

BDR bailout

FROM PAGE 1

High officials of home ministry, police and BDR, representatives of different special agencies of police and NSI (National Security Intelligence) were present in the meeting.

The meeting to chalk out a "decisive action against crime" was convened in the wake of reports that the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, now on a tour to the USA, in telephonic talks with senior party and cabinet colleagues, expressed deep anguish over the situation.

According to different sources, the meeting was not in favour of a drive all over the country at one go, as it thought such an exercise would not be successful. Rather, it suggested carrying out combatting operations in the crime-prone areas on the basis of prior specific information.

The meeting felt that efforts should be there so that criminals do not get advance information of any drive.

Suggestions were also made in the meeting to seal the border so that the criminals cannot flee the country, the sources said.

They have given a nod to the drive to arrest accomplices and relatives of top criminals as a strategy to put pressure on them. Detectives in simultaneous raids at the city residences of four absconding listed criminals on Saturday night arrested their family members and relatives.

Meantime security has been beefed up in and around the city with BDR troops seen patrolling certain areas from Sunday night.

People form different parts of the city yesterday said they found BDR personnel patrolling certain areas including Badda.

Traffic police have also been asked to help police to improve law and order.

Yesterday, law enforcers intercepted and checked vehicles in different points of the city.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in a press release last night said they arrested three listed criminals and another 492 people

Rice looted

FROM PAGE 12

Customs official reported the incident to the nearest BDR camp and also informed the local district administration and police authorities.

Customs officials have taken refuge at the Benapole land port and border trade has been suspended following a directive by the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The deputy commissioner and superintendent of police have visited the troubled port last evening.

The customs officials are planning to lodge a case with the Satkhira police against the miscreants.

Our Natore Correspondent adds: Natore police foiled a bid for looting a rice-loaded truck on Saturday night soon after restoration of supply of rice from Naogaon, the northern region's biggest supply centre.

Police exchanged gunshots with the dacoits and forced them to flee.

The gang stopped the truck by putting up a barricade on Natore-Bogra highway at Neuguline in Singra upazila. They stabbed driver Helal Uddin while his helper managed to flee. The dacoits also hurled cocktails at police and fired shots. None, however, was injured.

Rice traders in Naogaon had stopped supply of the staple food to other parts of the country on May 9, protesting unabated highway robbery and murder of some truck drivers and helpers in the last eight months.

Supply resumed following government assurance of tight security measures.

Bill to curb media

FROM PAGE 1

would never accept the bill to go back to the House in its original form, especially with clauses aimed at curbing press freedom. "We'll strongly oppose the undemocratic and unrealistic provisions of the bill when the committee scrutinises it," he said preferring anonymity.

But the treasury bench members of the committee preferred not to comment on the controversial provisions. A Jatiya Party MP also declined to speak on the matter leaving it to the committee to decide.

"The bill got top priority in the meeting, for it involves the status and privileges of all the members of parliament," said a BNP member of the committee, also requesting anonymity.

The treasury bench member, who would not be named, said last night that he did not support privileges proposed in the bill for the MPs in a country like Bangladesh. "Our privileges should be defined as per our realities and we should not expect those enjoyed by the members of the House of Commons."

He felt that status of the MPs must be raised in the warrant of precedence. However, he said proposals like flags in the house and car of an MP sound illogical.

The bill proposed that an MP should enjoy the status of a Supreme Court judge.

Chaired by Committee Chairman Mozammel Haq, the meeting was

from 22 thana areas for their alleged involvement in criminal activities yesterday, the first day of special raid in the capital. Of them, 52 were arrested under Section 54, 236 under DMP Act, 67 on regular case and 22 as warranted criminals.

The sources said the state minister for home along with party men made surprise visits to different parts of the city Sunday night to supervise law enforcers' activities.

Mashayaki

FROM PAGE 12

This much-talked about stranger entered this village about eight years ago and took shelter in the house of poor farmer Abul Kalam Azad. Apparently a mentally retarded person, he has been residing here bearing the name Mohendra.

Because of his appearance, unfamiliar language and behaviour, he was widely speculated as the missing Japanese engineer Mashayaki, and such stories were widely circulated in the national media. Besides officials of the Japanese Embassy in Dhaka and some relatives of the missing Japanese engineer also visited this village to ascertain the identity of the stranger.

But all such attempts turned futile because of his non-cooperation.

However, yesterday's visit of Michio and her subsequent comments about the stranger made "Mohendra" a different man. Hitherto, supposed to be a retarded person, who always kept mum, Mohendra became furious and started misbehaving with Abul Kalam Azad as well as other people, including journalists who gathered at the village on hearing the arrival of the Japanese lady.

