

12 awarded 10 yrs jail each in a city robbery case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Sixth Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday sentenced 12 people to 10 years imprisonment in a robbery case.

The convicts are Marjan alias Farooq, Liton, Anwar Hossain, Zakir Hossain, Abul alias Rana, Billal, Shafiqul Islam, Abdur Rashid, Amir Hossain, 'Kana' Liton, Naimuddin and Monir Hossain.

Judge ABM Nizamul Haque pronounced the judgement in the afternoon. Ten of the accused were in the dock while two others -- Shafiqul Islam and Amir Hossain -- have been absconding since the incident.

In the case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station, it was alleged that a gang of robbers stormed into the house of Alhaj Nasiruddin Ahmed at 1/2 Moneshwar Road, Zigatola in the city on November 2, 1998 and looted Tk 7 lakh in cash and valuables at gunpoint.

Nasiruddin filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station the same day.

Police submitted charge sheet against the 12 on August 4, 99 and the court framed charges against them on February 22, 2000.

Only four out of the 20 prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

Arab League won't send troops to Iraq

Pakistan looks for 'legitimate' cover

AFP, Cairo

Arab foreign ministers ruled out a US request to send troops to Iraq when they met yesterday to discuss the Iraqi situation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Arab League officials said.

Pakistan on Monday said it would send troops only if Iraqis welcomed such a mission and the deployment was under a "legitimate" cover.

After a preliminary meeting late Monday, secretary general of the Arab Organisation, Amr Mussa, said the question of sending Arab troops to Iraq "will not feature on the agenda" of Tuesday's meeting, dashing hopes in Washington.

"Certain countries wanted to discuss the matter, but as there was no unanimous decision, it was struck off," an Arab official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"It is not an acceptable topic for discussion while Iraq is under foreign occupation," he added.

"Arab nations refuse on principle to play policeman to protect the Americans or quash Iraqi resistance," wrote editorialist Fahmi Howaidi in the Egyptian government daily Al-Ahram.

"From the American point of view, it would be ideal to have Arab troops in Iraq... It imply Arab recognition of the occupation to the extent of helping secure its continuation," he added.

Arab League spokesman Hisham Youssef told AFP on Monday that Iraq's security was the responsibility of the US-British forces.

"The United States have asked 70 countries to send forces to restore security. Thirty countries have accepted, the meeting will discuss the legal and political implications of their decision," he said.

Tuesday's closed-doors meeting of the so-called Arab League follow-up committee was to focus on the situations in Iraq and the Middle East, following preparatory meetings on both.

Mussa told reporters the League had drawn up a draft resolution to press the importance of a united Iraqi political front as the best means to guarantee the country's return to national sovereignty.

The draft also calls on the United Nations to take full responsibility for reconstruction efforts in Iraq, and on the United States to establish a framework to implement the peace roadmap, which paves the way to the creation of a Palestinian state by 2005.

It was the first time Pakistan acknowledged that it was not sure if the people of Iraq would welcome the presence of Pakistani troops.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

5-yr-old boy wounded in bomb blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-year-old boy sustained severe injury when a homemade bomb went off at Jatrabari yesterday.

The incident took place when Arif, a class one student of Phool Kuri Kindergarten School near their house at Notun Mahalla in Jatrabari, and his classmate Russell were going to school at 7:00am.

When they were crossing a field near the school, they found two abandoned containers -- one covered with black tape and the other green. Arif took the black one and Russell the other one and they went to the DND embankment for a walk as they had time before their class.

As Arif, a son of a CNG-run three-wheeler driver, shook the container, it exploded and he received injury in his both hands, chest and chin. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, a trader was shot by

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

A price list board placed by the Dhaka City Corporation hangs blank at Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday.

Price charts in kitchen markets founder

ABDUL KADER

The government initiative to inform consumers about prices of essentials by posting a daily chart at the kitchen markets has fallen flat due to indifference of the authorities.

Considering the growing consumer plight at kitchen markets, the commerce ministry in a letter last year asked the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to put up price boards for hassle and bargain-free shopping.

The DCC has so far installed

price boards at 21 out of 105 kitchen markets, and its staff at the kitchen markets have been assigned to inspect whether the chart is being maintained.

The market authorities care not to maintain the price board installed by the DCC, and the corporation men complement the negligence by ignoring the commerce ministry directive.

