

# 'Criminal' killed in 'gunfight' with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

An alleged criminal was killed in a "gunfight" between his cohorts and police in Rajshahi city early yesterday. But the identity of the deceased, aged around 26, could not be known immediately. Iftekhair Alam, an assistant commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP), said a team of the Detective Branch of police with some policemen of Motihar Police Station was conducting an anti-militancy drive near Ashrafer Mor. Around 3:00am, some criminals suddenly attacked the law enforcers, blasted several crude bombs and opened fire. Police then returned fire, triggering the "gunfight". At one stage, the youth was hit by bullets and died on the spot, while others managed to flee, said Iftekhair, also spokesperson for the RMP. The law enforcers also claimed to have recovered a pistol from the spot. "We are yet to know who the criminals were, it will be clear when we can identify the deceased," said the police official.

# West Bengal

FROM PAGE 16 Bengal, informed this to journalists at Nabanna, the state government's secretariat.

The name West Bengal should not exist when there is no East Bengal, he argued saying that if the new name of the state starts with the alphabet "B", it would climb up the alphabetical list of states, and as a result, the state would be in an advantageous position in matters of national importance. Litterateurs and intellectuals in West Bengal expressed mixed reactions to the proposal. Talking to this correspondent, popular litterateur Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay said the name West Bengal bears no meaning anymore and the name should have been changed long ago. Another renowned litterateur Samaresh Majumdar preferred the name "Bangla" to "Banga". Educationist Rajat Kanta Roy, former vice-chancellor of Visva-Bharati University, opposed the move saying that the name West Bengal is part of history.

BJP leader and Union Minister Babul Supriyo, as a personal preference, liked "Bangla" as the state's new name.

# Ministry orders

FROM PAGE 1 "peace schools" in six districts were being run by pro-Jamaat-e-Islami men and a portion of their income was being spent on the party's organisational activities. Of the peace schools, the one in the capital's Lalmatia has government approval, according to an education ministry official. The ministry has asked the Dhaka Education Board to cancel the approval of the school for "its involvement in controversial activities", said the education ministry press release yesterday. "We have asked the Dhaka Education Board to explain how the Lalmatia school got approval. We will take further steps on this matter after investigation," Nahid said yesterday evening.

In response to a query, a senior official of the education ministry told this newspaper, "These unapproved schools must be closed. That's why we have asked the home ministry to do this."

Asked how the unapproved schools had been running so far, he blamed it on lax government monitoring.

# Eviction drive

FROM PAGE 16 different houses were demolished. Most of the shops in the area were kept closed during the drive. The eviction team reportedly faced resistance from locals as some locals complained that the Rajuk team was knocking down illegal portions of their structures while many other such structures did not come under the eviction drive. Contacted, Nasir Uddin, executive magistrate of Rajuk, who led the drive, said, "We did not face any resistance from the locals and will resume the drive on Wednesday [today] morning." In another drive, a team of Rajuk, led by Executive Magistrate Khandokar Oliur Rahman, sealed two shops and a superstore in Gulshan-1 for running those illegally in residential area. Utility service of those business establishments was also disconnected. The team also cleared parking space of a building and demolished ramps of six buildings which were constructed on footpaths illegally.

# 'Toxic gas' dropped on Syria's Idlib

## 33 people, mostly women and children, affected

AGENCIES

A Syrian rescue service operating in rebel-held territory said yesterday a helicopter dropped containers of toxic gas overnight on a town close to where a Russian military helicopter was shot down hours earlier. The opposition Syrian National Coalition (SNC) accused President Bashar al Assad of being behind the attack. Assad has denied previous accusations of using chemical weapons. A spokesman for the Syria Civil Defence said 33 people, mostly women and children, were affected by the gas, which they suspect was chlorine, in Saraqeb, in rebel-held Idlib province. The group, which describes itself as a neutral band of search and rescue volunteers, posted a video on YouTube apparently showing a number of men struggling to breathe and being given oxygen masks by people in civil defence uniforms. "Medium-sized barrels fell containing toxic gasses. The Syrian Civil Defence was not able to determine the type of the gas," said the spokesman. The Syrian government and its Russian allies were not immediately available for comment, reports Reuters.

