

PHOTO: STAR

A helpless family, top, struggles to rebuild life from scratch amid ruins all over and a villager, bottom, trawl for relatives' bodies in a swamp in Kanchanpur village in Netrakona yesterday, two days after a monster twister reduced the idyllic village into matchwood.

One murdered

FROM PAGE 1
Locals alleged that Yasmeen was involved in an extramarital affair with Shipon.

Shipon's family members on the other hand said Manik had a dispute over property with his brother Farooq and pointed accusing fingers at him for the murder.

They said Shipon, who recently had his master's in chemistry from Jagannath University College, was falsely implicated in the murder.

On hearing the news of his son's death, Shipon's father went to the spot along with an acquaintance but both were also beaten up by the mob. Police later rescued them and sent them to the DMCH for treatment.

Manik's brother Farooq filed a case with Demra Police Station accusing Shipon of killing his brother.

In another incident, a ward level leader of Jasas (Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha) was shot dead near his Azam Road house in Mohammadpur

yesterday.

Hospital sources said Syed Mehedi Ahmed, 28, Jasas secretary of ward no. 44, was gunned down within 20 yards of his house where he was going for lunch.

Mehedi, who ran a vegetable shop at Mohammadpur's Town Hall Kitchen Market, was shot in the head and back.

His relatives found him lying on the roadside and took him to the DMCH as a road accident victim. But doctors at the DMCH morgue found bullet marks on his body.

Mohammadpur police confirmed Mehedi was murdered but could not give any details of the incident.

Meanwhile, Pallabi police recovered a partially decomposed body of a 25-year-old man from a paddy field near Ashulia embankment yesterday.

Police said the body of the unidentified man was dumped there after he was killed two to three days ago.

The body was sent to the DMCH morgue for autopsies.

JCD factional clash at Sust injures 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An inter-faction clash of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) in the wee hours yesterday left 15 injured, six of them badly.

The clash took place when Kamal-Shanto faction launched an attack at 1:30am on members of Momin-Sadat faction residing in Shahporan Hall reportedly for joining in a protest against an alleged sexual violence by a JCD man on a female student of the varsity two days ago.

The attackers were armed with guns and iron rods. They reportedly fired about 15 shots during the raid that ended when police reached the spot at about 3:00am.

The seriously injured six students were admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. Among them, Sust JCD Vice President Momimul Islam Momin received bullet wounds. Of the rest, Shahadat Hossain, Manjur Al Hasan Babu, Sudipta Saha Pappu and Rubel are JCD members and Saidur Rahman is known to have no political affiliation.

According to witnesses, 40 to 50 JCD cadres led by Sust JCD President Mostafizur Rahman and General Secretary (GS) Emran Hossain Bhuiyan swooped on their rivals in Shahporan Hall at the dead of the night. The invaders belong to Kamal-Shanto faction named after Reza Sharif Kamal and Shanto, former president and GS of the Sust JCD. They broke into eight rooms belonging to some members of Momin-Sadat faction. Those rooms and some toilets, where frightened students tried to hide, were badly damaged in the raid.

Professor Moslehuddin Ahmed, the acting vice-chancellor, visited the wounded students in the hospital yesterday afternoon.

Professor Habibul Ahsan, provost of Shahporan Hall, said, as the clash was an intra-party incident of the JCD, the varsity authorities had nothing to say.

Members of the Momin-Sadat faction had joined an all-party procession on the Sust campus Thursday protesting the sexual assault on a fellow student allegedly by JCD cadre Mahmudul Haque Sadi.

In a written accusation, Shanta Dey, a second-year honours student, also of social science, alleged Sadi requested her to go to a mess at Rikabibazar in the city Sunday last for some urgent business. When she went there at noon that day, he sexually assaulted and abused her, Shanta complained, adding Sadi also tortured her physically and mentally. She also said some friends of Sadi were present outside the room in the mess during the assault.

