

ONE YEAR OF BANSHKHALI CARNAGE Horror spectre still haunts village as probe stalls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Investigations into the Banshkhali arson, in which 11 people of a Hindu family were burnt to death on November 2003, has been stalled for the last few months allegedly for slacking off on it by the police.

Even after two years of the horrific attack, village Sadhanpur of Banshkhali upazila has yet to get back to normal. The house of Tejendra Lal Shil still lies desolate as none of the surviving family members dare to live

there.

The police in last 24 months failed to make any major breakthrough in the investigation and the charge sheet in the case has yet to be submitted.

Although they have arrested 29 accused in the incineration case, they seem quite indifferent to arresting the prime suspect, a ruling-party-backed UP chairman. The chairman's name came up as 'the mastermind behind the carnage' in confessional statements of almost all the arrestees.

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Biman may close down 2 int'l routes

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A high-powered committee has recommended closure of four of Biman's international routes, including Dhaka-New York flights, and all domestic routes excepting the Dhaka-Sylhet route to bring down its growing losses.

The Route Restructuring Committee of the Biman Bangladesh Airlines at a meeting Wednesday made these recommendations, sources said.

The committee also suggested increasing the number of flights on some profitable routes. As per the suggestion of the committee, the Biman can operate return flights

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Lankans vote amid sporadic violence

Turnout very low in Tamil
dominant areas

AFP, Colombo

Voting in Sri Lanka's presidential elections ended after nine hours yesterday amid sporadic violence and a virtual boycott by minority Tamils, officials said.

Election officials said voter turnout was extremely low in the island's volatile northern and eastern regions dominated by Tamil rebels where two people were killed and 17 wounded in separate incidents during the voting period.

However, in the rest of the country the turnout was high and there were no reports of major violence, an election official said adding that counting of the ballots would begin in a couple of hours.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in a conflict between separatist Tamil rebels and the government between 1972 and 2002 when a ceasefire came into effect as part of a peace process brokered by Norway.

The first results are expected at

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PHOTO: STAR

Vigilant plainclothesmen stand guard on the High Court premises yesterday in the wake of assassination of two judges in Jhalakathi on November 14.

The Daily Star, English medium schools raise fund for Monga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star and the principals and representatives of 31 English medium schools

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Minister sees no Monga

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf yesterday categorically denied existence of Monga (near-famine)

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PHOTO: STAR

Traffic flow from airport road through Mohakhali flyover adds congestion to the busy thoroughfare where the overpass ends.

2-day-old girl rescued from sand grave

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

A newly-born baby buried in a sand field survived miraculously, after coming under attack of preying crows, as people went to the field hearing a feeble cry and rescued it at around 11:00am yesterday.

A flock of 12-15 crows was pecking on the face of the baby girl, most of whose body was hidden under sand, when people found the child in a sand field near Hazaribagh-Boubazar.

The rescuers immediately took the injured child to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where doctors immediately started operating on her.

A middle-aged beggar Minara Begum first spotted the crows

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Free trade area to boost S Asian trade: Manmohan

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday said the creation of a free trade area in South Asia would more than double the size of the market in the region within two years.

Addressing business leaders from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Singh tried to reassure smaller neighbours that a South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) would be beneficial.

"The need for implementing Safta cannot be over emphasised," Singh said.

"It is expected that with the free flow of trade in saarc (South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation) region, the current level of intra-regional trade will rise from six billion to 14 billion dollars annually within two years of Safta's existence," Singh said.

Saarc countries trade mostly with the world's developed markets -- the United States and the European Union -- rather than between themselves.

At their regional summit in the Pakistani capital Islamabad in January 2004, leaders of the seven member states had agreed to usher in Safta by January 2006, paving the way for the world's biggest free

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Foreign airlines to carry private Hajj pilgrims for \$1,150

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The foreign airlines have agreed to carry non-ballottee Hajj pilgrims at \$1,150 per head after a series of meetings with the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

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Prayer Timing

November 18

	Asan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-21	5-24
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation