

**Dr Aftab murder
3 held, hartal
at Golapganj
today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Golapganj thana police arrested three persons on Monday night and yesterday for their alleged involvement in the killing of Dr Aftab Hossain, assistant director of the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital.

The arrested persons are Liton, 22, an attendant of Dr Aftab's private chamber, Nayeem Ahmed and Badrul. Of them Liton was arrested on Monday night while Nayeem and Badrul were arrested yesterday morning.

They will be produced in a magistrate's court here today.

Dr Aftab was murdered on Saturday night. His body was recovered on Sunday from a bush near village Ghoshagaon in Gopalganj upazila, about four to five kilometres from his private chamber.

Meanwhile, Golapganj upazila unit of Awami League, Bazar committee and transport owners and workers organisations have called a hartal at the upazila headquarters today protesting the murder.

**10 awarded
life term
for murder
at Kushtia**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, here yesterday sentenced ten people to life term imprisonment for killing a young man.

The convicts are Jamal Uddin and his two sons, Kamal and Keltu, Tofazzal, Rafiq, Ranju, Anwarul, Asmat Darud and Shaheen. All the accused hail from Barkhadha village in sadar upazila.

According to the prosecution, the accused led by Jamal beat Sirajul Islam to death at Trimohoni on September 7, 2000.

Victim's father Nizam Uddin filed a case with sadar thana the same day. Police after investigation submitted a charge sheet against the ten.

After examining records and witnesses, Judge Idrish Alam pronounced the judgement.

Bappi murder

**Hearing on
charge-framing
on Sept 21**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Third special court for prevention of women and children Repression, Dhaka, yesterday fixed September 21 for hearing on charge-framing in the Bappi abduction and murder case.

Judge Sarker Abul Mansur fixed the date. The court on September 2 directed the authorities concerned to take steps to publish an advertisement in two Bangla dailies asking Sharif to appear before the court. The court issued warrant of arrest against Sharif on August 24.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case submitted the charge sheet in the case to the chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM's) court, Dhaka on August 21 against five people.

They are Bappi's cousin Shahidul Alam Shipon, Ripon Kumer Roy, Sanjit Sarker, Sankar Rajbanshi and Shariful Islam alias Bada. Sharif has been absconding since the incident.

Rubayet Ahmed Pabbi, 8, a student of class III of Armenitola Government High School, was abducted by Shipon and four others from Bappi's Becharam Dewri residence in the old city on August 5

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**Iraq agrees to unconditional
return of UN inspectors**

US dismisses Baghdad's offer as a ploy

Disarming Iraq: the UN programme

1991 April: Creation of UNSCOM, UN special commission charged with certifying destruction of Iraq's biological, chemical and ballistic weapons

1998 Aug 5: Iraq suspends its cooperation with UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA
Nov 11: UNSCOM quits Baghdad

1999 Dec 17: UN Resolution 1284 replaces UNSCOM with UNMOVIC

2000 Baghdad refuses to cooperate with the new body

2002 Sept 17: Iraq accepts unconditional return of weapons inspectors

UNMOVIC: destruction of Iraq's biological, chemical and ballistic weapons (nuclear control remains IAEA's remit)

AFP, United Nations

Iraq agreed on Monday to the unconditional return of UN arms inspectors amid intense diplomatic pressure to head off US threats of war over Baghdad's suspected weapons programs.

Washington, which has been pushing for the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, immediately dismissed the offer as a tactical ploy while other UN Security Council members greeted the move with scepticism or relief.

Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz for his part said that by its move Baghdad had removed any excuse for a US-led war against it.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he had received a letter from Iraqi Foreign Minister Najib Sabri informing him of the government's decision to allow the return of the weapons inspectors "without conditions."

The letter said Iraq wanted to start immediate discussions on practical arrangements for the

return of the inspectors, and "remove any doubts that Iraq still possesses weapons of mass destruction."

The White House branded Iraq's offer "a tactic that will fail" to prevent UN action to disarm Baghdad and called for a tough new Security Council resolution to deal with Saddam.

"This is a tactical step by Iraq in hopes of avoiding strong UN Security Council action. As such, it is a tactic that will fail," spokesman Scott McClellan said in a statement. "It is time for the Security Council to act."

US President George W. Bush still wants "a new, effective UN Security Council resolution that will actually deal with the threat Saddam Hussein poses to the Iraqi people, to the region, and to the world," he said.

