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Cops back jungle rule in northwest



Bangla Bhal

A self-styled vigilante group kills people in the name of anti-outlaw operations, force women to wear burkha and men to grow beards all under direct police support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are patronising Jagrota Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) which has kicked off an apparent drive to 'cleanse' leftist outlaws from four northwestern districts amid

allegations of enforcement of harsh Islamic codes and crimes against the vigilante group.

A top police officer yesterday said police stations in Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore and Bogra were asked to support the group in its

mission, but locals accused its members of meting out harsher punishment to 'their suspects' and women violating 'their dress codes'.

The group operatives are painting women with their navels

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Pak foreign secy wants roadmap for better trade

Dhaka wants bigger concessions to bridge gap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting Pakistani Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokar has proposed a roadmap to advance his country's relations with Bangladesh in economy, trade, culture and other areas as Dhaka pushed for bigger trade concessions from Islamabad.

"We ought to develop a roadmap to see how relations progress in economy, trade, culture and other areas," Khokar told a joint press briefing with Bangladesh Foreign

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BDF MEET

Donors to press govt for more tolerance in politics

STAR REPORT

Donors at the upcoming Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meeting will press Dhaka to address the issue of political confrontation as they believe the government should be tolerant toward peaceful protest and respect freedom of thought, association and speech.

In the discussion note prepared by Local Consultative Group of the BDF, the donors have expressed their keenness on ensuring early

support for holding the national elections in 2006 under a neutral caretaker government.

They however have criticised the 14th amendment to the constitution that deals with women's reserved seats in parliament. "Any constitutional amendments should be preceded by full consultations and widespread support. This is even more pertinent given the ruling coalition's large majority in parliament."

Stressing the importance of more constructive dialogues (between the

conflicting political parties) through democratic channels, the development partners have asked the government to respect people's right to wage new political movements or float platforms, hinting at the government's intolerance toward former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury's new political platform.

The donors have also expressed concern about the government's fresh application for a further extension of the time limit for the imple-

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Public life is under threat: says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Platform for Unity (NPU) President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said public life is under threat for illegal gunrunning, mass arrests, corruption, violence and price hike of essentials.

The incidents of mass arrests, torture and harassment to general public in the name of resisting opposition's movement were a violation of the people's basic rights and anti-democratic, Dr Kamal said at a meeting with activists of the NPU.

Awami League's political gambling by capitalising on the public miseries is unexpected, he said, adding both the main opposition AL and ruling BNP have failed to govern the country.

"Bangladesh has become the champion of corruption and these two parties should be held responsible for this humiliating position," he said.

He asked the AL to attend parliament and play its due democratic role.

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

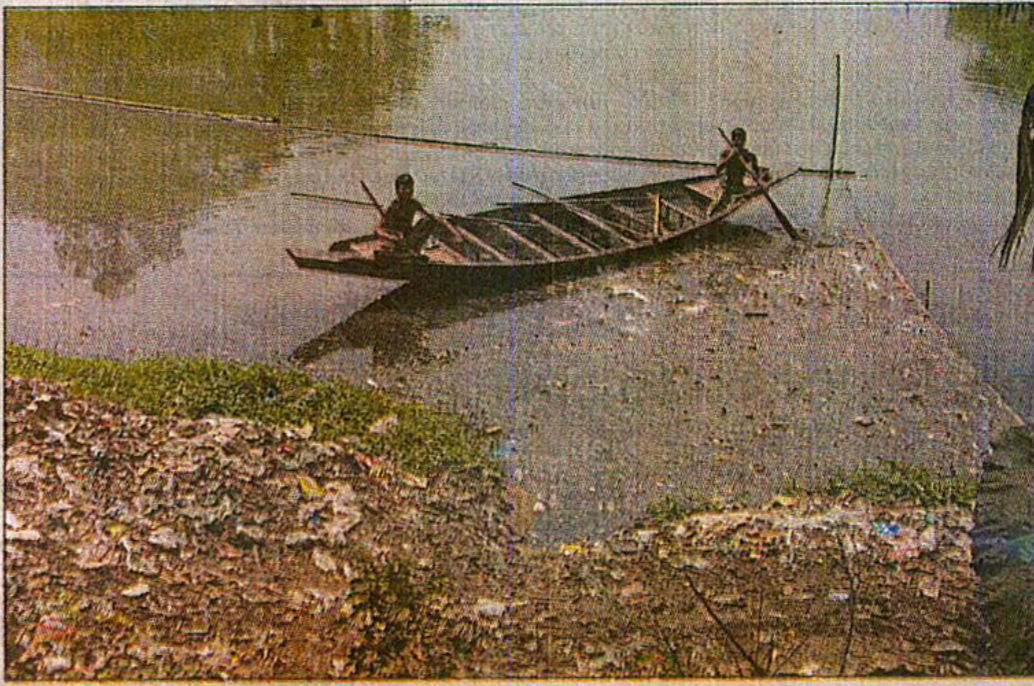


PHOTO: SHARIEF KHAN

WASTE-LAKES

Huge sewerage pipes channel tons of foul-smelling, toxic household and industrial wastes into the Gulshan Lake (left) near the Gulshan-Badda connecting road, turning the water dark and killing large numbers of fish; the stretch from Uttara Lake (right) reaches nearby houses, giving one the feeling of living close to a garbage dump. The lake virtually acts as the sewage retention reservoir for the area, since Rajuk never had the foresight to build a proper sewage disposal system for this vast 'model town'.

JCD leader beaten dead over toll demand

UNB, B'baria

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Nabinagar upazila unit president was beaten to death and one of his associates injured allegedly for extortion.

Sources said JCD leader Mohammad Fariduddin, 25, along with his four associates went to the house of Anwar Hossain at Alamnagar village at midnight on Tuesday.

As the inmates raised an alarm shouting 'dacoits, dacoits', the villagers rushed to the spot, caught Farid and Jewel and beat them mercilessly. Two others managed to flee.

On information, police went to the spot and rescued JCD leader Farid and his associate, Jewel, in critical condition. Farid succumbed to his injuries on the way to Nabinagar health complex. Jewel is now undergoing treatment at the hospital.

According to Anwar Hossain, the

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Delhi offers to boost ties with Dhaka

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, from New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said Tuesday night that a proposal has been made to Bangladesh for boosting bilateral trade and people-to-people contact to improve ties between the two countries.

"With a view to improving relations with Bangladesh, a proposal has been given to that country to increase bilateral trade and for commencement of people-to-people exchange," he said while addressing an election rally in Kolkata.

"We've already done this with Sri Lanka and now we want to make similar efforts with Pakistan and Bangladesh," the prime minister said.

Vajpayee said his government, if voted back to power in the ongoing parliamentary elections, will press on with the peace initiatives with Pakistan.

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MUNICIPAL POLLS

Rigging, violence mark start

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Municipal corporation elections began yesterday with sporadic incidents of violence over alleged controlling of polling centres, rigging and false voting that left over 100 people injured.

However, the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat yesterday in a press release claimed polling at the 36 municipal corporations scheduled for yesterday was held 'in a festive mood'.

Chief Election Commissioner

(CEC) MA Syed yesterday again wrote a letter to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia requesting her to make arrangements for deployment of army during the staggered voting that ends on May 10.

Earlier on April 28, the CEC wrote to the prime minister asking for army deployment, but she did not respond.

On the first day of the polls, incidents of violence took place at Ramganj in Laxmipur, Sirajganj, Pabna and Dinajpur municipalities.

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CTG ARMS HAUL

5 truckers held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police Tuesday night arrested five truck drivers tasked to carry the huge arms cache hauled in Chittagong port on April 2.

The drivers, Kabir Ahmed, 40, Md Rafique, 45, Manir Ahmed, 40, Abdul Malek, 35, and Manjurul Alam, 35, were produced before court here and sent to jail custody yesterday, court sources said.

CID ASP (additional superintendent of police) Kabir Uddin questioned the drivers at his office and got important clues on which he declined to make any comment.

A CID source said the manhunt

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ALLEGATION AGAINST PROSHIKA

Government yet to build 'conspiracy' case

JULFEKAR ALI MANIK

The government is yet to gather hard evidences of the conspiracy against the state by leading NGO Proshika even after police raided its headquarters twice.

The NGO Affairs Bureau on Sunday filed a case against 12 Proshika staff including its President Qazi Faruque Ahmed, accusing them of financial irregularities.

"They misused funds of an approved

project," said newly appointed Director General (DG) of NGO Affairs Bureau Mizanur Rahman.

The DG however said he knows nothing about allegations of Proshika's playing anti-government role, but home ministry sources said the government will continue operations to unearth the NGO's anti-government activities and sedition charges might be pressed against it.

The government earlier filed sedition charges against two

Proshika officials but the High Court acquitted them.

Now the government is looking for ways to take stringent steps like filing more graft and sedition cases against Proshika Manobik Unnoyong Kendro, one of the largest non-government organisations (NGO) of the country, according to sources.

The government is also planning to have Proshika President Qazi Faruque Ahmed removed from his

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Proshika staff subjected to HR violations, says Abed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fazle Hasan Abed, chairperson of Brac, a leading non-government organisation, yesterday observed that activists of 'an internationally recognised' NGO Proshika are subjected to treatment incompatible with human rights and good governance.

Expressing his grave concern at the treatment, Abed said methods and actions that may be construed as political victimisation should not be taken.

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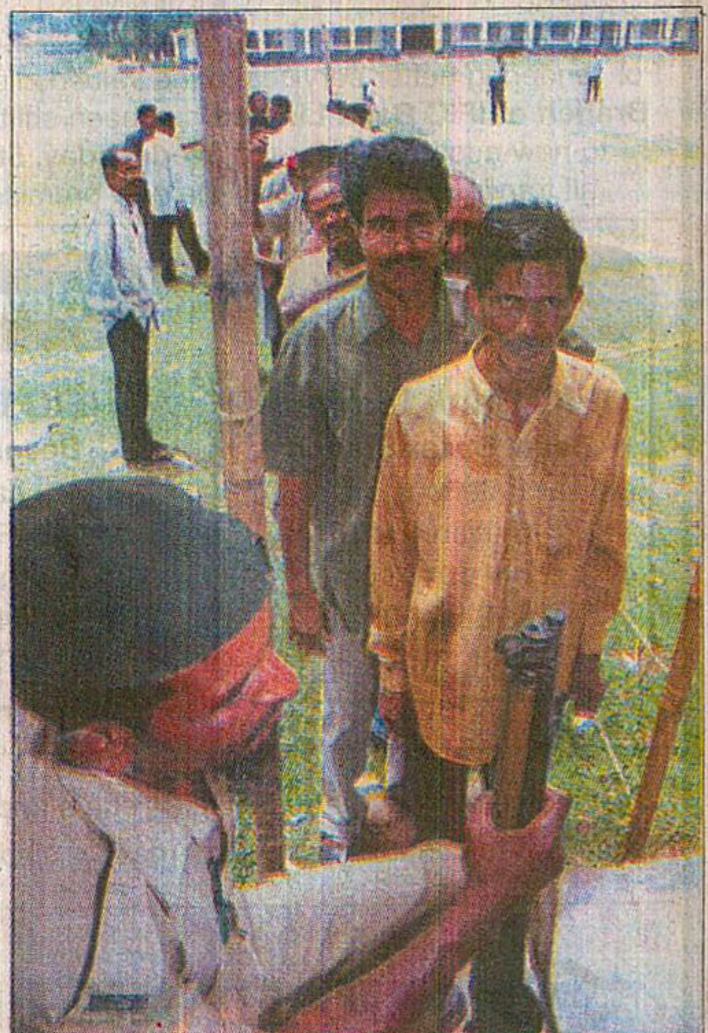


PHOTO: STAR

Only a handful of voters turn out at the Hardinge High School polling centre in Dhamarai to cast votes during the municipal corporation elections.

50 students hurt in clash with NU employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 50 students of different colleges under the National University (NU) were injured when NU employees at Gazipur allegedly attacked students demonstrating in front of the vice-chancellor (VC)'s office after failed negotiations over their five-point demand.

Sources said the attackers numbering around 60 also detained 12 student representatives for more than six hours before releasing them at 9:30pm.

Nine of the injured students including two female students were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with head

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Garment units still prove death traps

Lack of fire training leads to tragedy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment factories virtually become death trap for their workers in case of fire or other accidents mainly because the workers do not know how to make use of the safety measures including emergency exits, industry sources say.

Lack of knowledge on the part of workers about tackling an emer-

gency situation has rendered meaningless whatever safety measures the factories have provided.

Moreover, most of the garment factories keep their main gates locked and that is why workers cannot move out quickly even during an emergency, they pointed out.

Many of the factories have emergency exits but in most of the cases

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Let us build a Cancer Hospital

Raising of Fund from Sales of Business Products and Services

Dhaka Ahsania Mission has taken initiative on humanitarian ground to establish a full fledged international standard Cancer Hospital at Sector-10 (embankment drive), Uttara, Dhaka. In the first phase the hospital will have bed capacity of 160 which will be raised to 500 when the hospital will be fully developed. The Mission now wishes to invite:

- **Commercial Banks** to help in raising of funds for this humanitarian project by agreeing to donate a small percentage of Bank's service charges levied to the clients viz. pay order, OD, DD, TT, Bank guarantee, lending etc. or in any other way.
- **Insurance companies** to donate a percentage of commission offered to the agents for securing insurance policies as well as from their profit.
- **Multinational/ Bangladesh Companies** to agree to share a small percentage of their profit on their wide range of business products or services which could be inscribed on the body of their product as a matter of publicity.

We very much count on your participation.

Help Fight Cancer

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Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital Fund
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