

# Munshiganj

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the clashes that left 100 people injured and a sub-inspector killed.

Abdul Matin, a public prosecutor and Awami League Munshiganj town unit president, filed another case against 3,000 people including BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia, our Munshiganj correspondent reported.

Immediately after filing of the cases, Rab and police started hunting the accused.

Munshiganj Superintendent of Police Shafiqul Islam yesterday morning said they had arrested six persons. Commander Milan Mahmud of Munshiganj Rab camp said they had raided Barokhali, Laskarpur and Shologhar areas.

During the drives, law enforcers vandalised and looted several houses, alleged Shajahan Badal, convener of Arial Beel Raksha Committee and an accused in all three cases.

Inspector Farid of Sreenagar police lodged a case for the killing of Si Motiur Rahman while Inspector Abdul Kuddus filed another for attack on police at Chhanbari. Si Ataur Rahman filed the third for setting fire to Hashara police outpost.

Yesterday the areas were a deserted look. Shopkeepers at Laskarpur Bazar, Alampur Bazar, Dhali Bari Bus Stand, Hashara School Bus Stand area kept the shutters down.

Terror kept students away from schools and farmers from fields.

Locals said an Armed Police Battalion team swooped on innocent pedestrians and rickshaw pullers near Hashara Bus Stand around 11:45am.

Shop owners said about 10 to 12 people were picked up by police while other witnesses said at least 20 people were beaten up.

Chinu Rani Sarkar, mother of Ajay Sarkar who was held by the armed police members, said, "My son was not involved in any demonstration. He just came back from his in-laws' house today [yesterday]."

Police also assaulted ATN Bangla reporter Shawkat Milton and Baishakhi TV cameraperson MK Rahul when they went to cover the incident.

A tea stall owner, who opened his stall for a very short time, told The Daily Star "Who would dare open shops after the police action? Besides, police have filed cases."

"Fearing arrest, many people spent night in the Beel while some took shelter in nearby villages," said Aminul Islam, a local youth of Laskarpur. He, too, stayed out all night.

SSC candidates, already a

bag of nerves on the eve of their exams, got into a panic after the violence.

Locals said police action in Hashara union had begun hours after the Monday turmoil.

"Over 100 people, some in police uniform and some in black dresses, started the operation around 2:30am [yesterday] while we were sleeping," an elderly woman told The Daily Star, preferring anonymity.

Residents said at least 50 houses have been vandalised by law enforcers.

Sakhawat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sreenagar Police Station, denied the allegation and said they raided to recover four firearms "which the demonstrators looted after setting fire to Hashara police outpost".

He claimed one of the four shotguns was found abandoned in Sreenagar at Monday midnight.

But Ozear Rahman, who is in charge of Hashara highway police outpost, said risking life they had saved those arms. Only 15 bullets were lost during the incident, he said.

This corresponded visiting Laskarpur area of the union found more than 40 houses ransacked. Furniture, refrigerators and windowpanes were damaged.

The law enforcers had rummaged through the houses and beat residents who protested the exercise.

Seventy-year-old Sabirunnesa, who lives in her two-room house with her widowed daughter, said "the intruders" vandalised their showcase, windows and ceiling fan.

"I have been saving Tk 8,000 over a long period to pay off my microcredit instalment. But policemen took it away," Shiilpi Begum, a woman who lives in a small hut, said wiping her tears.

Momena Begum, wife of Sheikh Mokhles, a local farmer, alleged "the intruders" vandalised their showcase and almirah and took away her ornaments and Tk 50,000 cash.

"My husband was not home last night fearing police arrest," she said.

Saidur Rahman, a rickshaw puller, said police raided and vandalised his house. Family of Ratan, an expatriate, had almost the same experience.

Police beat up Nurul Huda, imam of Uttar Laskarpur Masjid, to stop him from making any announcement on the mosque's loudspeaker about police atrocities, said Aminul, another resident.

The government has decided to build the airport in an area that includes thousand acres of agricultural land and part of a wetland, Arial Beel, provoking angry protests from locals.

# India in 'stalemate' with Maoists

**Says minister**  
AFP, New Delhi

India's home minister yesterday said security forces were locked in a "stalemate" with Maoist insurgents despite a crackdown in 2010 that killed a record number of people.

India's left-wing guerilla movement, which began in 1967, feeds off land disputes, police brutality and corruption and is strongest in the poorest and most deprived areas of India, many of which are rich in natural resources.

The Indian government launched a major offensive by police and paramilitary forces in the second half of 2009 which intensified last year to fight what is sometimes referred to by sections of the Indian media as the "red menace".

