

## 2 killed in shootout

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arrested Leku at Tongi of Gazipur district on Thursday.

Rab sources said they took Leku to Rajoir for quizzing and as per his statement, they set out to recover illegal firearms, taking Leku with them.

When the Rab men along with Leku reached Shankordipar under Badarpasha Union at about 3:00am, Leku's accomplices opened fire on the elite force, prompting them to retaliate.

Leku was caught in the shootout as he tried to flee and died instantly, the sources said.

Rab recovered a sawn-off rifle, two pipe guns and four bullets from the spot.

The officer-in-charge of Rajoir Police Station said Leku was the listed criminal of Madaripur district and wanted in 21 criminal cases including murder, extortion and kidnapping.

He said the people of Rajoir heaved a sigh of relief at the death of Leku.

Our Pabna correspondent reported that Rab-5 members arrested Tayeb Ali at Kotbari Bazar under Chatmohor upazila on Wednesday.

Later, the Rab men took him to Rajshahi zonal headquarters for interrogation where he revealed important information about his arms den.

## Edict banning

**FROM PAGE 1**

influential persons and alems (religious leaders). The edict also includes a provision of penalty of Tk 500 for the shopkeepers who would sell anything to a woman. The edict was announced to prevent 'anti-social activities', said the announcer.

Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan, superintendent of the Sylhet police told The Daily Star that a short while ago a group of local influential people including a union parishad chairman had made a similar announcement. "We are investigating the matter," he added. A contingent of police was sent to the area.

## Deadly bird flu

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has been reported in the country outside the Danube delta region.

Flutur sought to reassure Romanian citizens, saying that more than 400 other tests carried out on suspected cases from the east of country, including the Vastui region, had been negative.

But he said protection measures, including a ban on outdoor rearing of farmyard poultry, would be maintained in the regions affected.

The H5N1 virus has infected 118 people in Asia since late 2003 and killed more than 60.

Experts fear a pandemic that could kill millions across the globe if H5N1 acquires genetic material from a human influenza virus and becomes easily transmittable from human to human.

Europe is on maximum alert for the further spread of the H5N1 strain, which has already also been detected in Croatia, Russia and Turkey, a westward sweep health experts believe is caused by birds migrating ahead of the winter.

Romanian health authorities on Thursday ordered tests on several chickens found on a train arriving from Russia.

Countries around the world have rushed through measures in recent weeks to try to abate the spread of the virus in birds.

On Tuesday, the European Union agreed to impose a ban on pet bird imports from the rest of the world, following the detection of the H5N1 strain in a dead parrot held in quarantine in Britain.

Tests on 32 other birds which died in British quarantine up to mid-October have found that some had bird flu, although the exact strain remains unknown.

Earlier China insisted that there have been no documented human cases of

## Bomb recovered

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Police said Jamal and Sumon were recently recruited in the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho). The bombs were made to carry out destructive activities, they added.

A case was filed with Daulatpur Police Station yesterday evening. A vigorous investigation is going on, police said.

## Dog squads

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the elite force will be formed, raising the total to three.

"The entire country will be put under an extensive security network," the meetings sources said.

They said the authorities will further modernise the Management Information System (MIS) of Rab.

Inspector General of Police, Rab director general and senior officials of the home ministry attended the meeting.

On his confessional statement, the members of the elite force set out for Pabna on Thursday night, taking Tayeb with them.

When they reached near Kankhola Bridge at about 2:00am, the accomplices of Tayeb opened fire on them in a bid to snatch their gang leader. Rab returned fire.

Rab sources said Tayeb was shot during the encounter and died on the spot.

Rab recovered a shutter gun, a pipe gun and six bullets from the spot.

Our staff correspondent from Khulna writes: Arifuzzaman Arif, general secretary of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Daulatpur unit, was arrested by the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Thursday night.

The Rab-6 members arrested Arif at Daulatpur bus stand and handed him over to the Daulatpur police. He was shown arrested in a bomb attack case filed with Daulatpur police on October 25.

## Railway men held while trying to sell slippers

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj**

Railway employees caught staff of a construction farm when they attempted to sell 100-ft railway slippers after uprooting it in Narayanganj Thursday night.

