

Cops, militants

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tion from them.
Deputy Commissioner of Joypurhat Md Abdul Mannan Patwary told The Daily Star by phone that the BDR was called in and the situation was under control.
The attempts are underway to recover the looted arms and ammunition, he added.
Md Abdul Jalil Mandal, superintendent of Joypurhat police, told the BBC radio last night that the attackers belonged to outlawed Jama'atul Mujahidin and an investigation was going on to confirm whether the arrestees were the operatives of the outfit.
The injured police personnel -- OC of the Joypurhat Sadar Police Station Iqbal Shafi and constables Abdus Sattar, Nazrul Islam, Shahidul Islam, Tipu Sultan and Anwar Hossain -- were admitted to Joypurhat Hospital.
The suspects arrested after the incident are Aatur Rahman, Yunus Mia, Joyanal Abedin, Rafiqul Islam, Mamunur Rashid, Oahedul Islam, Sarwar Jahan, Borhan Uddin, Salehin, Khorsheed Alam, Shahidul Islam, Moinalul Islam, Abdul Awal, Rashekan, Anwar Hossain, Golam Mustafa, Masudur Rahman, Delwar Hossain and Mizanur Rahman.
Locals said the arrestees were natives of Dinajpur, Naogaon, Panchagarh, Gaibandha, Bogra, Joypurhat and Chapainawabganj districts.
Police later recovered a huge number of leaflets, books and 50 travel bags from the house of Montezar, an alleged boss of the outfit and former member of Borotara union Jamaat-e-Islami.
Officials said the 24th BDR battalion reinforced security and a combing operation was launched in the morning.
Villagers of Mahespur lost their words at the grim gunbattle that unfolded the face of militancy in their area.

India to send mission to moon by 2008, says Vajpayee

REUTERS, New Delhi

India will send an unmanned mission to the moon by 2008, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said yesterday, in what is seen as an effort to showcase the country's scientific capabilities.
"India is ready to take a big leap in science," Vajpayee said in his Independence Day anniversary address to the nation. "I am happy to announce that before 2008 India will send a mission to the moon."
"It will be called 'Chandrayan Pratham' (First Journey to the Moon)," he said. The mission is expected to cost New Delhi about \$80 million.
A proposal to send a spacecraft to the moon was first mooted by the state-run Indian Space Research Organisation three years ago and the agency began a feasibility study in 2001.

3 girls rescued while being trafficked to India

BSS, Sathkira

Police on Wednesday rescued three girls from border areas under Debhata upazila of the district while they were being trafficked to India.
They are Sharifa Khatun, 11, Rabeya Khatun, 9, and Marufa Khatun, 7, daughters of Abdul Mazid of Eidghapara under Debhata Sadar upazila.
The traffickers abducted the three while they were asleep on verandah of their house.
The abductors managed to escape. The girls were handed over to their family.

41 MP hostel rooms

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bers who were re-elected to the eighth parliament need not apply again for allotment, they reasoned.
Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, also on the list, denied being in possession of any room. He told The Daily Star that he got a room at the Nakhalpara hostel after the previous election, but no room this time.
State Minister for LGRD Ziaul Haq Zia, another occupant, said, "I pay rents for my room. Had it not been allocated to me, how come they charge me?" He alleged that the Parliament Secretariat gave wrong information to the House sub-committee.
Goutam Chakraborty, state minister for water resources, said a room was allocated to him but, "as I don't need it anymore, I asked my staff to return the room to the Parliament Secretariat."
"Maybe the hand-over process has not yet been completed, which is why my name is still on the list," he said.
Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, whose assistant private secretary (APS) resides in a room at the Nakhalpara hostel, could not be contacted for comments. Parliament sources said the minister's APS is residing there on an instruction from the ruling party Whip Syed Wahidul Alam.
JP (E) lawmaker Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury reasoned that he did not need a fresh allotment as he got his room after he was re-elected.
Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui said he was to get a room at the Nakhalpara MP hostel but was not sure whether the authorities gave him any.
Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said his party wrote to the Parliament Secretariat asking for rooms for three AL MPs. But they were not provided with any room, said Shahid, also a sub-committee member. "Those staying without approval were served with notices twice," he said.
Whip Fazlul Haq Aspia said he was given a room of the Nakhalpara MP hostel as a BNP lawmaker of the seventh parliament. Although he was not officially given any room after he was re-elected, he occupied one without approval this time.
The Parliament Secretariat list says: At the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP hostel, 13 rooms are in the name of Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain and State Minister for Environment Zafrul Islam Chowdhury; JP (E) MPs Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, Motiur Rahman, Shah Solaiman Alam,

Top lawyers

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rule of law but also a threat to the constitutional provisions that all are equal in the eye of law, he added.

