

Criminals

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Daily Star a gang of five to several persons in another car intercepted the Toyota Corolla on Khilji Road.

The criminals, identifying themselves as police, said they would search the car. As the driver opened the window, they asked all to step out of the car, the OC said.

When everyone came out, the criminals snatched two handbags, five mobile phones, a gold chain and Tk 9,000 in cash, and sped away on the cars.

“The additional DIG was unarmed and he did not disclose his identity,” the OC said.

Abu Musa is also a member of Directing Staff (MDS-Research and Evaluation) of Police Staff College at Mirpur.

The OC said after the criminals left the scene, the additional DIG informed other policemen of the incident.

“When policemen of a check post at Shyamoli identified the stolen car, they chased it. But the criminals escaped, leaving behind two bags of booty and a mobile phone on the road.”

Biplab Sarkar, assistant police commissioner of Mohammadpur zone, said, “We are trying to recover the car and arrest the criminals.”

Several other police officials also confirmed the incident to The Daily Star.

But Imam Hossain, deputy police commissioner of Tejgaon division, claimed that the additional DIG was not present during the incident.

Emdadul Sheikh, the driver of the car, filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station. The case statement did not mention the additional DIG.

The Daily Star failed to reach Abu Musa for his comments.

Zardari

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that day. Correspondents say that by ensuring that both cases are heard on the same day, the court has effectively narrowed the legal options of the prime minister.

Gilani is being tried for contempt because he has refused to write a letter to the Swiss authorities despite a Supreme Court order which overturned an amnesty on corruption cases said to be politically motivated.

The BBC's M Ilyas Khan in Islamabad says yesterday's court order is likely to further heighten the tensions between the government and the judiciary.

Many in Pakistan wonder whether this is a power struggle between two state institutions or a battle to ensure the rule of law, our correspondent says.

SWISS 'LAUNDERING' The prime minister, who has pleaded not guilty to the contempt charges, faces jail and being barred from office if convicted.

In explaining why he did not ask for the cases to be reopened, Mr Gilani has said it would have been unconstitutional to pursue them as the president has immunity as head of state.

In 2003 Zardari and his late wife, Benazir Bhutto, were found guilty in absentia by a Swiss court of laundering millions of dollars in kickbacks from Swiss firms while they were in government.

They appealed and Swiss officials dropped the case in 2008 at the request of the government led by the Pakistan People's Party of Zardari.

The case was one of thousands dropped under an amnesty agreed with then President Pervez Musharraf that allowed Benazir Bhutto to return from self-imposed exile and run for election in 2008. She was assassinated shortly after returning.

However in 2009 Pakistan's Supreme Court declared the amnesty unconstitutional, leaving those covered by it open to prosecution.

Analysts say the court and the government are locked in a power struggle over who is the final arbiter of the rule of law.

Body flown

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A special flight of Saudi Airlines arrived at Shahjalal International Airport at 7:15pm to take the body of Khalaf Al Ali and had left at 8:25pm, said officials at the airport. Several top officials of the Saudi embassy in Dhaka went along with the body to Saudi Arabia.

Al Ali, who had been working at the embassy for about two years, was shot dead around 30 yards from his house on Road-120 in Gulshan early Tuesday.

A namaj-e-janaza was held after Asr prayers yesterday at the mosque of Shahjalal International Airport. Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh Abdullah Bin Naser Al-Busairi, diplomats from different countries, several ministers of the Bangladesh government, officials of the foreign ministry and leaders from Awami League, BNP and other political parties and senior police officials took part in the namaj-e-janaza.

Talking to the media, Mahbub Ul Alam Hanif, joint general secretary of ruling Awami League, stressed the need for beefing up security measures in the diplomatic zone in Dhaka.

He urged the government to remove offices of political parties and all business establishments from the diplo-

matic zone of the capital.

BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan, however, said, “The government should not pass their responsibilities on others' shoulders. They should try to carry out their own duties so that no diplomats are killed in future...”

Meanwhile, law enforcers and police could not make any headway with their investigation even though three days had gone by since the murder. Several teams of Gulshan division police, Detective Branch of Police, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Rapid Action Battalion were working on it.

Khandaker Lutful Kabir, deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division, said, “We are trying our best to find the motive of the murder and the killers.”

Meanwhile, Rab around 6:00am Wednesday picked up Anwar Hossain, a water-pump technician of the building in front of which Ali was found.

Anwar reportedly heard a gunshot, saw a man standing between the body and a white car, and the man leaving by the car.

Commander M Sohail, director of Legal and Media wing of Rab, however, said he was unaware of Anwar being picked up for questioning.

MPs blast

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Imajuddin Pramanik demanded that the government deploy army to ensure irrigation in the northern region, which, according to him, meets the major portion of the country's annual rice demand.

It took almost over an hour as a total of nine MPs vented their annoyance over the power situation on point of order.

All the MPs taking floor said they cannot say anything as people in their respective constituencies ask them when the power situation will improve.

"I am going to my constituency tonight with a deep sense of sorrow in my mind as I will have to tell people again that the situation will be alright when they will ask me about the outage," commented veteran AL lawmaker Tofail Ahmed.

While speaking on point of order, a number of MPs enquired the state minister for power about the amount of power his ministry had generated in the last three years.

"The government is saying that around 3,500 megawatt power has been generated in its tenure. Then where is that power? Why the whole country is suffering from power outage?" Fazle Rabbi Mia launched the blistering attack.

Taking floor on a point of order, Rabbi demanded that the state minister for power came up with a formal statement in the House to clarify where the 3,500 MW power has been and is being used.

"You have to answer why there is load-shedding in the country," Rabbi, also chief of the parliamentary body on law ministry, said.

AL lawmaker Sadhan Chandra Majumder said farmers of his constituency get power only from 2:00am to 6:00am which is very inadequate for irrigation.

8 arrested

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DB also seized six train tickets from them.

Mohammad Alamgir, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said the detainees, all from Rangunia upazila, were preparing to go to Dhaka on the night of March 11.

But he could say what their political affiliations are.

6 of a family die

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injuries at the hospital.

Munsi Sahabuddin, assistant superintendent of police (Natore circle), said the bodies were handed over to their family members in the presence of Government Railway Police officials without autopsy as they had no claim.

Workers

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copies of newspaper, heading for Tangail, Jamalpur and Kaliakoir.

Around 10 workers were injured when a Dhaka-bound bus of Hanif Paribahan rammed into their nosimon, a locally made motor van. They were returning to their homes around 4:00am.

They were rushed to the clinic located inside the factory premises.

However, at one point, a rumour of three deaths spread like wildfire causing the aggrieved workers to take to the streets.

The workers withdrew the blockade around 7:30am when police intervened and assured them that no one had died in the accident, said Harunur Rashid, a sub-inspector of Joydevpur Police Station.

Solar storm

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systems, airline flights, satellites and power grids, Nasa and other US agencies warned.

The leading edge of the coronal mass ejection -- a burst of hot plasma and charged particles -- that erupted from the Sun early Wednesday reached Earth yesterday at 1045 GMT (5:45am Eastern time in the United States), said an update from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Predictions that the storm would reach a level three on a scale of five, or a "strong" level of solar radiation and geomagnetic storming, continue to "look justified," the NOAA said.

"So far the orientation of the magnetic field has been opposite of what is needed to cause the strongest storming. As the event progresses, that field will continue to change."

NASA had forecast late Wednesday that the storm could reach "severe" levels, and its effects were expected to last through today.

The storm is likely "the strongest one since December 2006," NOAA scientist Joseph Kunches said on Wednesday.

Astronauts aboard the International Space Station were not expected to be affected by the radiation storm, Nasa said.

Experts on space weather were to give an update on the storm's effects later yesterday.

Geomagnetic and radiation storms are growing more frequent as the Sun leaves its solar minimum period and moves into a solar maximum over the coming years, but people are generally protected by Earth's magnetic field.

However, some experts are concerned that because the world is more reliant on GPS and satellite technology now than it was during the last solar maximum, more disruptions to modern life are likely.

Bhasani

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entire province continued to be run under Mujib's directives.

There was yet no move on the part of the Pakistan military regime to initiate negotiations with the Awami League in light of Bangabandhu's declaration of March 7. However, a series of meetings went on at army headquarters in Rawalpindi, the ostensible purpose of which was to find ways and means of tackling the popular movement in East Pakistan. It was obvious that the regime had been placed in a spot by Mujib's demand that power be transferred to the elected representatives of the people.

Additionally, the fact that Mujib was in reality running the show in East Pakistan was a clear sign of how diluted the authority of the Pakistan government had become in the province. In effect, what alarmed the regime was that while the Bengali leader had not gone for independence for Bangladesh, he had made sure that the government of Pakistan be looked upon for the illegality that it was, especially against the background of its refusal to convene the national assembly or make a move toward a quick transfer of power to the majority party.

With each passing day, Bengali militancy went up by sure degrees. Nothing happened in East Pakistan unless it had the sanction of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

