

UPDF member shot dead in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An activist of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was shot dead by unidentified criminals in Rangamati Sadar upazila yesterday, said police.

The deceased was identified as Rupantor Chakma, 47, hailing from Dighinala upazila in Khagrachhari. The murder occurred around 8:45am in the Manikchhari area as he was heading towards Chakrachhora area from Narachhari for organisational work.

Locals said a group of criminals then opened fire, leaving him dead on the spot.

Ariful Islam Amin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station in Rangamati, said police learned that a UPDF member was shot dead by Jana Sanghati Samiti (JSS) members.

Police rushed to the spot to recover the body, he said.

Meanwhile, in a statement, UPDF also blamed JSS for the killing and demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Today's SSC, equivalent exams postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday postponed Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent exams scheduled for today under all educational boards.

The authorities of six education boards — Chattogram, Cumilla, Barishal, Jashore, technical and madrasa — postponed exams due to the potential impacts of Cyclone Mocha.

"Today, we have decided to postpone SSC exams of all educational boards as the students will need to take exams of optional subjects and the exams of all education boards take place following a single question," Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chief of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Today, general education board students were supposed to be tested on home economics, agriculture studies, Arabic, Sanskrit and other subjects.

There are no exams scheduled on the day for madrasa or technical board students.



PHOTO: COURTESY

PRACTISING ART IN THE CITY

RBR

The best place to paint a gorgeous, amber sunrise in Dhaka is definitely our Ramna Park and on most Saturdays, you will see students of Dhaka Water Colour Academy, a group for budding artists, young and old, trying to capture that exact moment in time through their work.

Kamalapur Railway Station, any old tea stall, Ramna Park — these are the places to capture the essence of city life or Dhaka in general for Shahanoor Mamun, a celebrated watercolourist and founder of Dhaka Water Colour Academy, and his students. On top of that, outdoor art activities are not much common in Dhaka. We hardly see any groups of artists painting and studying the outdoors in the metropolis. The academy's group outings allow Dhakaities to see the city in an artistic light.

After graduating from university, Shahanoor Mamun missed the comradery of his hall life, a time when he went outdoors to practice drawing with juniors. This interaction with young minds gave him immense pleasure and he thought of engaging with the youth, besides doing studio work.

His wife Zannatun Shahanoor Rinti suggested taking students whenever he ventured outdoors to work on his projects, and that is how Dhaka Water Colour Academy came into being in 2019.

The school applies a master-and-disciple format teaching method where

they all venture outdoors and also work inside the studio. The course fee is Tk 1,500. It is a yearlong course and Mamun starts with basic line drawing and ends up teaching watercolour, acrylic, oil, and charcoal works.

"Taking up painting seriously at the age of 45 turned out to be an invigorating and enriching experience. Firstly, it is a creative outlet for me. Painting allows me to express myself in a unique manner and provides an outlet for any pent-up emotions



or thoughts. Also, it is a great stress reliever. Immersing in painting can be a fantastic way to unwind after a long day or week," expresses Paula Aziz, a student of Dhaka Water Colour Academy.

The pupils at the academy are from different backgrounds — some are university students, some hail from the madrasa background, some are job holders; there are even retirees.

Paula Aziz further elaborates, "Above all, it is a chance to challenge myself when I thought I have reached

my mid-life and I may have to go slow. Instead, I started to learn something. Allowing myself to set goals and do things I have never done before. Finally, I am making new friends and knowing people outside of my circle.

"I chose Mamun as a mentor because I am a fan of his work. I have been following him for many years now. Suddenly, I saw a workshop and got enrolled just like that. Slowly I got involved in his group and became a mentee. He is great at explaining with patience. The academy is a fun place to learn painting and upskilling."

Mamun is trying to build a community where the new will get a chance at mingling with professional artists. The academy invites renowned artists to join workshops and outdoor classes.

"These amateurs will never get a chance to see and work beside professional artists like Kamaluddin or Hashem Khan. So, I plan my workshops accordingly to give the students as much exposure as possible," Mamun relates.

Recently, Shahanoor Mamun is preparing for an exhibition. "I am pulled towards the nightscape now and am testing with colours. This time I am trying to take my watercolours to a different medium and height. I want to explore the characteristics of watercolour to the fullest and even experiment a bit with mixed media at times keeping my signature colour palette and at times also trying to break it," the artist says.

3 Rohingyas held in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Three teenage Rohingyas were detained in Moulvibazar Sadar on Saturday.

The detainees are Hashima, 18, Sajida, 17, and Mujibur Rahman, 17, inhabitants of a refugee camp in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar.

The trio managed to escape the camp on Friday. They were planning to intrude into India through Chatlapur border in Kulaura, said Saiful Islam, sub-inspector of Moulvibazar Model Police Station.