But Aziz told a gathering of political supporters in Baghdad

T u e s d a y ,
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PHOTO: STAR

Locals look at twisted and burnt remains of wayside shops at Sheikhdi in the city's Demra area yesterday after a fire triggered by an electric short-circuit killed four people and gutted nine shops.

**Snacks spiked with
rat poison, 49
die in China**

REUTERS, Beijing

Local officials have confirmed the breakfast snacks that poisoned hundreds in eastern China were deliberately spiked with rat poison and the death toll has risen to 49, mostly children, state media said yesterday.

One Hong Kong newspaper said the poisoning might be linked to a dispute between the owner of the Heshengyuan Soy Milk chain store and a cousin but shed no further light on the motives behind the crime.

On Saturday, Tangshan residents were shocked to see customers at the tiny restaurant collapse, some bleeding from the mouth and ears, after eating fried dough sticks, sesame cakes and glutinous rice, many of which were made at a stall opposite.

The Shanghai Daily said health officials had later found a rate poison called Du Shu Qiang in samples of snacks at the popular fast food restaurant in the small industrial town of Tangshan in Jiangsu province.

"Examination of the samples sent from hospitals showed it contains Du Shu Qiang," it quoted an

official at the Jiangsu provincial Epidemic Prevention Centre as saying.

There was no effective antidote for the poison which was officially banned in China but readily available in the countryside, the newspaper said.

Local officials contacted by Reuters declined to comment.

But China Radio International, the official English-language station, said on Tuesday that local officials had told it the death toll was 49 so far, including two soldiers.

Tangshan residents have said they saw hundreds being rushed to hospital and estimated the death toll at more than 100.

Reports in state media have been tightly controlled as the government fears a public outcry and seeks to show its handling of the incident in a good light, Chinese reporters say.

China's cabinet and the Communist Party's Central Committee, which oversees national policy, sent police and health officials to investigate, state media said, highlighting concerns about bad publicity ahead of a leadership transition expected in November.

**Four burnt
alive in
Demra**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people were burnt alive in a fire at a wayside market at Sheikhdi in Bhangra Press area under Demra thana yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Afzal Khan, 35, Mohammad Shohag, 14, Mohammad Monir, 30 and Selim, 12.

According to Fire Brigade and police sources, the fire originated from an electric short circuit at Bismillah laundry shop at about 4:45 am and soon engulfed eight other shops.

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**2 listed criminals
held in Ctg**

BSS, Ctg

Police in separate raids arrested two listed criminals from Chandgaon and Doublemooing areas in the city yesterday, a CMP press release said.

They are Pradip Nath and Alamgir Chowdhury.

Police said Pradip Nath, 25, son of Nagarbashi Nath of Banskhalhi thana in the district, was arrested with a gun in the evening from Bahadderhat pessi corner under Chandgaon thana.

Doublemooing police arrested Alamgir Chowdhury, 18, from Pathantoli area under the same thana in the early hours of yesterday.

**Launch movement for power
decentralisation: Yunus**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Prof Yunus

Professor Muhammad Yunus has called upon people to launch a social movement compelling lawmakers to accept the popular demand for decentralisation of power to local government bodies.

The lawmakers pledged before elections and the governments experimented on functions and structures of the local government bodies but failed to make them independent and effective, said Prof. Yunus at different discussion meetings on a two-day motivational tour to Bogra, Gaibandha and Dinajpur, starting on Sunday.

As the lawmakers are elected by people, they must accept the demand at least for their re-election, he said.

"In a democratic country, the local government can be an effective tool of development should they be empowered and free from bureaucratic and political interference," Prof. Yunus said.

The purpose of the discussion meetings with elected representa-

tives of the paurashabha, the union parishad and civil society members was to create awareness about the importance of making local government bodies stronger and more effective.

Prof. Yunus welcomed the government decision on revival of the upazila parishad, calling it a step forward to decentralise power, and urged the government to hold upazila parishad elections as early

as possible.

The Local Governance Support Group (LGSG), a citizen forum working on empowerment of local government tiers, organised the tour.

The programmes began with an opinion-exchange meeting at the Sherpur Upazila Complex in Bogra Sunday morning, with Prof. Yunus, convener of the LGSG, Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, executive director of BRAC, Hussain Zillur Rahman, member secretary of the LGSG, Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, founder of Ganasasthya Kendra, Rafiqul Islam Sarkar, former chief of news of the Bangladesh Television (BTV), Badiul Alam Majumder, country director of Hunger Project, Md Ahsanul Zabbar, thana nirbahi officer (TNO) of Sherpur on the discussion panel.