Uncertainty of hearing of the appeal in the case has given rise to lot of questions and fears in the public minds. It is not good for the nation," Amir Ul Islam noted.
Amir Ul Islam said, "We will soon request the chief justice to take unnecessary measures in this regard."

The killing of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his family members is a black spot in the history of the nation and the people are still to overcome the shock, he said.

The case is now pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. A bench comprising three judges is needed to hear the case. But six of the seven judges at the Appellate Division are not in a position to hear it on different grounds.

Former law minister Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru said, "Killers of the father of the nation and his family members openly confessed to ,both at home and abroad, their involvement in the killing. Some judges felt embarrassed to try them. It is unfortunate."

He alleged the present government is prolonging the disposal of the case on the pretext that there are not adequate judges to hear it. The problem can be solved simply by appointing judges on ad-hoc basis in the Appellate Division.

The former law minister of the previous Awami League (AL) government said, the accused had killed the father of the nation and his family members in a planned way and in cold blood. The then government had protected the self-proclaimed killers making an indemnity ordinance against the spirit of human rights. After 21 years, the AL government repealed the black law paving the way for trial of the accused persons, he mentioned.

Khasru said trial of the case was held properly and the accused had the opportunity of defending themselves.

A lower court sentenced the 15 accused to death and the High Court upheld most part of the judgement.

One of the petitioners of the case Advocate Anisul Haq said despite repeated requests over the last two years, the government is yet to appoint any ad-hoc judge in the Appellate Division. This is prolonging the delay in the hearing of the case, he pointed out.

36 killed

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women and children, in nearby Manipur state.

In a separate overnight attack, four paramilitary soldiers were shot and injured by unidentified guerrillas in Tripura's Khamtiang region, PTI said.

A police patrol also came under heavy fire at Kaptali in southern Tripura district late Thursday but there were no casualties, police added.

Police in Manipur also reported a string of overnight bomb blasts in Manipur but said there were no casualties.

The militant-led boycott, however crippled life in six of the seven northeastern states and residents chose to stay at home instead of venturing out, a police spokesman here said.

"Private and public transport in most parts of the region remained off the roads, while people preferred to stay indoors," he said as 70,000 security men patrolled the seven states.

Federal frontier guards have sealed the international border with neighbouring countries to prevent entry of militants into the northeast.

At least 68 people have been killed by suspected militants in the region since Monday in the run-up to the August 15 celebrations.

Some 50,000 people have lost their lives to insurgency in the seven regional states since India's independence in 1947.

Stiglitz

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Corporate interest often dictates policies, he said. "If you spend money for people when they are in campaign, you expect returns for your money. Corruption is everywhere, but it is not in the same form as you see in developing countries."

Pointing to Singapore, he said, it raised the salary of its tax officials to reduce corruption. In many countries, tax officials are paid low that breeds corruption.

The government has an important role in making regulations, as unnecessary regulations are another source of corruption; the government should not regulate a matter if there is no need for it, he said.

Asked whether Bangladesh should accept the prescriptions of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Stiglitz said Bangladesh should put its views strongly.

"There are big differences between the IMF and the WB, though from outside it may be felt they are similar." The WB always provides scope for alternative policies, but the IMF often tries to impose unbalanced conditions, he said.

The WB has a diversity of views but the way the IMF operates is quite different, he said. About the declining foreign aid, he said foreign aid is only 2 per cent of GDP but the cost of bad economic policies is enormous. "It should find ways to benefit against such a cost."



PHOTO: PID

Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz presents a book titled 'Globalization and Its Discontents' written by him to President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Thousands mourn

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The party will also enforce a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal today demanding execution of the court verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case.

On this day in 1975, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, along with 18 members of his family, was assassinated by a group of disgruntled army officers.

His two daughters -- former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana -- escaped death as they had been away from the country on the dreadful night.

Commemorating the day, newspapers published special reports and brought out supplements on Bangabandhu.

The Awami League and its front organisations and different socio-cultural organisations also observed the day through milad mahfils and quran khwani, mourning processions, destitute feeding, blood donation programme and discussion meetings on the life and works of the slain leader.

Awami League leaders and workers also visited the Banani Graveyard in the city and offered fatiha for salvation of the departed souls of the members of the

Bangabandhu family and the four national leaders killed on August 15 and November 3 in 1975.

National flag was hoisted at half-mast at the Bangabandhu Bhaban and party offices while AL leaders garlanded the portrait of Bangabandhu in the morning.

The AL units arranged destitute feeding in 107 wards in the capital and offered special prayers at the places of worship.

Jatiya Party Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju and JSD General Secretary Hasanul Huq Inu also visited the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhamond 32 and offered munajat there.

UNB Correspondents from different parts of the country including Barguna, Nilphamari, Narail, Thakurgaon, Patuakhali, Gopalganj, Satkhira, Feni and Jhalukathi reported that AL and its front organisations observed the day through various programmes.