Protesting and condemning the crime, students and teachers formed a human chain on the varsity campus Thursday afternoon. The social science department also organised an all-party protest procession, followed by a rally in front of the registrar building, in which JCD Momin-Sadat faction took part, infuriating its rival faction, to which Sadi belongs.

India's historic win

FROM PAGE 1

"It's a very big win, coming against Pakistan. It'll take a few days to sink in. We've been playing good cricket for the last two years, it's great to win when you're playing well."

The victory was Ganguly's 15th as captain, making him India's most successful test skipper surpassing Mohammad Azharuddin's 14 wins.

Pakistan, resuming on their overnight 49 for two chasing 376 to make India bat again, enjoyed a spate of lucky breaks earlier on Friday.

Hameed was dropped on eight at point by Tendulkar, who could not hold on to a tough chance to his left.

He got another life on 13 when Kumble put him down at gully off left-arm seamer Irfan Pathan.

Danger man Inzamam was dropped on eight by Rahul Dravid at first slip, the ball popping out of his hands, before Balaji had the skipper caught behind with a late

outswinger.

Youhana also got a chance when Yuvraj Singh could not hold on to a sharp catch at point.

But India still had little to complain about as their seamers made good use of overcast conditions to move the ball both ways.

Youhana and left-hander Asim Kamal attempted to stem the tide in a breezy 81-run sixth-wicket stand before Youhana lobbed a simple return catch to Kumble.

There were doubts if Kamal would bat after he was hit on his right elbow by a ferocious pull from Ganguly on Wednesday, but the 26-year-old showed great resolve.

Shoaib played an attractive cameo but, by then, it was only a matter of time.

Dravid was named man-of-the-match for his 270, which enabled India to amass 600 after dismissing Pakistan for 224 in the first innings. (Scoreboard on sports page)

Old Dhaka traders

FROM PAGE 12

"Businesspeople have been forced to go into hiding as police are arresting anyone who were on the list made by Nasiruddin Pintu's men after the strike called by Lalbagh businesspeople on March 22. When we challenge the arrests, police ask us to prove our innocence in court," said a businessman from Nolgola.

Six cases have been filed against former lawmaker of Lalbagh and Awami League leader Haji Selim on charges of illegal possession of explosives and hindering government functions after the March 22 strike that also left Haji Selim and 10 Jubo League workers injured. At least 40 of the arrested businessmen were also implicated in the cases.

Haji Selim told The Daily Star recently that BNP leaders, aided openly by police, are trying to get AL adherents in the Lalbagh area arrested on farcical charges.

OC Gaffar also dismissed the allegation that such a list exists and that police are making arrests in accordance with names of traders listed by any political party.

The Daily Star was unable to talk to Lalbagh MP and BNP leader Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu as he is

currently abroad.

Gaffar, OCs of Kotwali Police Station Sultan Ahmed and Sutrapur Police Station Awlad Hossain have all refuted allegations of harassing businesspeople. Sultan has also said no businesspeople were arrested in connection with the protests or under ruling party directives.

Leader of Nawabpur Dokan Malik Samity Kamal Hossain Kamal, meanwhile, said he had received death threats after he went ahead with the strike despite political pressure to call it off.

"Has it become a crime to protest against criminal activities?" complained Kamal, adding that a number of his workers have been arrested for simply participating in the protest programmes.

Traders of Lalbagh also alleged that police are not only serving vested political interests, but also taking bribes from arrested businessmen for their release.

They said acting Chairman of Bish Banik Samity of Nolgola Abul Bashar and Murtoza Ali, a ceramic trader from Chawkmogultoli, were arrested on March 29 but were released on the same night in exchange for a hefty sum.

In pursuit of happiness

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mother poured a mixture of tobacco and hot mustard oil into them for a cure. But the treatment erased the last of hope of Julia's recovery.

After her hearing became impaired, Julia also came to be known to others that she was unable to speak.

