

Robber killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The chief of a robber gang active in the Sundarbans was killed in a “gun-fight” with police in the district’s Koyra upazila on Thursday night. Deceased Moktarul Dhali alias Mokter, 32, was the leader of a robber gang named after him. He was son of Moti Dhali of Bhutuswari Char in the upazila. Moktarul was accused in five cases, including four for murder, in Koyra and Dakop police stations, said Subir Dutta, officer-in-charge of Koyra Police Station. Subir said acting on a tip-off, Koyra police arrested Moktarul from Mostofar Intersection in Khulna city on Thursday morning. As per his confessional statement, police along with Moktarul raided different parts of Koyra upazila to recover firearms on Thursday night and reached Bhutuswari Char around 11:45pm. At Bhutuswari, sensing the presence of policemen, accomplices of Moktarul opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate, the police official said. Moktarul was hit by bullets while the others managed to flee the scene. He was rushed to Koyra Upazila Health Complex where on-duty doctors declared Moktarul dead, it added. Police claimed they recovered four pipe guns, 16 bullets and six crude bombs from the spot. Four policemen, including officer-in-charge of Koyra Police Station, were hurt during the “gun-fight”. They took first aid, the police official added.

Launch owned

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financed MV Oishee Khan, named after the minister’s daughter, Tk 10,000. “The launch is owned by the members of my family and my brother-in-law,” Shajahan Khan told The Daily Star over the phone last night. Shafiqur Rahman, chief inspector of Department of Shipping, however, said they came to know about the ownership of MV Oishee Khan only after slapping the penalty. Three more launches were penalised for not having proper safety equipment. The same punishment was given to ML Princess while ML Narisha and MV Tapan were fined Tk 10,000 and Tk 5,000. Actions could not be taken against two other launches -- MV Sajal-1 and MV Sajal-2 -- as their authorities fled sensing the presence of the mobile court. The vessels did not have sufficient fire extinguishers and life-buoys, said Shafiqur Rahman. The launches were anchored at Kawrakandi Launch Terminal in Madaripur yesterday when the drive was conducted.

Airports

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Service yesterday. The move comes following the World Health Organisation declaring the Ebola outbreak in West Africa an international public health emergency. Special attention should be given to the peacekeepers returning home from peacekeeping missions in African countries, Nurul mentioned. The DGHS has asked the armed forces and police authorities to monitor the returnees and take them to the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control Research for check-up, he said. The Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate has recently said no Bangladeshi peacekeepers were diagnosed with Ebola.

No govt can afford

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stakeholders has turned into little more than eyewitness and eventually a unilateral exercise,” TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman told UNB. The TIB official, who was at the forefront of civil society leaders invited to participate in the process behind formulating the policy, said no government can afford to restrict media freedom, not to speak of doing away with it. “The only type of regime that finds it convenient to go that way is military or military-backed or other types of authoritarian government,” he added. The government will serve its own cause if it holds a series of genuine consultations with stakeholders to review the broadcast policy, observed Iftekharuzzaman. He commended some good aspects of the policy. “But the unfortunate part of the experience is that our governments often fail to live up to their own standards.” The information ministry on Thursday published a gazette on the National Broadcast Policy 2014 for television and radio, ignoring wor-

Police foil demo

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groups of workers gathered at Jamgora-Fantasy Kingdom area in Ashulia and in front of Rana Plaza site in Savar. Each group had 20-25 people. They ran away when local police chased them,” said Md Mustafizur Rahman, director of Industrial Police-1, Dhaka (Ashulia). Yesterday’s programme was called by Tuba Group Shramik Sangram Committee. The workers’ platform has called a strike in garment factories across the country for today with the same demand. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has called upon the workers to withdraw the strike for the sake of the industry. “We have disbursed the outstanding wages for two of three months at the BGMEA headquarters on Thursday,” said Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of the garment makers’ apex body, yesterday. The arrears were for the months of May, June and July, including overtime bills and Eid bonuses. “Workers will get the salaries for the month of July on Sunday at the BGMEA office,” Azim said. Tuba Group workers and labour leaders formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, demanding payment of arrears and cancellation of Tuba Group owner Delwar Hossain’s bail. They condemned law enforcers’ “attack” on workers that ended an 11-day hunger strike of workers at a

