

GUNFIGHT IN NOAKHALI 7 bullet-hit

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Noakhali

At least seven people, including five policemen, got shot yesterday when supporters of a local union parishad chairman opened fire on police and the law enforcers retaliated at Madanpur of Laxmipur.

The injured include constables Saiful Islam, Md Hanif, Ismail Hossain, Sharif Hossain, Mizanur Rahman and auto-rickshaw driver Abdul Berek.

The injured were admitted to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital.

Police and locals said a gunfight broke out yesterday afternoon between the supporters of Bashikpur union parishad Chairman Abul Kashem, also an Awami League, and "Masum Bahini" over establishing supremacy in Balaisampur.

On information, police went there and the groups retreated.

However, around 3:00pm, supporters of the union parishad chairman opened fire on police when the law enforcers were going to Madanpur.

The law enforcers retaliated and the gun battle ensued.

Police later recovered 20 bullets from the spot but failed to arrest anyone in this connection.

Call for unity

FROM PAGE 20
and Christians belong to the mainstream group, while a small number of people, who were defeated in 1971, are the minority.

"We shouldn't forget that we got independence at the expense of blood of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians.... If we retain our unity, no power would be able to resist us," he mentioned.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman said, "Nobody has given you [political parties] the right to do business with religion and use it as a political weapon. Even if you think this way, you should know that those days are over."

Pointing to the recent mayhem in Fatikchhari of Chittagong, he said, "If this is the purpose of politics, then we do reject and hate that politics."

Rights activist Sultana Kamal said the attacks on religious minorities are actually attacks on the people who believe in secularism.

Asking the audience not to be afraid of the attacks, she noted that people who are against the spirit of Liberation War must be defeated and humanity will prevail.

Minister without portfolio Suranjit Sengupta said the religious minorities have suffered in the independent Bangladesh. Even the majority of the 30 lakh martyrs of the Liberation War were Hindus.

Former minister and BNP standing committee member MK Anwar said the Hindus, Buddhists and Christians have the same rights as the Muslims (in Bangladesh).

He warned that the government will have to pay the price if it does not take steps to stop oppression on religious minorities.

"For how long the minority community will have to endure torture?" questioned Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad.

He called for building a consensus among national leaders irrespective of political divides to stop repression on religious minorities.

Earlier, Maj Gen (ret'd) CR Dutta Bir Uttam, sector commander of Liberation War, inaugurated a procession. Hundreds of people from the minority communities joined the procession holding banners with slogans for stopping repression.

During harital hours on April 11, Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, and Hefajat-e Islam joined in by locals attacked an anti-hartal procession in Fatikchhari, leaving three Awami League men killed and scores injured.

Suspect killed

FROM PAGE 20
known to the FBI as Suspect No 1 and was seen in surveillance footage in a black baseball cap, was killed overnight, officials said. His brother, a 19-year-old college student who was dubbed Suspect No 2 and was seen wearing a white, backward baseball cap in the images from Monday's deadly bombing at the marathon finish line -- escaped.

The law enforcement officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the unfolding case.

Authorities in Boston suspended all mass transit and warned close to 1 million people in the entire city and some of its suburbs to stay indoors as the hunt for Suspect No 2 went on. Businesses were asked not to open. People waiting at bus and subway stops were told to go home.

From Watertown to Cambridge, police SWAT teams, sharpshooters and FBI agents with armored vehicles surrounded various buildings as police helicopters buzzed overhead.

"We believe this man to be a terrorist," said Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis. "We believe this to be a man who's come here to kill people."

The bombings on Monday killed three people and wounded more than 180 others, tearing off limbs in a spray of shrapnel and instantly raising the spectre of another terrorist attack on US soil.

Authorities have shed no light on the motive for the attack and have said it is unclear whether it was the work of domestic or international terrorists or someone else entirely with an unknown agenda.

The endgame -- at least for Suspect No 1 -- came just hours after the FBI released photos and video of the two young men at the finish line and appealed to the public for help in identifying and capturing them. Tips came pouring in to the FBI immediately, but exactly how authorities managed to close in on the two was not immediately disclosed.

The men's uncle, Ruslan Tsarni of Montgomery Village, told The Associated Press that the brothers traveled here together from the Russian region near Chechnya.

