

'CROSSFIRE' KILLING
Masum's father
demands
judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Father of slain Jagannath University student Iqbal Hossain Masum yesterday demanded judicial inquiry into the killing of his son.

"I earnestly request the prime minister to form a judicial inquiry committee headed by a high court judge to find out the fact behind the death of my son," Masum's father Abul Khaer told The Daily Star.

Khaer, a businessman and retired UNDP official said he is shocked that killer police termed his innocent son a criminal.

Plainclothes police picked up Masum from a family programme on July 8 and his relatives found the body in Dhaka Medical College and Hospital morgue after a day.

After a hide and seek play for a few hours, police finally said Masum died in "crossfire" with

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

CROSSFIRE

When innocents
become victims

At least 14 killed by Rab had no criminal records

SHARIFUL ISLAM

At least 14 innocent people were killed in the custody of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police either in "crossfire" or from torture by the law-enforcers since the beginning of an extra-judicial killing spree in June last year.

These killings were not linked to anticrime measures as the victims did not have criminal records. Such extra-judicial killings sparked widespread grievances and protests among people and human rights

bodies.

In all 14 cases the victims' relatives and neighbours said they were killed intentionally for vested interest or someone might have used the law enforcement agencies to take revenge on them. In some cases, misleading information furnished to the law-enforcers had led to the killings, they said.

After every incident the police and Rab tried desperately to establish the victims as "infamous criminals" and implicated them in cases which were found to be false in

investigations by newspapers and rights organisations. These investigations have revealed that these 14 innocent people were arrested and then killed in the Rab or police custody.

The deputy commissioner, district magistrate, additional district magistrate, superintendent of police (SP) or additional SP has carried out executive enquiry in all but one "shootout" incidents. However, none of the enquiries found that anybody was killed

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

LALMATIA 'ROBBERS'
Neighbours say
they're innocent,
cops find no
criminal records

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

Neighbours and relatives of three alleged robbers killed on Tuesday in police firing at Lalmatia in the city claimed yesterday that they were innocent and the police failed to find any criminal records of them even in three days after the incident.

Sutrapur police, who claimed on Wednesday night that all the three -- Zakir Hossain, 27, Monir Hossain, 25, and Ramjan, 25 -- were involved in criminal activities, said last night they would be able to justify their claims by today.

Relatives of the youths received their bodies from Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday following autopsy.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Media asked to
formulate code
of conduct

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Press freedom cannot be curtailed through enactment of law but journalists and newspaper owners will have to formulate a code of conduct so that they can present news objectively, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Moudud Ahmed said yesterday.

"Full freedom of journalism now exists in the country and in some cases, excess freedom," the minister said while speaking as chief guest at a function marking the 15th founding anniversary of English weekly Dhaka Post at a city hotel.

Moudud however observed freedom of press in the country is a matter of pride for the nation. "As the opposition members do not go to parliament, newspapers have taken the role of bringing transparency in the government."

As a result, importance of newspapers has increased further, he felt.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia meets her Japanese counterpart Junichiro Koizumi before their official talks at Koizumi's residence in Tokyo yesterday.

Dhaka reassures Tokyo
about UNSC backing

PM calls for strategic partnership to supply global market; deal signed for job training

UNB, Tokyo

Bangladesh reaffirmed its support to Japan for becoming a member of the United Nations Security Council through the proposed expansion of the UN police body.

Dhaka, however, refrained from making any firm commitment to co-sponsor the draft resolution on the UNSC enlargement.

"We reiterated Bangladesh's support... we will not co-sponsor,"

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin told reporters after the official talks between Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

"Japan requested to vote for the draft resolution, but we said we'll look into it," he said, replying to a question about the UNSC reforms that would be mooted in the UN General Assembly sitting in September.

Brazil, Germany, India and Japan

have formed a group called G4 to lobby for permanent seats on the Security Council.

He said Japan agreed in principle to provide assistance for constructing the Padma Bridge. He, however, did not mention any specific commitment, saying that it still remained at the stage of feasibility study.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Kamal Uddin Siddiqui

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

NOAB, BSP for
watch body for
wage board
implementation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP) and Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) yesterday demanded that the government should take up legal procedures to form a monitoring committee for smooth implementation of the wage board award.

The High Court had earlier ruled on formation of a monitoring committee and formulation of new laws in this regard, if need be, for declaration of reality-based wage board award and its smooth implementation.

According to a government committee report, four percent of the newspapers have so far failed to implement the fifth wage board.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

LONDON BOMBINGS

Mastermind identified
Europe falls silent for victims after a week

AGENCIES, London

Millions across Europe paid silent tribute to London's dead yesterday, a week to the day since suicide attacks killed over 50 people, as police tried to track down the mastermind behind the four British bombers.

In London, workers poured out of their offices to line the streets while taxis and buses came to a halt. Planes at airports switched off their engines and delayed take-offs.

Hundreds gathered at King's Cross station, site of one of the blasts detonated by a group of young British Muslims of Pakistani ethnic origin who lived in northern England.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, who on Wednesday said he would look urgently at new measures to tackle extremism, marked the silence in the garden of his Downing Street office, while Queen Elizabeth observed it at Buckingham Palace.

Golfers at the 134th British Open championship stood quietly on the fairways and greens of the St Andrews course in Scotland.

Tributes were also paid in Madrid and Bali -- both targeted by bombers from the Islamist al-Qaeda network in the past -- and in cities across Europe. The Pope, on holiday in the Italian Alps, prayed for peace.

Forty miles northwest of London, police continued to search a house in the market town of Aylesbury for

clues to who may have plotted the bombings -- the first suicide attacks in western Europe.

