

'Criminal' killed in 'crossfire' in Comilla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A top criminal and leader of an inter-district gang of robbers was killed in “crossfire” between the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices in Chouddagram upazila of Comilla early yesterday.

He was identified as Abdul Moteleb alias "Motaiya Dakat", son of Late Abdur Rashid of Purba Dekra village of the upazila.

Rab sources said Moteleb was an accused in around a dozen criminal cases including two for murder.

Being tipped off, a Rab team from the Feni camp of Rab-7, Chittagong, raided West Dekrerdighir Par under Alkora Union of Chouddagram at about 7:00pm on Thursday and arrested Moteleb.

On his statement, a ten-member Rab team set out to recover illegal firearms, and arrest the accomplices of Moteleb, taking him with them.

When the Rab men reached Golzer Road in Asfalia area at around 1:35am yesterday, Moteleb's cohorts opened fire, forcing the members of the elite force to retaliate.

Moteleb was shot during the shootout and died on the spot, the sources said. The Rab men recovered one locally made gun, two light guns (LGs) and some bullets from the spot.

Relatives of 5 outlaws term it cold blooded murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushitia

Relatives of five outlaws, who were killed in a 'shootout' with police at Baruria village in Kumarkhali upazila Wednesday night, termed the incident a cold blooded murder.

They talked to journalists while receiving the bodies on Thursday, but declined to be named.

They said Kumarkhali police arrested them in a hideout at the village on Sunday night and killed them.

The outlaws are Helal Uddin Swapan of village Paikepara, Babu alias Pota and Mafikul of village Charpara in Kumarkhali upazila, and Mofa and Azibar of village Nagarmohammadpur in Sadar upazila.

Swapan was a top leader of Gono Mukti Foj (GMF). Ousted by his rival group, he later formed a gang styled 'Swapan Bahini.' He was wanted in at least 10 cases including six for murder.

Sources said Gama, an accused in at least 15 murder cases, joined hands with some ruling party leaders, including a lawmaker in the district, to kill Swapan.

Being informed by Gama's men, police raided the village and arrested the outlaws. One sten gun, one swan-off rifle, one revolver and

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Prayer Timing		
November 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Oceans, greenhouse gases rising faster

REUTERS, Washington

Ocean and so-called greenhouse gas levels are rising faster than they have for thousands of years, according to two reports published on Thursday that are likely to fuel debate on global warming.

One study found the Earth's ocean levels have risen twice as fast in the past 150 years, signalling the impact of human activity on temperatures worldwide, researchers said in the journal Science.

Sea levels were rising by about 1 millimetre (0.04 inches) every year about 200 years ago and as far back as 5,000 years, geologists found from deep sediment samples from the

COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT OPENS

Terrorism a threat to all, says Queen



AFP, Valletta

Queen Elizabeth II opened a summit of the 53-nation Commonwealth yesterday with an appeal for determined action against challenges such as terrorism that she said posed a threat to all.

Dressed in cherry-red coatdress and broad-brimmed hat with a feather, the queen said the club of mostly former British colonies can be "strong and effective" in addressing problems such as terrorism and poverty as it is a diverse group of nations representing many faiths, cultures and people.

"Determined and collective action can also help us tackle other challenges that cannot be addressed alone, such as the scourge of terrorism,

which is a threat to us all and has directly affected a number of our countries," the British monarch said at the opening ceremony held at a conference centre in Valetta.

She expressed thanks to Commonwealth nations who stood by Britain in the wake of the July 7 bombings that killed 56 people on three London underground trains and a bus, the worst terrorist attack in Britain.

Other than Britain, Pakistan, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are among the Commonwealth countries also struggling with terrorism.

The queen said that last year's tsunami disaster in Asia and the October 8 earthquake in Pakistan

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PHOTO: STAR

Debris of the Spectrum Sweater factory in Savar and the column with faulty structure, inset, that Buet investigators find responsible for the April 11 building collapse that claimed 61 lives and injured many others.

Spectrum Sweater bldg caved in for faulty foundation

Member of Buet probe team says

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Spectrum Sweater factory at Palashbari in Savar caved in due to improper concreting in three feet area of a foundation column, said a civil engineering expert who was in a team that investigated the collapse.

The falling down of the building on April 11 left 61 people dead and at least 86 others injured. Of the injured, 11 were partially disabled, losing various limbs, according to the official count.

"Failing to bear the load, iron bars in the three-foot area in the building's northeast corner having no concrete support, started tilting and at one stage, [it] pulled the other columns, leading to the collapse," the expert, a teacher of the civil engineering department at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology

(Buet), told The Daily Star recently.

Seeking anonymity he also said they found only stone chips and clay in the said area, which was some three feet under the ground level.

Buet had formed the probe body with its own experts to find out the reason behind the collapse of the building. The probe had been conducted mainly for academic purpose and the report may not necessarily be made public.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector Anwar Hossain of Detective Branch of police said he had learnt about the Buet's report that says improper concreting in about three feet area of the northeast foundation column resulted in the falling of the structure.

He said the case is still under

investigation.

