

BSF guns down Bangladeshi, two Indians

UNB, Lalmonirhat

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down one Bangladeshi and two Indian cattle traders on Burimari border in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila early yesterday.

Two more Bangladeshi cattle traders were injured in the incident.

The deceased Bangladeshi national was identified as M Aimal Huq, 32, son of Kandura Mia of Muglabari village while the Indians as Sri Amal Chandra, 22, and Khokan Mohanta, 19, of Chengrabandha thana in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district.

The injured cattle traders -- Mofazzal, 23, son of Hanifar Rahman, and Dulu Mia, 35, son of Aminul of the village -- were admitted to hospital in critical condition.

BDR sources said BSF troops at Chengrabandha camp fired 30 rounds of bullet on the cattle traders when they entered Bangladesh territory from India along with cattle at about 1:00am, killing Aimal, Amal and Khokan on the spot.

The Indian border guards took away the bodies of the two Indians.

BDR strongly protested the killings.

'Army shouldn't be called in to hold polls'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Army should not be called in for holding the general election, said former adviser to caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan yesterday.

"The general election in Nepal was held peacefully without engaging its armed forces in the election activities. We can also apply it in our country. A basic political agreement should be struck between the political parties in this regard," said M Hafizuddin Khan, who led an opposition coalition in Nepal while speaking at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

The team that observed general election in Nepal, also gave suggestions to the caretaker government

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Islamist groups call off agitation programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No untoward incident occurred at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday as the Islamist outfits postponed their earlier announced demonstrations in front of the mosque demanding cancellation of the National Women Development Policy.

The Islamist groups called off their agitation programme after the government on Thursday night vowed to take tough actions against anyone who might instigate violence protesting the policy.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



HERITAGE AT RISK... Campaign for Heritage Conservation and Urban Study Group jointly brought out a procession yesterday, parading Sutrapur area in Old Dhaka to raise awareness about the city's historic sites. In the picture, leading participants are seen watching a building being demolished on 45 BK Das Road in Farashganj.

20 lakh deprived of OMS and fair price facilities

Just because they fall under union parishad areas

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and WASIM BIN HABIB

Over an estimated 20 lakh people in areas under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) are left out of the government's safety net programmes like open market sale (OMS) because they live in unions outside the city corporation.

Officials of the Directorate of Food said the programmes are meant only for the residents of municipalities and upazilas. The

government has yet to take similar measures for those living under union parishads.

Visiting 17 unions for the past few days, The Daily Star correspondents found that rickshaw pullers, day labourers, factory workers and small traders constitute the majority of the populace there.

The unions -- Sultanganj, Harirampur, Uttar Khan, Dakshin Khan, Satakul, Demra, Sharulia, Matuail, Shyampur, Nasirabad, Dakshin Gaon, Barayit and

Bhatara -- are within the confines of 11 police stations of DMP.

People living there are no less affected by price spiral of essentials, and absence of OMS and fair price shops in their localities has only compounded their problem.

Talking to The Daily Star, several union parishad chairmen said about 80 percent of the people there are poor. Though many of them work in Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) areas, they have opted to stay on in the unions to escape the high

cost of living in the city proper.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dhaka Kamal Uddin said according to the 1991 census the number of people in these 17 unions then was about 11 lakh.

Though no census was carried out in the recent times, he added, the population is believed to have well exceeded the 20 lakh mark in the past one and a half decades.

Some other sources however put the number at 30 lakh.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Chicken prices mark sharp rise

Edible oil price rises further, coarse rice price stable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of battery and free-range chickens registered a sharp rise in the city in last one week as bird-flu panic dies down and supply remains poor following the culling of thousands of birds during the avian influenza outbreak.

Green chilli prices, however, came down significantly in kitchen markets yesterday.

Meantime, price of different varieties of coarse rice remained stable on the retail market in last four days but edible oil prices hiked further in last one week.

The price of battery chickens rose by Tk 10-15 per kg on the retail market, jumping to Tk 115-125 per kg yesterday. It was sold for Tk 105-110 a kg a week ago. Three months back the price was Tk 60-70 per kg.

Price of free-range chickens leapt by Tk 10-20 per bird. A big-size bird weighing 800 grams to 1 kg was sold at Tk 200-220 yesterday while the minimum price of a local species was Tk 90-100.

Wholesalers at Tejgaon and Kaptanbazar contributed the chicken-price hike to poor supply. They said they sold battery chickens at Tk 106-109 per kg yesterday

while free-range chickens at Tk 80-200 per bird.

They said consumption of battery chickens plummeted significantly during the bird-flu panic. But its prices spiked as demand has soared while supply remains still poor as thousands of birds were culled during the avian influenza outbreak.

The prices of coarse and fine rice dropped on the wholesale market in last two weeks. The wholesale price of coarse rice came down by Tk 100 per maund while fine rice prices fell by Tk 50-80 a maund.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Arrested two former secys sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two former secretaries who were accused along with former premiers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina in separate cases were sent to jail yesterday.

Former secretaries Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and Khandaker Shahidul Islam were arrested yesterday and Thursday night in the city's Dhanmondi.

