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People's Right to Know

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Firearms flood in thru' porous Satkhira border

SHARIFUL ISLAM back from Satkhira

Gangs of gunrunners openly smuggle firearms into Bangladesh, making the Satkhira borders with India porous with bribes to 'mammonish law-enforcers', underworld operators and local people said.

International gunrunning syndicates buy the firearms cheap from eastern Indian state of West Bengal, especially from its capital Kolkata and Bardhaman, and sell them at higher prices in restive southwest region in Bangladesh.

- Law enforcers stand by taking bribe
- Gunrunners share police - BDR intelligence
- Shrimp farmers, outlaws top buyers

From Satkhira, Khulna and Jessore, the heart of 'wild southwest' where outlaw violence has risen to a new high in recent years, the arms fan out to local shrimp farms and other parts of Bangladesh, including capital Dhaka.

"We've intelligence that firearms are being smuggled into the country through Satkhira borders," said Major Ashraf Hossain, acting commanding officer of the 12th Battalion of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

He said his border guards try their best to check the influx of arms in a claim contradicted by local residents and gunrunners, who say part of their profit goes to 'mammonish BDR and police forces'.

"We seize arms entering the country," Major General Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, director general of the BDR, told The Daily Star last night.

"We take action against corrupt BDR personnel," he said.

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Business leaders' prodding fails to budge AL on Feb 12 hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A letter from business and chamber leaders requesting the Awami League (AL) chief to withdraw the February 12 countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal in the greater national interest has apparently failed to influence the main opposition party to budge on the issue.

"The country's business community have long urged political parties to find an alternative to hartal and siege programmes to stage their protest," the letter said, signed by chiefs of 10 leading chamber and trade bodies including the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and

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An elderly villager of Shahpara in Natore cries as he lost his house in a revenge arson attack carried out allegedly by BNP activists in the wake of the killing of the nephew of a deputy minister in the northwest district on Saturday.

BIMST-EC MEET

FTA deal signed, door kept open for Dhaka

STAR REPORT

The commerce ministers of all BIMST-EC member states except Bangladesh yesterday signed a framework agreement on a free trade area (FTA) in the Thai resort town of Phuket, keeping an option open for Dhaka to join the deal at a later date, report agencies.

The sixth BIMST-EC ministerial meeting, which concluded yesterday, also decided that the grouping's summit this year would be held in Bangkok and thereafter take place on a two-year rotational basis.

The two-day meet also agreed

that Bangladesh would host next senior officials' meeting of the grouping in September this year and the next ministerial meeting in February next year.

The meeting adopted a joint statement recommending trilateral highway links among Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand, coastal shipping, human resources development and sustainable management of fisheries resources in the Bay of Bengal.

To facilitate business travel within the BIMST-EC region, the meeting agreed to issue long-term

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Rivals kill two Khulna outlaws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Armed assailants yesterday killed two youths with suspected ties to an underground outfit in an attack over internal row in Khulna city, dubbed as the valley of death, in the latest in a series of killings since January 15.

Law enforcers seized a blood-smeared gun from the scene near Ahsan Ahmad Road to the rented house of journalist Manik Saha, bombed to death by outlaws on January 15 in an incident that underlines security fears in the southwest.

Towhid, 23, who came under attack at about 11:30am died on his

way to Khulna Medical College Hospital where 22-year-old Monir died from bullet wounds on arrival, said GK Agarwala, assistant registrar of the hospital.

Police linked the killers to the Marxist-Leninist outgrowth of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), blamed for a string of high-profile killings in the district over the years, while another source said the two defected from PBCP's Janajuddho faction to a new underground party - Purbo Banglar Maoist Communist Party.

"An armed gang of four fled

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Bomb found near Khulna AL rally venue

Hasina points at alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna police yesterday recovered a hand bomb from the roof of a shop at Shahid Haidis Park, a few yards away from the venue of an Awami League (AL) mourning rally.

The 'powerful' bomb was found on the roof of a spectacles shop in the afternoon, just too near the podium of the AL rally, police said.

Local AL organised the rally to protest the killing of its leader Manjur Morshed Labu.

Addressing the gathering later Abdul Jalil, central secretary of the

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Protesters torch 16 AL men's houses

Underground outfit claims responsibility for Gama killing, hartal in Natore today

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Arsonists with ties to the ruling BNP burnt down at least 16 houses of Awami League adherents in police presence Saturday night in the outrage at the killing of a deputy minister's nephew in Natore, for which an underground outfit claimed responsibility.