The IO said he has received a report also from Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) where it says it never gave permission for construction to anyone in the name of Spectrum Sweater as no such company had even applied for the permission.

Anwar said he awaits another report from Cantonment Board as the area falls under the board.

Chief Engineer of Rajuk Emdadul Islam yesterday said the investigation that they [Rajuk] had carried out soon after the incident reveals that the building was collapsed due to overloading, faulty laying of the foundation and improper use of construction materials.

He however said the investiga

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Contractor shot dead, youth's body recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons were killed and one was injured in two separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Shah Alam Islam Rony, 32, a small contractor of Paltan area, was shot dead by some criminals of the same area while his brother-in-law Al Amin, 20, received bullets at around 4:00pm near the Battola mosque at Naya Paltan.

Locals and police rushed the two to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared Alam dead.

Injured Al Amin told The Daily Star, "Some local miscreants stopped us at gun point when we came out of our house. Moments later, I heard the sound of firing behind me and I was bullet-hit in the thigh."

Alam's wife Selina Akhter Keya said her husband used to keep company with the local miscreants and was arrested once. For the last one year, however, Alam left the evil company.

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2 top Janajuddha bombers killed

Chanchal confesses to attacking cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two of the 24 Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) operatives listed as potential bombers by the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) were found dead with bullet marks at two different places in the city early yesterday.

Khulna police recovered the body of Bulbul Howlader, 24, son of Ismail Howlader of Goborchaka under Sonadanga thana, from Arongghata of Daulatpur, and the body of Ashim Kumar, 30, son of Sudhir Kumar of PTI Road, from Smashanghat at Sonadanga.

The dead bodies of the bombers of the PBCP faction Janajuddha, loyal to its founder Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Dada Tapan, were found hit with bullets of .303 rifle.

Meanwhile, a cadre of the outlawed Janajuddha gave confessional state-

ment regarding last week's bomb attacks on police at two places in the city.

Chanchal Kumar Shil, 22, held by the Detective Branch (DB) of police on Wednesday night, confessed Thursday evening before a first class magistrate, to hurling bombs on policemen near Daulatpur bus stand on November 19 and at the Picture Palace cinema on November 20.

According to DB Assistant Commissioner (AC) Zahur Chowdhury, Ashim, who had long been hiding in India to evade arrest, came back to Khulna on November 16. He was directly involved in a bomb attack on police at the city's PTI intersection in 2003.

The murder of Bulbul and Ashim, both members of the PBCP bomb squad, is nothing but an outcome of the recent conflicts

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News Analysis

Speaker's role in House once again in question

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Running of the last session of parliament by Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, once again raised serious questions regarding maintaining the rules of procedure (RP) of the Jatiya Sangsad and how his rulings leave much to be desired.

Some bizarre incidents were recorded during the short session of parliamentary proceedings, like violation of the rules of procedure to congratulate the prime minister on her election as the Saarc chairperson, and the speaker's participation in some lawmakers' venomous attack on the media.

No important business was carried

out in the last session, which was summoned only to meet the constitutional requirement for the House to meet in 60 days.

In absence of the main opposition Awami League in the House, the sessions were dull. Senior ministers and ruling BNP lawmakers did not attend the sessions regularly and on time. The prime minister's half an hour question answer session was postponed on Wednesday as she did not attend the House.

However, in his wrap up speech, Sircar claimed that the session was full of activities and lively.

VIOLATION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE (RP)

According to the rules of procedure

every session of the parliament should start with an hour of questions and answers unless it is mentioned to the contrary in the agenda at the beginning of the session.

At the beginning of the session on Sunday, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar in his opening remarks declared that they gathered there to run the House in accordance with the constitution and the rules of procedure and to enact laws for the betterment of the nation.

But soon after his welcome address, the speaker did not hesitate to ignore the RP by giving the floor to the finance minister as he stood up to congratulate Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on her elec

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'Allow duty-free access of items from LDCs' Women's rally in city calls on WTO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rally of several thousand women workers at Muktangan in the capital yesterday called on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to allow duty-free access for the goods from least developed countries (LDC) like Bangladesh.

Participants at the rally arranged in the build-up to the sixth WTO ministerial conference slated for December 13-18 in Hong Kong also demanded that the industrially developed nations do away with the visa requirements for the workers from LDCs.

Amidst rounds of slogans against the WTO rising from the mammoth gathering, speakers accused the multilateral trade-governing body of applying double standards in its treatment of developed and developing countries.