Authorities said surveillance tape recorded late Thursday showed Suspect No 2 during a robbery of a convenience store in Cambridge, near the cam-

Dhaka, Delhi

FROM PAGE 20
The Tk 1,200-crore Rampal project will add electricity to the National Grid by 2016. Cost of per unit electricity produced here will range between Tk 5 and Tk 7, subject to current coal price in international market.

On January 31, Dhaka and New Delhi had announced to start work on setting up the power plant when power secretaries of Bangladesh and India at a joint press conference assured that latest technologies will be used in this plant.

The Indian power secretary had said they would use technologies that consume less coal and keep the level of pollution very low. Moreover, Bangladesh would import coal from Indonesia which is proven to be of high quality.

The plant would have 275-metre high chimney with its efficiency level being 99.99 percent. So, there is no chance of any major damage to environment, Uma Sankar added.

pus of MIT, where a university police officer -- 26-year-old Sean Collier -- was shot to death while responding to a report of a disturbance.

From there, authorities said, the two men carjacked a man in a Mercedes-Benz, keeping him with them in the car for half an hour before releasing him at a gas station in Cambridge. The man was not injured.

The search for the vehicle led to a chase that ended in Watertown, where authorities said the suspects threw explosive devices from the car and exchanged gunfire with police. A transit police officer was severely wounded, authorities said.

Watertown resident Christine Yajko said she was awakened at about 1:30am by a loud noise, began to walk to her kitchen and heard gunfire.

"I heard the explosion, so I stepped back from that area, then I went back out and heard a second one," she said. "It was very loud. It shook the house a little."

She said a police officer later knocked on her door and told her there was an undetonated improvised explosive device in the street and warned her to stay away from the windows.

"It was on the street, right near our kitchen window," she said.

Boston cab driver Imran Saif said he was standing on a street corner at a police barricade across from a diner when he heard an explosion.

"I heard a loud boom and then a rapid succession of pop, pop, pop," he said. "It sounded like automatic weapons. And then I heard the second explosion."

He said he could smell something burning and advanced to check it out but area residents at their windows yelled at him, "Hey, it's gunfire! Don't go that way!"

Doctors at a Boston hospital where Tamerlan Tsarnaev died said they treated a man with a possible blast injury and multiple gunshot wounds.

200-yr-old

FROM PAGE 1
BNP men are behind the attack.

Police, meanwhile, arrested Haridashdi-Mahendradi union unit BNP President Abul Kalam Azad yesterday afternoon suspecting his involvement in the incident.

Mofazzal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Rajoir Police Station, said they were yet to identify the attackers and that they were investigating the incident.

Uttam Banerjee, president of the temple managing committee, said locals rushed to the spot on seeing the flames but the temple had been badly burnt before they could bring the flames under control.

In December last year, miscreants vandalised some idols of the same temple, he added.

Temples of the Hindus in several districts came under attacks in the past few months.

Mahmuda Begum, a housewife who lives next to the temple, said they saw the temple on fire around 3:00am and began to scream.

Harinath Bhattachariya, whose ancestors had donated the land for building the temple, said they were upset to see repeated attacks on the temple.

Mohadev Mridha, another villager, said, "My father and grandfather used to offer prayers at the 200-year-old temple that burnt down before our eyes."

Nasirul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Madaripur, visited the spot and said law enforcers were gathering information and were trying to catch the culprits.

One-seater

FROM PAGE 20
students from Technische Universitat Muenchen in cooperation with Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, was revealed at the 3rd Taiwan International Electric Vehicle Show.

Its inventors claim it is as agile and affordable as a scooter while as safe and comfortable as a car.

The 2-wheel Voi electric scooter is designed as a transporter for densely populated megacities where congested traffic is a major problem.

"For anyone living in a megacity, being stuck for hours in a gridlock is a part and parcel of everyday life," its developers say.

"This makes it hard to travel quickly and efficiently in personal modes of transport such as a car or taxi."

"While motorcycles offer a possible alternative to navigate through heavy urban traffic, it is often not a viable option for business people who need to arrive safely, comfortably and, most importantly, dry."

Positioning the driver at the rear of the scooter allows for a compact design with an enclosed passenger cabin in front that shields occupants from the elements, the designers said.

The lightweight scooter can reach speeds of 30mph with a range of around 50 miles, they said, with zero tailpipe emissions.