Peace is a must for development: President

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh with its vast natural and agricultural resources has been trying to develop its economy to ensure a better life for the people.

His remarks came when visiting Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz made a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban, said an official handout.

Welcoming Professor Stiglitz, President Iajuddin said peace is essential for development activities.

The president also mentioned the government's efforts to develop the IT sector to cope with the pace of the developed nations.

Education and flow of information are necessary for development, he said and stressed the need for cooperation from Columbia University in this regard. Prof. Stiglitz is a teacher of Columbia University.

Prof. Stiglitz said information is a great factor for doing proper research and that research is a must to reach a decision.

"Research is a long-term process and it must be continued without break," he said.

Prof. Stiglitz presented a book titled 'Globalisation and Its Discontents' written by him to the president.

Science and ICT Minister Abdul Moeen Khan was present on the occasion.

RAB

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comprise a strike force capable of crackdown on criminals any time, anywhere and in any circumstances," the sources added.
RAB will start operation with about 600 members. Its strength will be gradually raised to five battalions comprising around 600 members each.

Two battalions will be based in Dhaka and the other three will be deployed in crime-prone areas across the country.

RAB will have a gang crime unit and a narcotics crime unit to deal with organised criminal gangs and drug traffickers. Moreover, there will be a specialised investigation unit to probe money laundering, fraud, homicide and other such crimes.

Two Special Weapons and Tactics (SWT) teams of RAB will deal with criminals possessing sophisticated firearms. Its diving team and air wing will also carry out operations, if needed, officials said.

The existing 275-member Rapid Action Team (RAT) will be merged into RAB. RAT members are being trained for taking greater responsibilities after the switchover.

RAB will be commanded by an official of the rank of deputy inspector general of police.

The Jatiya Sangsad passed a bill in its eighth session providing for deputation of army, navy and air force personnel to RAB to help improve law and order.

Ctg abductions

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kidnapping of leading businessman Jamaluddin.

But as the allegation of police involvement has come to light, no policeman is mediating a settlement.

Jamaluddin was kidnapped 21 days ago with the demand for Tk 50 lakh in ransom. The police made a number of raids in different areas to rescue him, but failed.

A relative of Jamaluddin said, "A few days ago, we gathered specific information about his whereabouts and passed on the information to police."

"Police swept various rooms of the building excepting the one we tipped them off."

"Soon after we were informed about his abduction, we rushed to the Kotwali Police Station to file a case. But the police refused to take the case. We went to the Chandgonj Police Station where the case was accepted," he said.

"This is just one instance. In almost all cases, reluctance of the cops is clear."

When businessman Zakir was kidnapped on Monday, his family rushed to the Kulshi Police Station to file an abduction case. The police officials did not want to take the General Diary (GD) for a while, saying, "He must have gone into hiding to avoid lenders."

The bullet-riddled body of Zakir was found at Militarirpole in Boalkhali upazila on Tuesday morning.

Earlier this year, millionaire Haji Monir was kidnapped. He was released on a ransom of Tk 70 lakh through police negotiation.

In Satkania, schoolboy Rajiv Bhattacharya was taken hostage and released on Wednesday after 11 days in captivity for Tk 50,000 in ransom.

A student of a private university of Dhaka who went to Chittagong on vacation was kidnapped in April. He was released on ransom. His family is afraid of disclosing further details on security grounds.

There are over 100 criminals in Chittagong involved in kidnapping. The police list shows 107 such criminals of whom 78 have been shown arrested.

A Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) official said the list was old and needed upgradation.

"Many of the arrested criminals have obtained bail, but our list does not show it," he pointed out.

"Most of the kidnappers live outside the city," added the CMP official who has been working in Chittagong for six years.

The kidnappers have their secret dens in the hills or forests of Raozan, Fatikchhari, Rangunia, Hathazari, Satkania, Dohajari, Chandanais and other places.

When they kidnap someone, they take the victims to the hideouts and then initiate the process of

ransom realisation from the victim's family.

"Sometimes, a group of kidnappers even sells a victim to another outfit," a detective branch official said.

Police rarely rescue the victims before the ransom payment is made. Such a success story was written three months ago when non-Bangali businessman Mohammad Hanif was freed.

The first sensational kidnapping in Chittagong took place in 1995 when businessman Faridul Anwar was picked up by criminals.

Anwar's family bought his freedom at Tk 20 lakh.

Mourners

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programme on Thursday night, leaving eight people injured.

Villagers said the gang attacked the leaders of Panchasar union AL at Binodpur in Sadar upazila and looted six maunds of beef, two goats, three sacks of rice and other cooking materials.

They fired blank shots to strike panic into locals. Local AL blamed the BNP cadres for the attack.

