

AL man killed in clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An Awami League activist was killed and eight others were injured in a clash between two local factions of the ruling party in Mirpur upazila of Kushtia yesterday.

The dead is Nuru Islam, 50, son of Abdur Rahman of Poradaha union. He was the supporter of Mosharraf Hossain, president of the AL's Poradaha union unit, police said.

There was a longstanding feud between Mosharraf and Asaduzzaman Parvez, joint secretary of Mirpur upazila unit of Juba League, over establishing supremacy in the area, said Kazi Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station.

An altercation took place between the supporters of Mosharraf and Parvez over some issues around 6:30pm. Following this, both the groups with locally made weapons clashed with each other that left Nuru along with eight others from both sides injured.

Nuru was taken to Kushtia Medical College Hospital where he died around 8:55pm. Nuru's throat was slit with sharp weapons, police said.

Abu Bakar Siddique, additional superintendent of police in Kushtia, said the situation was under control.

Several houses were torched after the clash allegedly by the supporters of Mosharraf, said witnesses.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area after the incident. Additional law enforcers were deployed there.

Birds

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made by accident while researchers were testing whether the warblers - which weigh less than two small coins - could carry geolocators on their backs.

It turned out they could. With a big storm brewing, the birds were seen taking off from their breeding ground, where they had only just arrived, as part of an unplanned migratory event.

The birds were alerted when the storm was 560 miles away, causing them to flee to Cuba before making the return trip once the storm had passed.

Overall, the warblers travelled 930 miles in just five days to avoid the deadly storms.

Dr Henry Streby, of the University of California, Berkeley, said: "The most curious finding is that the birds left long before the storm arrived.

"At the same time that meteorologists on The Weather Channel were telling us this storm was headed in our direction, the birds were apparently already packing their bags and evacuating the area."

Dr Streby and his colleagues found the birds fled from their breeding territories more than 24 hours before the arrival of the storm.

The researchers suspect that the birds did it by listening to infrasound associated with the severe weather, at a level well below the range of human hearing.

8 kids killed

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midday after reports of a woman with serious injuries on the premises.

They found the bodies of the children, aged between 18 months and 15 years, when they were examining the location.

Detective Inspector Bruno Asnicar said police believed the woman was the mother of seven of the children.

"There is no formal suspect," Asnicar told reporters.

"We are talking to a range of people. Anybody who has had any involvement in the past two or three days is a person of interest," he said.

The woman, aged 34, was receiving treatment for her injuries, police said, and was assisting them with their investigation.

Forensics officers have locked down the scene and there has been no formal identification of the children.

While unrelated to the mass stabbing in tropical Cairns, the Sydney siege has triggered an outpouring of grief, with shocked Australians laying thousands of bouquets of flowers at a makeshift shrine in a central city mall near the siege cafe.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott called the events in Cairns "heartbreaking" and acknowledged that these were "trying days" for Australia.

"All parents would feel a gut-wrenching sadness at what has happened. This is an unspeakable crime. Tonight, there will be tears and prayers across our country for these children," he said in a media release.

Police in Cairns urged calm.

"There is no need for the public to be concerned about this, other than it is a tragic, tragic event," Asnicar said.

"The situation is well controlled at the moment and there shouldn't be any concerns for anyone else," he said.

Specialist officers were being sent from Brisbane, the state capital, to assist with the investigation, Asnicar said.

Media outlets reported that the neighbourhood was predominantly inhabited by indigenous Aboriginal Australians, and was known by residents to have a high crime rate.

Comilla schoolgirl 'gang-raped'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A class V girl in Comilla has been "gang-raped" by unidentified men who then shot the entire incident on their mobile phones, the victim has alleged.

The incident happened after she went to her school in Sundalpur area in Daudkandi upazila with her mother yesterday afternoon to receive her stipend.

Around 5:15pm, the mother went to a classroom to collect the money, leaving her daughter with other students in the playground.

But the girl was not there when she came back with the money.

An hour later, the girl was found inside a nearby bush with blood stains

on several parts of her body, alleged the mother.

On information, police went to the spot and sent the girl to Daudkandi Upazila Health Complex where doctors confirmed that she had been raped.

She was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after her condition deteriorated.