But to Julia the weight of beatings from her parents, the weight of the pain in her ears, the weight of society's brutality towards the disabled eroded her will to speak and to live.

She grew weary of the world, as her parents would beat her up every day for not being able to hear or speak to them and society would attach stigma to the people with disability.

It became a desolate life for Julia until a group of social workers instilled her with a new hope and spirit to live. She began her journey from being shunned to shining in her life. Angela Gomez, head of Jessore-based non-governmental organisation Banchte Shekha (Learning to Live) and her "Didi", penned the poem that Julia was reciting.

Gomez and the staff of her organisation sowed the seed of hope in Julia and others in the rehabilitation centre and infused them with a commitment that they would break out of society's neglect and their lives

would be as colourful and fulfilling as anyone else.

While working as social workers in southern districts, the activists of Banchte Shekha found that children like Julia, with physical disabilities, were the most helpless and neglected people in society; even more painfully if they were born into ultra-poor families.

Two years ago, the organisation built a centre for the rehabilitation, treatment and development of 10 disabled girls from ultra-poor families aged between 12 and 16.

The centre now houses 20 girls with speech, hearing, visual or other disabilities. The centre has in-house physiotherapist and treatment, educational and recreational facilities as well as a history of treating 150 physically-challenged children as outpatients.

The girls are on a daily advance towards medical improvement with the aid of modern equipment purchased with the funds provided by Bangladesh Freedom Foundation, among other donors.

They also receive skill training in handicrafts and computers along with regular academic classes for a more holistic rehabilitation in their pursuit of happiness.

Escap sees 5.7 pc GDP

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh, the report that covered all the nations in Asia and the Pacific region, said: "The rate of consumer price inflation has been on an upward trend since 2001 and was expected to be over 5 percent by the end of 2003. Major causal factors were higher prices for imported petroleum products, rice, sugar and edible oil and increases in administered prices for gas and electricity."

"Prices are likely to have increased more in rural areas as compared with urban areas," it added.

"Consumer prices are projected to rise somewhat more slowly in the fiscal 2004, at a rate of 4.5 percent and inflation is expected to continue to slow in the following year."

Commenting on the interest rate, Escap points out, "Domestic interest rates remain relatively high in Bangladesh compared with neighbouring countries, and the central bank sought to lower rates in fiscal 2003."

"Although private sector credit expanded, as public sector borrowing declined, liquidity remains high in the banking system, reflecting weaknesses in capital markets and the reluctance of banks to lend to small borrowers."

On trade performance, it said there was a strong turnaround in merchandise export that expanded

9.4 percent in the fiscal 2003.

Higher export earnings were recorded for all major export categories, although the recovery in ready-made garments, knitwear and hosiery exports was relatively modest.

"There was an even sharper turnaround in merchandise imports, which expanded 13 percent in the fiscal 2003," the report added.

