

One killed in BSF fire near Benapole

UNB, Benapole

A Bangladesh national was killed and three others were injured in a brushfire by Indian Border Security Force at Raghunathpur border on Monday.

Witnesses said the four Bangladeshi youths came under the BSF attack while they were working in a field at zero point near Berapara border of India.

Later, the BSF personnel took the body and the bullet-injured youths to the Indian side. The identity of the youths could not be immediately known.

BDR sources said none came to them for any information on the deceased and the injured youths.

The BSF claimed that they found three packets stuffed with smuggled goods from the spot.

Tension was running along the Indo-Bangla border following the incident.



Federer romps to Aussie Open

AFP, Melbourne

Roger Federer confirmed his world number one ranking on Sunday with

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3 bodies recovered in Banshkhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bodies of three auto-rickshaw passengers have been recovered from Shankha River near Tollaridwip Ferry Ghat in Banskhal upazila in a span of 48 hours ending at Monday afternoon.

The Chittagong-bound CNG (compressed natural gas)-run vehicle with four passengers fell on the river when a bus rammed the three-wheelers from behind on the pontoon at 4:30pm Saturday. All the passengers went missing since then.

Divers of Bangladesh Navy after a rescue operation found the bodies of Shefali Chowdhury, 60, and her son Babul Chowdhury, 30, of Manik Muhuripara at Jaldi in Banskhal at around 5:00pm Sunday.

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Pabna JP leader killed in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Highway robbers knifed to death the convenor of Pabna district Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad), wounded two persons and looted cash and valuables near Nabinagar in Savar on Sunday.

A gang of inter-district robbers looted cash and valuables, stabbing Azizur Rahman Arzu, convenor of Pabna JP-Ershad, and his brother Kadar Ali and their employee Chunnun in Nabinagar area when they were going to Pabna from Dhaka, sources said.

Arzu, an accused of the murder of former Pabna municipality chairman Sheikh Shahidullah Bachchu, died on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

He was on the run for long until recently when the High Court

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Prayer Timings		
February 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-45
Maghrib	5-55	6-00
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Firemen try to hose down a raging inferno that burnt 50 wholesale shops on the first floor of Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday evening.

Bangladesh eligible for new US dev aid

AFP, Washington

The United States on Tuesday named 63 countries, including Bangladesh, eligible to share billions of dollars in US aid under a new program aimed at rewarding developing nations which commit to democratic and free market reform.

Abillion dollars has already been made available by Congress for fiscal year 2004 and President George W. Bush on Monday asked lawmakers to approve 2.5 billion dollars for the account in fiscal 2005.

Nations named Tuesday will be able to compete for a slice of the aid under the program, billed by the

Bush administration as a revolutionary way to wean poor nations off long-term aid and prevent assistance from disappearing into the coffers of corrupt states.

Eligible recipients include fledgling states like East Timor and Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Asian giants India and Pakistan, and Uganda, Nigeria and Senegal, which Bush visited during a quick tour of Africa last year.

The announcement followed a meeting on Monday of the board of directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) which will administer the aid.

Secretary of State Colin Powell chairs the board, which also includes Secretary of the Treasury John Snow, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, and the head of the US Agency for International Development Andrew Natsios.

Powell said at the start of the meeting on Monday that "People matter."

"The plight of the world's poor presents all of us with a profound moral challenge," he said. "Alleviating their suffering also holds profound implications for freedom

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India says abetting terrorists may boomerang

Asks neighbours to take lesson from Bhutan

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

India on Tuesday asked Saarc countries to draw a lesson from Bhutan's recent military operation in its territory against Indian militants and said encouragement to terrorist activities could boomerang on the countries themselves.

"The bottom line in our relations with neighbours must remain the need to be sensitive to each other's security concerns and to neither encourage nor undertake any activity that might be detrimental to the security and welfare of the neighbour," External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said while delivering a lecture here on "12th SAARC Summit and Beyond".

Mere denials will not suffice.

Inspiration should be drawn from the courage and foresight with which Bhutan has moved against elements within its borders which were threatening its own sovereignty as well as security of India, he said.

Bhutan's Royal Army had carried out operations in December-January against north eastern Indian insurgent groups like ULFA and NLF.

Pointing out that there have been several developments in India's immediate vicinity, Sinha said it would be wise for everyone to learn from these developments.

Encouraging non-state actors, terrorists and other elements by providing sanctuary and support is

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2 robbers held as daring bid to rob house foiled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police foiled a daring robbery attempt at a house at Mohammadpur and arrested two robbers Tuesday afternoon.