Another destitute feeding programme at Hasanpur in Feni district was marred allegedly by BNP activists.

Villagers said some armed cadres of the party came on two jeeps and eight motorcycles and damaged a portrait of the Bangabandhu and broke the microphone. Some local shops were also damaged during the attack.

Some of the assailants beat up Mintu, leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), and Harun, leader of the Sramik League.

Another destitute feeding programme arranged by Awami League at Sanua in Sadar Upazila was also attacked, local people said.

UNB from Gazipur adds: A destitute feeding programme arranged by the AL at Thirati in Kapasia upazila was attacked by miscreants.

The hoodlums also ransacked the furniture of the local AL office. The AL blamed the BNP for the attack.

Meanwhile, police dispersed a mourning procession brought out by the BCL in Munshiganj town yesterday. Police also took away the banners and chased the processionists in Chhatbar Kheula.

Our Karachi correspondent adds: The Khulna City Corporation (KCC) disallowed the AL to hold a milad mahfil at the commissioner's office in Ward No. 23.

At a press conference, the AL alleged that the section concerned of the KCC took Tk 300 and gave the party permission for using the office as venue for the milad on August 11, but later cancelled the permission.

Imam Hasan Chowdhury, commissioner of the ward, however refuted the allegation. The KCC mayor could not be reached for comments.

Power outage

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and parking garages. Near Grand Central station, commuters slept on the sidewalk, their heads on their briefcases.

Aman walking by said: "Everybody is homeless tonight. Now you get a taste of what homelessness is like."

In Ottawa, the darkness brought criminals and vandals out onto the streets. "There is serious looting going on," said city police chief Vince Bevan, reporting break-ins, smashed windows and theft in the Canadian capital.

The office of Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien said a severe outage at a Pennsylvania nuclear power plant may have caused the massive power blackout that cascaded over an area of 3,600 square miles in the US Northeast and Ontario.

Earlier, US and Canadian officials said a fire or perhaps lightning had hit a power plant near Niagara Falls in New York state.

Power grid operators said there appeared to have been a failure on the high-voltage transmission lines connecting the United States and Canada.

They estimated it was the biggest outage to strike the North American grid, although exact numbers were not yet available.

Nine nuclear reactors in four US states were shut down, officials said.

Bush vowed the government would investigate what caused the outage and promised to prevent a recurrence.

"This was not a terrorist act," Bush told reporters during a visit to California. "We're slowly but surely coping with this massive national problem," he added, saying that he was "confident we can get things up and running."

New York Gov. George Pataki said about half of the state's 19 million people were affected by the outage. In Canada, officials said as many as 10 million people were affected.

Air traffic into New York's three major airports was affected for several hours before flights began to trickle back in and the Federal Aviation Administration lifted flight bans into New York and Canadian airports.

Police workers crowded onto the streets in heat of more than 90 F (33 C), facing a long walk home as buses and trains came to a halt. Streets became gridlocked when traffic signals failed.

Thousands of New Yorkers were trapped underground in the dark when rush hour subway trains stopped in their tunnels after the power went out shortly after 4 p.m. EDT (2000 GMT).

In a City Hall lit by emergency

lighting, New York's mayor, Michael Bloomberg, later told a news conference power had returned to various parts of the city but said: "We're still out of the woods yet."

"We think that it should be a normal day in terms of being able to go about your business tomorrow," he said. "Our expectation is that traffic will be flowing normally and that the subways will be working."

Late trading on US financial markets was hit by the outages, with dealing rooms shut down across the region.

But the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq said they were set to open Friday morning as usual.

In Toronto, Canada's largest city, the transit system ground to a halt and thousands were stranded as temperatures hit 86 F (30 C). Subway stations were closed to prevent overcrowding.

Both the Toronto Stock Exchange, the country's main bourse, and Pearson International Airport operated on back-up power supplies.

In Detroit, headquarters of the largest US automakers, many workers went home after the lights went out, creating traffic gridlock in the city. General Motors said several of its auto plants were closed by the outages.

Launch strike

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from Postogola at 4:45pm yesterday carrying more than 2,000 passengers. The highly overloaded vessel left for different destinations including Chandpur, Barisal, Bhola and Khulna.

In a desperate bid to board the vessel, scores of passengers reached it in country boats. Many of them scuffled with each other to get into the ferry, risking their lives.

Official sources said government-owned steamer -- MV Sella -- will ply Dhaka-Bhola route from today. Besides, two sea trucks will carry passengers today.

The launch strike was enforced from Tuesday as a mobile court fined eight launches on the previous day for overloading and not having necessary papers.

The demands of the launch owners include official recognition of attested registration and survey papers, drawing by a naval architect instead of three persons selected by the government, withdrawal of the order for installation of expensive modern equipment including hydraulic steering, echo sounder and rudder system in launches.