

HC asks govt not to arrest, harass Shanta

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked the government not to arrest or harass Advocate Shahin Sultana Shanta in any case in 48 hours of the court order upon a writ petition filed by her.

Shanta was tortured and injured by police during opposition's March 12 programme to lay a siege to the Election Commission (EC) office.

A division bench comprising Justice Awlad Ali and Justice Zinat Ara gave the order after Shanta filed the petition seeking compensation for police attack on her and submission of investigation report on the incident to the High Court.

The hearing on the writ petition will be held today.

On March 22, two separate cases were filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court (CMM), Dhaka, against Shanta and

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40 killed in attack on Iraqi army base

16 more die in US raid on 'mosque'

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A suicide bomber yesterday killed 40 people waiting outside an Iraqi army recruitment centre as US forces defended themselves against charges of attacking a Shia mosque in Baghdad.

The attack on the Iraqi army base called Tamarat near the town of Tal Afar, close to the Syrian border, was the deadliest single attack in Iraq since a January suicide attack on police recruits in Ramadi.

"Forty people have been killed and 20 wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the midst of candidates waiting at the army recruitment centre," an interior ministry official said.

Last week US President George W. Bush cited Tal Afar, which last year was the scene of major joint US-Iraqi operations, as a model for coalition efforts to create a stable Iraq.

The attack came as the US military defended itself against charges it had killed over a dozen Shias in an operation against a Baghdad mosque.

Amid a swirl of conflicting versions of the events late Sunday, the US military said Iraqi special forces raided a meeting hall in northeast Baghdad being used by an insurgent cell and killed 16 people and detained 18 others.

Accounts of the evening raid in Baghdad varied. Aides to the Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and Iraqi police both said it took place at a mosque, with police claiming 22 bystanders died and al-Sadr's aides saying 18 innocent men were killed.

The Americans said Iraqi special forces backed by US troops killed 16 insurgents in a raid on a community meeting hall after gunmen opened fire on approaching troops.

Iraqi television showed images of blood stained corpses inside a Shia prayer hall with most of the dead appearing to be elderly. Their identity cards proclaimed them to be members of prominent Shia political parties.

The Imam Ali hospital, in

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Students of Eden University College hold a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday, demanding a halt to the murky trade on hostel seats, trial of their ousted principal and immediate reopening of the institution.

Hearing of 2 cases against Sunny today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The hearing of two cases against the military commander of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) Aatur Rahman Sunny and four others will be held at a Dhaka court today.

Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court will hear the cases in presence of the accused.

On March 19, the same court had directed the authorities concerned to produce Sunny and four others before it during the hearing of the cases.

The two cases, one under the Arms Act and the other under Explosive Substances Act, were filed in the Sabujbagh Police Station against Sunny and six others on December 14 last year.

On March 14, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) pressed charges against Sunny and four others.

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A polythene bag tied to a stick is the only sign that warns of an open manhole on a road near Gulshan-1 in the city. The lid was stolen months ago and the manhole now spreads unbearable stench. Besides, sewerage water floods the road with passing vehicles spraying the filth.

BARAPUKURIA POWER PLANT First unit resumes trial production today

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinaipur

The first 125MW unit of the country's first coal-based Barapukuria 250MW Power Plant, which was shut down for technical glitches in January, will resume trial production from today.

Its second unit has been contributing 125MW power to the national grid since last February, power plant sources said.

Bangladesh Power Development Board officials are also expecting that the 125MW second unit of the plant that has been running on trial basis will go into Elaborate Test Run (ITR) or full production by early next month.

After the diesel firing, the unit will be run on mechanical test for four to five hours, and then coal would be fed to the power plant.

The 125MW first unit of the highly over-priced two-unit Chinese built

Barapukuria power plant went out of operation soon after its trial run in mid-January.

The authorities tried hard to address the technical glitches of the unit as the country is undergoing a severe power crisis.

The problems of the first unit have been addressed and operation of this unit will depend on the performance of the second unit, sources said.

The Chinese-built plant, originally scheduled to start operation in 1998, now is due to operate from April this year.

A new problem for the power plant that emerged recently is that coal being extracted as raw material for it has 20 percent moisture instead of the expected 10 percent.

Another problem is higher accumulation of coal dust.

Experts said the problem is due

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Cops to get 317 more vehicles

Purchase body okays proposal

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The government yesterday approved a proposal for purchasing 317 more vehicles for the police department at a cost of about Tk 37 crore.

The proposal came at a meeting of the cabinet committee on purchase with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair.

Committee members, senior ministers and secretaries concerned were present.

According to the home ministry sources, the vehicles to be added to the fleet of some 1,800 vehicles purchased in the last two years for the department.