Locals held them at Moulvibazar Bus Stand on Saturday morning and handed them over to police, he added.

Harun-ur-Rashid, officer-in-charge of Moulvibazar Police Station, said the detainees would be sent back to respective Rohingya camps.

Woman killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

An elderly woman was killed after a battery-run three-wheeler run over her on Lalmonirhat-Rangpur road in Lalmonirhat Sadar yesterday afternoon.

The dead is Ekena Khatun, 75, of Gokunda union in the upazila, said police.

After the accident, locals rescued and rushed her to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital, said Ermaadul Alam, officer-in-charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station.

She breathed her last while undergoing treatment at the hospital, the police officer said.

The law enforcers handed over the body to the victim's family members as no one filed any complaint in connection with the death, he further said.

Rickshaw-puller dies as live wire falls on him

UNB, Ctg

A 38-year-old rickshaw-puller died after a live wire, dislodged by the winds of Cyclone Mocha, fell on him at the Oxygen intersection of Chattogram city yesterday.

The victim was Md Zahid of Lalmonirhat. Quoting witnesses, Md Akteruzzaman, senior station officer of Bayezid fire service, said the wire suddenly fell on him when he was sitting on his rickshaw during heavy winds around 9:30am.

The rickshaw caught fire and he got burn injuries. Later, he was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital where he died at 3:30pm, said Sub-inspector Nurul Alam Ashek, in-charge of the hospital's police outpost.

Body recovered from Kirtankhola river

UNB, Dhaka

River police recovered the body of a man from the Kirtankhola River in Barishal on Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Kalachad Kumar Das, 50, a resident of Basinda area under ward 8 of Barishal city.

Md Abdul Jalil, officer-in-charge of Sadar river police station, said police recovered the body from the river after being informed by the locals in the morning.

22 people killed in Somalia floods: UN

AFP, Beledweyne

Flash flooding in central Somalia has killed 22 people and affected over 450,000, the UN's humanitarian agency OCHA said yesterday, after the Shabelle River burst its banks, forcing tens of thousands out of their homes.

Heavy rainfall earlier in the week sent water gushing into homes in Beledweyne town in Hiran region, submerging roads and buildings as residents grabbed their belongings and waded through flooded streets in search of refuge.

A lucky escape

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According to the preliminary data of the district administration, at least 2,522 huts were destroyed and 10,469 houses were damaged in the eight upazilas of Cox's Bazar.

Over 3.34 lakh people in the upazilas were affected by Mocha and over 2.37 lakh took cover in cyclone shelters.

People started returning home from the cyclone shelters yesterday afternoon, said Bibishan Kanti Das, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of Cox's Bazar.

Some 15 to 20 people were injured in Cox's Bazar. They took first aid and went home, claimed Md Abu Sufian, additional district magistrate (ADM) of Cox's Bazar.

The people of Hatiya and Nijhum Dvip in Noakhali were fearing tidal surges last night.

"We have warned people about tidal surges and directed them to rush to the cyclone shelters if there were tidal surges," said Hatiya Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Kaisar Khasru.

There was no significant damage caused in Noakhali by the storm.

[Our correspondents in Cox's Bazar, Chattogram and Noakhali contributed to this report]

New rules spur migrants to seek legal path to US

AFP, Matamoros

With tough new asylum rules in place, many migrants on the US-Mexico border were seeking legal routes to enter the United States on Saturday, despite warnings of a chaotic surge in crossings.

Gustavo Rodriguez, who fled Venezuela after deserting the military, was among those who saw official channels as offering the best chance of being allowed to stay on US soil.

"I want to enter legally," he told AFP in Matamoros, one of several Mexican cities along the border where thousands of migrants fleeing poverty, crime or persecution are gathered.

US President Joe Biden's right-wing opponents predicted a rush across the border after pandemic-era restrictions allowing for immediate expulsion ended at midnight Thursday.

So far the surge failed to

materialize, though thousands of migrants had tried to enter the United States in the days leading up to the rule changes.

That was because anyone crossing the border illegally now faces a five-year ban on applying for legal entry as well as possible criminal charges.

Asylum-seekers are supposed to set up an interview appointment through a smartphone application called CBP One or processing centers the US plans in Colombia, Guatemala and other countries.

But migrants say using the app is a lottery, despite Washington's promise to increase the number of appointments available each day to 1,000.

Jose Manuel Tovar was one of the lucky ones — after four months of trying he finally got an appointment.

"I cried. My family, all my colleagues were crying with joy," the Venezuelan told AFP.

3 killed as Mocha lashes

FROM PAGE 1

In Sittwe, a cell phone tower collapsed under high wind and other buildings were damaged, local media reported.

Across Rakhine state and the northwest of the country, about 6 million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance, while 1.2 million have been displaced, according to the UN humanitarian office (OCHA).