# Zia plotted

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his co-accused will find their place in history; Zia and "his gang of conspirators" will be unmasked.

The observations came during hearing on a writ petition at the bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain.

The petition was filed by Anwar, Taher's wife Lutfa Taher and Fatema Yusuf, wife of Yusuf Ali Khan who was sentenced to life in prison by the same military court.

It challenges Martial Law Regulation No.16 of 1976, under which Taher was tried for sedition and executed.

While making his statement, Anwar read aloud a few lines from Taher's testimony before the 1976 tribunal:

"A law is not a law unless it aims at the good of the people and the country. The ordinance promulgated on June 14, 1976, is a black law. It was promulgated to suit the designs of the government. The ordinance is illegal. So this tribunal ceases to have any right legally or morally to try me."

# Nobel committee

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very positive picture together that the Committee came to the conclusion it did," said a press statement issued by Grameen Bank, quoting the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

The bank issued the statement on Thursday after it received a letter from the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Geir Lundestad, secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, signed the letter dated January 27.

The committee issued the letter after a Norwegian TV aired a documentary in December last year titled "Caught in Micro-debt" saying Yunus mishandled some donors' fund.

Later, various reports were published in Bangladesh.

In the letter, Lundestad said the committee has learned about the "charges recently leveled against Yunus and Grameen Bank" in Norway and Bangladesh.

"As I have already stated on various occasions to the media, before the Norwegian Nobel Committee in 2006 decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Yunus and to Grameen Bank, it had for several years looked into their qualifications.

"Without going into detail since there is 50 year secrecy rule for the entire Nobel system, I can testify to the fact that the vetting process was actually even more thorough than what is normally the case," the letter read.

The secretary said the committee consulted several top international and Norwegian experts on Yunus and Grameen Bank before taking the final decision.

Grameen Bank welcomed the letter from the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

"We warmly welcome this support from the Norwegian Nobel Committee, who represents a major support within this context. We have no doubt that this present declaration will serve as a strong proof of the integrity of both Professor Yunus and the Grameen Bank," read the Grameen Bank press release.

# Slain journo's

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around 5:00am, said Monirul Islam, deputy commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) of police.

Paraded at the DB office at city's Minto Road, Yon confessed to have committed the double murder along with his friend Razu to loot some money and valuables from his uncle's house.

A Dhaka Court placed him on a four-day remand for interrogation.

At the press briefing, he said he planned to loot the house a few days ago failing to bear the cost of his mess.

He shared the plan with his friend Razu and told him that they would kill the couple if needed.

According to his account, the two reached Farhad's house around 11:00pm on Thursday when the couple arranged a bed for them.

They entered the couple's bedroom around 2:00am on Friday -- two hours after they went to sleep -- and looked for the keys of the cupboard but did not find.

At one stage, they

brought two knives from the kitchen.

Yon said he then slit Farhad's throat and Razu that of his wife Rahima's. Afterwards, they collected the keys and looted Tk 20,000, some gold ornaments and Farhad's cellphone.

Police recovered the bodies of Farhad Khan, 60, senior assistant editor of the daily Janata, and his wife Rahima, 55, around 5:30pm on Friday.

Immediately after the incident, the two went to Yon's mess, and Yon later came to his uncle's house to attend the funeral.

He is the son of Farhad's younger sister Naznin Zamanlty.

Shahed Khan, a nephew of Farhad, said Yon earlier stole 20 tolas of gold ornaments from his mother and sister.

Police recovered his blood-stained shirt and pants, two knives used in the killings and Farhad's cellphone yesterday.

On Sunday, another suspect in the case was arrested.

# 276 officials now OSD

**Ashraf tells JS**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as six secretaries, 30 additional secretaries and 240 other government officials are now working as officer on special duty (OSD) for different reasons.

Of the 240 officials, 162 are joint secretaries while 78 deputy secretaries.

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, also in-charge of establishment ministry in the parliamentary affairs, yesterday said this in the House in response to lawmakers' queries.

The minister cited various reasons for making those officers OSDs. The reasons include public interest, promotion to higher posts, trainings, corruption charges etc.

He said the officials do not have any difficulty in drawing their salaries and enjoying service facilities.

Meanwhile, replying to lawmakers' queries, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the government is considering setting up permanent attorney service to recruit public prosecutors to conduct the cases involving public interest.

In response to another query, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas said the country is facing shortage of fish by around 60,000 metric tonnes. This shortfall is being met through importing, he said.

# Boi Mela

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become successful this year to add an aesthetic look to stall decoration and premises," he said. He expressed the hope of month-long good participation of readers, visitors, publishers and writers.