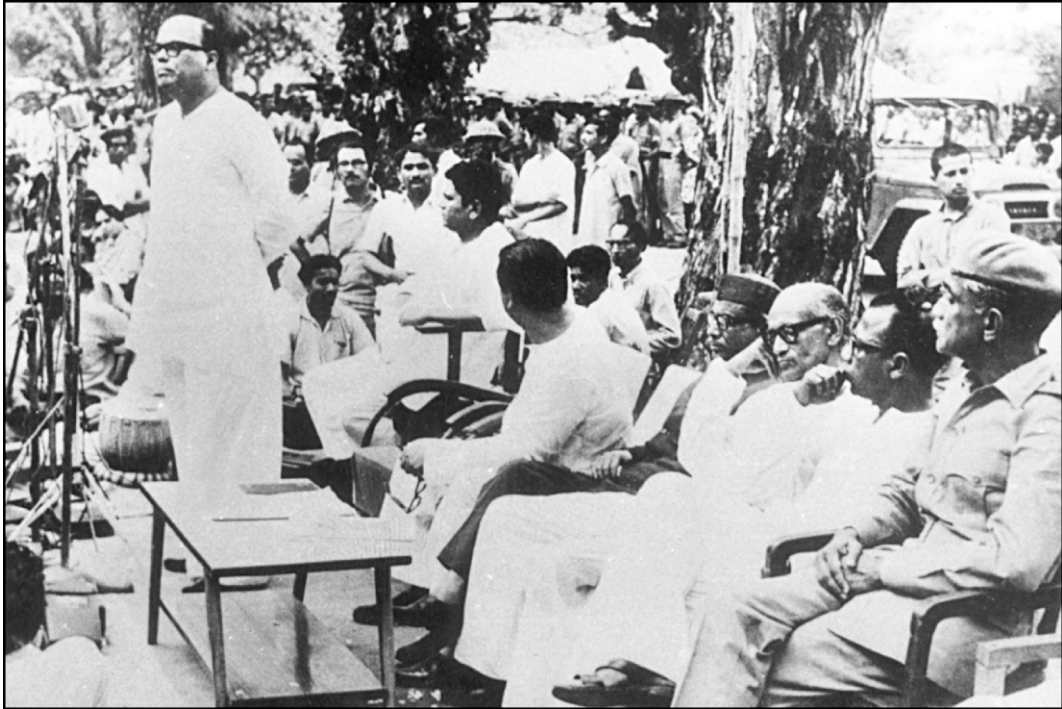
On capital flows, exchange rates and external debt, it said net capital inflows rose 37 percent in fiscal 2003, with official development assistance accounting for the major share of these resources.

"Private Foreign Direct Investment also increased significantly, but remained modest. Gross foreign exchange reserves were 56 percent higher in fiscal 2003, reaching \$2.5 billion," the report said.

"Official external debt increased slightly to 16.9 billion dollars but the bulk of it is on concessional terms and the debt service burden remains modest."

Aided by strong growth in intra-regional trade and domestic demand economic growth of the developing countries in the Escap region in 2003 stood at 6 percent, higher than in the previous year.

At the same time, inflation was kept in check at low levels in most parts of the region.



FILE PHOTO

Acting President of the provisional government of Bangladesh, Syed Nazrul Islam, speaks after formation of the administration in Mujibnagar on April 17, 1971. Seated on the podium, from right, are Colonel MAG Osmani, cabinet members M Qamruzzaman, Monsur Ali and Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed (back to camera).

Mujibnagar Day today

FROM PAGE 1

Installation of the government began with a guard of honour led by a contingent of police. Syed Nazrul Islam took the salute and hoisted the national flag.

The Awami League (AL) and its front organisations have taken up elaborate programmes to mark the day across the country.

In Dhaka, the national flag and party flag will be hoisted at Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmodi and also at the AL's Bangabandhu

Avenue headquarters at six this morning. Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina will place wreath at the portrait of Sheikh Mujib at Bangabandhu Bhaban at 7:30 am.

Hasina will also chair a discussion at Paltan Maidan this afternoon.

The AL has also taken up a series of programmes at Mujibnagar in observance of the day, says a party press release.

In a message on the occasion,

Hasina recalled the Mujibnagar government's contribution to the emergence of Bangladesh.

She paid rich tributes to Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali, AM Quamruzzaman and others comprising the government.

Hasina also recalled the contribution of civil and military officials of the government-in-exile, political leaders, freedom fighters and others to liberating the motherland.

Ahmadiyya mosque

FROM PAGE 1

Replacements have become urgent especially in Old Dhaka, where the water supply pipes are narrow. Households are pining for water from the main water line because of insufficient water supply through the narrow pipes, locals said.

Some Wasa officials said they have 2,300 km of supply lines while others said they have nearly 2,600 km of supply lines.

The Wasa recently formed a committee to find out details of the supply network.

