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Wife and son of Swapan Goswami, who was gunned down yesterday, mourn the slain Government Laboratory High School teacher.

Govt Lab School teacher slain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants shot dead a teacher of the Government Laboratory High School near his residence at the North Road in the city's Bhutergoli area yesterday morning.

Swapan Goswami left for school at about 9:00am and stopped in front of a roadside shop about 50 yards from his residence to buy cigarettes when two miscreants shot him in the head, chest and abdomen from close range, witnesses said.

The teacher, known to students and guardians to be "very polite and possibly the best in the school", collapsed on a pool of blood. He died while being taken to nearby Central Hospital.

The two killers, one wearing a lungi and the other trousers, fired five shots and fled towards Hatirpool, the witnesses said.

The two men were moving in the area since morning. "They shot the teacher when he stopped to buy cigarette at Shikder Store, opposite to Baitul Aksa mosque," said a man who runs a stationary shop there.

A heart-rending scene was created when the body was taken to the school at about 12:30 pm after autopsy at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Hundreds of students and their guardians crowded the school,

some of them seen weeping. The school authorities called police and at one stage locked the gate to control streams of aggrieved and agitated students, guardians and other people.

They snatched away two banners as the crowd was preparing to bring out a mourning procession. At this, the students chanted slogans against the school authorities.

Eventually, the students and guardians brought out a procession and paraded some city streets, chanting slogans and demanding arrest and trial of the killers.

Swapan's cousin Rinku said, "He (Swapan) left hurriedly after breakfast as school examinations were scheduled to start at 9:30am."

"After a while, one person came to the house and told me that one person was shot. I could not believe that my cousin was the victim. I went to the spot and found him lying in a pool of blood," said Rinku.

Swapan, along with his family and Rinku had gone to his village home at Kollyandipara in Chandpur to celebrate Durga Puja. They returned Dhaka leaving Swapan's wife Shimla Goswami and their only son, three-year-old Arnab, at her father's house in Feni.

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Death toll in custody now 9 Army chief visits camps in Bogra, Pabna, Sirajganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A BNP leader and a suspected criminal died during army interrogation, raising the number of death in army custody to nine since the countrywide crackdown on criminals began on October 17.

Abdul Aziz Sardar, a former chairman of the Pangsha municipality and acting general secretary of the local BNP, died at a Rajbari army camp while Khorshed Alam, a labourer, at Feni.

Sardar was picked up from his Moishala residence with five others Thursday night. The next day, the army took the 52-year-old to several places to give location to criminal hideouts and weapons caches. As no arms could be recovered and criminals arrested, the troops beat Sardar up in presence of local people.

As the BNP leader fell sick Friday night, he was sent to the Rajbari Sadar Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead. Later, the autopsy was carried at the hospital in presence of army. The family members were not allowed to see Sardar's body.

Alam was arrested with three others for suspected involvement in criminal activities in front of the Islamia Hospital at Chowmuhuni. Later, the 35-year-old labourer was handed over to the Begumganj police in critical condition. He was first sent to the Bazra Hospital and then to Noakhali Sadar

Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Army sources, however, claimed that Alam had died in police custody and was a member of an inter-district gang involved in robbery.

Meanwhile, Chief of Army Staff Lieutenant General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday visited several army camps in Bogra, Pabna and Sirajganj. He also exchanged views with local administration, army officials and journalists.

Deployment of army was in no way a proof that the government's helplessness in the face of rising crime and violence, the army chief said.

He also brushed aside suggestions the government agencies engaged in law enforcement had failed to curb crime.

In the capital yesterday, the army arrested Jahangir, an accomplice of Kilar Abbas, one of the 23 most wanted criminals. Also picked up was an accomplice of Langra Helal. He was later taken to the Science Laboratory army camp.

The army arrested a criminal named Mister and handed him over to Lalbagh police station. Two revolvers were seized from his possession.

Another army team arrested listed criminals Abed and Javed from the old town and took them to the camp at the Dhaka University Gymnasium. The arrested are involved in more than 20 cases.