Senior Sub-Assistant Engineer of Bangladesh Railway Deen Islam said staff of construction farm Ehsan Enterprise, which is engaged in Narayanganj Municipality road repairing works at Rail-gate area, uprooted 100-ft abandoned rail slippers at 10:00pm Thursday and loaded it on a truck.

Railway employees caught the truck when it was taking the slipper to sell somewhere.

They handed over both the truck and its driver to Narayanganj police.

## College principal abducted in Khagrachhari

**UNB, Khagrachhari**

Unidentified miscreants kidnapped the principal of Panchhari Degree College from his house here yesterday morning.

Police quoted family sources as saying that a gang of miscreants picked up Principal Samar Dutta Chakma, also an adviser to the local unit of the Awami League, at gunpoint at about 8:00am and took him to deep forest.

Local Awami League suspected that tribal miscreants were behind the abduction.

## Khatme Nabuwat

**FROM PAGE 1**

in the name of Islam and now betraying us," said IKNMB Joint Secretary Maolana Abu Taher.

The leaders said political parties like Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote, who always speak for Islam, failed to uphold the dignity of Hazrat Mohammad (SM) as they did not demand such a declaration in the parliament.

"If you cannot speak up in the parliament, leave the power," said IKNMB's central cabinet member Mufti Abdur Razzak, adding that December 23 is the last date and that the Muslims of the country will drag down the government from power without wasting any more time.

Alhajj Noor Hossain, another leader of the organisation, alleged that the present government is pretending to sleep on the Ahmadiyya issue. The fact is that Britain, Israel and the European Union are backing the Ahmadiyyas and threatening the government with suspension of funding, he added.

"But we ask the BNP-Jamaat government whether we the Muslims of the country brought them to power or the Western forces did that for them," he said.

Presiding over the rally, IKNMB Ameer Maolana Mahmudul Hasan said the Omrah being observed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in Saudi Arabia could not be valid if she does not declare the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims.

"The contradictory policy of respecting our prophet and not paying heed to the demands of the Muslims to declare the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims is a betrayal to Islam," Mahmudul Hasan said.

He conducted an oath where several thousand Muslims pledged to continue their movement until December 23 demanding the declaration by the government.

IKNMB's Central Nayebe Ameer Enayetullah Abbasi, central members Maolana Ruhul Amin and Mamtazul Karim also spoke.

The party needed more than a year to recover from the 2001 election debacle, which was totally unexpected to it. It nominated its lawmakers to the parliamentary standing committees about one year into their formation. And except a few senior AL MPs, most of them failed to play any significant role on the committees on different ministries, mainly due to the absence of adequate briefings by the party high-ups.

However, it achieved a major success in this area by compelling the parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry to scrutinise the much talked-about presidential mercy to a BNP man. The committee's examination revealed a shady role of the law ministry in arranging the clemency.

After the 2001 general election, the AL experienced another debacle this year, as the April 30 deadline set by it for unseating the government miscarried to the utter frustration of its midlevel and grassroots leaders and activists.

The party could not maintain a consistent stance on contesting the by-elections under the coalition regime, too. First it decided to boycott by-elections, later it reversed the position, and then again abstained from competing in by-polls.

**ATTACKS ONAL**  
In the last four years, the main

radical Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of Abbas's ruling Fatah party, said it had fired rockets on Israeli communities, but no impacts were reported.

"We are saying to the criminal enemy, incursions, arrests and assassinations against our Mujahedeen and leaders will not stop our jihad (holy war) against its army and settlers anywhere," they said in a joint statement.

Sharon has vowed to press an offensive to the end against militants after the suicide attack in the town of Hadera -- the first such deadly strike since the Gaza pullout.

"Our activity will be wide-ranging and continuous until we have brought about the cessation of terrorism," Sharon said.

The prime minister has ruled out a resumption of talks with Abbas unless the Palestinian Authority cracks down on militants.

"If the PA (Palestinian Authority) does not take serious and tangible action against terrorism, there will be no diplomatic progress," he said.

completely destroy the ceasefire," Erakat told AFP, referring to a tenuous truce that has been loosely adhered to by militant groups, but ignored by Islamic Jihad.

Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas, appealed for calm, warning that the consequences of the bombing would affect both peoples.

"The Israeli escalation in Gaza and the West Bank will affect everyone. We ask Israel to stop this aggression immediately," he told AFP.

During the night, the air force carried out four strikes on open fields and access routes used by militants to launch rockets against Israel.

