

More arson in Natore

Over 100 BNP musclemen torch 15 more houses, 12 shops in wake of Gama killing

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Over 100 arsonists allegedly led by a deputy minister's relatives and BNP activists looted and torched 15 more houses and 12 shops at the Awami League-dominated Shahpara and Amtali Bazar in the village yesterday morning, creating a reign of terror in the area.

People of Shahpara were living in insecurity since February 7 when BNP activists torched some 16 houses in retaliation for the murder

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BNP, AL blame each other

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The district unit of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday blamed the killing of a deputy minister's nephew in Natore on the Awami League (AL) that accused its rival of unleashing violence in the wake of the murder.

The blame and counter-blame came amid a fresh spell of arson that burnt down 15 houses and 12 shops

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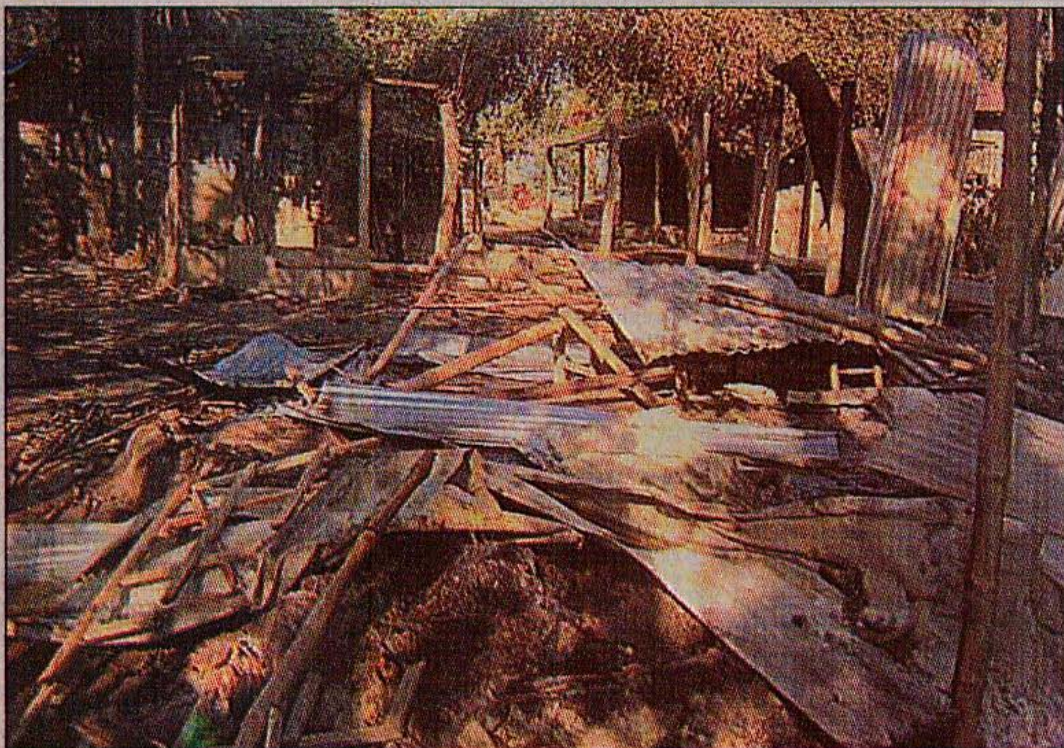


PHOTO: STAR

Remains of burnt-down houses lie mangled after arsonists with alleged ties to the ruling BNP set fire to 15 houses and 12 shops in Natore yesterday in a fresh wave of violence in the wake of the killing of a deputy minister's nephew.

U-19 WC cricket gets underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The 5th ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup 2004 was declared open at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday evening.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia inaugurated the 16-nation extravaganza. State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, International Cricket Council (ICC) President Ehsan Mani and Bangladesh Cricket Board President Ali Asghar also spoke on the occasion.

The colourful ceremony began with the march past of the participating nations -- defending champions Australia, Canada, England, India, Ireland, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the West Indies, Zimbabwe and hosts Bangladesh.