BNP's youth front Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal and a local vigilante group, Lathi Bashi Shilpa Banik Samity, jointly called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Natore for today protesting Saturday's killing of Sabbir Ahmed Gama in an armed attack at Kamarpura in Naldanga in the northwest district.

A gang of 30 burst into Shahpara

village at about 10:30pm and set fire to the houses mostly with thatch or tin roofing after spreading gunpowder.

No-one was hurt in the two-hour arson, as families fled the village in fear of their life in the wake of the afternoon killing.

The attackers looted Tk 1 lakh in

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DU student's date with destiny

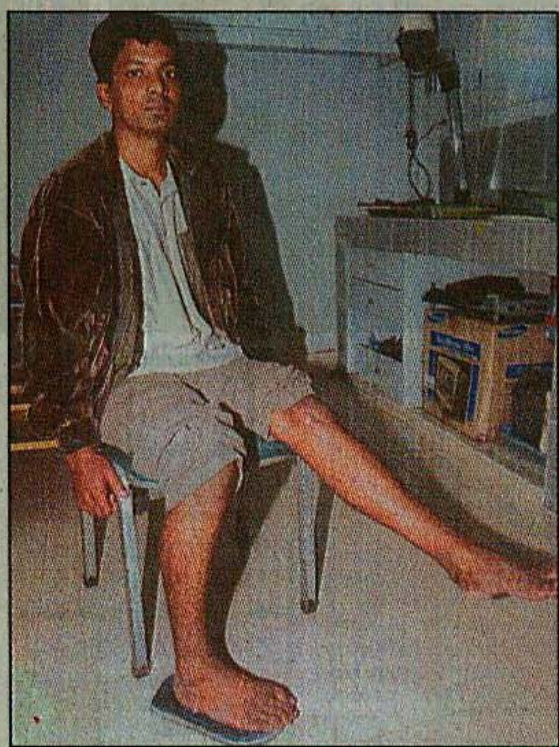


PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University student Motiur Rahman, who faces disability after suffering leg injuries in a car crash on a university field trip in 2001, looks pensively at his bleak future.

Injured in field trip, denied medical help, faces disability

NAIMUL HAQ

Md Motiur Rahman, 23, a student of Dhaka University's Institute of Nutrition and Food Science (INFS), is facing disability as the leg injuries he sustained in a road accident during a university field trip two and a half years ago have been left virtually untreated due to negligence of doctors and DU authorities.

On June 30, 2001, Motiur was invited to join a field trip by Assistant Professor Abdus Zaher, house tutor of Shahidullah Hall and also a teacher of INFS. Motiur replaced another student who was dropped from the survey team for some reason, but the

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JP(E) walks out to protest bar on Ershad's visit

SQ Chy explains govt action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) stormed out of parliament yesterday protesting the government's barring its chief former president HM Ershad from flying abroad last week.

After the walkout, Prime Minister's Adviser on Parliamentary Affairs Salauddin Quader Chowdhury explained the government restriction on Ershad's private foreign trip on Friday.

The deputies of the second largest opposition party staged the walkout at 7:15pm and after that, Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar accused them of dishonouring the Chair. The JP lawmakers did not return to the House until the end of the day's business last night.

Before the walkout, JP (Ershad) lawmaker TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury took floor to say that forbidding Ershad and his family from going abroad was a clear violation of the articles 32 and 36 of the constitution that guarantee freedom of movement.

The senior JP lawmaker found the government's action a clear departure from democratic norms. He condemned the government's intervention and led all his party

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Jewellers keep shutters down protesting Feb 4 heist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jewellery shop owners of Dhaka city kept their shutters down all day yesterday to protest robbery of over Tk 5.5 crore worth of jewellery from two retail outlets on Wednesday.

The strikers threatened to enforce a countrywide strike of jewellers and stop paying Vat (value added tax) and other taxes if law enforcers fail to recover the stolen gold within the next three days.

