

Chronicle

FROM PAGE 1
into people, but the perpetrators wentscot-free.

The killing of Haroon-or-Rashid, 44, of the local daily Purbanchal, on March 2, 2002 sent a shock wave through the region, prompting Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury to promise quick actions to arrest the killers and help the victim's family.

The pledges still go unmet.

He often covered the criminal activities by leftist extremists.

Journalist Shukkur Hossain, 40, of the regional daily Anirban was abducted from home and gunned down on the river Ghangrail in Khulna on July 5, 2002.

His body was never found.

Journalist Nahar Ali was killed in April 2001 near his home in Dumuria. No-one of the six accused of killing him was tried.

Saiful Alam Mukul, editor of the Jessore-based Runner, was killed in 1998.

Mir Illias Hossain, editor of the local daily Bir Darpan, was killed in January 2000.

SM Allaudin, editor of the local weekly Ogrodoot, was killed in the region in 1996.

Shamsur Rahman, Jessore correspondent of the daily Janakantha, was gunned down at work on July 16, 2000.

Local police submitted a supplementary chargesheet on September 10 last year in a move criticised by the victim's wife as a ploy to hide the real criminals.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 1
In a condolence message yesterday, Hasina blamed the coalition government for the bomb attack and said the killing of Manik was not an isolated incident but part of repressions on the journalists.

She expressed sympathy for the bereaved family and prayed for peace of the departed soul.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna adds: The AL chief is expected to arrive in Khulna on January 18 to visit Manik's residence and express sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday went to Khulna Medical College Hospital to pay respect to the slain journalist. Jalil came to Khulna to inaugurate the conference of city Awami League.

Khulna journalist

FROM PAGE 1
city life to a virtual halt. Security was tightened in and around the city, but no-one was arrested until early last night.

Witnesses said a man went to the press club at about 12:30pm and talked to Manik about a personal matter minutes before he boarded a rickshaw to get back home.

The man called Manik from behind -- his rickshaw a few steps ahead -- and another man hurled the bomb at him as soon as he got down from the vehicle. He died instantly. The rickshawpuller fled.

Journalists who were at the press club rushed out on hearing the explosion and found his headless, blood-smeared body on the ground. They took the body to the KMCH.

Police believe the killing was the result of his outspoken, uncompromising stand against law and order downslide in the southwestern district with a long history of outlaw violence.

Local journalists brought out a procession yesterday afternoon in protest at the murder of the prominent reporter, who was also senior staff correspondent of NewAge.

"His reports regularly probed ... into underground political activities of the region. We consider the attack ... an infringement on freedom of expression," says New Age in a press release.

Khulna Press Club called a daylong hartal in the metropolitan city for tomorrow as part of a seven-day programme that includes wearing of black badges, protest rally, mourning procession and hoisting of black flags atop local newspaper offices.

The main opposition Awami League called another daylong hartal for Sunday in the city to protest the murder.

Leaders of political parties, including the ruling BNP, rushed to hospital to pay their last respect to the slain journalist and expressed solidarity with the hartal call and other programmes drawn up at a meeting at 3:30pm by Khulna Press Club with its President Humayun Kabir Balu in the chair.

Khulna district and city units of Puja UdJapan Parishad condemned the murder of Manik, one of parishad leaders.

Manik, also member of Khulna District Bar Association and Vice-chairman of Khulna South Herald School, entered journalism in 1984 and was closely associated with

manysocio-cultural organisations.

He left behind his parents, wife and two minor daughters.

Senior police officers, including Police Commissioner Mustafizur Rahman, visited the scene and the press club.

Khulna Union of Journalists and Metropolitan Union of Journalists also condemned the killing and demanded arrest of the killers in 24 hours.

Manik joined BBC as a stringer in 1994 and now-closed Ekushey TV as its divisional correspondent in 2000.

The senior crime reporter of Dainik Purbanchal, Shaikh Haroon-ar-Rashid, was gunned down at Mujjumi under Khalishpur Police Station in March 2002 and the Dainik Anirvan crime reporters Nahor Ali and Shukur Hossain were murdered in Dumuria the same year.

