

PM calls for rooting out unfair means during exams

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged teachers, guardians and all others concerned to take a resolute stand to eradicate unfair means from all public examinations...

She stressed the importance of improving standard of education in classrooms to help check the tendency to copy at exams...

"Adopting unfair means in examinations is not desirable; students do not intend to suffer from this disgrace," she said...

The chairman called on the prime minister at her office in the afternoon and presented to her the statistics of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination 2002...

During the presentation of the exam statistics, the Education Minister informed the PM that various measures taken by the Ministry and all other concerned organizations before this year's examinations helped significantly reduce the propensity for adopting unfair means.

Expressing satisfaction at the SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Funds being set aside to contest public property cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works is creating a separate fund to engage 'specialised lawyers' to defend cases involving public properties...

The move to have a separate fund for engaging high-priced lawyers was reached as the ministry kept losing legal battles, while defending public interest in the court of justice.

The ministry has already sought permission from the Ministry of Finance to create the fund.

Sources in the housing and public works ministry said, over the years, it has engaged petty lawyers, who have 'deliberately misrepresented' the cases in connivance with a 'vicious circle' eager to grab public properties.

An official source said, since 1985 the government has hardly won a case in the courts. This has led to a loss of public properties of an astronomical value.

"Whenever we tried to defend a case, important documents would go missing or the lawyers would deliberately withhold vital evidence which could lead to our victory," said the official.

He said, lawyers are not alone in SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Landslide kills 3 in Cox's Bazar

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Three members of a family were killed in a landslide at Lighthouse Para on the outskirts of the resort town yesterday.

Shona Meher, 27, her son Sayedul Alam, 3, and brother Abdul Hakim, 17, died when their house was destroyed by the slide caused by incessant rain at about 7 in the morning.

Police recovered the bodies from inside the house. Rafique Ahmed, husband of Shona Meher, is a night guard of a local residential hotel.

Table with prayer timings for July 4 and 5, including Sun Rises, Sun Sets, and Azan/Jamaat times.

Canadian, British envoys meet Hasina Govt, opposition urged to exercise restraint

UNB, Dhaka

Two leading western diplomats have strongly pleaded that the government and the opposition parties exercise restraint for the sake of social security and economic development.

They hoped that the two sides, again at loggerheads, would find a common ground to improve law and order, ensure security and make parliament effective for economic interest and improving the image of Bangladesh.

Canadian High Commissioner David Preston and British High Commissioner Dr David Carter made the remarks after a long meeting with Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence yesterday.

Nearly two hours of parley from 10:00am focussed on issues like the opposition's joining the parliament and making it fully functional, repression on Awami League, law and order and human rights situation in the country, party sources said.

"We discussed a range of issues, we heard concerns from the leader of the opposition... we certainly welcome the return of Awami League to parliament and we encouraged them to pursue in parliament the issues that concern them," David Preston told UNB.

Asked if they discussed any issue precisely, the envoy said law and order and the opposition's interest in getting fair opportunity to speak in parliament came up

during the meeting. British High Commissioner Dr David Carter said they encouraged both sides to exercise restraint and find a common ground in national interest on economic issues, law and order and security.

Both the diplomats, belonging to the so-called Tuesday Group formed before October 1 election representing USA, Canada, Britain and European Union, remarked that all parties should play their part in making the parliament fully functional, which is important for Bangladesh's image abroad and encouraging its development partners.

They observed that parliament could be made a meaningful forum with honest efforts and mutual cooperation of all political parties and people, and thus the law and order situation could be tackled.

"Everybody and all sides look for an improvement in law and order and it is possible, in my view, if everybody cooperates and all Bangladeshis pull together to improve the situation and promote democracy in the country," said Dr Carter.

Asked if they had any discussion on political developments following resignation of Prof. AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury from the presidency last month, David Preston declined to make any comment, saying it is an internal affair.

Later briefing on the meeting, Hasina's political SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Shazneen case: Latifur Rahman cross-examined

STAR REPORT

Latifur Rahman, second prosecution witness in the Shazneen rape case and father of the victim, was cross-examined for about two hours in the Second Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, yesterday.

The lawyer for principal accused Shahidul Islam alias Shahid cross-examined him.

Judge Kazi Rahamat Ullah then adjourned the hearing till 11:00 am today.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom, was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

During the cross-examination, Latifur Rahman told the court that there was a party at his residence on the night of the incident. It was a very simple one. All the guests at the party were invited through cards. The number of invitees was about 30.

He also said a list of the invitees was earlier given to the investigation officer of the case, but now he could not remember the names of all. Most of the invitees were his friends and well-known persons.

Rahman told the court that he could remember the names of some of the guests at the party. They are Obidur Rahman Khan, Anisuzzaman Khan, Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, KM Ezajul Haq, KM Samsul Alam, Anwarul Haq, Hafizuddin Ahmed, Enayet Ullah Khan, Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan and Ahmed Shafi Chowdhury. There were no the then ministers, secretaries and personnel of law enforcing agencies including CID, SB and DB at the party, he mentioned.

