

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781 VOL. XII No. 227 DHAKA FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, 2002 BHADRA 22, 1409 BS ZAMADUIS SANI 27, 1423 HIJRI 20 PAGES PLUS MAGAZINE PRICE: TK. 10.00

www.dailystarnews.com

inside BUSINESS PAGE

Govt under fire for apathy to local business interest

Speakers at a discussion yesterday came down heavily on the government for liberalising the market without protecting local industries.....SEE PAGE 7

Trimatrik brings 1971 in 3D



computer game

Nineteen seventy-one is the setting. You are a freedom fighter and your mission is to liberate your motherland. And

One more death in army custody

STAR REPORT

A suspected criminal whom army picked up on Wednesday and interrogated at an army camp died at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday, the eighth day of the countrywide anti-crime crackdown.

The victim is Nazmul Islam Milon, 40, son of Abdur Rahman Pachu Biswas and a gatekeeper of Barnali Cinema Hall at Kadamtala in Rajshahi city. An army team picked up Milon from the cinema hall Wednesday afternoon. He was a close associate of Ward Commissioner Rezaunabi Al Mamun.

Sources quoted the doctors as saying that the victim died of heart attack. He was taken to the hospital at around 11.30pm.

The latest death raised the casualty figure in army custody to seven since the start of the drive on October 17.

Family members said the body bore marks of injuries including cuts in both arms apparently due to physical torture during the interrogation.

Milon's father claimed himself and his son to be ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists. According to police, Milon was facing at least five criminal charges including two for theft and mugging. They added that a few months ago he happened to be the second-in-command of the city's top listed crime cartel 'Gama group'.

An unnatural death case has been filed with the Rajpara Police Station in this connection. Rajpara police handed over

Milon's body to his family yesterday morning after autopsy at dawn by a three-member medical board headed by Dr Ashraf Alam, head of the Forensic Department of the RMCH.

Meanwhile, at least 20 people were injured as army clubbed a crowd Wednesday night when a bomb went off in front of an army camp at the Rajshahi Stadium. A reporter of a local daily, Sonali Sangsad, was also injured during the army action. He was taken to the RMCH.

In the capital, army conducted raids in the city yesterday including in city hotels and a shopping complex at Hatirpool and arrested an unspecified number of people.

Army last night was reportedly conducting a raid on the Defence

Army begins probe into deaths

STAR REPORT

The army has taken initiatives to prevent further deaths or human rights violations in their custody, sources said.

Also, internal investigations are underway against commanders of units, under whose custody seven persons died in different places since the countrywide crackdown on criminals called Operation Clean Heart began eight days ago. The Gaibandha and Rajshahi unit commanders could be withdrawn very soon, a source said.

While the deaths were officially attributed to 'heart failure', the army command has instructed all its teams involved in the drive to handle the arrested carefully.

There is specific instruction that there should not be "any more deaths in army custody", said a source.

The deaths are learned to have infuriated the army command. The general officers commanding (GOCs) are now inspecting every army camp under their command to make sure the troops do not use brute force during the drive.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

Traffic on a road in the city's Gulistan area looks thin due to the half-day hartal jointly enforced yesterday by the Dhaka city unit of Awami League and the Jubo League in protest at the arrest of Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

Graft case against Hasina Charge framing hearing adjourned

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Special Court for Dhaka Division, yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge-framing against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and two others, in a graft case.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq adjourned the hearing till November 14 following a time petition by the defence lawyers. The two other accused are former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and former principal secretary to Hasina Dr SA Samad.

In the case filed with Tejgaon thana, it has been alleged that Sheikh Hasina in connivance with former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former principal secretary Dr S A Samad and BEPZA Executive Chairman Brigadier General M A B Siddiq Talukder unnecessarily employed a lobbyist in the United States for garment industries that lost the country Tk 2.1 crore.

Abdullah-al-Zahid, an officer of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC), filed the case against Hasina and three others on December 11 last year.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted the charge sheet against Hasina and two others on June 18, this year.

Siddiq Talukder's name was dropped from the charge sheet as the allegation against him was not proved.

All the three accused, including Hasina, are now on bail.

Chechen rebels storm Moscow theatre, hold 700 hostage

Withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya demanded

AFP, REUTERS, Moscow

Chechen separatist guerrillas threatened to shoot or blow up 700 hostages in a Moscow theatre yesterday unless Russia pulled its troops out of their homeland.

The group of about 40, including masked women with explosives strapped to their bodies, burst in on Wednesday night firing into the air and shouting, "Stop the war in Chechnya."

The radio station Ekho Moskvyy quoted child heart specialist Maria Shkolnikova as telling it from inside the theatre: "They are saying 'You have been sitting here for 10 hours and your government has done nothing to secure your release.' The main thing is that troops must be



pulled out or they will start shooting people."

Earlier, Shkolnikova told Reuters, also by mobile phone: "A huge amount of explosives have been laid through the place."

She said explosives had been laid in passageways and on seats and even attached to hostages themselves.

Officials said some 60 foreigners

were among the captives. Meanwhile, ITAR-TASS news agency quoted a police official as saying Chechen rebels have shot a woman dead.

But Russian officials from a crisis unit dealing with the hostage taking did not officially confirm the report, ITAR-TASS said, and one of the rebels, who said his name was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Amnesty voices concern at death, torture in custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International yesterday urged the government to immediately investigate all allegations of death and torture in army and police custody since the launch of an anti-crime drive on October 17.

"The government must bring to justice any army or police personnel involved in torture of detainees and clarify the legal status of the army's involvement in arrests of civilians," said an Amnesty International statement.

Over 2,000 people have been arrested and at least five people have died in custody since the government called out the army for 'assistance' in the drive known as "Operation Clean Heart", the statement said.

More than a dozen detainees were sent to hospital with severe injuries reportedly caused by beatings in army custody. They include members of both the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the opposition Awami League (AL).

For example, Abul Khair Ratan died in custody from torture after his arrest on 18 October. Yakub Ali and Jahangir Alam also died in custody.

The home ministry said they died from cardiac arrest but family members believe they were tortured to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Saber charged with attack on Khaleda's car

Remand extended for three days; torture alleged

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury has been shown arrested in a case filed with Savar police station in connection with the attack on a motorcade of the then opposition leader Khaleda Zia on June 17 last year.

Ramna police produced Saber before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Dhaka at about 4:45pm yesterday in connection with the case. The court placed him on three days' remand.

He was produced in the court on expiry of two days' remand granted earlier in connection with a case filed under Section 54 of CrPC.

Saber, political secretary to the AL President and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, alleged in the court yesterday that he was 'tortured physically and mentally in custody during interrogation.'

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Hartal passes off peacefully

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The half-day hartal enforced by main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday passed off peacefully in the capital amid tight security.

Police on Bangabandhu Avenue, however, clubbed a peaceful Jubo Mohila League procession injuring two of its leaders, Apu Ukil and Tuhin.

With riot police virtually besieging the AL central office and army men patrolling the city streets, the hartal was virtually confined within the Bangabandhu Avenue, Ramna Bhaban and Pir Yemeni Market areas where the AL headquarters is located.

Most modes of transports plied the streets in other areas of the capital while shops and business establishments were open as usual as there were hardly any pickets to enforce the general strike.

Police picked up two people on charge of troublemaking while some

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4