

## 5 more killed in 'crossfire'

STAR REPORT

Three suspected robbers and two outlaws died in so-called crossfire with police and Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) in Jhenidah, Noakhali and Natore yesterday, sending the death toll in the law enforcers' action in 11 days to 22 and 169 since January last year.

Kotchandpur police arrested Shanti, 40, a top cadre of outlawed party Janajuddha, in the Jhenidah upazila headquarters Monday evening and took him to Kotchandpur Police Station for interrogation, our Magura correspondent reports.

Police said their men took Shanti, who faced several cases including three for murders, to Alangi village to 'recover' arms, following 'leads' extracted from him.

As they reached a field in Alangi, Janajuddha operatives 'fired' on them at around 3:45am and police also 'retaliated', said a police officer from the police station.

Shanti 'attempted to flee from the police van' during an hour-long 'shootout' and died on the spot, police claimed.

They also claimed that Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Saheb Ali and constables Mahabul and Serajul were wounded in the shooting and that they retrieved one pipe-gun and two rounds of bullet from the spot.

In another raid on Borobazar of Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah, Kaliganj police arrested infamous bandit leader Goutam, 45, allegedly a leader of inter-district robbers' gang, Monday noon.

Police later took him to Pirojpur, a village beside Kaliganj-Jessore highway, to seize arms where Goutam's accomplices were learnt to have been to carry out robbery.

A police officer said his associates fired on the law-enforcers when they reached there at 2:00am. They also fired back and Goutam died when he 'tried to get down from a police van'. The officer claimed two

constables were also injured in the 'shootout'.

Police recovered a pipe-gun, four bullets and other weapons.

**NOAKHALI**  
Yakub Ali alias Jahangir, 30, and Shahjahan alias Badshah, 28, suspected gangsters involved in Sunday's robbery of Rupali Bank, were gunned down at Chhotohasanpur village in Begumganj upazila early yesterday.

Police arrested Shahjahan in Choumohoni, hours after robbers shot and killed autorickshaw driver Noor Nabi and knifed two staff of Rupali Bank while robbing the bank staff of Tk 8 lakh. Yakub was arrested in Chawkbazar on Monday.

Going by their confession, police took Yakub and Shahjahan to Chhotohasanpur village to 'arrest' Liton, another gang member, at 2:00am Monday night.

When police cordoned Liton's house, he and his accomplices opened fire to trigger a gunfight, police said.

Yakub and Shahjahan took bul-

lets during the incident and were taken to the General Hospital where Shahjahan died late in the night. Yakub died on way to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital yesterday.

Police claimed five law-enforcers were hurt in the shootout and said they recovered a foreign-made gun and ammunition from the spot.

**NATORE**  
Rab arrested Moslem Mollah, 28, who is also known as Omar, vice president of Rajshahi Division chapter of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (ML) in Jigrihat of Bagatipara upazila in Natore Monday night, our Rajshahi correspondent reports.

A Rab-5 team took him to Ramananda Khajura of Shingra upazila in Natore to arrest his associates who, according to Moslem, were hiding there.

His friends could not be found there and Moslem contacted them again over mobile phone and said they were staying in Itali union, said

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## Hajj pilgrims stranded at ZIA

Passengers blast Saudi airlines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 300 passengers, mostly Hajj pilgrims, of a Jeddah bound flight of Saudi Arabian Airlines (SAA) remained stranded at the Zia International Airport for over 10 hours yesterday.

The flight SV5767 of SAA, which was scheduled to depart at 11 in the morning, did not leave ZIA till filing of the report at 8:00 pm.

The passengers were served with hardly any food and beverage during the long delay that had been attributed to a 'technical fault'.

Conventional practices and rules, however, obliged the airlines to provide food and beverage and hotel accommodation in case of such prolonged period of delay.

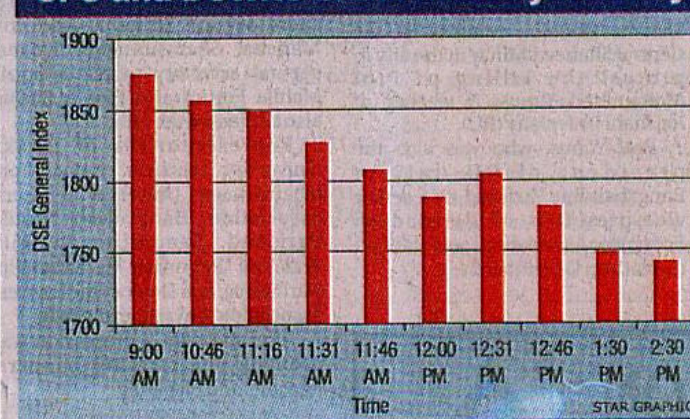
The airline officials issued the boarding cards to passengers, many of whom reached the airport early in

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## Battered stocks spark investors' protest

DSE index sheds 133 points, CSE 206

### UPS and DOWNS of the INDEX yesterday



M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

The Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) General Index took a massive 133.13-point tumble yesterday triggering widespread protests among the small investors who blamed the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for the current bearish trend.

