

MUGGERS' GANG

Cop among 3 hurt in gunfight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A policeman and two from a gang of muggers in a stolen car were wounded in a gunfight at Rupganj of Narayanganjearly yesterday. Injured Sub-inspector Khandokar Helaluddin of Shyampur Police Station and the two wounded criminals -- Abdul Halim, 30, and Zillur Rahman Zakir, 35 -- were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The two injured muggers are now under police custody. Helaluddin was later taken to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic

Rehabilitation for his serious injuries. He was shot in the abdomen and both the left and right legs, while Zakir was hit in the right leg and Halim in the right hand. SI Harunur Rashid, from the same police station, said they were tipped-off about the muggers roaming about in a stolen car in Shyampur since Monday. Following the lead the police team had positioned themselves to arrest the criminals at Arsalan area around 1:30am. "They sped away defying our signals to stop. We then chased them to Tarabo of Rupganj, where they opened fire on us. We returned fire,"

said SI Harun. The police team arrested Md Badsha, one of the muggers, and confiscated a cocktail and two knives from the hijacked car. At his DMCH bed, Zakir told The Daily Star that their four-member gang was making rounds in the stolen car to mug people when the police intercepted them. Their leader Babu Miah, who had stolen the car, fled the scene as he shot the cops and threw cocktails at them. "We tried to run away as driver Halim was shot. I was shot next when I tried to escape as the cops kept firing at us," he added.

US intercepts 'ricin' letter to Obama

AFP, Washington

A letter addressed to US President Barack Obama has preliminarily tested positive for the deadly poison ricin, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said yesterday. In a statement, the FBI said the investigation into the letter sent to Obama and another sent to Senator Roger Wicker was ongoing, adding there was "no indication of a connection" to the Boston Marathon bombings. The FBI said additional tests would be carried out over the next 24 to 48 hours to confirm the presence of ricin. The US Secret Service said the letter had been intercepted at a mail screening facility outside the White House on Tuesday, the same day authorities said a letter was sent to Wicker that also showed traces of ricin. Secret Service spokesman Edwin Donovan said the agency, which protects the president and his family, was working closely with the US Capitol Police and the FBI to trace the origins of the letter. At the US Capitol, sections of two Senate office buildings were briefly cordoned off amid reports of a suspicious package. Capitol Police later said results of tests conducted at the Hart Senate office building were negative and the closed-off areas were reopened. US Capitol Police confirmed one man was being questioned. "Right now they are interviewing a person but that person is not in custody. He has not been detained," a US Capitol Police officer told AFP. Senator Carl Levin issued a statement saying one of his staffers had discovered a "suspicious-looking letter" at a regional office in

Michigan and handed it over to authorities for further investigation. The discovery of the letters rattled nerves following the bomb attacks near the finish line at the Boston Marathon on Monday that killed three people and injured more than 180 others, though it was not clear if the incidents were linked. The episodes also recalled the mysterious series of letters laced with anthrax that were sent to lawmakers and some journalists following the September 11 attacks in 2001, which killed five peo-

ple and sickened 17 others. Congressional mail has been screened off-site since the 2001 incident. Three Senate office buildings were shut in 2004 after tests found ricin in mail that had been sent to the Senate majority leader's office. The biological agent was also sent to the White House and the Department of Transportation in November 2003. There were no injuries in those incidents. Ricin, when inhaled, can cause respiratory problems. Ingested orally, the protein is lethal in even miniscule quantities.

Ricin: potential bioterror weapon

What is it?

