

WEST BANK RAID

Israeli forces kill two Palestinians

REUTERS, Tulkarm

Israeli forces killed two Palestinians, including a fighter of the Islamist Hamas group, during a raid on a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank yesterday, emergency workers and Hamas said.

Israeli forces raided the Nur Shams camp near the city of Tulkarm in the early hours of yesterday morning, setting off an hours-long gun battle with Palestinian fighters, witnesses said.

The Israeli military said it conducted "counterterrorism activity" in the camp, dismantled an operational command centre, equipped with computers and surveillance cameras, and uncovered dozens of explosive devices and bomb-making components.

"During the activity, suspects opened fire and hurled explosive devices at the forces, who responded with live fire. Hits were identified," the military said in a statement, adding that an Israeli soldier was moderately wounded.

Hamas, which has been extending its reach away from its base in Gaza and into the West Bank, said one of the men, 21-year-old Osaid Abu Ali, was a member of its armed wing.

The family of the other man, 32-year-old Abdel-Rahman Abu Daghash, said he had stepped onto the terrace of his house to observe what was going on when he was killed by a sniper.

"He went up to the rooftop to film the ambulances. He barely had the chance to look and the sniper targeted him," said his brother Mo'men Abu Daghash. "He has nothing to do with it and he has kids and his wife is about to give birth."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Schoolgirl drowns in pond

UNB, Chattogram

A fourth grader drowned in a pond at Gachbaria Nayapara in Chandanaish upazila of Chattogram yesterday afternoon.

Jannatul Tahseen, 10, daughter of Md Rubel of Gachbaria Talukderpara area, was a student of Gachbaria Model Govt Primary School.

Deceased's father said she went to visit a relative in the Gachbaria Nayapara area and drowned while taking a bath in the pond.

Later, locals rescued her and took her to Chandanaish Health Complex where doctors declared her dead.

Price capping a windfall

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white sugar was selling at Tk 135 to Tk 140 per kg and packaged sugar at Tk 140 per kg.

Let's have a look at the present status of CNG or petrol-run four-stroke three-wheelers.

In 2015, the government fixed the rental rates for CNG run four-stroke three-wheelers along with the daily deposits, the fare per kilometre, the fare per minute of breaks, and the mandatory minimum fare for passenger transport over any distance.

Since then, the CNG price has gone up by Tk 8 per cubic metre, but the government did not make the corresponding adjustment. So, nothing is working as per the government-set rates.

It is very difficult to find a single CNG-run three-wheeler that is willing to go by the meter.

The Daily Star spoke with at least seven three-wheeler drivers about the issues to get a clear picture.

Anwar Hossain, a driver for 15 years, said he is paying the daily deposit as per the vehicle owner's demand and not at the government-fixed rate.

"So, it is not possible for me to follow the government's pricing. Besides, if we transport passengers at the fare fixed by the government, it won't be possible for me to survive in this city with my family."

Sometimes, the law enforcers impose fines for not carrying passengers at the government-fixed fare and for not having the meter but Anwar is willing to take that risk.

The government fixed the rates of non-judicial stamps, which are used to carry out any non-judicial commercial arrangements between parties like all kinds of property transfer agreements, leasing agreements and affidavits.

But none can buy stamps at that rate due to inadequate supply against the demand. Customers have to buy this stamp by paying Tk 20 to Tk 50 more than the fixed price.

Amid rising drug cases, IV saline price is now between Tk 130 and Tk

MY DHAKA



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

IKEBANA EXPERIENCE CENTER

Bringing respite to DHAKA'S BUSY LIFE

RBR

Ikebana started its journey in 1992 and the boutique has evolved through the years -- from a small shop in Dhanmondi to doing prestigious government events, award-winning landscaping projects, and the recently opened plant sales centre, where taking in the green experience is of paramount interest rather than purchases.

The Ikebana Experience Center is the brainchild of Nilufer Farook. A sophisticated lady in her early seventies, she is an inspiration to today's women who have to fight to express their individuality -- creative or otherwise.

Married off at the young age of 19, her in-laws were not very supportive of her free spirit, neither did she get encouragement from her husband.

"I decided early on that my life is not for my husband but for me. I have been a good wife and a responsible mother but I needed to create a niche for myself, I did not allow my family interference to pull me back.

"With my positive outlook and fighting spirit I won against my bad life. This new Ikebana Experience Center is my testament to all that I have been through and I want our women to take inspiration and gamble with luck. Women's emancipation is not to destroy but to build," she says strongly.

In this metropolis full of posh

cafes and tea houses, a serene garden exuding a zen-like calm was maybe one thing missing. Aesthetically pleasing, the Ikebana Experience Center houses big trees on which hang decorative plants, garden ornaments, etc.

The plants are neatly lined, the lush green foliage of the ferns growing in hollowed tree trunk pots, big earthen pots with blushing pink bougainvillea, and the rolling carpet of green grass -- all lend the ambience



a tranquil feel.

As you enter the snug garden you break into a smile; it lifts your mood instantly. Chirping birds and colourful butterflies among the inviting green, you know that you can find peace here for a few moments. Succulents and creepers that can adapt to a vertical growing space add to the fineness of the place.

Cacti and tall and short plants bundled together on the window sill in lovely pots catch your attention. All these are for sale, it is a nursery like no other. You can make your purchase

while having a cup of tea or sitting on the green grass.

The Ikebana Experience Center has a sun-baked look, the green foliage and colourful flowers glisten at sunset

allowing you to take a lungful of fresh air and relax your stiff senses.