This correspondent during a visit to four kitchen markets at Plashi, New Market, Hatirpuli and Karwan Bazar Saturday found the price

charts but those were not maintained. Only in the New Market kitchen market was the price chart roughly maintained.

An official of the commerce ministry also recently found most of the boards blank and list of items not categorised systematically.

A DCC official however disagreed with The Daily Star and ministry findings claiming that price boards are maintained.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

218 more Gram Sarkar units formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two hundred and eighteen more units of the Gram Sarkar (GS) were formed in 25 districts yesterday, bringing the total to 496 in four days.

Earlier, 21, 105 and 152 units were formed on the first, second and third days with the formation of the Gram Sarkar starting on August 2.

According to the monitoring cell at the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, the units formed yesterday include 30 in Noakhali, 28 in Cox's Bazar, 18 in Laxmipur, 17 in Khagrachhari, 16 in Tangail, 11 in Jhalakathi, nine each in Kurigram and Jamalpur, eight in Gazipur, six each in Chittagong and Mymensingh, four each in Gajbandha and Habiganj, three each in Chapainawabganj, Chandpur, Nilphamari, Rangamati and Lalmonirhat, two each in Jessore, Barisal and Bandarban, and one each in Madaripur, Manikganj and Satkhira.

Our Staff Correspondent from Rajshahi reports: A few hundred people led by 41 chairmen and members of different union councils of Rajshahi yesterday demon

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Tremor shakes Nepal-Tibet border

AFP, Kathmandu

An earthquake measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale shook the Nepal-Tibet border yesterday, but there were no reports of casualties or damage, officials said.

An official from Nepal's Mines and Geology Department said the tremor occurred at 10:12am local time and the epicentre was Kodari, 114 kilometres northeast of Kathmandu, the official said.

Another tremor rocked parts of Gujarat yesterday, sparking panic in areas ravaged by a giant tremor that killed 20,000 people two years ago, reports said.

Television networks said cities in the Saurashtra region of coastal Gujarat were jolted by the earthquake but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

BD's final ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh play their final match on their tour of Australia today when they face the world champions in the third one-day international in Darwin.

State-run Bangladesh Television will telecast the match live from the Marrara Oval from 5:30am (BST).

Going down meekly in the first two limited-overs games coach Dav Whatmore brought about two changes to the side, replacing Al Shahriar and Hasibul Hossain with

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Suspension for corruption Unionists press BTTB for revoking order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-government unionists and officials of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) are at loggerheads over suspension of six employees found involved in corruption and irregularities.

The Bangladesh Telejogajog Sramik Karmachari Union (BTSKU), an affiliate of Jatiyatobadi Sramik Dal, gave the authorities an ultimatum for removing a general manager by August 3 for taking disciplinary actions.

On the other hand, the Bangladesh Civil Service Telecom Samity, representing the officials, in a letter to the BTTB chairman yesterday termed the agitation as a threat to the state security.

"Despite being government employees, the union leaders have challenged government orders, which smacks of a deep-rooted conspiracy," the Samity statement said.

The security of the country's strategic telecom installations is at stake due to the highhandedness of pro-government unionists, sources at the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) said.

The employees' union has demanded removal of the general manager (GM), telecom region (North), Mohammad Obaidullah, for his taking punitive steps against six

regular and part-time employees after an official investigation revealed irregularities and corruption.

The investigation found, among other things, tampering with telephone lines under Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Exchange that pushed the subscribers' bills up.

The most sensational case of such irregularities took place at the UNDP's Dhaka office last year in which a section of unscrupulous BTTB employees and union activists were found involved.

They switched over the UNDP telephones to a fax, phone shop from where continuous overseas calls were made. The incident was highly embarrassing for the government as the UN organisation threatened to hold a press conference on the issue.

In that case, the GM suspended Abdul Latif, sub assistant engineer, Belayet Hossain, technician, and Anwar Hossain, lineman.

He also dismissed a number of contractual employees for their proven involvement in the scam.

Obaidullah also suspended technician Musleh Uddin Parvez facing similar charge in a different case.

Finally, the GM suspended three other employees Salahuddin, head

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Letter to PM US watchdog body condemns attack on newsmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a New York-based journalists' rights watchdog body, has condemned the recent attacks on The Daily Star's Dhaka University correspondent Hasan Jahid Tusher and the daily Sangbad's reporter Jahangir Alam Akhshar.

In a letter to the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on August 4, Ann K. Cooper, executive director of CPJ, wrote, "These are the latest in a series of assaults against journalists in Bangladesh, none of which your government has adequately investigated."

