

Two outlaws killed in 'shootouts' in Rajshahi, Kushtia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two underground operatives were killed during 'shootouts' between the law enforcers and their cohorts in Kushtia and Rajshahi early yesterday.

The outlaws were identified as Nabin Hossain, 30, a regional leader of Gono Mukti Fouj (GMF), and 'Murgi' Masud alias Akash, a cadre of Puro Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Red Flag).

Nabin was killed at Alampur village in Sadar upazilla of Kushtia while Masud at Pabnapara under Taherpur Municipality of Bagmara Upazilla, Rajshahi.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that a police team, acting on a tip-off, cordoned off the bank of a pond at Alampur village where the GMF cadres were holding a meeting at around 4:30am.

Sensing the presence of the police team, the GMF cadres opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Police said Nabin received bullets during the gunfight that continued for an hour, while his accomplices managed to escape unhurt.

Nabin, son of Aftabuddin Biswas of Alampur village, was wanted in three murder cases filed with Kushtia Sadar Police Station. Police recovered a shutter gun and

four bullets from the spot. Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Masud on Wednesday and handed him over to the police on Thursday night, according to our staff correspondent from Rajshahi.

On his confessional statement, police along with Masud set out for Pabnapara to arrest his accomplices and recover the hidden firearms at around 3:00am.

When they reached the area, Masud's cohorts opened fire on the policemen, prompting them to retaliate.

Police said Masud was shot during a 25-minute-long gunfight while his accomplices managed to flee. They took Masud to the local health complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Son of Nur Muhammad of Ramraja village of Bagmara upazilla, Masud was convicted in Mostafa Khamaru and Mamtaz Khamaru murder cases and awarded life term in absentia, police said.

Shahabuddin Khalifa, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bagmara Police Station, said Masud was also wanted in 12 cases including four murders.

Police recovered a pistol, two knives, two machetes and some drugs from the spot.

Top French bank

FROM PAGE 16

Caisse d'Epargne is a fixture on the French high street and as a mutual bank is popular with small-scale savers. It has 27 million private account holders.

It is merging with its smaller rival Banque Populaire, which it owns an investment subsidiary, Natixis, that has seen its stock battered during the current global financial crisis.

The merged company will probably be France's second biggest retail bank after Credit Agricole.

The firm said the losses were suffered by the group's central capital fund and were discovered during normal internal oversight procedures.

According to a company source, the bank's traders had not respected rules limiting how much they could invest in stock derivatives, despite having been specifically warned about the danger presented by "market conditions".

Last week saw European stock exchanges plunge in their most dramatic crash since the Great Depression of the 1930s and billions of euros were wiped off the values of stocks around the world.

France's Finance Minister Christine Lagarde has been informed of the bank's loss, her spokesman said, adding that it "does not call into question the solidity of the establishment in question".

Nevertheless, the Caisse d'Epargne's expensive error came at a critical time for European banking, when governments haunted by the threat of a run on the bank by nervous savers have been battling to shore up confidence.

It will also revive memories of the disaster earlier this year at another French bank, Societe Generale, which lost 4.9 billion euros to a series of bad investments by alleged "rogue trader" Jerome Kerviel.

Maniruzzaman

FROM PAGE 1

where they can reach agreement on issues of national importance. The "Minus-2" formula was framed as the government failed to understand the political culture of the country, Maniruzzaman noted. The two leaders represent two dominant political theories—Bangladeshi nationalism and Banglae nationalism—and have become integral part of the political culture.

Demanding complete withdrawal of the state of emergency, he said (state of) emergency and free elections do not go together as emergency rules curtail key ingredients of an election—freedom of movement, speech, procession and assembly. "If needed, the president can impose state of emergency locally for a temporary period," he observed.

The Election Commission delayed initiating the process of political parties' registration, he said. What has been accomplished in two years, including preparation of voter list, could be done in one year if things were started in earnest earlier.

Without taking political parties into confidence, the government attempted to impose reforms on them and wrongly tried to teach them political lessons, he remarked.

In politics, it is unrealistic to expect totally clean candidates, and some unclean candidates will also come out victorious in parliamentary polls, he said. "The practice of nominating cadres and businessmen, and buying votes will reduce to some extent because there is a realisation among the policymakers."