US jets strike

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predecessor George W Bush’s 2003 invasion of Iraq, said he was not sending background forces. “As commander in chief, I will not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq. Obama said the strikes would be limited and it remained unclear how much of a game-changer they would be on the ground. Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby said on Twitter that US forces bombed the jihadists after artillery fire against Kurdish regional government forces defending their capital Arbil. Two US jets hit a mobile artillery piece, he said. A Kurdish official said the strikes targeted the towns of Gwer and Makhmur, southeast of the autonomous Kurdish region. The US operation began with air drops of food and water for thousands of people hiding from the Sunni extremist militants in a barren northern mountain range. Many people who have been cowering in the Sinjar mountains for five days in searing heat and with no supplies are Yazidis, a minority that follows a 4,000-year-old faith. Obama accused the IS, which calls Yazidis “devil-worshippers”, of attempting “the systematic destruction of the entire people, which would constitute genocide”. The UN said it was “urgently preparing a humanitarian corridor.” Panic had begun to grip Arbil after IS thrust into the Nineveh plains separating the city from the main jihadist of Mosul and Obama’s decision was welcomed there. The Kurdish peshmerga, short of ammunition and stretched thin along a huge front, have been forced to retreat in the face of brazen assaults by the jihadists. Their withdrawal from Iraq’s Christian heartland on Wednesday and Thursday sparked a mass exodus and spurred Western powers into action. Obama’s announcement came after an emergency UN Security Council meeting called by France, which also offered to support forces battling the jihadists and contribute to the relief effort.

ries about a possible misuse of some of its provisions. About the policy, he said it is appalling a provision has been kept in the policy that can be easily interpreted to practically proscribe critical views against armed forces and law enforcement agencies in the pretext of protecting image. “This is against the spirit of democracy. Nobody or no institution can be above criticism in democracy,” he pointed out. The policy also contains many provisions that are subject to such scope and risk of motivated, subjective and arbitrary interpretations that the document can at best be called as a lost opportunity, mentioned the anti-graft activist. “The basic constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of expression can be severely curtailed. The policy appears to be a brainchild of those in the government who are intolerant to media freedom and critical views,” he observed. On formation of a broadcast commission, he said the selection process should be absolutely trans-

factory of the group on Thursday, and demanded that owners allow workers to form trade unions in all garment factories. Labour leaders alleged Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan is working for the owners, not for the workers. Mominur Rahman, a member of Garment Workers Unity Forum, said, “The minister is busy serving the interests of the BGMEA.” The Shipping Minister, along with State Minister for Labour and Employment Mujibul Haque Chunnun, held a meeting with Delwar Hossain yesterday and later told the press at the BGMEA office that Delwar was instructed to pay the workers “by any means”. Another human chain was formed in Chittagong by rights body Coalition for Humanity demanding government’s interference in realising the “just demands” of the garment workers. Meanwhile, the shipping minister has defended Thursday’s crackdown on Tuba Group workers, saying the government intervened as a faction of workers tried to refrain workers from receiving arrears. “When the government had taken steps for providing wages of the agitating workers, a section of workers tried to create a problem so that other workers could not receive it. This compelled the government to intervene,” Shajahan Khan said at a programme at Bashudhara City in the capital. He said the disbursement of salaries and Eid bonuses at Tuba Group was delayed as its owner was in jail.

Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako said Iraq’s largest Christian town of Qaraqosh was emptied of its population on Thursday and estimated the number of Christians forced from their homes at 100,000. In Mosul, the country’s second city, identical sermons were delivered in all mosques Friday, residents said, with worshippers asked to swear obedience to the “caliph”, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Iraq’s military chief of staff told AFP he expected to see his forces and the peshmerga reclaim large tracts of land “in the coming hours”. He said he thought the US air strikes would extend to other towns controlled by IS but he did not say which ones. The jihadists control towns west, south and north of Baghdad. There has been daily fighting on several fronts for two months and as the conflict escalated, the US banned its civilian airliners from overflying Iraq, Britain asked its nationals in parts of Kurdistan to leave and global stock markets were unsettled. Many people in Baghdad were sceptical of Obama’s motives. “He did nothing for three years but something happened to the Kurds and the Christians and he started talking about terrorism,” said Rashaad Khodhr Abbas, a retired civil servant. “Where were you all this time, Obama?” IS has enjoyed a spectacular run of military successes in Iraq, but the group also scored a key victory in Syria, with the capture overnight of a key army base in Raqqa province.

2 Bangladeshi

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Daily Tribune, a Bahrain newspaper. He said that the ministry would submit to him a detailed report on plant authorities’ alleged violations of law, following which they might face legal action. He also instructed the Inspection and Trade Unions Directorate of Bahrain to increase its visits to the concrete plants to ensure workers’ safety there, said the newspaper.

parent though the experience of commissions in the country is far from satisfactory. He hoped that the broadcast commission would be constituted by individuals who enjoy credibility in public eye, who are impeccably non-partisan and well-known for contributions to public life, media and broadcast sector in particular. Asked whether media freedom is set to suffer a twin-blow as the new press and publications act is in the offing which would revive the 1973 act’s provision whereby the DC’s can shutdown publication, Iftekharuzzaman said there are reasons to be concerned about such a turnaround. “But we hope and trust that the government wouldn’t take such a course that can be counterproductive for itself, and for the future of democratic and constitutional rights of the people, particularly right to free media and free flow of information,” he added. The TIB chief executive said he does not think that there is absence of media freedom yet in Bangladesh.