An unidentified youth tricked the girl into going to a nearby place before raping her with four others, said the mother, quoting the girl.

Later, the girl was forcefully taken inside the bush and gang-raped, she added.

Abu Salam Mia, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Police Station, said they were investigating the matter.

A historic gift

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hold the Indian president in their highest esteem.

Earlier, Mukherjee, who was discharged yesterday from a hospital after a week-long stay there during which he underwent a coronary angioplasty, welcomed Hamid on his maiden visit to India and complimented him on his personal role in strengthening India-Bangla relations.

Mukherjee said it was greatly satisfying for India to see Bangladesh showing a high economic growth with a promising future.

"It is heartening to see the impressive strides made by Bangladesh regarding human development, healthcare, education, women empowerment and other socio-economic issues," the Indian president was quoted in the statement.

After the meeting, Mukherjee hosted a dinner for Hamid which was attended by, among others, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Bangladesh's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam and Bangladesh High Commissioner to

India Syed Moazzem Ali.

Meanwhile, in a statement released in New Delhi, Indian public service broadcaster Prasar Bharati has given details of two CDs of Akashvani (Air India Radio) that was gifted by the Indian president yesterday, reports PTI.

The first CD titled "Liberation of Bangladesh 1971" contains the public speeches from Akashvani Delhi of the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Lok Sabha statements, interviews and speeches of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the broadcast of surrender of Pakistani forces on December 16, the public address of Bangabandhu in January, 1972, and other programmes, that are mainly in Bangla.

The second CD titled "Struggle of a Nation" is based on the recordings of Akashvani Kolkata, and contains documentation of important events from March to December 1971 and the speeches of the then Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh, and live commentaries.

The gift also has the "Sangbad Bichitra" newsreel programme, that played a pivotal role during the 1971 Liberation War, the statement added.

Freedom in the air

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online depository also contain exclusive interviews of war heroes, key diplomatic cables including then US Consul General Archer K Blood's "Dissent Cables" famously known as "Blood Telegrams" and the report of Pakistan government-formed Hamoodur Rahman Commission which censured the politicians and army for genocide in Bangladesh in 1971.

In three of those rarely watched videos, Pakistan army's massacres stood out vividly.

Ron Nessen, in an NBC News report (Link: ow.ly/G6ga8), showed part of a massacre at Dhaka University on February 2, 1971 showed a killing ground beside a narrow river on the outskirts of Khulna city. Skulls and tattered bones were seen scattered on the bank of the river.

According to a Bangladesh government report, Khulna alone experienced at least 1,00,000 deaths in the genocide. Among the killed were mostly the supporters of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hindus, students and professionals, Grant said.

The documentary also talks about the bilateral protocols between India and Bangladesh and the four different river routes between the two countries.

"There are 54 rivers shared between two countries, but so far only a river agreement on Ganga has been inked between the two countries," senior journalist Santanu Sanyal said, adding that about 620 million people are depended on the rivers in both the countries.

While delving on the issue centring on the shared river system, scientists also pointed out that rivers themselves are environmental hot spots and sustain a number of species.

where the Pakistan army conducted a heinous raid the day earlier.

Terming the villagers "Mukti Bahini guerrilla fighters" or their sympathisers, the military indiscriminately killed civilians and raped women before charging bayonets to kill them. The army forced their families to watch the women being disgraced. They continued their rampage with bullets and bayonets. Even a year-old infant was not spared. Before leaving, they vandalised and set fire to the entire village.

A CBS News report (Link: ow.ly/G6ga8) by Peter Grant on March 26, 1971. A professor of engineering took the video with a portable tape machine hidden on the roof of a building 300 yards from the place where the Pakistani soldiers herded students, teachers and employees of the university.

The footage was kept hidden for nine months before it made its way to NBC News.

In another report (Link: ow.ly/G6h1a), Howard Tuckner of ABC News showed a village near Dhaka on November 30, 1971,

where the Pakistan army conducted a heinous raid the day earlier.

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subsidised gas," BPC Chairman Eunusur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Rahman said the armed forces, police and some government agencies got the gas at Tk 700 a cylinder. But BPC officials said it was only 12 to 15 percent of the total gas the BPC sells per year. So, 85 percent of BPC's LP gas is pocketed by unscrupulous dealers who sell those at market rate more than double the BPC price.

