

Karwan Bazar
business leader
gunned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals gunned down a business leader at city's Karwan Bazar yesterday afternoon.

Mohammad Abu Hanif, 45, was the joint general secretary of Karwan Bazar Baboshaye Kalyan Samity (KBBKS) Super Market and the president of ward 39 unit of Sramik League, workers front of the main opposition Awami League (AL).

Witnesses said the criminals shot Hanif when he was saying his Zohr prayers alone inside the prayer room on the first floor of KBBKS Super Market at around 2:30pm.

He died on the spot as 13 bullets hit different parts of his body.

"Hearing gunshots I looked at the prayer room and saw four to five youths running away," said a nearby shop owner adding that the criminals melted into public within moments.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Mastermind in
Mediterranean
boat tragedy
held in Morocco

3 other human traffickers
also caught

UNB, Dhaka

In a major breakthrough in resisting human trafficking, the Moroccan security forces arrested four Bangladeshis of a transnational racket, including its kingpin, who were also responsible for the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

SAUDI ROAD CRASH

Bangladeshi
casualties
identified

BSS, Dhaka

The External Publicity Wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday confirmed the identities of five people killed in a road accident in Saudi Arabia on Friday.

The dead are Mohammad Ashraf Ali, son of Mohammad

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

14-PARTY OBSERVES 'ELECTRICITY DAY'

Opposition lays siege
to power offices

150 hurt in BNP-AL clash in Sirajganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 150 people were injured in a clash between BNP and Awami League activists in Sirajganj yesterday as the AL-led 14-party opposition combine observed "Electricity Day" across the country demanding uninterrupted power supply.

The opposition combine also laid siege to electricity offices in district and upazila headquarters and staged demonstrations in the capital.

During the programme, the opposition leaders demanded immediate solution to the power and fuel crises.

They also protested the skyrocketing price of essential commodities.

The opposition activists besieged the electricity offices in Khulna, Narayanganj, Kishoreganj, Sirajganj and other parts of the country.

In Sirajganj, a violent clash between the ruling BNP and opposition Awami League activists after the 14-party's power office siege programme left about 150 people, including eight policemen and 10 journalists, injured.

District AL President Abdul Latif Mirza, General Secretary Hasan Ali,

journalists G Mostafa of The Daily Star, Abdul Kuddus of the daily Sangbad, Jakirul Islam of the Ajker Kagoj, Selim Reza of the New Nation and Fazal-e-Khoda of the Ittefaq are among the injured, reports our Sirajganj correspondent.

The injured were admitted to Sirajganj Sadar Hospital, Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital and different private clinics in Sirajganj and Bogra.

The clash erupted at about 10.00am near Chowrasta intersection in the district town when

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

TALKS ON REFORM

Obaidul Quader
urges Bhuiyan
to sit with Jalil

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday urged BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan to sit with AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil to discuss the reform agenda.

The AL leader made the proposal while addressing a rally at Muktagong in the capital in observance of the "Electricity Day" by the 14-party opposition combine.

Quader said if the government side nominates Bhuiyan for the dialogue, the AL will have no problem in nominating Jalil to discuss the reform agenda.

He said the government is not interested in dialogue and for this the dialogue team was formed with



PHOTO: STAR

A shopkeeper waits for customers in his shop with abundant goods. An unusual price hike of essentials has forced people of limited income group to consume less. The photo was taken at Karwan Bazar in the capital yesterday.

DROUGHT IN RANGAMATI

Power, water supply,
river transport in
near collapse

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Absence of rainfall for the last couple of months in Rangamati has culminated in hampering power generation in Karnaphuly Hydroelectric Project (KHP), suspension of communication by water transport between six upazilas and the district headquarter and severe disruption of water supply in the town.

Only one out of five units of KHP is producing electricity. Rest of the four units remain out of commission for the lack of water current due to reduction of water level in Kaptai Lake for the last couple of months.

At the end of winter, Kaptai Lake's

water level begins to decrease, which continues till summer every year. Usually the level of water falls to an alarming low in the middle of summer. But this year, the lake water fell to a severely low level rapidly due to a long drought, KHP office sources said.

KHP is now producing power from unit-2, which is generating only 60 megawatts (mw) of electricity instead of its capacity of producing 180mw if all the five units are in operation.

The lake water is now at 70.45 MSL (Mean Sea Level) whereas it stays at 82.80 MSL during winter when the lake remains full. If the

water level comes down to 66 MSL then power generation in KHP will be totally stopped, sources said.

For normal generation of power, the water level should be at least at 76 MSL in Kaptai Lake, KHP sources said.

