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People's Right to Know

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Kansat stained with blood again

3 killed as power-hungry people clash with BNP cadres; 100 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Three people were killed and some 100 others injured in a two-and-a-half-hour clash between BNP members and villagers demanding smooth power supply yesterday evening at Kansat, Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj.

The clash ensued as both the local chapter of ruling BNP and the Palli Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Parishad (PBUSP), a Kansat village-

ers' forum agitating in demand of power, announced programmes at the same time in Shibganj yesterday afternoon.

With yesterday's killings the death toll in the Kansat movement rose to 13 since January, when the PBUSP had launched an intense agitation protesting the arrest of its Convenor Golam Rabbani.

The dead in yesterday's skirmishes are Rabbani's brother-in-law Akramjaad Khan, 32, local UP

chairman Ashraf's brother Mahbulul Alam, 35, and Abdul Jilani, 14, son of Kalimullah of Bahanbari, Kansat.

Among the dead, Akramjaad and Mahbulul belonged to the BNP and the teenage boy to the PBUSP.

The PBUSP last week had announced to hold a stick-procession at Shibganj yesterday afternoon to press its several

Ershad, Manju talk to reduce differences

BDNEWS, Dhaka

After a meeting between Ershad and Anwar Hossain Manju yesterday, Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) leaders said the two parties are heading towards an alliance. But Manju directly denied it.

The JP (Ershad) leaders said the process of discussion for the planned alliance began through the meeting between Ershad and Manju, who is now the chairman of his faction, Jatiya Party (JP-M).

Manju, however, called it a courtesy meeting.

Sources in the JP (Ershad) said the two leaders in an hour-long meeting tried to reduce the differences between them.

Kazi Firoz Rashid, political



2 die, 25 hurt as nor'wester hits Jhalakathi

UNB, Jhalakathi

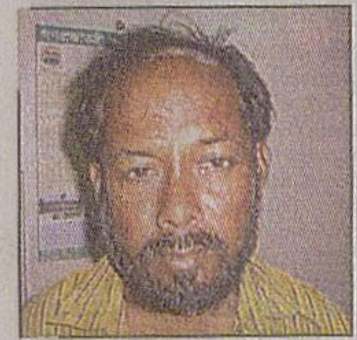
Nor'wester lashed three villages in Kushangal Union under Nalchiti upazila of Jhalakathi district in the early hours yesterday, killing two people and injuring 25 others.

The dead are Khabiruddin, 70, and his wife Phulbanu, 50, of Khaira village. The couple died as their house collapsed during the storm.

The storm also damaged over 300 tin-roofed houses and uprooted a large number of electric poles, leaving the three villages without power.

The power supply could not be restored in the affected villages as of 4:30pm yesterday.

Meanwhile, officials of the local administration visited the affected areas yesterday morning and gave Tk 10,000 to the family members of the deceased couple.



Opposition proposes AL-BNP reform talks

Bhuiyan receives Jalil letter, says Jamaat should be in dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition alliance yesterday replied to the ruling BNP secretary general's letter, suggesting formation of the proposed committee for dialogue on electoral reforms with only AL and BNP leaders while keeping Jamaat outside.

In his reaction after receiving the letter, BNP Secretary General and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, however, said the Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest partner of BNP in the ruling alliance, will be included in the pro-

posed 10-member committee.

"I don't want to make any comment...but it is natural that partners of the ruling alliance will be there in the dialogue," Bhuiyan told newsmen on the opposition's reservations on Jamaat's inclusion in the proposed talks.

AL Office Secretary Abdul Mannan Khan and his deputy BM Mojammeel Haque handed over the letter to Bhuiyan at his residence in the evening.

Hinting at the Jamaat, the opposition letter signed by AL General Secretary and 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil said, "We

have been struggling to free the election and politics from the influences of anti-Liberation War elements, war criminals and (religious) fundamental forces. To avoid any debate on the issues and to find a solution, the proposed dialogue should be held with Awami League and BNP leaders."

"Fundamentalism and militancy have created an acute crisis in the country and you are well aware about our positions on the issues," Jalil wrote.

AL leaders will represent the opposition combine in the

Husband kills self to protest wife's rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A rickshawpuller yesterday committed suicide inside an advocate's residence in Nabapalli area of the city in protest of his wife's rape allegedly by that lawyer and two others.

