

Altaf faces PM flak

Remarks on Naushin's killing irk BNP rank

NAZMUL ASHRAF

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury's comment on Thursday's killing of 20-month old child Naushin in the capital has irked the prime minister and drawn flak from the ruling BNP rank.

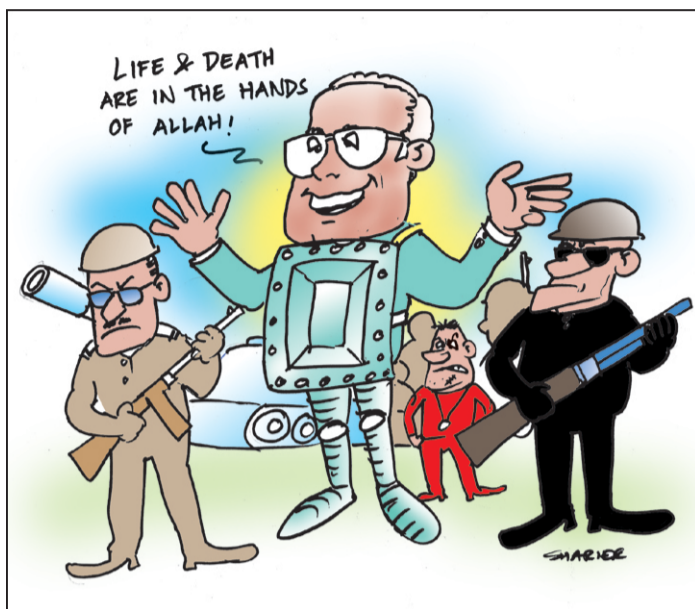
Sources said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who was attending the UN special session on child rights in New York, phoned BNP Secretary General and LRGD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan several times yesterday to talk about the law and order, Naushin's killing and the home minister's controversial comments.

Earlier on the day, press clippings were sent to her on the tragedy. The PM asked Bhuiyan to strengthen government efforts aimed at improving the law and order, sources said. "We must live up to the people's expectation about the country's law and order," Bhuiyan quoted Khaleda as saying to him on the phone.

BNP leaders, including some ministers, felt that the home minister should be removed, as his remarks were highly embarrassing for the government and damaging to its image. They also observed that he had failed to deal effectively with growing acts of crime across the country.

While consoling parents of Naushin at their Badda residence Friday, the home minister had said none could change destiny when it comes to death. "Life and death are in the hands of Allah and none can do anything about them. Allah has taken back his creature," the home minister philosophised.

PAGE 11 COL 7



Bangladesh a special friend of US: Hillary

UNB, New York

US Senator and former first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton yesterday described Bangladesh as a "special friend" of the United States, appreciating Bangladesh's position against "terrorism" and its joining the global campaign against terror.

Senator Hillary the spouse of immediate-past US president Bill Clinton, appreciated Bangladesh's position against "terrorism" and its joining the global campaign against terror. Hillary, who has been elected to the Senate, the upper house of American parliament, Congress, from New York at the last election, expressed the views when she called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her hotel suite here.

In the meeting, described as warm and cordial by the foreign secretary in a press briefing, the two leading ladies recalled their earlier meetings during the term of p a s t

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Foreign visitors in visa juggernaut

200 refused on-arrival visa so far, foreign office yet to provide list of 'no-visa' countries to ZIA

M ANWARUL HAQ

Nearly 200 foreign nationals have been refused visa on arrival or landing permit (LP) since the government imposed new restrictions and immigration procedures on April 18, sources said.

Those who were denied entry included citizens of the US, the UK, Germany, France, Malaysia, Morocco, Japan and Chad.

On Thursday, 27 foreigners including a British and a Turkish national were refused entry. A group of 25 Malaysians, who came for Tablig, were also turned down.

A Norwegian on an educational tour was also stopped at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday. Later, intervention by the home and education ministries finally helped him get visa on arrival.

But most of the foreigners, who face hitch at ZIA, are not so lucky. They sometimes have to wait for three or four days in the transit lounge in distress since the airport does not have the barest of accommodation facilities.

There are also complaints that prospective foreign investors are also facing undue delays and harassment in getting their visas extended.

Besides, procurement of income tax clearance certificate by departing foreigners has caused both anxiety and undue problems for foreign nationals who make short stay here.

A government order on April 18 clamped new immigration restrictions. The home ministry order

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Depression

UNB, Dhaka

The well marked low over North Andaman Sea and adjoining area concentrated into a deep depression and was centered about 1160 km South-Southeast of Chittagong Port, 1070 km South-Southeast of Cox's Bazar and 1275 km Southeast of Khulna town at 3 pm yesterday.

It is likely to intensify further and move initially in a westerly direction, said a special bulletin of Storm Warning Centre.