Latifur Rahman filed a murder case with Gulshan Police Station accusing Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, a domestic help at his residence, on April 24, 1998.

Mojibur Rahman, additional superintendent of police of CID, SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

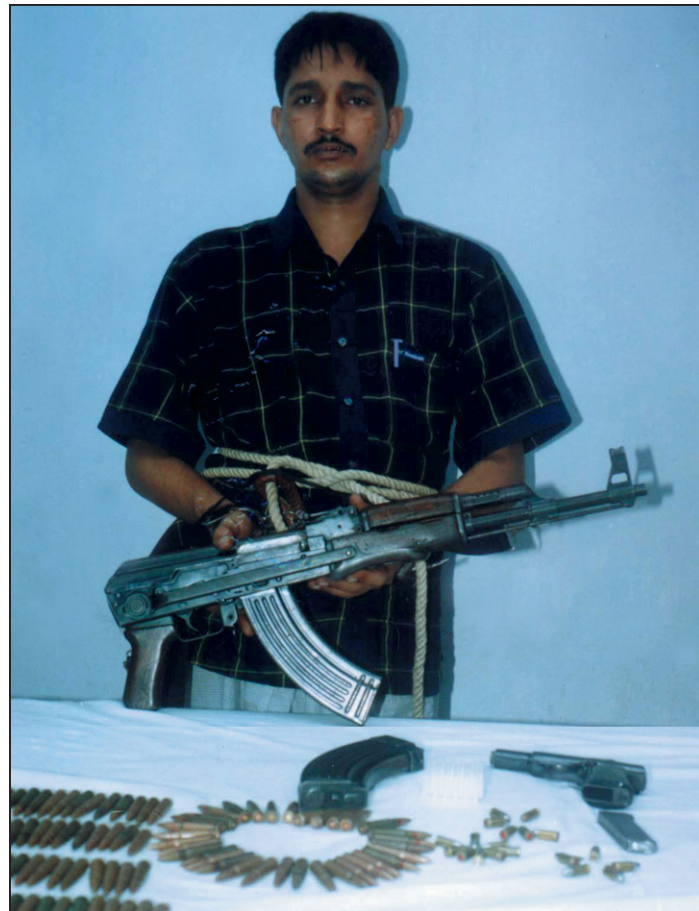


PHOTO: STAR

Taslimuddin alias Montu, prime suspect in the Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case, arrested with an AK-56 rifle at the DC Road at Chittagong yesterday.

Prime suspect in Muhuri murder case arrested

BSS, Ctg

A prime suspect of the sensational Principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri murder case was arrested yesterday from DC Road under Bakolia thana in the city.

Detective Branch (DB) of police in a pre-dawn raid picked up Taslimuddin alias Manik alias Montu, 32, with a Spanish-made

pistol. Acting on a tip-off, a well-equipped force of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) raided the rented house of Taslimuddin at DC Road and nabbed him with the arm.

Based on his instant confession, the squad conducted a raid on a nearby house of one of his accomplices and seized one Chinese-made AK-56 rifle with two magazines and 140 bullets concealed in a bag.

Son of Delwar Hossain of Darmapur village under Fatkhkhari thana of the district, Taslimuddin, an accused in eight criminal cases and wanted by Razaon police, was absconding for a long time.

Police said Taslimuddin was earlier arrested on April 21, 1997 with eight categories of arms and a huge quantity of ammunition including four Mark-2 rifles, one G-3 rifle, one Chinese-made Sten gun, two Chinese-made AK-56 rifles and 2,670 bullets. He was released on bail from the High Court in October last year.

Police suspect that Taslimuddin led the gang that swooped on the residence of eminent freedom fighter and educationist Principal Gopal Krishna Muhuri at Jamal Khan in the city on November 17 last year and shot him dead on the spot.

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Heavy rain in July, flooding forecast

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Heavy rains are expected during July, which may trigger flooding in the Ganges-Padma, Brahmaputra-Jamuna and Meghna river basins, said the meteorology department in a long range forecast.

It said in its forecast that there will be a 10 to 20 per cent above average rainfall during the current month and three to four times higher spells of rains that may lead to the flooding. This level of flooding is normal, however.

The national average fall in July, the peak month during the monsoon, is 480 mm. The higher than average rainfall had been continuing since March, which was 24.5 per cent above average, department sources said.

The trend towards the flooding was noticed last month when higher rainfall had occurred in the Northeastern Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya and Bihar. The rush of water from the hilly areas caused flash floods in northeastern Bangladesh.

After a review of the recent weather pattern, the forecast noted that in June there had been more rains than normal in the country barring Chittagong and Sylhet divisions. The reason behind more SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Swiss mugged leave country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The two Swiss nationals, looted by dacoits at Harintana under Swaran Khola thana on June 27, have left the country empty-handed.

Police did not prevent them from leaving the country on ground of their helplessness. But a reliable source said the Swiss nationals were asked not to proceed with case filed on June 29.