Fighter planes over Gaza City caused deafening sonic booms six times during the early hours, an AFP correspondent said.

Israeli troops arrested at least 16 Palestinians, 12 of them suspected Jihad members, in an overnight West Bank sweep in the aftermath of Wednesday's suicide bombing, military sources said.

The armed wing of Jihad and the

## Strategic flaws

**FROM PAGE 1**

From the very beginning of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition regime to date the main opposition has been persistently demanding resignation of the government. It had no major focus on issue-based movement that could have mobilised people against what the party dubbed misrule of the government.

Demanding fresh polls, the AL refrained from joining the House for about eight months and when it did join the House had already passed more than 70 workdays. In truth, the joining was but a nominal one, as the AL lawmakers faced the risk of losing their membership if they remained absent from the House for 90 consecutive days.

Then it started boycotting the House, accusing the ruling BNP and the Speaker of gagging its lawmakers in parliament. According to some political analysts, the opposition party unwittingly walked into the very trap the ruling coalition had laid for it. The frequent AL walkouts actually benefited the treasury bench, which feels more comfortable in running the House with its archenemy out of the way.

Out of a total 297 workdays of the House, the AL so far has taken part only in 87 days. In consequence, its role in the JS was not strong enough to balance out different executive steps that affected people's life.

Its participation in parliamentary proceedings and its parliamentary strategy as the main opposition party were better in the fifth JS than the current one. That time, it had joined the maiden session of the House and continued until the end of 1994. The party started boycotting the House only from its 13th session and did not return up to the dissolution of parliament in 1996. The seats of the AL lawmakers in the fifth JS were vacated during its 20th session on June 19, 1995 on their absence for 90 consecutive days.

At present, the main opposition that has been boycotting the House since last year is in a dilemma whether to return to parliament or to let the seats of its MPs be vacated for absence.

Though Awami League has not shown any enthusiasm for participating in parliament proceedings, its lawmakers have been enjoying all the benefits and privileges. Some of them have also accepted perks like foreign trips.

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Save Gulshan  
**FROM PAGE 1**  
South Park, should be freed from the land grabbers to restore the healthy environment of the city.

Presiding over the rally, Bapa Vice-Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said Bapa is worried about the rapid degradation in environment in the country. The authorities concerned should take stringent measures to preserve the environment, he said.

"The number of parks in the city is very small compared to its population, so the government should pay more attention to preserving the environment than constructing more buildings," he noted.

Bapa General Secretary Mohidul Haque Khan alleged that the DCC is developing the Gulshan South Park, bypassing the Park-Uddyan Management Committee, which is entrusted with supervising and recommending on the issues concerning parks and open spaces in the city.

An opportunist quarter in the government always grabs the public land, the speakers alleged, adding that some ministers and bureaucrats are trying to build their residences, filling up the Banani Lake and some other lowland areas.

The parks in Dhaka are also losing beauty due to lack of proper planning and maintenance, they said.

Gulshan Society Vice-Chairman Saiful Islam, General Secretary Anwarul Alam, Bapa Joint Secretary Mihir Biswas, executive member architect Iqbal Habib, Advocate Iqbal Kabir, Bangladesh Architect Institute President Khadem Ali, former minister ABM Golam Mostafa also spoke at the programme.

Environment and rights organisations Nagorik Udyog, Green Voice, Jubo Nagorik Odhikar Jote and Peace also attended the human chain.

**Pet bird**  
**FROM PAGE 1**  
"As soon as we see the name of UK on the list, we will ban import of chicks from there," he added.

Earlier, the government banned import of chicks from five European countries -- Romania, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey and Greece. Initially, the government banned importing chicks from 13 Asian countries where the avian influenza broke out.

However, the government is yet to issue any official note regarding the ban.

Bangladesh is still safe from the outbreak of the deadly avian influenza caused by H5N1 virus. But there are possibilities that the H5N1 strain could trigger a flu pandemic if it mutates with a human flu virus.

There are 120 confirmed cases of bird flu being transmitted to humans in Asia, of which 60 have proved fatal.

Meanwhile, amid the potential danger of the avian flu, pet shops at the city's Kantabon, which import birds from different countries of South America, Australia, Africa and south and southeast Asia, are still continuing with the business.