Steps for security

FROM PAGE 1

lists of suspected criminals who they think might attempt to attack electoral candidates or might attempt to create instability before the election. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad told The Daily Star, "We have asked all units to keep their eyes on possible candidates and gather intelligence on possibilities of attacks on them. The units have been asked to ensure their security."

The IGP also said all law enforcement units have also been directed to hunt suspected and listed criminals who are likely to attempt to create instability.

"Our target is to bring known dreaded criminals and their accomplices to book and to keep other criminals on the run," the IGP said adding, "It's one of our precautionary measures, so no upward incident may happen before and during the election."

Another police official said, "It's quite impossible to keep eyes on all candidates and to provide special security for all of them. Therefore the units have been asked to identify candidates who are more susceptible to threats and attacks."

"Those who will get threats or become otherwise susceptible to attacks, intelligence personnel and police will follow their movements to ensure their security," he added.

The sources said before the election, all units of police will be directed to carry out anti-crime drives.

Ancient figures

FROM PAGE 16

Sura Masjid was built using stones between 1450 and 1500 AD, during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Hussain Shah, he added.

Archaeologist Md Badrul Alam conjectures that such stones were used in Hindu or Buddhist constructions in the area during the Gupta period.

Some type of stones had also been used for constructing Sura Masjid.

Assistant Custodian of the Mahasthan Museum Md Mahabub-Ul-Alam said the engraved stone believed to be of Gupta era represents Hindu architecture that period.

Good for some

FROM PAGE 1

worker's 4.18 percent to Tk 3,821 and a private healthcare worker's 4.11 percent to Tk 3,867.

Females' situation is even worse. Their monthly real income has dropped by 0.30 percent to 16.50 percent. Cement, wooden furniture and cotton textile workers are the top losers here. A female cement worker's monthly earning dropped 16.50 percent to Tk 4,325, a wooden furniture sector worker's 4.74 percent to Tk 2,648 and a cotton textile sector worker's 4.30 percent to Tk 3,180. Female workers' gross income also dropped.

A look at the real figures will reveal the discrimination against women workers. The average gross income of a male food and beverage sector worker was Tk 3,310. But a female worker got only Tk 1,833. In shrimp processing sector, a male worker earned Tk 3,484 but a female got Tk 2,633.

Not only this, Males even made advancement in some sectors. His monthly real income has increased 1.16 percent in garment, 0.94 percent in railway and 0.99 percent in real estate sectors.

But a female garment worker's average real income decreased 0.96 percent. Female sewers and embroiders experienced a major shock as their incomes dropped by 3.09 percent. Interestingly, female pattern makers and cutters earned

1.98 percent more.

The Daily Star talked to Dr Zaid Bakht about why male garment workers' income rose. He reasoned that the knitwear sector witnessed fabulous growth where most are skilled males. They naturally got more pay.

Females are less skilled and lack bargaining capacity. Among the day labourers, real incomes of rickshawpullers and shoe shiners marked a slight rise. The daily real wage of a rickshawpuller was Tk 144 during January-March 2007, which increased to Tk 145 during April-June. A shoe shiner's daily real wage increased to Tk 126 from Tk 124.

A BBS high official explained that these two groups could not adjust their wages keeping with essentials' price hike.

But daily real earnings of male day workers in general have slumped by 2.99 percent. Agriculture sector workers received 1.19 percent higher income but non-farm sector workers' reduced by 5.92 percent. Gross income of agriculture sector workers also increased 5.57 percent.

Dr Uttam Kumar Deb, head of research, the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said April-June is the Boro rice cultivation season and so the workers could bargain higher wages.

Diversify products

FROM PAGE 1

them profitable. The experts said forming a jute board would help.

Diversified jute products like agrotexile and geotextile have a huge potential for Bangladesh. India and many European countries have already started using such products.

"Diversified products add value from 30 to 300 percent. Research and new markets are needed to tap the potential," said Dr ABM Abdullah, executive director at the Jute Diversification Promotion Centre (JDPC).

He however said at present diversified products do not consume even five percent of the total jute produced.

"In Bangladesh we are just bleaching and dying the traditional products, not developing new items for new applications...we need to develop new products and create markets for them."

