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Robbers kill driver, helper to loot truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of a truck driver and his helper from an abandoned truck near the Kumargati graveyard on Nagarbari-Bogra highway in Ullahpara upazila.

The dead are truck driver Monju Mia, 40, and his younger brother Riazul Islam, 35, hailed from Sreeballabhpur village of Kurigram Sadar.

A gang of robbers looted a Kurigram-bound wheat-laden truck from Chittagong on the highway, said Abdul Based,

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Medicare at stake

Medical representatives go for aggressive promotion during busy hours at hospitals

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

In aggressive promotion of pharmaceutical drugs the country's medical representatives invade hospitals during busy working hours in violation of marketing code and medical ethics, according to doctors and witnesses.

Visiting the outpatient sections of several public hospitals in the capital The Daily Star correspondent found many medical representatives talking to doctors in their rooms, while patients waited outside.

Public hospital doctors usually see patients from 8:00am to 2:30pm. Medical representatives are allowed to visit doctors when they are not busy with patients, and most hospitals have specific time and date set for the drug promoters.

But medicine promoters are seen roaming hospital corridors and invading doctors' chambers all through

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Medical representatives cajoling an outpatient in front of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital to see if their companies' drugs are prescribed by the doctors.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Jamaat leader held with 10 firearms

BSS, Comilla

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested a Jamaat leader along with 10 firearms at West Deka of Chaudhagram upazila in Comilla.

A special team of the elite force raided a house in the area at about 5:45 am and arrested Nazrul Islam alias Mamun, general secretary of Alpara unit of Jamaat.

Rab members recovered a loaded pistol, two

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Financing budget a major challenge

MCCI for special attention to inflation control

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Financing the coming year's budget will be a major challenge for the government, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) has observed.

Implementation of the proposals is another big test, it said in a written statement yesterday.

The trade body suggested that the government puts special emphasis on containing inflation.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith placed Tk 1,635.89-billion budget for the fiscal year 2011-12 in parliament on Thursday.

Of the outlay, 56.2 percent will come

from tax revenue, 13.8 percent from non-tax revenue and 11 percent from foreign loan and grants. Another 16.6 percent is to come from domestic sources, mostly from bank loans.

Since the projected borrowing from banks is much higher than in the previous budget, the MCCI opined that there must be a cap on the government borrowing.

Instead of borrowing, the government should seek a fair share of the financial package to be made available to the developing countries as pledged in the G-20 Summit recently.

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Withdraw hartal

FBCCI urges BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) yesterday urged BNP to withdraw a nationwide 36-hour-long hartal and opt for an alternative as it hinders country's economic growth.

"The hartal programme hampers the normal growth of the economy and the private sector will face difficulties from such a programme," observed FBCCI President AK Azad. He was addressing a

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Gas hopes remain elusive for industries

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Syfur Rahman Khokon, a steel mill entrepreneur who deposited Tk 40 lakh with Titas nearly two years ago for gas connection, is yet to get it. He spends Tk 30 lakh a month in repaying instalment of bank loan and for staff payments.

He is almost exhausted and pumping money from his other units of businesses for survival. He may take the hard decision of shutting down the factory and let his 22 employees go in next two months.

Nasir Group of Industries is also not getting gas connection for its newly set up Tk 700 crore glassware and tube industries. Nasiruddin Biswas, the owner of the group, has to bear a loss of Tk 2.5 crore a

month. Biswas has now decided to use costly compressed natural gas (CNG).

There are several hundred ready-made garments and textile factories facing the same problem for the last two years. But not all of them are like Syfur or Biswas, who have other businesses. Many entrepreneurs has single unit of business and are getting frustrated.

These entrepreneurs were eagerly waiting for the government to address the gas crisis in the budget proposal for fiscal 2011-12. They are now shocked and feeling doomed.

"If the government was unable to supply gas, why has it kept crores of taka as deposit since 2009," questioned Syfur,

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One killed in boiler blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A boiler explosion at a rice mill in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna left one worker dead and two others seriously injured yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Md Ranu Hossain, 36, of Dhulauri village in Chatmohar upazila of the district.

Locals said the

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PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

On this day in 2007, a total of 127 people living in the valleys of Chittagong lost their lives in a series of landslides.

Following the incident steps were taken to rehabilitate people living in those places and stop hill cutting. This photo taken yesterday from Lalkhanbazar Matijharna indicates that those steps have remained on paper only.

Three killed in "gunfight"

BSS, Khagrachhari

At least three people were killed during a "gunfight" at the remote Naraichhari village of Dighinala upazila yesterday, sources said.

Police and locals said the gunfight was between Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

Border Guard Bangladesh officials identified two of the three dead as Sargeswar Sharma and Shiro Chakma, both in their 30s.

Abdul Qader, officer-in-charge of Dighinala Police Station, said, "We are trying to gather the detailed information. A police team will be sent to the spot."

BGB officials referring to local sources said the victims were members of PCJSS led by Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, better known as Santu Larma.

A group of UPDF members attacked the PCJSS men at a local bazar in the afternoon and then the firing ensued,

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The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

How do you look at the proposed budget for fiscal year 2011-2012?

Better (21.3%)
Worse (39.5%)
Usual (39.2%)

TOTAL VOTES: 291

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think opposition's 36-hour hartal is justified?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

Syrian troops raid flashpoint town

22 killed as US, Turkey slam regime; protesters claim of mutiny

AGENCIES

Syrian security forces launched a long-feared crackdown in a flashpoint town yesterday and killed at least 22 democracy demonstrators nationwide, as Turkey accused the regime of atrocities and the US slammed the "slaughter of innocent lives."

"Army units have started their mission to control Jisr al-Shughur and neighbour-

ing villages and arrest the armed gangs," state television said, adding that the raid on the northwestern town came "at the request of residents."

One witness told AFP that "military forces bombarded the villages around Jisr al-Shughur in their advance on the town."

Rights activists said most of the 50,000 inhabitants of Jisr al-Shughur had fled -- many to neighbouring Turkey -- when

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Toxic gas kills 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three people died after inhaling toxic gas trapped inside a septic tank of an under-construction building in Bashabati of Bagerhat district on Thursday evening.

The deceased are mason Abdul Malek, 40, of Joygachi village, Shohag Nakib, 28, of Raghunathpur village and Sheikh Ariful Islam, 17, of Gobordia village under Bagerhat Sadar upazila.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

This photo of waterlogged Dhania Bazar Road of Jatrabari in the capital was not taken after a heavy shower, but on a bright, sunny summer day yesterday. Due to poor drainage, this road remains under ankle-deep water for several days after rain.