

Robbers loot Tk 22 in cash, valuables in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted around Tk 22 lakh in cash, gold ornaments and other valuables in two separate incidents in the city's Jurain and North Basabo areas yesterday, police and the victims said.

They said a gang of nine dacoits entered the house of Abdul Mannan on Khandaker Road in Jurain by cutting open its grilles early yesterday morning.

They held the family hostage at gunpoint and reportedly looted Tk 18,93,500 in gold ornaments, cash, mobile sets and wrist-watches in an hour-long raid.

Quoting the First Information Report, police said the robbers decamped with 85 tola of gold ornaments.

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PHOTO: STAR

Secretary General of the ruling BNP Abdul Manna Bhuiyan addresses a public meeting, organised by the four-party alliance yesterday to protest what alliance leaders called subversive activities by the main opposition Awami League.

Hasina calls for oust-govt movement

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Leader of the Opposition in parliament and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged people to launch a united movement to unseat the coalition government, saying that it has betrayed people by fomenting anarchy and failing to control prices of essentials.

Addressing a public meeting at Chapainawabganj Government College ground on the second leg of her three-day tour of three northern districts, Hasina said public life is insecure under the rule of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who she termed the "godmother of terrorists".

"They (the government) are out to eliminate the Awami League by killing our leaders and workers one after another," she said.

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Outlaws kill UP chairman, BNP man in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Underground operatives shot and killed a Union Parishad (UP) chairman Saturday night and a BNP Batiaghata thana unit activist yesterday died from wounds in the same attack in Khulna.

Shaikh Jahan Ali, 34, chairman of Surkhali union, died instantly, as the gang sprayed bullets at will, leaving five others injured at about 10:30pm Saturday at Gaoghara Bazaar in Batiaghata.

Ali, also general secretary of the BNP Batiaghata thana unit, was playing carom with his party colleagues when the gunmen arrived, faces covered in napkins. They ripped his head off in a hail of

gunshots with sawn-off and .303 rifles, said witnesses.

The killers -- in sleeveless black shirts -- shouted slogans in favour of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and made a getaway in a trowler, firing gunshots in the air, according to the witnesses.

One of the five injured, 24-year-old Ashraf Ali Biswas, died at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) early yesterday morning. The KMCH doctors said the president of Shajahan Shaikh, 50, president of Batiaghata thana unit of Jatiyatobadi Krishak Dal, is critical.

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Federer wins Wimbledon

REUTERS, London

Roger Federer became the first Swiss man to win a Grand Slam singles title on Sunday when he outclassed Australian Mark Philippoussis 7-6, 6-2, 7-6 in the Wimbledon final.

The 21-year-old fourth seed produced a display of cool artistry on Centre Court to confirm his

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SHAZNEEN CASE

SI Enamul gives deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Recording officer Sub-inspector (SI) Mohammad Enamul Haq, the 21st prosecution witness in the Shazneen rape case, gave his deposition before the court yesterday.

Kazi Rahamat Ullah, judge of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, recorded the deposition.

Later, the witness was cross-examined by the lawyers of all the six accused.

In his deposition, Enamul Haq told the court that he was a duty officer of the Gulshan Police Station on September 4, 1998. On that day, SI Mizanur Rahman of the Criminal

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JS body for more funds for defence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence Ministry will recommend the government to enhance budget for strengthening the defence system.

The second meeting of the committee took the decision yesterday after reviewing the activities, problems and possibilities of different organisations under the ministry including Army, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Directorate General of Defence Purchase (DGBP), Directorate General of Military Service (DGMS), Inter Service Selection Board (ISSB), Defence Service and Staff College (DS&SC), and National Defence College (NDC).

The recommendation will be sent to the defence ministry to increase the logistics support, manpower and its budget, said

standing committee chairman and BNP lawmaker Mahbubur Rahman.

"We should take steps to make our armed forces modern and efficient. To attain this goal, defence budget should be increased," said Mahbubur Rahman.

The defence sector with a budgetary allocation of Tk 3,995 crore in 2003-04 is however one of the highest recipients of national revenues.

In the meeting, top officials of different organisations placed several reports, explained the formation, function, problems and prospects of their bodies.

The army chief informed the committee that the armed forces have a total manpower of 1,20,918 against 1,35,317 approved posts. A total of 2,526 army personnel are now on peacekeeping missions,

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Road accident kills 6 in Narayanganj

4 more killed in Feni, Magura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six people including two children were killed and at least 19 others injured in a fatal road accident at Tribordi under Sonargaon thana in Narayanganj on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at around 8:15am yesterday.

Two other accidents in Feni and Magura killed four people including two children, said our correspondents from the two districts.

Our Narayanganj correspondent quoting an eyewitness account said six people were killed, five on the spot, when a Dhaka-bound microbus (Ctg-Metro-Chha-11-1074) carrying 10 people collided head on with a passenger bus (Dhaka-Metro-Ja-14-0562)

going to Daudkandi.

Five of the dead included microbus driver Belal, 20, of Chawkbazar of Chittagong and four passengers -- two men and two children aged between three and five. Locals rescued five injured passengers including two children aged four and seven from the badly damaged microbus and sent them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). One of the injured, an unidentified woman of about 35 years, died at the hospital.

At least 15 others travelling on the roof of the passenger bus were injured as the bus fell into a roadside ditch after collision with the

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PHOTO: STAR

A microbus lies in wreckage after a bus smashed it killing six of its passengers, including two children, on the spot at Tribordi in Sonargaon on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway yesterday.

HC rule nisi on govt for not protecting Sonadia forest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court Division yesterday issued a rule nisi on the government asking it to explain why it should not be directed to protect and conserve the 4,916 hectares of Sonadia Island under Cox's Bazar district.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Syed Shahidur Rahman also stayed granting of any lease or tampering with 4,916 hectares of the mangrove forestland of the island.

