

Speedy Trial Tribunal takes up Malibagh killing case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Speedy Trial Tribunal Dhaka Division yesterday took up the case concerning the Malibagh killings on February 13, 2001.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin fixed tomorrow for appearance of the accused in the case.

The judge also directed former Awami League Lawmaker Dr HBM Iqbal and six other accused, now on bail, to appear before it tomorrow, issued warrant of arrest against eight absconders including Pichchi Hannan and issued production of warrant against the eight accused, now in jail custody.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police on December 31 last year submitted a chargesheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's

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AL plans alliance for UP polls

REAZ AHMAD

The main opposition Awami League plans to forge a consensus with like-minded parties on candidates for the January 25-March 16 elections to more than 4,000 Union Parishad (UP).

Although political parties cannot officially nominate candidates in the local body polls, candidates customarily enjoy backing of major political parties they belong.

Sources said the AL has instructed its units across the country to forge understanding with like-minded progressive parties to field "consensus candidates" at least for the post of UP chairman.

"If such arrangement can be made in all unions, pro-opposition

candidates will definitely defeat the ruling alliance-backed candidates", one source said.

Moreover, pro-AL candidates' victory over alliance-backed candidates in last week's municipal elections in Narayanganj and Magura gave a boost to Awami League to think of a better preparation for the upcoming UP polls, the sources said.

AL hopes that the ongoing standoff between the Election Commission and the government over army deployment during the polls would be resolved soon, paving the way for holding the election in a free and fair manner.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star yesterday, "We want the polls to be held in a free

and fair manner. If fair polls are held, opposition-backed candidates will gain overwhelming majority."

The government should give all assistance and support to the Election Commission, he said.

Talking to this correspondent last week, leaders of AL, JP (Ershad), JP (Manju), CPB, and JSD (Inu) expressed their skepticism about holding of a fair UP election without army deployment, sought by the EC.

All of them feared that the polls could be manipulated in absence of army.

Some of them also questioned the sudden withdrawal of army from

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Launching ceremony of NOAB held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The launching ceremony of the Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) was held yesterday at a city hotel.

Eminent personalities including ministers, politicians from both government and opposition, top businessmen, artists, writers, civil society members, diplomats, renowned journalists and representatives from all leading advertising agencies and hawkers unions were present at the ceremony, held at Sheraton Hotel last evening.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Fisheries and Live Stock Minister and Mayor of Dhaka City Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Land Minister M Shamsul Islam, Science and Technology Minister Moin

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GUESTS AT NOAB CEREMONY



Another fair blast victim dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another person wounded in the Faiya Paglar Mazaar bomb blasts succumbed to his injuries at the Kumudini Hospital in Mirzapur yesterday, raising the death toll to eight.

Abbas Ali, 27, of Protima Bamki village under Shakhipur upazila of Tangail, died in the early hours of yesterday.

Seven persons, including a child, were killed and 15 others injured when two bombs went off at a traditional fair at Dariapur village in Shakhipur on Friday night. Three of them died on the spot.

Sources in the six-member probe committee investigating the explosion yesterday said the bombs w

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City commuters in high-fare glitch

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Drivers of taxicabs and CNG-run auto-rickshaws are charging passengers high fares, taking advantage of the acute public transport shortage.

With rickshaws off many busy roads and two-stroke three-wheelers phased out, the middle class city dwellers are now facing troubles commuting to work.

The laid-back approach of the transport authorities to finding alternatives has compounded the problem so much that the less affluent are in increasing anguish over their budget.

Any workday, hundreds of men,

women and children keep waiting for transport on the entire stretch of rickshaw-free Mirpur Road, Panthapath and Sonargaon Road. Few buses on the route are jam-packed.

Taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers refuse to carry passengers at first approach. When insisted, the drivers invariably demand an exorbitant fare.

But helpless commuters, especially women with children, have no option other than giving in to the unreasonable demand.

At 9.30am Monday, about 50 commuters were waiting at the Shukrabad bus stand. Buses to New Market, Gulistan and

Sonargaon were packed with passengers. Although some taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers were lazing out at the intersection, they said 'no' to every approach by the eager commuters.

When a woman with two schoolchildren in uniform pleaded for help, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver asked for Tk 60 to take her to Azimpur Colony, hardly two kilometres off.

When the woman protested, the unscrupulous driver blamed the owner of the vehicle for charging him (the driver) Tk 550 a day in rentals.

The frustrated woman said she

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When politics prevails over merit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Her competitors have far better results than hers. But that does not stop the Dhaka University authorities from selecting her for a viva voce for the post of lecturer. After all, she is a Jaliyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader and reportedly masterminded the attack on the Shamsunnahar Hall last year.

A group of so-called pro-BNP teachers are now strongly lobbying for the appointment of controversial JCD leader Noor Jahan Begum Shanta to the newly established Development Studies Department.

Her selection for the viva voce

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CPB hartal on Feb 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday called a countrywide down-to-dusk hartal on February 27 as part of their 11-point demand.

Their demands include the cancellation of the indemnity ordinance, removal of war criminals from the cabinet and their trial, reducing of the price of essentials and reopening Adamjee Jute Mills.

Leaders of the CPB called upon all pro-liberation war persons belonging to the Awami League, BNP and other parties for a unified movement.

They said the country has to be rescued from Jamat-Shibir, the anti-

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 21		5-37 pm
Jan 22	6-43 am	

Prayer Timings		
Jan 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-45	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-43	5-48
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTOS: STAR

Ministers, political leaders, diplomats and civil society members at the launching ceremony of the Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (NOAB) at a city hotel yesterday.