Hasina slams

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with protests and criticisms. Today, hundreds of children and women, including expecting mothers, are being killed with bullets... why their conscience is silent,” she questioned. The prime minister was speaking at a function organised by women and children affairs ministry at Osmani Memorial Auditorium marking the 84th birth anniversary of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, the wife of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was killed along with most of her family members, including Bangabandhu, on the fateful night of August 15, 1975. Chaired by the State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki, the function was addressed, among others, by Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, Chairman of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha Momtaj Begum and Bangladesh Shishu Academy Chairperson Selina Hossain. The premier also took a further dig at the ‘civilized world’, saying, “Why the people, who claim themselves as civilised ones, are silent now?” Pointing finger at the country’s human rights organisations, Hasina said these organisations often run to the hill tracts, islands and here and there in case of any trivial incident. “Where are they now, why are their voices missing?” she asked. She requested the Mahila Awami League and other women organisations of the country to strongly raise their voice against the killing of women and children. “When there is any such incident anywhere in the world, I’ll request you to raise your voice... though these incidents are not taking place here in Bangladesh, there shouldn’t be any complacency that we are safe,” she said. Briefly describing the role of Fazilatunnesa, the prime minister said the killers of August 15, 1975 knew about her courage and organisational capacity. “That’s why they didn’t spare my mother,” she said. Earlier, a documentary on Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib was also shown in the programme sketching the life of the wife of the Father of the Nation.

Indian politician

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itself is 18-22 carat purity, and there have been no other metals used. It is lined with a thin cloth for added comfort, though the body of the garment is smooth. A team of 20 people are thought to have spent 3,200 hours crafting the shirt. Parakh, who left school without any qualifications, lives outside of Mumbai in the town of Yeola, and is hoping that his creation will get him into the Guinness Book of World Records and the Limca Book of Records, the Times of India reports. “Gold always fascinated me since I was five years old and studying in school. Over the years, I have become passionate about this royal metal.” Parakh said. Some locals have told Parakh that he flashes his wealth, while others feel that he is “poking fun” at people’s poverty, but the businessman is unperturbed. “My family is hardly impressed or interested in my love for gold. They just ignore and accept it as a part of domestic life. But the rest of my extended family thinks I am weird,” he said.

21 more MH17 crash victims identified, experts fly home

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Dutch forensics experts have identified 21 more flight MH17 crash victims, the government said Friday, as experts unable to work at the crash site in restive eastern Ukraine began flying home. The Malaysia Airlines 777 exploded over Ukraine on July 17, killing all 298 on board, 193 of them Dutch, with the West accusing Russian backed separatists of shooting it down. Over 220 coffins have been flown back to the Netherlands, which is tasked with identifying the bodies. Only two bodies had been identified so far, with the 21 new victims made up of 16 Dutch, including a dual British national, two Malaysians, a German, a Canadian and a Briton, the Dutch justice ministry said in a statement. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said on Wednesday that the search for body parts at the crash site was being suspended because of the deteriorating security situation in the face of fighting between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists. Following that decision, two planes carrying 142 police experts from the Netherlands, Australia and Malaysia are flying to the Netherlands on Friday.

Police finally record case

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she had seen the signboard “Mohakhali Kancha Bazar” (kitchen market) as she was running for cover. Tejgaon industrial police refused to accept the case apprehending that the spot was not under their jurisdiction and sent the victim to Banani Police Station. A man related to the victim preferring anonymity said a minister had to intervene to get Banani police to record the case. The driver has been identified as Rafiqul Islam Rafiq, 45, who worked for Liza-Anik transport service that operates between Dhaka and Nalitabari in Sherpur. “Wait here a while... it is raining outside,” Rafiq had told the victim after the bus reached the terminal at 4:00am on Wednesday. Rafiq then sent one of his two assistants to fetch breakfast and the other to get a rickshaw for the woman. The garment factory worker was returning to Dhaka after her Eid holidays. “The driver locked the bus door immediately after his assistants left and raped my