At the heat of the moment, Mohendra claimed himself to be Bhopen Adhikari, a Nepalese citizen. He also uttered some names involved with terrorist and criminal rings of Nepal. It also came out from his utterances that he intruded into Bangladesh through Burma and India to escape criminal charges in his country.

Mysterious death of detainee at Ctg jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A detained youth at the Chittagong Jail died 'mysteriously' here in the city yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rashid, 21, an accused in an attempt to murder case. He was allegedly poisoned to death.

Sources said, Abdur Rashid brought to the Chittagong Jail custody on April 1, was shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) from the jail hospital as his condition deteriorated in the early hours. He died at CMCH in the morning.

Rashid, reportedly, knew some information about the top criminals of Raiganj and the accomplices of the criminals in the jail are suspected to have poisoned him to death.

Former jailer

FROM PAGE 12

Another accused AYMA Bashar, now Jail Super of Gaibandha, failed to appear before the court.

The accused persons have long obstructed the trial. Finally, on order from the High Court they appeared before the District and Sessions Judge's Court on Sunday and prayed for bail.

Rejecting the bail petitions, Judge Mohammad Mofizul Islam sent them to jail hajot.

also attended by AYM Khalilur Rahman, Sardar Shakhamat Hossain Bakul, Mohammad Abu Hena and Nazir Hossain of BNP; Shawgat Ali and AICM Jahangir Hussain of the AL; Tajul Islam Chowdhury of Jatiya Party, and Abdus Sobhan of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1

The prime minister on Thursday participated in a roundtable meeting and shared views with UN secretary general in a separate meeting. She also attended the luncheon hosted by the Secretary General in honour of the world leaders.

She also shared views with Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Norwegian Minister for International Development Ms H F Johnson, senator and former US first lady Ms Hillary Clinton, and Congressmen Josey Crawley, B Gilman and G W Mike.

Executive director of UNICEF Ms Carol Belamy and executive director of the World Bank B P Singh also called on the Prime Minister. She visited Ground Zero, the Twin Tower disaster site and placed wreaths as mark of respect for the victims on May 11. She also had a meeting with relations of the Bangladeshi victims of the Twin Tower tragedy.

HSC exams Secret camera to monitor 37 Rajshahi centres

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Education Board (REB) authority has decided to monitor 37 HSC examination centres through close-circuit video cameras to check cheating.

This was disclosed by REB chairman Prof Nazrul Islam at a press conference at the Board's auditorium yesterday afternoon.

At least 1,92,436 candidates, including 71,334 female students, from 882 colleges of 16 districts of Rajshahi Division are likely to take part in the HSC examination scheduled to begin from May 16.

As many as 217 vigilance teams and seven 'summary trial' teams will be engaged to monitor the examinations in 261 centres.

Of the 37 'highly cheating-prone' centres, four centres are in Rajshahi, three in Naogaon, one each in Sirajganj, Bogra and Thakurgaon, Joypurhat, Chapainawabganj, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Dinajpur, Natore, Nilphamari and Panchagarh, two in Pabna and six centres in Rangpur district.

PJCSS supporter shot in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Niron Bikash Chakma, 36, a PJCSS supporter, was shot during a fresh attack allegedly by UPDF activists at Betchori village under Kawthali thana of the district yesterday morning, police said.

Witnesses said, an armed gang attacked the residence of Krishno Chakma at around 7 in the morning. They fired indiscriminately leaving Niron bullet injured on the spot. The bullet hit Niron's left knee. The attackers then fled the scene as their targeted person was not there.

Injured Niron was rushed to local Upazila Health Complex and later shifted at Rangamati General Hospital.

Crime wave

FROM PAGE 1

Network providers and furniture shops. The cable network providers of West Shewrapara had to keep their connections snipped for about one month on an order of the gang that demanded Tk 10 lakh from them.

These gangs always try to overpower the other to keep up their dominance. "The more a gang is powerful, the higher is its rate and earning."

Over 500 businessmen brought out a procession and held a rally at Shewrapara on May 4, protesting the criminal activities in the area. The businessmen also observed a daylong strike that covered the areas from Rokeya Sarani to Shewrapara, demanding an end to criminal activities.

Likud rejects

FROM PAGE 12

has been the traditional position of the Likud, but Sharon has said that under stringent conditions, he would agree to creation of such a state, at one point calling it "inevitable."

Instead of the measure opposing a Palestinian state, Sharon asked the convention to approve a resolution backing his government in its efforts for peace and security. In a secret ballot, delegates voted against Sharon's proposal by a margin of 59 to 41 per cent, a stinging defeat for Sharon.

