

3 die in custody, 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons including a top cadre of an outlawed outfit died in 'crossfire' with police in Dhaka and Chuadanga yesterday while one died in the custody of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in the capital.

Dhaka

Manik alias Yunus, 28, died reportedly in crossfire with police on a construction site in city's Balurmath area early yesterday.

Badda police arrested Manik and Masud Parvez at Post Office Lane of Sonakatarata in East Badda at 8:00pm on Friday night and allegedly recovered a pistol and

eight bullets from Manik's possession.

Following leads extracted from the two, a police team taking Manik with them raided Aftabnagar project site at Balurmath area at 4:05am. The instant they reached the site Manik's associates, lying in wait there, opened fire on them, said Badda police.

Police fired in return. Manik while attempting an escape got shot and died on the spot, said police adding that Manik's accomplices managed to flee the scene.

Police said that they had recovered a light-gun (LG) and few rounds of used bullets.

Police sent his body to Dhaka

Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. The morgue sources said the body bore four bullets in the chest, back and head.

Badda police said Manik was an extortionist and he used to carry illegal firearms. They could not give any instance of his having criminal record until 7:30pm last night.

In a separate incident in Sutrapur, alleged criminal Yusuf, 25, died in Rab custody.

Rab men arrested him at Dayaganj area at about 2:30pm yesterday. Accused in five cases for robbery, murder attempt and other

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PROF YUNUS MURDER

Fresh remand of 4 sought, hunger strike at Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police sought five days' fresh remand of four people arrested in connection with Prof Yunus murder case yesterday.

Islamic Chhatra Shibir leader Sirajus Salekeen, Jubo and Chhatra Moitree activists Mizanur Rahman Rummon, Monirul Islam and Nazibul Islam Bachchu were placed before a metropolitan magistrate's court after completion of their four-day remand.

The court will hear the remand prayer on January 4.

"They (arrestees) provided us much information and we need to quiz them further," said Muhammad Lokman Hakim, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi

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LOOTING IN 2000

Charge sheet against Abul Hasnat, 19 AL men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Police have pressed charges against 20 leaders of district Awami League and its front organisations in a case filed in 2002 for looting and setting fire to a house in 2000.

The chargesheet was submitted on November 11 last year and kept secret for taking legal advantage in the case, sources said.

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AHSANULLAH MURDER

Witness says 'Kana' Hafiz fleeing with arms

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness in the Ahsanullah Master murder case yesterday told the court that he saw 'Kana' Hafiz and 11 others with arms rushing to the house of Mohammad Ali, one of the 30 accused.

Mohammad Zakir Hossain, a trader of waste materials, told the court that at about 12:45am on May 7 last year he went to Amtoli in T o n g i

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Bloodshed greets Iraq in 2005

Allawi vows decisive year

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq's insurgency claimed the lives of seven Iraqis and one US marine at the start of 2005, with elections less than a month away and no end in sight to the violence.

A loud explosion rattled central Baghdad Saturday afternoon, shaking the windows in buildings, but there was no word on what caused the blast

in the capital city, regularly convulsed by mortars, rockets and bombs.

In the waning moments of 2004, interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi addressed Iraqis in a televised message, telling them the next year, with its January 30 national elections promised to be decisive for Iraq.

His vision and those of a collection of radical Islamist groups

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PHOTO: STAR

The mutilated carcass of a whale, apparently killed after being entangled in a fishing net in the Bay of Bengal and washed ashore by tide, lies half buried in sand on Kotka beach in the Sundarbans.

Giant of the deep falls prey to nets

CHRISTINE WANNER, back from the Sundarbans

Tourists last month found a whale's carcass on Kotka beach in the eastern Sundarbans with tell-tale signs indicating the gentle sea giant had fallen prey to fishing nets.

Stranded whales are quite rare on Bangladeshi seacoast, as the water is too shallow for them to roam about. But apparently a strong high tide washed ashore this brownish grey water mammal.

The 9-metre-long mutilated corpse was lying

on its side, exposing its jaws and the ventral plates running down from the chin to a white-yellowish belly partly covered by a swarm of flies.

Operators of the Guide Tours Limited that takes tourists on package trips spotted the dead whale on December 22. The half-buried remains are still rotting on the shore.

Its trademark tail and the fins were cut off, and the body bore a gash under one of its pectoral fins caused by a rope.

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DHAKA-KOLKATA PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Dhaka to consider Delhi's proposal

RAFIQ HASAN

Dhaka is actively considering recent proposal from India to implement a long dormant agreement on passenger rail service between Dhaka and Kolkata.

India and Bangladesh signed an agreement in July 2001 during the Awami League rule to introduce a passenger rail service between Dhaka and Kolkata. But the agreement has yet to be implemented due to a lack of political will, sources say.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda on Tuesday told

Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri that Dhaka would consider the proposal. He stressed the need to strengthen relations between the two neighbouring countries on the basis of a Saarc spirit.

Huda later told The Daily Star that the agreement has not been implemented because the present government has not taken an active interest in it.

The railway departments of both countries conducted trial services of passenger rails on the Joydevpur - Shaldah route following the agreement. Officials of the ministries of communication, home affairs, and

finance, as well as representatives from other related organisations also participated.

They found the route feasible and economically viable, determining that a significant number of passengers would benefit from a rail journey. The public on both sides has since greeted the prospect with enthusiasm, the sources said.

But the issue went into deep freeze following Bangladesh's political changeover in October 2001, because the BNP-led four p a r t y

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TANORE RAPE

Missing docs found, case set in pace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At long last, legal proceedings against the persons responsible for the Tanore gang-rape 17 years ago started yesterday as the missing documents were found at a judge's court in Rajshahi.

The one member committee formed to investigate the missing of the legal documents had found those in the office of an additional judge's court. Additional District Magistrate Monir Hossain headed the committee.

"The case documents, in fact, were not missing. Rather, those could not be found immediately because of the court's going into vacation. The case was under trial at a judge's court," said ADM Monir Hossain.

As the judge's courts ended vacation yesterday, the case documents were sent to the court of First Class Magistrate Zebunnesa Karim following a High Court order for further investigation into the incident.

The magistrate's court would hear today the bail petitions of Yaad Ali and Omar Ali, two ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party workers who were arrested in connection with the rape.

The committee however will not look into why the HC order pertaining to the case took nine years to reach Rajshahi from Dhaka. "Sometimes it happens in our country. But now as we've got the High Court order at hand, we won't spend any time finding out the reasons for the delay," said a top official on condition of anonymity.

Four people including Tanore upazila BNP Vice President and Chanduria Union Parishad Chairman Mofiz Uddin, his associates Omar and

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Strike again at Benapole port

UNB, Benapole

The land port users in Benapole went on an indefinite strike yesterday protesting a sharp increase in godown tariff.

A huge quantity of merchandise and perishable goods and cereals were stuck up on both sides of the port due to the strike.

A meeting of different business associations has decided to boycott all transactions with the Customs House from today.

Business leader of Benapole Mafizur Rahman Sajjan said godown tariff was hiked five times at one go yesterday.

"We're not against the increase but it should be tolerable. We're ready to pay even higher than normal charges. But authorities must improve the infrastructure like building new sheds, buying fresh

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Businessman kidnapped in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals yesterday abducted a businessman and demanded Tk 3 lakh for his release in Sheikhpura village in Daulatpur upazila.

Hafizur Rahman, 25, son of Daud Hossain and a betel leaf trader, was abducted from his betel leaf enclosure. Police said seven criminals picked up him at gunpoint when he was guarding the crop with his nephew Jalal at 3:30am.

The captors later demanded the sum over cellphone and threatened to kill Hafiz if his family failed to pay, police said.

This was the first abduction reported in Kushtia in the year 2005. As many as 119 people including 48 school and college students were kidnapped last year.

A few organised outfits of criminals and outlaws are reportedly carrying out abduction, police and families of victims say.

Prayer Timing		
January 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		