

AL protests attacks

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Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, among others, attended the rally.
Our Sylhet Correspondent adds: Misrule of the BNP-Jamat led-government would soon end in the face of a combined resistance by all the peace loving forces of the country. AL leaders said at a rally in the city's Paura Point area yesterday.
AL Presidium Member Alhaj Abdus Samad Azad MP said the government did not bother to take any tangible initiative to avert bomb attacks on personalities like British High Commissioner, former finance minister Kibria, and City Mayor Kamran.
Former minister Abdur Razzaq MP said the government has essentially to contain the price hike of essentials and the downside in the law and order.
Central leaders Dewan Farid Gazi MP, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmad, and Nurul Islam Nahid, City AL Chief Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran,

Tight security plan

FROM PAGE 1
On this day in 1952, the students of Dhaka took to the streets in protest against the then rulers' denial to give Bangla the status of a state language and imposition of Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan.
Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and many others embraced martyrdom when the police opened fire on the procession upon the orders of the then government.
The protests that sparked off on February 21, 1952 led to the long-drawn-out nationalist movements that achieved the recognition of Bangla as a state language in 1956, and eventually the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.
One hundred and eighty-eight countries across the globe are also joining Bangladesh to observe the 21st February following UNESCO's recognition of the day as the International Mother Language Day on November 17, 1999.
President Iajuddin Ahmed will lead the nation in paying homage to the language martyrs by placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar as the clock strikes one minute past midnight. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will follow the president.
In his message on the eve of the Amar Ekushey, the president said, "The language movement has a far reaching significance in our national life and the national awakening out of self-imbued spirit has taken international shape today."

IMF team due tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission is due in the capital tomorrow to review the conditions for the fourth instalment of the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) loan.
The IMF had deferred the review mission visit last month as the government failed to fulfil some conditions including initiation of the Rupali Bank's privatisation.
The fourth instalment of the PRGF loan amounting to about \$70 million was supposed to be disbursed last month.

Police not planning to arrest Asadullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police say they have no immediate plans to arrest the controversial Rajshahi University teacher Dr Muhammad Asadullah Al Galib, citing 'lack of evidence,' but admitted they are maintaining close watch over him.
Asadullah, also the ameer of Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh, was suspected of links to militant activities after Shafiqullah, the arrested top Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) leader of Bogra, as well as 12 other militants of Natore, claimed him as their leader.
Police say these and other allegations are not enough to warrant an arrest. "We have not received any clearance from our high ups to arrest him. We also lack strong evidence against him," Moliar Rahman, Rajshahi Metropolitan police commissioner, told The Daily Star yesterday.

UP member shot, hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Unidentified assailants shot and knifed a Union Parishad (UP) member to death and injured another in Agkolia village in Daulatpur upazila Friday night.
The dead is Bachchu Mollah, 47, son of Nurul Mollah of Wail village and member of ward No. 7 of Kolia UP.
Police and witnesses said up to 12 criminals appeared at local Kalibari temple at about 9:40pm during a Kirton (religious song) performance.
They shot Bachchu from behind when he was taking tea at a tea stall near the function. The killers also chopped him until he died, the police and witnesses added.
An electrician, Pakhi, was also injured during the knife attack, police said, adding that the UP member was killed due to previous enmity.

BCL threatens non-stop strike at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday threatened to call an indefinite strike at Dhaka University (DU) if its leader Abu Abbas Bhuiyan is not released by February 22.
Police arrested Abbas, joint secretary of Sir AF Rahman Hall unit BCL, on February 17 as a suspect in a string of blasts during a Valentine's Day programme near the TSC.
The leaders of the BCL, student wing of main opposition Awami League, at a rally on the campus said Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) forced police to arrest Abbas.
They alleged the arrests of Abbas and other leaders have been made to shift the responsibility for the blasts to the BCL leaders.
They said Abbas' honours final year examination is on and his next exam is on February 22, and demanded his release immediately.
BCL President Liakat Sikder said Abbas has no link to the TSC blasts and his arrest is part of a conspiracy by the JCD.

Bac staff yet to start working for ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The former staff of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) did not start working at the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday as they did not receive any official orders from the commission in line with its decision taken on Thursday.
ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan said after Thursday's meeting that all Bac staff would be attached temporarily to the ACC and start working from Saturday.
Some Bac staff, talking to The Daily Star yesterday, said they would not start working until they get written orders. They however welcomed the decision to attach them to the ACC.