The sellers also looked vibrant in their stalls as they found a good number of booklovers as soon as the fair was opened for public.

"We have sold around 40 books in 30 minutes. It is really encouraging and I hope we will get a big crowd throughout the month," said Shaheen of Anupam publication.

However, a number of stalls both inside the premises and on the road outside were not ready yesterday. Officials of the stalls said they were doing the last-minute decoration and would be ready by today.

Like the previous years, visitors were disturbed by dust on the first day as many were seen walking with hands on their mouth.

The authorities have installed an e-centre where visitors would get information about new books and other facilities on large screens.

# Outpost burnt

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when agitated people set fire to the outpost.

The Hashara police outpost came under attack as protesters of a proposed airport in the Arial Beel in Munshiganj clashed with law-enforcers leaving one policeman dead.

"The money included my salary and Christmas bonus. Now who will I complain to?" John told The Daily Star.

John, who is serving the police department for 32 years, said he is the only wage-earner of his four-member family that includes his wife, their son and daughter.

"I joined this outpost on December 29 and did not go home since then. I withdrew the salary and bonus just a few days ago," he said.

"This is a huge loss for a poor man like me as my whole family depends on my income," he said.

"All the valuables I had in the outpost were burned except the clothes I am wearing now. This is the fate of all the police members living here," John added.

Policemen of the outpost said they could only save their lives and firearms. They said a tin-shed and tin-fenced house for a highway police outpost is very insecure.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Highway) Md Sohrab Hossain visited the outpost yesterday.

Talking to reporters, the DIG said there was no reason to attack the highway outpost as it only deals with law-enforcement on the roads.

# Egypt protesters

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injured -- has sent jitters throughout the Middle East.

King Abdullah II of Jordan sacked his government after weeks of demands for change, Yemen's president summoned parliament ahead of a "day of rage" called for Thursday, and a Facebook group of Syrian youth called for a peaceful revolution to start on Friday.

A committee of Egyptian opposition groups, which includes ElBaradei and the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, pledged that there would be no negotiations with the regime until Mubarak "leaves."

Men, women and children swarmed Cairo's streets from early morning, joining hundreds who had spent the night in Tahrir Square in tents or sleeping on the grass.

Protester Madiha Shalaby, 38, held aloft a sign in the square calling on the "US to support Egyptians."

Basma Mahmud, 30, said: "We are waiting for them to say he has left, that he is on a plane. This is our dream."

Chants of "Revolution! Revolution until victory!" rang out amid the festive atmosphere in the square.

Soldiers in tanks encircled the square but they held no fear for the happy crowds.

An army statement to "the great people of Egypt" on Monday said "your armed forces, acknowledging the legitimate rights of the people," stress that "they have not used and will not use force against the Egyptian people."

The army's position drew praise from Washington as Defence Secretary Robert Gates spoke by telephone with his Egyptian counterpart, Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, yesterday.

"Thus far the Egyptian military has acted with professionalism and restraint," Pentagon spokesman Colonel Dave Lapan told reporters.

It was a position echoed by British Prime Minister David Cameron. "In his calls, the prime minister welcomed the restraint the Egyptian army had shown today and emphasised the importance of allowing the protests to take place peacefully," his office said.

"The prime minister called for an orderly transition to a broad-based government, including opposi-

tion figures." The US and British governments both kept in touch with opposition leaders as well as the government, as Washington ordered the evacuation of all non-essential staff from Egypt.

US ambassador Margaret Scobey spoke by telephone with ElBaradei, a US official.

"The British ambassador in Cairo, Dominic Aquith has had a range of contacts on the ground today with both government and opposition figures, including Mohammed ElBaradei," a Foreign Office statement said.

The New York Times reported that Frank Wisner, a former US ambassador to Egypt, had been sent to meet Mubarak directly, but that officials would not say whether Wisner would urge him to leave office.

Writing in the same paper, senior US Senator John Kerry said it was time for Mubarak to say clearly he will step down.

"It is not enough for President Mubarak to pledge 'fair' elections, as he did on Saturday," said Kerry, who is chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"The most important step that he can take is to address his nation and declare that neither he nor the son (Gamal) he has been positioning as his successor will run in the presidential election this year."

ElBaradei told Al-Arabiya television that Mubarak should leave by Friday.

"What I have heard (from protesters) is that they want this to end, if not today (Tuesday), then by Friday maximum," he said.

But he called for Mubarak to be spared prosecution. "I'm for a safe exit for President Mubarak," the Nobel peace laureate told US-funded Al-Hurra television.

"We're going to turn the page; we can pardon the past," he said.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that, according to unconfirmed reports, a total of 300 people had died in the unrest so far, with casualties "mounting on a daily basis."