US Secretary of State John Kerry on Monday urged Russia to "restrain" itself and the government in Syria as fierce fighting there continues on the day he had hoped political transition could start. "It is critical, obviously, that Russia restrain both itself and the Assad regime from conducting offensive operations, just as it is our responsibility to get the opposition to refrain from engaging in those operations," he told journalists. Kerry said the government's attacks had prevented the warring parties from meeting for negotiations on Monday, the target date set for the regime and opposition forces to agree on the framework of a political transition, reports AFP. Meanwhile, shells fired by Syrian

rebel groups killed at least 28 civilians in southwestern districts of the battleground city of Aleppo over the last 24 hours, a monitor said late Monday. Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said those killed "included six children and eight women" in two government-controlled neighbourhoods of divided Aleppo. In Libya, forces loyal to unity government said yesterday they were advancing inside the jihadist stronghold of Sirte, following the first US air strikes on Islamic State group positions in the city. The IS bastion, located just across the Mediterranean from Europe, has been shaken by weeks of fierce clashes between jihadists and fighters allied to the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA). The city, located 450 kilometres east of Tripoli, has been controlled by IS since June 2015, and its loss would be a major blow to the jihadists, who have faced a series of setbacks in Syria and Iraq. IS has transformed the city into a training camp for Libyan and foreign militants, terrifying residents with public amputations and executions. The pro-GNA forces said yesterday they had gained full control of Al-Dollar, a central residential district in Sirte, after clashes that killed five of their members and wounded 17. The announcement came after US aircraft launched five air strikes on Monday against "several targets in Sirte, hitting IS members and vehicles", the GNA forces said in a statement. The Pentagon said the raids were launched in response to a request from Fayed al-Sarraj, the head of the unity government. It was unclear whether the strikes had helped the GNA fighters to gain control of Al-Dollar. IS took advantage of the chaos in Libya after the 2011 ouster of longtime dictator Moamer Gaddafi to increase its presence in the oil-rich country.

# Eyes on top militants

FROM PAGE 1 In 2005, the government had announced Tk 50 lakh bounty each for the arrest of Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai -- top leaders of banned militant outfit Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB). Gunmen stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan diplomatic zone on this July 1 and killed 20 hostages, mostly foreign nationals. Two police officials were also killed during the 12-hour hostage standoff. In Kishoreganj, four people, including a suspected attacker, were killed in a militant attack near the Sholakia Eid congregation ground on July 7, the Eid day. TAMIM Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury is a top JMB leader and police investigation found his involvement in the Gulshan and Sholakia terror attacks, said the IGP. He had also guided the group of nine militants, killed in a recent police operation at Kalyanpur, into planning further attacks, he said. Shahidul said police were not sure whether Tamim is in the country right now. However, he claimed that they have identified two key associates of Tamim and were working to arrest them. Tamim, an accused in the case filed with Mirpur Police Station over the Kalyanpur incident, came under law enforcers' radar last year although he entered the country in a flight from Dubai on October 5 in 2013, said police. He used to frequent the militant den in Kalyanpur and have meetings with the militants and give them motivational speeches, according to the case statement. Tamim and other accused in the case also provided the 9 militants with financial support, firearms, ammunition and explosives, the case statement said, adding that the accused also trained the radicals. Investigators believe Tamim is leading a pro-Islamic State (IS) group in Bangladesh. The IS mouthpiece Dabiq magazine says Tamim identifies himself as Shaykh Abu Ibrahim Al-Hanif, the "Amir of the Khilafah's Soldiers in Bengal."