Sources pointed out waste cannot enter water lines when supply is normal and water pressure is high but the decline in supply and resultant fall in water pressure during dry season allows waste to enter them.

"We need conscious participation and support of residents to prevent the causes of water contamination," said the Wasa managing director.

He also said a long-term strategic development plan is in the offing for a permanent solution to illegal connections and water contamination.

The demand for water in Dhaka now is 200 crore litres a day and the supply is 150 crore litres at the maximum.

2 outlaws

FROM PAGE 1

boxes were put on a bomb alert after informers warned that PBPC operatives could launch a major assault on police at any time.

In another incident, a mob gouged out the eyes of an alleged extremist, Nasir, 30, of Rudagarha Union of Dumuria. Police recovered two firearms on the dead man's person.

Earlier on the night of April 10, police havildar Akram Hossain was killed in a bomb attack in Khulna city. PBPC (Janajuddho) claimed responsibility for the murder.

On the evening of April 11, a powerful bomb exploded just in front of Moliapota Police Box when seven constables were inside.

Top Ctg criminals

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security guards who were carrying the money from a bank for payment to textiles company employees.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury in a statement expressed concern at the slide in law and order in the district, reeling from a string of crimes that he fears will harm foreign investment.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) updated the list of identified criminals to 902 and 70 of them were bracketed as terrorists, police said. Of the 70, 30 were put behind bars but all were freed.

"We are trying to nab the top criminals," CMP Commissioner SM Sabbir Ali told The Daily Star.

"We are also gathering new evidence against the criminals who were released from jail."

The commissioner said crime hit a new high in the port city, which prompted law enforcers to launch crackdowns in different areas.

But Habib Khan, 'Gittu' Nasir, Morshed Khan, Etim Alam and Iqbal who figure on the police list of criminals are operating unchecked, as they have clandestine links to police, sources alleged.

Some criminals were seen moving with a local lawmaker and the Chittagong mayor addressed a reception to Ward Commissioner Mamunur Rashid with a murky past, who was released from jail about three months ago.

26 more Iraqis killed

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at Najaf hospital.

"According to the witnesses who brought them in to the hospital, the clash broke out between them and a US convoy that had been passing on the Kufa-Hilla road at midday (0800 GMT) Friday," he told AFP.

The road has seen repeated attacks on convoys of the US-led coalition and its Iraqi allies.

A report from Amman adds: Two Jordanians were killed and a third was injured in Iraq when their vehicle was hit by rockets near the central town of Ramadi, the official Petra news agency reported yesterday.

"A Jordanian vehicle was targeted in the region of Ramadi (west of Baghdad) with a rocket bombardment on Wednesday, which cost the lives of two Jordanian citizens and badly wounded a third," it said.

The report identified only one of the dead, lawyer Mouaffak Faleh al-Zohbi, and said the injured man, Qassem Oueid al-Zohbi, was taken to hospital in Amman where he was in a critical condition.

Jordanian newspaper Al-Arab Al-Yom said the rockets were fired from a US helicopter.

A government official also confirmed that a Jordanian was injured

when a mortar struck the Jordanian hospital in Fallujah, a scene of major fighting between US forces and Iraqi insurgents west of Baghdad.

Meanwhile, talks between senior coalition officials and an Iraqi team on a permanent ceasefire in the insurgent bastion of Fallujah opened in a US marine base just outside the town, an AFP correspondent saw.

The 11-strong Iraqi delegation of town and tribal elders arrived nearly two hours behind schedule shortly before 5 pm (1300 GMT). There was no immediate explanation for the delay.

The coalition team included the occupation authority's senior policy officer Richard Jones and two top military commanders -- Lieutenant General James T. Conway, head of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, and Major General Joseph Weber, chief of staff of coalition ground forces commander Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez.

Jones was the most senior civilian official to take part in the truce talks to date. Conway was the first marines commander to participate, according to officers.