

Fresh bloodshed

FROM PAGE 1
His cousin SM Rezaul Hasan received the body and carried it to the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue before taking it to Khulna for burial.

Addressing an impromptu rally after he was brought to the DMCH, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil blamed the attempt on the life of Manzur, general secretary of Sonadanga AL since January 1, on the 'ruling party hit-men'.

Manzur's killing took place after a series of high-profile killings in Khulna including that of city unit AL president Manzurul Imam on August 25 last year, journalist Manik Chandra Saha on January 15 and Batighata BNP leader Amir Azam Khan on January 29. **REVENGE KILLING**
Police retrieved Kubbab's body from Despare WAPDA road yesterday morning and the superintendent of police, Khulna said the murder was committed at the house of alleged underground operative Shahidul Islam.

Alleged outlaws abducted the BNP leader from his Anandnagar village home hours before the killing, said his younger sister Chantara Begum, who lodged the first information report with the police.

The motive for the killing could not be known immediately, but locals alleged outlawed operatives killed him to avenge his cooperation with law-enforcers in an anti-outlaw drive in the upazila.

Some alleged the Janajuddha (Marxist and Leninist) murdered him as he severed ties with the outfit after being elected to the union parishad.

Two suspects were picked up for questioning after the killing, but the local officer-in-charge refused to give their names.

Leaders and activists of Terokhada BNP brought out a procession in protest against the murder and demanded exemplary punishment to the killers.

VICTIM OF TURF WAR
Iqbal received bullets in his head and chest in front of Kashipur Primary School at about 9.30pm on Friday on his way home from a sister's house.

Son of Hashem Biswas of Royermahal in Khalishpur, Iqbal had been living in the Kashipur house of his sister for the last three months after receiving death threats from drug-runners associated with outlaws, family sources said.

Locals said he was a victim of turf war between two gangs of drug traders close to outlaws, but his brother-in-law Akram Molla said he was killed for opposing drug pushing in the locality.

STUDENT LEADER DEAD
Organising Secretary of Faridpur district Chhatra League Biswalet Dasgupta, 26, who was stabbed by assailants in Faridpur on January 15, died from his wounds at the DMCH yesterday afternoon.

A gang of 14 assassins stabbed him repeatedly with sharp weapons when he was drinking tea at a stall near his house.

He was rushed to Faridpur hospital and later shifted to the DMCH a day after the incident.

RESPONSIBILITY
In a message faxed to the press club and a few newspapers in Khulna yesterday, the Janajuddha faction of the PBCP claimed responsibility for

the killings of Manzur and Amir Azam Khan, local BNP leader and chairman of Amirpur union in Batighata upazila.

In a similar message, Janajuddha (Marxist and Leninist) faction took responsibility for killing Kubbab and Iqbal.

The claims could not be probed independently.

ANTI-CRIME DRIVE
A fresh anti-crime drive was likely to be launched in the troubled Khulna region from midnight last night to hunt down terrorists, highly placed sources told The Daily Star yesterday.

All preparations were taken and a high-level meeting of superintendents of police in the violence-torn southwestern region was held at the office of the deputy inspector general of police, Khulna range yesterday to discuss the drive, they added.

The government has ordered the drive to stem the tide of killings in the region, they said, adding the army might be called out to assist the law-enforcers.

VALLEY OF DEATH
Long described as a city of tranquility for peaceful life in the confluence of Rupsha and Bhatirab rivers, Khulna city has now emerged as the 'valley of death' for its violent present.

At least 45 people have been killed in Khulna division from January 1 to January 30, mostly in Khulna city which is at the heart of the bloodbath, blamed largely on a raft of leftist outfits.

"People fear to go out of house after sunset and relatives call one another after nightfall to know their wellbeing in the violence-scarred city," said a Khulna journalist, requesting anonymity.

"It's like a plague outbreak." The list of the dead is growing every day with the death of political leaders, journalists, law enforcers and even innocent bystanders caught up in the raging chaos.

About 580 people, including 12 police constables, were killed in 2003, up from 285 in 2002, 333 in 2001 and 380 in 2000 in the southwest, showing a clear sign of rising death count.

The outlaws, used to employing sniper attacks in their war against 'class enemy', are now largely using crude bombs to take life, plunging existence in the city into utter uncertainty.

"After we leave home for work, we cannot say who will return home at the end of the day," said a civil servant.