Police and witnesses said a band of six robbers broke into the house of the chief purchase officer of Dhaka City Corporation at Tajmahal Road and took all its inmates hostage at around 2:30pm.

Sensing the robbery attempt, locals called Mohammadpur police and two mobile teams led by sub-inspector AKM Mamunur Rashid rushed to the spot and raided the house.

The robbers asked the police team to leave the spot; otherwise,

they said they would kill the family.

One robber snatched nine-year-old Anika at gunpoint to use her as a shield and ordered the inmates to ask police to leave the area. Otherwise, Anika will be killed, the robbers shouted at the besieged inmates.

One of the policemen however stormed into the room and shot at the robber who was holding Anika hostage. The robbers released Anika and tried to flee the house with the booty firing at the police who also retaliated, police said.

During the gunfight, seven people including two police constables and two robbers sustained bullet wounds.

Four robbers fled the house, but

one was caught. While fleeing, the four robbers got into a private car parked nearby and forced the driver to leave the area. The driver however drove the car onto an electronic pole at Ring Road in Mohammadpur.

A patrol police chased them and arrested one of the four with bullet wounds. Police recovered a revolver and some magazines from the robbers.

MA Malek, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, told newsmen that two constables Mahfuz and Shaha Alam were admitted to Pongu hospital. The

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Mystery virus exposed

A Nipah-like virus the culprit, a US centre discloses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A virus akin to Nipah and Hendra viruses is behind the 'mysterious disease' that broke out in Rajbari and Manikganj recently.

Laboratory tests by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) of the USA have identified the killer virus that causes the fatal encephalitis, which has 'influenza-like' symptoms with high fever and muscle pains.

"The outbreak in Goaland and Shivaloy is a virus closely-related to Nipah and Hendra viruses," Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Professor Mizanur Rahman announced Sunday at a press briefing at the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR). Official count of the recent deaths from the virus is 19 while

more than 66 people fell sick apparently infected with it. The disease may progress to inflammation of the brain with drowsiness, disorientation, convulsions and coma. Fifty percent of the clinically apparent cases die.

To determine the actual nature and cause of the disease, Bangladesh urgently sent body-specimens of very sick and mildly ill patients to the CDC in Atlanta, USA on January 29, Health Directorate officials told The Daily Star yesterday.

Discovered in 1999, Nipah and Hendra viruses are believed to be carried by certain species of fruit bats. It is said that close contact with contaminated tissue or body fluid from infected animals transmits the virus to human body through an undetermined process.

No drug therapies have yet been proven to be effective in treating Nipah infection. Treatment of the disease relies mainly on providing intensive supportive care.

Until the CDC findings, scientists who visited spots of the outbreak termed the viral transmission as unknown or 'mysterious'.

During January 2004, 12 residents of Gaolando upazilla in Rajbari district experienced severe illnesses involving vomiting, headache and fever that progressed to unconsciousness. Of them, 10 patients died.

The scientists said the patients' ages ranged from 2 to 28 years, with the majority in the 7- to 15-year slot. The first case of the outbreak in the area was recorded on January 12 and the last on January 17.

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3 killed in fire at a slum in Tejgaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire at a slum in Tejgaon Tuesday killed a man and two children, injured seven others and gutted around 400 shanties.

The fire, according to police, originated from a stove, but firefighters said it broke out from a mosquito coil of a hovel of Lalmath slum located at the south of Land Settlement Office.

The fire broke out at around 12:15am and engulfed most of the shanties. But the firefighters with 12 vehicles from five stations -- Tejgaon, Mohammadpur, Ramna, Kurimotola and Palashi -- reached the spot about an hour late and put out the flames at around 3:15am.

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Inferno at Karwan Bazar market

Tk 5 crore worth of goods reportedly lost

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A raging inferno burnt down some 50 wholesale shops on the first floor of Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday evening reportedly damaging around.

No death was however reported till 8:30 last night in the fire believed to have originated from an electric shot circuit. According to witnesses, the fire gutted one third of the shops on the first floor of the market.

Firefighters faced great difficulties to tame the flames as the fire

spread fast because of many inflammable items like soybean oil, mustered oil and methylated spirit for paints which prompted the fire to spread fast, according to sources.

They had to break a number of windows to douse the fire as the kitchen market was closed and all entrances were locked due to the Eid-ul-Azha.

Traders and witnesses alleged that the fire that started at around 7:00pm was brought under control at around 8:00pm could

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers of Dhaka City Corporation wash part of Panthapath in Dhaka yesterday, as the road where a cattle market sat in the run-up to the Eid-ul-Azha was littered with animal excreta.