"We had submitted proposals several times to hike the price, but they were not accepted," said the BPC chairman.

Currently, the yearly consumption of LP gas in the country is 1 lakh tonnes -- 80 percent of it imported and the rest produced by the BPC. Local companies Bashundhara and Jamuna Spacetech and French TotalGaz and Australian Kleenheat sell cooking gas by importing it.

In 2013-14, the BPC has produced and sold 20,000 tonnes of LP gas, enough to refill 15 lakh 12.5kg capacity cylinders. The government has to give subsidy of up to Tk 500 per cylinder. In all, the annual subsidy stands at Tk 75 crore, according to the BPC.

Not that the government officials are unaware that middlemen are gobbling up all the subsidies. Yet, the authorities have repeatedly declined to adjust the price upward in line with the market price. At the moment, the gap between government price and market price of a 12kg cylinder is over Tk 800.

Though private players adjust the price in line with the international market price, the BPC did not do so in

the past five and a half years. The last time it adjusted the price downward to Tk 700 from 850 was in June 2009. The price cut was made to help BPC compete with private companies that were selling gas at Tk 750-800 a cylinder at the time.

Since then private companies have increased the price several times.

"Apparently, you won't get the BPC gas in any dealer's shop. They erase BPC's name from the cylinder and sell it at market price," said a senior official of BPC's LPG Plant in Chittagong.

He said he wanted to rebrand the product to stop the malpractice by dealers and help consumers get it at the subsidised rate.

Analysts say there is no reason behind continuing the subsidy when the BPC cannot intervene in the market and when consumers do not get its benefit.

"It is tough to intervene in the market with 15-20 percent share. It can hardly create any impact on the market," said Prof Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue. "So, the government has to rethink about the subsidy on LP gas."

He also pointed out the issue of selling BPC gas in black markets, which is illegal.

India, which was facing an identical problem, has devised a way out to give the subsidy to the targeted consumers. Now a cooking gas consumer gets Rs 435 directly in his bank account when he books for an LPG cylinder. But the consumer has to buy the gas at the market price.

Additional police were deployed in the village to fend off further trouble, the police official added.

Complete fencing in 3 months

Indian SC asks govt on Bangladesh border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court has asked the federal government to complete fencing work on the border with Bangladesh within three months to check influx of illegal Bangladeshi nationals into Assam state and streamline the process to deport them back.

A bench, comprising justices R F Nariman and Ranjan Gogoi, also asked the government to hold discussions with Bangladesh government for ensuring that illegal migrants be sent back and passed a slew of directions in this regard.

"We are at a loss to understand why 67 years after independence, the eastern border is left porous," it said, adding "we have been reliably informed that the entire western border with Pakistan, being 3300Km-long, is not only properly fenced but properly manned as well and is not porous at any point."

The bench, in its 70-page verdict on Wednesday, directed the government to take all effective steps to complete the "fencing (double coiled wire fencing) in such parts/ports of the Bangladesh border (including Assam) where fencing is yet to be completed to prevent illegal access to the country from Bangladesh."

On the issue of curbing influx of migrants, the bench said "the vigil along the riverine boundary will be effectively maintained by continuous patrolling. Such part of the international border, which has been perceived to be inhospitable on account of the difficult terrain, will be patrolled and monitored at vulnerable points that could provide means of illegal entry."

"Flood lights, wherever required, will also be provided while maintaining the present arrangements. The completed part of the border fencing will be maintained and repaired so as to constitute an effective barrier to cross border trafficking," the bench said adding it will monitor the progress made in this regard at the end of three months.

Indo-Bangla river

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Well known river expert Kalyan Rudra said that the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basin brings about 167 crore tonnes of sediment a year which is the highest in the world. Stating that one first challenge to save the river is doing away with sedimentation, Prof Rudra said that efforts should be made for turning the river routes more sustainable.

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Banquet

FROM PAGE 2

tensions in parts of the country.

Mamata, also the Trinamool chief, has repeatedly targeted Modi using some strong words, and the BJP attacked her and the Trinamool Congress accusing them of shielding those involved in Saradha scam and Burdwan blast.

The Indian president, who returned from a week-long hospitalisation where he underwent a coronary angioplasty, did not stay for the banquet and retired to bed.

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