Tamim's father Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury, who was a shipping officer in Chittagong, moved to Canada along with his family after the liberation war in 1971. Before the 2013 visit, Tamim along with his family came to Bangladesh in 2001 and stayed for around three months. Tamim's cousin Tazim Ahmed Chowdhury said Tamim is married and has three children. According to the international media, Tamim was previously a resident of Windsor, Ontario in Canada. He is in his mid-30s. A few people knew him from the local mosque and from the social circles. He was a shy and skinny kid. Abdus Salam, chairman of Dubag union, said Tamim's family is associated with Jamaat politics and his late grandfather Abdul Majid Chowdhury was a "helping hand" of a Peace Committee, an anti-liberation force, during the 1971 Liberation War, reports our Sylhet correspondent. ZIA At yesterday's press briefing, the IGP said police investigation also found the involvement of sacked army major Syed Ziaul Haque in recent targeted killings of individuals. Son of Syed Md Zillul Haque, Zia is from Mostafapur of Moulvibazar Sadar upazila. According to police sources, Zia is the key operational commander of the pro-Qaeda outfit called Ansar Al Islam which was previously known as Ansarullah Bangla Team. Zia made headlines in 2012 while trying to engineer a military coup that failed. Ansar Al Islam claimed responsibility for some of the targeted killings of secularist writers, bloggers and gay rights activists. Around 200 of its trained members are active in the country to execute the plans of Zia, detectives say, based on the statements of some of its arrested members. Zia has been dodging police dragnet since 2012. Chief of Counterterrorism and Transnational Crime unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Monirul Islam said Zia is currently inside the country. Among the members of his group, Zia is known as Sagar and Ishtaq. Arrested Ansar Al Islam member Suman Hossain Patwari said he along with several other members was trained up at a centre in Tongi which was visited by Sagar alias Ishtaq, said police. Suman has confessed his involvement in the attack on Shuddhoswar Publication owner Ahmedur Rashed Chowdhury Tutul on October 31 last year, police added.

# Indian team due in Dhaka today

## To discuss strategy for taking back elephant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A team from the Assam forest department will come to Dhaka today to discuss with the Bangladeshi authorities concerned how to bring back an elephant stranded in Bangladesh. "They are going to Dhaka tomorrow [today] where they will meet Bangladesh forest department officials and prepare a strategy to bring back the elephant," Assam's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Bikash Brahma said in Guwahati, India, yesterday. The three-member team will be comprised of Goalpara District Forest Officer Suleman Uddin Choudhury, retired conservator of forests Rithesh Chandra Bhattacharjee and veterinary professor Dr K K Sarma. On June 27, it was reported that a wild female elephant was separated from her herd in Assam and floated along with the currents of the Brahmaputra river from Dhubri district into Bangladesh. Moudud

FROM PAGE 16 day after allowing the appeals of Rajuk and Moudud against two separate HC verdicts on them. Rajuk had appealed to the Appellate Division of the SC against HC verdict that in August 2010 directed for mutating the land in the name of Moudud's bother Monzur. Moudud had appealed to the apex court against another HC judgement that in June last year upheld a lower court's order accepting charges of the corruption case against them. The ACC on December 17, 2013 lodged the case with Gulshan Police Station against Moudud and his brother Monzur on the charge of grabbing an abandoned public land worth over Tk 300 crore in capital's Gulshan. The ACC said in the case statement that Moudud and his brother grabbed the land -- stretching over around one bigha and 13 katha -- in Gulshan between 1978 and 2006. According to the case statement, the land was enlisted as the government's abandoned land in 1972 after Pakistani couple Mohammad Ehsan and Inge Maria Flatz left the country before 1972. Ehsan received the possession of the land in 1961 from now-defunct DIT [now Rajuk], the case statement said, adding the land was transferred to Flatz in 1965. Moudud falsely showed that Flatz issued a power of attorney in favour of him on August 2, 1973. Moudud grabbed the land and its establishment, and started living there showing him as a tenant of Flatz. But the ACC investigation found no record that says that she visited Bangladesh after the independence of the country. On September 14 last year, the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka took cognisance of the charges in the case. But on June 23 last year, the HC rejected a revision petition filed by Moudud challenging the legality of the lower court order accepting the charges.

