

BSF kills 1, abducts 6

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi youth in Chapainawabganj and abducted six farmers in Kushtia yesterday.

The dead is Rubel, 30, son of Akkas Ali under Godagari upazila of Rajshahi, while the abducted farmers are Alamgir Hossain, 36, Rintu, 24, Anwarul Hossain, 27, Ripon, 24, Samsul, 36, and Asadul, 25.

The UNB quoted local people as saying that the Indian border guards of Char Renuka camp opened fire on Rubel when he was crossing Poldanga border under Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila at around 2:30am to visit his relatives at Lalgola in India. He died instantly.

Confirming the incident, 39 Rifles Battalion Commander Lt Col Akter Hossain said a protest letter was sent to the BSF authorities demanding return of the body.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that the BSF picked up the

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PROTHOM ALO ROUNDTABLE

Top ex-army men for purge of political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several former top army officials yesterday stressed the need for a thorough purge of political parties with emphasis on stopping their criminal activities and corruption, and depoliticisation of the public institutions to make them functional for democracy.

Strongly opposing the idea of keeping the state of emergency in effect for too long or instituting a martial law in the country, they said at a roundtable in the capital that the political parties will ultimately rule the country to fulfil the people's expectation.

The former army officials suggested utilising expertise of the armed forces for correcting the voter roll, making voter identity

cards, recovery of illegal firearms and for stopping the use of black money during elections, as they were deliberating on what to do next against the backdrop of the prevailing state of emergency 'declared following a grave political crisis that threatened national security and economy'.

Hailing the role of the army during natural calamities and in strengthening democracy in other countries, the speakers asked them to show patriotism in creating a congenial atmosphere for holding the next general election and for strengthening democracy.

The vernacular daily Prothom Alo organised the roundtable titled 'The State of the Country: State of Emergency and the Imperatives' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

"While the country was advancing towards a civil war like situation following confrontations and bloodshed due to the two political alliances locking horns, the armed forces successfully took some steps to rein in the situation," said moderator Motiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo.

Some of the participants suggested that the army should stay in the field until the necessary tasks are done, may be for six months or a year, before holding the parliamentary election and handing over power to elected representatives.

Regretting the failure in developing a true democratic culture since restoration of democracy in 1991, security analyst Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Husain said

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Employees of roadside flower shops, which Rajuk tore down at Shahbagh intersection in Dhaka yesterday, sleep on the central reservation of the road keeping beside them the flowers and bouquets they managed to save.

Joint forces pick up 2,214 more, seize 26 firearms

STAR REPORT

The army-led joint forces rounded up 2,214 people including several local leaders and activists of BNP and Awami League (AL) and their front organisations from different places during the 24 hours ending at 6:00pm yesterday.

Navy personnel recovered 13 firearms and 200 bullets from a house in Moheshkhali upazila yesterday morning while the joint forces recovered 13 more firearms during their drives.

Of the arrestees, 25 are fugitive convicts, 1,059 facing arrest warrants and the rest are accused in different cases, said a press release

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US congress set to be counterweight to Bush

AFP, Washington

would run counter to national interests.

The resolution is not binding, but by winning support of a handful of influential Republicans, its drafters hope to demonstrate President Bush's increasing isolation on the subject.

The White House, which for the moment repeats that nothing will force it to back down on Iraq, does not try to conceal its concern.

Its main argument, which aims to stave off defections by more top Republicans, holds that a vote against a new Iraq strategy announced by Bush earlier this month would end up encouraging the Iraqi insurgency and further weakening the Iraqi government.

In the end, Democrats, who recognise that their initiative will not affect Bush's decision to deploy an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq, plan to take more effective measures, at least to reassure their own political base.

US Senators Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and Christopher Dodd -- all declared or presumed 2008 presidential candidates -- have introduced bills calling for capping the US military presence in Iraq at levels that existed at the beginning of the year.

A debate on war funds that is expected to take place in February could also allow Democrats to

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Couple killed in wall collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A factory wall collapsed in Tongi industrial area yesterday and left the parents dead and their three children injured.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Siddiq, 45, and his wife Zohora, 40. The injured are Rawshan Ara, 16, Rokasana, 10, and Sajib, 8.

The incident occurred when a wall of a spinning factory owned by Jaber and Jubair Group collapsed

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Prayer Timing

January 21		
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-43	5-47
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Khorshed, an 11-year-old self-proclaimed pir (spiritual leader), wrapped in a rug lies at Shahbagh Police Station in the capital yesterday. He allegedly ordered his followers to attack a photojournalist on Thursday. Story on page 2.

JCD man dies 14 hours after release from army custody

UNB, Sherpur

An activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Nakla upazila unit, detained by army on Thursday night, died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital after 14 hours of his release.

The dead, Mazharul Islam Ranju, 32, was the younger brother of Sherpur town BNP President Mokhlesur Rahman Tara.

Local and family sources said an army team picked up Ranju from his in-law's house at Kacharpura in the district town at 11:00pm on Thursday and took him to their camp.

Ranju was released at 4:00pm on Friday in a "critical condition". He was immediately admitted to Nakla Upazila Health Complex with respiratory problems.

Later, Ranju was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College

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PHOTO: STAR

Army personnel install a temporary bridge over the river Turag near Tongi on the outskirts of the capital as part of the preparations for Biswa Ijtema which starts on February 2.

BNP wants poll timeframe

Vows to go for movement for elected govt if need be

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leaders yesterday unequivocally said the caretaker government must clearly declare a time frame for holding the ninth parliamentary election. They also vowed to go for a movement, if necessary, for an elected government.

"The caretaker government must clear what they meant by saying that the election will be held in 'due time', former law minister Moudud Ahmed said at a discussion at the Institution of Diploma Engineers at Kakrail.

"They should declare a specific time frame for holding the election," Moudud said, adding, "Things cannot go like this for an indefinite period."

The meeting and a milad mahfil were organised to mark the 71st birthday anniversary of founder of BNP late president Ziaur Rahman.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan chaired the meeting. Party Chairperson Khaleda Zia was present among the audience.

At the discussion Moudud asked the present government to make clear whether the present government is an interim or a caretaker one.

"The spirit of the constitution is to hold the election within 90 days," he said, adding, "If needed, the chief adviser can stay in his post for a few more days."

Moudud said, "Those who say

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AL demands fresh list of criminals for arrest drive

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday urged the members of the armed forces and law enforcement agencies to prepare a fresh list of criminals by collecting information from across the country and then launch a drive to arrest them.

"It seems that the caretaker government is conducting its drive against criminals on the basis of the list prepared by the immediate-past BNP-Jamaat coalition government," he said.

Quader was talking to journalists on behalf of AL President Sheikh Hasina when the family members of slain Chhatra League leader Mizanur Rahman Tuhin met the party chief at AL's Dhanmondi office. He said BNP-Jamaat cadres killed Tuhin on January 7.

Kader alleged that the alliance

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Pledge to free world of injustice

SWF meet starts in Nairobi

SHAKHAWAT LITON, from Nairobi, Kenya

The seventh World Social Forum (WSF) meeting began yesterday in Nairobi, Kenya, with the objective to make the world free from injustice and all kinds of repression.

The World Social Forum, 2007 meet was kicked off at a casual ceremony in Uhuru Park of Nairobi where social activists, networks, coalitions and other progressive forces from Asia Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Europe and all corners of the African Continent participated.

The WSF that started in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 has become one of the annual events that work against the negative consequences of globalisation, said a participant.

"It is the greatest assembly of citizens with diverse backgrounds," Toufiq Ben Abdullah, member of the organising committee of WSF, 2007 said.

The WSF is considered an open

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Hillary takes first step in presidential race

AFP, New York

Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton yesterday took the first step toward a 2008 White House bid that could make her the first woman president of the United States, she

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