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3 killed in 'crossfire' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three operation commanders of the outlawed Biplabi Communist Party (BCP) of Khulna, Jessore and Narail were killed in separate 'crossfire' incidents between their accomplices and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday.

A Rab press release yesterday said Operations Commander of Khulna BCP Mohammad Matiar Rahman, 33, was arrested around 11:00pm on Friday. Following his confessional statement, a Rab team went to Hogladanga in Manirampur upazila of Jessore around 3:10am yesterday to recover hidden arms when Matiar's accomplices ambushed the team. Rab retaliated and Matiar tried to flee during the shootout. He was caught in crossfire and died on the spot, Rab claimed. One pipegun, two shotgun shells and three used bullet shells were recovered from the spot but Matiar's cohorts managed to escape.

Rab said Matiar had several accomplices.

MEETING PEOPLE'S HEALTHCARE NEEDS

Govt fails, pvt sector facing challenges

The Daily Star-Health 21 roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When the public sector failed to meet people's healthcare needs, the private sector is also facing a number of challenges against its full-fledged flourish in the country, due to lack of proper policy, medical experts and policymakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

Lack of professional skills and quality healthcare services forced a lot of patients to go abroad for better treatment, causing losses of huge foreign exchange every year, they said.

A large number of poor people of the country do not have access to proper healthcare while many others are subject to harassment or

cheat in the name of treatment at some diagnostic centres in the absence of a proper regulatory body, experts observed.

Under the circumstances, the country needs to rethink about the private sector's healthcare system, analyse the problems critically and take proper actions to reshape the total health sector, they said at the roundtable styled "Rethinking private healthcare in Bangladesh, reaching health to the people" jointly organised by Health 21 and The Daily Star at the latter's conference room.

In the keynote paper presented at the discussion, Health 21 Executive Director Dr Rubaiul Murshed said the private sector now covers more than 60 per cent

of healthcare, which was mostly a public issue in the 1980s. Nevertheless, many have lost confidence in the locally available services and allied healthcare.

Patients are going abroad, especially to India, Thailand and Singapore for treatment, he said, citing port statistics that 12,000 patients crossed the border through Benapole while about 4,500 went to Bangkok and 500 to Singapore through the Zia International Airport in 2005. The actual figure, however, is much higher, he said.

Lack of confidence in the local healthcare system, poor accessibility, and lack of integrated facilities

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Matiur's remains received in state honour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The remains of Birsreshtho Matiur Rahman, one of the most valiant heroes of the Liberation War of Bangladesh, arrived at the Zia International Airport last night from Masroor Air Force Base in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia received the national flag covered coffin containing Matiur's remains at 11:00pm and paid homage by placing a wreath on the coffin after a special flight of Bangladesh Biman brought the war hero home.

Martyred Matiur's family members including Milly Rahman, the widow of the late hero, and their younger daughter Tuhin Matiur Haider were in tears as they touched the coffin for the first time.

Their elder daughter Mahin Matiur now lives in the USA.

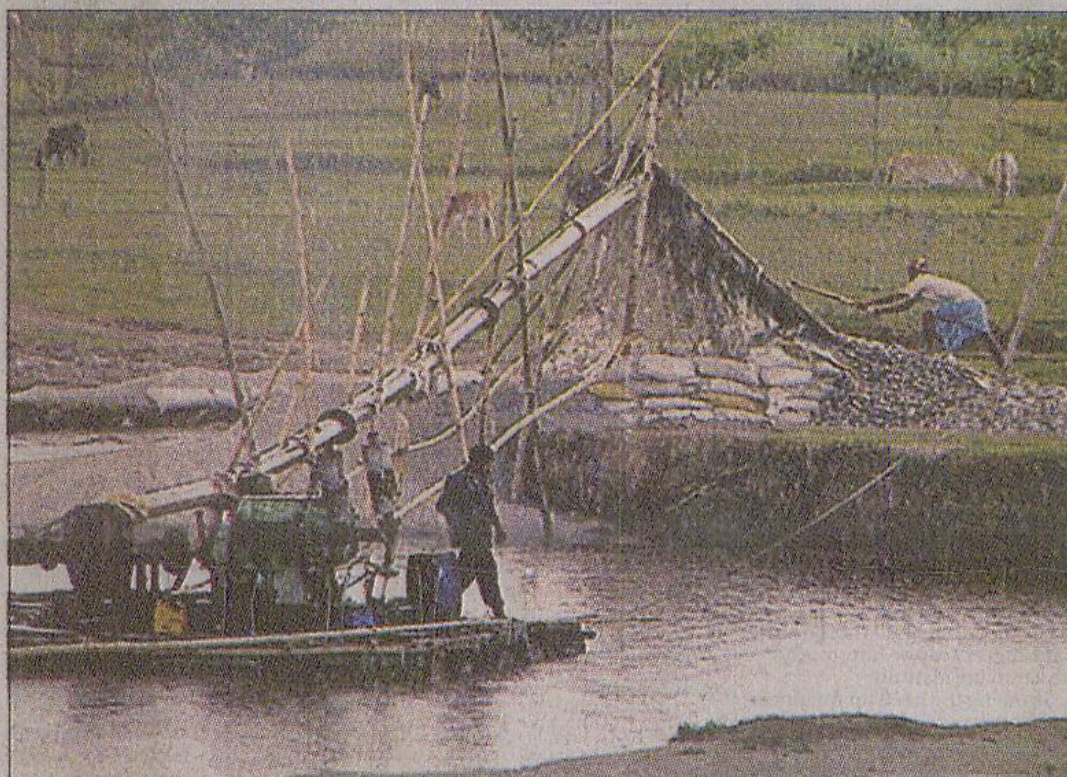
"I do not know what to tell at this moment but we are very happy that

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia places a wreath on the coffin containing the remains of Birsreshtho Matiur Rahman at the Zia International Airport last night.

