

Textile park to be set up in AJM areas

UNB, Dhaka

The vast area of the closed Adamjee Jute Mills will be turned into a 'textile park' to accommodate new enterprises and give priority to foreign investment.

It will have two categories of plots - one-acre plots for backward linkage industries and one-bigha plots for garment units - and those will be allotted to the entrepreneurs suiting their requirements.

Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Textiles Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, Disaster and Relief Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, State Minister for Industries Rezaul Karim and leaders of associations of the textiles sector, including BGMEA, BTMA, BKMEA and BSTMA, attended the meeting.

Once the PCP is prepared, the government will take next steps for developing the 294-acre land into a well-equipped industrial park for housing garments, dyeing, finishing and weaving industries, an inter-ministerial meeting decided yesterday.

The park, to be developed with government funds, will have a container terminal, a central affluent treatment plant and all utility services, including gas, electricity, water and telecommunications.

A steering committee, headed by a secretary will be formed to develop the industrial park in the shape of export processing zone, the meeting decided with Industries Minister MK Anwar in the chair.

Abul Kalam murder case One to die, 16 get life term in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Barisal, yesterday sentenced one Maman Peada to death and 16 others to life term imprisonment in the sensational Abul Kalam murder case.

The accused awarded life term are Gani Peada, Aziz Peada, Yunus Biswas, Khalil Chowkider, Mehedi, Jahangir, Zafar, Alauddin, Mizan Chowkider, Hassan, Selim Peada, Jamal Biswas, Alam Peada, Suman Peada, Razzaq Peada and Abdur Razzak.

They have been fined Tk 20,000 each, in default, they have to suffer two years more in jail.

According to the prosecution, the accused picked up Abul Kalam from a tea stall in front of Patuakhali College at around 8 pm on August 23, 1999. They took him to a place near the District Council

Three killed as nor'wester hits Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least three persons were killed and some 40 people were injured during a nor'wester over the district's Mohonpur, Godagari and Bagmara upazilas, on Tuesday night.

The victims were identified as Mokhbul Hossain, 26, a day labourer of Zanganpara, and Shamma Akhtar, 16, a Secondary School Certificate examinee of Bandhaimuri village in Bagmara upazila.

Mokhbul died when he went to pick mangoes during the storm and Shamma was killed when a wall collapsed on her, sources said.

Ten people were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The storm blew at a ferocious speed of 82.8 kilometres per hour. It destroyed many houses and trees in the areas and also damaged the paddy fields, banana and mango orchards, sources said.

12 hurt as JCD factions clash at Munshiganj

UNB, Munshiganj

At least 12 people were injured, some with bullets, in a clash between two factions of JCD on the Haraganga College campus yesterday.

The bullet injured are Sunon Ripon, Kiflu, Ismail, Shahjahan and Abu Hanif. Some of them, Ripon was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while others were admitted to a sadar hospital.

Witnesses said the clash ensued over admission to accountancy (Hons) where 160 students applied for 24 seats.

Mohiuddin and Shahriar, both belonging to JCD and leaders of ad-hoc convening committee of students union, led the rival factions.

Prabir Meherunness, principal of the college, blamed the ad-hoc convening committee formed barely 45 days ago. The academic council has been called to a meeting seeking to dissolve the ad-hoc committee, she added.

Jute trader beaten, shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A jute trader was beaten and shot dead by miscreants in the city's Sabujbagh area. Tuesday, police and hospital sources said.

The victim, Amanullah, 36, son of Mojibur Rahman, was a resident of South Mugdapara. His whole body was badly bruised and three bullets were found in his leg, hospital sources said.

Victim's wife Taslima Begum said local gangsters had sent a boy to call her husband from their 95/1, South Mugdapara residence at 2:00pm.

At around 4:30pm, Amanullah was found lying on the road near his house and badly bleeding.

He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at 5:30pm where he died an hour later.

Taslima Begum filed a case with Sabujbagh police station without naming anyone as accused.

Police failed to arrest anyone till filing of this report last night.

Armed gang kills fellow member in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Armed men of a criminal gang killed a fellow member at Ranigram village under Atikula thana in the district Tuesday night, police said.

Police recovered the body of the victim, Abu Bakkar, 40, from the village yesterday and sent it to the Pabna General Hospital for autopsy.

