

Titas CBA leader, two others killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified gunmen shot dead a supervisor of the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited at Postagola in Shyampur in the city yesterday.

Police and hospital sources said Mohsin Reza Chowdhury, 35, a supervisor of a Titas office in Golapbagh in Demra, was returning home in a black car after work. He was also the finance secretary of the Collective Bargaining Agency (CBA) of Titas.

Driver of the car, Raju Ahmed, 25, was also shot in the head and back during the attack.

As soon as his car reached Postagola at about 5:00pm, three youngsters fired at random at Reza and Raju.

The sources said at least 13 bullets hit Reza in different parts of his body. The gunmen left Reza on the spot for dead.

Sub-inspector of the Shyampur Police Station Abdul Hai took the victims to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the on-duty doctors declared Reza dead at about 5:55pm. Raju was undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

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Trial of Bappi killing begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Trial of the sensational Bappi abduction and murder case began yesterday at the Third Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka.

The first prosecution witness in the case and the victim's father, Alfu Miah, gave his deposition and was cross-examined by lawyers for the five accused.

The court then adjourned the hearing till September 28.

In his deposition, Alfu Miah told the court that his only son Bappi, 8, who was a student of class three at Armentola Government High School in the city, returned from school at about 11 am on August 5 and had his meal. About 15 minutes later, Bappi's maternal cousin Shahidul Alam Shipon came and talked to him (Bappi) inside a room, closing its door. At about noon, Shipon took Bappi out of the house on some plea. As he (Bappi) did not return home for about two hours, "we began to look for him," the witness said.

He said that after some time, two boys including one Emdadul Haque from the locality "informed us that they saw Bappi sitting in a rickshaw near Babu Bazar Bridge. They asked him why he was there alone, but he replied that he was not alone and his maternal cousin Shipon was with him."

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Home ministry asked to prepare summary of Bari report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has been asked to prepare a summary of the judicial probe report on sensational bomb attacks during the past Awami League (AL) rule and recommend actions.

A meeting of a select group of ministers yesterday reviewed the controversy over the report submitted to the government last week by the judicial commission headed by former Supreme Court Judge Abdul Bari Sarkar.

The commission blamed former prime minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina and some of her party colleagues for six of the seven bomb attacks in the second half of the AL rule.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister

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Gas export decision by year-end

STAR REPORT

The government will decide on the pipeline export of gas by the year-end.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is working on a plan so that the government can take a decision by October, highly placed sources said.

But other sources have said any decision would not be possible before November, if the issue is discussed in the House -- as promised by the prime minister upon submission of reports by the national committees on gas reserve and utilisation last month.

The sources added that the next parliamentary session is unlikely before the last week of October.

"I don't think we can reach any decision before December," a policymaker told The Daily Star yesterday.

Although policymakers are yet to decide whether the issue should be discussed in parliament, they favour public discourses on the issue, especially with the business community and the civil society.

The energy and mineral resources ministry will make

a presentation to the prime minister on highlights of the reports by the two national committees and its own observations on utilisation of gas, with a comment that export from the future discoveries is the best option.

"We haven't sought time from the Prime Minister's Office. We are planning to make the presentation in the second week of October," AKM Mosharraf Hossain, state minister for petroleum and mineral resources, told The Daily Star Tuesday.

Some important ministers will also be invited to the presentation, the sources added.

If the ministry gets nod from the prime minister, it may place a proposal on the issue to the cabinet at the end of October, the highly placed sources said.

Asked when the government will decide on gas export Mosharraf said, "I think we should take the decision by October."

He thinks the decision should be taken as early as possible so that international oil companies (IOCs) feel encouraged to go for fresh drillings and possible buyers

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NGO committee seeks talks on new guideline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National NGO Co-ordination Committee has urged the government to sit with the representatives of the NGO community before finalising the proposed guideline for regulating the NGO sector.

A press release signed by its Member Secretary Shamsul Huda yesterday called upon the government to take immediate steps for opening discussion about the recommendations of the proposed guidelines for the NGO sector.

Referring a recent assurance given by the LGRD minister to the co-ordination committee, it further hoped that the government would go ahead as per the minister's assurance for holding discussion with the representatives of the NGO sector.