Looking defiant but uncomfortable, Sharon took the podium and made a brief statement after losing the vote on his resolution. He said he would honor the decisions of his party's central committee, but added, "I will continue to lead the state of Israel and the people of Israel according to the same ideas that led me always -- security for the state of Israel and its citizens and our desire for real peace."

Then Sharon exited the hall, walking behind Netanyahu without looking at him, before the delegates quickly approved the resolution opposing creation of a Palestinian state.

Netanyahu told the AP that the vote showed how the Likud party activists view peacemaking. "In the midst of a terror campaign run by (Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat, they don't want to envision a terrorist state which would threaten the destruction of Israel," he said.

Altaf

FROM PAGE 1

None of the channels were also allowed to cover the two meetings.

The home minister has been facing public outcry for his 'insensitive' remarks on crime ever since he took over.

But his most enraged comment came during his visit to the residence of Naushin, a 20-month-old toddler killed by muggers last week. Instead of consoling the parents of Naushin, he said, "Allah has taken back its creature!" He also commented, "It is not possible to prevent murders, as criminals do not kill after making announcements."

These comments haveirked the prime minister and Altaf's cabinet colleagues and prompted them to ask the home minister to hold his tongue.



PHOTO: STAR
Awami League leaders console the distressed family members of Marisha Islam Naushin yesterday. Naushin was killed in firing by extortions on Thursday last.

US, Russia reach arms cut deal

AP, Washington

President George W. Bush announced yesterday that he will sign a landmark accord in Moscow this month to dramatically shrink American and Russian nuclear arsenals. "The treaty will liquidate the legacy of the Cold War," he said.

Under the agreement with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Cold War-era arsenals will be reduced to 1,700 to 2,200 warheads, Bush said.

The United States has about 7,000 strategic nuclear weapons, Russia about 6,000.

Bush and Putin agreed to the nuclear reduction targets in principle last year, leaving difficult negotiations over details to their diplomats.

Putin welcomed yesterday announcement. "We are satisfied with the joint work," he said. "With

Judgement in Jahangir Master murder case May 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Verdict in the sensational Jahangir Master Murder Case will be pronounced on May 21 by Md Didar Ali Fakir, Additional District and Sessions Judge.

Notorious criminal Ershad Shikder is the prime accused in the case.

Arguments in the case ended yesterday after cross examination of 27 prosecution witnesses.

Jahangir Hossain was private tutor of two sons of Ershad Shikder.

He was brutally killed allegedly by Shikder and other accused on the night of March 18, 1998 in the ice factory at Skid Ghat. Shikder suspected that Jahangir had illicit relation with his wife Khodeja, sources said.

Security agencies in India estimate the level of infiltration has not come down and terrorists are raring to enter Jammu and Kashmir to foil the assembly polls.

India is also likely to convey to Rocca that Musharraf has paid only lip service to his January 12 address to the nation where he had promised to crack down on extremists and terrorists in his country.

Besides, New Delhi is also going to point out to the US official that Islamabad is yet to act on the list of 20 terrorists wanted in Indian in connection with various crimes. Some of the 20 are Indian citizens.

This will be third visit by Rocca to New Delhi since March this year.

Gas committee

FROM PAGE 12

Vice-Chairman of BUET Prof Nooruddin Ahmed.

On the crucial issue linked with a tricky question of whether or not to go for export of gas, differences cropped up in the committee last month and it decided to submit a split report.

Later, they agreed on presenting a unanimous assessment, but again the divisions sharpened, indicating a split estimation of gas reserves.

With the latest development, a committee member said, they would try to hammer out an identical estimation on which the major policy decision of export depends. "If the members finally failed to reach a consensus, again a split report is likely."

The committee will sit again on May 20 to discuss the two figures of appraisal 15.5 TCF by the petroleum engineers and 11.7 TCF by geologists trying to reach a common stand. The difference in quantities of recoverable gas between the two groups is 3.8 TCF.

The petroleum engineers' reckoning is based on geological and production data as well as the report of Hydrocarbon Unit (HCU) of the Energy Ministry and Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD). The HCU estimated the reserves at 16.1 TCF.

On the other hand, the geologists' assessment is similar to the survey of IKM of Canada, conducted in 1992. The survey showed the reserves at 11.1 TCF.

Nasty nine

FROM PAGE 1

At northwest Shewrapara, the gangs led by Jahangir, Korban Ali and Shukur Ali control the Pilerbagh area and WASA Road. Although the triad has been in jail for the last one month, their followers Rubel, 'Kala' Babu, Nayan, Billal, Shaheed and Badsha, among others, are continuing mugging, forced contracts and even murders.