Sources said rickshawpuller Afzal Shaikh, 37, took poison and died at 2:30pm in the residence of Advocate Mehedi Insar of Nabapalli area under the Sonadanga Police Station.

Police said Afzal's wife filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on March 29, accusing Advocate Mehedi and two others of raping her on March 28.

The three accused have since

'MISUSE' OF MPs' DUTY-FREE CAR PRIVILEGE ACC to probe, NBR says 'no' fearing fallout

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will investigate the allegation against lawmakers of misusing the privilege of importing duty-free cars while National Board of Revenue (NBR) will not go for any such action, fearing potential fallout.

The lawmakers of the current parliament brought in 275 luxury cars from abroad, costing the NBR over Tk 260 crore in tax. Most of them sold the cars to businessmen for Tk 10 lakh to 25 lakh a car.

Selling cars like BMW, Cadillac, Porsche, the lawmakers have made at least Tk 50 crore during this

parliament. For their use they however seem to prefer low-cost cars.

"Giving the lawmakers the benefit to import duty-free cars is against the natural justice and discriminatory. It's illegal and it should be scrapped," former adviser of the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

"And then it's a corruption when the lawmakers sell those cars," he observed.

Noted jurist Dr M Zahir said such privilege contradicts the principle of equality before the law. "The Members of Parliament should not seek to be in an elite

club being the representatives of ordinary citizens," Dr Zahir told The Daily Star.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan said he has noticed the news of lawmakers misusing the privilege of importing duty-free cars.

"We will discuss the matter and look into the allegation. We will also examine whether a lawmaker can sell the vehicle he has imported being exempted from taxation," he added.

However, NBR, which in line with a government decision waives import duties in case of a legislator

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DIU Authority

ADB OUTLOOK 2006

Political heat to dip GDP in FY07

But FDI boom likely in coming years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) yesterday predicted a lower GDP growth in the next fiscal year in Bangladesh due mainly to political uncertainty, but projected a significant boost in foreign direct investment in the coming years.

The GDP growth would be 6.5 percent in the current FY, 2005-06, but would slide to 6 percent in FY07, forecasts the bank's Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2006 released yesterday.

"GDP growth is forecast to moderate to 6.0% in FY2007, mainly reflecting political uncer-

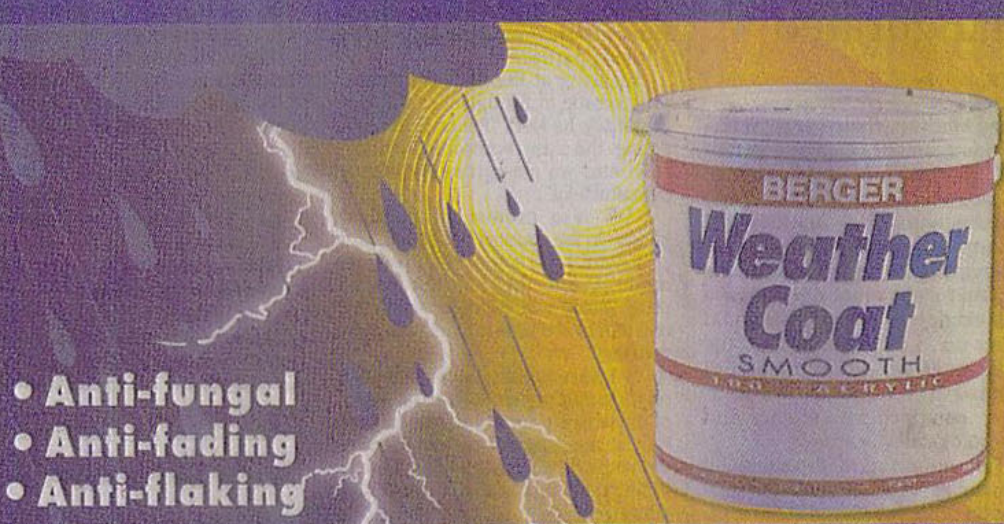
tainty over investment and business decisions in the lead-up to the general elections in January 2007. Moreover, the newly elected Government will also probably require some time before embarking on substantive initiatives," the ADO argues.

Compared to the projected growth rates for Bangladesh, the outlook sees an average GDP growth of 7.2 percent in FY06 and 7 percent in FY07 in the South Asian region.

Releasing the ADO 2006 at a press conference at the ADB Bangladesh Residence Mission in

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