The discussants suggested that specific guidelines be formulated to mobilise local resources to minimise dependence for funds on the government.

Elections to the gram sarkar, the

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**Ex-BUET teacher
roughed up
at Motijheel**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A former teacher of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and now chairman of a private shipbuilding company was beaten up and critically injured allegedly by top officials of the East West Property Development Limited (EWPDL) at its Motijheel office in the city.

The incident took place when he went to the EWPDL office on Monday to claim his company's dues for building some vessels for the property developer.

Dr Abdullah Bari, a former teacher of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering department of the BUET, was admitted to a city clinic with multiple injuries in his head and other parts of his body. His condition is 'critical', doctors at the clinic said.

The EWPDL officials also beat up seven staff of his office as they tried to save him from assault. They were admitted to different hospitals in the city.

According to sources, Dr Bari, chairman of Ananda Group, had

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**30 injured as
villagers clash
in Magura**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 30 people were injured, eight of them seriously, in a clash between two rival groups of villagers at village Boro-sholor in Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

Two houses were also damaged during the clash.

Witnesses said, two rival groups one led by Lal Mian and the other by Sayed Molla clashed over establishment of their supremacy at the village.

Both the groups used lethal weapons during the clash that continued for half an hour.

The seriously injured identified as Nayeab Ali, 35, Jamal Hossain, 22, Rabeya, 27, Alamgir, 24, Maju Bibi, 50, Azizur Rahman, 35, Minhaz, 25 and Shukur Ali, 30, were admitted to Magura Sadar hospital.

No case was lodged in this regard till filing of this report at 5 pm yesterday.

**3 dacoits held
after gunfight
at Dhanmondi**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three alleged dacoits were arrested and a revolver and some crackers were recovered from their possession after an exchange of fire between the gang and a team of detective police in the city's Dhanmondi residential area yesterday.

Three police personnel and a gang member were injured in the incident.

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More perks for NRBs

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has decided to provide some extra facilities to families and children of more than 25 lakh Bangladeshi expatriates.

The decision was taken to increase the flow of expatriates' remittances to the country.

The facilities include adequate housing plots, quota in educational institutions, scholarships and separate pension schemes.

Sources in the expatriate welfare and overseas employment ministry said that a number of meetings were held with the ministries concerned, including the finance ministry.

The finance ministry approved a number of finance-related programmes and asked the expatriate ministry to begin the procedure.

"We look forward to getting more than Tk 400 crore from the housing plots for the expatriates," State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and

Overseas Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam told The Daily Star.

The government is also thinking of allocating some flats built for the NAM summit to the expatriates.

"There is nothing wrong with giving them the unsold flats," he reasoned.

Around 4,000 housing plots in the new projects of Rajuk have been earmarked for the expatriates, said the sources.

Earlier, the government decided on allocating about 1,000 housing plots under Rajuk's Purbanchal project to the Bangladeshi expatriates.

Since around 4,000 expatriates applied, the government increased the number of plots.

Rajuk will take the final decision upon approval from the housing and public works ministry, sources said.

The expatriate ministry also submitted a proposal to the education ministry to secure a quota for children of expatriates in all promi-

nent institutions like the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), medical colleges, technical institutes and universities.

The ministry also proposed scholarships to be allocated from the wage earners welfare funds.

Cumaru Islam regretted that the wage earners funds were previously misused. The government now wants to use them properly for Bangladeshis, he said.

The overseas pension scheme trust under the Bureau of Manpower Export and Overseas Employment will organise the pension schemes in three terms -- of five, ten and 15 years.

According to the expatriate ministry, 25.88 lakh Bangladeshis living in 35 countries around the world have sent a remittance of US\$1.8 billion over the first eight months of this year.

**AL leader
slaughtered
in Sirajganj**

UNB, Sirajganj

Armed miscreants slaughtered former upazila chairman and vice president of Kamarkhand upazila Awami League ATM Firoj Master on Monday night.

Police said Firoj Master of Raidaulatpur village came under attack by the assailants at about 10:30 pm near a bridge adjacent to his residence.

Police recovered the body yesterday morning and sent it to sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.

The motive behind the killing could not be known. A case was filed with Kamarkhand police station.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 18		6-01 pm
Sept 19	5-45 am	

Prayer Timings		
Sept 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-06	6-10
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation