

## Jubo League man

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Kushtia correspondent.  
After the shootout, the police seized arms and ammunition from the spot.

In Kushtia, a wanted leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) Sirajul Islam alias 'Koshai Siraj', 36, was killed in another shootout between the police and the PBCP men at Kaziur in Daulatpur upazila early yesterday.

**NARAYANGANJ INCIDENT**  
A team of Rab-3 raided the house of Shaful, a member of Shiddhirganj Jubo League convening committee, at Ailpara at around 4:00am Monday. Falling to arrest him, the team arrested his brother-in-law Liton and tenant Akhtar Hossain.

Later, the Rab members searched the nearby house of Shaful's uncle and arrested him.

Nasima Begum, mother of Shaful, alleged the Rab men were accompanied by local BNP activists during the raid. Shaful tried to avoid arrest giving a false identity but BNP cadre Sumon exposed his identity to the Rab, she alleged.

Nasima said the Rab men then dragged Shaful out of the house and shot him in his leg. They also asked Nasima and her two daughters not to disclose anything about the incident and the names of the BNP men who helped Rab.

The Rab men then took the Jubo League activist to Rab-3 office at Adamjee. The family members of Shaful alleged they heard gunshots from the Rab office. The Rab members did not let them meet the arrestee, they said.

The body of Shaful was found yesterday at Siddhirganj on the bank of Shitalakya.

Officials of Rab-3 said they arrested 12 accomplices of notorious 'Mati Bahini' including Shaful from Ailpara in the early hours Monday. Following his statement the Rab raided a cement factory in the early hours yesterday and seized some arms and ammunition.

During the arms seizure operations, the Rab officials said, the accomplices of the arrestees attacked the Rab team from a boat in the Shitalakya river that triggered a gunfight between them. Shaful received bullets while escaping from the custody and died on the spot. The attackers managed to flee with the boat.

The victim's mother further alleged that she gave Tk 1 lakh to one Rab source for his release. Shaful was killed by Rab on the instruction of

the BNP leaders, she said.

Rab-3 Commanding Officer Lt Col Gulzar denied the allegations and told The Daily Star last night that there is no room for bribing the Rab. "We do not consider the political identity of the criminals...We follow our own intelligence sources," he said.

**JHENIDAH INCIDENT**  
Two alleged BCP cadres, Mazid and Rajkumar, were arrested by a team of Jhenidah police at Paharkata village in Sadar upazila Monday night, the police said.

The team came under attack by the outlawed men at around 12:45am while returning to the police station after raiding a couple of spots for arms seizure.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station said the BCP men opened fire on the police van when it reached Madhabpur. The law-enforcers returned fire and the gunfight continued for five hours. At least 150 rounds of gunshots were exchanged.

Rajkumar and Mazid received bullets while trying to escape from the van and died on the spot at around 4:30am. Their accomplices fled, the police said.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Fazur Rahman and Constable Mafizul Islam were also injured during the shootout. They were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

The police recovered four pipe-guns, one shutter-gun, one foreign-made revolver, ammunition and three other weapons from the spot.

**KUSHTIA INCIDENT**  
The police nabbed Sirajul Islam, a regional leader of the outlawed PBCP from a house at Badda in the capital on Friday night. He was then sent to Kushtia for quizzing.

Following his confessional statement, the police raided Kaziur village to seize firearms at about 4:30am yesterday. When the police team reached the village, the PBCP cadres opened fire on police triggering a gunfight.

Both sides traded around 100 shots during the hour-long shootout. Siraj tried to escape during the encounter and died on the spot receiving bullets, the police said.

Police recovered one foreign-made revolver, one rifle and four bullets from the spot and sent the body to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

Siraj, who allegedly led a triple murder incident at Kaziura on October 22, was accused in 17 cases including nine murder cases.

## Divided America

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states taken by Bush in 2000.  
Bush sounded confident after voting at the local firehouse near his ranch in Crawford, Texas.

"I believe I'm going to win," Bush told reporters before heading to the battleground state of Ohio to thank Republican election volunteers and then returning to the White House. "My hope, of course, is that this election ends tonight."

In his own drive to get voters to the polls, Kerry met Democratic activists in Wisconsin, a battleground state that allows same-day registration, and hammered Bush on his conduct of the Iraq war.

"You have a choice, all Americans have this choice today," the Massachusetts senator said before heading home to Boston to vote. "George Bush made his choices...He made a choice without a plan to win the peace."

Analysts predict the highest turnout for 40 years and both candidates were still campaigning on election day.

With the race so close, there are fears of a repeat of 2000's disputed result and subsequent legal wrangling.

In Florida, thousands of lawyers from the two political parties, as well as international election observers, have been drafted in amid reports of lost ballots, confusing voter technology and intimidation of voters.

However, Bush and Kerry have both said they do not think a protracted legal battle is likely.

In one sign of the legal battles, US Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens allowed Republicans to challenge voter qualifications inside polling stations in Ohio, a development that Democrats fear could be used to intimidate their core voters.

The first votes to be cast and counted on election day were on the east coast, in New Hampshire's North County, where a survey of a few dozen voters showed a narrow lead for Bush.

**SWING STATE TENSION**  
Two of the biggest battlegrounds, Florida and Ohio - both in Bush's column in 2000 - were too close to call yesterday.

In Florida, each campaign said it was encouraged by the early voting. But the state's size and the diversity of its electorate, coupled with the emotions remaining from the 2000 recount, make it perhaps the most difficult battleground state to read.

Although a reported two million people have already cast their ballots in Florida during two weeks of advance polling, turnout was expected to be heavy on election day.

On Monday, people in some parts of Florida queued for several hours to take advantage of the last day of early voting.

Tensions are also high in the state of Ohio, which like Florida could prove decisive in the poll outcome.

Ohio, which no Republican has lost and still won the White House, appeared to be a tossup. The University of Cincinnati's Ohio Poll yesterday put Bush at 50.1 percent and Kerry at 49.2 percent, and a Columbus Dispatch poll on Sunday called the race 50-50, the closest in the poll's history.

Kerry must win at least one of those two states to have a realistic shot at victory, while a Bush loss in Florida would leave him in danger unless he could steal Pennsylvania or some Midwestern states like Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa - all won by Gore in 2000.

Pennsylvania, once seen as leaning to Kerry, may have tightened up over the weekend. A victory by Bush in Pennsylvania, which Democrat Al Gore won four years ago, would create a huge hurdle to Kerry's hopes of winning the White House. Democratic strategists said they expect to win the state, albeit more narrowly than they once believed.

Three upper Midwest states also remain close. Minnesota continues to tilt toward Kerry, with Bush still hoping for an upset. In Wisconsin, both sides said the outcome is likely to be determined on the ground today. Bush strategists believe Iowa is the most likely state to take from the Democrats, but one adviser to Kerry said yesterday the state has begun to move his way.

Bush's campaign also sees New Mexico as a potential pickup, and Kerry's team believes the Democrat will take back New Hampshire. Democrats see Nevada as still in play, but the Bush camp believes it will remain in the red-state column. Bush is still fighting to win Michigan but appears to have an uphill fight.

Analysts say a higher than usual turnout may benefit Kerry, as first-time and occasional voters are more likely to vote for change. However, Americans are not in the habit of changing leaders during wartime and may in the end decide to stick with Bush.

(REUTERS/AFP/AP/WASHINGTON POST/BBC)

## Ctg magnate

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Monday night.  
During interrogation Mahubb disclosed that Jamal had been killed but he declined to give details, Rab officials said yesterday.

The Rab handed over Mahubb, allegedly involved in the abduction on July 24 last year, to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the police, now probing the abduction case, for further interrogation, Rab sources said.

Nazma Begum, wife of Jamal Uddin, yesterday told The Daily Star that Kasem chairman and Mahubb were involved in the abduction. "He (Mahubb) can tell the whereabouts of my husband...I believe he knows everything."

CID investigation officer Anwar Hossain also said he has got enough information about the involvement of Kala Mahubb in the abduction of Jamal.

Kasem chairman of Fatikchhari and another accused Shahid chairman of Anwara upazila went into hiding after the abduction. The Osman Bahini chief has also been on the run since the Rab started raiding his dens in Fatikchhari.

## Polls either under

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at the International Conference Centre (ICC).

She delivered her speech after listening to as many as 25 leaders of district, upazila and municipality units of the BNP Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu also spoke at the function.

BNP Standing Committee Member RA Ghani and ministers and MPs from Rajshahi division were present.

The prime minister said the opposition party has been trying to create an issue to launch a movement. But the people did not respond to its evil attempts, she added.

Referring to the improvement of law and order following the measures taken by the government, she said the opposition does not want the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) as it has stopped terrorism and extortion in the country.

Responding to the demand of the field level party leaders and workers for holding upazila parishad elections, the prime minister said the matter is under active consideration of the government.

She urged the party men to be

## Rickshaw

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release a rickshaw even though it has all the valid papers to meet the costs best known by the on-duty policemen.

But, when asked, police Sub-Inspector Abul Kashem in charge of the dumping site denied the allegation saying, "No money is being taken to release rickshaws having valid papers."

Earlier, during a visit at about 12:30pm to New Market in front of Balaka Cinema Hall, about 20 rickshaws were found being seized. A number of their owners are seen engaged in negotiation with brokers in presence of traffic sergeants and police to procure release of their vehicles.

One Mohammad Golap was bargaining with a broker to get back his rickshaw seized a few minutes ago from the New Market area. At first, he proposed to give Tk 300, but eventually the deal was settled at Tk 700 to get his rickshaw back.

Although representatives of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) were supposed to accompany the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) teams, DMP traffic teams alone are conducting the seizing, as the DCC's officials concerned have been engaged in renewing rickshaw licences since October 24.

## CU moves to act

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the findings to the university syndicate, which sent the same to anti-corruption department.

As the scandal of judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee broke, intelligence agencies and government departments concerned became active to collect the findings of the probe headed by Abu Saleh, a teacher of CU chemistry department.

Saleh could not be contacted as he is staying abroad.  
A member of the probe body, Azizur Rahman, said "I cannot remember details of our findings. I can only say that changing of marks, rubbing, overwriting and other forms of tampering with mark sheets were detected in the investigation."

"We found massive irregularities in the results....But I do not know what happened later," said Rahman, now chairman of CU botany department.

The then Deputy Controller of Examinations Habibur Rahman and Section Officer Nasir Uddin who

united and strengthen the party to make it victorious in the next general elections. She also asked them to settle differences, if any, among themselves, and project the government's success to the people.

Referring to some current issues, she said the problem of electricity in some areas is due to fall in the pressure of natural gas. The problem of loadshedding in rural areas will be over by January next with the improvement of gas supply from the Sangu field, she hoped.

She said the government has adequate stock of food and the recent price hike was due to the extensive damage caused by the exceptionally bad weather. The situation, however, improved with huge production of vegetables in the last few days, she added.

## India withdraws

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from a two-day trip to New Delhi with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's official letter of invitation to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to attend the 13th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) Summit in Dhaka next January.

Morshed had also proposed a Saarc Standardisation Institute to institutionalise uniform standards for product certification in Saarc countries.

"A draft for the standardisation institute would be prepared in consultation with other Saarc countries and submitted before the Saarc council of ministers for approval," said Morshed.

During his two-day visit, the foreign minister met with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh and Commerce and Industries Minister Kamal Nath.

Morshed said the Indian prime minister reiterated his support for Saarc, saying India would cooperate in every possible way for the success of the Saarc Summit.

Asked if the border skirmishes between the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Bangladesh Rifles were discussed during his meeting with Natwar Singh, Morshed replied that they had discussed the matter and the Indian side sought 'consular access' to 18 Indian nationals who were recently arrested with illegal weapons while trespassing onto Bangladesh territory.

Morshed also sought the support of the left-front leaders in Delhi in opposing India's river linking project.

were in charge of the confidential section of tabulation sheets, were terminated at that time for their involvement in the manipulation of results, sources said.

Nasir became a millionaire by making huge money through corruption, they added.

Meanwhile, some 20 lawyers of Chittagong Court have stopped coming to court after the result scandal of 110 lawyers came to light through press reports, sources said.

Chittagong Bar Association has already formed two committees to probe the scandal.

"The probe bodies will sort out the names of the lawyers who are engaged in practice with fake certificates," Bar President Ibrahim Hossain Babul said. "We will ask them to bring no objection certificates from CU authorities within one week."

"If they fail to do so, we will not allow them continue practising and their names will be sent to the Bar Council for cancellation of their enrolment," he added.

## Mohakhali flyover

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Project Director Shahabuddin said former officials of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) mis-guided the WB.

"We had several meetings with the WB and they are convinced with our arguments. There is no doubt about the safety of the flyover," said Shahabuddin.

Sources in the WB said there was concern and finally they gave the green signal last week after checking all technical issues.

WB sources, however, said, "We are not fully happy with the situation. Authorities have to finish all other work as early as possible to make it safe."

The much talked about flyover costing around Tk 114 crore was scheduled for opening on November 7 but the authorities

planned to open it three days earlier due to the busy schedules of the prime minister and other ministers on November 7, the National Revolution and Solidarity Day.

Construction of the 1.12 km long and 17.9 metre wide flyover began on December 6, 2001 to be complete by June this year. The deadline was extended to September for installing shock transmission units (STUs) to protect the flyover from damage by earthquake.

Yet only 21 STUs out of a total of 42 have been installed into the flyover.

The flyover can be opened tomorrow though it is not 100 per cent safe, said a highly placed source at the DSM consultant.

"If an earthquake hits Dhaka, not only the flyover, the whole city will be damaged," he said.

## Starving people ferret

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the same village. He said recurrent floods this year have damaged all his crops. "I planted seedlings three times but all were washed away by floodwaters," he said.

Zakaria plans to move to Munshiganj after Eid for work as a day-labourer.

Across the river, people in Morneya village alleged that the government relief did not reach them. Most of the people in the village have been the worst victim of river erosion, having lost houses and other properties to the erosion.

Chairman of Morneya Union Parishad Shamsul Alam however denied allegations of not reaching government assistance to these villages. "Almost all families, except

for mine, got some sort of assistance this time," he said.

On the allegation made by people in Moubhashi village, Alam said the village was under ward no. five and that ward got 268 VGF cards. The army personnel are visiting door to door and enquiring about food assistance to the poor against the cards.

A total of 2,500 families out of a total population of around 40,000 got VGF cards this time. The government also supplied 10 kgs rice against each card, he claimed.

He, however, admitted that there was a shortage of food among the people. "This is because people of this area do not have work during Bangla months of Ashwin and Kartik."

## Saifur names 16 cos as defaulting Tk 16cr in taxes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The finance ministry has identified 16 companies that have defaulted on taxes of over Tk 16 crore, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman told the House yesterday adding steps for legal actions have already been initiated against the companies.

Of the income tax and VAT (value added tax) defaulters, M R Chemicals alone evaded paying Tk 15 crore to the government, Saifur said in response to a query of a lawmaker. However, the period of the default was not mentioned during the discussion.

In the list of the tax defaulters the finance minister submitted to the House, the other companies are: Rainbow (Tk 21.57 lakh), B Douza and Co (Tk 65,000), Abahoni Banijya Sangstha (Tk 3,772), Farco Syndicate (Tk 8.77 lakh), Ahmed and Brothers (Tk 91,552), Saikat Trading Agency (Tk 20,986), City Trade International (Tk 1.44 lakh), Paradise Fashion (Tk 80.33 lakh), Silver Syndicate (Tk 1.03 lakh), Kavazi Nariman and Co (Tk 5,794), Ankhi and Brothers (Tk 3.70 lakh), Paradise Corporation Pvt Ltd (Tk 4.49 lakh), Party Centre (Tk 1.23 lakh), Ananda Ullash Community Centre (Tk 51,380) and White Palace Community Centre (Tk 88,444).

The finance minister said steps are one way to recover the unpaid taxes according to Section 128 of the Income Tax Ordinance 1984 and Section 37 of Value Added Tax Act 1991.

## 7 Indians pushed back

UNB, Thakurgaon

Seven Indian nationals were pushed back through Panchagarh border in the early hours yesterday. Local BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) Commander Lt Col Mustafizur Rahman said the Indian nationals were pushed back at 2-30am. They are Amina Begum, 45, her two daughters and four boys.

They told BDR that the Indian border guards pushed them at gunpoint through Harinamari border at dead of night on October 30.

Sources said the BSF (Border Security Force) have assembled several hundred Indian Muslims at different points of Baliaadanga border to push them into Bangladesh.

Another report from Panchagarh said lathi-banishi (stick and whistle) committees have been formed at the frontier villages to resist Indian push-in bids.

## Moudud

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withdrew Faizee from the bench in face of the allegation and lawyers' threat to boycott his court. He also thrust full responsibility of the bench upon Justice Ali Asgar Khan, Faizee's senior judge in the bench, after Asgar declined to sit with him in the court.

The minister, however, questioned the role of Bangladesh Bar Council for not noticing the matter earlier.

"I've heard he (Faizee) was a junior of the present president of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA). Why wasn't it (certificate tampering) noticed that time?" Moudud said.

Two major dailies reported that Justice Faizee, one of the 19 additional judges whose appointment on August 23 drew sharp criticism from different quarters, tampered with his mark sheet of the LLB examinations he sat from Chittagong Law College in 1989.

An inquiry committee of Chittagong University unearthed the fraud.

SCBA on Monday sent to the chief justice some documents in support of the allegations of tampering with the examination results by Faizee following Chief Justice's query made in a meeting with the SCBA leaders and senior lawyers on Saturday.

## Bangladesh

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Foreign ministry officials, some diplomats and journalists witnessed the explosions.

According to an international estimate, nearly 60 to 70 million landmines were indiscriminately laid in the ground in at least 70 countries of the world.

The landmines injure or kill approximately 26,000 civilians every year, some 8,000 to 10,000 of them are children.

In keeping with its constitutional obligation towards complete and general disarmament and a deep commitment to humanitarian principles, Bangladesh signed the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention on May 7, 1998 and it ratified the convention on September 6, 2000.

Under provision of the convention, state parties are required to complete destruction of its anti-personnel stockpiles within four years from the date of becoming a party. A total of 134 nations are state parties to the convention.

Another 13 countries have signed but not ratified the convention yet. "Thus we may consider that 147 countries have legally committed to the core obligations of the treaty," the military officer told the function.

Canada, awarded as the most peaceful country of the world, has provided \$2.8 million in financial assistance for meeting the expenditure of the destruction operation.

## Mob lynches 4 'robbers'

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had its fan broken. Soon we jumped into the river as locals in another trower were chasing us," said one of the robbers, Shaheen, who is now under police custody with a wound in the head. He took first aid from Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

A robber shot the nearly 50-year-old boatman in his leg and he fell into the river. Police could not say anything about him.

The robbers fired three times to force the mob give up the chase. But soon the locals caught 'Kala' Ripon, Johnny and Jewell. Around 200 locals who gathered on the riverbanks beat the three dead on the spot.

Before lynching, the robbers admitted that 'Kala' Ripon, a neighbour of Moktar, used to provide them with information including the recent selling of a piece of land for Tk 20 lakh.

Later, the mob searched out 'Dhola' Ripon who was walking on a road at Char Wazpur and beat him to death.

Three operatives of the gang, Shaheen, 'Murgi' Tipu and 'Chakma' Faruk, a close associate of Nabil, a notorious criminal of Mohammadpur, swam across the river, but locals on Mohammadpur embankment caught and beat them before turning them in to the police.

Worker Abdus Salam, 42, received a bullet in the chest and was first rushed to the DMCH and then to the Chest Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali.

Another member of the gang, Sumon, however managed to slip away.

Locals said the river bandits from Mohammadpur and Mirpur used to carry out robbery in Basila, Char Wazpur and surrounding areas.

The police and locals could neither recover the looted money nor the gold ornaments and other goods from the robbers.

'Murgi' Tipu, however, said some locals snatched the money

and other goods from them. Tipu also said they had five firearms, which they dropped into the river.

**PROCESSION**  
Locals of Char Wazpur took out a procession in the area protesting the robbery yesterday.

A few hundred locals brandishing bamboo sticks demanded exemplary punishment to the arrested robbers. They also demanded a permanent police camp in the area.

## Altaf

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Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed stood to respond to the AL lawmakers' protest and asked the opposition deputies why they were raising such strong protest.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid then brought the absence of commerce minister to the law minister's notice and termed it a violation of the rules of parliament.

Moudud then looked at the commerce minister's seat and found it vacated.

Earlier, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad, ruling BNP lawmaker Manzur Quader read his call attention notice about mixing chemicals in food grains. Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui, who was presiding over the session, gave floor to the commerce minister for response. But Altaf was not available in the House and did not even arrange for someone else to respond to the notice for him.

The deputy speaker, apparently baffled in the face of opposition protest, said he had seen the commerce minister in the House only a while ago.

The deputy speaker then shifted the notice to the next day's business.

The Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad say a minister shall attend the House to respond to a call attention notice that is already accepted by the House. He may do it by proxies as well.

## Govt interfered

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