Now only 20mw power is being supplied to the national grid and another 40mw to different areas in the district, KHP sources added.

Khandaker Safiqul Islam, project manager of KHP told this correspondent over the phone that if the drought like situation continues for a week or two then all the five units will be out of commission.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

Launches run aground near Suvalong Bazar due to a drastic fall in water level in Kaptai Lake in this dry season.

Govt bans scrapping
Bahamian toxic ship

AFP, Dhaka

The government issued a temporary order Saturday refusing to allow scrapping of an oil tanker which, according to Greenpeace, contains toxic materials.

Alfaship, formerly named Alfa America, is one of the 50 ships the international environmental group Greenpeace has put on its watch-list of vessels believed to be contaminated.

The Bahamian-flagged ship arrived at Chittagong Port on Thursday and a ship-breaking yard owner, who now owns the oil tanker, sought government permission for scrapping it.

"We have refused permission for its scrapping in our waters after we saw its name on the Greenpeace watch-list," said Mercantile Marine Department Principal Officer Habibur Rahman.

He said, "The government has formed a probe committee including

government officials and environment and nuclear wastes experts, which will inspect the ship to make a final decision on whether to allow the ship to be dismantled here or not."

But he did not give any timeframe for the decision.

The Greenpeace site does not mention what contaminants Alfaship contains and the Bangladesh authorities concerned also have no information about the alleged toxic materials.

Environmental activists here have censured the arrival of Alfaship in Bangladesh waters without government permission.

"The entry of Alfaship is illegal because it's a toxic ship. We have served a legal notice on the government so that it tells the ship to leave Bangladesh waters," Rizwana Hassan of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association said.

The oil tanker was built in Nagasaki, Japan, and was sold to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Koirala urges Maoists
to renounce violence

Takes oath in front of Nepal king

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's new premier urged Maoist rebels yesterday to renounce violence, making the appeal in his first parliamentary speech after being sworn in by a monarch whose power he has promised to curb.

Girija Prasad Koirala took the oath in front of King Gyanendra before legislators met to act on demands from hundreds of thousands of protesters to end the monarch's sweeping powers.

The two political foes stood face-to-face during the short ceremony at the pink-hued Narayanhihi Royal Palace as veteran democracy campaigner Koirala, 84, read out the oath. He now faces the task of keeping together an unwieldy seven-party coalition and persuading the Maoists to end their decade-long rebellion that has left more than 12,500 dead.

Koirala told the newly convened House of Representatives he wants the

rebels to improve upon last week's declaration of a three-month ceasefire.

"Maoists have already declared a ceasefire. I request them to renounce violence and come to the process of dialogue," he said to applause from legislators.

He did not make a direct reference to the rebels' key demand, for a body to draw up a new constitution, which would limit Gyanendra's powers.

But Koirala said he would stay committed to an agreement signed between the Maoists and the opposition alliance that includes a review of the king's powers.

Parliament sat Friday for the first time in four years but Koirala missed it, along with his planned swearing-in ceremony that day, because of bronchitis. He says he is well enough to lead the country.

Koirala, who has been premier

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

British Foreign
Secretary Straw
due May 16

UNB, Dhaka

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw is likely to visit Bangladesh on May 16 on a one-day goodwill visit.

Although the precise agenda of his visit could not be ascertained, diplomatic sources said he might discuss about Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's long overdue official visit to the United Kingdom, among other bilateral issues.

Khaleda Zia is expected to undertake the visit to UK sometime this June.

Prayer Timing		
May 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Children play in the industrial waste being dumped into the river Buriganga through a narrow drain at Fatullah in the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra dam area. The photo was taken yesterday.

3 get death
for rape,
murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Barisal court handed three youths double death sentences in connection with the killing of Tania Akter, 17, after abducting and raping her in Dashmina in Patuakhali.

The convicts are Miraz Khalifa, Jafar Gazi and Nur Alam Howladar.

Judge Md Abdul Matin of the Barisal Speedy Trial Tribunal handed down the verdict in a crowded courtroom yesterday.

The judge said all the three accused were found guilty under

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

PHULBARI COAL PROJECT
Indigenous people
rally against open
pit mining plan

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

If the government agrees to implement open pit method for mining coal at Phulbari, a Kansat like situation will occur there, warned Chairman of Parbatya Chattagram Adibashi Parishad Santu Larma.

"A Kansat like situation will occur if the government agrees to let Asia

Energy to implement open pit method at Phulbari coalmine. So, I am urging the government to revise the deal again with Asia Energy and to ratify it in the parliament," Santu Larma also president of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum told a public rally at Phulbari in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5