WHO declares

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public health emergency of international concern,” Chan said, warning of the “serious and unusual nature of the outbreak and the potential for further international spread”. States of emergency have been declared in the hardest hit countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, while two people have died in Nigeria and Benin is investigating a suspect patient. In the first European case, Spain is treating an elderly priest who contracted the disease while helping patients in Liberia. US health authorities have also said the symptoms of Ebola would “inevitably” spread beyond west Africa, and medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has warned the tropical virus is “out of control”. Defining the epidemic a public health emergency of international concern -- a label only used twice before, during the H1N1 swine flu pandemic in 2009 and last May for the reemergence of polio -- “alerts the world to the need for high vigilance,” Chan said. Chan said only a small part of Africa had been affected so there was little reason to fear that all countries would see Ebola cases”. Ebola had by Wednesday claimed at least 961 lives and infected nearly 1,800 people since breaking out in Guinea earlier this year, with 29 people dying in just two days, the WHO said. The outbreak likely to last for months, WHO added. In Liberia, soldiers in Grand Cape Mount province -- one of the worst-affected areas --

Gaza bloodshed

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In Gaza, some families who had returned home trickled back to shelter in UN-run schools after Palestinian militants fired rockets at Israel and Israel retaliated from the skies. “Of course we’re all scared, I’m scared, my children are scared, my wife is scared,” Abdullah Abdullah, 33, told AFP at the school. The Israeli army said Palestinian militants fired 35 rockets into the Jewish state, wounding a civilian and a soldier in the south, and that “terror sites” had been targeted in Gaza. The army banned all gatherings larger than 500 people within 40 kilometres of Gaza and said kindergarten and summer camps could only operate if there was a bomb shelter nearby. In Gaza, the interior ministry and witnesses said Israeli warplanes struck targets in Jabaliya in the north, Gaza City and in the centre of the Palestinian enclave. Witnesses also reported artillery fire east and north of Gaza City. Israel launched an air campaign on July 8, followed by a ground offensive designed to destroy Hamas’s arsenal of rockets and its network of tunnels stretching into Israel. “We will continue to strike Hamas, its infrastructure, its operatives and restore security for the state of Israel,” said army

wife,” the victim’s husband told The Daily Star. She got an opportunity to run away when he opened the door as one of his assistants had returned. “She got hold of her mobile phone, which the driver had taken away before raping her, and ran until she found a place where she felt safe to stop and call me,” said the husband. When his wife got on the bus the night before, the husband had asked Rafiq to look out for her as she was travelling alone. The couple has a son two and half a years old. The news of the rape outraged the people of Nalitabari who immediately stormed the bus counter there and held a driver and a helper captive. Local politicians had a meeting with Liza-Anik transport service employees and got the identity of the suspect. The employees told them that Rafiq was on the run and that his phone was switched off. The case was recorded under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

have set up road blocks to limit travel to the capital Monrovia, as bodies reportedly lay unburied in the streets. In Sierra Leone, which has the most confirmed infections, 800 troops were sent to guard hospitals treating Ebola patients and two towns in the east were put under quarantine. In Nigeria, which so far has seen two dead and five others infected, doctors suspended a nearly five-week strike to help prevent the virus taking hold in sub-Saharan Africa’s most populous country. As African nations struggled with the scale of the epidemic, the scientists who discovered the virus in 1976 have called for an experimental drug being used on two infected Americans to also be made available for African victims. There is no proven treatment or cure for Ebola and the use of the experimental drug has sparked an ethical debate, and WHO is planning a special meeting next week to discuss the issue. US regulators meanwhile loosened restrictions on another experimental drug which may allow it to be tried on infected patients in Africa. Ebola causes severe fever and, in the worst cases, unstoppable bleeding. It is transmitted through contact with bodily fluids, and people who live with or care for patients are most at risk. Fatality rates can approach 90 percent, but the latest outbreak has killed around 55-60 percent of those infected. The earlier the virus is discovered, the better the chances are of survival.

spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Peter Lerner. Egypt, mediating talks to end the Gaza conflict, called for an extension of the ceasefire, with the foreign ministry saying progress had been made in the negotiations. The head of a Palestinian delegation in Cairo said they were committed to achieving a truce. “We told the Egyptians (mediators) we are sitting here to achieve a final agreement that restores the rights” of Palestinians, Azzam al-Ahmed told reporters. A Palestinian official said Hamas and Islamic Jihad had first agreed to a ceasefire, but backtracked when there was an alteration in the wording of the agreement regarding Israel’s blockade of Gaza. Hamas did not claim responsibility for any of yesterday’s attacks. Hamas and Palestine Liberation Organisation officials laid out a number of demands, including the lifting of Israel’s eight-year blockade and the building of a sea port. They also want Israel to free some 125 key prisoners. Despite withdrawing all its troops from Gaza by the time the truce began on Tuesday, Israel has retained forces along the border, ready to respond to any resumption of fighting.



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