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) filed a writ petition yesterday seeking special protective measures to protect and conserve the 4,916 hectares of Sonadia Island as an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA).

The 4,916 hectares of Sonadia Island was declared an Ecologically Critical Area under Section 5 of the Environment Conservation Act, 1995, on April 19, 1999.

The respondents of the case -- the secretaries of the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Ministry of Land, chief conservator of forest, the deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, and the divisional forest officer of Cox's Bazar -- have also been asked to explain their position on the matter within four weeks.

The bench also asked the respondents to carry out an investigation

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PHOTO: AFP

An operation was on to separate Iranian sisters Laleh, right, and Ladan Bijani, left, joined by the head, in Singapore yesterday.

Operation of conjoined Iranian twins starts

REUTERS, Singapore

An unprecedented, high-risk operation to separate adult Iranian twin sisters joined at the head began in Singapore yesterday, a Raffles Hospital official said.

Law graduates Laleh and Ladan Bijani, 29, had undergone tests and counselling since November and say they are willing to risk death for the chance to lead separate lives.

The operation, led by neurosurgeon Dr Keith Goh, is expected to last at least 48 hours. Doctors say the operation is possible because they have anatomically separate brains.

"The twins' pre-operation scan started this morning," a hospital spokesman said.

Twins joined at the head occur only once in every two million live births, and successful separation is even rarer.

Singapore doctors performed the operation in 2001 on infant girls from Nepal, but

experts say an operation on adult twins is unprecedented.

Goh is being assisted by Dr Walter Tan, a plastic surgeon, and Dr Ben Carson, director of paediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore.

Carson successfully separated twin boys joined at the head in Germany in 1987 and six-month-old twin girls in 1997.

Goh was part of the team that successfully separated 11-month-old Nepali girls Jamuna and Ganga Shrestha, joined at the head, in a four-day operation in April 2001.

French radiologist Pierre Lasjaunias from the Centre Hospitalier de Bicetre said late on Saturday that all steps that could be taken to secure the twins' safety had been taken.

"Most of the security that could be achieved has been achieved in the past few weeks and today," he said.

"... now the journey has to go on."

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Amendment bill placed in JS to form RAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government introduced an amendment bill in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday to form a special force, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), to improve the law and order.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury tabled the bill, The Armed Police Battalions (Amendment) Act, 2003, to clear the way for the formation of the RAB by amending the Armed Police Battalions Ordinance, 1979.

The passage of the bill will give the Rapid Action Team (RAT) an institutional shape and rename it as the RAB under the existing Armed Police Battalion (APBn).

The RAB members will be drawn from the army, navy, air force and police.

As it is not possible to maintain law and order with the regular police force only, the government formed 23 Rapid Action Teams by employing selected officers from the regular police force, the bill said.

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Young addict 'jumps' to his death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A drug addicted young man allegedly committed suicide yesterday jumping from the rooftop of a five storied building of a clinic in West Jatrabari where he was being treated for his addiction.

Mohammad Zahid, 31, was admitted to Natun Jiban Madakashakti Chikitsashalay in west Jatrabari on 27 June.

Fatally injured Zahid was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctor declared him dead at about 1:15pm. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

The victim's brother, Mohammad Babul, said he was admitted to that hospital on a con

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India sets highest trade barriers in South Asia

WB report terms the Asian giants' economy most protected, least open

NAZMUL AHSAN

India has the most protected and least open economy in the world and its trade barrier is the highest in South Asia, discloses a recent study of the World Bank (WB).

The WB carried out the study on "Trade policies in South Asia" and handed it over to the governments of five regional countries -- India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

"India's trade barriers are the highest in the region, the least transparent and the most complex," the WB report observed.

The average customs duty and

other protective taxes of India are highest in this region at 32.7 per cent, followed by Bangladesh at 26.4 per cent, Pakistan 18.2 per cent, Nepal 16.2 per cent and Sri Lanka at 12.5 per cent.

India's un-weighted average tariff in late 2002 was higher than that of all, except for one out of 105 developing countries. It was double or more than double the average tariff levels of other big developing countries like China, Brazil and Indonesia, the study said.

India introduced many industrial import tariffs, made anti-dumping a major activity and imposed specific duties to protect the textile and garment industry. It

also substantially increased tariffs to safeguard major agricultural products and agro-industries.

India is currently using six normal customs duty rates along with 41 protective tax slabs to discourage import. The protective import tax includes special additional duty, additional duty, luxury tax, anti-dumping duty, ad valorem tariff and so on.

Inclusive of specific duties, India has the largest number of tariff peaks in South Asia, mainly to protect its agriculture, textiles, garment and automobile sector.

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Man knifed to death allegedly by in-law's boyfriend

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was knifed to death allegedly by his sister-in-law's boyfriend for protesting their marriage at Jalaler Colony in this city yesterday.

The incident took place at Jalaler Colony of the Chittagong Polytechnical College adjoining Tulatala area under the Khulshi Police Station at around 3:30pm. Police arrested the accused Beul Karikar, 23.

Police and witnesses said, Beul, son of one Mafzal Karikar of Faridpur, developed a love affair with Kalam's younger sister-in-law Lovely and wanted to marry her.

But the victim, Kalam alias Manik, 40, protested the proposed marriage proposal as Lovely's family reportedly did not want it too. He summoned Beul yesterday

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 07		6-50 pm
July 08	5-17 am	

Prayer Timings		
July 07		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-15	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: STAR

World Bank Country Director Christine Wallich, left, talks to Shova Akhter, a housewife, right most, during a visit to Kendua Dewani Bazar, Jamalpur, Saturday.

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