"Since there are government instructions not to work with the commission, we can't risk working with the ACC without written document," said a mid-ranking Bac official.
The commission, meanwhile, did not send any letter to the government for withdrawing the officials who worked with the bureau on deputation. The Thursday's meeting decided not to attach some 80 such officials to the commission.

ANTI-TOBACCO LAW 50,000 workers rally against govt decision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

About 50 thousand bidi factory workers of Haragachh and its adjoining areas yesterday held a rally in Rangpur town and laid siege to the office of the deputy commissioner in protest against the government's decision to pass an anti-tobacco law.
The bidi workers' leaders said the government must think of creating alternative earning sources for the bidi workers before passing such a law.
About 100,000 workers in Haragachh and its adjoining areas earn their livelihood by bidi making, said Aminul Islam, who presided over the rally.
If the bidi factories are closed as a consequence of the implementation of the anti-tobacco law, their families will have to starve, he added.
The agitating workers kept all main roads blocked from 11:00am to 1:00pm causing huge traffic congestion in the town.
After the rally, leaders of the bidi workers handed over a 19-point memorandum to the deputy commissioner and asked him to send it to the prime minister.

Man, nephew die

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The bodies of the deceased criminals where they lay, recovering them only several hours later.
Police sources said Habib had earlier been shot in the right leg during a fight with former Awami League lawmaker Shamim Osman over establishing ownership of a sand trade at Fatulla in Narayanganj. Habib's family alleged he and his nephew were killed in a planned retaliation for the conflict, even though Habib has made efforts to settle it.
Habib's son Bappi was not released as of yesterday afternoon.
Police said they recovered a shotgun, a rifle, a pistol, six revolver chambers, 36 shotgun cartridges, four rounds of bullets, 12 shotgun shells and four machetes from the spot.

5 journos

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The criminals in the letters termed them extortionists and musclemen, saying they will keep an eye on them and send two more letters each. If the journalists change their attitude, they might not carry out the threat.
Notice
FROM PAGE 1
The Daily Star will also observe birthday tomorrow on account of Shaheed Dibash, but the newspaper will be published on February 22.

Space for liberal

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Muslim was a suspected terrorist," recalls Irene, distressed by the adoption of draconian laws by the US to deal with terrorists.

What is needed is an alternative vision to the war on terrorism, Irene stresses, and spells her view: "One doesn't need to wage war. What is needed is a culture of peace and human rights."
A frank and forthright person, Irene is not loath to admit bias and double standards in the practice of human rights. "Selectivity and hypocrisy have been part of the discourse on human rights," asserts Irene.
Irene is pained by the unilateral actions of the US.

"Some powerful nations have made us feel that (human rights) apply in some situations more than in others. Long before 9/11, the US was violating human rights with impunity in Latin America and Southeast Asia."
Calling a spade a spade, she declaims: "Human rights are not Western values; they are human values. The West is violating them as much as the South."

How does it feel like being the first woman and the first Muslim to head a global rights organisation?
"Being a Muslim woman, I am able to raise the issues about the way Muslim women are being treated in Muslim countries more effectively."
"The Shariat (Muslim personal law) is being used to suppress women in many Muslim countries," says Irene, for whom the atrocities and discrimination against the minorities in her country in 1971 was a turning point in her personal life.
"I saw a lot of suffering and cruelty at that time. I was barely 15 then - a very impressionable age. A Hindu girl in my school was killed. That's when I thought I must do for

Arms haul at Rangamati

UNB, Rangamati

Two light guns and a foreign revolver were seized from the possession of a union parishad (UP) member at Kadamtali in Baghaichhari upazila yesterday.
Acting on a tip-off, police and paramilitary BDR launched a joint drive under the leadership of Lt.Colonel Azizur Rahman and raided a tea-stall in the area.
They nabbed Marisha UP member, Nihar Bindu Chakma, 40, along with the firearms, police said.