Popular artists Shafin Ahmed, Bappa Mojumder and Mehreen then circled the BNS singing World Cup's theme song -- Utshabe Anande Mete Uthuk Cricket.

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BUSINESSMEN MURDERS

Angry traders threaten to stop paying taxes



PHOTO: STAR

Mirpur shopkeepers keep their shutters down yesterday protesting the murder of businessman Anwar Hossain Babul apparently over extortion.

STAR REPORT

Trade bodies warned yesterday of stopping tax payments if the slide in law and order continued, while traders of three Mirpur wards kept shops closed and took out a procession demanding arrest and trial of killers of a local entrepreneur.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead Anwar Hossain Babul, 40, treasurer of Mirpur Benarasi Tanti Samity and a contractor, on Zoo Road in Rainkhola at around 7:30pm Monday.

The same day in the afternoon assailants killed travel agent Mostafa Kamal, 35, at his Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue office over a denial to pay tolls.

In reaction, members of Kazi Nazul Islam Avenue Traders Association (KNIATA) yesterday

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Dhaka confirms death of 3 Bangladeshis in Riyadh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka on Monday confirmed the death of three Bangladeshi expatriates near Riyadh last week in a brush fire by their employer's son who is also a member of Saudi royal family.

According to a Saudi source, the yet to be named killer and a member of the royal family of Ameer Abdullah Bin Fahad sprayed bullets on Kamal Hossain, brothers Abdur Rashid and Sirajul Islam, all from Alopur village under Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila.

Three other foreign workers from India, Pakistan and Sudan also died in the shootout at an agricultural farm house, some 100 km off the Saudi capital, the source added.

However, the motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

To conceal the gruesome murders, the killer also tried to set fire on the bodies after pouring petrol on the dead, according to information provided by Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh.

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Six to die for killing cop

UNB, Dhaka

A speedy trial court yesterday awarded death penalty to six people and life imprisonment to four on charge of killing a police officer in the capital in 2001.

The convicts with death penalty are M Maksudur Rahman alias Saikat, 30, Nazrul Islam alias Naju, Rezaul Islam Iqbal alias Rezaul, 28, Azizul Islam alias Aziz, 26, Sukkur Ali alias Rana and Mujibur Rahman alias Rifle Mujib, 32.

Tribunal judge Shahed Nooruddin also fined them Tk 50,000 each.

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BNP MPs decry fertiliser price hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Treasury bench lawmakers yesterday complained about price hike of fertiliser during the current Boro season and asked for ensuring fair price of fertiliser, diesel and seeds so that food production is not affected.

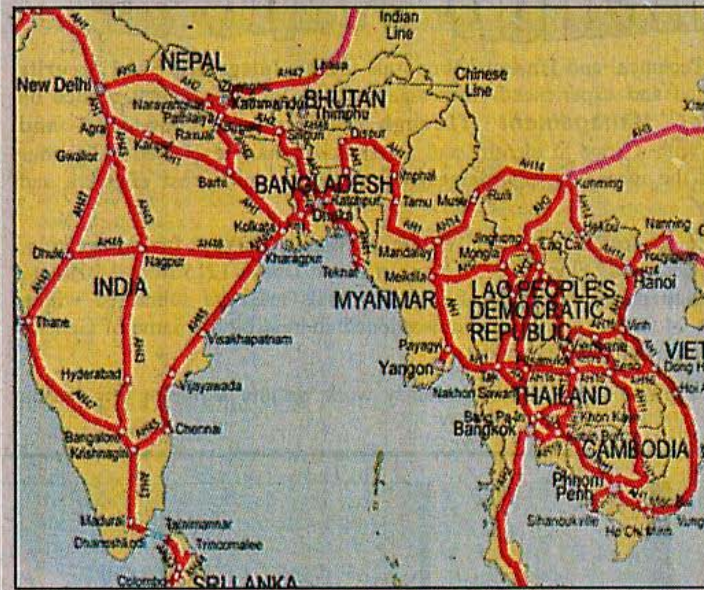
During the question-answer session of parliament, several ruling BNP lawmakers took the floor to say that price hike of agri-inputs hit hard farmers in their constituencies.

