

Police put at 5 city bus terminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police were deployed yesterday at five city bus terminals on the heels of two days of anti-crime crackdowns to stop extortion and harassment of transport owners, workers and passengers.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) made the deployments following the sweep from Monday at Sayedabad, Joy Kali Mondir, Gulistan, Mohakhali and Fulbaria bus terminals.

Alongside the deployment, joint forces comprising police, paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles, Rapid Action

Team and the Detective Branch of Police will stage surprise sweeps on the terminals, DMP Commissioner Ashraf Huda said yesterday.

The joint forces took a break yesterday following two days of crackdown that netted 105 alleged criminals, including eight on the police list.

The permanent police force took position simultaneously at the five bus terminals at 8:00am yesterday.

"Three teams will keep a vigil at each of the five bus terminals on eight hour shifts and guard those round the clock," the DMP commissioner said.

"The force members will be changed frequently to ensure that extortionists do not develop any rapport with them," he said.

Sudden crackdown and deployment of police at the terminals followed the prime minister's directives on Monday to stop anarchy there.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owner's Association welcomed the prime minister for her directive "that stopped extortion in the transport sector".

"This timely step has restored a peaceful atmosphere in the transport sector," said a press release signed by general secretary

of the organisation, Kafil Uddin.

Demanding arrest and trial of the extortionists collecting tolls in the name of different associations and unions, the association called for demolition of all roadside offices of illegal associations and unions, saying those were the bases for toll collection.

They proposed formulation of a policy to stop extortion and run the sector successfully and asked members of the organisation not to pay toll to anyone.

Innocent 12-yr girl languishes in jail for 9 months

UNB, Magura

A minor girl has remained interned at the local jail hajrat for the last nine months without any criminal record or complaint against her.

Police picked up Shilpi Khatun, 12, for vagrancy from a local bus stand on Oct 14, 2002, and later produced her before a court seeking permission to keep her in safe custody. Since then, the child has been kept in the jail and her fate hangs in the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

All for TIFA despite some 'risks'

NAZMUL AHSAN

Both public and private sectors yesterday extended their support to signing the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between Dhaka and Washington to enhance bilateral cooperation.

The unqualified support came at a meeting at the commerce ministry with Secretary Sohel Ahmed in the chair. Representatives from the foreign ministry, finance ministry, Tariff Commission, Board of Investment (BOI), industries ministry and different chamber organisations were present at the meeting.

The meeting was arranged to finalise Dhaka's position on the issue

as a key US official will arrive in Dhaka August 6 to discuss the TIFA.

A joint council will be set up under TIFA that will deal with commercial issues. The US has so far signed TIFA with Morocco, South Africa, Ghana, Egypt, Tunisia, Nigeria, West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Algeria, Bahrain, and Sri Lanka.

The Tariff Commission highlighted the possible risks and benefits of TIFA.

"There is no doubt that the agreement will create an opportunity for dialogue with the US on a regular basis and expressing our concerns to the USA," The Tariff Commission in its observation said. The views of the

Commission have been placed in the meeting.

It, however, feels that TIFA would not serve as a tool for future negotiations on duty-free access of textiles and clothing.

"The agreement will pave the way for initiatives for future agreement, which may be beneficial to Bangladesh," the report added.

On the possible risks, the Commission observed: "If Bangladesh agrees to the texts on labour and environment standards, these issues would most likely be raised during bilateral talks, which may put Bangladesh in a rather uncomfortable situation."

NBR grinds to halt as officials stop work over arrest of colleagues

STAR REPORT

Activities at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and all customs commissionerates in Dhaka came to a halt yesterday as officials abstained from work protesting the arrest of their colleagues on corruption charges.

Three arrested NBR officials -- Shawkat Hossain, deputy commissioner of customs at the NBR and Sayeed Ali and Mofazzal Haq, superintendents at the customs house, Dhaka -- were sent to jail after the Metropolitan Magistrate Court, Dhaka rejected their bail.

The trio was arrested on Tuesday in connection with a Bureau of Anti-Corruption case that accused them of releasing a consignment of yarn without realising Tk 7,42,393 in customs duty in April 2001.

Members of the Bangladesh (BCS) Customs Association at a meeting yesterday expressed their concern over the arrests and demanded immediate release of the detainees. They alleged that a vested group was up for harassing customs officials.

The meeting held at the NBR with association president Alauddin

Chowdhury in the chair said the corruption charges were brought without any evidence.

Sources said the custom officials are likely to talk to Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman today to convey their resentments.

Abu Taher Mia imported the yarn and managed to get it released allegedly showing a fake order of the High Court which gave the importer rebate in advance income tax (AIT) and value-added tax (VAT).

The customs officials released the imported goods on the basis of the court order, which turned out to be fake later.

The Dhaka Customs House filed the case with the Airport Police Station in last June against the importer and clearing and forwarding agent Rabindranath Roy of R Chowdhury Enterprise for showing the fake order.

The first information report of the anti-corruption bureau said the fake High Court order only asked to give rebate in AIT, not in VAT.

But leaders of the Bangladesh (BCS) Customs Association said the fake order had asked to give rebate in both AIT and VAT.



A sea of rickshaws yesterday clogs the Municipal Road from the Victoria Park to Laxmi Bazar, home to about 20 educational institutions on both sides. Students demand immediate fixing of the traffic system that has proved a bane of commuters.

