BCL men loot money, gold from AL leader's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two activists of Chhatra League stormed into the house of Sunamganj district Awami League acting general secretary Nurul Huda Mukut Saturday night and took away money and gold.

Two BCL activists entered the house at about 10pm and demanded money from Mukut's mother. As she refused to give in to their demand, the BCL activists took the key of almirah from her at gunpoint and looted money and 25 tolas of gold ornaments.

The BCL activists fled the scene leaving behind a pistol.

At leader Mukut was not at the house during the incident.

Later, on information, police recovered the pistol along with two bullets from the house.

Badrul Huda Bakul, brother of Mukut, filed two separate cases with Sadar police station accusing the BCL activists Shibbir and Zia.

Four female FFs to be honoured today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee will honour four Birangona Muktijoddhas (female freedom fighters of the Liberation War) today who underwent torture in the hands of the Pakistan occupation forces and their collaborators in 1971, said a press release yester-

The Birangonas, who are now living under extremely poor conditions, were identified as Halima Parveen. Rokeva Khatoon and Fatema Khatoon of Jessore, and Nazma Begum of Gopalganj.

These four valiant daughters of the soil have never received any assistance from the government other than a certificate attesting to their participation in the Liberation War, said the press release.

The committee, which has long been engaged in identifying collaborators of the Pakistan Army, discovered the four women while investigating war-related documents.

The committee will accord a reception to the four Birangona Muktijoddhas today and announce a rehabilitation programme for them. A discussion meeting will follow the reception.

6 hurt as JCD factions clash on RU campus

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least six persons were injured in a clash between two factions of JCD over formation of a full-fledged RU committee of the BNP-backed student body yesterday afternoon.

Earlier in the morning, the council meeting of JCD Rajshahi University unit ended in a chaos and slogans against each other in presence of Nazimuddin Alam MP and other central leaders of the student

Soon after their departure, JCD Ujjal group attacked Simul and Likhon group that led to the clash between the two rival factions.

New committee could not be formed because of factional rivalry. A tense situation was prevailing



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the newly appointed South Korean Ambassador Kyu Hyung Lee are at a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers **leave Sierra Leone**

Thousands of people, many in tears, lined the road to Freetown's airport on Saturday to bid farewell to the first large contingent of United Nations peacekeepers to leave war-scarred Sierra Leone.

Some 450 Bangladeshi troops, stationed in the West African nation for almost two years as part of the UN's 17,400 strong mission, left Lungi International Airport on a special flight.

A smaller group of some 150 Nigerian soldiers left without fanfare on Friday, the UN said.

The United Nations Security Council gave the green light in September for a gradual withdrawal of peacekeepers as stability is restored after a decade of brutal "We are leaving with mixed

feelings as we have been with the

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University

Teachers' Association (JUTA)

yesterday announced postpone-

ment of its indefinite strike following

assurance by university authorities

to meet its four-point demand at a

negotiation with the teachers' asso-

which was enforced on October 23.

will go into effect from today.

The postponement of the strike,

The decision was taken at a

general meeting convened by the

JUTA executive committee in the

morning as the strike entered its

12th day yesterday. Held at the

Central Cafeteria Lounge, the

meeting was attended by 113 teach-

ers of the university who unani-

According to the assurance

given by the university authorities.

elections to the syndicate, dean's

office, academic council and

finance committee will be held on

November 18. Also, no new teach-

mously endorsed the decision.

people of Sierra Leone for so long, said Bangladeshi Major-General Ahmed Tarique

The Bangladeshi troops had been involved not only in security but also in building mosques and schools in the Freetown area. They also provided free medical care to many local residents.

"I am crying for my boyfriend." said 25-year-old Hawa Bangura. "For nine months he has been responsible for me and my two children. I am going to miss him."

The peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone is the UN's largest. It has been in place since October

Some 4,500 peacekeepers are to be pulled out in the next seven or eight months. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has proposed shrinking the mission to about 2,000 soldiers by the end of 2004. The civil war in the impoverished

letter would be sent to the chancel-

lor requesting his permission to hold

meeting yesterday, JUTA general

secretary Shamsul Alam Selim

however cautioned that the agita-

university authorities fail to fulfil their

regarding implementation of our

demands and depending on that.

we will decide our next course of

action at the next executive commit-

are expected to cast their votes in

the elections to the Jahangirnagar

University Syndicate, Finance

Committee, Academic Council and

Dean's Office that are scheduled to

be held at the Teachers' Club from

9:00am to 1:00pm on November 18.

Last date for submitting nomina-

Meanwhile, some 310 teachers

tee meeting," he added

"We will monitor their actions

Talking to journalists after the

the VC panel election

pledge in time.

JUTA postpones

indefinite strike

but diamond-rich country of 5.4 million pitted government forces against Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels.

The war, which killed up to 50,000 people, was notorious for its savagery. Rebel forces terrified the population by hacking off civilians' limbs, raping women and forcing children into combat. The RUF has since been trans-

special court has been set up with the UN to try about 20 ringleaders for war crimes. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in May after a

UN-led drive to disarm government

formed into a political party and a

militias and rebels Serious problems remain, however, including security in diamond-mining areas, high unemployment and poor prospects for

former combatants

item to India, various state govern-

ments impose various conditions

and high excise duties on the item

which increase the price and so the

delay in releasing items and export-

ers face huge loss because of lack

of proper warehouse facilities on the

Indian side to preserve goods,

the two neighbouring countries is

now over US\$ 1 billion in favour of

the other issues which came up for

discussion include checking illegal

trade and movement of contraband

items across the border, training of

customs officers and increasing

communication facilities between

According to competent sources,

the Bangladesh delegation at first

had tried to raise the issue of non-

tariff barriers and harassment on

Bangladeshi exporters. But it could

not be put on table due to strong

opposition by the Indian side that

said the issues were not on the

group of customs would take place

The follow-up meeting of the joint

the customs of the two countries.

According to meeting sources,

The annual trade gap between

according to exporters.

The Indian customs always

product loses competitiveness.

FROM PAGE 12

robbers also attacked Simanta Jewellery in the same bazaar and took away cash and gold worth about Tk 46,000 from the shop, said Customs talks shop-owner Gour Chandra Sarkar. Police took the cashier and night

guard of the bank into custody for interrogation. The superintendent of police in

Magura visited the spots. A case has been lodged with Sreepur Thana in this connection.

Detention

Awami League and its student front Chatra League brought out processions in some by-lanes during the hartal hours, defying a ban. The Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) banned rally, picketing, carrying of weapons, explosives, firearms and torch procession in the city with effect from 4 pm on Saturday under sections 29 and 85 of the Khulna Metropolitan Ordinance.

Meanwhile, arrested AL leader and former whip Mostafa Rashidi Shuja, has been sent to Rangpur district Jail, sources said.

Ward Commissioner Nurul Islam and Moazzem Rashidi Doja have been sent to Raishahi district jail.

Former ward commissioner Mozaffar Rashidi Reza and RNP activist Raia Biswas have been sent to Barisal district Jail while ward commissioner Anis Biswas has been sent to Pabna district Jail. They were arrested by army on October 17

Will recent gas finds reduce India's import dependence?

Will India's dependence on imported gas, including that proposed to be brought from Bangladesh, be reduced following the latest major reserves discovery by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), and acquisition by the ONGC's foreign arm in three oil and gas fields abroad?

The RIL, the largest private firm in the country, is expected to deliver in three to four years about 40 million standard cubic metres of gas per day from the Krishna-Godavari basin off the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, the chairman of the Rs 65,000 crore Reliance Group

The ONGC Videsh Limited has signed an agreement to acquire 25 per cent stake in an oil and gas field in Sudan for 720 million dollars from the Canadian company Talisman Energy. Besides, the ONGC Videsh Limited has also acquired part equities in Vietnam and Sakhalin

Bank,

Jewellerv

shop looted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A gang of armed robbers looted

nearly Tk 55,000 from Bangladesh

Krishi Bank (BKB) and Tk 46.000

worth of cash and gold from a jewel-

lery shop at Shachilapur Bazar in

Sreepur upazila of the district in the

Officials of BKB's Shachilapur

Bazar branch said an armed gang

numbering 20 to 25 broke open the

backdoor of the bank, tied up the

cashier and night guard, and took

After robbing the bank, the

away Tk 54.498 from the locker.

in Magura

early hours of vesterday.

field is expected to flow in by December this year. The total production will be 7.5 million standard cubic metres per day of which ONGC Videsh Limited's share will

India's total gas demand now stands at 150 million metric standard cubic metres (mmscm) and is expected to grow four times in next 25 years, according to Indian Energy Secretary B K Chaturvedi. At present, only 65mmscm of gas is

be 45 per cent.

Gas and Petronet companies.

Energy experts believe the Reliance's gas find may cut down the quantum of gas needed from the proposed pipeline gas from Bangladesh, which has been hanging fire in Dhaka, and Iran over which India has strong security concerns if the pipeline is laid overland through Pakistan.

True, the Reliance gas could be sold at 3.5 per dollars per million British thermal units as pooled rate

fertiliser and power plants to opt for gas instead of naptha in order to reduce running cost particularly if the LNG imported from abroad is costlier than gas from domestic

India being one of the biggest consumers of gas in the world, there has been a lot of talk about building pipelines from energy-rich Central Asian Republics through Pakistan in the west and off the coast of Bay of Bengal from Myanmar and Bangladesh. But given the major security issue and political sensitivity involved in these proposals, there is an element of uncertainty

The other side of the story is that it is estimated that even the gas find by Reliance will only be a small portion of the total demand India will have in the next five years. In that case the present discovery may not make much of a difference. But one thing experts agree is that it will bring down India's dependence on imports of gas.

News AnalysiS

One dies in Habiganj

available from domestic sources.

The Reliance can supply the gas it has discovered right up to West Bengal in the eastern part of India through the pipeline of state-owned Gas Authority of India Limited's infrastructure

The new gas find by the Reliance also may force a review of ongoing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) pro

Sadarghat launch terminal, and

recovered the LMG with two maga-

zines, six sophisticated pistols, one

revolver, one shotgun and 2054

bullets. The arms and ammunition

along with 569 bullets in the last 24

hours ending at 8 am yesterday. The

arms include eight pistols, a revolver,

that army raided the residence of one

Farida Banu, a girlfriend of 'listed

terrorist' Mainul at Nanupur in

Fatikchhari at about 9.00am and

recovered the AK47 rifle, hidden in

Mainul, an activist of Bangladesh

AK47 rifle, along with one M-16 rifle

and a huge quantity of ammunition

Chhatra League (BCL), escaped.

Peres quits

Sharon govt

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon

Peres submitted his resignation late

Wednesday, shortly after the head

of his Labour Party, Defence

Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer, also

Minister Matan Vilnai likewise quit

from the coalition government of

Sharon after talks to thrash out a

compromise on a 2003 austerity

College student

in Rangamati

BSS, DHAKA

murder: One held

Police yesterday arrested a youth for

his alleged involvement in the killing

The arrested person was identi-

Apu Mahajan, 18, a student of

Rangamati Government College was

brutally beaten up on October 14. He

Rangamati General Hospital follow-

Schoolteacher

of college student Apu Mahajan.

fied as Bimal Biswas, 30.

At the same time, Culture

quit, officials said.

budget failed, they said.

One Shahin was arrested but

Earlier, troops recovered one

The army seized 30 firearms

Our Chittagong bureau reported

were contained in a sack.