It is also not limited to transporting passengers, the designers said - its modular front pod can be swapped for a cargo box or even a mobile kitchen, making it a multipurpose urban vehicle.

In Vietnamese, "voi" literally translates to elephant, and is a symbol of a safe and intelligent way of transport.

HSC exams

FROM PAGE 1
Khaleda Zia has been inviting "bad times" by enforcing recurrent hartals and killing people, added Hasina, also the president of Awami League.

Referring to BNP's threat to carry out attacks on the AL men like the way Jamaat-Shibir men did recently at Fatikchhari of Chittagong, the prime minister said killing people is the character of BNP.

She questioned what kind of religion the Jamaat-Shibir men practise when they use mosques for misleading people, humiliate the imam of national mosque and bar people from saying prayers there properly.

The AL chief directed the Krishak League leaders to strengthen the organisation, stand by the people and farmers across the country and tell them about the successes of the government.

She also asked them to inspire people not to leave an inch of land uncultivated. The government has focused on seeds research and that is why there has been bumper production in the country in recent years, she added.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said due to the tremendous success in the agriculture sector, the government did not have to import rice in the last 22 months. Rather, it exported some fine rice abroad.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, Krishak League general secretary Shamsul Haque Reza and joint secretary Samir Chandra also spoke at the programme, chaired by its president Motahar Hossain Mollah.

Bangladesh Games, the country's biggest national sporting event, kicks off today in the capital.

Danger

FROM PAGE 1
Standards and Testing Institution] seal and using harmful colours in their products.

The owner paid the fine money but broke open the seal illegally and went into production the same way, he added.

The court yesterday again sealed off the factory and ordered to destroy 500 kilogrammes of products including talcum powder, colour and condensed sugar.

The court also ordered filing a regular case against the factory owner, Mohammad Abul Kalam, who was not available at the spot during the drive.

Migrants' plight

FROM PAGE 1
followed an altercation between the Greek foremen and some 200 workers demanding six months' unpaid wages. When the foremen left the scene, the Bangladeshis began hoping that management was preparing to offer a solution. But the foremen returned with two shotguns and a handgun and opened fire -- spraying pellets into torsos and limbs. A total of 28 people were sent to the hospital, none with life-threatening injuries.

Md Khan Liton, one of the Bangladeshi protesters, described the terror of coming under gunfire.

"They fired at us as if we were animals," said Liton, who escaped unhurt. "We are peaceful people trying to make money to send home. We want to be paid."

There have been several cases of migrant labourers being abused in Manolada in recent years -- including men being dragged behind cars or motorbikes. But none has been as bad as Wednesday's shootings.

"It was an unprecedented situation," said senior health official Panos Efstathiou. "You'd think there was a war on," the official said.

Bangladeshi workers said tensions with the farm have festered for months. Mohammed Lendu Miha, who has worked at the plantation but was not present at the shooting, said his former employers had tried to pay him with a check that bounced, and threatened to kill him when he insisted on cash.

"They told me that if I didn't leave, they would burn me alive," he said. "I went to the police but got no help, they don't care."

The shootings drew calls on social media for a boycott on strawberries from Manolada. The area, about 260 kilometres southwest of Athens, produces most of the strawberries sold in Greece. It's an industry based on cheap labour by immigrant workers living in conditions the country's justice minister likened to those in America's south during the years of slavery.

Greece is the main gateway for immigrants from Asia and Africa trying to clandestinely enter the European Union. Most end up stuck there, amid Greece's worst financial crisis in decades, and up to a tenth of the formerly ethnically homogeneous country's population is not native-born.

With Greek unemployment at 27 percent, migrants take what work they can get. Often they toil in fields that Greeks abandoned over the past decades of consumption-fuelled affluence.

"We have roughly the same picture, with small variations, across the country," Kanakis said. "Foreign workers working uninsured with very low wages, who live in poor conditions. These are frightened people, without legal documents, who don't know the lan-

Russia slams US deployments in Jordan

AFF, Moscow

Russia yesterday called the deployment of US troops in Jordan over the Syria crisis an unconstructive step that threatens to expand the conflict.

US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel revealed Wednesday that 150 US military specialists had been deployed in Jordan since last year and that he had ordered the army to bolster the mission by bringing the total American presence to more than 200 troops.