Face conspiracy

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(literature, posthumous), Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed (education), Prof Iqbal Mahmud (education), Prof Jubaida Gulshan Ara (literature), Bishuddhananda Mahathero (social welfare, posthumous), Prof Ashab Uddin Ahmad (literature, posthumous), Abu Saleh (literature), Bashir Ahmed (music), Chittaranjan
Saha (education), Mohammad Abdul Gafur (language movement), Abu Sattar Mohammad Shah Zaman Apel Mahmud (music) and Md Mashir Hossain (journalism).
Ministers, MPs, people of various professions, diplomats, political leaders, bureaucrats and the recipients of the Ekushey Padak attended the function held at Shilpakala Academy auditorium.
The prime minister appealed to the Bangladeshis both at home and abroad to sharpen their merit, talent, pen, spirit and speech and act against all ill motives.
She said poets, writers, journal-

Markets go wild

FROM PAGE 1
secretaries of the finance and the internal resources divisions, and the member (Programming) of the Planning Commission.
The high-profile body approved by parliament was supposed to sit at least once every three months to review the consistency of macro-economic policies and also to revise the limits and targets set in the budget during its formulation.
But it has not even tried to hold a meeting since its inception.
Meanwhile, the price of dollar against taka shot up from Tk 59 in November last to Tk 63 at the moment in the inter-bank market and even higher at customer level. The high exchange rate of dollar against taka prevails despite the central bank's interventions including releasing about \$200 million in January and this month to cool down the market.
The inter-bank call-money rate also soared up to 70 to 75 percent recently from the normal level of 5 percent. The central bank believes it is happening due to foul play by certain commercial banks and risky lending behaviour of some others.
To keep the situation under control, the BB repeatedly pumped in hundreds of crores of taka through repurchase agreements.
The price of rice, which contributes 70 percent to the country's

human rights."
The Amnesty chief is confident about the return of democracy in Nepal, which she visited this week.
"I saw an unappeasable hunger for freedom in the Nepalese people. If it's in their minds and hearts, you can't root it out through diktats. Ultimately, people will be shaping the agenda."
At the end of the day, what keeps her ticking is her resolute belief that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.
"Human rights are more relevant than before. People's security should be at the heart of human rights strategy, and not governments," says Irene, an alumnus of Harvard Law School.

5 to die, 6 get life for killing trader

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced five people including a father and his son to death and jailed six others for life for killing a trader, Ahsanullah, in Baunia Bazar in Uttara in 1998.
The convicts with death are Abdur Razzak, his son Sharif Islam, Tajul Islam, Delwar Hossain alias Delu and Barkat Ullah. Mokhesur Rahman, Giasuddin, Rokaunuddin and Asumuddin, all brothers, and Afajuddin and Mohitun Islam were jailed for life.
Judge Shamsul Alam Khan of the Third Additional Sessions Judge's Court handed down the verdict at a jam-packed courtroom in presence of the convicts.
The death convicts can appeal to the High Court against the verdict within seven days from the date of receipt of the judgement copy, the court said.

Earlier, the prosecution and defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 19 prosecution witnesses.
In a case filed with Uttara Police Station on September 24, 1998, the victim's brother Matiur Rahman said Tajul and Sharif killed Ahsanullah over a dispute in buying a shop the same day. They took Ahsanullah to Baunia Bazar and gunned down him, he added.

Matiur filed the murder case against Tajul and 10 others and the investigation officer pressed charges on May 30, 1999.

Killed for a meter

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The attacks only intensified when Mostafa's wife, Nazma Begum, arrived. As her husband lay bleeding, they demanded she return to them the Tk 3,000 that Mostafa took for buying and setting an electric meter at Mojibur's house.
Nazma complied, but the beatings continued again when she left to retrieve the money, so brutally in fact that Mostafa finally died at approximately 5:00am.

When they realised he was dead, the attackers hung Mostafa from the grill of the balcony and told Nazma, who returned in the morning, that he had committed suicide.
Khilgaon police arrested Zahir, Mojibur and Farzana after Nazma filed a case against them and additional two to three unknown assailants.

Unesco website

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The officials of the education ministry, however, said that Unesco already has adequate documents in this regard.
"We furnished them with all the necessary documents relating to the Language Movement when we submitted the proposal in 1999 to declare February 21 as International Mother Language Day," said Mohammad Asabur Rahman, additional secretary of the education ministry.
They could easily have the historical background included in their website, he added.
In 1999 the Bangladesh government decided to translate the history of Ekushey into six official languages of the UN and send it to 188 countries.
Though most of the UN member states at that time had shown keen interest in the idea, the Bangladesh government failed to translate its decision into action. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Education shift the blame onto each other for the failure to do the job.

"This is a matter usually dealt with by the education ministry. So they should contact the Unesco in this regard," said Begum Selima Rahman, state minister for cultural affairs.
"Sending such proposal and relevant documents is the responsibility of the cultural affairs ministry," said Mohammad Asabur Rahman, additional secretary, ministry of education.

CANTT ENTRANCE 5 AL leaders granted bail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted ad interim bail to five leaders of the main opposition Awami League (AL) in a criminal case.
Advocate Rahmat Ali MP, Farooq Khan MP, Mirza Azam MP, Obaidul Qader and Jahangir Kabir Nanok appeared in the court and sought anticipatory bail.
The court issued a rule upon the government to explain why they should not be granted regular bail.
The AL leaders were accused of illegal entry into the protected area of Dhaka Cantonment and also violating the Official Secrecy Act on February 28 last year.
The police in the case said the accused accompanying AL President Sheikh Hasina tried to visit Prof Humayun Azad in the CMH defying restrictions.
Barrister Rokaunuddin Mahmud appeared for the petitioners.

Safta

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King Gyanendra dismissed the government, the Safta meet has been cancelled due to Pakistan expressing its inability to attend.
The three-day expert level meeting to fine tune the Safta treaty was due to begin Feb 26 in Male, capital city of the Maldives.
However, it was cancelled as Pakistan informed the Saarc Secretariat in Kathmandu that its experts on the Safta team would be "otherwise busy during the time" and would not be able to send any expert to the seventh meeting.
On Feb 14, the Saarc Secretariat sent a letter to the Maldives' ministry of foreign affairs communicating the postponement of the expert level meeting.

Tk 25cr lost

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Golam Mortuza, a trader in processed bones, urged the government to convince the foreign buyers that Bangladesh is completely free from mad cow disease.
He claimed taking advantage of the present situation some Indian traders have been buying cattle bones and horns illegally, with hundi, from Bangladesh at much lower prices and exporting to other countries.
Mortuza said, "We are not asking any favour from the government. We just want it to create a congenial atmosphere for exploring the export potentials of the cattle bone sector."
Livestock Directorate Director (Administration) Dr Abdul Moteab said the fisheries and livestock ministry did request the finance ministry to grant the subscription money of the OIE. But it is not clear why the delay has been being made.
However, officials of the Finance Division said the ministry would soon allow the money.
"The OIE subscription money has already been approved by the secretary committee and now awaits the cabinet's approval," Finance Division Deputy Secretary Nazmus Sakib said.

ADDL SP CONTROVERSY

Outlaw link reported to govt last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two intelligence agencies in separate reports informed the government last year that the then additional superintendent of police of Khulna Mofazzel Hossain had close links with 12 top extremists and five ringleaders of outlawed organisations in southwestern region of the country, sources said yesterday.
Mofazzel, who was arrested recently, had also helped many extremists flee the country to escape Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) operations. He had virtually turned his office room into a safe shelter for many extremists where they used to meet him frequently, said the reports submitted to the home ministry.
Besides, Mofazzel engaged seven extremists to collect toll for him from shrimp enclosures of Phultala, Dumuria and Paikgachha upazilas of the district. He had links with smuggling syndicates and illegal arms and drug traders, intelligence sources said.
The former Addl SP also used to pass advance information to extremists about Rab operation.

Two most wanted cadres of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) Janajuddho faction -- Shoib and Sumon -- evaded Rab operation in Khulna every time alerted by Mofazzel, who was posted in Khulna on August 18, 2003.

Meanwhile, BDNEWS reports that a case was filed yesterday with Chittagong Sadar Court against Mofazzel for attempt to rape a housewife.

Hosne Ara Banu, wife of Md Selim of Sitakunda area, filed the case.
She alleged that Mofazzel had tried to rape her on April 29, 2003 when he was additional SP of Sitakunda circle.

The Court directed the superintendent of police of Chittagong to investigate the matter.
Our staff correspondent reports while in khulna, Mofazzel had planned attacks on journalist Dip Azad and the local press club out of vengeance and to create panic, sources said.