"These pet birds are also very risky and could be the carriers of the avian flu virus," said Karim.

**Janajuddha**  
**FROM PAGE 1**  
Janajuddho has claimed responsibility for the killings. Blasting the ruling alliance for crossfire killings it said it would carry on the revenge campaign with even more vengeance. The statement was faxed to some local newspersons in Chudanga and Kushtia on Wednesday night soon after the killings.

It said the law enforcers have long been killing its men cold-bloodedly and falsely ascribing the deaths to 'crossfire', 'encounter', 'line of fire' or 'shootout'.

Police in Khulna range were put on alert and security in the region was beefed up following the five murders.

"Police are verifying the source from which the statement was issued," a high police official of Khulna told The Daily Star yesterday.

Replying to another query, he said, "We are always on alert and our drive against lawlessness is on."

According to the law enforcers, at least 10 outlawed parties with 10,000 cadres have been active in the region for the last 30 years.

They are PBCP (Marxist-Leninist), P B C P - J a n a j u d d h o , B i p l o b i Communist Party (BCP), New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP), Banglar Communist Party (BCP-Laltu), Gono Mukti Fouj (GMF), Jashod Gono Bahini (JGB), Socialist Party (SP), Biplobi Anuragi, Chhinnamul Communist Party (CCP).

Some 183 outlaws including several top leaders of the outfits were killed in 'encounters' with the law enforcers since June last year while in the year before, some 65 were killed in 'Operation Clean Heart' and 'Operation Spider Web' in the region.

A top leader of Janajuddho yesterday told The Daily Star that now with their back to the wall they have no alternative but to keep on 'cleansing the region of the class enemy'.

## Save Gulshan

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varies on two charts, one by the government and the other by Bus Truck Owners Association.

For instance, the government chart shows the distance between Dhaka and Meherpur to be 249 km while the association chart shows it to be 295 km.

Following the hike in fuel prices, the government recently has fixed the transport fares per km. According to the government decision, per km fare for buses is Tk.80 and minibuses Tk.83.

The association chart put the distance at higher figure as the more the distance, the higher the fare, alleged a passenger standing in front of the charts posted on ticket counter walls at Gabtoli.

Some passengers expressed disgust at the law enforcers' role who, they said, despite complaint from the passengers remain indifferent to the differences in the charts.

Law enforcers on guard at Gabtoli Bus Station told The Daily Star that the number of allegations from the passengers is very low.

# Oil-for-food report ready for prosecutors

## 2,200 companies gave Iraq illicit funds

**REUTERS, United Nations**

The independent panel investigating the UN oil-for-food programme for Iraq has issued a report that prosecutors in 66 countries can use against 2,200 companies accused of diverting \$1.8 billion to Saddam Hussein's government.

The 623-page survey on Thursday exposed how more than half the companies doing business with Iraq wittingly or unwittingly fed Saddam's need for cash through straight bribes or surcharges on oil sales.

"The (UN) secretariat, the Security Council and UN contractors failed most grievously in their responsibilities," said Paul Volcker, the former US Federal Reserve chairman, who headed the probe, which issued the last of five reports.

The list included firms from Vietnam to the United States as well as European giants Daimler-Chrysler, three subsidiaries of Siemens and Volvo. All companies and traders contacted by the panel denied the allegations except for one oil firm and 26 suppliers of goods, the report said.

And the document castigated French bank BNP-Paribas, which managed funds for the \$64 billion program, for a host of irregularities, from its fees to its failure to expose wrongdoing. The bank denied any wrongdoing.

The humanitarian program, which began in 1996 and ended in 2003, was designed to ease the impact on ordinary Iraqis of UN sanctions, imposed when Baghdad's troops invaded Kuwait in 1990. Iraq was allowed to sell oil in order to buy food, medicine and many other goods.

South African Judge Richard Goldstone, another commissioner of the UN-established Independent Inquiry Committee, said archives would be turned over to the United Nations but also shared with law enforcement authorities.

"Anything that we are able legally and morally to share with a prosecutor or authority of any country, we will be more than willing to do that," Goldstone told Reuters.

Some nations, including the United States, Britain, France and Switzerland have initiated prosecutions. Texas oil tycoon Oscar Wyatt, former chairman of founder of Coastal Corp., pleaded not guilty Thursday in New York to charges that he conspired to pay several million dollars in kickbacks.