Sources said Tejgaon police arrested former energy secretary Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi yesterday morning in the city's Green Road area for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

VIOLATION OF PARTY DISCIPLINE Pro-Khaleda faction for showcase on Maj Hafiz

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Pro-Khaleda faction of BNP plans to issue a showcase notice on Major (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, acting secretary general appointed by standing committee, for violating party discipline.

They would proceed after getting the nod from detained Chairperson Khaleda Zia, said insiders.

In another development, chairperson's Adviser Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah yesterday said Saifur Rahman, acting chairman appointed by standing committee, has proposed forming a committee to run the party in absence of the party chief.

Talking to reporters at his Mohakhali residence, he said, "We

have no objection to reuniting the party. But that has to be done excluding three leaders -- Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Ashraf Hossain and Mofiqul Hassan Tripti -- who were expelled by the chairperson."

Maj (ret'd) Hafiz, on the other hand, said they want unconditional unity of the party.

Leaders loyal to the now detained former prime minister at a meeting recently demanded disciplinary action against Standing Committee Member Saifur Rahman and Vice-president Hafizuddin Ahmed.

Senior leaders however did not support taking any action against Saifur, former finance minister and the senior most leader of the party, as they believe he was forced to join

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Two killed as storms lash 4 districts

STAR REPORT

Two teenagers were killed and at least 17 people injured in nor'wester and thunderstorm which also destroyed hundreds of thatched houses and vast swathes of standing crops in four districts in last two days.

Our Chapinawabganj correspondent reports: A 14-year-old, Rahmatullah, was crushed to death while collecting blown-down mangoes when a mango tree fell on him during a nor'wester in Shibganj upazila Thursday evening.

Three people were injured during the storm. No less than two hundred thatched houses, Boro and maize crops and mango orchards were also destroyed in five upazilas of the district.

In Moulvibazar, a teenager was killed and a youth injured as they were caught in a thunderstorm on their way back home from Hakaluki Hori in Kulaura upazila

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

PDB retains Hosaf's deal after serving termination notice

SHARIER KHAN

After serving it with a contract termination notice last month, the Power Development Board (PDB) allegedly under pressure from an influential quarter Wednesday accepted security deposit from a power company owned by Hosaf Group for setting up Fenchuganj 50 megawatt rental power plant.

On March 30, the PDB served Hosaf's company Energy Prima with a notice of default and intent to terminate the contract for a three-year rental power project in Fenchuganj for repeatedly failing

to provide performance guarantee.

This rental power plant was supposed to start operation late next month to ease load shedding this summer. Now, Energy Prima is virtually allowed to delay it by two months by compromising the purpose of this fast track project.

Though Energy Prima did not fulfil bidding criteria, it was awarded four rental power contracts out of eight in January with the goal of bringing these small and easily installable plants into operation this summer. These 300 MW plants are supposed to add 300 MW

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Dialogue will be meaningless if Hasina not treated abroad

UNB, Dhaka

Leaders of the Awami League (AL) yesterday said the electoral reforms dialogue with the government will be meaningless if the home adviser's remark is true that the caretaker government is not considering sending Sheikh Hasina abroad for treatment.

Even the advisers at the pre-dialogue talks felt the necessity of releasing Sheikh Hasina to create a congenial atmosphere for holding the parliamentary polls, said AL

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Forged 'photocopy visas' being used to cheat job seekers

PORIMOL PALMA

Racketeers using forged 'photocopy visas' sent many Bangladeshi job seekers to Iraq promising well-paid jobs and deserted them in Sulaimaniya and elsewhere in that country to live a subhuman life without jobs, an investigation found.

"It is easy to forge photocopy visas. And cheats take advantage of this," said a member of a taskforce formed in January this year to probe irregularities in recruitment system for overseas jobs.

Photocopy visas are copies of

visas that employers in the UAE send to Bangladesh for recruiting workers. Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) in Bangladesh issues emigration clearance against these visas but does not have any mechanism to check if the visas are forged.

"A major portion of fraudulent practices in document forging have been found linked to photocopy visas," said the taskforce member.

Since January this year, around 100 Bangladeshis who were cheated in the name of jobs in Iraq returned from Sulaimaniya and other places in Iraq. Over 50 of

them came back home with assistance from the International Organisation for Migration.

Law enforcers arrested four in connection with illegally sending Bangladeshi job seekers to Iraq. Bangladesh does not send manpower to that country presently.

The returnees told the taskforce that there are "several hundred" Bangladeshis in various places of Iraq, who were cheated by racketeers.

The frauds forge photocopy visas to entice workers. They are instructed to wear clothes with

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Exploring New Horizons ...

DEKKO GROUP, a pioneer manufacturing company with over 50 years of experience started its journey back in 1953, when the notion of manufacturing itself was difficult due to inadequate infrastructure & small market size.

Since then it has diversified its business ranging from paints, ready made garments, garments accessories to manufacturing and marketing of food products like spices, biscuits, noodles, etc. In all its ventures, DEKKO has put quality first. It is this commitment to quality that has fostered growth and made its journey meaningful.

This journey still continues - in search of newer horizons.



DEKKO
GROUP