Local journalists incurred his displeasure because of their reports on outlaws and smugglers closely linked to him, and he used to guide them to attack journalists or threaten them to stop writing such reports.

"Mofazzel became a godfather of Janajuddho cadres who got his help to hide in Khulna city and maintained contact with him through cell phone," one source said seeking anonymity.
Intelligence agencies are also probing if he had any role in the murder of journalist Manik Saha in a bomb attack by outlaws on January 15 last year near the local press club.

Try killers of journos

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The editors who joined yesterday's protest rally include ABM Musa of the Jugantar, Enayetullah Khan of the New Age, Reazuddin Ahmed of the News Today, Mahbubul Alam of The Independent, Mahfuz Anam of The Daily Star, Atiqullah Khan Masud of the Janakantha, AMM Bahauddin of the Inqilab, Amanullah Kabir of the Amar Desh, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury of The Bangladesh Observer, Golam Tahaboor of The New Nation, Mottur Rahman Chowdhury of the Manabzamin, Gias Kamal Chowdhury of the Khabarpatro and Golam Sarwar of the Samakal. Ataus Samad, advisory editor of the Amar Desh, and Syed Fahim Munaim, managing editor of The Daily Star, also attended the programme.
Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Khulna Union of Journalists (KUJ), Grameen Sangbadik Sangathan and senior journalists from print and electronic media took part in the rally.
Presidents of the two factions of BFUJ Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Gias Kamal Chowdhury addressed the gathering. Iqbal proposed to keep a blank space of 6 inches in all newspaper on February 28 and called for a newspaper strike on March 1 to protest the killing of journalists.
The editors expressed deep concern over the rise in the killing of newsmen and repression on them. They said journalists are being subjected to killing one after another especially in the southwestern region.
Journalists in other parts of the country are also being threatened, attacked and implicated in cases while carrying out their professional duties, they observed.
THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE
The joint communiqué of journalists termed 2004 a painful year for the journalist community that began with the killing of journalist Manik Saha in Khulna. President of Khulna Press Club Humayun Kabir Balu was killed five months later.
Khagrachari correspondent of daily Aker Kagaj Kamal Uddin and Executive Editor of Bogra-based Durjoy Bangla Dipankar Chakraborty were also killed in 2004.
The year 2005 also started with the killing of Shaikh Belaluddin, it observed.
"We demand trial of the killers as soon as possible....We are also expressing deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved families," News Today Editor Reazuddin Ahmed said reading out the declaration.
"We notice that journalists are being obstructed by killings, attacks and intimidation. This attack is not first on independent journalism. In the past too, journalists were killed and maimed in the country, but the cases were not disposed of," he said.
"In a few cases, inquiries and

4 highway robbers

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half hours after they handed them over to police. They could not say how the other died.
Police said nine robbers in the guise of passengers boarded a Rajshahi-bound BRTC bus from Kurigram. As the bus reached Jhalmolia in Puthia at around 9:00pm, they started robbing at gunpoint.
At one stage, the supervisor of the bus jumped out of the vehicle and barricaded the road with another BRTC bus coming from behind.
Hearing shouts, villagers from Tarapur and Kandra rushed to the scene and beat two robbers to death, said police.
The other two robbers were caught by the mob at Tarapur Bazaar. Police said they rescued them and sent them to hospital. One of them was pronounced dead upon arrival, while the other, Dulal, died half an hour later.
Two passengers -- Abul Kashem and Abdul Khaleque -- were injured as the robbers stabbed them.
VILLAGERS' VERSION
The villagers said they caught Dulal after chasing him about two kilometres and held Sumon and Azizul from two houses in Kandra and Tarapur. The robbers were handed over to police, they added.
PASSENGERS' ACCOUNT
Abul Kashem and Abdullah Al Selim and a few others said they did not see any of the robbers caught and beaten up.
"The driver and helper might have link with the robbers as they were talking with them since they (robbers) boarded the bus from Natore," alleged Selim.
The officer-in-charge of Puthia Police Station however said the mob lynched the robbers before police reached the scene.
Police recovered looted goods including a mobile phone, a Tk 8,000-bank draft and Tk 5,000 in cash.