Foreigners continued to throng Cairo airport for flights out as several governments announced they were sending charter aircraft to assist the exodus.

# Khaleida sued

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Sreenagar Police Station to take necessary steps.

Apolice sub-inspector was killed and around 100 were injured in a series of clashes on Dhaka-Mawa highway on Monday between the police and people protesting the proposed construction of an international airport on Arial Beel.

Filing of the case against Khaleida triggered instant protest from BNP; its parliamentary party (BNPPP) asked the government to withdraw the case within 24 hours.

The opposition party will stage demonstrations across the country today to press the demand for immediate withdrawal of the case.

In a late-night development, BNP decided to call a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal in protest against the case against its chairperson, and for realising its various demands.

The decision was taken at a meeting of top leaders of the party with the chairperson at her Gulshan office.

The hartal programme might be announced today, party sources said.

Seeking anonymity, a BNP leader said the party will go for hartal probably on February 7.

In the capital, the opposition activists brought out processions in different areas yesterday and set fire to several vehicles including a police van.

Police arrested 10 activists from the party's Nayapaltan central office area following chase and counter-chase between the two sides. They also charged batons to disperse the demonstrators when they set fire to a bus.

Later in the afternoon, addressing a press conference at the BNP central office, party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain announced

the countrywide demonstration programme today, and urged the party men to make it a success.

He announced the programme following a meeting with senior leaders of the party.

"Government has taken a stance against the people by taking the initiative to build an unnecessary airport in Munshiganj," Delwar said. And it did not even conduct feasibility studies for the project, he added.

Many locals will lose their ancestral homes and land if the airport is built following whimsical decisions of the government.

At a separate press briefing at the parliament media centre, Chief Whip of the Opposition Zainul Abidin Faroque asked the government to withdraw the case within 24 hours, and warned of fierce protests if it was not done.

He also said although it is an ethical duty of BNP to express solidarity with the people's movement, BNP is not involved in the agitation in Munshiganj. He opposition lamed local AL lawmakers for using their musclemen to foil the movement.

BNP lawmakers Nazrul Islam Manzu, ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee, ZIM Mostafa Ali, Shammi Akhtar and Nilufar Chowdhury Moni were present at the press briefing.

In the city, demonstrators yesterday set fire to a police van at Nayapaltan, a passenger bus at Mirpur and another bus at Pallabi. No casualty was reported.

Today, the main opposition party will also hold a protest rally at the city's Muktangan, as announced on Monday demanding resignation of the election commissioners.

# Transport staff

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Witnesses said the mobile court, supported by Rapid Action Battalion, started to check fitness, detect hydraulic horn, black smoke spewing vehicles in front of Kashipur High School on Barisal-Dhaka highway around 11:30am..

The court fined seven buses Tk 5,000 each and sentenced five drivers to one month's imprisonment, including a fine of Tk 1000 each. Md Qamaruzzaman, executive magistrate of environment directorate led the drive, said a press release of the directorate.

The court went into operation without any prior notice, claimed Aftab Hossain, president of city Shramik League and road transport workers' union.

It also physically assaulted transport workers and leaders who failed to pay the fine or protested its action, he added.

According to the workers, the situation worsened after the law enforcers assaulted Shah Alam, secretary of the workers' union.

Incensed, they assembled at Nathullabad central bus terminal, about a kilometre away from the mobile court spot and blocked the highway around 12:30pm.

The agitated workers attacked a police pickup while it was crossing the terminal area around 1:15 pm, witnesses said.

Six policemen were riding the van on their return trip from a protocol duty of ruling party whip ASM Firoj.

A strong contingent of riot police rushed to the spot and controlled the situation charging baton and lobbing huge number of tear gas shells around 2:30pm.

Police also raided houses of workers' leaders and ransacked offices of road transport workers' union, transport tickets booths, waiting rooms and shops in the terminal area, mentioned locals.

Binoy Krishna Bala, deputy inspector general of Barisal police, claimed police maintained highest restraint even after some of its members were injured seriously.

Denying any firing incident, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Abdur Rahim said law enforcers controlled the situation by charging baton and firing tear gas.

The mobile court did not inform the administration about its operation, noted Barisal Deputy Commissioner ASM Afrifur Rahman.

The decision of operating the court near an SSC examination centre was imprudent, observed officials.

Leader of the mobile court Md Qamaruzzaman, however, said they duly informed the administration about the operation.

High officials of Barisal division, district and police visited the spot and hospital.

A group of road transport workers brought out a procession in the city yesterday evening demanding punishment of Aftab Hossain for the unrest.