"It's a homeland of horror," he said, adding, "Only major incidents get play in the press, scores of others go unreported as journalists fear to cover them."

The Janajuddha issued a death threat to nine journalists in Satkhira on January 23 for covering their activities.

Several clandestine arms factories work full-time in the 'wild southwest' to manufacture weapons for the outlaws, said a Khulna-based journalist.

The government ordered several anti-crime drives in the region to cut violence, but the operations failed to make headway.

The much-talked-about joint drive Operation Clean Heart and Operation Spider Web could not stem the free fall of order.

College student

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Solaiman to pay Tk 5 lakh toll since last week. As he refused to pay the money, they abducted his 20 years old son, family sources said.

The gang called the victim's father in the evening and demanded the same amount as ransom they added.

Tejgaon police said they heard about the incident but could not elaborate.

Car bomb
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elections ahead of the June 30 deadline for the handover of sovereignty from the US-led coalition to an Iraqi government.

Annan pulled international staff out of Iraq last year after two suicide attacks on the UN headquarters in Baghdad. The most devastating attack, on Aug. 19, killed 22 people including the head of the UN mission, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The United Nations is returning to Iraq at the request of Washington, after US plans for the handover of sovereignty were rejected by Iraq's leading Shia cleric.

No bird flu
FROM PAGE 12
second largest chicken exporter, they suggested.

About a survey being carried out by government departments concerned on the latest situation in poultry sector, Morshed Alam said the survey report will be available within a week. Reports received so far say the situation is good, he added.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide financial and technical support to face any situation in poultry sector, Alam mentioned.

On the death of chickens at same Savar poultry farms recently, he said it was an isolated incident caused by wrong vaccination.

Association leaders who spoke at the press conference included MA Salek, vice-president, ATM Alamgir, treasurer, and Rafiqul Haq and Kamal Ahmed, members.

Govt on alert
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meeting called by Deputy Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan.

Jafar said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia held separate talks with the three DCs of the CHT on current political atmosphere and directed them to avert any untoward situation and discuss matters with the opposition parties and civil society to that end.

The prime minister has also asked Head of CHT Implementation Affairs Committee Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to discuss immediately political issues on the CHT with PCJSS chief Shantu Larma.

Meanwhile, Moni asked the Parbatya Bangali Gono Parishad (PBG) to withdraw its counter programmes against the PCJSS agitation and hold talks with the government.

The PCJSS has called the agitation programmes demanding full implementation of the CHT peace agreement, removal of Chairman of CHT Development Board lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan, appointment of an indigenous person as full minister for CHT affairs and withdrawal of Bangalee settlers from the area.

Rover sees
FROM PAGE 12
Global Surveyor previously spotted hematite at Opportunity's landing site. Scientists believe the mineral covers as much as 20 percent of the surface at Meridiani Planum, an area hundreds of miles across.

As for the ailing Spirit rover, Nasa deleted 1,700 files from its flash memory Friday and then rebooted the rover.

"I am pleased to report it appears to be working just fine," said Glenn Reeves, chief engineer for the rover's flight software. He said Nasa should be able to declare Spirit "fully recovered" by Sunday.

Businessman
FROM PAGE 12
notorious Shibir cadre Gittu Nasir. Police said they are trying follow up all possible leads to the identity and whereabouts of the abductors.

"We are trying to catch the culprits and rescue Jahangir," Meah Luthfar Rahman Chowdhury, the deputy commissioner (north) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police told this correspondent.

The victim's younger brother Jan-e-Alam filed a case with Khulshi police yesterday.

B Chy
FROM PAGE 12
platform.

Badruddoza, also the founding secretary general of the ruling BNP, said he had to relinquish presidency as the party that voted him to the office asked for it by a majority decision. "I know that was a wrong decision, still I did oblige, as it was a majority decision."

About his re-entry into active politics after one and a half years, Badruddoza said he was aspiring to introduce an alternative trend in politics through which he could get close to the people.

Asked if he expects the electronic media to air the new CD, the former president said if it is not possible to show the CD in local media he would arrange for its publicity in foreign TV channels. The CD would be released first in the Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy.

Cattle traders

FROM PAGE 1
Traders said sale picked up yesterday and is expected to double today as thousands of sacrificial animals swarmed the designated cattle markets and nearby roads.

Thousands more poured into the city throughout yesterday, by trucks, mechanised boats and on foot to join the already packed markets.

Sale will peak today and throughout the night as most buyers prefer to wait till the last moment looking to strike a better deal.