Accusing the capital market watchdog of deliberately touching off the slide by changing the bourse members' margin regulation, small investors staged a protest rally outside the DSE premises yesterday.

Trading on the country's prime bourse began at 9:00am with the General Index at 1876 points.

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## Penury leads parents to donate son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Extreme poverty has forced a day labourer, Mohammad Ali Molla, to donate his 19-day-old son to businessman Habibur Rahman of the rail bazar area under Jessore Sadar thana.

Mohammad Ali Molla hails from shantipur village under Sharsha upazila of Jessore. He lives on the platform of the Jessore rail station with his wife Nasima, 30, who begs alms from door to door.

Nasima gave birth to her only child on December 22 of last year. But the couple was unable to welcome the birth of their son because of their abject poverty.

Unable to care for the baby, last Monday Mohammad Ali and his wife Nasima gave their 19-year old

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PHOTO: STAR

The burnt, bent carcass of a wellhead lying abandoned in Tengratila gas field in Sunamganj bears testimony to the intense fury of Saturday's blow-out that triggered a mass panic in the surrounding areas.

## Gas still leaks from 30 points, air stinky

PINAKI ROY with IQBAL SIDDIQUI from Sylhet

The raging flames that had leapt about 100 feet at Tengratila gas field in Sunamganj on Monday and started spreading to nearby villages subsided to 10 feet yesterday, renewing hopes the blaze might extin-

guish soon. The flames had shot up to about 300 feet on Saturday and subsided to 10 to 30 feet on Sunday.

Gas was still spewing out at more than 30 points in the area and bubbles of gas were seen in the local water bodies also yesterday. The main drilling well that had exploded

early Saturday now looks like a pond and gas leakage from it continued.

The air within one square-kilometre area around the gas well remained stinky until yesterday. No birds or animals were also seen in the area that virtually gives a deserted look with about 10,000

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## Eid-ul-Azha on January 22

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated on January 22 as Jilhajj moon was not sighted anywhere in the country yesterday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Moon Sighting Committee at the Islamic Foundation yesterday evening with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharref Hossain Shahjahan in the chair.

Director General of the Islamic Foundation AZM. Shamsul Alam, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Moulana Obaidul Haque, Principal of Madrasa-e-Alia Nur Mohammad, Khatib of Lalbagh Shahi Jam-e-Mosque Moulana Mohammad Aminul Islam and other members of the committee attended the meeting.

## RU Teacher Murder Student strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six opposition-backed student organisations enforce a country-wide strike in the educational institutions today protesting the killing of Rajshahi University (RU) teacher Dr Yunus.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) led six student bodies under Anti Terrorism and Anti Communal Alliance has called the strike today to press home three-point demand including arrest and exemplary punishment of the killers of Prof Yunus, security of teachers and freeing educational institutions from terrorism.

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## Biting cold, drizzle to continue for two more days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country experienced a most gloomy weather yesterday shadowed by a cloudy sky, with drizzles and icy gusts chilling people to their bones and paralysing normal life.

The inclement weather brought in by an amalgamation of eastern and western depressions of the Ganges in West Bengal and a high velocity jet air in the higher sphere of the atmosphere over the country is likely to continue for the next two to three days, met office sources said.

The highest rainfall was recorded yesterday at 64 millimetres in Khepupara. It was 20mm at Mongla, 9mm at Jessore and 8mm at Patuakhali.

Although the temperature in the capital dipped only to 15.5 degree Celsius, the wind and drizzle made it biting enough to make people stay indoors.

The lowest temperature in the country was recorded at 9 degree

Celsius in Srimongol and 9.8 degree in Sitakunda.

River vessels and inter-district buses however left the terminals on time and flight schedules remained unchanged.

Talking to UNB, Sujit Kumar Dev Sharma of the met office said a strong western depression now centred in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the northwest region of India is likely to be intensified influencing the weather of the country.

According to his forecast, a cold wave is likely to sweep the country in four to five days when the haze is cleared.

Light to moderate rain is likely in many parts of Sylhet, Dhaka, Barisal and Khulna divisions today, weather office in the capital forecast yesterday. The temperature might remain unchanged in the next 24 hours.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: A septuagenarian man named Khokan Ali Khoka of

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## ACC meets ADB on assistance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sat with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) officials to discuss the mode of ADB's proposed assistance to the commission.

The ACC, however, did not reach any decision yesterday on the matter. The commission had disagreed with the government when it first suggested taking ADB's assistance on Saturday.

"We're yet to reach a final decision in this regard (ADB's proposal). We'll need more time for doing so," commission Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan told The Daily Star after the meeting.

Meantime, a meeting scheduled for yesterday to discuss ACC member Prof Maniruzzaman Mian's letter suggesting ways to properly run the three-member commission was not held.

The ACC chairman said the ADB is running a project in Bangladesh on good governance and wants to assist the commission as part of that project. "We've inquired about the

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## In memory of 2nd death Anniversary

Today is 12th January, on this day we deeply remember our dearest founder Chairman of Shamsul Alamin Group Late Al-haj A.K. Shamsul Alamin, a renowned personality, a famous Industrialist, a social worker, a charitable man and a former member of Parliament.