Russian foreign ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said such a move ran counter to internationally-agreed principles for ending the crisis through negotiations.

"These are absolutely not the actions that we now need to bring Syria out of its dead end," Lukashevich told reporters.

"These actions exacerbate the Syria crisis, which is now gaining the dimensions of a regional crisis," the spokesman said.

Russia is viewed as one of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's few allies because it vetoed three rounds of UN Security Council sanctions against his government.

guage."

On the island of Salamis last year, an Egyptian bakery worker was found badly beaten and chained to a tree after seeking back pay from his employer. The Greek bakery owner, who was arrested, claimed the victim had tried to steal money from him.

Migrant workers have for more than 20 years formed the backbone of Greece's agriculture, on wages well below the official minimum of \$34.

"In the southern Peloponnese where I come from, if we didn't have foreign workers we wouldn't ever gather any olives," Kanakis said. "It would be very unlikely for Greeks to accept such living conditions. When you're paid 20 euros [\$26] a day and are trying to save money to send home, obviously you'll live in the fields, not in a proper house."

In Manolada, many labourers live in tents or shacks, stifling in the summer and freezing in winter, without sanitation or adequate access to drinking water.

Kanakis accused local communities of hypocrisy, accepting the migrants' money in local shops but ignoring their plight, including lack of access to healthcare.

"The problem isn't so much the landowners -- from whom I expect nothing better -- or state agencies which may turn a blind eye," he said. "It's the local societies, where everyone knows what is happening but nobody talks."

The wave of illegal immigration in recent years, coupled with a spike in violent crime, has fuelled anti-migrant sentiment propelling the meteoric rise of Golden Dawn, a party so far to the right that its website brims with Nazi literature and references. The party, currently Greece's third most popular -- polling at about 10 percent -- strenuously denies being neo-Nazi.

It also rejects broad allegations that it instigates attacks on migrants, although its supporters have been linked with such violence on several occasions.

Foreign workers in Greece are in a particularly parlous position, as those who have violated immigration laws are under constant threat of arrest and deportation if denounced to authorities. Even victims of racist attacks have been detained over alleged immigration violations, a practice condemned by international rights groups.

Many employers take advantage of the risk of detention to quell protests.

"The basic threat is: Don't talk much and perhaps we'll pay you sometime," Kanakis said.

Greece's public order minister, Nikos Dendias, yesterday pledged that the injured Bangladeshis would not be punished if found to have illegally entered Greece.

"None of the victims have been detained, nor will they be deported," he said during a visit to the Manolada area.

2 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 20
Six Bangladeshi workers were working in the cafe but four others were not injured, she added.

The BBC reported: a suicide bomber detonated his explosives inside the cafe in the west of the city. No group has claimed responsibility.

The violence comes ahead of Iraq's provincial elections today, the first in the country since 2010.

HC to get 20

FROM PAGE 20
On March 28, acting president Abdul Hamid had appointed four HC judges to the Appellate Division.

The new Appellate Division judges, who took oath on March 31, are Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque, Justice Siddique Rahman Miah, Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury.

Out of existing 90 HC judges, five judges have been discharging their duties at the International Crimes Tribunals, set up to try war crimes cases.

The government has so far appointed 10 judges to the Appellate Division and 61 judges to the HC Division.

Grenade found in city park

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered an abandoned grenade from Osmani Udyan in the capital's Shahbagh area.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Sanwar Hossain of the Detective Branch of Police told The Daily Star that on information police had recovered the grenade around 5:00pm. It was left under a banyan tree near the Rail Bhaban.

Personnel from the bomb disposal unit defused it on the spot.

Sanwar said, "The grenade would be examined to find out where it was produced and its kind. Preliminary assessment tells it was a factory-made grenade but was not very powerful."

He said they were trying to find out who had left it there.

Storm kills 1 in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

An elderly woman was killed as a strong nor'wester accompanied by hailstorm lashed five upazilas of Dinajpur early yesterday.

The dead is Jhelo Begum, 90, of Fakirpara village in Parbatipur upazila.

She died as a mud wall of her home fell on her when she was asleep, police said.