About 40 percent of the jute grown in the country is exported raw, which is not profitable at all. Existing mills could use all raw jute and earn much more foreign currency if run efficiently.

Major thrust areas for value-added diversified jute products include jute handlooms and handicrafts, non-woven and industrial applications, jute rigid packaging, decorative products and jute geotextile.

"The intention to move towards diversified products made wholly or partially from jute fibres has important consequences for the industry," Sudipta Roy, Secretary General at the International Jute Study Group (IJSG), said.

The real future of jute, however, lies in technical textiles, be it

Shop owner murdered in Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants gunned down a shop owner near his house at Kaliganj under South Keraniganj Police Station last night.

Police said Mohammad Sohel, 28, owner of Sohel Electronics Shop in the area, came under attack while he was returning home from nearby Char Kutub at around 8:10pm.

Witnesses said a gang of criminals shot Sohel in the head and left the scene. Locals rushed him to Sumona Clinic at Patuati in Old Dhaka where the doctors declared him dead.

Police later took the body to Mitford Hospital for autopsy.

Family sources said Sohel might have been killed by some drug peddlers as he recently protested sale of drugs in the area.

2 crushed under wheels of train

UNB, Khulna

Two people were crushed under the wheels of a train while gossiping on a rail track at Khalishpur early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Faruk, 25, and Belal, 28. They hailed from Khalishpur.

Railway police said the two were run over by a Khulna-bound mail train from Parbatipur at around 2:00am.

They recovered the bodies and sent them to Khulna Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

'Huji had plan to snatch Mufti Hannan from custody'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four arrested activists of outlawed Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) told police during interrogation on Thursday night that they had a plan to forcibly free their leader Mufti Abdul Hannan from custody.

AC (Khalishpur zone) Rabiul Islam of KMP quoted the arrestees as saying that they had a plan to snatch Mufti Hannan from custody by launching bomb and armed attacks simultaneously.

They also told police that they came to Khulna on instructions of Shabuj, the second-in-command of Harkat-ul-Jihad, now in jail.

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Huji men Mizanur Rahman Tushar, Omar Faruque, Mujahidul Islam and Yusuf Al Helal at Khalishpur on Tuesday. They were shown arrested under section 54 of CrPc and taken on a five-day police remand on Thursday.

AC Rabiul said the arrestees are yet to give information about their strongholds in Khulna, number of other Huji men working across the country, sources of their fund and types of firearms they are possessing.

Amini

FROM PAGE 16

military personnel martyred in the liberation war, he said the country's defence forces' worship' fire, against which his organisation had spoken before 'as the practice is anti-Islamic'.

He threatened to wage a greater movement against the government 'if it fails to immediately put a stop to the activities that are going on against the country and Islam'.

"The movement will not be deterred by any emergency, martial law, jail or harassment," he said adding, they cannot remain silent 'if anti-Islamic activities continue in the name of the state of emergency'.

The IOJ chairman also said status are being constructed all over the country, and demanded that the government puts a stop to the move.

"We respect laws and we can't break the emergency powers rule, but we also can't tolerate the anti-Islamic activities anymore," he said.

Talking about the capital city, he blamed past Awami League (AL) regime for 'its efforts to turn the city of mosque into a city of statues'.

"The present government is also trying to turn the Muslim nation into a country of statues," he alleged.

He, however, denied allegations that they had protested against sculptures of bauls (folk singers) in front of Zia International Airport and forced the authorities to pull them down.

He also demanded that Dr Taj Hashmi, a teacher of an American college, be declared 'anti-Islam', and be expelled from Bangladesh for his writings in a Bangla daily.

Amini accused the caretaker government of failing to hold the election on time and to hand over power to an elected government.

He said the caretaker government enjoyed enormous public support when it assumed office but its position is now questionable.

"There are serious concerns among the people due to some government steps against the country and Islam during the emergency of the last 21 months," he said.

He also demanded scrapping of the Women Development Policy 2008, and stopping of an alleged move to hand over control of the country's primary education to Brac'.

IABC leaders Abdul Latif Nezami, Shafiq Uddin, and Abul Kashem were also present.

IMF: Bank guarantees

FROM PAGE 16

rumours about its stability, with savers clashing with police as they tried to withdraw their funds.