Trader dies

FROM PAGE 1
Saidur Raman Babul asked her to pay Tk 2 lakh in presence of the police informant and two sub-inspectors to secure her husband's release, Moina alleged.

"As I knew he had no cases against him, I refused to pay any money and told the OC I would have him freed by court."

Police produced Khorshed before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Wednesday with a seven-day remand petition. The court however granted a one-day remand.

When Moina and her daughter Ivy went to the police station yesterday noon, they were told Khorshed had suddenly fallen sick and was taken to Suhrawardy Hospital.

"When we went to the hospital at around 5:00pm, the hospital staff told me he had died," Moina said, sobbing.

The OC, however, refuted the allegation. "She [Moina] came to the police station at 1:30pm after I phoned her to say that her husband had fallen sick. I had never talked to her before that."

PM shocked

FROM PAGE 1
bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Manik Chandra Saha, staff correspondent of The Daily Sangbad in Khulna and former president of Khulna Press Club, was killed in a bomb attack in front of the club yesterday.

B Chy against JS expansion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury has opposed the ruling four-party alliance decision to expand the Jatiya Sangsad by adding 150 seats to the existing 300.

In a statement yesterday Badruddoza said, "A rise in parliamentary seats will increase public expenditure."

Moreover, it will create conflicts between lawmakers and upazila chairmen as both will be elected by almost equal number of voters from their constituencies, the statement said.

Badruddoza favoured the existing 300-seat parliament and proposed direct election to 200 seats and distribution of 100 seats among the political parties on the basis of votes won by them in the elections.

Civil servants

FROM PAGE 12
Chairman of the Handloom Board Taj Mohammad has been made Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs. His replacement is yet to be appointed.

Secretary in-charge of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs Nazrul Islam has been transferred to the Energy Division of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Iqbal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury has been made Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Official sources said more changes will take place immediately as contract of several secretaries will expire soon.

Thai PM

FROM PAGE 1
Commerce (ICC), Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will welcome her Thai counterpart at the Zia International Airport at 11:30am.

Thaksin will present the key-note paper at the inauguration session of the ICC conference at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre tomorrow noon. Khaleda Zia will be the chief guest of the session.

Later, the Thai premier will visit the International Trade Fair and the Thai pavilion there at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, foreign ministry sources said. They also confirmed that this is not a bilateral visit.

Thaksin is scheduled to leave Dhaka at 6:00pm.

Pascal Lamy

FROM PAGE 1
meet Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, a press release said yesterday.

International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh has organised the conference on Global Economic Governance and Challenges of Multilateralism.

Lamy will have talks with Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and discuss the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Development Agenda with WTO Director General Dr Supachai Panichpakdi and other visiting trade ministers.

He is expected to meet members of the civil society, business leaders and foreign investors.

Bush

FROM PAGE 12
essential, especially after China's first manned space flight last year. Nasa's 2003 strategic plan says its mission was widened to include the Pentagon's space effort.

Road link

FROM PAGE 12
The prime minister recalled her last visit to Yangon, which she said has ushered in a new era in the relationship between the two neighbours.

The envoy mentioned the exchange of visits at the top level and said it has opened new avenues of cooperation in trade and commerce.

Referring to the road link, the Myanmar envoy said the work is about to start.

82 sarbaharas

FROM PAGE 1
The operatives will leave the path of crime," the minister told the official news agency BSS, describing the event as a great success for the government.

Police allowed the operatives to surrender without illegal firearms in a decision that drew flak from locals and called the event on Wednesday as a special meeting on law and order as controversy muffled it.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Golam Mustafa told The Daily Star: "Police administration listed 82 operatives for return to normal life. They are all on bail. The event is the outcome of a series of meetings with two outfits of outlaws."

"The programme is not aimed at granting them amnesty," he said, adding the operatives handed 82 firearms and 180 bullets to police and agreed to give up violence.