# Ex-Bangalee

FROM PAGE 16 He was the commander of an army camp set up at Daudkandi High School and "committed" crimes from the camp, Kalam added. The Daily Star could not have the version of the accused or his family immediately. Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday granted a prosecution petition to show three alleged Razakars of Mymensingh arrested in a case filed in connection with the crimes. The accused are Abul Kalam alias Samsuzzaman, 65, Mohammad Abdullah, 63, and Abdul Malek Akanda alias Abul Hossain, 67. They all originally hailed from Gafargaon upazila in the district but now live in Pabna, Dhaka and Mymensingh respectively. On July 25, Khalilur Rahman Meer was shown arrested in the case. Prosecutor Rezia Sultana Chaman told the tribunal that during a probe against Khalilur Rahman, the investigation officer found "involvement" of the three in wartime crimes. She said the three were arrested in separate cases filed under the Special Powers Act and now in jails, but they might go into hiding after obtaining bail. So, they need to be shown arrested and kept in jail for proper investigation, she argued. In another case against six Gaibandha men including a former Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker, the trial began yesterday with Prosecutor Syed Sayedul Haque Sumon placing the opening statement. The tribunal fixed August 28 to start recording the testimony of the prosecution witnesses. The accused are Abu Saleh Md Abdul Aziz Mia, 65, a former Jamaat lawmaker and alleged commander of local Razakar force, Ruhul Amin alias Manju, 61, Abdul Latif, 61, Abu Muslim Md Ali, 59, Najmul Huda, 60, and Abdur Rahim Mia, 62. On June 28, the tribunal framed three charges against the six for looting and killing of a Hindu man at Moujamali village in Gaibandha Sadar, murdering a Chhatra League leader, and killing of 13 chairmen and members of five unions in Sundarganj.

# BNP to leave Jamaat

FROM PAGE 1 no links with war crimes as they were born after the Liberation War.

In the wake of a spate of terrorist attacks in Bangladesh, Khaleda came up with a proposal for creating national unity to combat the threat of militancy and terrorism. The ruling Awami League rejected the proposal, citing BNP's affiliation with Jamaat which opposed Bangladesh's liberation in 1971 and the party's alleged links with different militant outfits. Speaking at different programmes earlier, several senior BNP leaders, including standing committee member ASM Hannan Shah, indicated that BNP was ready to drop Jamaat from the national unity process for the country's greater interest. Prof Emajuddin in his speech yesterday said forging national unity is very much necessary in the present situation of the country. Without naming Jamaat, he said a political party is being blamed for not creating national unity among all political parties. "The government can ban the party at time if it wants," he added. "GOVT DESTROYING EVIDENCE" Senior BNP leader Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday asked the government to explain its "motive behind destroying evidence" by killing militants instead of arresting them. Addressing a press conference at the BNP's Nayapaltan central office, he said, "Awami League leaders say the BNP is decrying the killing of militants. But we want to say that BNP wants militancy to be uprooted by collecting information from extremists." Also a BNP standing committee member, Nazrul alleged that the government was making elimination of militancy complicated by not collecting information from militants through arresting them. The BNP is contacting different political parties to bring them under a single and united platform for initiating a fight against militancy, he added. Contacted, a BNP standing committee member denied making any comment on Emajuddin's statement. "I don't know what madam told him [Emajuddin] about keeping Jamaat out of the unity process or dropping the party from the 20-party alliance," the BNP leader said on condition of anonymity. Another standing committee member said he was not aware of any such development that the BNP was going to drop Jamaat from the alliance.

# First flight of Hajj

FROM PAGE 16 A total of 1,01,758 Bangladeshis are expected to perform Hajj this year. Only 10,000 of them would perform Hajj under government management while 91,758 might perform the holy ritual under private managements.

All private Hajj agencies have already completed reservation for accommodation of the Bangladeshi pilgrims and they have made required fund deposits in bank accounts authorised by the Saudi authorities, Bahar confirmed adding, "The agencies are now busy verifying the confirmation of visas and air tickets for the pilgrims." Biman Bangladesh Airlines -- the national flag carrier of Bangladesh -- and Saudi Arabian Airlines have been selected by the government for carrying the Hajj pilgrims this year. Both airlines will carry equal number of passengers and maximum luggage allowance for each passenger will be 46 kilograms. A number of unscrupulous brokers have been deceiving the pilgrims by charging extra money for air tickets -- admitting this complaint from a Haab agent, the Haab president hoped that this issue will be resolved soon since it has been raised to the government already. Abdul Jalil, secretary of Ministry of Religious Affairs, said, "We've taken