We pray to Almighty Allah to grant eternal peace for the departed soul of Late Al-haj A.K. Shamsul Alamin.

Humbly, we remain,  
All family members and  
Officers, Staffs and Workers,



**Shamsul Alamin Group**

Alamin Centre, 25/A, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka - 1000

## Demra OC, ASP charged with taking bribe

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A case was filed yesterday against the officer-in-charge (OC) and three other policemen of Demra Police Station, a CID assistant superintendent of police (ASP), and a man on charges of taking Tk 30,000 in bribe.

Advocate Atiur Rahman of Mohammadia Housing Society at Mohammadpur in the capital filed the case with the Court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Dhaka.

Atiur accused OC Mohammad Gaffar, ASP Qamrul Hassan, sub-inspectors (SIs) Sahadat Hossain, Mohammad Kashem and Abdur Razzak and one Khondaker Ruhul

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## JS body sees BSTI failure to check inferior goods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adulterated goods have flooded the market due to the failure of BSTI (Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution) to monitor the market, Mahmudul Hasan, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on industry ministries said yesterday.

"We are at the top in the world in corruption and also in swindling

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## Mongla Port under 'mafia' grip

JS body for 50pc cut in staff

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The shipping ministry is held hostage by the 'mafia' in Mongla seaport and it cannot implement measures to make the port operations smooth and efficient, observed a parliamentary body yesterday.

The parliamentary standing committee on shipping ministry after discussing the prevailing situation of the port, made a set of recommendations including a 40-50 percent manpower reduction at the country's second seaport.

Through intelligence sources the parliamentary body received a list of 11 mafiosi who lord it over now the problem-ridden port hampering government initiatives to improve its management and operations.

The standing committee however did not disclose the names of the mafias and it decided to send the list to the home ministry for taking legal actions.

The mafia has been creating problems to the smooth operations of the port, which has become a losing concern, observed Committee Chairman and ruling BNP lawmaker Golam Mohammad Siraj at the meeting.

The parliamentary body identified 'excess manpower' as a major drag on the port and recommended cutting at least 40 to 50 percent

manpower under the golden handshake programme started last year.

The port authorities failed to implement the programme due to strong opposition from the labour leaders and vested interest groups, the committee observed.

The committee chairman said the vested interest groups jump to ships as soon as they anchor and capture the work of cargo unloading. "Twenty-four people gather for a work which can be done by 12 labourers," he said.

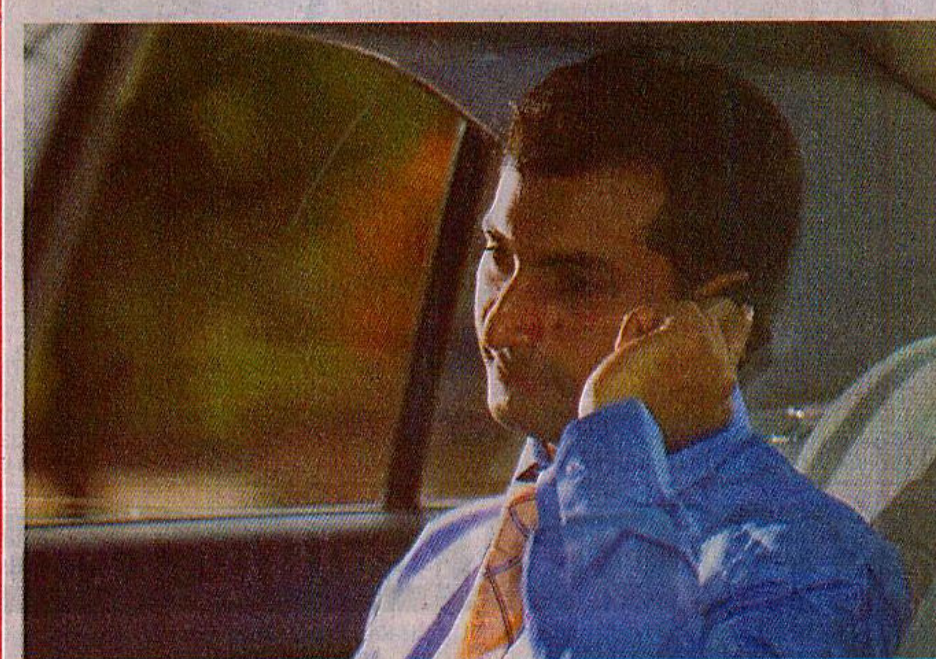
"The labour leaders and the mafia are using the labourers as their cadres," said the committee chief. He also blamed the dock labourers' board and the stevedores association for the prevailing situation.

The parliamentary body asked the shipping ministry not to make any fresh recruitment at the port at this moment. It however recommended allocation of a fixed budget for dredging to ensure navigability of the port channel.

The committee also suggested moving the customs office from Khulna to Mongla Port immediately as the port users have to go to Khulna for customs clearance.

All the recommendations will be sent to the prime minister for her consideration, the committee

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