

Crackdown on 'Indian rebels' hiding along border: 6 killed

9 held in joint BDR-Rab raids in Moulvibazar, Sherpur; 1 Rab official critically injured

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Six suspected Indian insurgents were killed early yesterday in a fierce gunfight with a joint raiding party of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on a hilltop in Kamalganj, five kilometres off the Tripura border, in the northeastern district of Moulvibazar.

The paramilitary BDR and the elite crime-bursting Rab also

launched similar joint drive in the border areas of Jhenaigati in Sherpur district, reportedly to root out the hideouts of Indian rebels in Bangladesh territory.

But, the authorities claimed the operation was aimed against miscreants. "It's a crackdown on suspected gunrunners, who supply illegal arms and ammunition to local hoodlums," Lt Col Gulzaruddin

Ahmed, director of Rab intelligence,

who was with the Kamalganj raiding force, told The Daily Star over telephone last night.

He however said the six men killed, aged between 25 and 35 years, in the encounter were unknown to Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies.

A Rab deputy assistant director was critically injured by bullet hits during the Kamalganj encounter and was helicoptered to the

Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka. But his name was not disclosed.

When contacted early yesterday, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar declined to make any comment on the incident.

But a source involved with the joint operation said, as no local has come forward since early hours yesterday to identify the six men

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Hiilsha is now available at reasonable prices in city markets following India's decision to suspend fish import from Bangladesh through land ports. The photo was taken at the Swarighat market yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

GDP growth set to dip on bad crop

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

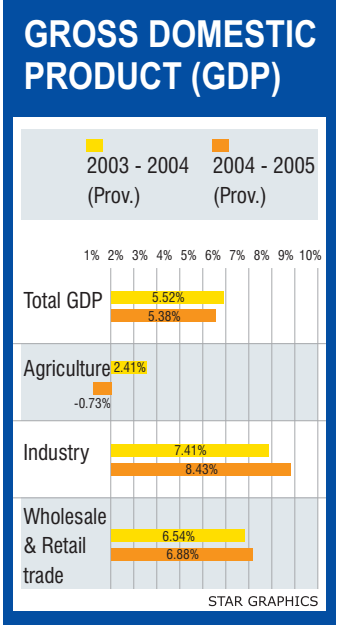
GDP growth this year is set to dip by 0.14 percentage point from the target because of a bad crop harvest, according to an estimate of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

A report of the BBS says GDP growth is likely to be 5.38 percent from the earlier estimate of 5.52 percent.

Agriculture, which accounts for 17.68 percent of GDP, is set to record a negative growth of 0.73 percent as floods ravaged crops from last fiscal year's growth of 2.41 percent.

Growth in the crop sector that bore the brunt of the deluge decelerated by 3.3 percent. Aman paddy production decreased from last year's 12.5 million tonnes to 10.6 million tonnes. This loss could not be made up by a subsequent bumper boro paddy harvest.

Industry with a 16.25 percent share in GDP however saved the day. The sector grew by 8.43 percent 1.02 percentage point over last year's growth. Large industries



grew by 8.65 percent and small industries by

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EXTORTION ATTEMPT IN RAJSHAHI 100 injured as BNP men, traders clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

More than 100 people were injured, 25 of them critically, in clashes between ruling BNP cadres and local traders, and police action on the clashing groups in Puthia yesterday.

During the clashes that erupted when the traders kept their shutters down to protest the BNP men's demand for toll in the name of a BNP lawmaker, about 30 shops and a Dhaka coach were also damaged.

On Thursday night, BNP cadre Ashraf's son Dollar demanded a toll of Tk 10,000 from confectionery owner Abdul Quaiyum on the plea that he sold 'rotten ice-cream'.

As Quaiyum protested, Dollar's men attacked the confectionery and injured six people including Quaiyum, Bellal, Millat and Sohel on the very night.

The attackers told them to pay the money within an hour and threatened to stop Quaiyum's

business otherwise.

Local traders, infuriated at the incident, called a strike from yesterday morning.

Local police refused a team of traders' leaders when they went to the police station to file a case on the incident.

BNP cadres forced some traders to open shops during their strike.

Fierce clashes began as armed

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Baby dies in acid attack in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Eight-month-old girl child Mukta, who was critically injured in an acid attack by unidentified miscreants in Koira upazila on Thursday night, died at Khulna Medical College and Hospital (KMCH) at 2:30pm yesterday.

Victim's mother Rexona, 28, and brother Badsha, 6, also injured in the acid attack, were admitted to the hospital in a critical condition. They were shifted to Dhaka at 6:00pm yesterday for better treatment as advised by the doctors.