Poison found naturally in the seeds of the castor plant, provides plant with natural pesticide

Can be made from waste material left over from the industrial production of castor oil

Can be in form of powder or pellet, dissolved in water or weak acid

Has been used experimentally in medicine to kill cancer cells

Ricinus communis

Cultivated in India, Brazil, China for production of castor oil

Inhaled

difficulty breathing, heavy sweating, fluid build up on lungs, low blood pressure, respiratory failure

Ingestion

Vomiting, bloody diarrhea, severe dehydration, low blood pressure, seizures,

Organ failure: liver, spleen, kidneys

Injection

Severe internal bleeding, tissue death, collapse of organ systems

Death can take place within 36 to 72 hours of exposure

5 micrograms per kg of body weight can be lethal

The US and Britain experimented with ricin as a weapon in the 1940s

Reportedly weaponised by Iraq in the 1980s

Ricin was used in the 1978 assassination of Bulgarian writer Georgi Markov in London when he was stabbed with a ricin-tipped umbrella

Source: Congressional Research Service / CDC/Spiez Laboratory

Make India a global solar energy hub: PM

AFP, New Delhi

India's prime minister urged global companies yesterday to make the sun-baked South Asian nation a solar energy hub as the country seeks to cut its chronic power shortages. India, which has an average of 300 sunny days a year, sees solar power as a potentially vital energy source that could be key to boosting power supplies and reducing greenhouse gas emission in the world's third-worst carbon polluter. "India is potentially a large market for production of such (solar) equipment and it is also a potentially competitive, attractive production base for supplying other countries," Premier Manmohan Singh told a global energy conference.

"We therefore strongly encourage global manufacturers to set up production facilities in this area," Singh said at the Fourth Clean Energy Ministerial meeting in New Delhi attended by representatives of over 20 nations. India is working urgently to develop alternative power sources and wean itself away from polluting coal-fired generation to power an economy that is expected to grow by at least six percent this financial year. It has just 551 megawatts of solar capacity installed currently, according to government figures, and some 70 percent of the equipment comes from abroad. India's National Solar Mission launched in 2010 aims to generate 20

gigawatts of solar power by 2022 -- equivalent to one-eighth of the nation's current installed power base. The solar energy drive is also part of efforts to tackle frequent power outages especially in rural India that economists say knock an average 1.2 percentage points off annual growth. But barriers to widespread introduction of solar power remain such as lack of technology and subsidies to consumers. Once installed, however, experts say the costs are low and are mainly confined to maintenance. The Indian government has unveiled draft legislation that would allow the solar industry to obtain grants covering up to 40 percent of installation costs.

BNP threatens hartal in 2 divs Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The main opposition BNP yesterday warned of dawn-to-dusk hartal for Sunday in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions, if its leaders are not released by Saturday. Joint Secretary General of the party Mizanur Rahman Minu made the announcement at a press conference in Rajshahi city. He said the party had also decided to bring out processions and hold protest rallies in the divisions on Saturday to press home its demands. The other demands Minu mentioned in the media briefing include putting an end to "mass killing", restoration of caretaker government, withdrawal of "false" cases against BNP leaders and activists, and release of Amar Desh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman. Party leaders Asadul Habib Dulu, Harunur Rashid and Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul were also present in the press conference.

RECRUITMENT GRAFT Mridha, four others sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed four cases against five railway officials and staff including its suspended general manager (east zone) Yusuf Ali Mridha for the alleged anomalies and corruption in recruitment. Three ACC officials filed the cases with Kotwali Police Station, said Kotwali police. The other accused are Senior Welfare Officer (east zone) Golam Kibria, senior data entry operator Mohammad Hamidullah, carpenter Gias Uddin and Chandan Kumar Roy, a teacher at Bangladesh Railway Govt Children Park High School in Lalmonirhat.

Army rocket fire kills 12 in Syrian village

AFP, Beirut

Army rocket fire on a central Syrian village yesterday killed at least 12 people including women and children, a watchdog said, as warplanes attacked rebel enclaves near central Qusayr. Aircraft also struck Karam Huweimed and Tariq al-Bab in the northern city of Aleppo, as well as a rebel-held town nearby, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "The number of people killed in rocket fire by the army on eastern Bweida has risen to 12, among them a boy and a girl, two women, and eight men," said the Observatory, referring to the village in the central province of Homs. Nearby, clashes killed three rebel fighters close to the town of Abel, said the Britain-based group, adding that "regime troops used warplanes and rocket fire". Fighting also raged in other flashpoint areas of Homs province. "The regime is relying on fighters loyal to (Lebanese Shiite movement) Hezbollah and the (pro-regime paramilitary) National Defence Forces to root out rebel fighters in the Homs countryside," said the Observatory's Rami Abdel Rahman.

