

The Daily Star

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

Monday 21-6-2004

Robbers gun down 2 cops in daring Motijheel heist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A notorious gang yesterday gunned down two policemen and injured as many people in a gunfight to evade arrest during robbery at a currency exchange shop at Motijheel yesterday.

The gang, Idul Group, looted Tk 1.17 lakh from the shop, before police shot and arrested Idul, the ringleader.

Idul is allegedly backed by a leader of BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Dhaka University unit.

Slain Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Aminul Islam and Havildar Liakot Ali were members of a special police team engaged in the recently-launched anti-crime drive in the city styled 'Operation Cobra'.

"It was around 3:30pm when four armed youths came to my office."

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Policemen carry fatally-wounded Assistant Sub-Inspector Aminul Islam to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after he and Havildar Liakot Ali took bullets in a gunfight with gangsters in Motijheel yesterday. Liakot also died later.

HC terms Mannan writ premature

Expects govt to comply with EC need

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday disposed of the writ petition of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh candidate Abdul Mannan as premature but said it expects the government to provide the Election Commission with all support including army deployment for the Dhaka-10 by-election.

Mannan sought a court direction for implementation of an EC decision for deployment of army in each polling centre for the by-election slated for July 1.

If the government declines to extend co-operation to the EC, which is the former's constitutional responsibility, legal action may be initiated against the government, the court observed.

The EC will be at liberty to inform the court in case of any deviation and the matter will be taken care of in accordance with the law, it further noted.

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Forces plan to take 500 acres of forest

Ministries fret over environmental harm, form committees to examine proposals

REZAUL KARIM

The armed forces are trying to take control of large swathes of forestland from the environment and forest ministry for putting up military installations what the ministry officials think may undo years of greening efforts.

The ministry at an inter-ministerial meeting with land and defence ministries chaired by Environment Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday gave nod to a proposal, but formed three committees to examine as many demands of the army, navy and airforce.

The three forces and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), which have already taken control of 2,282.73 acres of forestland across the country, now

seek about 500 more acres for building defence establishments, officials said.

They said the three services recently sought over 485 acres in Tangail, Gazipur, Chittagong and Moheshkhali, largely under the forest department, in five separate proposals -- two each from the army and airforce and one from the navy.

Meeting sources said the army in a proposal demanded 44.67 acres of forestland at Ghatail in Tangail for construction of a 300-metre firing range for Shaheed Salahuddin Cantonment.

The army asked the land and forest ministries for the forestland, parts of which are straddling over private lands at Gourishwar and Sandhanpur in Dhalapara forest range in Ghatail.

The navy seeks 100 acres of Moheshkhali island's reserved forestland, home to Garzan, Telshur, Keora and Bain trees, for setting up a forward base and a central station.

The army in another proposal expressed its desire to take control of 221.78 acres in Rajendrapur, seen as the core of Bhawal National Park, for establishing a brigade group under Gazipur Cantonment.

Forest ministry officials said the government in 1982 declared the Bhawal Forest as Bhawal National Park to protect its bio-diversity and fabled Bhawal Raja's heritage for educational, research and recreation purposes.

The forest department said it

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Workers Party expels five leaders

Ousted group to form faction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party of Bangladesh yesterday expelled five central leaders including a politburo member while the ousted group said they would continue to function as a faction of the leftist group.

The party central committee expelled politburo member Saiful Haq, former central committee member Khandaker Ali Abbas, Parsh Chandra Saha, Nasiruddin Ahmed Nashu, and Mohammad Zaman on disciplinary grounds of 'visible anti-party activities.'

The decision was taken on the first day of a two-day central committee meeting yesterday where Workers Party accused the five rebels of releasing statements against the party only to create a split.

"The people who abandoned the party's ideals do not have any

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SQ CHY'S REMARKS Ruling MPs refuse to censure, AL walks out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) lawmakers yesterday walked out of parliament, as treasury bench members refused to censure the indecent remarks of ruling BNP parliamentarian Salauddin Qaader Chowdhury on AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid at an instant press briefing after the walkout, second in a week, said his party would later decide whether AL lawmakers would join the parliamentary session today.

"We expected the government to say sorry for or condemn verbal obscenity. We pursued the treasury bench to censure the remarks," he said.

The AL lawmakers who came back to the Jatiya Sangsad on June 15 after an on-and-off boycott of sessions decided to participate in all House activities.

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Defeated in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) election, Salauddin on his return from Ankara on Friday made rude remarks also on Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in his reaction to newspersons.

During the 40-minute unscheduled debate on the issue, the opposition lawmakers lambasted Salauddin, also parliamentary affairs advisor to the prime minister, and demanded explanations from the treasury bench.

Salauddin who was not present in the House during the debate joined the session after the Asr prayer break when the AL deputies left.

Senior treasury-bench members looked "shaky" and sounded reluctant to take part in the debate initiated by AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim and joined by Hamid and

Desa asked to drop power station plan

Bapa renews call to save Buriganga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) has urged the authorities concerned to stop the construction of a power station that encroaches upon the river Buriganga.

The BAPA leaders yesterday submitted a memorandum to the chairman of Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA) to press home their demand.

Earlier, BAPA held a rally in front of the High Court.

Addressing the rally, the BAPA leaders said the government enacted a law (Water Body Act 2000) and constituted a taskforce to save the Buriganga, but now the government itself has started to stifle the river by allowing earth filling for the proposed power station.

"In this context, how can we be assured that the government will protect the Buriganga from illegal encroachers?" an environmentalist

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Dhaka Electric Supply Authority has filled up a huge chunk of the wetland by the bank of the river Buriganga to install a power sub-station in Kamringirchar. The stretch of the land has been classified as the shore of the river.



This ravaged road in Becharam Deuri in Old Dhaka, which plays host to accidents, stands as a testament to the mindless digging of roads by the utility agencies.

Morshed off to ACD meet in China

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday left for Qingdao, China to attend the Third Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) which starts today.

He will represent Bangladesh in the dialogue and organise discussions on e-commerce, roads and communication.

The foreign minister will also present a concept paper titled "Rehabilitation of Working Children of Asia" at the two-day dialogue session. He will join the 22-member ACD Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Tuesday.

Prior to his departure, Morshed told the BBC Bangla Service that Dhaka would also push for creation of an Asian fund, which was

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OIC POLL DEFEAT Hasina blames it on PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed 'stubbornness' of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for Bangladesh's defeat in the election to the secretary general post of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

"We (AL) repeatedly opposed the nomination of an anti-liberation person for the post of OIC secretary general but the prime minister stood firm on her decision," Hasina said at the inauguration of member collection campaign of Bangladesh Awami Shwechhashebak League (BASL) at the National Press Club auditorium.

The opposition leader also said Bangladesh had bright chances of getting elected to the secretary

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Fake fertiliser robs southwest farmers

REAZ AHMAD, back from Jessore

Producers of fake fertiliser are robbing farmers in Jessore and Jhenidah regions of huge sums of money they spend on procuring the vital agricultural input.

A number of clandestine factories in the two districts are doing a brisk business of fake fertiliser for triple super phosphate (TSP), many of the victims said.

Zamir Hossain, a farmer from Nagarpur village in Jessore Sadar upazila said, "These unregistered factories produce fake TSP branding it 'Made in China'. They produce it by mixing up certain quantity of gypsum with cement and mud."

Another farmer, Nazrul Islam Khan from Gaidghat village of Bagharpara upazila of the district, said farmers in their area procure such fake TSP from local markets only to be cheated repeatedly.

"About six months ago, we spotted one such clandestine fertiliser factory at Sheemakhali Bazar and the Superintendent of Police (of Jessore) inspected it. But the authorities took no step to nab the factory owner and just picked up an employee," Nazrul alleged.

Many other farmers alleged fake fertiliser producers were cheating them for years together but the authorities seemed reluctant to root out the crime.

Contacted over telephone in Chittagong, Chairman of Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) Kafil Uddin said they have information about mushroom growth of fake fertiliser factories both in Jessore and Jhenidah.

The BFA, apex body of private sector fertiliser importers and traders, had brought the issue to the notice of the authorities many times in the recent months. The authorities also decided to go for special inspection of such factories but it is yet to be done, he said.

Sources pointed out producers and sellers of fake fertiliser were taking advantage of the shortage of

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Woman, only child killed in Ctg landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A destitute young woman and her only child perished in a landslide at Nasirabad in the port city yesterday.

Josna Begum, 22, and her one-year-old boy Mohammad Yusuf were trapped under a huge mound of earth and rocks as a large chunk of a hill at Almagar, Nasirabad collapsed on their hillside shanty at around 1pm, police and locals said.

Police with help of local residents later dug out the bodies.

Police said the landslide was triggered by yesterday's non-stop downpour that paralysed the city life, forcing most of the city-dwellers stay indoors.

Met office recorded 126mm rainfall in 24 hours to 3pm yesterday.

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Making quick bucks at cop checkpoint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

At around 5:00 in the afternoon Friday, eight members of the armed police battalion and three police constables led by a sub-inspector (SI) set up a checkpoint on the eastern side of Satmasjid Road in front of Abahani Club Ltd. in Dhanmondi.

The launch of the heavily guarded checkpoint is a part of an ongoing government effort to catch criminals on the streets before they strike. The move came with the alarming rise in violent crimes in the city in the last three months.

Armed with AK-47 rifles and US-made shotguns, six members of the smart platoon in combat dress sat on a bench on the pavement and chatted. The rest randomly stopped all sorts of vehicles on the

busy road. The young SI standing by the roadside selected which vehicle to be stopped. Curiously, the SI's interest was mainly focused on vehicles carrying families and apparently innocent looking motorists.

This correspondent spent an hour on the spot and counted 17 vehicles stopped by the police. Of the 17, six were threatened with prosecution but released in the end through negotiations.

As soon as a microbus carrying an old couple and two children was stopped, its driver was asked to produce documents.

"Your tax token has expired, I have to prosecute you," said the SI to the pleading driver. He, meanwhile,

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Proshika boss charged with sedition

6 other NGO men also accused of plotting to overthrow govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has brought sedition charge against Proshika chief Qazi Faruque Ahmed, who is now in jail, and six of his subordinates.

The case lodged yesterday with the chief metropolitan magistrate's (CMM) court of Dhaka accuses the officials of Proshika, an NGO, of plotting to overthrow the government. The charge comes at a time when Qazi Faruque has been gaining bail in most of the previous cases lodged against him.

The six co-accused of the Proshika president are Proshika Director Sahnewaz and deputy

directors Sirajul Islam, Mahbub Alam, Fazlul Huq and Abdur Rab.

The plaintiff, Sub-Inspector (SI) Abdur Rahim Khan of Pallabi Police Station, in a petition to the CMM alleged the Proshika top brasses in connivance with others tried to unseat the government. According to a seditious scheme, they tried to hire thousands of people in March 12 to April 30 this year from across the country and assemble them in the capital to form a 'mancha' (opposition platform), the petition added.

The timeframe of the alleged seditious intrigue coincides with the

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