

'Criminal' dies in 'crossfire', Janata Bank guard killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in 'crossfire' between police and his accomplices yesterday, and unknown criminals chopped a bank guard to death in Motijheel in the capital on Thursday.

The dead are Syed Abdul Awal Manik, 30, of Baraiara village in Jhalakathi, and Abdul Kader, a guard of the Janata Bank's Rajarbagh Corporate Branch.

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Manik, resident of Fatullah in Narayanganj and an accused in at least 13 cases, in Khilgaon on October 13 with two firearms.

He was placed on a two-day remand on October 17 and one day's fresh remand on October 20. Following his statement, a DB team comprising Cobra and Cheetah personnel took him near an under

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N'ganj chamber chief throws Iftar for 20,000 today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

District BNP leader and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) First Vice President Mohammad Ali has invited some 20,000 people to an Iftar party he hosts today.

Ali, also president of Narayanganj chamber, is throwing the party as part of a campaign to bag a candidature for the next general election, sources said.

Twenty-five cows and 30 maunds of rice have been stockpiled for the party to be held at the closed Dhaka Vegetable Oil Mills he owns at Panchabati in Fatullah.

The sources said, since Ali has not mentioned his political identity on the invitation cards, he may be lobbying both the major political parties of the country for nomination.

Asked, he admitted inviting 20,000 guests to what he termed his personal function. Ali was elected a

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MOMIN MURDER Another accused arrested

UNB, Dhaka

Another accused in Momin murder case was arrested yesterday evening in the city's Kafrul area, raising the total number of arrestees in the case to 15.

Acting on a tip-off, Sub-Inspector (SI) Aziz of Kafrul Police Station arrested Jisan at Ananda Nagar of the area at about 6:45pm. He was later handed over to the CID police for interrogation.

Qamrul Islam Momin, a student of Mirpur Commerce College, was killed last month.

Former officer-in-charge (OC) of Motijheel Police Station Rafiq, the prime accused in the case, is now in jail, as his bail petition was rejected by a lower court on October 16.

GOVT HOSPITALS IN CITY

'Free' treatment denied as not everything is for free

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Many a poor patient is forced to leave government hospitals midway through their treatment for want of money, while others languish untreated for months in hospital beds being unable to pay, exposing just how expensive 'free' treatment can be.

Although about 60 percent of beds in the government-run hospitals are designated as free, the reality is often starkly different for patients of the lower income bracket.

Shamsher Ali, 28, a day labourer, hails from Tetulia, Panchagarh. He has been lying on Bed 10, Ward 1 at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) for more than two months now. One of his heart valves is not functioning and he was sent here

after being treated at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) for about one and a half months.

The treatment has cost him dearly. He had to sell his two cows and one bicycle and also to borrow Tk 15,000 to bear the expenses of medicine and tests. Now, after all the tests have shown that one of his valves is out of order, he does not have a penny for the operation he immediately needs.

Current hospital regulations stipulate that food, beds and some medicine, usually the cheaper ones, as well as some tests, again usually the cheaper ones, should be free. But in reality patients often need more than this, making their treatment costlier than their means.

Even a basic CT scan costs Tk 2,000, while more complicated ones cost as much as Tk 4,000. An Angiogram, x-ray of arteries or veins, costs around Tk 5,000, including medicine, while one round of chemotherapy costs Tk 3,000, including medicine. Cancer patients often require several rounds of chemotherapy.

The costs for Ali's operation are impossible for him to bear and he has already missed two dates for his operation at the NICVD. Even a cheaper variety of the valve he needs costs Tk 55,000, while an Oxygenator would cost around Tk 25,000. Besides, there is an Operation Theatre (OT) charge

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Chan Mahmud, left, the poor father of a teenage girl awaiting surgery, and Basir Ahmed, a destitute youth suffering from Thallasemia, are forced to seek donation for treatment from visitors in a corridor at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

Bird flu deeply embedded in Asia: UN expert

REUTERS, Beijing

Bird flu is deeply entrenched in bird populations across Asia, and China and other countries have a big challenge on their hands fighting the disease, a top UN health official said yesterday.

David Nabarro, who has said up to 150 million people could die in a flu pandemic if the H5N1 virus that causes bird flu mutates into a deadlier form that spreads more easily among humans, urged Beijing to keep up its guard.

China says the situation will be very

grave over the coming months of autumn and winter.

"All countries in this region are facing considerable challenges to do with H5N1-caused influenza," said Nabarro, senior UN coordinator for avian and human influenza, referring to a strain believed to have killed 67 people.

"These are substantial because the epidemic is really quite deeply embedded into the domestic and industrial bird population."