Nasim Osman

FROM PAGE 20 the press club. "We have made a list of journalists like you and decided your fate," Halim quoted Nasim as saying. The incident took place after a monthly meeting of district law and order committee at the deputy commissioner's office. A member of the committee, Halim is also the member secretary of the newly formed "Santras Nirmul Toki Mancha." The journalist later filed a general diary with Narayanganj Sadar Police Station in this connection. Meanwhile, Nasim Osman in a press statement claimed that Halim made "provocative" statements in the meeting which was enough to irk him.

Yunus given rare honour

FROM PAGE 1 "Professor Yunus set out to do what may be the biggest thing of all, and that is liberating people to seek a better life. And not just any people, but men and women who had only known misery, who had been told they were no good," House Speaker John Boehner said during the award ceremony in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol in Washington DC. "To do all this, he first had to teach himself how to run a bank from scratch. That was when he realised he had to do the exact opposite of what a bank normally does to make his idea work. Then there was actually getting people to borrow the money, to see value in themselves, to spark their sense of wonder. He had to convince them that they too didn't need rank or status to advance their place in life," he said.

House and Senate leaders presented Prof Yunus with the Congressional Gold Medal, which was announced in 2010. "It's very emotional. It's not only an endorsement, but an inspiration for everybody who has supported us - colleagues and friends, staff and borrowers of the Grameen Bank, all the people who participate in social business," a jubilant Yunus told The New York Times ahead of Wednesday's ceremony in Washington DC. "I'm grateful to the US Congress that it paid attention. Many people do good things that are never recognised. I'm very blessed that way," he said, while dedicating the honour to the people of Bangladesh. Yunus is best known for

developing the concept of microcredit and using that model of lending to promote economic and social opportunity. Through his Grameen Bank, Yunus pioneered the movement and helped hundreds of millions come out of poverty. Today, microfinance providers reach about 200 million clients globally. In Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank, the first bank in the world owned by poor women, has 8.4 million borrowers -- 96 percent of whom are women. Known as the Banker to the Poor, Yunus has set up many other enterprises that offer an array of products and services to the poor, to achieve his lone ambition of eradicating poverty from the world, or, as he likes to put it, "sending poverty to the museum". In 2010, the US Senate unanimously approved a bill to award Yunus the medal, which represents Congress' highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievement and contribution. Former recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal include George Washington, Sir Winston Churchill, Elie Wiesel, Pope John Paul II, Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr and Coretta Scott King. In the next five years, Yunus wants to see at least 1 percent of the world economy made up of social business, his new passion. "If we can make that 1 percent happen, I think the world will be completely different. People will see how exciting it is, and soon the level will rise from 1 to 5

percent and pave the way to 50 percent," he told the newspaper. Social business is a non-dividend company dedicated to solving human problems. It allows the company to make profit, but it stays with the company. The owner will only get back the original investment, and nothing more, according to Prof Yunus. He is upbeat about the success of social business, as he was in the case of microcredit. "There's a whole generation of young people coming up with social business ideas. Profit making doesn't interest them as much as it interested people before, particularly the post-war [Liberation War of Bangladesh] generation. Their main question is: What am I going to do with my life? What is the purpose of my life?" Yunus said once people like the idea of social money, they would start diverting their business money into social businesses. The microcredit pioneer said it was very much possible to eradicate poverty. "With the creative power we have today, this is a doable proposition. We can create a world where poverty doesn't exist. In order for the next generation to see poverty, we'll have to create poverty museums. That's where poverty belongs, not in human society." "So let's put this on the list of impossibilities that we want to make possible within the next 20 years. That's the way change takes place," he told the New York Times.