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Press briefing out, fax messages in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry has finally suspended its daily press briefing on 'Operation Clean Heart' as it is failing to provide the media adequate up to date information on the operation.

Ministry officials however said yesterday that the briefing would resume soon with 'complete information'. Till then, the ministry will send information on the army drive to the press through fax messages, they said.

As on previous days, Home Ministry Joint Secretary (Political) Kamaluddin Ahmed and coordinator of the Monitoring Cell Wahiduzzaman avoided most of the newsmen's questions during yester-

day's briefing.

They said there would not be further daily briefing as the ministry was unable to give 'instant replies' to questions. Newsmen would be kept informed through fax messages.

If any 'extra information' is to be shared, the ministry will hold press conference, they said.

The officials expressed their ignorance when asked if the home ministry had arranged release of Sherpur BNP leader Jane Alam Khoka by withdrawing his detention order.

They also could not explain why ward commissioner Khaja Habib of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) was released though he was arrested with arms.

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Bloody raid ends theatre siege

67 hostages, most Chechen rebels killed



Russian special forces carry out the hostages during the storming of the Moscow theatre building captured by Chechen separatists yesterday. The pre-dawn raid left 67 hostages and most of their Chechen captors killed.

REUTERS, MOSCOW

Russian special forces stormed a besieged Moscow theatre yesterday in a pre-dawn raid that left 67 hostages dead along with most of their Chechen captors.

More than 750 other hostages, held since Wednesday by the heavily armed Muslim guerrillas, were rescued, including all the children, Deputy Interior Minister Vladimir Vasilyev said. Nearly all the rebels were killed - 34 of died, many of them possibly immobilised by a knockout gas before troops moved in.

"We saved more than 750 people... 67 were lost," Vasilyev told reporters outside the theatre, where a popular and glitzy musical show had been brutally interrupted three days earlier.

A doctor from Moscow's main emergency hospital said he was treating 42 patients for gas poisoning, supporting reports that security forces had pumped knockout fumes into the theatre.

Officials said troops forced their way into the theatre after rebels, some women with explosives wrapped around them, executed two male hostages to press their demand that Russia pull its troops out of their separatist southern homeland.

A woman hostage was killed earlier in the siege while trying to escape. Officials gave no details of other dead hostages but Australian and British

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PM for aggressive entrepreneurship

DCCI Business Award 2002 goes to GQ Ball Pen, Janata Jute Mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has urged entrepreneurs in the country to come forward more aggressively to help achieve the desired goal of national development and reminded them that they have to compete in the changing global trade and business scenario.

Privatisation programme has been strengthened, she mentioned and hoped entrepreneurs would utilise the facilities provided under it and invest in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to increase export.

The PM was speaking as chief guest at a function for handing over the DCCI Business Award 2002 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship

Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Janata Jute Mills Ltd and GQ Ball Pen Industries Ltd have got the DCCI Business Award 2002 as Exporter of the Year and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) of the Year respectively.

Khaleda said investment and production must be increased and at the same time it has to be seen that goods are produced keeping in view the people's taste and the demand for those both at home and abroad. "Employment opportunities must be created and it is not possible without industrial development," she added.

Besides establishing export processing zones, the government

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Govt interfering in army drive: AL

'Arrested BNP men being freed under pressure'

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League presidium yesterday noted with grave concern that the anti-crime army operation was getting bogged down in what they said petty party interest of the government and its interference.

A meeting of the main opposition party urged the government to stop "illegal interference" in the army operation and allow the troops to conduct the anti-crime drives neutrally honoring the rule of law, Constitution and human rights.

"The people of the country are watching with great concern that wherever army catches armed criminals of the ruling party with illegal weapons and drugs, the arrested are released immediately under illegal pressure of the government," it said.

In the emergency meeting at the party's Dhanmondi office, with AL acting president Abdus Samad Azad in the chair, the presidium mentioned the release of Sherpur (Bogra) Thana BNP president Jan-e-

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