Unlike bankruptcy and other problems afflicting the banking system in Europe and the United States, Asian banks were generally "well capitalized and pretty liquid" with relatively limited reliance on foreign wholesale funding, he said.

Asian economies, which faced a major financial crisis in 1997-98, now enjoy relatively high growth rates and have plentiful foreign exchange reserves with low fiscal deficits and debt levels, making them well placed to weather the current global financial turmoil, he said.

Asked what was his greatest fear for Asia during the current global turmoil, Burton said that it was the prospect of a "confidence crisis."

"These financial crises have a way of moving very fast and you have a sudden shift in confidence and funding starts to become more difficult that feeds on the confidence," he said.

"Asia's well placed but when confidence is shaking globally, you have to be on the alert because very unpredictable things can happen and suddenly even though economic fundamentals may be solid."

"It's just the risk that sort of thing can get out of control."

The current global financial maelstrom has already sparked capital outflows from equity and bond markets in Asia, causing downward pressure on exchange rates and US dollar funding, Burton said.

It is also beginning to dampen economic growth rates amid declining exports to Europe and the United States.

On whether Asia will plunge into a recession, Burton replied: "You are going to see a substantial slowdown in Asian growth."

He said that China and India would remain growth powerhouses despite the turmoil, while Japan would remain a source of stability for the global financial system with its restructured banking sector.

Burton also said that the IMF would not hesitate to bail out Asian economies if they needed it -- unlike the financial crisis a decade ago when the Fund imposed many conditions on its help.

ACC sues former BNP lawmaker, 8 others

UNB, Natore

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has filed a case against former BNP lawmaker Mozammel Huq and eight others for embezzlement of a school fund.

Deputy Director of ACC Abdul Karim filed the case with Gurdaspur Police Station on Thursday night.

The other accused are Mozifuddin Bhuiyan and Obaidul Qader, former deputy director and assistant director of the Education Department, Tariqul Islam, former principal of Kachhikata School and College, school teachers Shafiqul Azam, Mizanur Rahman and Shammi Akhter and office assistants Monowara Begum and Selina Parvin.

The complainant alleged that the accused embezzled Tk 3.17 lakh from the school fund between May 2, 2003 and April 9, 2006.

Briton jailed

FROM PAGE 16

Zillur Rahman yesterday observed that plotting is on to foil the December 18 polls. He directed his party men to be on alert.

He said this when Awami Jubo League General Secretary Mirza Azam, released on bail the previous day, went to meet him at his Gulshan residence.

The AL acting chief said the government must hold the election on schedule.

He said, "We will have to watch out for attempts to bring the anti-Liberation War forces to power."

The senior most AL leader asked why Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed has not been detained despite a warrant for his arrest.

TALK WITH AMU

The veteran AL leader said the government must carry on its efforts to hold the parliamentary election on December 18.

It should not bother much if a party threatens to boycott the polls on "illogical grounds".

Amu observed that international assistance might start flowing in once an elected government takes over after a free and fair election.

"We have told officials at the European Union not to take seriously election boycott on flimsy excuses," he said adding that seeking to delay the polls under the pretext of preparing for registration is not acceptable.

He however said the demands for withdrawal of the state of emergency and deferral of upazilla polls are logical.

Mentioning a telephone conversation with AL President Sheikh Hasina, who is now abroad, Amu said the former prime minister has asked them to get rid of all misunderstandings and work in unison towards the election.

He said the AL chief might return home in the second week of November.

Mini Kissinger

FROM PAGE 1

Hassan Arif as 'an associate of the mini Kissinger', and urged the law adviser not to run with the commerce adviser to politicians for 'secret meetings'.

"It is not their duty. Why Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and four other advisers are continuing to have dialogues with corrupt politicians?" he questioned while addressing the media in his residence in the capital.

The Gono Forum chief demanded a judicial committee for investigating the incident of granting bail to 206 detainees including many political leaders in 100 minutes.

The law adviser should investigate the issue of granting bail to 206 persons in a day. It's not possible through legal procedures. An investigation should be launched in the interest of the people and the judiciary," Dr Kamal said.

He also urged the caretaker government not to defer the election 'being threatened by some corrupt politicians' who are saying their parties will not participate in the election unless their top leaders' release from detention are made permanent.