Karmajibi Nari, a non-government organisation working for female workers, organised the rally where representatives from different political parties, business

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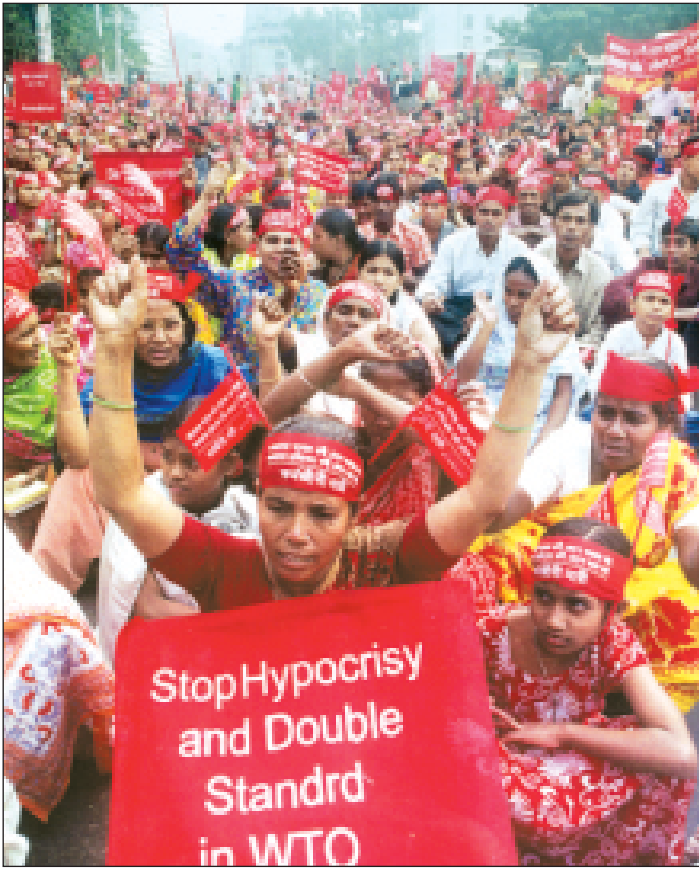


PHOTO: STAR

Karmajibi Nari, an NGO for women workers, organises a large rally at Muktangan in the city on the eve of the sixth ministerial conference of World Trade Organisation yesterday.

Smuggled salt, sugar seized, 52 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A patrol team of Bangladesh Navy arrested 52 members of a smuggling syndicate and seized seven cargo boats with over 1,400 tonnes of smuggled salt and sugar on Sandwip Channel of the Bay of Bengal Wednesday afternoon.

The smugglers and the goods worth around Tk 4.70 crore were handed over to Patenga Police yesterday afternoon, navy sources said.

Of the goods, 1,260 tonnes are salt loaded in six boats and 148

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Lanka to amend truce to halt 'terrorism'

REUTERS, Colombo

New Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse said yesterday he would amend a ceasefire with rebels to halt "terrorist acts", saying he did not believe minority Tamils should have their own separate homeland.

A 2002 ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has come under mounting strain in recent months, with grenades frequently thrown at army posts.

Overnight, the military said one

soldier had died and nine civilians wounded in two attacks blamed on the militants.

"We are ready to start direct talks with the LTTE," Rajapakse said as he reopened parliament. "This ... will be an open and transparent process. It will include the prevention of terrorist acts and child recruitment. We will review the present ceasefire agreement to include these aspects."

Before the election, the rebels had warned that any tampering with the ceasefire agreement could cause it to

PRICE HIKE AL to lay siege to dist admin offices Nov 30

UNB, Dhaka

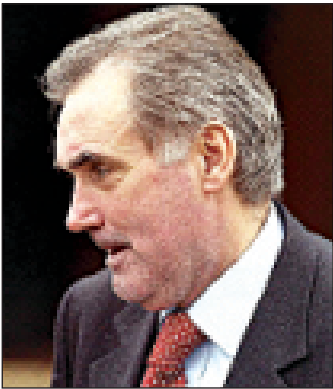
The Awami League-led 14-party combine will lay a two-hour siege to the district administration offices across the country on November 30 to protest the price-hike of essentials.

Fixing the two-hour siege programme, the liaison committee of the opposition at a meeting yesterday also discussed the preparations for holding a grand rally in Khulna on December 9 as part of the two-month-long programme announced from the November 22 grand rally at Paltan Maidan in Dhaka.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP told reporters that before the Khulna grand rally, the opposition will launch a mass contact programme in 10 districts of Khulna Division on December 3 and 4.

"Besides, yesterday's meeting of the liaison committee also reviewed the latest political situa

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George Best passes away

REUTERS, London

Former Manchester United winger George Best, one of the greatest players in soccer history, died on Friday after spending much of his adult life battling an alcohol problem. He was 59.

Best, who had been in hospital since the beginning of October, underwent a liver transplant in 2002 after years of heavy drinking.

He was admitted to hospital after suffering a reaction to the treatment he was receiving for his new liver and then developed an infection and internal bleeding.

"After a long and very valiant fight, Mr George Best died this afternoon in the intensive care unit at Cromwell Hospital," a spokesman for the hospital said.

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Road barricade to protest trader's death in accident

DMCH CORRESPONDENT

An elderly trader was killed when a garbage collecting truck of Dhaka City Corporation ran over him at Posta Dhal in the old part of the city yesterday morning.

Aggrieved locals put a road barricade that lasted for five hours.

At 7:15am, the truck driver Mohammad Ali let his unskilled nephew Mohiuddin steer, who lost control of the truck that ran over the victim identified as Mohammad Ali Akbar, who was brushing his teeth sitting beside the road at Posta Dhal.

The victim, 60, died on the spot and Mohiuddin fled the scene, said

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