Verdict any day

FROM PAGE 1 The prosecution sought capital punishment because of Ghulam Azam's "role in planning and conspiring to war crimes, inciting his followers to commit the crimes and his complicity in crimes against humanity and ordering the killing of 38 people in Brahmanbaria". The defence claimed that the prosecution had "failed" to prove any of the five charges, which were based on 61 incidents. On March 26, 1992, the Gono Adalat (people's court) led by Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam, had sentenced Ghulam Azam to death. The two tribunals, dealing with war crimes cases, have already delivered verdicts in three cases. On Tuesday, the Tribunal-2 wrapped up the case against Jamaat leader Kamaruzzaman and he too is waiting for the verdict. The Tribunal-2 had awarded expelled Jamaat member Abul Kalam Azad the death sentence and life sentence to Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah while Tribunal-1 awarded Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee capital punishment for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War. Four other Jamaat and BNP leaders are also facing trial at the two tribunals for allegedly committing crimes against humanity during 1971. Yesterday, the three-member Tribunal-1 chairman Justice ATM Fazle Kabir, with members Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Anwarul Haque, kept Ghulam Azam's case awaiting a verdict delivery. "We have drawn a conclusion to the case and kept it for CAV. Verdict could be delivered any day. Before delivering verdict, we will let you know," said Justice Kabir. CAV (Curia Advisari Vult) is a Latin legal term, which means the verdict could be delivered any time. The Tribunal-1 took 30 days to deliver the verdict in Sayedee's case after the closing arguments were done with on January 29. Tribunal-2 took 25 five days to deliver the verdict in Azad's case and 18 days in Quader Mollah's case. Ghulam Azam was arrested in the war crimes case on January 11, 2012, after the tribunal took the charges into cognisance. The prosecution on January

5, 2012, brought 62 specific charges against him. On May 13, 2012, the tribunal indicted him on five charges of crimes against humanity based on 61 incidents of murder and torture of unarmed people; and conspiracy, planning, incitement and complicity to commit genocide and crimes against humanity during the 1971 war. The brief profile of the accused in the indictment order said at the time of the Liberation War in 1971, all leaders and workers of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha, under Ghulam Azam's leadership, opposed the liberation movement. "At that time Jamaat-e-Islami became an auxiliary force under the Pakistan army and since he was the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, he not only controlled the organisational framework of Islami Chhatra Sangha but played the pivotal role in forming the Shanti Committee, Razakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams etc," the order read. "He was also elected uncontested a member of the National Assembly from Tangail district through a sham election held in 1971," the order read. He went to Pakistan on November 22, 1971. After the liberation of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971, in the first part of 1972, he formed a committee named "Purbo Pakistan Punoruddhar Committee" (East Pakistan Restoration Committee) as part of his campaign to restore East Pakistan. Yesterday, Prosecutor Syed Haider Ali told Tribunal-1 that the prosecution had been able to prove the charges beyond any shadow of doubt. Completing her replies in response to defence arguments, Prosecutor Tureen Afroz reiterated that during the Liberation War in 1971 Ghulam Azam functioned as the "lighthouse" of atrocities. "He showed members of the Peace Committee, Razakar and Al-Badr (auxiliary forces to Pakistani army) the path to committing crimes against humanity," she said. Defence counsel Tajul Islam told the media that the prosecution had failed to prove the charges brought against his client. Claiming that the charges were "fraudulent", he said the tribunal, if it wanted, could bring "mali-