17 shotguns and a pipe gun.

the kitchen ceiling.

same quantum. But then, the government has also indicated that subsidies on gas would be slashed. The price of imported LNG

as was indicated by the Indian

government as against the present

subsidised rate of 2.8 dollars for the

supplied by even state-owned Petronet is likely to be higher than the domestic gas. The domestic gas

from Fatikchhari on Thursday last.

Troops also raided Sher Shah

Colony and arrested alleged terror-

ists Mainuddin. One LG, two 3-0-3

rifles and five bullets were recovered

smuggler, from Dider Market under

Kotwali thana in the early hours of

Our Bogra Correspondent

Army arrested Sona Babu. a

during the raid.

vesterday.

Graft case: Hearing on charge framing against Nasim, 20 others Nov 21

The Special Court for Dhaka Division, vesterday fixed November 21 for hearing on charge-framing against former home minister Mohammad Nasim and 20 others in

connection with a graft case. reported that nine alleged criminals including some 'listed' ones were arrested from different parts of the placed before him. town on Saturday night and handed

over to police. Police produced them before court vesterday. The court sent them

Meanwhile, army released Bogra district BNP joint secretary Ali Azgar Hena and two party activists Rumon and Titu on Saturday night after interrogation. They were arrested from Jaleswaritola area in the eve-

Our Netrokona Correspondent said army yesterday arrested general secretary of Netrokona Poura Awami League Habibur Rahman Ratan, an alleged godfather of a local gang known as 'engine Bahini'. Army raided Katti area of the town and arrested Ratan. Army also arrested three 'listed' criminals from the town.

Our Jhenidah Correspondent said army arrested five persons from different parts of the district yesterday. They are Nayeb Ali, Sahad Uddin, Kalam and Shamsur and Sukkur Ali Mandal.

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq passed the order after the case was In the case filed with

Mohammadpur thana, it has been alleged that Nasim along with 20 others inflicted a loss of Tk 4.25 crore on the government through the sale of a one-bigha plot at Lalmatia to a phony society. Former home secretary Jagannath Dey, Chief Engineer Zuned Ahmed Deputy Commissioner of PWD Aminur Rahman, personal secretary to former home minister Abdul Malek, assistant commissioner Yakub Ali and other officials later took possession of the land.

Mohammad Saif Mahmud, an nspector of the Bureau of the Anti-Corruption (BAC) filed the case on December 11 last year accusing Nasim and 20 others

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet against Nasim and 20 others on June 16. Advocate Sahara Khatun

Habibur Rahman and Masud Ahmed Talukder appeared for the

Sutrapur double-murder

a murder case accusing 14 people including Rahid Hasan Sumon.

the case submitted a charge sheet against Sumon and 14 others on March 3, 2001. But the Chief Metropolitan

Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, ordered further investigation into the matter following a naraji petition submitted by Amin Miah.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police submitted the supplementary charge sheet to the CMM's Court against Sumon and 33 others on May 19 this year. In the charge sheet 40 people were shown as

prosecution witnesses. Of the charge-sheeted accused

Sumon, Sultanuddin Ahmed, Sajit Hasan Sujan and Ripon are now on bail while Nadim, Nahid, Muktar, Azizur Rahman, Liton, Ramzan, Chhoto Ramzan, Bashirul Islam Biaaut, Munna Kasai, Riazul Islam Tutul, Anisur Rahman, Sanaullah, Chhoto Sumon and Angul Kata Sumon in the jail custody.

The 15 others -- Shankar, Sanowar Hossain, Minto, Atikuzzaman Ramzan, Aziz, Chacha Anwar, Nazrul Islam, Monirul Islam, Zahangir, Khalil Ullah, Titu, Babul, Khaza, Chhoto Babul and Kana Babul -- have been absconding since the incident

-- I'll paraphrase -- 'hardly worth

getting out of bed for that, why don't

a secret address and had the chil-

dren been with her -- the two chil-

dren Brooklyn and Romeo -- to take

them too and to try and extort five

million in return for their safe recov-

ery," Kuttner told Sky News on

of the World: "If someone is that

mad -- that sick -- what can you do?.

for a while. I'm just so shocked."

kidnap Victoria Beckham.

