

While in power, AL had promised not to go for hartal anymore but in the changed situation, it has again called hartal.

A joint meeting of AL presidium, advisory council, central working committee and party MPs on Thursday found the present situation in the country 'suffocating'.

It resolved to gradually build up a mass resistance against 'misdeeds' of the ruling alliance.

As a first step, the party would convene a three-day national convention in the city from January 17 to denounce, what it said, 'Crimes against Humanity.'

Through the convention, AL

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State security for Hasina Move to repeal law an act of political vengeance: Khasru

UNB, Dhaka

Former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru has brushed aside Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed's contention in parliament on repealing the special security act for Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, the two surviving daughters of the father of the nation.

"The move for repealing the Act is but a cruel manifestation of political vengeance to invite and instigate the condemned killers to finish off Sheikh Hasina, an institution of democracy, independence and non-communal politics," he said yesterday.

Briefing newsmen at the Awami League's Dhanmondi office on the bill introduced by Barrister Moudud in parliament Wednesday to repeal

the Father of the Nation Family Members Security Act, 2001, Khasru said the law was enacted considering an extraordinary situation in complete consonance with the Constitution.

Moreover, he said, judgements of Supreme Courts of Bangladesh, India and the United States, and the Law Commission members were consulted before the special security law was unanimously adopted by last parliament on June 20 this year to protect the life of the two sisters facing potential threat by the self-proclaimed killers.

Awami League presidium member Abdul Jalil MP, publicity secretary Abdul Mannan and office sec

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Forty journalists attacked or given death threats since Oct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 40 journalists were attacked or threatened with death by activists of the ruling BNP since it came to power in October.

In a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Reporters Sans Frontiers (reporters without borders) and Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) protested 'violence' perpetrated by BNP activists against the media. Summary of the letter was made available to The Daily Star yesterday.

Both the organisations requested the prime minister to put an end to such violence and bring the culprits to trial.

They also urged the government to release writer and columnist Shahriar Kabir and withdraw charges against him.

The letter noted with satisfaction

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Ban production, use of polythene

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bangladesh Environment Movement) yesterday called on the government to expedite the process of ban on production and use of polythene in the country and find alternatives in its place to ward off an impending environmental disaster.

The call came during a citizen's rally organised by the Andolon in the city to forge a citizen's coalition against use of polythene and press the government to implement its election pledge.

Presided over by Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, the rally was also addressed, among others, by Imdadul Haq Milon, Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Rafiqul Islam Sarkar and Dr Meher-e-Khoda.

Speakers at the rally noted that this non-biodegradable substance was responsible for pollution of land, air and water pollution and

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Shahjahan Sardar, Motahar Masum new DRU President, Secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shahjahan Sardar of the Ittefaq and Motahar Hossain Masum of the Sangbar have been elected president and general secretary respectively of the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU).

The DRU election was held at the National Press Club yesterday. Reporters of the different newspapers and news agencies cast their votes from 9 am to 4 pm through a computerised voting system.

Shahjahan Sardar defeated his opponent Swapon Das Gupta of Matribhumi while Motahar Hossain Masum defeated Shariful Islam of Dinkal and Pir Habibur Rahman of Jugantar.

The other elected office-bearers of the new committee are vice president Mesbah Ahmed (Ajker Kagoj),

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