cious proceedings" charges against the prosecution and the investigation agency. A total of 16 prosecution witnesses, including seven "seizure-list" witnesses and the investigation officer, testified against Ghulam Azam while only Ghulam Azam's son testified for him. The witnesses testified between July 1, 2012 and February 14, 2013. The prosecution and the defence completed their arguments between February 17, 2013, and yesterday. CHARGES One of the charges against Ghulam Azam was involvement in the torture and murder of 38 people in Brahmanbaria on November 11, 1971, including Shiru Miah, a sub-inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station. The Pakistani forces with the help of their collaborators -- Razakar and Al Badr -- killed the 38 after receiving a written order from Ghulam Azam, the charges said. The tribunal also charged him with conspiring to commit crimes on six occasions on which different crimes against humanity were perpetrated across Bangladesh. The former Jamaat chief was charged with planning to commit crimes on three occasions, which resulted in crimes against humanity committed across the country. He was also charged with 28 instances of provoking crimes and his complicity in 23 incidents of crimes against humanity. VANDALISM IN CITY As the court concluded the trial yesterday, Jamaat-e-Islami and the pro-Jamaat student body Islami Chhatra Shibir activists went on the rampage. Bringing out a flash procession of 100 to 150 people, they vandalised at least 15 vehicles in front of Hossain Market at Badda in the capital around 2:30pm. The stick- and iron-rod-wielding activists demanded release of their leaders arrested for crimes against humanity. Law enforcers arrested three of them from the spot. The detainees were Omar Faruk Tonmoy, 20, Abdur Rauf, 22, and Md Kausar, 33. Iqbal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station, told The Daily Star that some of the attackers belonged to the opposition BNP as well.

Weathermen forecast more nor'westers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Country's middle and northern parts might witness two or three medium or major nor'westers while other parts might experience one more light or medium nor'wester in this month, said the Met office yesterday. Rain or thunderstorm accompanied by nor'wester is likely to occur today in different parts, especially in the south. Light and medium nor'westers lashed many areas of the country in the last two days. Meanwhile, after 6:00pm Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla maritime ports have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three as a severe thunderstorm with nor'wester is likely to affect North Bay and its adjoining coastal areas. The three ports have been put on alert, said a special bulletin of the Met office. All fishing boats and trawlers at the North Bay have been advised to stay close to the coast and navigate with caution till further notice. This month there might be more than average rainfall across the country and one heat wave especially in the northern and middle parts, said the forecast. One more depression might form in the Bay of Bengal, it added. Sudan rebels group say 'ready' for peace talks AFP, Khartoum Rebels in Sudan's South Kordofan state yesterday said they are ready to talk with the Sudanese government in Ethiopia next week over ending a two-year-long war. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) told AFP that African Union mediator Thabo Mbeki had sent rebel chairman Malik Agar an invitation "for peace talks in Addis Ababa on the 23rd of April." Arab nations FROM PAGE 20 "Diplomats of the Arab countries [in Bangladesh] have said they will continue their efforts to hold meetings with the government and all political parties, especially with the main opposition, so that their desire [for a credible and acceptable poll in Bangladesh] is fulfilled," said Shamsher, a former foreign secretary. Without naming any particular ambassador, Shamsher said they [the envoys] wished that democratic process, peace, rule of law and good governance would prevail in Bangladesh so that people could live in peace. He said the envoys wanted all quarters to reach an understanding regarding the next elections in Bangladesh as soon as possible. "They also said it was imperative to get rid of the present crisis and that they hoped all political parties will find out a solution through discussion." And if necessary, they as an Arab group would hold discussion with the BNP chairperson again, he said. Asked what the BNP chairperson told the envoys, Shamsher quoted Khaleda Zia: "Bangladeshis want an acceptable and peaceful election." He said Khaleda told the envoys that the government was yet to take any initiative for dialogue in this regard. Gun attack FROM PAGE 1 shot two bullets at Mujibor. The attackers fired several more shots indiscriminately, injuring the four. They also blasted a home-made bomb and fled away. The injured are Rafiq Bepari, 28, Hashu Sheikh, 40, Akhter Sheikh, 35, and Ayon Hossain, 60. Of them, Rafiq was rushed to Dhaka for better treatment while the rest were admitted to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital.