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Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sakhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader at Gunarajpur border village under North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal early yesterday.

The cattle trader was identified as Kabirul Islam, 28 son of Jamat Ali Gazi of Bayardanga village under Kalaroa upazila of Sakhira district.

The BSF men of Gunarajpur camp under Swarnnagar Police station opened fire on Kabirul while he was returning home with cattle at around 3:30am, according to a message received from across the border.

Kabirul received bullets and died on the spot. The BSF personnel took away the body. A flag meeting between the BDR and BSF held at zero point near Hijaldi border at about 11:00am.

At the meeting, BDR demanded return of the body, but BSF said they would hand over the body after maintaining some formalities.

When contacted, Major Kamrul Hasan, operations officer 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident.

Writer Anisul Huq hurt in road mishap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Popular writer, dramatist, novelist and journalist Anisul Huq was seriously injured in a road accident in the city's Shahbagh area yesterday.

Anisul Huq, also the deputy editor of Prothom Alo, received injuries when a speeding bus hit the CNG-run three-wheeler in which he was going to the Ekushey Boi Mela (book fair) at Bangla Academy from Prothom Alo office at 3:30pm.

Auto-rickshaw driver Nur Islam also received serious injuries and his vehicle was badly damaged.

Soon after the accident, pedestrians rushed Anisul Huq to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Hospital and the driver to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Anisul Huq was later shifted to Labaid Hospital while auto-rickshaw driver Nur Islam to the intensive care unit of the DMCH.

"Anisul Huq is now out of danger," doctors at the Labaid Hospital and family sources said last night.

Bomb kills 13 wedding party members in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

A roadside bomb ripped through cars carrying wedding guests in northwestern Pakistan yesterday, killing at least 13 people including the bride and wounding a dozen others, police said.

Children were also among the dead from the blast in the insurgency-hit Swat Valley, the first bomb attack in Pakistan since the country held largely peaceful parliamentary elections on Monday.

"There was a remote-controlled bomb explosion which targeted a wedding party. Two cars were destroyed including the car in which the bride was travelling, she died," local police officer Haroon Khan told AFP.

He said a total of 13 people were killed and more than a dozen wounded.

Some children were among the killed and injured, he said.

Interior ministry spokesman Brigadier Javed Cheema confirmed that the bomb near the town of Matta targeted the wedding party. He earlier said that eight people were killed.

The Swat Valley was a famed tourist spot until the middle of last year when it became a flashpoint for violence between the military and followers of a hardline pro-Taliban cleric who tried to establish Islamic Sharia law.

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Prayer Timing
February 23

| | Azan | Jamaat |
|---------|-------|--------|
| Fajr | 5-20 | 5-55 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 4-30 | 4-45 |
| Maghrib | 6-03 | 6-07 |
| Esha | 7-30 | 8-00 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

BTTB signs back-up optical fibre deal

SHARIER KHAN

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) signed a Tk 18 crore deal with Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) on Wednesday for installation of a back-up optical fibre network between Dhaka and Cox's Bazar to ensure better access to the submarine cable system.

Official sources said the three-year deal will now ensure an uninterrupted service of Internet and telecom connections that largely rely on the submarine cable system from Cox's Bazar.

After installation, the PGCB back-up network will automatically handle the data flow to ensure connectivity in case the BTTB's 433km optical fibre line is disrupted.

Ever since the BTTB launched the submarine cable system in 2006, it has been operating with a single optical fibre network between Cox's Bazar and Dhaka. The on-land line connects Dhaka with the Cox's Bazar submarine cable landing station from where the nation connects to the information superhighway.

The BTTB installed its optical fibre line only a few feet below the roadside surface. Lack of a back-up optical fibre network between Cox's Bazar and the capital has so far caused a lot of problems whenever this line was disrupted.

Having this backup line became a priority issue for BTTB following repeated snapping of the original line caused by miscreants. Each

disruption deprives the BTTB of revenue of at least \$70,000 per hour.

After installation BTTB has so far shut down the line eight times for maintenance work and there have been seven cases of accidental disruption and another eight instances are being termed as acts of sabotage.

BTTB had two options to set up the back-up line since late 2006, one of which was to have it from the PGCB that already has the network above the ground and over the power grid.

However, the PGCB has been asking for Tk 19.4 crore as rental and other charges for a five-year term. In addition, BTTB will have to install some equipment worth Tk

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Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, 3rd from right, and army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed, 2nd from right, watch the past during inaugural ceremony of the Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Hillary accuses Obama of political plagiarism

AP, Austin

Hillary Rodham Clinton accused presidential rival Barack Obama of political plagiarism Thursday night, but drew boos from a Democratic debate audience when she ridiculed him as the candidate of "change you can Xerox."

Obama dismissed the charge out of hand, then turned the jeers to applause when he countered, "What we shouldn't be spending time doing is tearing each other down. We should be spending time lifting the country up."

The exchange marked an unusually pointed moment in an otherwise civil encounter in the

days before March 4 primaries in Texas and Ohio contests that even some of Clinton's supporters say she must win to sustain her campaign for the White House.

The former first lady has lost 11 straight primaries and caucuses, and trails her rival in convention delegates. Obama has won a pair of big union endorsements in the past two days.

In a university auditorium in the heart of Texas, the two rivals agreed that high-tech surveillance measures are preferable to construction of a fence to curtail illegal immigration.

They disagreed on the proper response to a change in govern-

ment in Cuba in the wake of Fidel Castro's resignation. Clinton said she would refuse to sit down with incoming President Raul Castro until he implements political and economic reforms. Obama said he would meet "without preconditions," but added the US agenda for such a session would include human rights in the Communist island nation.

They also sparred frequently about health care, a core issue of the campaign.

Hillary Clinton said repeatedly that Obama's plan would leave 15 million Americans uncovered.

But he, in turn, accused the

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Coastguards recover 2,400kg jatka (hilsa fry) worth over Tk 5 lakh during a raid on engine boats at Sowarighat in the capital yesterday. A portion of the catch was later given to orphanages and sold at auction.

Pabna Jorbangla temple in ruins, terracotta falling apart

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The Jorbangla temple, built in early 17th century at Kalachandpara village in Pabna, is in ruins due to negligence of the authorities, said sources at the Department of Archaeology.

The outer walls of the beautiful brick structure that resembles the traditional hut of ancient Bengal is covered with amazing terracotta artworks depicting mythological tales.

A merchant named Brajaballabh built the temple in 1607. Some time during the 19th century, the temple came under the ownership of the Nags, an elite Kayastha family in Pabna.

A bronze idol of Radha-Krishna was stolen from the temple during

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Badly eroded wall of the 17th century Jorbangla temple at Kalachandpara in Pabna. The priceless terracotta artworks lie in ruins just for lack of maintenance.

Canadian lawyer Sloan not allowed to talk to press

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting Canadian lawyer William Sloan could not hold the press conference he planned for yesterday after the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel had cancelled his hall room booking.

The international human rights lawyer who arrived in Dhaka on February 16 was confined to his hotel room and not allowed to talk to the journalists waiting outside.

Meantime, plainclothes detectives barred journalists and lawyers from entering the hotel. They did not let newsmen move beyond the driveway.

Contacted, a hotel official said all they knew was that the booking had been cancelled and nothing more.

William Sloan, who was earlier denied access to the Special Court hearing a graft case against detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, had booked Chitra Hall of the hotel for the press conference at 4:30pm.

But as the time neared, additional police and plainclothes intelligence personnel crowded the entrance and exit of the hotel.

Intelligence sources said the Canadian lawyer had pledged on his arrival not to speak to the media over any internal issue.

Prof Payam Akhavan, another Canadian lawyer, during a visit to the country recently as Hasina's international counsel had criticised the army and the caretaker government.

The authorities did not want that to repeat and so this time they did not allow Sloan to hold a press conference, sources told The Daily Star.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed, a senior counsel for the AL chief, said preventing a lawyer of Sloan's stature from holding a press conference would in fact blemish the country's image abroad. Everyone has the right to speak.

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Take steps for land reforms, recovery of khas land

Economists, experts urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government should take initiatives immediately for land reforms, recovery of khas land from grabbers and establishment of rights of the landless people, said economists and experts on land related issues yesterday.

The matter should be taken seriously because over 80 per cent civil and criminal litigations and conflicts are linked to land, which leave marginal farmers deprived and cheated of their land, they said at a book publication ceremony.

They proposed formation of a commission for this purpose and measures to educate people about land laws to help them get rid of complications linked to land-related litigations.

The book titled "Bhumi Aainer

Sahaj Path" (land law made easy) written by Nazrul Islam Khan and published by Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) was launched at the Jatiya Press Club.

Speaking as the chief guest of the event, Health and Food Adviser Dr AMM Shawkat Ali said the government also wants to protect khas land and has already sought assistance in this regard from experts.

"We want to make an arrangement for the protection of grabbed khas land in the city's periphery and other areas," he said.

A good planning is needed for this and the RIB and others working in this field can place such a plan to the government.

A policy on land usage was framed during 1996-2001, but it was not implemented, Shawkat said. There are many laws and it is

immediately necessary to see where intervention is required, he added.

The citizens' rights on land should be fixed through reviewing all the land laws before forming any commission or taskforce for land reforms, he said, seeking RIB's assistance in preparing a draft citizens' charter for the land ministry.

Among other measures, audio-visual materials could be prepared to create mass awareness about land laws and citizens' rights on land, he noted.

Centre for Policy Dialogue Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said the country is now run by market economy, which has elements that go against morality.

People should be educated

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Airliner with 46 aboard crashes in Venezuela

AFP, Caracas

A Venezuelan airliner that went missing with 46 people on board apparently crashed in the Venezuelan Andes, a regional civil defence official told AFP, citing witnesses in the area.

Noel Marquez, head of the Civil Defence for Merida, 500km southwest of Caracas, said local people in the Andean region of Coyoado del Condor reported seeing the aircraft go down.

Civil Defence Director General

Antonio Rivero confirmed to AFP that the Santa Barbara Airlines flight, reported missing at 5:45 pm (2245 GMT) Thursday after departing from Merida for Caracas' Simon Bolivar airport, was carrying 43 passengers and three crew.

"A telephone call was received from some of the local people. Right now rescue teams are going to the area to confirm the information," Marquez said.

He added that the plane, a French-Italian-made twin-engine

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14,000 chickens of 4 farms in Savar culled

UNB, Savar

Around 14,000 chickens of four poultry farms in Savar municipal area were culled yesterday after detection of avian influenza at a farm.

Sources said some chickens of Sheela Poultry Farm died on Wednesday and Thursday. After laboratory test, avian influenza virus was found in the dead chickens of the farm.

Upazila administration then culled 3,100 chickens of Sheela Poultry Farm, 2,800 of Semi Poultry Farm, 1,000 of Polish Poultry Farm and 7,000 of Jewel Poultry Farm.

Local administration sources said around 18,000 more chickens of seven poultry farms in the municipal area are likely to be culled today.

Jatka seized in Narayanganj, Chandpur

2-month ban on fishing

STAR REPORT

Coastguard members yesterday seized about 70 maunds of Hilsa fry in separate drives in Narayanganj and Chandpur.

Meanwhile, a two-month-long ban has been imposed on fishing in different areas in the southern part of the country.

The coastguard conducted drives at Sadarghat, Sowarighat and adjacent areas and seized about 2,400 kilograms of Hilsa fry from several boats in the Buriganga river, sources said.

Coastguard officials said a group of fish traders brought Hilsa fry worth about Tk 101,000 by vessel Swarnadweep from the country's southern part.

In another drive, about 10 maunds of Hilsa fry were seized from several fishing boats in Chandpur.

The government has imposed a ban on netting Hilsa fish below nine inches in length.

Meanwhile, the Fisheries

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

Linking Young Minds Together

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views.

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Star Campus helps link young minds together.

SAUFEST 2008
Amidst the Mountains