Officials of Department of Agriculture Extension of Dinajpur said the nor'wester swept through Dinajpur Sadar, Parbatipur, Chirirbandar, Khansama and Biral upazilas around 1:30am. Croplands of Irri, Boro and maize and a number of banana orchards have been affected badly while a lot of thatched houses in Chirirbandar and Parbatipur were damaged.

AHRC worried

FROM PAGE 20
arbitrary detention of Amar Desh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman.

Arrested on April 11, Mahmudur had been placed on a six-day remand. On Thursday, he was moved to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), as he fell sick due to continuous fasting.

Quoting Mahmudur's lawyer and his colleagues, the AHRC in a statement alleged that police had tortured Mahmudur in custody and applied electric shocks and other methods of torture on him.

The AHRC also said the closure of Amar Desh printing press by police was arbitrary. "There has been no court case or order from any court of law in the country directing the police to close down the press," read its statement.

Meanwhile, after a visit at the BSMMU prison cell, family members of Mahmudur Rahman yesterday alleged that he had become sick due to police torture, reports the BBC.

Columnist Farhad Mazhar, who accompanied Mahmudur's family members to the prison cell, also alleged of brutal torture on Mahmudur.

Home Minister MK Alamgir denied the allegation in an interview to the BBC yesterday.

13 more

FROM PAGE 20
officer-in-charge of Bhujpur Police Station.

With the arrest, 86 people have so far been held for their alleged involvement in the attack.

Of the arrestees, 73 have been remanded for different periods.

On April 11, Jamaat-Shibir activists with Hefajat men attacked the law enforcers and an anti-hartal motor procession of the AL in Kazirhat Bazar of Bhujpur. It left three AL men killed and more than 100 injured.

The following day, police filed a case against some 5,000 people, including 100 named, with Bhujpur Police Station on charges of attacking law enforcers and obstructing them from performing their duties during the attack.

2 more farm

FROM PAGE 1
Rezaul Karim of Madaripur, Morshed Chowdhury of Habiganj, Md Farhad of Brahmanbaria, Kamrul Mia of Rajbari and Abul Khayer of Joypurhat, foreign ministry sources said.

The Bangladeshi workers were shot when some 150 Bangladeshi employees of the farm, Vagela Kos, went on a strike on Wednesday demanding their due payments of six months.

Meanwhile, Greek Minister for Public Order and Citizens Protection Nikos Dendiaf visited the wounded Bangladeshis at a hospital yesterday morning, said the Bangladesh ambassador.

The minister condemned the attack and expressed his sadness over the incident, the envoy said, adding that the Greek minister assured the workers of providing legal assistance.

Embassy officials met local Killini city Mayor Dimigrios in the afternoon and sought his assistance in realising the arrears of the workers, said BM Jamal Hossain, councillor of Bangladesh embassy.

"The mayor gave us the assurance that the victim workers will be paid off their arrears and their security will be ensured," he told The Daily Star.

Hossain, however, added that the work at the farm remained suspended since the shooting.

Meanwhile, some left political parties in Greece were continuing their demonstrations, demanding protection of expatriate workers, the counsellors said.

March saw

FROM PAGE 1
humanity on February 28, at least 94 attacks were carried out in March on minorities, mainly on the Hindus.

In total, 187 houses, 162 businesses and 89 temples were attacked and looted and 133 idols were vandalised, according to the statement of a writ petition jointly filed by six rights organisations.

The organisations, which included Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, told the court that the government "failed" to discharge constitutional duties to protect the minorities.

Following the petition, the High Court on April 4 issued a rule directing the government to investigate the recent communal violence and attacks on the religious minorities forming a high-powered committee and submit a report in three months.

It also ordered the government to identify the areas vulnerable to communal violence and provide sufficient protection to the minorities living in those areas, and asked the government to submit a report in two weeks on the initiatives taken after the attacks.

Deputy Attorney General Mokhlesur Rahman told The Daily Star that the government has not responded to the High Court rules.

Earlier, on different times, the High Court expressed concerns over such incidents and passed various directives on the government to protect the minorities and their places of worship.

Yesterday, while talking to The Daily Star, ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal expressed concern and regretted the incident of torching of the temple in Madaripur.

She said the government has not taken any effective measures against the culprits who were responsible for communal violence and attacks on religious minorities.

CQK Mustaq Ahmed, senior secretary to the home ministry, claimed that the government was taking serious actions against the culprits responsible for the attacks.