"But the arms and ammunition were listed as abandoned because of legal bindings," said the DIG who held talks with the leaders of underground Zia and Kamrul groups over the last four months amid law and order downslide in the district.

Political observers view it as a scheme to rehabilitate the ruling BNP-patronised outlaws.

Private firm

FROM PAGE 1
"Foreign investment will not be a problem for such a project if the government gives guarantee," he remarked.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat and high officials of the ministry were present.

Contech Ltd was the lowest bidder after an American company that quoted Tk 6,000 crore in an international tender called by Bangladesh Railway for the subway last February.

According to the proposal, the firm will hand over the system to the government after 19 years of operation when it will charge the highest fare of Tk 18 a passenger on a one-way 22 km journey.

The company will install a gas-fired power plant to run the subway system and raise the fare in case of gas price hike by the government, Masud said.

Commenting on the project, the communications minister said the government decided in principle to set up a subway in Dhaka, but it was yet to give the job to any company.

"We are just gaining knowledge from the presentation," he said.

The minister said the government had earlier thought underground railway was not viable for Dhaka city because of its soil conditions.

But new technologies that have evolved over the years could be applied, he said, adding subway was a solution to messy traffic snarl-ups.

Prof Shafullah of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) said the soil of Dhaka had advantages for a subway and was better than the soil configuration of Tokyo.

He said the systems could be developed with the existing technology and the maintenance

Saifur

FROM PAGE 12
Religious places should be kept beyond the reach of politics and the culprits punished, he observed. He also visited the injured at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Police are quizzing the five remanded for the second day yesterday but failed to get leads to the bomb attack, sources said.

Meanwhile, Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain has demanded a public investigation commission to probe the bomb blast.

Dr Kamal said he would send letters through Abdul Quader Siddiqui MP to Leader of the House Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina seeking the probe.

A powerful quarter was behind the mysterious explosion and there should be an extensive enquiry into the incident, he told a public meeting held in the city's Court Point area yesterday evening and organised by Sylhet District Oikya Prochetsha.

Aftab Hossain Chowdhury chaired it while Quader Siddiqui, Fazlur Rahman, former MP, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and Pankaj Bhattacharya spoke, among others.

Dr. Kamal said the country does not belong to any person, family or party, but to its people.

Earlier, he visited the shrine and the place of occurrence. He also expressed sympathy with the injured now receiving treatment at the hospital.

11th Asian Art

FROM PAGE 12
distinctiveness," said the prime minister.

She was inaugurating the 11th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh 2003 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday afternoon.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman and Director General of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Ahmed Nazir also addressed the function, attended, among others, by ministers, MPs, diplomats and a large number of artists and art critics from home and abroad.

The prime minister distributed prizes, including medals and cash, among the winners of the 11th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh 2003.

Artists from 45 countries of the Asia-Pacific region and Africa are participating in the art festival, organised by Bangladesh Shilpa Kala Academy. It will continue till January 31.

Michael Riley of Australia, Simin Keramati of Iran and Tayeba Begum Lipi of Bangladesh received grand prizes of Tk one lakh and a medal each.

expenditure of an underground system was less than surface communications.

The traffic system in the city might be disturbed in the construction period, but that would have to be tolerated for a better future.

Alamgir Mujibul Huq, another BUET teacher, observed that a surface transport system was not enough for any city of over one million people.

A multi-transport approach is needed to tackle the situation, he said, adding the government would make choices of systems.

The subway will have four major junctions from where people will be able to change routes.

Initially four coaches will run on the route, carrying about 2,000 passengers a trip. The number of coaches may be increased depending on the rush of passengers.

In the second phase, the subway may be extended up to Sadarghat from Gulistan.

Intelligence unit

FROM PAGE 12
companies. The remaining 400 files are on large-scale industrial companies. The Vat files being prepared by the LTU are on these industries.

"By monitoring both income tax and Vat payments of these companies from a single point, it will be easier to detect evasions," said an NBR source.