A copy of the letter made available to The Daily Star yesterday reads "On July 31, members of the Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), a student group associated with your (prime minister) ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), viciously attacked Tusher in the middle of the night outside his dorm room at Dhaka University."

"Tusher's colleagues ... suspect two JCD leaders -- Tanjilur Rahman Tanjil and Shueb Khondoker -- of orchestrating the attack. According to The Daily Star and The Associated Press (AP), about 20 JCD members beat the correspondent with iron rods, causing severe injuries to Tusher's back and shoulders."

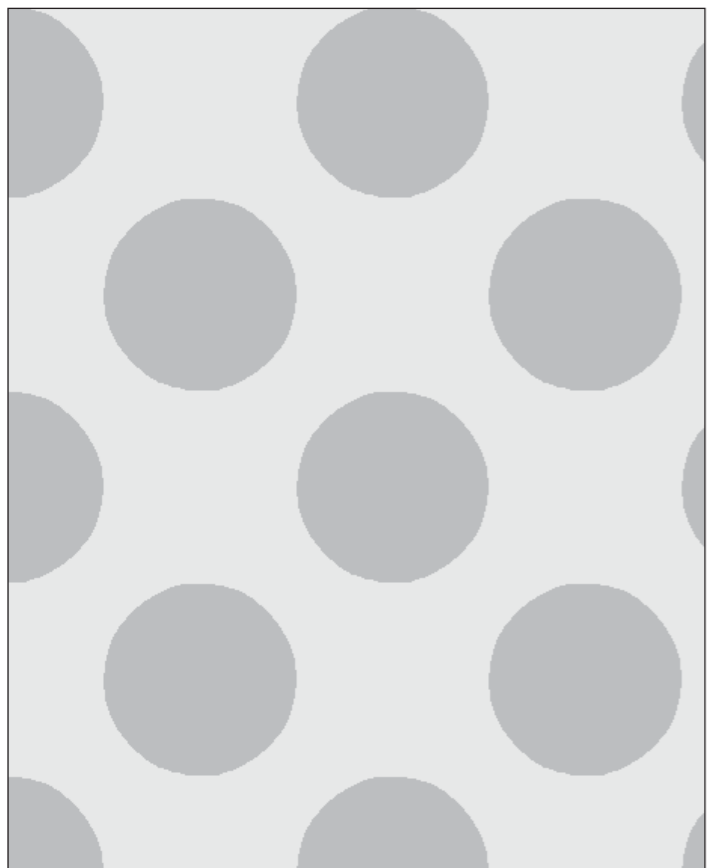
"You have no right to stay here since you have written reports against us," shouted one of his assailants, according to The Daily Star and the AP. The attackers then dragged Tusher down the stairs from

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

Policemen walk on a tidy and passenger-friendly pontoon at Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday after hawkers were evicted. Law enforcers launched a drive to free the terminal from hawkers to restore discipline to it.



MP profiling falters on sketchy info

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Lawmakers' reluctance to provide personal information to the parliament secretariat has stalled publication of profiles of the MPs.

Official sources said repeated reminders since the installation of the eighth parliament about two years back to many MPs for submitting their bio-data to the parliament secretariat have been of no avail.

Most ministers including Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have not responded to parliament secretariat's call.

A similar move in the seventh parliament had also fallen through due the non-cooperation of the legislators. Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, speaker of the seventh parliament, initiated the move to publish profiles of the MPs in the form of a book.

Although 240 MPs have so far submitted their resumé, many of these are either riddled with misin-

formation or lack enough information, as some lawmakers did not fill in the prescribed forms fully.

Compilation of profiles is thus turning out to be a futile exercise, officials at the parliament secretariat noted.

Sources said after the inauguration of the Jatiya Sangsad on October 28, 2001, the parliament secretariat sent letters to all MPs requesting them to submit their curriculum vitae. But a few MPs responded to the letter.

The secretariat then sent two more letters urging the lawmakers to give information for their personal profile.

Some who submitted resumé forgot to put their signatures on the form, some mentioned minister and lawmaker as their profession, some preferred not to describe their past political career, while some others did not furnish full information.

Leader of the Opposition and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Staff of Credit Agricole Indosuez Bank yesterday protest what they call unjust compensation package offered ahead of takeover by a Sri Lankan bank. The staff are holding rallies and bringing out processions on the bank premises since Saturday after they received the offer Thursday.