Meanwhile, some cattle traders have been mugged by organised gangs of criminals in the city. There have also been reports of buyers being robbed after being drugged unconscious.

Sources at Dhaka Medical College Hospital said 25 such victims, mostly from the city's largest Gabtoli cattle market, were hospitalised in last two days with drug-induced complications.

Apart from Gabtoli, many prospective buyers are also checking out other markets like the one at Panthapath.

"I came to this market on Wednesday when sales were insignificant. But now with two days before the Eid, the place is teeming

with buyers and sellers," said Ataur Rahman, a trader at Panthapath cattle market. He said traders expected the rush to further intensify tomorrow, the day before Eid.

Mohammed Mostafa, a resident of the city's Mohammedpur area, was surveying market prices before making a final decision. "Yesterday, I went to Gabtoli but prices there were too high compared to last year," he said as he checked out prices at the Panthapath market.

Mahmudur Rahman from Dhanmondi bought a bull at Panthapath. "I have bought for Tk 17,000, which seems a bit higher than last year."

Dhaka's Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka and State Minister for Home Luftuzzaman Babar yesterday visited some cattle markets in the city and directed authorities to ensure complete discipline during transaction.

The mayor asked mobile courts to watch out for all types of extortion and harassment and ensure cleanliness.

He said market authorities were permitted to charge five percent of the sale price, adding that anyone found overcharging would be prosecuted.

DAE question leak 3 remanded, 15 jailed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A court in Mymensingh yesterday placed three persons on remand for their alleged involvement with the question paper leakage for the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) written test of Block Supervisors.

The Court of Magistrate Mosharrat Hossain placed each of three men on a two-day remand and sent 15 others, arrested in connection with the crime, to jail.

On Friday, police held 18 persons including 16 employees of the DAE on charge of question paper leakage, sources said.

The written examination was postponed on Friday but fresh date was yet to be announced, a DAE official said.

When contacted SM Ashfaq Hossain, additional deputy commissioner (education), said the test will be held within two or three weeks.

Agricultural ministry formed a three-member body headed by Abdul Mannan Mian, director of the DAE, to probe the question leakage.

Tk 2.8 lakh robbed from Butterfly showroom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted cash and valuables said to be worth over Tk 2.8 lakh from Butterfly showroom at Darussalam Road in Mirpur-1 on Friday night.

Posing as customers, 7/8 youths entered the showroom at Block B at around 9:00pm to inquire about prices of different items.

At one stage, some of them whipped out arms and took hostage all six staff at gunpoint and asked showroom Manager Badrul Alam to hand over entire cash.

The robbers took Tk 2.64 lakh from the cash counter, Tk 5,683 from Badrul, a mobile phone and a ring.

While leaving the gang warned them of further attack if they showed their faces.

Badrul filed a case with Mirpur Police Station. Police could not recover the sum or arrest any of the robbers till 8:00 last night.

AL leaders
FROM PAGE 12
without opposition" as during 1991-96 and 1996-2001. Despite the transition to a democratic order after Ershad's autocratic rule, both the fifth and seventh parliaments passed almost half of their terms with the opposition staying away.

About MPs' views on crucial issues like parliament boycott and anti-government movement, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star, "MPs are not above the party. Everyone including the lawmakers should abide by whatever the party decides."

A defiant Jalil said if the government paid no heed to AL's 15-point demand and 30-day ultimatum, the party would certainly go for a quit-power movement.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid, however, told this correspondent if needed, the party would convene a meeting of the ALPP during the current session of parliament.

On the party workers' fear of being implicated in false cases if an out-governed movement is launched, Hamid said, "We will deal with the situation accordingly."

Odhikar
FROM PAGE 1
18 abducted in the incidents. Besides, 10 children are missing, seven acid-burnt and three arrested while five committed suicide.

It said one journalist was killed, one arrested, one abducted and three others were injured during the period. Moreover, three new persons were assaulted and one attacked, while 15 received death threats and cases were filed against five.

Eighteen people were acid-burnt, mostly as a sequel to previous enmity and overland dispute.

Odhikar also said 18 women were killed, eight tortured and one committed suicide in dowry-related violence.

Nine people were killed, 23 injured and 14 abducted in incidents of human-rights violation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts during the period.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Shishu Odhikar Forum said 553 children's rights were violated in January.

However, Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha said 189 incidents of women torture took place in last month, killing 66.