Nepal troops kill 82 Maoists

AFP, Kathmandu

At least 82 Maoist rebels have been killed in clashes with security forces in Nepal, sources and officials said yesterday.

Most of the deaths came overnight in the Maoist stronghold area of Rolpa, 380 kilometres off Kathmandu, an army source said.

"We have reports of deaths of about 75 Maoists in clashes with army security personnel on Tuesday night," he said.

"The bodies of about 35 Maoist terrorists were recovered at Pawang village in Rolpa district and villager reports said about 40 Maoist bodies were carried away by their colleagues in bamboo baskets."

The Nepali-language daily Nepal Samacharpatra (Nepal Newspaper) said as many as 100 rebels and

three army personnel had been killed in the clash, but there was no official confirmation of this.

In another clash Tuesday in the Dadheldhura district, 485 kilometres southwest of Kathmandu, home ministry officials said a high level Maoist commander Pushkar Sharma was killed by security forces, along with six other rebels.

The rebels have been fighting for a communist republic in Nepal since 1996 and the insurgency has so far claimed around 4,900 lives.

The army was sent in to fight the rebels for the first time in November last year, when a state of emergency was imposed to crack down on the insurgency.

The emergency lapsed on August 28 and has not been reimposed by the government because parliamentary elections are due to be held on November 13.

Cancellation of SSA project may affect US FDI, says Peters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters has said that future investment in Bangladesh from her country could be threatened if the American company, Stevedoring Services Association, is not allowed to build its proposed private container port in Chittagong.

The SSA is facing local resistance to its plan regarding the installation of a \$550 million dollar container port at Patenga here.

Talking exclusively to this correspondent during her stay in the port city during the American week, Mary Ann Peters said "future investments in Bangladesh by American companies might be threatened if the plan for the SSA port is not

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PHOTO: STAR

Although there is a footbridge at Fulbaria, so is there a request notice to use it. But who cares? People prefer to cross the road at will risking their lives and making vehicular movement difficult.

Squeezing millions out of wayside vendors

Police use 'linemen' to collect tolls from vendors

STAR REPORT

Police garner lakhs of taka every day from sidewalk vendors, staying behind the scenes.

Each wayside shopping spot in the city has a toll-taker called 'lineman' hand-picked by police from local small traders or gangsters.

To keep toll collection steady, police fix the amount of money and ask the linemen to hand it over to the designated person or the respective police station. Usually, the linemen collect more than they pay the policemen.

Spot visits by The Daily Star have revealed that hawkers have to pay the linemen tolls every day, no matter how much they earn from sales.

The illegally collected tolls get channelled up to top police officials, with a share kept aside for local political leaders and criminals who shelter the toll-takers, said hawkers.

A strong criminal gang is thriving on this shady practice and the whole affair is wrapped in intimidation. If any hawker refuses to pay tolls, police arrive on the spot and threaten him with ouster from the place, said a seller on the western side of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque, who pays Tk 40 a day to a young lineman.

Police deployed seven linemen in the Baitul Mukarram Mosque area, said sources.

Six linemen control the Farmgate area home to 800 small traders and hawkers who sell various products from needle to shirt to the consumers of the low-income

bracket.

Rab and Kadam Ali collect tolls from the hawkers on the Indra Road, Shah Alam and Hossain from the Farmview Super Market and Ananda Cinema Hall, Jahangir from the Al Razi Hospital and Shamsu from in front of the Holy Cross School and College, hawkers alleged.

The vendors with a profit of up to Tk 500 a day have to pay up to Tk 150 in tolls each.

Usually, the hawkers like jerkin seller or shoeshine boy pay the lineman between Tk 10 and 20 and small traders like fruit vendor between Tk 30 and 150.

The linemen are basically small traders and collect tolls for the Tejaon Police Station and the Farmgate police outpost. They are sheltered by a local BNP leader named Dulal, they alleged.

"We run our shops on footpaths, which is illegal...and we have to pay tolls if we want to continue," reasoned a vendor.

Mahbub, who sells cosmetic products in front of the Tejaon College, said he makes a profit of Tk 170 a day on the Tk 1,000 sale and pays Tk 100 in tolls to the lineman.

Asked how much he collects from the hawkers, Rab, the lineman controlling the Indra Road, said, "I have never taken tolls."