Yesterday's strike was observed at the behest of Bangladesh Jewellery Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, Bangladesh Jewellers Samity, Bangladesh Poddar (gold bar sellers) Samity and

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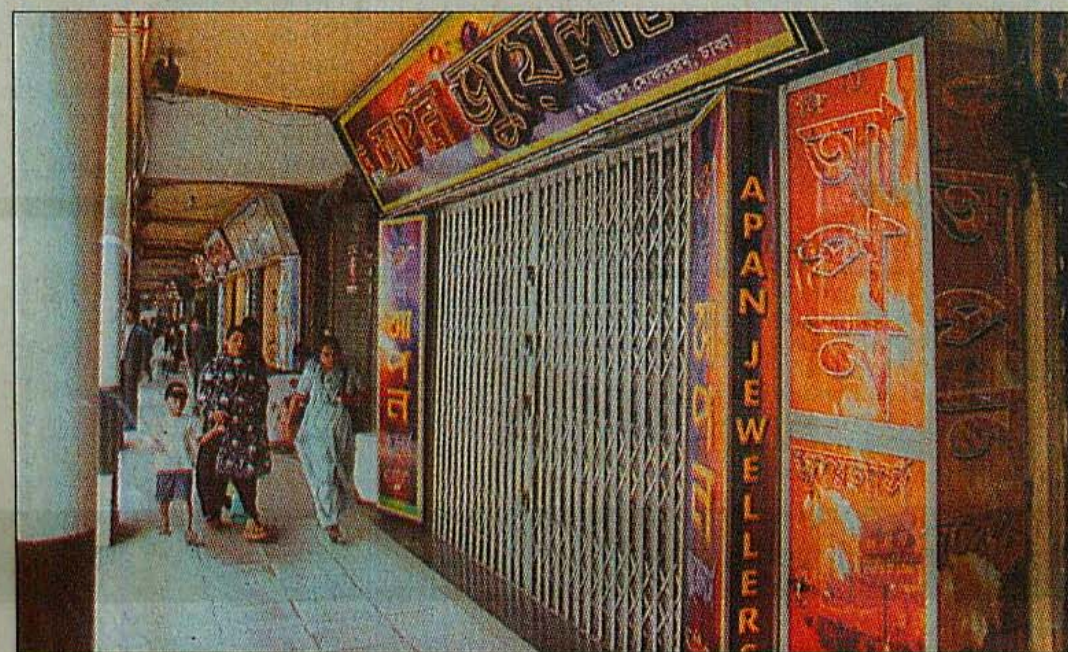


PHOTO: STAR

Jewellery shops at Baiful Mukarram Market remain closed during a strike jewellers staged yesterday to protest one of the capital's biggest heists that cost two ornament stores at Karnaphuli Garden City Market of over Tk 5.5 crore in gold and cash.

Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation Scholarship for meritorious and needy students



Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation has decided to award 250 (two hundred fifty) scholarships every year to meritorious and deserving students studying at HSC, Bachelor and Masters levels in any discipline. Meanwhile, under this program, 150 scholarships have already been awarded to HSC and Masters level students. Now another 100 scholarships will be awarded to students studying at Bachelor level (students who have passed HSC examination in 2003) for which applications are invited from meritorious and deserving students.

Eligibility to apply for scholarship :

Academic level	Minimum CGPA Science Group	Minimum CGPA other than Science Group
HSC	4.70	4.60

Academic level	Scholarship Period	Monthly Stipend	Annual Grant for Reading Material	Total Amount per student per year
Bachelor (Pass)	2/3 years	Tk 2,000/=	Tk 5,000/=	Tk 29,000/=
Bachelor (Honors)	3/4 years	Tk 2,000/=	Tk 5,000/=	Tk 29,000/=

Other criteria of the scholarship :

- The Scholarship for degree level study will be available either for Pass or Honors Course in any discipline including Medical, Engineering, Agriculture, Textile Engineering, Leather Technology, etc.
- The scholarship will be renewable from year to year basis for the entire duration of a particular course subject to satisfactory result/academic performance duly certified/recommended by the Principal/Institutional Head/Departmental Head/Vice Chancellor as the case may be.
- Students availing scholarship from other sources will not qualify for Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation (DBBF) scholarship. In case of opting for DBBF scholarship one has to surrender the scholarship already availed from other source.
- A DBBF scholarship holder shall not apply for other scholarship. In case of availing other scholarship he/she will have to surrender the DBBF scholarship.
- Prescribed application forms will be available in all the branches of DBBL. Application should reach to the Administrator, Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation, Sena Kalyan Bhaban (5th Floor), 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, on or before April 10, 2004.
- All applications should be routed through the respective Institutional Head/Departmental Head with their due recommendations.



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