NAME OF PROPOSED BANK	MAJOR SHAREHOLDERS
UNION BANK LTD (19 SHAREHOLDERS)	Former president HM Ershad, Shahidul Alam, Golam Moshi.
MODHUMATI BANK LTD (38)	Fazle Noor Taposh MP, Humayun Kabir.
CHARTERED BANK LTD (28)	Enamul Haque Chowdhury, Shahabuddin Ahmed,
MEGHNA BANK (22)	HM Ashikur Rahman MP, Nasrul Hamid MP.
THE FARMERS' BANK LTD (13)	Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir
KOTAK BANGLA BANK LTD (12)	Nitol Motors Ltd, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Pran Agro Business Ltd
PEOPLE'S ISLAMI BANK LTD (20)	Abul Kashem, MA Awai, Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury, Ifad Autos Ltd,
FEDERAL BANK (18)	M Abul Hashem, Sultan Ahmed Dewan, Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury, and Ifad Autos Ltd.
SOUTH BANGLA AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE BANK (14)	SM Amjad Hossain, Dr Abdul Mannan Chowdhury and Qazi Abdul Majid
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BANK (16)	Motiul Islam
THE PEOPLE'S BANK (26)	Mirza Azam, SM Jahangir Alam and Mosharraf Hossain.
FEDERAL BANK (26)	Shahriar Alam, Harunur Rashid, Capt ABM Tajul Islam and Meghna Cycle Industries Ltd
MIDLAND BANK LTD (33)	Moniruzzaman Khan Khandker
TMSS KHUDRA PUNJI BANK (30)	Hosne Ara, Orion Pharma Ltd, Belhasa Accom JV Ltd.
SELF EMPLOYMENT BANK (43)	Mahbuba Kabir, late National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Abdul Latif, Prof Shahin Mahbuba Kabir, Prof Akhteruzzaman and Dr Md Iqbal Mahmud Chowdhury.
KOREA-BANGLA BANK (15)	Engineer Enamul Haque

Central bank

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With time came more pressure, forcing the BB to make a big list.

Applicants for the new banks include former military ruler and Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad and Awami League lawmaker and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's nephew Fazle Noor Taposh.

As per rules, the BB holds the ultimate power to approve new banks. But in reality, it is now allowing banks by those enjoying blessings of the government high-ups, a number of officials told The Daily Star yesterday, requesting anonymity.

The central bank had faced tremendous pressure from the government high-ups to quickly approve those banks even before it could properly

scrutinise the applications, they added.

Normally, at least three committees of the central bank scrutinise the applications before giving the go ahead and the process takes at least six months.

But in this case, the BB is set to place the applications in its board meeting on March 15, only three months into the submission. However, a BB official claimed that the applications would go to the table on completion of all the formalities.

In addition, the BB board on the day is likely to approve three banks by Non-resident Bangladeshis. Earlier the authorities had decided to allow one such bank.

Two of the three applicants could not produce their

income tax certificates, but the matter was overlooked, a finance ministry official said.

Since the 1980s, each of the three major political parties--AL, BNP and JP -- during its rule allowed setting up of new banks. The AL during its previous term approved 13 new banks.

The International Monetary Fund and leading economists in the country oppose setting up of new banks at the moment. They argue that more banks in the already saturated market will set off an ill competition and worsen the current liquidity crisis.

But the government says it still sees scopes for more banks given the size of the economy and growth in the export-import business.

Declaration

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Nayapaltan in the capital.

The decision came at a standing committee meeting that also fixed the party's "plan of action" as to what it would do if the government obstructed the rally.

However, none of the standing committee members commented before the media on the meeting agenda.

The three-hour meeting that ended around 12:30am today also discussed ways to make the rally a success even if the government imposed a ban, party sources said.

A possible return of the BNP lawmakers to parliament was also discussed.

Today, Khaleda Zia, also the leader of the opposition in the House, is likely to issue a statement on the latest political situation in the country.

KSA wants

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information and help each other," Foreign Minister Dipu Moni told journalists yesterday at her office.

The main objective is to find out the killers and bring them to justice, she said, adding, "Therefore, they can come."

Meanwhile, Saudi Ambassador to Dhaka Abdullah Al Bussairi yesterday in a statement reiterated KSA's demand for necessary measures to arrest the people involved in the "heinous crime" and bringing them to book.

"The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has confidence in the capability of the government of Bangladesh in identifying the criminals and announce their identification and motive behind the assassination," he said.

Dipu Moni said if necessary, international assistance would be sought to investigate the killing, but "we have not asked for it yet".

Asked whether Bangladesh would seek any international assistance for the probe, Dipu Moni said the investigators were already working on the case and "if at some point they feel the need for any assistance they will ask for it". Whatever needed to achieve the ultimate goal would be done, she added.

She said the Bangladesh ambassador in Riyadh had already met the high officials of the ministry of foreign affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and appraised the steps taken by the government regarding the investigation.

Besides, Dipu Moni continued, she would herself visit Saudi Arabia on her way back from Hamburg next week and meet the high government officials of KSA to inform them further of Bangladesh government's steps.

The Foreign Minister will visit Germany on March 14 to hear the verdict of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) regarding the delimitation of maritime boundary with Myanmar.

On the panic among the expatriate Bangladeshis in KSA centring the embassy official's murder, she said, "It is an unprecedented incident for Bangladesh, but I see nothing to be worried or panicked about as we have properly appraised the incident to the Saudi authorities concerned and are maintaining constant contact and discussion with them."

The body of Khalaf Al-Ali was flown to Riyadh by a special flight of Saudi Airlines last night, after a namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayers) at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after the Asr prayer.

After the namaz-e-janaza of Khalaf Al-Ali, the Saudi ambassador told reporters that the incident would have no negative impact on the bilateral relations between the two countries. "The relations will remain as before," he said.