"A congenial atmosphere for the next election and unconditional release of corrupt politicians can't go hand in hand. We don't want an election ignoring our constitution," he quipped.

The caretaker government should not be covered by the threats of political parties, Dr Kamal added.

He urged the government to make public the details of corruption cases against politicians, so the

Mohiuddin Chy

FROM PAGE 1

life-support ventilation, sources said.

Tumpa, a 3rd year student of English at Premier University in Chittagong, had been receiving treatment for non-Hodgkin Lymphoma since the first week of June this year.

Mohiuddin received the news of his daughter's death while boarding a Bangkok-bound flight of Thai Airways along with his wife Hasina Mohiuddin and son barrister Mohibul Hasan Noupeel at the Chittagong airport.

He told the journalists on Thursday that the government order allowed him to travel to Bangkok and Singapore but did not permit him to perform hajj.

The CCC mayor said he did not harm anybody and has always tried to work for people.

"I used to talk about the Chittagong port for its improvement. I have always wanted to work for Chittagong and its people who had been victims to deprivation and harassment," Mohiuddin told The Daily Star at his Chashma Hill residence in the city's Sholoshahar area on Thursday afternoon.

Replying to a query, the mayor said he was yet to receive any reply following his appeal to the LGRD ministry for an explanation about the restriction on his working as the CCC mayor.

"I want to leave behind a centre-based system that would allow the leaders to carry on party activities smoothly," he said.

When asked to name some leaders who might be given the responsibility to lead the party in the port city in his absence, Mohiuddin referred to Dr Aferul Amin, advocate Ibrahim Hossain Babul, AL city unit General Secretary Enamul Haq Danu and Khorsheed Alam Sujon.

Earlier, Mohiuddin held a meeting with CCC councilors and officials.

He asked them to strengthen the corporation's existing income generation projects to overcome the revenue shortfall, which reportedly stood at Tk 30 crore.

people may know about them.

He also said 14-party alliance was formed on the basis of a 23-point charter. "No partner can violate the 23-point charter. If any partner doesn't believe in the charter or violates it, that party will be ejected from the alliance," he said.

Referring to an interview of BNP Standing Committee Member Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky with The Daily Star published yesterday, Dr Kamal said, "I support Tanbir's proposal for publishing white papers on Hawa Bhaban."

He also raised questions about Ershad getting bail in four cases, and said, "Scrapping of four cases against Ershad was not in line with the constitution."

About Ershad's Jatiya Party being an ally of 14-party in the grand electoral alliance, Dr Kamal said, "14-party shouldn't have alliance with any party that doesn't subscribe to the 23-point charter. A controversial political party shouldn't be allowed to have an alliance with 14-party just to win some seats in the election."

Gono Forum Presidium Member Pankaj Bhattacharya and its Acting General Secretary Advocate Subrata Chowdhury were also present.

UN chief

FROM PAGE 1

preparations for the UN chief's visit was held at the sub-committee Chairman Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury's Dhanmondi residence.

An advanced team for Ban Ki-moon's visit is already in Dhaka. The team members led by Hitoki Den were with Dessallien to meet the AL body.

Talking to journalists later, Dessallien, also UNDP resident representative, said participation of all political parties in the election is a must for a peaceful transition of power. The UN wants the election to be held on schedule and in a manner free and fair.

She said the parties should be allowed to conduct normal polls activities to have a free and credible election on December 18. But this has to be settled through talks between the parties and the government.

Asked about the difference of views over issues like withdrawal of the state of emergency, she said both sides should seek innovative solutions in this regard.

Replying to another question, she said the UN is confident that the general election would be held in time with participation of all parties.

At the meeting, members of the AL body told the UN team that the polls must be held as scheduled. They said they will not take part in it if AL President Sheikh Hasina is not released unconditionally to contest the election.

"We told them that we want to participate in the upcoming parliamentary election under the leadership of Hasina," Faruk Chowdhury, also a member of the AL advisory council, told The Daily Star.

He said the current political situation and election, among other issues, came up for discussions.

"We explained our position, and said the state of emergency will not be sure get in the way of a free and fair conduct of the election. So, withdrawal of emergency is a must," said the former diplomat.