PHOTO: PID



Powerful syndicates continue to lift stones from the rivers in Tetulia in northern Panchagarh district causing ecological imbalance.

Stone extraction at Panchagarh goes unabated

KONGKON KARMAKER,
back from Panchagarh

Illegal extraction of stones in Panchagarh is going on unabated despite a government ban, threatening the ecological balance and depriving the government of a large amount of revenue, local sources say.

Several powerful syndicates are managing the illegal stone business at Bhajanpur, Buraburi, Sarkarpara and Majhipara under Tetulia in Panchagarh, displacing soil of large swathes of the area for stones under the earth, rendering the border area of the district vulnerable to landslides, according to experts.

The rivers in the area are also changing their courses due to the practice, according to Bangladesh Water Development sources.

Already, the Dahook and Korotoa rivers at many points in Tetulia have dried up or changed their courses, sources said. Several

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Govt pry teachers start fast-unto-death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With government primary school teachers starting hunger strike unto death yesterday demanding elimination of 'wage discrimination', the country's primary education faces further uncertainty.

All of the 37,800 government primary schools and 3,778 community primary schools across the country have remained virtually closed since June 17 due to the teachers' strike while teachers of these schools yesterday vowed to keep the institutions closed and continue their hunger strike until their demands are met.

Awami League (AL)-backed Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association started hunger strike from 2:00pm at Muktagong in the capital where thousands of teachers from all districts of the country joined demanding elimination of wage discrimination and introduction of school-based examination system.

The ruling BNP-backed teachers association also started hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar demanding the same yesterday.

AL-backed association led by Prof Abul Kalam Azad and Kazi Fazlul Huq has also been observing strike at the government primary schools across the country since June 17.

The BNP-backed association led by Abdul Awal Talukdar, which did not support the strike at that time, submitted a memorandum to the prime minister issuing a seven-day ultimatum for realising their demands.

"We will also go on strike at the schools along with our hunger strike if our demands are not met by seven days," Abdul Awal Talukdar, president of BNP-backed association then said.

"We get only Tk 2,600 per month when the same level qualified PTI demonstration school teachers are paid under Tk 5,200 scale," he added.

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ORIENTAL BANK Loan defaulters to face cases within a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Oriental Bank will file criminal cases against its loan defaulters within one month if they fail to respond positively to its initiative to recover the loans through discussion.

Newly appointed administrator of the bank Murshid Kuli Khan held a meeting with the managers of the bank's 30 branches across the country yesterday and instructed them in this regard following a Bangladesh Bank (BB) direction.

The branch managers will try to get back all loans from the defaulters through discussion in the coming weeks, Murshid told reporters after the meeting. If any defaulter fails to respond positively to the bank's initiative, a criminal case will be filed, he said.

"Criminal cases will also be filed against those who already have cases at the money loan court if

they fail to come to any arrangement with the bank about repayment of the loans," he added.

Stressing recovery of the loans as well as collecting fresh deposits at the meeting, the bank management has also set targets for all bank officers, including the branch managers.

The management will monitor the activities of the officers and the branches will report their weekly performance to the management, Murshid told reporters.

The managers were asked to launch negotiation meetings with the loan defaulters for recovering the loans.

The meeting decided that the branch managers will assign officials to visit the loan defaulters as part of the initiative. They themselves will also make such visits.

The Oriental Bank has a loan default of Tk 445 crore out of its

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PRESSURE FROM SHIBIR

RU authorities allow Salehi to take exams

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities allowed RU Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) President Mahbub Alam Salehi to take the master's exams of Geology and Mining Department yesterday following pressure from the student body.

Salehi, an accused in the murder case filed after the killing of Prof

S Taher Ahmed on February 1, had gone into hiding earlier. The police are still looking for him after preliminary investigations indicated his involvement in the murder.

Many people, mostly outsiders, staged a demonstration on the campus and laid siege to the university main gate for an hour demanding Salehi be allowed to sit

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Anti-Ahmadiyya bigots to enforce 2-day hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Ahmadiyya organisation Khalme Nabuwat Andolan Bangladesh will enforce dawn to dusk hartal today and tomorrow in areas under five northern police stations in the city and on its outskirts in a bid to force the government declare the community non-Muslim.

Police yesterday foiled an agitation programme at Ashkona in Uttara which the religious bigots

termed 'protest against the police attack' on them in front of the Airport roundabout on Friday.

The anti-Ahmadiyya outfit then held a rally in front of Baitus Aman Mosque vowing to enforce the hartal.

As the government prepares to stop the zealots from taking to the streets today, the zealots warned of a 'disaster' if attempts were made to foil their protest.

"I'll lead the pickets in

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Today's HSC exams shifted to July 1

UNB, Dhaka

HSC examinations of Accounting 2nd paper, Geography 2nd paper

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Prayer Timing		
June 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-57
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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