

Outlaw, robber killed in 'shootouts'

STAR REPORT

An underground operative and a robber were killed during "shootouts" between their cohorts and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Pabna and Bhola districts on Wednesday night and early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Ainal Haque, 35, an activist of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Lal Pataka), in Chatmohor upazila of Pabna, and Miraj, 30, of Joynagar village in Sadar upazila of Bhola.

According to our Pabna correspondent, a team of Rab-12 cordoned off Khotbari Primary School premise in Chatmohor upazila where Ainal and his accomplices were holding a meeting at around 10:00pm.

Sensing the presence of the Rab men, the outlaws opened fire on the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate.

Rab sources said Ainal received bullets during the "shootout" and died instantly, while his accomplices managed to flee. He was an accused in seven cases including four for murder, the sources added.

Rab recovered a rifle, and two bullets from the spot.

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CG to give autonomy to BTV, Betar

Says information adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is going to award autonomy to state-run BTV and Bangladesh Betar to make them more competitive, educative and entertaining for the people at large, said information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday.

The government would also explore various aspects of opening up terrestrial frequencies for private television channels, the adviser added.

"Success and future of BTV and Betar lie in freedom and autonomy similar to that of BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation]," Mainul said at a launching ceremony of final report on 'Media in development: Linkages between Socio-Economic Development and Diversified Media in Bangladesh' conducted by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI).

Farooq Sobhan, president of BEI, and Shahab Enam Khan, lecturer of Jahangirnagar University, prepared the report. The report said key constraint to the

growth of media landscape in Bangladesh is the regulatory policies set for the broadcast media.

The adviser in his speech further said although Bangladesh is currently under a "state of emergency", the government is keen to uphold the process of freedom of press for liberal broadcasting. "No abuse is more reprehensible than the abuse of the media freedom. At the same time, media personnel should also realise that no freedom can survive in the absence of responsible exercise of such freedom."

Speakers at the discussion session stressed the need for establishing a permanent and independent "National Broadcasting Commission" comprising key stakeholders to regulate the broadcast media while many suggested renaming the commission. "The National Broadcasting Commission should be renamed and it should assert the freedom of all sorts of media," said Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, editor of The Bangladesh Observer.

Saiful Bari, chief adviser of ATN Bangla, said freedom must be enjoyed with responsibility and the media is no exception.

The discussants suggested that terrestrial broadcast frequencies should be licensed for private use to help generation of revenues for the government, maximum use of idle frequencies, maximum geographic access for both public and private sectors and ensuring access to the poor.

Amanullah Khan, chairman of United News of Bangladesh (UNB) Ltd, emphasised the need for a self-regulatory body to ensure independence of the media and said, "The ineffective Press Council should be replaced by 'Press Complaint Council'."

Shujauddin Ahmed, former director general of National Institute of Mass Communication (Nimco), emphasised a diversified media. "Indian viewers enjoy a diversified media, which resulted in the growth of numerous media."

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ARREST OF STAR REPORTER

Local journos to boycott Nilphamari DC's news

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The journalists of Nilphamari district yesterday decided to boycott every positive news item of Deputy Commissioner Khandakar Mokhlesur Rahman in protest against arrest of The Daily Star correspondent EAM Asaduzzaman Tipu.

They demanded immediate and unconditional release of Tipu who was arrested in a "false and fabricated" case on Wednesday.

At an emergency meeting at the conference room of Nilphamari district press club, the journalists made the demand. The journalists of Dinajpur district also attended the meeting.

The Daily Star's Nilphamari correspondent Tipu, arrested from his home on Wednesday morning in connection with a report about urea fertiliser crisis that came out in the daily on March 17, is now in the district's prison.

The meeting decided to boycott every positive news item of Deputy Commissioner Khandakar Mokhlesur Rahman.

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Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed makes a courtesy call on President Iajuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban in the capital yesterday.

CA apprises president of CG steps

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed met President Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

During the meeting, the CA apprised the president about various steps taken by his caretaker government.

The president welcomed the CA and assured him of providing all necessary supports.

Military Secretary to the President Major General M Aminul Karim, Secretary to the President M Sirajul Islam and Chief Adviser's Acting Secretary Kazi Aminul Islam were present.

Ex-BNP MP Nasirul held

STAR REPORT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested former lawmaker of BNP Khandaker Nasirul Islam at West Malibagh under Motijheel police station in the city yesterday.