all measures for smooth operation of the flights. If any Hajj agent fails to complete the procedure and any of their pilgrims miss a flight, the concerned agent will be reprimanded severely." The Bangladesh Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia has already completed its preparations for ensuring a smoother management for the Hajj pilgrims this year, AKM Masudur Rahman, a Hajj counsellor, told The Daily Star from Saudi Arabia over phone on Sunday. Two medical teams, for overseeing health issues of the pilgrims, have reached Saudi Arabia last week, he added. Earlier in June, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism at an inter-ministerial meeting on Hajj preparations at the Secretariat decided to begin Hajj flights from August 4. The outgoing flights will continue till September 5 and the return flights will start from September 17 to October 16. The holy Hajj is likely to be held on September 12, subject to moon sighting. In January, the government announced two Hajj packages costing Tk 3.05 lakh and Tk 3.6 lakh. Haab has set Tk 3.05 lakh for performing this year's Hajj under private management.

# Flood causes huge damage

FROM PAGE 1 Osimuddin Miah, a farmer in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, lost aman paddy on 1.66 acres of land to flooding. "I borrowed Tk 20,000 from an NGO for cultivating aman, but the floods have ruined everything," he said yesterday after returning home along with his five-member family from an embankment. The 62-year-old had no idea about how he would repay the loan, go for growing another crop and repair the house, reports our Lalmonirhat correspondent. Mofazzal Hossain, 56, a farmer at Shiberkuti village, could not buy aman seedlings as the prices were high. "If the govt doesn't provide necessary support, we won't be able to grow aman paddy," he said, adding that it would ultimately have an adverse impact on their livelihood. Fish farmer Mohammad Ali in Melandah upazila of Jamalpur said he spent Tk 10 lakh for farming in two ponds, but the total investment is lost due to flooding. As of yesterday, crops on 1.07 lakh hectares in 23 districts have been inundated by floodwaters, according to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). The DAE would make a complete assessment of the damages after the flood is over. Based on the assessment, the government would decide on how to help the affected farmers, DAE Director General Md Hamidur Rahman told The Daily Star. The government would ensure availability of paddy seedlings and vegetable seeds so that farmers can resume cultivation after the subsidence of floodwaters, he added. According to the Department of Disaster Management, at least 6,34,409 families in the country's 16 districts, mostly in the north and northeast, have been hit by flooding since mid-July. The deluge killed 21 people and fully damaged some 8,140 houses. Some 2,000 km of roads and 58.09 km of embankments in Jamalpur; seven km of roads in Nilphamari; 327 km of roads in Sirajganj and 300 metres of dykes in Gaibandha were damaged fully or partially. Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya yesterday said the government would take a 40-day programme to rebuild the damaged houses in low-lying areas. "Immediately after the receding of

floodwaters, the government would start rebuilding the damaged homes," he said while distributing relief materials among the victims in Phulbari of Gaibandha. Two hundred more flood shelter centres will be built to protect people from flooding, Maya added. Meanwhile, water levels in the Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakhya around the capital are rising and the trend might continue in next 24 hours, according to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC). "There is no possibility of flooding in northern and western areas of Dhaka. But the low-lying areas in the east might see flooding," said Ripon Karmaker, assistant engineer of FFWC.

# Residents protest

FROM PAGE 2 survey of this land has taken place as yet, he pointed out. The Development Minister of the West Bengal state government and Cooch Behar district Trinamool President Rabindranath Ghosh said the union government and the state government are working for the development of the enclaves. It would take some time for that to happen especially as the monsoon season is ongoing right now. Meanwhile the district magistrate of Cooch Behar P Ulaganathan said a Rs 200 crore project has been submitted by the union government and the state government for the development of the enclaves.

# Turkey to split spy service after coup: report

AFP, Istanbul Turkey is planning to split its spy service into separate units for foreign and domestic intelligence after the organisation was vehemently criticised for shortcomings over the failed coup, a report said yesterday. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been scathing about the failure of the National Intelligence Service (MIT) to warn him in a timely manner about the coup, complaining he found out when his brother-in-law called up. Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus on Monday said a restructuring of Turkey's intelligence operations was "on the agenda" after the coup, just as with the military.