ROAD WITH MYANMAR Joint survey by Feb 20

BSS, Dhaka

Experts from Bangladesh and Myanmar will conduct a joint survey between February 15 and 20 on construction of Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship Road, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said yesterday.

He said the process to constitute Bangladesh survey team within February 15 has been taken on an urgent basis. Additional Chief Engineer of Roads and Highways Division Abed Uddin Ahmed would head the Bangladesh team.

Huda was presiding over a meeting to implement the project for construction of Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship Road to establish direct road link between the two countries at the conference room of

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19 killed, 92 hurt in road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nineteen people were killed and 92 others injured in road accidents across the country during the last four days ending yesterday.

Five people including a class seven student died in separate road accidents in Bogra in the last four days ending yesterday. The victims are: Mizan, 13, Joban Mondal, 70, Sajeda Khatun, 50, Gadu Mian, 55, and Abu Sayed Lablu, 40.

Three people including a 12-year-old boy were killed while nine others injured in separate accidents in Rangpur and Narayanganj yesterday.

An unidentified middle-aged man died on the spot and five others

were injured when two taxicabs rammed into each other at Dewanbagh on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at 2:00pm yesterday.

One Ambia Khatun was killed after a speeding bus knocked her down at Langalbandha at about 3:30pm yesterday.

In another accident in Rangpur, Asaduzzaman Barshan, 12, died on the spot and four others injured as a speeding bus hit another bus from behind on Dhaka-Panchagar highway yesterday morning.

On Thursday, five were killed and 40 wounded near Bonanza Inn, a highway hotel in Sirajganj, when a

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Daughter of AL leader raped, strangled

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Unidentified miscreants allegedly raped and strangled the 8-year-old girl of an Awami League (AL) leader at Mohadevpur village of Kakonhat municipality in Godagari upazila here on the night before the Eid-ul-Azha.

Nur Nahar Usha, student of class three at Kalihati Mohadevpur Primary School and daughter of Mohadevpur ward Awami League Organising Secretary Nazrul Islam, went missing at 9:00pm on the night. Her body was found in a pool of blood at a tomato field, some 400 yards off her house.

Additional Superintendent of Police (SP) of Rajshahi Arjul Haque told a group of visiting journalists the incident might be the work of one of the several youth groups who drank and danced throughout the night at some points in the village.

Police were also investigating

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Trader gunned down in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A trader was gunned down allegedly by activists of the Biplopi Communist Party (BCP) at Uttarbhawanipur in Bheramara upazila on Tuesday, as he failed to pay them toll.

Police said seven BCP men stormed into the house of Hamidul Islam, 32, at around 8:30pm and took him by the Hira River at gunpoint. The gang shot him point blank and left him dead on the spot.

Police recovered the victim's body yesterday.

The BCP men took Tk 15,000 from Hamidul last month and demanded Tk 20,000 from him before the Eid-ul-Azha, family sources said.

A case was filed.

Violence over hide business

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fierce and often violent competition among local gangs for grabbing the hides of sacrificial animals on the Eid day resulted in a death at Shantibagh in the city and clashes and looting in Narayanganj.

The casualty at Shantibagh in Motijheel is Mohammad Ali, 40, commander of local night guards and a former police informant.

In that morning, Ali supervised slaughtering of five sacrificial cows, skinning them and carving their meat at the house of one Razzak in the area. Afterwards, he and his wife were returning to their house at 8/5, Shantibagh at around 10:30am when five local hooligans intercepted them.

"Daring" Jamal, Aziz, Hafiz, Dilu and another youth, who were vengeful towards Ali for getting Jamal arrested by police a few months back, held him there by force," said Rafiq, a cousin of Ali.

"They started to strangle him, accusing him of taking the meat-preparation work," said Ali's wife Mafia Begum.

As she shouted for help, Aziz shot Ali once at his chest. The bullet went right through his body, locals and Ali's relatives said.

Locals took Ali to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died on admission at 11:15am. Ali's relatives said, a few months back, he provided police with information about some alleged illegal activities of Aziz, who runs a VCD rental shop, Daring Jamal and their associates. Police arrested Daring Jamal.

Coming out of police custody on bail on February 1, Jamal went to

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PCJSS truncates road blockade

BSS, Rangamati

Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) has shortened its three-day road barricade to two days from February 8.

The PCJSS called the programme in the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban to realise its four-point demand, a press release said.