

Pichchi Hannan

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and directed the authorities to treat him in jail for bullet wounds.

Law enforcers found the bullet-marked body of Iqbal Hossain Nitel in blue polythene, with a saline needle set on one hand, on the road near BG Press in Tejgaon in a discovery at 5:30am.

Thirty-year-old Nitel took bullets in his leg as Hannan's gang engaged in Friday's fierce firefight with the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Uttara, which was launched on April 14 to curb crime.

Nitel's ringleader Hannan and three others shot their way through a police dragnet, as the Rab team raided a house in Uttara, prompting the gang to storm out on the elite force injuring its two members.

The family of Nitel, accused in at least four criminal cases including the killings of ward commissioner Sajidur Rahman Newton in 2002 and sub-inspector Humayun Kabir in 2003, confirmed his identity at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Sources said Nitel was introduced to Hannan after he graduated in commerce from Shaheen College about 10 years ago and initiated into the crime world. Hannan tasked Nitel with drug peddling in Argaoon.

Relatives received the body of Nitel, son of Abul Khair of Maddhya Payekpara in Mirpur, after an autopsy at the DMCH.

Police believe Nitel was treated in an unknown clinic for wounds and his body was dumped onto the road after death.

Earlier, Nitel's sister Nipa filed a petition with the CMM's Court for not carrying out a postmortem, but the court rejected her petition.

LYNCHPIN IN JAIL

Uttara Police took Hannan, one of the 23 most wanted criminals on the police list, to the CMM's Court with three forwarding reports to show him arrested in cases.

Moulvibazar floods

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Chittagong probably will not adversely affect the flood situation.

Rain forecast in Sylhet for the next few days, however, is likely to worsen the flood situation in the already inundated Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Sylhet districts. These districts are more prone to flash floods as small rivers like Manu and Dholai swell and break the banks easily during heavy rain.

Our Moulvibazar correspondent reports that, low-lying areas of Kulaura, Rajnagar and Kamalganj are still under water as flash floods from the rivers Manu and Dholai intensified by water coming down from across the border upstream, have caused breaches in several embankments on Thursday and Friday.

Water level of the Manu river fell below danger mark yesterday, but those of Surma and Kushiyara were above in Sylhet and normal in Sunamganj.

Despite falls in water levels, residents of at least 60 villages from the inundated areas of those three upazillas are still stuck on the embankments, with most of their Aush crops destroyed by floodwater.

Concerned authorities have not yet estimated the losses inflicted by the floods in Moulvibazar, Habiganj or Sylhet.

Sylhet Division Development Action Council will hold a rally in Sylhet today to demand the government declare Moulvibazar,

Ministers skirt army

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parliamentary rules of procedure. They, however, assured the opposition deputies of a free, fair election.

Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Law Minister Moudud Ahmed attempted to reply to the opposition lawmakers, but Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar overlooked Moudud and gave BNP lawmaker Mashur Rahman the floor.

Bhuiyan, also ruling BNP secretary general, let BNP lawmakers Jyoti Abedin Faruk and Ilias Ali speak on the issue.

The main opposition AL lawmaker Shahjahan Khan, rising on a point of order, demanded adequate security for voters in the by-elections to Ramma-Tejgaon seat. He said the AL has lent its support to Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh candidate Abdul Mannan and is campaigning for him.

He referred to last week's attack and manhandling of an opposition parliamentarian by BNP adherents during the election campaign and said: "Voters are scared ... we're doubtful about free and fair election. Despite the demand for deployment of army apprehending violence and intimidation, the government has not responded to the Election Commission's request."

The AL lawmaker called for comprehensive steps to ensure fair vote in the by-election.

Rising on a point of order, AL lawmaker AKM Jahangir Hossain sought an explanation from the government for a lawmaker and a state minister's alleged involvement with the smuggling of Tk 3.50 crore in foreign currencies seized at Zia International Airport recently.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus

A Rab team that arrested Hannan in a clinic in Savar escorted Hannan by microbus to the court at about 4:00pm to back up Uttara police. Rab handed Hannan over to Uttara Police Station on Saturday night.

During the hearing in court, Hannan was on the microbus, as he could not walk because of abdominal pain.

In the forwarding reports, police linked him to killing, robbery, extortion, theft and a reign of terror he spread with his operatives.

"We are not seeking reward for Hannan now," said Lieutenant Colonel Chowdhury Fazlul Bari, commanding officer of Rab Battalion 1 that took part in its first frontal engagement with criminals since its launch.

He said Hannan gave important intelligence but refused to disclose to the sake of investigation.

Earlier, the home ministry announced a Tk 1 lakh reward on him for arrest or information leading to his capture.

The investigation officer prayed for 10-day reward for Babul Mian, Mostafizur Rahman, Rafiqul Islam Tuku and Motaleb -- all arrested in Uttara soon after the shootout and co-accused in the three cases.

The court scheduled July 1 for hearing on the prayer for reward in the presence of the arrestees, who were sent to jail.

INMORGUE

A magistrate carried out an inquest into the death of Debashish Kumar Das, 32, who was taken to the DMCH a few hours after arrest in a Savar clinic along with Hannan.

Debashish was introduced to Hannan about eight years ago when he was running a fish depot at Karwan Bazar. "He (Debashish) would hardly go back home after his acquaintance with Hannan," said Debashish's father Gajendra Kumar Das, a resident of Badda.

Govt mulls land transport police, new road fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering formation of a 'land transport police' (LTP) force to ensure safety and security of the road traffic and creation of a fund to maintain the roads and bridges.

The LTP would be a force similar to the GRP assigned to the railways but, unlike GRP, which is supervised by the home ministry, it would be under direct command of the communications ministry, said Communications Minister Nazmul Huda at a press conference yesterday.

Nazmul said, in addition to maintaining traffic, the LTP would detect fake papers of vehicles and check reckless driving on roads and highways. He, however, did not go into details about other activities of the force or from where its funds would come.

The minister said the new road fund would be created with the money collected from bridges as toll and a separate body like the Bangladesh Land Port Authority would be formed to maintain it. The fund would be used to carry out repairs and maintenance of roads and bridges, without spending money from the revenue budget, Nazmul elaborated, adding donor agencies also suggested creating such a fund.

The minister also reiterated his ambition to develop a magnetic train service between Dhaka and Chittagong, which he said is still under the government's active consideration. "It is my dream and one day this dream would come true."

Magnetic train service, which is very cheap and cost-effective, is used in China, Nazmul said. He thinks it would enable people to shuttle between the capital and the port city in only an hour.

Nazmul informed the newsmen that the construction of Padma Bridge at Mawa would begin in late 2005 or early 2006. The cost of the 6.2-km bridge, the longest in the country, would be around Tk 7,000 crore, with Tk 5,000-crore foreign aid.

He also disclosed that the government is mulling over a sixth China-Bangladesh friendship bridge at Mokhtarpur.

The communications minister spoke of a number of steps his ministry has undertaken to modernise the country's railway system, among which a process is now underway to extend the broad-gauge rail-lines from Khulna and Rajshahi up to Dhaka. He also listed some future plans of his ministry to develop the country's communication structure, including a long-term programme to establish a multi-modal transport system.

"Ranga, Akhter and Firoz threatened to rape our daughters if we don't leave home," said Jaleshwari Murmu, who suffered injuries in the attack.

After the looting, the JMB men forced other villagers to sign a piece of paper to brand the victims as outlaws, locals alleged.

Talking to The Daily Star, a villager said asking not to be named. "They wrote later in the paper that villagers attacked them (the victims) as they supported us," he said. Locals did not file any case fearing further attacks by the JMB men.

Identifying himself a JMB operative, retired police constable Enamul Haq told reporters that he had never found such anarchy created by outlaws in the area before.