Victoria Beckham told the News

"I don't think this will really sink in

Kuttner said his paper was

alerted around six weeks ago that a

gang of Romanian and Albanian

criminals had a plan to try and

gang and in fact found themselves

playing a central role with this group

of people, most of whom were

armed and extremely dangerous

"So much so that one of our

"Our reporters infiltrated the

"The plan was to hold Victoria at

we go for five million (pounds)?'

Beckham's wife

information about the planned Kohinoor said Shantanu and

"He (Jhony) gave us important

Rifat disclosed names of some persons including that of Jhony who were involved in the killing. Five more persons involved in the killing are yet to be nabbed, he

With Jhony, the number of persons arrested in connection with the

Of the arrested persons, Shantanu, who confessed involve-

ment in the killing is now in Dhaka

Central Jail while Tanvir Ahmed Apon is now on seven days remand. The two were student of class VII at Government Laboratory High

School while Rifat was a student of class X of New Model School. Monirul Islam, arrested from Bhutergoli in the city and Yunus, arrested from Chandpur, were

relieved from charges as their involvement in the murder could not be proved. Shantanu's father Assistant Secretary Moshiur Rahman,

arrested earlier, was given bail. Swapan, an English teacher of Government Laboratory High School in the city, was gunning

down near his residence at North

Road in Bhutergoli on October 26.

No charges have yet been brought against any of the nine, who are being held in police stations across central London.

Police acted after a tip-off from the News of the World newspaper, whose reporters had infiltrated a gang of Albanians and Romanians, originally to uncover an alleged art

"I'm in absolute and total shock

life out of me," she added. Following information from the News of the World, a special kidnap

unit on Saturday conducted an armed operation in the Docklands kidnap, police said.

rate addresses in south London.

Stuart Kuttner, managing editor of the News of the World, said of the alleged kidnap plan:

tion," he told Sky.

David Beckham's employers Manchester United, one of the world's most famous football teams. has said it is unable to comment on events for the time being.

ers would be appointed before tion papers is November 6. LTTE drops demand Hasina asks Khaleda to quit

than complete independence. Also Sunday, they suspended their demand for an interim administra-

"We are concerned with taking

up core issues as early as possible

so that we will not be bogged down to any particular framework," Balasingham said. The unexpected concessions, along with other agreements during the talks have raised hopes of a

permanent solution to the war. Another round is set for December. "The spirit of consensus and compromise... was very much there and that was the most redeeming feature of the whole discussions. Sri Lankan Cabinet minister Rauf

Hakeem said at the end of the four-

day talks. But he cautioned that agreements to "start grappling with the most contentious matters" may not mean an early solution. "We are not even a quarter of the away to an interim settlement and even further away from a final settlement," he

Chief government negotiator GL Peiris told reporters that the former foes have agreed to set up a subcommittee on political affairs that will figure out how to share power address ethnic questions.

"It is a fresh start. It is an approach in a spirit of innovation and creativity... The issues are very complex." he said.

The negotiations also saw agreements to create two other important committees - one that will oversee the restoration of war-torn areas in the north and east: and the other to ensure refugees are resettled in areas occupied by govern-

The fighting halted in February under a cease-fire brokered by Norway, which also sponsored the peace talks. The first round of talks was also held in Thailand.

Tamils, who comprise 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 18.6 million people, complain of discrimination n jobs and education by the majority Sinhalese, who make up 74 percent of the population. Muslims consti-

The agreements do not ensure a quick peace, however. Autonomy or self-rule for Tamils must be endorsed by a constitutional amendment, and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will have to overcome opposition by hard-liners among the Sinhalese.