Fifty-three women were raped, 18 tortured, 14 acid-burnt, 13 abducted and 10 harassed to suicide, the organisation added.

Meanwhile, Manobadhikar, another rights organisation, said 177 people were killed in violence in January with an average of six every day.

Nuclear chief

FROM PAGE 1
scientists sold nuclear weapons technology to countries including Iran and Libya. The probe was launched in November after Iran provided information to the UN nuclear watchdog.

It wasn't immediately clear if further legal action would be taken against Khan or others accused in the investigation.

President Pervez Musharraf chaired a meeting yesterday of Pakistan's National Command Authority, which controls the country's nuclear assets. The top officials were informed that the investigation "was nearly concluded and appropriate action will be taken against those found guilty," the military said in a statement.

The statement also reiterated that the nuclear program was only intended to deter Pakistan's enemies and "it would never be in the national interest to share this technology in whatever form with any other country."

Six scientists and security officials from the nuclear facility -- the Khan Research Laboratories, named after Khan -- are being held in the probe over allegations of nuclear transfers to Iran and Libya. Khan was not arrested, but acquaintances said he has been restricted to the capital, Islamabad.

Analysts had said a decision to punish top scientists, particularly Khan, would be a tough one for Musharraf and would likely trigger an angry reaction from nationalists. Khan remains an icon of impoverished Pakistan's successful campaign to create a formidable nuclear defense against a much larger foe, India.

Officials have said that Khan and a top aide, Mohammed Farooq, have failed to account for money in personal bank accounts. Farooq is among the six scientists in custody.

Khan and Farooq have told investigators they didn't supply any technology to Iran and Libya, and Khan has maintained he did nothing to damage the interests of Pakistan, officials said.

Earlier yesterday, officials said loose controls at Khan's laboratory allowed a small number of its employees to profit from the nuclear black market. Those findings were to have been reviewed by Musharraf at the yesterday's meeting.

Pakistan's government says it never sanctioned transfers of nuclear technology to other countries and will act against anyone guilty of doing so. The government has publicly acknowledged "one or two people" acted for personal gain.

Born in present-day India in 1935, Khan emigrated to Pakistan in 1952.

1.7m perform Hajj
FROM PAGE 1
attempt to undermine security, are working overtime to prevent any attacks in the kingdom during the pilgrimage.

Six Saudi security men were shot dead Thursday as they searched for arms and explosives in a wanted militant's home in Riyadh, 700 kilometers (435 miles) from Makkah. The militant was arrested in the operation, and his father killed.

The interior ministry said security forces in the capital subsequently arrested seven suspected members of a group planning a "terror attack" and seized large amounts of arms and explosives.

Security forces arrested "seven individuals suspected of belonging to the group... preparing a terror attack," said an interior ministry statement quoted Friday by the official SPA news agency.

Raid on two Riyadh hideouts of presumed Islamist militants Thursday night netted a booby-trapped car and 21 explosives belts among large amounts of arms and explosives, the statement said.

The security operation followed the fatal shooting, also Thursday, of six security men and the father of a detained suspect during a search of his home.

five years after its partition from India. He earned a doctorate in metallurgy in Belgium, and has been awarded Pakistan's highest civilian award twice the only person so honored.

Khan worked in the Netherlands at a subsidiary of the British-German-Dutch nuclear conglomerate URENCO in 1972-76 before returning home to start Pakistan's nuclear program, which tested its first nuclear device in 1998.

In 1983, a Dutch court convicted Khan in absentia of stealing confidential material from URENCO and sentenced him to four years in prison. He denied the charge and the conviction was later overturned on a technicality.

Blast at Shahjalal shrine Probe body gets extra days to submit report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
Local administration yesterday gave a committee on probing the bomb blast at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) 10 more days to submit its findings for the second time.

Earlier, the probe body, headed by the superintendent of police in Sylhet, was given another 10 days to point finger at persons involved in the explosion after it failed to submit its report within seven days.

With two weeks passing since the bomb blasted on January 12, police failed to identify the people involved in the attack, which claimed five lives and injured more than 50 devotees, sources said.

Police could not reap any valuable information from the six arrested persons. A magistrate court sent them to jail after their remand period expired, they added.

Gilligan seeks
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suicide of Iraq weapons expert David Kelly, said on Saturday he has resigned from the public broadcaster.

