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'Think simple' works well

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Crude bombs exploded there. Clashes were witnessed in the neighbourhood too and many got injured in the process.

But with flowers blooming, the area still looks immaculate. This has been made possible by a nature lover, Md Putu Mia Talukdar.

A businessman by profession, he has so far spent around Tk 2 lakh for the beautification of the central reservation of Shatmatha-Tinmatha road near Govt Azizul Haque College in Bogra.

Cocktails were blasted in the area during clashes between the college students and law enforcers. Police retaliated by clubbing troublemakers and lobbing teargas shells. Some of the incidents left several people injured.

Yet the area has not lost its graceful air due to the flowers. Asked about his initiative, Talukdar said being a diabetic patient, he used to go to the Bogra municipality park for a walk to keep his blood sugar levels under control.

A few months later, he thought of making a flower garden as the park was about two kilometres away from his residence at Jan-e-Shaba Housing Limited.

As he had no land available, he selected the one-kilometre stretch of the road -- from Karatoa Multimedia

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Md Putu Mia



The flower plants on the central reservation of Satmatha-Tinmatha road in Bogra town. Putu Mia planted them on a one kilometre stretch of the road of his own accord for the beautification of the town.

PHOTO: STAR

Bomb blast at 14-party gathering

2 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two people were injured in crude bomb explosions in a rally of the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance in the city's Hazaribagh yesterday.

The injured were Swetchhasebak League activists Moktar Hossain, 28, and Selim, 35. They received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, a source at the hospital told The Daily Star.

Police said criminals blasted two crude bombs near the rally at Hazaribagh Park around 2:45pm. No one was detained in this connection.

Although the explosions created panic in the area, the 14-party alliance completed the rally.

AL presidium member

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Violence on amid hartal, blockade

21 people injured; 18 vehicles torched, vandalised

STAR REPORT

Innocent people continue to bear the brunt of the ongoing blockade and hartals. Vehicles, particularly the goods-laden ones, are also being burnt or vandalised every day in different parts of the country.

At least 21 people were injured in arson attacks on buses and trucks yesterday, the fourth day of the BNP-led 20-party combine's hartal. Ten of them sustained burn injuries.

Around 18 vehicles were torched across the country while a government office came

under attack in Laxmipur.

At least 10 passengers of a bus of Hazrat Shah Sultan Paribahan were injured when pro-blockade pickets allegedly firebombed the vehicle at Sultanpur in Kishoreganj last night.

Of the injured, three suffered burns and the rest sustained injuries while trying to get off the burning bus hurriedly. Officer-in-Charge Mir Mosharraf Hossain of Kishoreganj Model Police station told The Daily Star. Identities of the injured, however, could not be known.

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Cops struggling to cope with overstretched duty

SHARIFUL ISLAM and RAFIUL ISLAM

It was a Sunday afternoon. Two on-duty policemen were sitting on a bench on the sidewalk of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital's Karwan Bazar area. While one was watching over the pedestrians' movement and the other was taking a nap with his chin rested on the back of his palm placed on the muzzle of his rifle.

As these correspondents started talking to his colleague, the constable woke up. His eyes were red and face bore clear signs of exhaustion.

And he himself explained it all.

"I have to wake up at 2 in the morning and rush to the Public Order Management unit of police at Mirpur from my house at Madartek and be ready for duty by 5," he said, wishing anonymity.

It is almost 10 at night when he returns home, meaning he gets barely four hours to rest a day. This has been going on since the countrywide blockade started on January 6, triggering a fresh spell of violence that has claimed at least 81 lives so far.

Like him, more than 80 percent of

the police personnel assigned to maintain law and order during the turmoil are under immense stress with little time for family, no weekly holidays and no leaves, except for emergency cases.

The Daily Star recently talked to over a dozen policemen in Dhaka city and three other districts of the country and all of them told of extreme tiredness as they have to work from 15 to 18 hours a day, almost double the normal work hours, since the blockade began.

"I have not had a good sleep since the blockade started. I feel dizzy while

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Swadhinata Padak goes to 8 persons

UNB, Dhaka

The government has nominated eight distinguished persons for Swadhinata Padak (Independence Award) 2015 in recognition of their outstanding contributions in respective fields.

The awardees include late commandant Manik Chowdhury, who made significant contributions towards organising the Liberation War in 1971 in Sylhet; late Mamun Mahmud, who was a police officer in 1971 and killed by Pakistani occupation forces for helping freedom fighters; late Shah AMS Kibria, who played an important role in the campaign for Bangladesh's war of independence in Washington; and late Prof Mozaffar Ahmed, who was an adviser to the wartime government of Bangladesh.

Besides, educationist and Prof Emeritus of Dhaka University Anisuzzaman, renowned film actor Abdur Razzak, agricultural scientist and former director general of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute Mohammad Hossain Mondol, and eminent

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With no curtain for the passenger, an umbrella is being used in a rickshaw at Dhaka University yesterday. Yesterday morning's sudden spring rain caught many people of the city off guard.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Mamata meets Modi Monday

Eyes crucial talks on Teesta, land boundary; writes to Indian PM about Bangladesh visit's outcome

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday said she told Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the need for improved India-Bangladesh ties.

Mamata arrives in Delhi on March 8 to hold talks with Modi on the following day. The issues of Teesta water sharing deal and land boundary accord between the two neighbours will dominate the meeting.

Talking to reporters in Kolkata, Mamata said she had written separate letters to Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj about the outcome of her recent visit to Bangladesh.

"After my recent visit to Bangladesh, I have apprised the PM and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj of the details about the Teesta water issue and Indo-Bangla relations," added the CM.

The Mamata-Modi meeting comes just over two weeks after Mamata's visit to Dhaka.

During her talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the West Bengal CM pledged to play a positive role for the Teesta water accord and Land Boundary Agreement (LBA).

The main purpose of Mamata's meeting with Modi is to persuade the PM to allocate more funds for the cash-strapped West Bengal government.

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IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

US defies Israel to go ahead with plan

AFP, Montreux

The US and Iran wrapped up three days of intense nuclear negotiations yesterday, but American officials said "tough challenges" remained as a March 31 deadline for a framework deal looms.

Ignoring a passionate plea from Israel's leader to ditch their talks, top US diplomat John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pressed on at the

negotiating table in the Swiss lakeside town of Montreux.

But a senior US State Department official conceded the "bottom line here is that there is no deal to announce to anybody today."

There had been "very intense hard work, some progress, but tough challenges yet to be resolved," the official said.

In a dramatic speech to the US Congress on Tuesday, Benjamin Netanyahu had

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World's first lagoon power plants in UK

BBC ONLINE

Plans to generate electricity from the world's first series of tidal lagoons have been unveiled in the UK.

The six lagoons -- four in Wales and one each in Somerset and Cumbria -- will capture incoming and outgoing tides behind giant sea walls, and use the weight of the

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JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

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