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Dhaka forms taskforce

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A high-powered national taskforce comprising members from three ministries has been formed against the backdrop of bird flu outbreak in many parts of the world. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman told the news agency yesterday.

"So far, we don't see any existence of bird flu here. But we cannot rule out the possibility and that is why we are cautious...if the bird flu hits here, it will not be possible to tackle as we don't have technical capacity," said the minister.

The taskforce, headed by a joint secretary of the fisheries and livestock ministry, also includes officials from forest and environment

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Cold weather to follow drizzle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Winter would commence gradually in about a week and a half, the weather office said yesterday.

Heavy to mild fog is already being experienced in many a northern district, an early sign of the approach of winter.

Weather officials said the drizzle accompanied by occasional heavy rains going on for the past two days would end within the next 48 hours.

The rainfall, typically seen before every winter season, is to continue until Sunday due to a prevailing low pressure over the Bay of Bengal, the officials said.

The night temperature has been gradually coming down from an average of 25 degrees Celsius last week to 20 degrees now and the descent is to continue into next week as well, the weather forecast said.

Due to the continuous drizzle,

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PHOTO: STAR

A few Eid shoppers brave the continuous drizzle yesterday, bargaining with vendors crouching under polythene sheets at makeshift shops on a footpath at Purana Paltan in the city.

'Judiciary has automatically been separated from executive'

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Constitution expert Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the judiciary has automatically been separated from the executive as the Supreme Court on Thursday did not give further time to the government in this regard.

The higher judiciary should start controlling the lower judiciary without any delay, he said.

"A severe crisis has been created in the lower judiciary and the structure of the rule of law has broken down due to non-implementation of the Supreme Court's judgement of the judiciary separation case by the government," he told BDNEWS.

The government is behaving like an ostrich burying its head in the sand since it (government)

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Spectrum's aid for affected workers

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh National Council of Textile, Garments and Leather Works yesterday gave financial assistance to 199 affected workers of Spectrum Sweater Factory.

Roy Ramesh Chandra, general secretary of the council, distributed the money at a function at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium as part of its programme to help the affected workers of the factory, said a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, Roy Ramesh said families of the workers killed in the factory collapse have already been given financial assistance. Besides, he added, all-

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MONGA SITUATION IN KURIGRAM GRIM

Exodus to cities for food, job starts

RAFIQUE SARKER, Kurigram

Thousands of people in the poverty-stricken northern district are suffering from Monga, a near-famine situation, which has appeared this year with a grimmer face.

The poor, particularly the agricultural day labourers, are going without a proper meal for days at a stretch amid extreme economic hardship. The situation is worst in Ulipur, Chilmari, Roumari, Rajibpur and Kurigram Sadar upazilas, where the labourers have no alternative work but farming, which will not be available for another eight to nine weeks.

Every year in Ashwin and Kartik (early October to late November), most of the agro-labourers in Kurigram and the neighbouring districts become

unemployed, simply because no farm hand is needed in this period. Monga spells dire hardship for the poor, who usually have no reserve to buy provisions and so have to starve -- half or full.

A huge number of such hungry people of these areas have been heading for Dhaka, Sylhet, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Chittagong in search of job, food and shelter.

Having no alternative, they are borrowing money for their fares as well as livelihood from local usurers at cut-throat interest rates to be paid during the Aman harvest about one and a half months away.

They are seen thronging

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Bush unsure of Palestine state before 2009

AFP, Washington

US President George W. Bush said Thursday that Palestinians might not have an independent state before he leaves office in January 2009, but urged them to crack down now on extremists who target Israel.

After talks with Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas, Bush renewed his support for Palestinian statehood but did not second his guest's call for an immediate resumption of talks

under the US-backed "roadmap" to peace with Israel.

"I believe that two democratic states living side by side in peace is possible. I can't tell you when it's going to happen. It's happening," Bush said during a joint appearance with Abbas in the White House Rose Garden.

"If it happens before I get out of office, I'll be there to witness the ceremony. And if doesn't, we will

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Little progress in probe into IOJ leader murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Seventh day into the murder of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Chittagong City unit convenor Maulana Iqbal Bin Yakub, there is not yet much progress of the investigation.

Meanwhile, police continued interrogating Samina Haq Mita, with whom Iqbal reportedly had extramarital affairs, and her in-law Abu Hossain Babla.

In remand, Mita, wife of Sadek Anwar, an expatriate to Korea, confessed to having illicit relations with Yakub, also the vice president of Chittagong Shop Owners' Federation, sources said.

They used to meet at a hotel in the city's Station Road and Yakub

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Sehri-Iftar			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
17	22		5-30
18	23	4-40	5-29



Prayer Timing		
October 22		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-39	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-45
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		