

4 robbers held in Ctg, gold ornaments recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested four members of a gang of inter-district robbers and recovered ten tolas of looted gold ornaments in the city yesterday. Police also arrested seven people, including five listed criminals, from different areas of the city in the last 24 hours ending at 6.00pm yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, Kotwali police raided different areas under Bakolia and Halishahar thana on Sunday night and arrested four people for their alleged involvement in a robbery that took place at a house at MM Ali Road on August 29. Gold ornaments and valuables worth over Tk one lakh were looted from Akter's house during the robbery. The four arrestees are Babul Das, 22, Nurul Huda, 25, Alamgir, 23 and Liton Kanti

Sheel, 22. They are suspected to be the members of a gang of inter-district robbers. On the basis of their confessional statement, police raided a jewellery shop at Bakolia DC Road in the early hours of yesterday and recovered the looted gold ornaments. The owner of the shop Sukamal Dhar, 27, was also arrested on charge of robbery. The listed criminals arrested from different areas in the city are Javed, 30, Shamsul Alam, 30, Md Musa, 38, Md Bashir, 26, and Nurul Alam alias Putul, 35. Besides, one notorious criminal and extortionist Azizur Rahman, 25, and a convict, Md Jamir, were arrested from Bakolia Bagarbil and Double Mooring thana areas.

Obituary

UNB, Rajbari

Shamsunnahar Begum, mother of former Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena, died of old-age ailments at her residence at Bahadurpur village in Pangsha upazila on Sunday night at the age of 97. She left behind six sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death. She was buried at her family graveyard.

Condolence meeting

EngenderHealth, Bangladesh Country Office, will hold a condolence meeting in memory of Dr Shah Reazul Islam Chowdhury at its office at 4.00pm today, says a press release. Dr. Chowdhury, a junior technical support expert, died on September 4 following a road accident that took place on August 5 when he was going to a rural health centre in Chittagong to conduct a workshop. He is survived by his wife, two sons and one daughter.



Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue, speaks at a dialogue on 'Sustainable agricultural growth in Bangladesh' in the city yesterday. State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Dr Mahabub Hossain of IRRI are on his right and Agriculture Minister M K Anwar and Prof Muazzam Husain of BRAC University on his left.

Involve private sector for better water supply: WB

BSS, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) has suggested involvement of private and NGO sectors in water supply and sanitation systems for greater coverage and better performance of the crucial utility service. "The public sector does not have the resources necessary to maintain the existing (water supply and sanitation) network, improve ser-

vice quality and satisfy unmet demands," said a recently released WB study titled 'Private Solutions for Infrastructure in Bangladesh.' It suggested that a 'multi-track reform' could only solve the growing problems of water supply and sanitation and the approach should focus both on adjusting cost-recovery charges in public utility services and creation of a favourable environment for private sector and NGO involvement in the sector. According to an Asian Development Bank (ADB) study, only 42 per cent population could be brought under urban water utility services in Dhaka, the lowest among the South Asian capitals or other major cities in 1997. The coverage was 86 per cent in New Delhi, 81 per cent in Kathmandu, 70 per cent in Karachi and 58 per cent in Colombo at that time, the ADB study said. Despite supports of the development partners in the form of loans, the study said, the water supply situation in Dhaka has only margin-

ally improved and "additional support to the highly inefficient public bodies (like WASA) will not help the sector improve its performance." "Accessing costly suppliers credits as funding from multilateral institutions ... will (also) increase the burden of external debt payments while brining limited social and economic returns," it said. Officials said that out of more than 250 urban areas classified as municipalities or pourashavas, only 101 are served with piped systems to some extent, and these are all fed by deep tubewells. Against these challenges, the study said, a multi-track reform approach was necessary. "(And) the reform must focus, on one hand on adjusting cost-recovery charges and exerting greater financial and commercial discipline on public bodies, and on the other hand, on creating a more favourable legal and regulatory environment for inviting greater private-sector and NGO participation in the medium and long term."