A group of 10 men attacked Bakkar as he was on his way home from Ranigram bazaar and hacked him to death, police said. The assassins are suspected members of an outlawed party.

A murder case was filed with Atikula thana. None was arrested till filing of this report yesterday.

Mobile phone shop robbed in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed robbers looted cash and goods worth around Tk 2.5 lakh from a cellular phone shop in the city's Mehedibagh area in broad daylight yesterday.

Sources said an armed gang of five robbers disguised as customers went to Naurin Media Centre at Mehedibagh Super Market in the Mehedibagh area under Kotwali thana at around 3:00pm yesterday.

They then robbed the store at gunpoint, taking away Tk 2 lakh and some 50 SIM cards and 15 mobile phones. The miscreants also beat up the employees of the store.

Owner of the shop Abdul Malik, who was preparing to file a case, said a similar robbery had been committed in his shop last year.

Tragic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A retired railway employee died of heart attack as robbers allegedly forcefully entered his residence and looted valuables yesterday. They also looted goods and money from a school office and a nearby house. The looted goods reportedly worth Tk 3 lakh.

The victim identified as Jan-e-Alam, 60, went into Leave Preparatory for Retirement around a year back and resided at Ambagan Railway Colony in the city. He panicked and fainted when the armed robbers started looting, a witness said. He died on the way to hospital.

The gang reportedly looted cash Tk 40 thousand and other valuables including ornaments and electronic goods worth Tk 2 lakh.

The same gang then looted goods reportedly worth around Tk 50 thousand from one Amir Ali's house at the neighbouring Tigerpass Railway colony. They later broke into the office room of Polo Ground school and reportedly looted Tk 15 thousand. The incidents occurred within two hours, sources said.

A case was filed with the Khulshi Police Station.

Shazneen case

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The place of occurrence (Latifur Rahman's Gulshan residence) at about 3:00 am on April 24, 1998 and made an inquest report in presence of the victim's brother Arshad Walir Rahman alias Reaz and other witnesses," Shamsul Haque told the court.

All the six accused -- Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shaniram, Minu and Parvin -- were produced in the court yesterday.

Special Public Prosecutor Arfan Uddin Khan appeared for the state while advocates Mosharrat Hossain Kajol, Mizanur Rahman and MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam defended the accused.

"Carry arms against your enemies, the Americans and Jews... Attack the missions of the United States, UK, Australia and Norway and their interests, companies and employees," he added.

The Bangladeshi Bank has said the banks will have to rationalise



Children at Muktangan yesterday protest the sudden rise in robbery and mugging.

US raises terror alert, FBI warns of attack

REUTERS, Washington

The US government on Tuesday raised its terror alert status to the second-highest level, citing the renewed risk of attacks on American soil in light of suicide bombings in Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

"Recent intelligence suggests (these) attacks may be a prelude to an attack on the United States," the FBI said in a message to law enforcement agencies across the country.

"This change is based upon the recent terrorist bombings in Saudi Arabia and Morocco, also in conjunction with intelligence reports concerning anti-US terrorist groups' intentions," said Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson.

"The United States' intelligence community believes that terrorists continue to plan attacks against targets in the United States, and for this reason the alert level has been raised," he told reporters.

Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge, who met with President George W Bush as the latest FBI warning was released, said in a statement that al Qaeda and its sympathizers were still the main danger but threats could also come from anti-US terror groups, regional extremists or "disgruntled individuals."

Market access

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links between the two countries.

Saifur Rahman said a non-discriminatory trade liberalization by Bangladesh in the early nineties led to boosting Indian exports to Bangladesh.

But he pointed out that Bangladesh does not get an equitable opportunity as India was yet to reciprocate the gesture by providing greater market access to Bangladeshi products.

Saifur Rahman stressed the need for customs infrastructure on both sides to facilitate smooth and hassle-free bilateral trade.

While the Bangladeshi side already had some infrastructure, the Indian side had none which sometimes causes goods imported from India to perish spelling losses to Bangladeshi traders, the officials said.

They said Bangladesh allowed Indian trucks to enter its territory carrying imported goods from India while India did not allow Bangladeshi trucks to enter its territory.

They also discussed the issue of a free trade agreement that India had proposed to sign with Bangladesh in line with the Indo-Sri Lanka free trade agreement, now poised to move into its second phase.

Saifur Rahman pointed out that without a quantum jump in Bangladesh's exports to India, it would be difficult for Bangladesh to sustain its imports from India which is already at a very high level.

These structures are intended to provide storage facilities for perishable goods exported by India to Bangladesh.

The two ministers exchanged notes on various economic reforms being carried out in their countries.

The two sides noted with satisfaction that a draft bilateral investment promotion and protection had been finalised for signing at a mutually suitable time, the officials said.

The Bangladeshi delegation included High Commissioner Tufail

K Haider, Foreign Affairs Ministry Director Musfi Bin Shams, the Finance Minister's Private Secretary Qayum Chowdhury and Commercial Counsellor in Bangladesh Mission Wasi Ahmed.

The press release said that India extended the validity period of a Rupee 200 crore line of credit to enable Bangladesh to avail of the balance credit of Rupee 26 crore.

The ambit of commodities for which the credit could be utilised has also been widened by rescheduling the amortisation plan.

Senior Indian officials took part in the formal talks between the two finance ministers.

Later, Saifur Rahman called on Indian Minister for Commerce Arun Jaitly and had an extensive discussion on bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation.

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Both discussions, officials said, took place in a highly constructive and cordial atmosphere.

Saifur Rahman will meet Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today.

He is also scheduled to call on the leader of the opposition Sonia Gandhi.

Saifur will leave Delhi for Dhaka this afternoon.

Launch capsizes in Patuakhali

UNB, Patuakhali

A launch capsized in the river Paira at Fultola in Mirzaganj upazila during a storm yesterday.

Witnesses said most of the passengers swam ashore while local people and fishermen rescued others. It could not be known how many passengers the launch was carrying.

Sources concerned said the launch, ML Takdir, left Subedkhali in Mirzaganj upazila for Patuakhali at 10 am and sank in the river an hour later.

The storm damaged over 300 thatched houses and uprooted many trees.

Graft cartel

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fabricated figures of import duty with the help of customs officials and got undue refunds. They also filed fake export documents, sources said.

The companies involved in the scam include a leading pharmaceutical company and a leather processing company.

The BAC will interrogate the customs inspector and take action, said the BAC inspector.

The chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the NBR member, (VAT) helped the BAC inspector reveal the misdeeds.

Sultana Panni

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talked with the members of the family and those who used to work for them.

The investigators have started questioning the arrested people.

Sultana Khan Panni, wife of the former deputy speaker Humayun Khan Panni, was strangled at her Dhamondi residence in the early hours of Monday.

The killers ransacked the residence to make it look like a case of robbery. But Dhamondi police confirmed that it was not a robbery. They believe family members might have been involved in the crime.

Dhamondi police had arrested four people -- Alaudin Munshi, the cook, Mohammad Rony and his wife Ruby in this connection. They are being interrogated on their five-day remand.

The namaj-e-janaza of Sultana will be held on Gulshan Azad Mosque premises after the Juma prayers on Friday. She will be laid to rest at the family graveyard in Tangail.

The qulkhani of Sultana Khan Panni will be held at house-31, Road-15 in Dhamondi R/A after Asr prayers on Saturday, said a press release.

Khosru said, "At around 9:30 pm on April 30, I was on my way to Nalapara in a hired scooter. When I was near the GEC intersection, I received a call from Nurul Islam on my cellular phone... He requested me to come to a local restaurant for some important talks with him... Nurul Islam along with one Lokman was waiting there... The BNP leader then asked me to cancel club membership of Mahmudul Haq, former president of Sitakunda Press Club... He also wanted me to help him in a case he had filed against Mahmudul Haq."

He added, "On refusal, Nurul Islam admonished me that I had made a blunder."

While coming out of the restaurant, Khosru said, he saw Lokman's car there and a group of Nurul Islam's men in and around the car. They

included Forkan, Abu, Sekander, Quaiyim, Salim, husband of Nurul Islam's sister, Kader Master and Kazi Amanat Ullah.

Khosru said he then started again and his scooter was intercepted by four armed miscreants boarding a taxi-cab near Dewanhat mosque. Then they picked him up at gunpoint.

He was then blindfolded and taken to a place probably at Kumira under Sitakunda and confined in a building, he said.