British police have identified the man thought to be the mastermind behind last week's bombings in London.

The British-born man in his 30s, of Pakistani origin, arrived at a British port last month and left the country again the day before Thursday's attacks, The Times newspaper reported.

The four suspected suicide bombers, three of whom have been identified by newspapers, were also Britons of Pakistani origin.

According to The Times, security sources believe the mastermind was

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

Trader burnt
to death in
city fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Owner of a foam shop in Old Dhaka was burnt to death in his shop that caught fire last night.

Abul Kalam, 35, owner of Amin Traders on Kazi Alauddin Road, was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a serious condition where doctors declared him dead.

"When the fire broke at 7:35pm, Kalam started removing goods from his shop. Firefighters rescued him but in the meantime he received serious burns," said Noor Hossain, a shop employee.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit in a shop adjacent to Amin Traders. Huge goods were burnt in the fire that caused extensive damage to four shops.

Seven fire-fighting units from the Fire Brigade Headquarters and nearby stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire within an hour.

Fu Wang fined
for selling food
items without
expiry dates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday fined the owner of Fu Wang Foods Tk 1 lakh after finding no manufacturing and expiry dates on the labels of their products.

Two mobile courts formed by the home ministry also collected Tk 1,31,400 as fine from shopkeepers at Gulshan City Market and New Market on charge of selling poisonous dried fish and products without BSTI (Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution) seal. They also seized 1,200 CDs of porno films from the footpath at Nilkhet.

In the last one month the two mobile courts formed to stop selling of adulterated food and substandard goods collected more than Tk 12 lakh as fine and filed more than 200 cases against the people

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6



'Islam forbids killing of innocent people,' says Bangladeshi British Muslims, a forum of expatriates, in a message inscribed on the Bangladesh national flag hung at Kings Cross station, London on Wednesday in memory of the London bomb blasts victims.

SUST closed as JCD
man killed in feud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader was killed in an internal feud at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) in the early hours yesterday, resulting in indefinite closure of the university.

SUST authorities have also evacuated the dormitories in the wake of the first political killing on the campus.

About 15 cadres of a rival JCD faction on Wednesday swooped on Rafiqul Islam Patwary alias Liton at 5:00pm just after he completed the last examination of his master's degree.

The attackers including JCD activists Tanvir, Aminur, Shihab, Pichchi Suman, Sharif, Zahid, Billah, Lincoln, Bidden and Nawaz took him to the students union building and beat him up with iron rods.

A teacher of the computer science department tried to rescue

Liton, assistant general secretary of the SUST unit JCD, but he had to give up.

A number of senior JCD leaders finally rescued and sent him to a local clinic. He was shifted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital at 9:00pm where he died at around 2:30am.

The syndicate at an emergency meeting chaired by Vice-chancellor Mosleh Uddin Ahmed closed the university at 3:00am to avert further violence.

The authorities have also evacuated the dorms and temporarily expelled JCD vice-presidents Jastim Uddin and Rubel Ahmed from the university for their alleged involvement in the incident.

A seven-member committee has been formed to probe the incident and submit a report in a week.

There is a longstanding feud between two rival factions of the

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

ELECTORAL REFORMS

AL, allies to launch
agenda today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) and its left-leaning allies will declare the much-talked-about electoral and caretaker government reform proposals today from a joint press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina will announce the reform agenda in presence of top leaders of the 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party (NAP).

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), one of the main components of the alliance, however, keeps away from the joint move.

Making the reform proposals

public, the opposition leaders are likely to issue an ultimatum to the government to meet their demands for the sake of free and fair elections.

Political observers believe this reform agenda will be the main focus of the political arena ahead of the next general elections scheduled for January 2007.

The opposition agreement deals mainly with the reforms in the formation and jurisdiction of the caretaker government, the Election Commission (EC) to make it a truly independent body and some electoral laws.

The reform proposals are coming into light after prolonged discussions in the opposition camp for the last six months. Apart from the senior opposition leaders, legal and

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

JS body finds rice
price hike for real

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of all varieties of rice have increased recently, a parliamentary body observed yesterday in a stark contradiction to the prime minister's recent statement on price hike in parliament.

The parliamentary standing committee on food and disaster management ministry however said only Dhaka and adjacent districts are witnessing the upward trend in rice prices.

The prices remain stable in other districts, the committee members observed at a meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad after discussing a food ministry report submitted to the committee.

The parliamentary body pointed out that the price of coarse rice has increased by at least Tk 3/kg. Coarse rice is now sold at Tk 17/kg in the

retail markets of the capital and adjacent districts.

In other districts, the price is still below the government fixed OMS (open market sale) rate of Tk 14.50/kg, the committee claimed.

On Sunday, the prime minister told parliament that the prices of essentials including rice have not increased that much. She said a section of newspapers are reporting on the issue "for nothing".

But the government raised the rate of rice procurement to Tk 14.50/kg from last year's Tk 13.25, keeping consistency with the price hike of rice, meeting sources said referring to the food ministry report.

The committee members asked the ministry to enhance its stock of food grains and increase food import, if necessary.

"It is true that prices of rice have

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Price hike dwarfs
rise in income

Inflation stands at 6.90pc in May, rising by .30 percentage point from April

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A relentless price hike of essentials has pushed inflation to such a peak that dwarfs the meagre rise in the real income of people, specially the poor.

According to the latest report of

the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), on point-to-point basis, inflation in May increased by .30 percentage point from the previous month, standing at 6.90 percent.

While the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) in its yesterday's

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