His rival, President Chandrika Kumaratunga, is also wary of giving too much to the Tamils. The parties could look for a solution short of autonomy that would not require a constitutional change. Still, taking up the core issue so

early was a boon to the peace talks.

which were originally meant to

discuss only humanitarian needs

and reconstruction of war-torn areas during the initial rounds. Another joint committee will identify humanitarian and rehabilita-

In her speech, Hasina expressed scepticism about the call the prime minister had made to the formation commanders of army to conduct the drive neutrally at a meeting on Saturday.

the army commanders to go by press reports as they go about catching criminals. "There have been one lakh false cases against AL leaders and work-

The former prime minister urged

ers over the last 12 months. So, if you (army) go by these cases in nabbing criminals, it would not be proper. Instead, if you go by newspaper reports over the last 12 months, you'll get the names of the criminals who have killed people, raped women and minors, forcibly occupied university halls and bus terminals since the four-party alli-

and caught the criminals accordingly, it would prove its neutrality, The opposition leader cautioned against victimising innocent people

If the army went by press reports

a serious consequence provided should the innocents be tortured. She said if the army went by the list provided by the prime minister, it would not be fair.

in the anti-crime drive and warned of

In this regard, the former prime minister claimed that the army had failed to catch a single listed criminal or illegal arms from the southwestern region in the country. Rather, an innocent person like Masum Biswas died in custody, she said.

in April-May next year.

The opposition leader alleged that due to pressure from the Prime Minister's Office news of a big arms haul from Chittagong and the name of a possessor were withheld from

recalled that components of the four-party alliance had shouted pro-Taliban slogans at a Paltan Maidan rally in 2000 and promised that they would turn Bangladesh into 'Afghan-Hasina wanted to know if the

In this connection, Hasina

army has checked for once whether those slogan-chanting people have illegal arms in their possession. The AL chief also expressed profound concern at the deaths of 18 people in army custody. "What's

going on? Is it a 'parliamentary

martial law'. Up to the fourth day of

the army operation, people sighed

relief; however, as days went on, they found out only people belonging to the AL were being nabbed." She was extremely critical of arrest of her political secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, who, she claimed, had no criminal links.

She also hit out at the raid and

subsequent sealing of the Centre for

Research and Information (CRI)

and damage to 300 documents and 13 computers there. Hasina wanted to know why the 'Hawa Bhaban', a much-talkedabout office of the ruling BNP was

not raided by the army yet. Hasina, who returned home Saturday from her fourth US visit

since the party's poll debacle late last year, feared that the special tribunals under the recently promulgated speedy trial law would be used to try the AL men only while criminals belonging to the ruling alliance would go scot-free. The former prime minister

recalled that the BNP-led alliance had promised to curb crimes and corruption; however, after coming to power "just the other day they (ruling alliance) shared among themselves the Tk 100-crore Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) development

"I've information that the prime minister's family sought Tk 10 crore from a buyer to whom the government wanted to sell out an industry under the divestment programme, Hasina alleged. Hasina apart, AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta, organ-

ising secretary Mohammad Nasim,

Taniim Ahmed Sohel Tai, MP, city AL

leaders Mohammad Hanif and advocate Qamrul Islam, Rajshahi City AL general secretary Khairuzzaman Liton and columnist Abed Khan addressed the meeting. The speakers expressed deep concern at the failure of the civil administration in running the coun-

Bangabandhu Murder Case.

try and the deaths in army custody. Two of his students master-They also criticised the delay in the minded the killing as he scolded 'Jail Killing' trial and the them at school for their bad perfor-

accused.

manhole the following day. Mohammad Amin Miah, father of Mohsin, one of the two victims, filed

The investigation officer (IO) of

Saturday.

"It's terrifying to think that some-

one would want to do that to you and your children." Victoria Beckham told the paper, published Sunday.

It's clear these people were serious and that, of course, has scared the

area of east London, where three men were arrested for alleged offences of theft and conspiracy to A further four men and two women were later arrested at sepa-

"There was discussion among members of the gang in the presence of our reporters about this and at one point it was suggested it might be one million (pounds) and

people was recruited as the potential getaway driver for the abduc-

and potentially very violent.

another member of the gang said it's

tion to speed up the peace process.