"Many Juma'atul Mujahedin operatives who were active in the area a few months ago have worked with the JMB and are now working with the peace committee," he said.

Shahid demanded relief for the flood-affected areas in

Moulvibazar, which prompted the speaker to say he will no more allow any deputies to speak on a point of order until the budget is passed.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid in a surprising move seconded the speaker.

Crisis-hit RMG

FROM PAGE 1

political parties early next month to find alternatives to hartial.

Major buyers will be coming into Bangladesh during September-October for placing orders, which will be delivered in January-March next year.

In the last six months since March, knitwear exports to the US has plunged by 38 percent and woven garment by 10.59 percent," Annisul Huq, president of the BGMEA, told The Daily Star last night. "This is a worrisome situation. We are going to have a quota-free regime from 2005 and if buyers come and face hartial, they will not hesitate to shift orders."

He said dialogues are on with the major two parties -- the BNP and AL -- to convene the meeting so that an alternative to hartial could be found.

"We have been encouraged by the recent pledge by the leader of the opposition, Sheikh Hasina, not to call any more hartsals if the party in power also pledges not to resort to the same means once it is in the opposition," Anis said.

In a quota-free era, buyers will have no obligation to place order in Bangladesh and giant competitors like China and Vietnam will win contracts.

Apart from yesterday's murder of Humayun Kabir Balu, editor of Dainik Janmabhumi, all the four other killings in Khulna were carried out in the last three years. Nahor Ali of Dainik Anirban was killed in April, 2001, Shukur Hossain of Dainik Anirban in 2001, Sheikh Haroon-ur-Rashid of Dainik Purbanchal in March, 2002 and Manik Chandra Saha of The New Age on January 15, 2004.

In Jessor, Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury of Dainik Sphuling was murdered in 1994, Farud Hossain of Dainik Runner in 1995, Saiful Alam Mukul of Dainik Runner on August 30, 1998, and Shamsur Rahman of Dainik Saha on July 16, 2000.

Criminals killed the correspondent of Jhenaibah's Dainik Biharin, Rezaul Karim Reza in 1998 and the paper's Editor Mir Elias Hossain Dilip on January 15, 2000. Editor of Dainik Patradut SM Alauddin was killed in Sathkhira on June 19, 1996 and Bazlur Rahman of Dainik Din Badal in Chaudanga on June 19.

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For his fellow defender Jaap

efficacy. The remaining 20 percent of the vaccines can cause accidents and it is globally accepted.

Medical experts say a vaccine,

like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. But the risk of DTP vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

Dr Rahman said that EPI officials are investigating the incident.

While asked about the removal of the vials manufactured from the same batch, Dr Rahman said, "We can't order removal of the vials made in the same batch because it's troublesome and those vials have already been scattered across the country."

The EPI services in Paikgachha upazila remained suspended, health directorate sources said.

Bangladeshis boys are also trafficked into the UAE and Qatar and forced to work as camel jockeys and beggars. Women and children from rural areas in Bangladesh are trafficked to urban centres for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work.

The Bangladesh government does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so, the US report contended.

Dr Rahman further explained that all vaccines have 80 percent

check-ups but it doesn't look good as it seems to be getting worse.

"I'm doubtful for the semi-final.

It's a big blow as I'd finally got myself back in the team and was playing with a lot of confidence.

"It's hard thinking I might miss the semi-final and final after coming this far."

Penalties have been a four-letter word in the Dutch camp as they lost on spot kicks in the last three European championships and in the 1998 World Cup.

De Boer himself missed two spot kicks in the Euro 2000 semi-final defeat against Italy, one in normal time and one in the shoot-out.

Despite his past failures from the spot the ex-Rangers defender said if he'd stayed on the pitch he might well have stepped up to take one against Swedish keeper Andreas Isaksson.

"If I'd been fit maybe I'd have

taken the place of (Philip) Cocu, who missed one in the '98 World Cup against Brazil."

"It's the captain's duty to take them."

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