DU science faculty students call for indefinite strike

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Science faculty students of Dhaka University (DU) called an indefinite strike yesterday demanding immediate acceptance of the four-year honours degree as full professional qualification.

The science students also demanded the four-year combined honours degree be mentioned in their certificates and be treated equally as the previous three years honours and one year master's degree.

The students who had been agitating for some time damaged at least ten private cars in the last two days together with DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz's official car yesterday.

According to the students, they accelerated their agitation when they found that their certificates, which they got on Tuesday, did not acknowledge their four-year honours.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Judgement in Kamal murder case today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the Kamal murder case will be given today.

Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Judge of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, will pronounce the verdict at 12:30pm, court sources said.

Both the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments on July 22.

Earlier, the court had recorded statements of 21 out of 22 prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on June 21, 2001 and the trial began on August 5, the same year.

Mohammad Kamal Hossain, 30, senior vice-president of Kotwali thana unit of Awami League, was gunned down by a gang of assailants led by Zobayed Mohammad Adel, son of former deputy mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Jahangir Mohammad Adel, on August 15, 2000 when he (Kamal) protested the hoisting of Pakistan

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

3 to die, 3 get life for Emdad murder in Naogaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Naogaon

A court in Naogaon yesterday sentenced three people to death and three others life imprisonment with a fine of Tk 10,000 or two more years in jail in default in the sensational Emdadul Haq murder case.

The second Additional District and Sessions Judge S M Solayman yesterday delivered the verdict in a crowded courtroom.

The convicted who received death penalty are Amjad Hossain, 35, son of Shaheb Ali of Madhainagar village under Sadar upazila, Dhado, 30, son of late Sob Mandal of Harirampur village of the same upazila and Babul alias Babu, 28, son of Sekendar.

Those who received life term were Abdul Jalil, 35, son of Omar Ali of Moheshpur village under Mohadevpur upazila, Hassan Ali, 45,

son of Bhuria Ali and Aslam Hossain, 35, son of Solim Uddin of Choknorsing village under Bodolgachhi upazila.

The victim Emdadul Haq, 25, son of Aftab Hossain, came under attack at Madhainagar while he was on the way to his boiler at Kittipur on November 21, 1994. They beat him up and fled the scene thinking him to be dead.

However, people rushed him to a local hospital to be shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he died on November 25.

Father of the victim, Altaf Hossain, filed a case with the Naogaon Police Station on November 26.

Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) Nazmun Nahar conducted the case on behalf of the state while advocate Jahangir Alam and Tofazzal Hossain defended the accused.

Flood situation improves further

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The overall flood situation in and around Dhaka and elsewhere in the country continues to improve.

But fresh floods may occur in the country's southeastern region as most of the rivers in the hill basin registered a sharp rise yesterday.

In and around the capital, the river Balu receded further but is still flowing 57cm above the danger level while the Lakhya at Narayanganj recorded further fall by 8cm but is also flowing above the danger level by 42cm. Though the Turag at Mirpur fell by 6cm, the Tongi Khal at Tongi registered further rise by 5cm. The

Kumar at Faridpur swelled by 10cm.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Ganges-Padma registered further fall at all points while the rivers in the Meghna basin recorded both rise and fall.

Out of the 85 monitoring stations, 37 points recorded rise, 33 recorded fall and one remained steady. The rivers were flowing above danger level at five points during the last 24 hours, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

The Surma experienced a 48cm rise at Kanaighat, 11cm at Sylhet and 9cm at Sylhet and 7cm at Tongi registered further rise by 5cm. The

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Contractor gunned down in Jessore town

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Gunmen shot dead a businessman in the new town area here yesterday morning.

Sources said Reazul Islam, 38, a well-known contractor, was on his way home on his motorbike when he was stopped by two men only about 100 metres from Babla Tola Police Station. The assassins, who were also riding a motorbike, shot Islam five times in the head, neck and chest before fleeing the scene. Islam died on the spot.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Municipal polls planned in April

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) plans to hold Pourasabha (municipality) elections in April 2004.

This was disclosed yesterday at a meeting of the EC that Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) M A Sayed presided. Election Commissioner Safur Rahman, M Munsif Ali, AK Mohammad Ali and other officials concerned attended the meeting.

The EC officials have already prepared a list of the municipalities the tenure of which will end by March 2004. Elections will be held in

more than 140 municipalities.

The last Pourasabha elections were held in February 1999.

The meeting also discussed Netrokona-3 by-elections scheduled for August 21.

Sources said a letter was sent after the meeting to the Armed Forces Division for deployment of army personnel at Netrokona-3 constituency on the election day.

The EC meeting also decided to hold another meeting on August 9 to review the law and order situation. The chiefs of the law enforcement agencies, including the army and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 31		6-43 pm
Aug 01	5-28 am	

Fugitive on death row shot dead

UNB, Narsingdi

A fugitive with death penalty on him was gunned down by unidentified assailants at a bazaar in Shibpur Uapzila yesterday.

Police said about 10 masked men shot dead Yusuf, 35, at the bazaar near his residence at Chanchapasha village at about 8:30am.

In April this year, Yusuf was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Prayer Timings		
July 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation