

Cops bar locals

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known as sarbaras. "Yet we met a very few people who were tortured by JMJB men and we think they could tell a little of their sufferings before police," he said.

Reports from Naogaon say police allegedly prevented the victims of JMJB vigilante activities relating their ordeal to the US embassy officials.

Police reached Bargachha village and Bheti village in Raninagar hours before the US team arrived there and made sure the officials do not reach the families victimised by the JMJB, its cadres.

The team met the family of Khejur Ali, killed and buried near their Bheti camp allegedly by JMJB men.

In the excessive police presence, sisters of Khejur could say no more about the horrific tale of the murder than they found the body in pieces.

The embassy staff visited and took photographs of Jagannath's house in Bargachha village, which was demolished by Bangla Bhai's cadres in a vigilante operation.

They then went to Bhetiagram where Bangla Bhai set up a camp to torture suspected members of the banned Purbo Banglar Communist Party and Mozaffar Hossain in the same village told the officials how

he was tortured by outlaws.

The family of Abdul Quiyum Badsha, killed and left hanging from a tree by the JMJB men met the officials in the Parajatan Motel and handed them a written statement. The family members told reporters that they came to Rajshahi, as police barred them to meet the team in their village.

Muhammad Musa, a schoolteacher and brother of Badsha, told Ague and Modley that Badsha was not a criminal as police and JMJB men branded him before killing. "He was killed on an order of a ruling BNPL lawmaker."

"My brother was willing to contest the next parliamentary election and was working to that end," Musa told reporters, indicating the killing was politically motivated.

Musa alleged Bangla Bhai and his associate Shahidul Islam damaged his house in Shafipur village on May 8 before kidnapping Badsha on May 19. The operatives killed Badsha in public after announcement by microphone.

Musa alleged police implicated Badsha in false cases to link him to crimes before his death. He referred to an extortion case the police filed against Badsha on February 30, 2001 as part of a scheme to harass him.

BNP asks JCD president to step down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly procured Bangladesh Biman F-28 aircraft faced technical failure once again yesterday, forcing its Chittagong flight to delay for around four hours.

The flight No. BG614 failed to fly on schedule on the domestic route due to engine hiccups. Passengers had to wait for more than five hours to reach Dhaka from the port city.

The flight was scheduled at 3:15pm. The national airline also failed to arrange alternative arrangements for the waiting commuters.

The same flight was rescheduled at 6:15pm. Reaching the capital at 6:55pm, it faced another difficulty as ZIA security personnel blocked the aircraft for around 45 minutes in going near the VVIP terminal. At around 7:45pm, passengers were allowed to leave the plane.

Biman recently procured two 26-year-old F-28s from Indonesian Hiebert Group Limited for US\$2.91 million, brushing aside all opposition and without considering its commercial viability.

Biman pilots and some officials opposed the procurement considering the outdated model and fearing risk of incurring huge loss due to heavy maintenance cost. Pilots of the F-28 fleet last month also refused to fly the old planes to Nepal, finding the planes not technically sound for the hilly terrain.

Deal signed to sell Rupali Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday signed an agreement with a British consortium to prepare the sale of state-owned Rupali Bank (RB) by the end of the year to satisfy conditions attached to the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans.

The process of privatising the RB may start at the end of this month in a bid to complete it by this year. The consortium led by GBRW Ltd., will be paid \$1.8 million by the government to assess the value of the bank, account for the RB's assets and liabilities and the strategy for the privatisation process.

The RB sell-off is the first initiative of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) reform taken under a WB project titled Enterprise Growth and Bank Modernisation Project.

Under the project, other NCBs including the Agrani Bank will go to private management and advisers will be appointed for the Sonali and Janata Banks.

The agreement was signed at the Finance Division at the National Secretariat.

BNP men

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Mannan, a retired army major, in Tejgaon for the July 1 by-election to Dhaka-10 constituency. Mannan, a former BNPL lawmaker, hails from Noakhali.

Witnesses said as the procession led by Mannan reached Modhukuni, some people came out of an election office of ruling coalition candidate Mosaddek Ali Falu and attacked the procession. They started beating up AL leaders Mohammed Ali, central committee member Mohammed Hanif, Golam Mahiuddin, Ekramul Karim Chowdhury and former chairman of Noakhali municipality Rabiu Hossain Kachi with hockey sticks.

Mannan later resumed his campaign from Begun Bari.

AL lawmaker Mohammed Ali at a hurriedly called press briefing condemned the attack by the government people' and said the ruling coalition has failed to even ensure the safety of lawmakers.

He said the AL leaders were the target of the attackers. Other injured AL leaders were present at the press conference.

Flash flood

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Ganges-Padma also registered further rise at all points. Most rivers in the Meghna basin recorded rise while south-eastern hill basin rivers recorded fall except at Halda and Narayanhat points.

Significant rainfall was recorded at Bhairab Bazar, Serajganj, Habiganj, Bogra, Panchpukuria, Parshuram, Dhaka and Jamalpur yesterday.

2 shot, IBBL car hijacked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals yesterday in separate incidents shot a travel agency owner in Motijheel and in Mohammadpur carjacked by shooting its driver.

Rezaul Bashar, 35, of Basabob, Sabupur, reportedly owner of a travel agency, was crossing the road in front of his New Paltan office when two appeared by a motorcycle and opened fire on him.

Bashar with bullet-wounds in his right thigh was rushed to a local clinic and to National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor).

Motiheli police, however, could not say anything about the incident at 7:30 last night.

In Mohammadpur, criminals hijacked a car of the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd. (IBBL) after shooting its driver.

Driver Abdur Rahman was waiting for IBBL Director Shahidul Islam at PC Culture Housing Society at 9:15am when four criminals asked him to yield the key of the car (Dhaka Metro-Ga-14-4876).

Refused, the criminals shot at his right thigh and drove off in the car.

IBBL Vice-president Rezaul Karim filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station on behalf of Rahman.

Demra police, meanwhile, recovered the rotting body of a woman of about 25 from a pond in Sarala yesterday at 12:05am and sent it to Mitford hospital for autopsy.

Expulsion will not impede party agenda: Menon says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP's high command yesterday asked Shahabuddin Laltu, president of the party's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), to step down.

Sources said the BNP high-ups called on Laltu and asked him why he gave statement in favour of a half unit leader who was involved in criminal activity.

The high command criticised Laltu and said his comment in favour of Tanjilur Rahman Tanjil, president of Jahanur Haq Hall of Dhaka University, has tarnished the party's image, sources said quoting one of the top leaders.

The BNP leaders are not pleased with top JCD leaders as they have failed to run the front properly, the sources added.

When asked, Laltu yesterday declined to make any comment.

Bangla Bahi's wing kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Members of the newly formed Shanti Rakha Committee (peace committee) in village Kujai under Raninagar upazila allegedly killed a half unit leader who was involved in criminal activity.

Of the 40 members of the WPPB central committee, claims of the five that 31 district units are with them are baseless, the statement said.

"Just five cannot charge us with moral deterioration, the entire party will determine that," Menon said responding to an accusation the expelled leaders made, "It's them who have deviated from morality by going against the party."

Among the central leaders, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Fazle Hossain, Abdul Basar, Mahmudul Hasan Manik, Abdul Motin, Saifuddin Ahmed, Iqbal Kabir and Anisur Rahman and representatives from the party's 51 organisational districts were present.

Cops raid

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at the hall following a kind of rental arrangement with the JCD leaders.

The raid continued from 1:45am to 4:00am while many of the students were in the TV room to watch Euro 2004 football.

Police broke opened all the locked rooms of the hall including that of Tanjil but could not find anything except some books and clothes, police said.

They seized a motorbike from the hall and Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, described it as suspicious looking.

Police the same night arrested Raquibul Huda Rakib, an MA student of Management of Jagannath College near the Shahidullah Hall at about 4:00am.

Meanwhile, arrested Shima on Wednesday in her statement identified herself as wife of Shahidul Islam Idul and sister of Bhuiya Babu, police said.

Inspector (Detective Branch) Nurul Amin has been investigating the case.

A letter signed by Tanjil said he had resigned from the post for the greater interest of the party. He claimed he was not involved in the Sunday afternoon shootout with police in Motijheel.

The copies of the letter typed on the pad of the Jahanur Haq Hall unit JCD were sent to the JCD president and general secretary and also to the Dhaka University Journalists' Association yesterday.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Aminul Islam and Havinder Liakot Ali of Cobra-7, the elite police team, died in a shootout with dreaded Thul Gang in Motijheel when the thugs were leaving the place after looting a money exchange shop.

A murder case was filed with the Motijheel Police Station accusing seven including Tanjil.

Dhaka to erase

FROM PAGE 1

Chowdhury and Singapore's Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs Bilahari Kausikan signed the MoU.

Chowdhury later briefed the press on the official talks at Sonargaon Hotel. He quoted the Singaporean PM as telling his Bangladeshi counterpart, "There is a perception in the west that identifies Islam with terrorism and Singapore would like to work with Islamic countries to remove the misconception."

"Bangladesh welcomed this noble initiative from a non-Muslim nation as it is an initiative for peace and accepted the offer," said Chowdhury, adding that it would promote the modern and tolerant ideals of Islam.

The foreign secretary said the eight-nation NSC would be made up of four Arab countries and as many countries from Asia, but he would not disclose the names of the other countries.

Chowdhury said the first NSC meeting will be held in Singapore in the end of the year, although the committee is still in the conceptual stage as Singapore is talking with other countries for bringing it into being.

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Rivals slaughter

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outlawed communist groups in Chuadanga. About seven underground political outfits with at least 1,000 armed members grouped into 20 gangs are active in the