Abu Yusuf Khalilur Rahman said,

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BANGLADESH-MYANMAR ROAD LINK

Team goes to Yangon next week for survey



STAR GRAPHICS

The road route is shown in red lines

RAFIQ HASAN

A team of engineers will go to Myanmar next week to survey an area to construct a 30-kilometre long highway directly linking Dhaka to Yangon.

The team will conduct a comprehensive survey to assess the cost and requirement for the highway from Guangdong in Bangladesh to Buchidong in Myanmar.

The highway will be built as part of the Asian Highway traffic network among 38 Asian nations linking them to Europe via Turkey, according to sources.

The Bangladesh team will submit a project proposal after the survey and the construction will start once the government approves the proposal, said a high official.

He said according to preliminary assessment Bangladesh will have to spend at least Tk 15 crore on build

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NGOs blast govt for regulatory step

ADAB, FNB call it unconstitutional, inappropriate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) irrespective of their relations with the government yesterday took a swipe at the ruling coalition for its move to amend an NGO regulatory ordinance.

They described the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities)

Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2004 as unconstitutional and inappropriate for private voluntary agencies.

The Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) and the Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB), two apex bodies of development organisations, said the government took

the move to tighten its grip on the NGOs and dubbed the proposed bill as a blueprint to harm them.

The bill intended to modify the 1978 ordinance is now lying with the parliament secretariat and will be placed in parliament next week, sources said.

The FNB and ADAB say the move

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50 killed as bomb rips thru' Iraq cop station

REUTERS, Iskandariya, Iraq

A massive car bomb yesterday ripped through a police station south of Baghdad killing about 50 people, in the latest deadly attack on Iraqis seen as collaborators with US occupation forces.

The attack came after US officials said an Islamic militant with links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda net-

work was plotting to ignite a civil war in Iraq to undermine efforts to hand over power to Iraqis.

"There are around 50 martyrs, 30 of whom have been identified, and dozens wounded," Dr Tahsin Ahmad told the news agency at the hospital in Iskandariya, 25 miles south of Baghdad.

The hospital's director, Razak Jannabi, said: "Thirty dead have

been brought here, I believe that number is rising. I believe it's at 49."

A reporter said he had counted at least 20 bodies outside the building. Inside the hospital, staff frantically tried to mop up pools of blood with soap and water.

"It was a car (bomb) that was parked outside the station," said policeman Sadeq Khodeir. "It

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GAS PIPELINE SCAM Contractor, Titas staff blamed in probe report

UNB, Dhaka

A departmental inquiry committee yesterday submitted its report blaming the contractor and supervising officials of Titas Gas for not properly installing Jamuna Bridge approach road gas pipeline.

The committee recommended, compelling the contractor to set up the high-pressure pipeline maintaining standard practice with the additional expenses from the pocket of the service provider (contractor).

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7 UPDF men abducted from wedding party

PCJSS cadres blamed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

In yet another incident of political violence, armed youths allegedly belonging to Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) abducted seven people known to be supporters of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) from a wedding ceremony in Shabekong area of Nariachar upazila on Monday.

Army and intelligence sources said an armed gang of more than 20 raided the house of Doyal Chandra Chakma at around 2:00pm as villagers gathered at a wedding ceremony there. They abducted Jogotiyoti Chakma, Ranga Bapon Chakma, Sachindra Chakma, Rup Dhan Chakma, Protimoy Chakma, Dhon Gula Chakma and Jyrimoy Chakma - all aged between 25 and 35, at

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Ad firms violate court order to put up billboards, says mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advertisement firms in the city violate court orders indiscriminately raising huge billboards, Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka alleged yesterday.

Several advertisement firms are violating the status quo imposed on both Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and the firms for six months commencing from January 12, 2004, the

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Asia faces four challenges

Malaysian PM outlines those at ANN meet

ANN/ THE STAR, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has outlined four fundamental challenges confronting Asia -- poverty eradication, human development, good governance and regional stability.

Speaking at the Agenda Asia Conference co-organised by the Asia News Network and Konrad Adenauer Foundation here yesterday, the prime minister said there should be "comprehensive emancipation" of the people through political,

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