In a statement to Britain's domestic Press Association news agency, Gilligan acknowledged that part of his May 29 report -- which alleged that Downing Street "sexed up" intelligence on Iraq -- was wrong.

"I again apologise for it," he said. "My departure from the BBC is at my own initiative. But the BBC collectively has been the victim of a grave injustice."

"I love the BBC and I am resigning because I want to protect it," he said in his 500-word statement.

"I accept my part in the crisis which has befallen the organisation. But a greater part has been played by the unbalanced judgments" contained in Lord Brian Hutton's report into Kelly's death.

Gilligan aired the May 29 report on BBC radio alleging that Prime Minister Tony Blair's inner circle had "sexed up" a crucial September 2002 dossier on Iraq and weapons of mass destruction.

Aussie Open
FROM PAGE 12
Henin-Hardenne then served out confidently for the title, sealing victory by hammering an unstopable serve down the middle that Clijsters could only flail her racket at.

Henin-Hardenne collapsed on the court with joy as Clijsters was left disconsolate after her fourth defeat in a Grand Slam final.

The win saw Henin-Hardenne go level with Clijsters in head-to-head meetings at 9-9 but she has now beaten her in seven consecutive WTA and Grand Slam finals.

Poultry industry

FROM PAGE 12
farms in Gazipur district on the verge of collapse, said Asaduzzaman Biplob, general secretary of the association.

Gazipur is the major hub of poultry industry.

In the last couple of years, around 500 poultry farms in the district closed down due to various factors.

The association leaders mentioned that wholesale price of broilers and layers has plummeted by about 50 percent to Tk 25 to 30 a kg now from Tk 50 to 60 only a few weeks ago. The price fall in retail markets is also similar.

The farms are also unable to stock chickens as it would cause them further loss due to increase in overhead cost, they added.

Poultry price has declined by around 40 percent from the usual price, said the staff at a city sales centre of a major poultry farm.

Meanwhile, high officials of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock said yesterday there was no report of bird flu in Bangladesh. They however stressed the need for alert.

"The entire field level, upazila and district officials have been asked to keep watch on the situation and report immediately any case of bird flu anywhere. Proper steps will be taken whenever needed," said State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock

Kul Abdu Sattar.

"We are also examining the parent stock of poultry, imported in the last two months," he added.

Director General of Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute Quazi M Emdadul Huque said they have the technology to detect if a bird is negative or positive with virus.

"Bird flu is a 100-year-old disease in the world, and people should not get panicked as out of many types of viruses, only H5N1 transmits from one species to another," he said.

In case of any infection, all kinds of movement to and from the area should be restricted, transports and equipment have to be disinfected, he added.

The World Health Organisation earlier said, "This (bird flu) is a serious global threat to human health," and sought global efforts to combat it.

Bangladesh government banned import of poultry, broiler or layer stock from India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Taiwan, Malaysia and South Korea in the wake of bird flu outbreak. Bangladesh Rifles have also been alerted to prevent smuggling in of poultry from across the borders.

The ban will continue for two months from January 15 and it will not create any crisis in poultry supply, the state minister said.

BA, Air France

FROM PAGE 1
from the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

He said: "Many Muslims will be travelling throughout aviation systems over the next few days, and some names may match or be similar those held on security records in the US."

Asked why passengers could not simply arrive early at airports to allow time to be cleared by security instead of having their flights cancelled, he said such a move "would create congestion in many airports all around the world."

Air France flights AF026 were cancelled Sunday and Monday "for reasons of security," spokeswoman Veronique Brachet said.

BA's Flight 223 had been the subject of concern early in January, when it was cancelled twice because of security fears and then delayed for hours several more times.

Nuruzzaman

FROM PAGE 1
city on November 18. He was taken to Srimangal Police Station and then to the upazila hospital and again to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

He was admitted to the hospital after he fell sick November 20 in police custody.

The businessman earlier alleged that the complainant of one of the cases, Shahed, Srimangal Thana BNP secretary, and policemen assaulted him in police custody on the night of November 20 while he was placed on a two-day remand.

Truckers 'loot'

FROM PAGE 1
demanded toll from some of them. On the other hand, the truckers denied the allegation of looting the money, but admitted that they beat up the toll collectors as they (toll collectors) assaulted a truck worker the previous night.

No case was filed in this connection till yesterday evening.

Businessman

FROM PAGE 12
notorious Shibir cadre Gittu Nasir. Police said they are trying follow up all possible leads to the identity and whereabouts of the abductors.</