Rab said the police of the Tejaon outpost come to

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'Massive' union parishad reforms planned

Move to make system dynamic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned massive reforms to make union parishad, the oldest local government structure in the subcontinent, a more effective, dynamic and stable body and further empower it as a democratic institution.

Sources said the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives in consultation with different bodies has finalised a series of recommendations for 'capacity building' so that the lowest tier of local government can be instrumental in achieving sustainable development of the rural areas.

Strengthening of the four-tier local government was one of the vital election pledges of the BNP

government, they pointed out.

Officials said the LGRD ministry is now taking steps to strengthen all local bodies, particularly the union parishad (UP) because it is the 'root' of other local bodies.

As instructed by LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) has prepared a set of recommendations to provide training to UP chairmen, members and secretaries for 'capacity building.'

A high level meeting at the LGRD ministry chaired by Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday reviewed the recommendations and formed a committee to finalise a syllabus and a training programme. The committee comprises heads of the National Institute of Local Government

(NILG) in the capital, the Rural Development Academy (RDA) in Bogra and the BARD in Comilla and officials concerned of the LGRD ministry.

Director General of the BARD Sekandar Ali Mondol presented a study report on local government at the meeting.

The meeting decided that some 4,484 UP secretaries would be given training to enhance their capacity. Secretaries are the only permanent staff of the UPs and thus they need to develop their skill so that they can run the UP office properly and help the elected UP leaders continue development activities in their respective areas, it noted.

Talking to reporters, the LGRD minister said the government has

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Dicey polythene traders beat up policemen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Polythene traders at Chawkbazar in the city yesterday chased a police team, damaged several and beat up a Bangladesh Television (BTV) crew when the law enforcers raided a shop to seize banned polythene items.

Acting on a tip-off, the police team along with a magistrate went to a shop owned by one Imran to seize polythene products. A BTV camera crew accompanied the law enforcers for video footage.

Seeing the police, the traders ganged up and chased the policemen, who managed to flee the area without being hurt. The magistrate also managed to get away from the angry traders.

However, the traders took away a camera from the BTV team and assaulted an assistant camera crew, Helaluddin. They snatched also took away a flash-gun.

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'9-shooter' Babul quizzed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Notorious criminal 'Ziku' Babul alias 'Nine-shooter Lito' was interrogated by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) yesterday, police sources said.

Kotwali Police said Babul was taken to the Special Branch (SB) office at Malibagh yesterday morning where officials of the JIC questioned him from 10:00am to 5:00pm about his political connection and criminal activities.

He was taken back to the Kotwali Police Station in the evening.

Sources said some political leaders from the opposition might also be questioned following the

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Action on hall incident after DU probe report

New vice-chancellor tells The Daily Star

SHAMEEM MAHMUD

Newly appointed Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University (DU) Professor SMA Faiz said the university authorities would reach a decision regarding the persons accused in the Shamsunnahar Hall incident after getting a report from the probe body formed by the university syndicate.

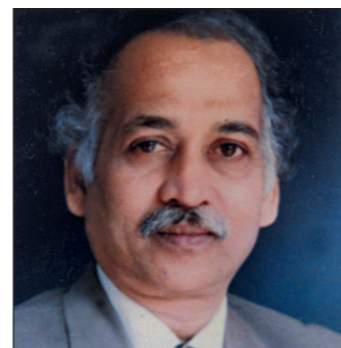
Termining the police atrocities on Shamsunnahar Hall residents 'unfortunate', Prof. Faiz said, "The university probe body is now looking into the incident and will submit a report soon," he said while talking to

The Daily Star on Tuesday.

Answering to a query on administrative actions against those held responsible by the judicial inquiry commission for the Shamsunnahar Hall incident, Prof. Faiz said, "We have yet to get the final report of the judicial inquiry commission formed by the government. However, we obtained some findings and recommendations of the commission through newspapers."

However, administrative actions cannot be taken on the basis of press reports only, he said.

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Professor SMA Faiz

| | Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| Sept 26 | | 5-54 pm |
| Sept 25 | 5-48 am | |

| Prayer Timings | | |
|----------------|-------|--------|
| Sept 26 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-40 | 5-15 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 4-30 | 4-45 |
| Maghrib | 6-01 | 6-05 |
| Esha | 7-45 | 8-15 |

Source: Islamic Foundation