Meanwhile, Revenue Officer of Dhangmari forest station Abul Bashar has been placed under suspension for not arranging security to the Swiss nationals during their sight-seeing tour.

Besides, two boatmen Shahabuddin, 40, and Manik, 28, have been arrested suspecting their connivance with dacoits of 'Rafiq Bahini'. They were sent to Bagerhat jail on Tuesday evening.

Abul Bashar allegedly failed to arrange security to Swiss nationals despite receiving Taka 3,550 from them as travel and guard fees, sources said.

All boatmen of Mongla Port went on an indefinite strike from Tuesday morning in protest against arrest of Shahabuddin and Manik.



PHOTO: STAR

Rajuk bulldozes houses and establishments to clear space for a link-road between central Badda and Gulshan Road No. 1 in the city yesterday.

Grading system makes little impact on SSC results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Introduction of grading system in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examinations has made little impact on the result.

The Grade Point Average (GPA) system was introduced last year to bring about qualitative change in the education and improve the low percentage of passing in the SSC exams.

But the results of two SSC examinations since the introduction of the GPA show that the average percentage of passing remained below 40. The average percentage was 35.22 last year. This year, it rose to

39.88 per cent. Some teachers of the city's renowned schools told The Daily Star that they expected the average percentage of passing this year would be around 50. They observed that the students are yet to get acquainted with the new system, hence the poor performance. "I am not happy with the result," said Hamida Ali, principal of the Viqarunnisa Noon School. She was happy with the performance of her students, but said teachers should take more care of their students. The maths question paper was very tough this year, SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

327 obtain GPA-5

STAR REPORT

A total of 327 students -- 230 male and 97 female -- have obtained GPA-5 or A+ (marks 80 to 100), the highest level in the letter grading system, in this year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations under the seven boards.

Of them, 155 got this grade under Dhaka board, 68 under Chittagong board, 43 under Comilla board, 18 each under Sylhet and 18 Jessore boards, 15 under Rajshahi board and 10 under Barisal board.

Dhaka Board: One hundred male students and 55 female students got GPA-5 under Dhaka board --149 of them from Science group and three each from Humanities and Business Studies groups.

Chittagong Board: Sixty-eight students obtained SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Indian HC had received the list in '99 ...

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Commission of India yesterday said it has received Bangladesh's list of 25-category products for duty-free access to the Indian market from an official of the commerce ministry in August 1999.

The high commission issued a press release just a day after the country's Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed at a press briefing said he could not trace any document regarding Bangladesh's list of 25-category products. But, he said he heard that a businessman had prepared the list.

However, the Indian High Commission said, "We would like to clarify that the above mentioned list of 25 categories of items was received by this High Commission along with a forwarding letter dated August 18, 1999 signed by Mr. MN Nabi, the then joint secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh."

"The clarification is being issued to put the record straight and to remove any misgivings in a matter concerning India-Bangladesh trade relations," the release added.

AL-BNP gunfight in Bagerhat kills 3

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Three people were killed and six others severely injured in a fierce gun battle between activists of BNP and Awami League at about 11 am yesterday at Gourambha union under Rampal thana of Bagerhat district.

The dead were identified as Asaduzzaman, 35, Arab Ali, 30, and Rakibul, 20. The injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. They are Babul Akhtar, 25, school students Hira, 14, and Shafiqul, 14, Aslad, 24, Akmal, 20, and Siraj, 30.

Asaduzzaman was general secretary of Gourambha union unit of BNP. The gun battle between the two rival parties took place over possession of two shrimp enclosures. Gunfight continued for more than an hour, eyewitnesses said. Armed cadres of PBCP were hired by BNP activists to fight with AL activists, local people said.

Panic gripped Gourambha and neighbouring unions from where large number of people are still moving to others places fearing further clashes. The incident paralysed normal life in the area forcing all shops to down their shutters and disrupting transport services.

Four platoons of riot police have been deployed at Gourambha and Rampal apprehending further violence as supporters of both the parties are reportedly taking preparations for revenge.

Police hunt was going on to arrest culprits of both the rival parties. Police took away the bodies and were refusing to hand them over to their relatives till filing of this report last night.

Rupsha Bridge toll collection Khulna Jubo Dal leader arrested, granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

General Secretary of Khulna Jubo Dal Tarikul Islam Zahir, 38, was arrested by police Tuesday midnight from the house of Khulna City Corporation (KCC) Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), but was later granted bail at the CMM's Court, Khulna at 4:30pm yesterday.

Zahir's arrest had been ordered by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) suspecting his involvement in rampant toll collection from contractors, consultants and engineers of the Rupsha Bridge Project (RBP), police said.

A high official of the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) said Zahir and his armed cadres have established a reign of terror on the eastern part of RBP, threatening its engineers and foreign consultants for non-payment of toll. He however refused to tell if there is any written complaint allegation against the Jubo Dal leader by anyone from the RBP.

But sources at KMP, RBP and intelligence agencies said the Jubo Dal SEE PAGE 11 COL 7