The new vehicles will be given to Dhaka Metropolitan Police and some police stations at district and upazila levels.

Thaksin's frantic offer for nat'l govt rejected

AFP, Bangkok

Opponents of Thailand's embattled Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday rejected his offer to form a national unity government if he wins troubled elections next weekend.

Their decision came as political tensions soared, with a one-kilo (two-pound) box of explosives found outside the Democrat Party headquarters and a new warning from election officials that Sunday's polls may not produce a parliament.

Democrat leader Abhisit Vejjajiva said Thaksin's offer to rivals to join his government did not address their demands for constitutional reforms and for an independent investigation into claims of corruption and abuse of power by the premier.

"Thaksin's offer does not respond to the demands of the Thai public and the political parties," Abhisit said.

"In fact, Thaksin is trying to make the Thai people more confused

about the situation in order to buy time for his political career," he said.

Abhisit said the three opposition parties would stick to their boycott of Sunday's election, and would stand by their appeal for Thaksin to resign so the nation's highly influential king could appoint an interim government.

Despite mounting calls for the king to intervene in the crisis, he has shown no sign of doing so.

Thaksin, who made the offer late Sunday after weeks of protests to demand he step down, played down the rejection.

"We have given them a chance to work together to move towards political reforms," he told reporters. "If they don't want to join, that's up to them."

The offer came after protesters staged their biggest rally yet, gathering some 100,000 people late

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3 customs men sued for Tk 24 lakh 'missing' cellphones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Detective Branch of police on March 25 night filed a case against three customs officials on charge of misappropriating mobile phone sets worth about Tk 24 lakh from a department godown.

The accused are former in-charge of the customs godown at Osmani International Airport Inspector Abdus Sattar, Inspector Selim, and former customs superintendent Salah Uddin Afsar.

The case states that 481 mobile phone sets worth about Tk 24 lakh that were seized at the Sylhet Osmani Airport on September 29 of 2004 were kept at the department's godown at Shahjalal Upashahar.

The godown was closed from November 10 to November 23 that

year due to Eid.

After the Eid vacation, the mobile sets went 'missing' from the godown.

Questions were raised about the mysterious incident while newspapers carried reports on it. The then godown in-charge Abdus Sattar filed a theft case on November 25 with Sylhet Kotwali Police Station.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Enamul Haque investigated the case and arrested night guard Oliur Rahman as suspect.

Upon his transfer, SI Mosharrar Hossain was given the charge of investigation.

As the then Superintendent of Police transferred the case to the Detective Branch on August 21 of 2005, SI Saifuddin Khaled was

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Unscrupulous employees of a shop at Kadamtala Market near the capital's second Buriganga Bridge fills plastic containers with tap water to sell those at Tk 2-4 as drinking water.

Rahman, Bangla Bhai to appear before Chandpur court April 16

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

The Special Tribunal Court yesterday directed the police to produce JMB Chief Abdur Rahman, second-in-command Bangla Bhai and its military commander Aatur Rahman Sunny before it on April 16 in the blast cases filed for August 17 and October 3 bomb attacks last year.

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Kamal blasts govt for politicisation of administration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Convenor of Jatiya Oikya Mancha Dr Kamal Hossain accused the government of violating the constitution through indiscriminate politicisation of administration.

At a meeting on Independence Day organised by the city Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium yesterday, Dr Kamal, also one of the architects of Bangladesh Constitution, said the government has politicised different state institutions including the Public Service Commission (PSC) for its gains.

The martyrs sacrificed their lives for establishing a non-communal, poverty free and democratic country, but even 35 years after the

liberation their dream has not been realised, Dr Kamal, also the president of Gono Forum, said.

Those who are in the power at present have destroyed the law and order in the country, undermining the dreams of liberation, he added.

Regarding the issue of militancy Dr Kamal said the BNP-Jamaat coalition government should apologise to the journalists for accusing them of circulating falsehood instead of taking timely measures to check the Islamist militancy.

Accusing the BNP-Jamaat alliance of using the laws in their political interests he posed a question as to how the killers, bombers,

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Hamas ready for int'l ME peace push

AFP, Gaza City

Incoming Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniya pledged yesterday his Hamas government would spare no effort in striving for peace in the Middle East as MPs prepared to approve his cabinet line-up.

Haniya, whose Islamist movement has been behind dozens of suicide attacks during a five-year uprising, insisted the Palestinian people had the right to continue their "struggle" for independence but stressed his desire to enter negotiations with the international community to end the conflict with Israel.

And he also urged the United States, which considers Hamas a terrorist organisation, to alter its stance towards the Palestinians while rejecting threats by Washington and Brussels to slash

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Prayer Timing

March 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