According to police, Mostafa Molla of Jaigirmahal village under Koira upazila of the district were asleep with his wife Rexona, son Badsha and daughter Mukta when some unidentified miscreants threw acid on them at around 11:30pm. Mostafa escaped unhurt from the acid attack.

According to Mostafa, the attack was launched taking advantage of

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Girl takes her life to escape teasing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A teenage girl committed suicide due to frequent teasing by local youths in Sidha Dhap village in Gobindaganj upazila on Thursday night.

Family sources said local youths used to tease Beauty Begum, 17, and continued proposing her love and spreading scandals about her. She sat for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations this year.

Protests at guardian level went in vain.

On Thursday, Beauty took her life by hanging herself in her bedroom as the teasing reached its peak.

Jewellery shop looted in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Burglars looted gold ornaments and cash worth over Tk 16 lakh from a jeweller's in the port city's traditional business centre of Khatunganj, Bakshirhat early yesterday.

Unidentified criminals broke into Fashion Jewellers through the ventilator from a room of the adjoining Star Boarding, and took away at least 140 tolas of gold ornaments and cash, police and witnesses said.

Mohammad Isha, proprietor of the shop, in a case filed with the Kotwali Police Station mentioned that goods worth Tk 16 lakh 48 thousand was stolen in the incident.

Police nabbed Harun, the hotel manager, and boy Alamgir for interrogation.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR BOOKS

Too tough for school kids to grasp

AKBAR HOSSAIN

A bulk of the 500 books the education ministry has selected as extra-curricular reading for secondary school students are on issues too hard for the target age-group to understand.

Besides some utter political trash, the move will require the students of class six to 10 of 2,317 beneficiary schools of a so-called development project to study research and analytic write-ups on highly complicated socio-economic topics.

For instance, the list include

'Bangladeshe Bhumi Sangskarer Rajnitik Arthaniti' on the political economy of land reforms and 'Bangladesher Grameen Daridrer Rajnaitik Arthonitee' on the political economy of rural poverty by Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddique.

Or, can we expect a teenager to grasp the content of the book 'Muktijuddho, Jatiya Nirapatta o Pratikakha Niti' written by retired Maj Gen Imamuzzaman that deals with national security and defence policy?

An eight-member committee headed by an additional secretary

made the choosing without examining the suitability of the books for secondary level students, ministry sources said.

School students are expected to read 'Issues in Training and Development' written in English by Cabinet Secretary Dr Sadat Hossain, 'Bangladesh: Rajniti Sankat o Bisleshan, an analysis of political crisis of Bangladesh by Dr Talukder Maniruzzaman, and 'Bangladesh: Rastra o Rajniti (Bangladesh: state

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NARSINGDI BY-POLLS

Khokon's nomination sparks violent protest

BNP men attack him, threaten hartal, damage vehicles, barricade road, ransack rail station

STAR REPORT

The ruling BNP yesterday nominated former Ducusu general secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon for the June 22 parliamentary by-election to Narsingdi-1 seat, prompting violent demonstrations in the constituency and threats of an indefinite hartal in the district if the nomination is not withdrawn by today.

The demonstrators led by a section of local BNP leaders damaged and torched rail tracks disrupting Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet train communication.

They also put up barricades

obstructing road communication between Dhaka, and Sylhet, Kishoreganj and Narsingdi.

The agitating people attacked Narsingdi rail station, ransacked its offices and damaged signal system and telephone links. They also damaged scores of shops and vehicles.

Khokon, who was on way to Narsingdi in a car from Dhaka, also came under attack. He received minor injuries and was given primary treatment at Narsingdi hospital, locals said.

Witnesses said former lawmaker Shamsuddin Ahmed Esaq's son and

town BNP General Secretary Harunur Rashid, district BNP Vice-President Mesbahuddin Bhuyan Iran, Joint Secretary BG Rashid and Jatiyatabadi Jubba Dal central Vice-president Mia Mohammad Selim led the protests. All of them were aspirants for party nomination for the by-election.

The local leaders have also decided to submit nomination papers violating the party decision.

Witnesses said as soon as a private television channel yesterday afternoon telecast the nomination of Khokon, hundreds took to the

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Bangladesh doomed

AL-AMIN from Lord's

England buried Bangladesh under tons of runs and then dismissed half of the Tigers' batting order on the second day of the first Test at Lord's yesterday.

The home side declared their first innings at 523-3 ten minutes after Tea but not before their top-five batsmen enjoyed a full length batting practice in front of a capacity home crowd.

When Bangladesh, who had a miserable first innings where they

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