A beautiful path leads to the earthly-looking pleasing Ajo Idea Space Café. The place also houses a shopping outlet, MIIB Spirit -- Made in Bangladesh products promoting a feeling of patriotism by supporting local wisdom and environment; the place also has an art gallery on the same premises. Truly a serene place to escape for people who are imaginatively motivated.

Life, beauty, death, decay, and renewal are part of our life cycle and a garden is no different. While flowers are the heart of this splendid experience endeavour, the true soul of it is the variations in foliage. Whenever you need to lift yourself from the chaos of your reality, this soothing garden is a must-go-to place for that restfulness you crave.

The Ikebana Experience Center is located at House 12, Road 101, Gulshan 2.

GANG RAPE IN FENI

Swechchhasebak League leader, aide land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Feni court yesterday sent a local Swechchhasebak League leader and one of his associates to jail in a case filed over gangraping a teenage girl in the district's Sonagazi upazila.

Police said they detained the duo -- Imam Hossain, 45, general secretary of Chardarbesh union unit Swechchhasebak League, and his associate Md Riad, 28 -- for interrogation on Saturday after the 15-year-old victim filed a complaint with Sonagazi Police Station.

The teenager filed the complaint Saturday afternoon alleging that she was gangraped by the two on September 20.

Hasan Imam, officer-in-charge of the police station, said after a primary investigation, police found the allegation against them to be true.

Later, in the night, the victim's father filed a rape case against them, he said.

Today, the accused were produced before the court, which sent them to jail, added the OC.

ACC ASI held for extortion in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police on Saturday arrested an assistant sub-inspector of the Anti Corruption Commission for bribing a jeweler in Chattogram city's Panchlaish.

Arrestee ASI Kamrul Huda, from Cox's Bazar's Kutubdia upazila, was an official of the Cumilla ACC, police said.

Santosh Kumar Chakma, officer in charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said police detained him from a restaurant in the area around 10:30pm and showed him arrested in a case filed against him.

"A few days ago, ASI Kamrul Huda phoned Chattogram-based gold ornament trader Parimal Dhar, saying a complaint was filed against him and he could fix the matter if he paid Kamrul Tk 20 lakh."

Parimal agreed to meet Kamrul at a restaurant in the area.

Mother attempts suicide after killing 3 children

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A woman tried to commit suicide over a family dispute yesterday after allegedly killing her three children with pesticide in Sunamganj's Jamalganj upazila.

According to police, Jamuna Begum (35) gave insecticide to her children -- Shakiba, 14, Tamzid, 13 and Shahed, 8 -- after an altercation with her husband on Saturday night over the family's financial issues.

Police have detained Jamuna's husband Jahangir Alam, 40, a fisherman in Shantipur village, said Abu Sayeed, additional superintendent (admin) of Sunamganj Police.

Yesterday morning, when Jahangir went out to catch fish, she gave insecticide to her children before taking it herself, he added.

The children died on the way to the Sunamganj Sadar Hospital. The mother has been admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

A case will be filed against Jahangir for provoking suicide, said the additional SP.

Observers may lend credibility

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at home and abroad. Be that as it may, I believe the European Union will nonetheless continue to support, in whatever way deemed expedient, our efforts in making the ensuing general parliamentary elections free, fair, participatory and credible," reads the letter.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan said the letter was sent yesterday to EU Ambassador Charles Whiteley.

Talking to reporters at his office, Ahsan said, "We hope that the European Union will send observers, even if it's a small group. If more observers monitor the election, the polls will be more transparent."

A handful of companies account for the supply of oil, sugar and eggs in Bangladesh.

"Those have become natural monopolies."

The government should monitor these big business groups instead of keeping watch on the end sellers like the corner shops or the kitchen market vendors.

"But for the prices of everything else, leave it to the law of demand and supply," said Mansur, a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

The government should look to break the market syndicate, which has consolidated over time due to weak monitoring, said Moinul Islam, a former professor at Chittagong University's economics department.

The current initiative of setting the prices of essentials by the government will not work, said AB Mirza Azizul Islam, a former finance adviser to a caretaker government.

To keep the prices under control, the supply of products in the market should be increased either through normal channels or alternative ways, he added.

Palestinians look on from a damaged building following an Israeli raid in Tulkarm in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Media may come under its purview: Haas

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Asked about the numbers of those who already faced visa restrictions, Haas said, "We don't provide that kind of information. You can ask the persons [whose names are coming out on social media] if they got their visas. We are not going to give the numbers and the names."

Asked why the members of opposition parties came under the restrictions, the US envoy said free and fair elections require everyone in the society, including people in the opposition. They can also do things to hamper the polls.

Chandpur minister

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sand from the Meghna again. Sand will be extracted with hundreds of dredgers. It will damage the river, the fish, and the environment. The rivers cannot be protected from them."

Manjur said the Karnaphuli was being sold in the name of leasing out.

"The shipping ministry, Chattogram Port Authority and the district administration are involved in this process. Chattogram City Corporation joined hands with them lately," he said.

"The Karnaphuli is a very important river from the point of

view of environment. It is also an economically important river. By declaring special economic zones, the land of the river is being split and the river is being killed," he added.

Former deputy director of NRCC Akhtaruzzaman Talukdar presented the keynote address at the programme.

He said there are 1,008 rivers in the country and the Padma is the longest.

Meanwhile, Waterkeepers Bangladesh yesterday observed World Rivers Day by holding programmes in Dhaka and 11 other cities.