Hundreds of thousands of the Muslim Rohingya minority remain in Myanmar's Rakhine state, where many are confined to camps separated from the rest of the

population.

"The state government has moved many Rohingya from Sittwe camps to higher grounds area," Zaw Min Tun, a Rohingya resident in Sittwe said, adding that the evacuation took place without any warning.

"They also didn't provide any food to them, so people are starving."

In May 2008, Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar with a storm surge that devastated populated areas around the Irrawaddy River Delta. At least 138,000 people died and tens of thousands of homes and other buildings were washed away.

Rivals claim early lead

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Erdogan had 46.48 percent.

Opinion polls before the election had given Kilicdaroglu, who heads a six-party alliance, a slight lead, with two polls on Friday showing him above the 50 percent threshold.

A senior official from the opposition alliance, asking not to be named, said, "It seems there will be no winner in the first round. But, our data indicates Kilicdaroglu will lead." Citing figures from state-owned agency Anadolu, Turkish media said that with almost 75 percent of ballot boxes counted, Erdogan was on 50.83 percent and Kilicdaroglu on 43.36%.

Sunday's vote is one of the most consequential elections in the country's 100 year history, a contest that could end Erdogan's imperious 20-year rule and reverberate well beyond Turkey's borders.

The presidential vote will decide not only who leads Turkey, a NATO-member country of 85 million, but also how it is governed, where its economy is headed amid a deep cost of living crisis, and the shape of its foreign policy.

The elections, which are also for parliament, are being intently watched in Western capitals, the Middle East, NATO and Moscow.

A defeat for Erdogan, one of President Vladimir Putin's most important allies, will likely unnerve the Kremlin but comfort the Biden administration, as well as many European and Middle Eastern leaders

who had troubled relations with Erdogan.

Turkey's longest-serving leader has turned the NATO member and Europe's second largest country into a global player, modernized it through megaprojects such as new bridges, hospitals and airports, and built a military industry sought by foreign states.

But his volatile economic policy of low interest rates, which set off a spiralling cost of living crisis and inflation, left him prey to voters' anger. His government's slow response to a devastating earthquake in southeast Turkey that killed 50,000 people added to voters' dismay.

Kilicdaroglu has pledged to set Turkey on a new course by reviving democracy after years of state repression, returning to orthodox economic policies, empowering institutions who lost autonomy under Erdogan's tight grasp and rebuilding frail ties with the West.

Thousands of political prisoners and activists, including high level names such as Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtas and philanthropist Osman Kavala, could be released if the opposition prevails.

POLARISED POLITICS

"I see these elections as a choice between democracy and dictatorship," said Ahmet Kalkan, 64, as he voted in Istanbul for Kilicdaroglu, echoing critics who fear Erdogan will govern ever more autocratically if he wins.

"I chose democracy and I hope that my country chooses democracy," said Kalkan, a retired health sector worker.

Erdogan, 69, is a veteran of a dozen election victories, and says he respects democracy and denies being a dictator.

Illustrating how the president still commands support, Mehmet Akif Kahraman, also voting in Istanbul, said Erdogan still represented the future even after two decades in power.

"God willing, Turkey will be a world leader," he said.

The parliamentary vote is a race between the People's Alliance comprising Erdogan's Islamist-rooted AK Party (AKP) and the nationalist MHP and others, and Kilicdaroglu's Nation Alliance formed of six opposition parties, including his secularist Republican People's Party (CHP), established by Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

With 62% of ballot boxes counted, Haber Turk put Erdogan's alliance on 52% and the opposition alliance on 33% in the parliamentary vote.

CHANGE OR CONTINUITY

Erdogan, a powerful orator and master campaigner, has pulled out all the stops on the campaign trail. He commands fierce loyalty from pious Turks who once felt disenfranchised in secular Turkey and his political career has survived an attempted coup in 2016, and numerous corruption scandals.

Don't increase tax burden on ordinary people

FROM PAGE 1

programme, the government will have to increase revenue collection and take various reform measures.

The National Board of Revenue shared its plan with Hasina for revenue collection for the next fiscal year in light of the IMF's conditions and upcoming national polls.

The revenue collection target may be set at Tk 430,000 crore, up by 16.2 percent from this fiscal year's target.

In the last five years, the NBR's average collection growth has been 12.12 percent.

NBR officials said they will be able to achieve the target since various reform measures, including installation of electronic fiscal devices (EFDs), have been taken.

Over the next three years, three lakh EFDs will be set up. At present, 9,000 EFDs are operational.

The officials also highlighted the plan to automate tax collection by

2025.

The IMF recommended reducing tax exemptions, which the NBR agreed to do gradually.

However, the NBR does not have any plan to reduce corporate tax. It plans to increase the price slab and tax on tobacco products.

The government is considering lifting the tax amnesty for undeclared income stashed abroad. That provision, brought in last year, has brought no result.