Terms of trade

FROM PAGE 1
grew in FY02 as the BB report shows."

It is vital the government adjusts its export strategy to reverse this trend, says Dr Mustafizur. "If we cannot graduate to high value addition products and go for up-market, where prices are better with new products, the terms of trade will further deteriorate."

Security

FROM PAGE 12
friends far outnumbered his enemies.

Manik was threatened many a time for reporting on how shrimp growers forcibly take over poor farmers' land.

Manik however could never figure out who these anonymous callers were. However, he always suspected the outlaw group, Purba Banglar Communist Party (Janajuddha), had targeted him, Khulna journalists said. His family was also under constant stress because of the situation. If he was late to return home at night, his wife and two daughters -- Natasa, 14, and Parsia, 7, would become worried.

Because of the threats, he used to move around the city carefully and would usually not go out alone.

But as fate had it, Manik went out alone in the morning yesterday. And the worst became true -- Manik was killed.

Eco-park

FROM PAGE 12
authorities fail to respond to the notice within 10 days of receipt.

The notice said the project has threatened the livelihood and culture of the Garo people living in and around Modhupur forest. Indiscriminate destruction and shrinkage of the forest land have adversely affected at least 25,000 forest people whose lives and livelihood depend directly on the forest.

It blamed government agencies for their mismanagement of the public forest. Illegal encroachment on forestland and trade in forest resources and unlawful utilisation of forestland for commercial, industrial and agricultural purposes are some major causes of shrinkage of the forest, it added.

The notice also demanded a comprehensive plan for recovery of the encroached forestland and restoration of ecosystem of the forest within two months.

The notice was served on the secretaries of the ministries of environment and forest, land, home, establishment and local government, rural development and cooperatives, chairmen of Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, chief conservator of forest, divisional forest officers, Tangail and Mymensingh, and deputy commissioners of the two districts.

Hasina rejects

FROM PAGE 1
"The government has made no efforts to make the current parliament functional, which has already lost its effectiveness," she said adding that the House and even the parliamentary standing committees have been suffering from acute quorum crisis despite two-thirds majority of the ruling alliance in parliament.

The Awami League chief hinted at the ruling alliance partner Jamaat-e-Islami's hands behind the recent bomb blast at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal in Sylhet.

Hasina criticised some newspapers and columnists for keeping mum despite a 'panicky situation' created by the alliance men all over the country. "During the previous Awami League government we were made victims of a smear campaign by some newspapers and columnists, but they are all silent now," she lamented.

The leaders of the professional groups extended their support to the AL's 15-point demand and said they would gear up anti-government movement to meet the demands.

The discussion, conducted by AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Kader, was addressed by Prof

Non-govt

FROM PAGE 12
Employees Unity Council.

The council has exempted public examinations and admission tests from the purview of the strike.

He claimed that the four-party ruling alliance in its election pledge had committed 100 per cent contribution to the salary of non-government teachers and employees but it is yet to meet the pledge.

"We had talks with the ministers concerned and they promised to fulfil our demands. But nothing has been done so far forcing us to go on a strike," the council leader said.

The strike will continue till the demands are met, he said. "If necessary, we will go for a fast unto death programme."

Reserved JS seats

FROM PAGE 1
a private organisation, termed the plan 'imprudent' and asked the government to give the idea a second thought.

"In the current election context, a woman cannot compete with her men counterparts as black money and muscle power rule the election process," Roksanad added.

Demanding direct polls to women seats, Ain O Shalish Kendra (ASK) pegged the government decision as 'imprudent and gender-biased' and urged the alliance to withdraw the decision.

"Such a major decision that requires an amendment to the constitution without discussion with the opposition does not mirror democratic attitudes," the ASK statement added.

---with the decision, the government has overlooked the longtime demand of women for direct elections in women constituencies," a statement of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWA) said.

"The government decision that undermines the entire women community of the country is also contrary to the Convention on Elimination of all Discriminations Against Women," said the BNWA statement, signed by its Executive Director Salma Ali.