Intravenous drug users most vulnerable to AIDS

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said the intravenous drug users (IDUs) are the most potential carriers of HIV/AIDS among the vulnerable groups in the country. They said the fourth round of national serological surveillance found four per cent prevalence of HIV infection among the IDUs in Dhaka and its adjoining areas. The number is quite alarming as it remains only one per cent less than the highest five per cent among the IDU group, the speakers added. The three-day workshop on 'Advocacy on United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Declaration and Commitment' was organised by STI/AIDS Network, Bangladesh, at BIAM auditorium in the city. Major General Dr ASM Motiur Rahman, chairman of Technical Committee of the National AIDS

Committee, Bai Bagasao of UNAIDS Bangladesh and Dr Tasnim Azim of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) spoke at the workshop. Dr Tasnim Azim said the rate of HIV/AIDS remains less than one per cent among the other vulnerable groups of commercial sex workers, homosexuals, hijras (eunuchs), truckers, rickshawpullers, and heroin smokers. The country has a large number of high risk behaviour groups and it is being considered as the most risk zone in South Asia after India, Dr Tasnim Azim added. Dr ASM Motiur Rahman said India that shares around 4,000 km borders with Bangladesh has recorded around 40 lakh HIV positive cases. He said high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in neighbouring India and Myanmar, movement of population, low condom use and presence of sexually transmitted diseases (STD)

are the major risk factors in Bangladesh. Dr ASM Motiur Rahman said the groups, having sex with commercial sex workers including the hijras without condom, are significantly contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS. He said by establishing 98 blood transfusion centres across the country with the help of UNDP, the government has reduced the number of professional blood donors. Bai Bagasao said the United Nations at its special general assembly in 2001 set 10 agenda to fight HIV/AIDS. She sought more participation of NGOs and members of the civil society to raise voice for solving the global problem. Officially 248 HIV/AIDS cases have been recorded in the country, but the UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated the number at over 13,000.



Fazle Hasan Abed, a member of the Board of Trustees of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), speaks at press briefing on its annual meeting at the National Press Club yesterday. Noel P Magor, IRRI Representative to Bangladesh, and Dr Mahbub Hossain, Social Science Division Head of IRRI, were also present.

Youth gunned down in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

A youth was gunned down by armed robbers at Rajnagar village in Chitalmari upazila yesterday. The victim was identified as Salahuddin Sheikh, 25, son of Habibur Rahman. Police said the gunmen, numbering 10-12, broke into the house of Habibur Rahman and sprayed bullets on Salahuddin as he tried to resist them. He died on the spot. Police suspected that Salahuddin

might have been killed following a conflict between his family members and the assailants as the robbers left the scene without taking anything. Police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy. They also arrested a young man, Bidhan Karmaker, after the victim's father filed a case against 12 people with local police station. With this, three youths were gunned down in the district in last two days.

Photo exhibition on Everest

BSS, Dhaka

A six-day photo exhibition of S M Muntasir Mamun begins at Zainul Gallery (2) at the Institute of Fine Arts today. Photographs taken by Mamun during his adventure to the Himalayas will be put on display, said a press release. Mamun, an electrical engineer, has a plan to scale the Mount Everest. As a pre-emptive bid of his mission, he went on trekking the Everest region recently. Sponsored by Rahimafrooz Batteries, a private enterprise, the theme of the exhibition is "Dream and the Everest". In Bangladesh, this is the first such photo exhibition on Mount Everest. The exhibition will remain open for all from 3 pm to 8 pm. Bhagiat Basnet, ambassador of Nepal in Bangladesh, will inaugurate the exhibition.



The concluding session and award giving ceremony of 'Tibet-Prothom Alo National Debate Contest Workshop and 10th inter-school & 8th inter-club debate competition' was held at the Vigarunnisa Noon School and College auditorium recently. Vigarunnisa Noon Debating Club organised the event. Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman of Privatisation Commission, attended the ceremony as chief guest while Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, and Rezaul Karim, executive director of Kohinoor Chemical Co., were special guests. Royona Hossain, principal of the college, presided over the ceremony.

Mohila Parishad protests killing of women, children

UNB, Manikganj

Various organisations under the banner of the district Mohila Parishad organised a rally here yesterday protesting the killing of women and children and rape and torture in the district in recent times. They also formed a human chain demanding immediate punishment to those responsible for killing Shilpi, Lipi and Rupali. The relatives of the victims from seven upazilas of the district attended the rally held in front of the Colletorate Bhaban with Mohila Parishad President Khaleda Haq in the chair. Hasina Akter, Chitta Ranjan Majumder, Dipok Ghosh, Laxmi Chatterjee, Shirin Chowdhury, among others, addressed the rally.



Aptech Mirpur Centre organised a blood donation programme in cooperation with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society recently to mark the centre's fourth anniversary. Centre Chairperson Sabrina Islam inaugurated the programme.