Tipped off, an intelligence team of Rab-3 raided the area at around 2:15pm and arrested Nasir, an accused in many cases, including murder.

Meanwhile, the joint forces arrested 1,549 people in their ongoing nationwide drive in the last twenty-four hours preceding 6:00am yesterday.

Among them, the armed forces held 22 people and also recovered a mortar shell and 76 bullets, while the police and Rab arrested the rest and seized 14 firearms and 45 bullets.

Eight cases have been filed under the Arms Act.

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Rocket misses UN chief in Baghdad

AP, Baghdad

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was unharmed but ducked behind the podium after a rocket landed near Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's office Thursday while the two men were speaking to reporters at a news conference.

Two Iraqi security guards on the grounds outside the building were slightly wounded, security officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to reporters.

An Associate Press reporter ran outside and saw a crater one-meter (yard) in diameter about 50 meters (yards) from the building where the news conference was in progress. Two cars were damaged.

Al-Maliki security officials said it was a rocket attack. US helicopters were quickly in the air headed in the direction from which the rocket was fired.

Small chips of debris floated

down from the ceiling above the UN chief after the big explosion rattled the building in the Green Zone. He looked frightened, casting his eyes right and left as he rose after ducking behind the podium where he was standing and answering questions next to the prime minister.

Al-Maliki said "nothing's wrong" as one of his security men started to grab the prime minister. The two men quickly resumed answering questions. The rocket landed as one of Ban's questions was being translated. They ended the question and answer session minutes later.

The sound of the weapon being fired - which sounded like a rocket launch - could be heard not far from the Associated Press office, which was across the Tigris River to the east of the Green Zone, which also houses the U.S. Embassy and Iraqi government offices.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

40 Taliban killed in Afghanistan clashes

AFP, Kandahar

About 40 Taliban fighters were killed in clashes with Afghan and Nato forces in southern Afghanistan yesterday, police said, as troops elsewhere captured eight suspected militants.

The troops also "captured Taliban ground" in an operation under way in the southern province of Helmand, the police chief for the province's Gereshk district, Habibullah Khan, told AFP.

The security forces had launched the operation from Gereshk and the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, to the southwest, said the acting police chief for the province, Isau Khan. The towns are 35km apart.

"In the anti-Taliban joint opera-

tion which started this morning from both Lashkar Gah and Gereshk, so far around 40 Taliban have been killed," Khan said. "Around 10 others...are arrested."

Khan said there had also been casualties to the Afghan forces but he could not say how many, with the offensive still under way.

"There is serious fighting," he said.

The media office of Nato's International Security Assistance Force in Kabul in northern Afghanistan could only confirm there had been "an incident" in the area.

Gereshk police chief Habibullah Khan told AFP earlier in the day, "We have captured the Taliban ground and the operation is still ongoing."

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Source: Islamic Foundation

ICC WORLD CUP 07

NZ plunder Canada

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand openers Stephen Fleming and Lou Vincent completed their half-centuries to have their side well-placed in their final Group C match of the World Cup at the Beausejour Stadium in St Lucia yesterday.

After being put in by John Davison, the Black Caps openers cashed in as their side piled on 266 for four in 40.4 overs.

Fleming found the going very easy against Henry Osiinde plundering him for 16 runs in an over. The onslaught on Osiinde included the pull over deep midwicket for 6, which has become a regular feature of Fleming's batting in this tournament. New Zealand raced to 99 in 15 overs.

Opener Lou Vincent had already toyed with Anderson Cummins in the previous over hitting him for a couple of boundaries one of them a cheeky stroke behind the wickets.

Cummins was replaced by Osiinde but Vincent did not spare him too scoring a couple of easy boundaries through covers and midwicket.

Cummins gave some anxious moments to Vincent in the first over, beating him outside the off stump regularly. Then Cummins brought one back in and Vincent shouldered arms. There was a huge appeal but Vincent survived. The New Zealand openers decided he had enough and

to the first ball of the next over went down the wicket and smashed over cover for 6.

That apart, Cummins and Bhatty kept the New Zealanders quiet as they managed only 14 from the first 5 overs.

New Zealand have already booked their place in the Super 8s having beaten England and Kenya while Canada have lost both of their matches against Kenya and England.

Away in St Kitts, Scotland were bundled out for 136 in 34.1 overs.

The Netherlands had knocked over half the Scottish side even before 50 runs were put on the board.

Scotland's top order was lopped off in the first 15 overs as Tim de Leede got Ryan Watson out and the Scots were 40/5 when the last Power Play was taken.

Watson smashed one straight back to the bowler and De Leede caught it as much to in self-preservation as anything else.

Watson went for 16, having struck three 4s.

Earlier, Daan van Bunge bungled two easy slip catches and Scotland could have been in even deeper trouble than they actually were at the end of the 13th over.

Neil McCallum slashed a wide one from Billy Stelling and should have been caught at first slip.

Pakistan test fires N-capable missile

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan successfully tested yesterday a nuclear-capable cruise missile with a range of 700 km (435 miles), the military said in a statement.

The Haft V11 Babur missile is a terrain-hugging, radar avoiding cruise missile capable of carrying a variety of warheads including nuclear, it said.

"The flight data collected validated the design parameters set for the flight test," the military said. "It is a highly manoeuvrable missile with pin-point accuracy."

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College girl murdered after abduction

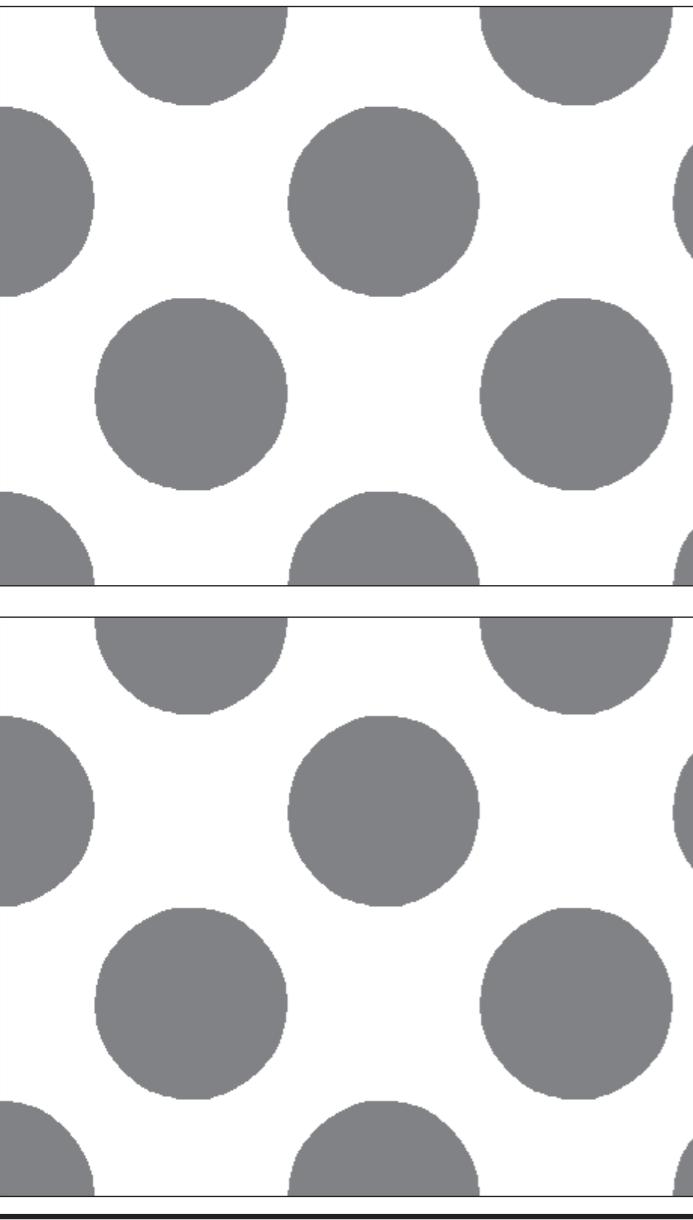
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student was allegedly murdered in the capital yesterday two days after she was abducted on her way home from her college.

Doctors declared 18-year-old Suborna Akhter Suma, first year HSC student of Shaheed Anwara Girls' College, dead after her suspected kidnappers brought her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday afternoon.

Police arrested Najmul Ahsan Raju who along with Jahidul Islam Jahid and his younger brother

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A 100-year-old elephant died in a fight with another lies in Zaliyapalong forest in Cox's Bazar.



ICC WORLD CUP 07

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Prayer Timing