Maximum sustained wind within 44 km of the depression centre is about 40 KPH rising to 50 KPH in gust or squalls. Sea will remain moderate.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Crime links Newton to death!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Involvement with an underworld don, feud over the recently concluded Dhaka City Corporation polls and rivalry over waste cloth business may have led to the murder of BNP Ward Commissioner Saidur Rahman Newton Friday.

According to his accomplices and sources in Mirpur area, Newton, also vice-president of the suspended central committee of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), had close links with one of the city's top criminal Kala Jahangir.

Over the years, he along with Kala Jahangir amassed huge wealth allegedly through illegal toll collection and grabbing of land and

property in Mirpur area. He was made vice-president of the JCD, the student wing of the ruling BNP, in December, 2000 and then he set up a group in his locality to carry out illegal toll collection.

But trouble for Newton started when he snapped links with Jahangir early this year and decided to contest the DCC elections. He became a strong rival of ward commissioner nomination seekers, Saiful Islam Ripon and Mosharrif Hossain Mashu, when he got nomination from the four-party alliance from ward No. 8.

Following feud with Newton, police arrested Ripon before the DCC elections. Sources said Newton had a hand in sending

Ripon behind bars to clear his way to win the polls. This angered Ripon, who wanted to take revenge on Newton, sources added.

Another source said Newton took control of waste cloth business in Mirpur immediately after being elected. The business was earlier controlled by Haji Rafiq, commissioner of ward No. 4.

Newton became the target of Kala Jahangir after he left his gang and got his wife arrested last month.

Intelligence sources said Jahangir recently joined hands with a ward commissioner and plotted the killing of Newton. A meeting was held at the residence of the commissioner in this regard.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Teenaged girl escapes rape, not death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenaged girl was stabbed to death at Badda in the city yesterday morning as she tried to save herself from being raped by three youths, police said.

Ratna, 18, was called out of her residence at Khilbaritek by three youths, all her neighbours. Two of them were named Babul and another was named Jahangir. They took her to the residence of one of the youths -- Babul- and tried to rape her.

As she cried out and tried to escape, the youths stabbed her fatally.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Listed criminal Julu gunned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons, including a 'listed criminal' were shot dead in separate incidents in the city last night.

Sirajul Islam Julu, 30, of West Agargaon, was shot dead in front of the LGED office in Agargaon last night.

Listed criminal Julu had as many as 17 criminal cases including charges of murder and mugging pending against him with the Mohammadpur thana.

Witnesses said Julu and his two accomplices were playing carom in front of the LGED office when their armed rivals came in two motorbikes and an auto-rickshaw, and sprayed bullets on them.

Julu was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where attending doctors declared him dead.

Identities and whereabouts of Julu's two accomplices, also injured in the attack, remained unknown. Police suspected they were secretly undergoing treatment in order to avoid arrest.

Officer-in-Charge of Mohammadpur thana said Julu along with a gang of criminals had long been running an illegal trade in phensidyl in the BNP slum.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Cops under attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six policemen including the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Motijheel police station were injured in a gunfight with muggers at Shantinagar in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

In another incident, a traffic constable was shot by miscreants near the Shapla Chattar last night.

They injured policemen are OC SM Mohiuddin, sub-inspectors Abdull Motin, Nazrul, Rafiqul Islam, Alamgir Hossain and constable Shahabuddin. The OC, SI Nazrul and constable Shahabuddin, all bullet-hit, are being treated at Rajarbagh Police Hospital.

Motijheel police said a team from

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

INSIDE TODAY

Article 4

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Column: Currents and Crosscurrents
M M Rezaul Karim

Law and our Right 5,6

The Arbitration Act 2001: A critical analysis; and Law Watch: The worst places to grow up

Death doesn't wake them up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight days after the worst launch disaster in the country that killed nearly 400 people, the authorities have done little to bring some discipline in the water transport sector, riddled with various problems.

The committee formed to probe the May 3 disaster in the Meghna failed to submit its report yesterday, the deadline. Minister for Shipping Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain yesterday said it would take another two or three days to submit the report.

Despite warnings from naval architects that hundreds of vessels are plying with structural and design faults, not a single one has been inspected or their owners penalised so far. This is exposing thousands of passengers to life risk.

During a visit to Sadarghat yesterday, all kinds of launches, big and small, were seen leaving the terminal without any check by officials. Every day, about 200 vessels arrive and leave the largest river port in the country.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Two killed as launch capsizes in Barisal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least two people died when a small passenger launch with about 100 people on board capsized and sank in the river Sandhya yesterday afternoon amid a nor'wester that swept over the Banaripara upazila headquarters in the district.

According to Sheikh Abul Kalam, deputy commissioner of Barisal, the launch ML Ifi was on way to Shikarpur of Barisal from Hularhat of Pirojpur with about 100 passengers on board.

But just minutes before anchoring at Banaripara at about 2.30pm, the launch capsized and sank in the river Sandhya being caught in the storm.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

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Round 3 on Page 15