Bangladesh Society for the Environment and Human Rights (BSEHR) said women were demanding direct election in women constituencies for a long time.

Sigma Huda, secretary general, and Elina Khan, executive director of the BSEHR, urged the government to amend the constitution enabling women's direct election to the reserved seats.

Shirin Akther and Sharmin Kabir, president and general secretary of the Karmajibi Nari, in a joint statement said: "Through the decision the alliance has deprived women of their rights and proved that they are politically indifferent to women."

"For ensuring women rights, it is an imperative to hold direct elections in the reserved constituencies as our political parties do not show interest in nominating women in parliamentary polls," said Shamima Akther, a student of Government Bangla College in Dhaka.

"Women should have 50 per cent representation in parliament as they constitute half of the population."

Jannatul Ferdous Rani, a student of mass communication and journalism at Dhaka University, also

Rashid-e-Mahboob, Dr Abdur Razzak, AKM Ishak, SM Khabiruzzaman, Dr Mustak Hossain, Dr Sarwar Ali, Prof Noor Mohammad Talukder, Prof Shadat Ullah, Prof Saidul Haq Chowdhury, Farhad Hossain, Ruhul Haq and QC Majumder.

Accord with China on public security coop in February

UNB, Dhaka

A meeting on China-Bangladesh cooperation on public security was held at Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday.

The meeting, chaired by State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar, discussed possible areas of cooperation, like training in various fields and exchange of experiences between the public security ministry of China and the home ministry of Bangladesh.

It proposed a visit to Bangladesh by the public security minister of China in the last week of February to sign an agreement on cooperation.

Chinese Ambassador Chai Xi, Home Secretary Muhammad Omar Farooq, Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, director general (Far East) of foreign ministry attended the meeting.

Sergeant killed

FROM PAGE 12
ascertain whether Hanif has any connections with former leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League Masud Rana Shahin with whom Firoz was talking at the time of the firing.

Sources in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue said the bullets found in the bodies of Firoz and Shahabuddin were of the same kind.

Another police officer said a gang led by Nabullah Nabi, a listed criminal of Mohammadpur, might have made the attacks.

favoured direct ballot to the reserved seats.

"We need efficient women politicians for women empowerment and development of the country and direct election can play a major role to that end," Rana said.

Rina Jobeyda Hossain, a housewife, also demanded direct election, saying it would help groom women leadership.

Lutfunnahar Mini, a service holder, does not think that an increase in women seats will ensure empowerment of women or development of Bangladesh.

JCD men

FROM PAGE 12
seeking security of life before going into hiding.

Ajker Alo ran a report on the capture of JCD leader of Kushtia Quamtul Alia Madrassah Amir Hossain with a girl in his hostel room by Madrasah Superintendent Mawlana Jaqub Ali on Tuesday morning, according to the GD.

The news angered the JCD men and on Wednesday night, at least 25 of them led reportedly by its district unit President Abdul Mueed Babul and General Secretary Kamal Uddin swooped on Risvy while he was going to office from the local civil surgeon's office after a press conference.

The JCD men picked Risvy at Joardar Lane, roughed him up and asked him to leave Kushtia. Risvy was given first aid.

Local journalists have protested the incident and demanded immediate action against the JCD men. A meeting was held at Kushtia Reporters' Unity office with its President Halimuzzaman in the chair. The journalists have issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the authorities to take action against the JCD men involved. Otherwise, they will go for tougher programme.

Former president of Kushtia Reporters' Unity Mattur Rahman Laifu, Editor of daily Andoloner Bazar Manjur Ahasan Choudhury, Editor of Daily Deshtathya Abul Bari, Editor of Daily Ajker Alo Gazi Mahabubur Rahman, Shamsul Alam Swapan, Amanur Aman, Mustafizur Rahman, Munshi Tarique Islam and Abu Bakkar Siddique spoke at the meeting.

The district BNP leaders have assured the journalists of taking appropriate action against the culprits.