

Ershad's arms case

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The petition was submitted on behalf of the accused on May 12, which was not a motion day.

It was evident from the argument yesterday that the High Court used its power to accept the petition "sue motto" in spite of a bar laid down in the Section 526 of the Criminal Procedure which states that 'intimation should be given to the trial Judge before any petition to the higher court under Section 526.'

In the petition the accused feared that he might not get fair judgement from the Special Tribunal as the Judge himself was 'biased'.

During the submission of the petition yesterday before the High Court Division Bench, Defence Lawyer Strajul Haque said that he was convinced the accused would not get justice in the Tribunal and accordingly on the advice of the accused the petition for transferring the case was filed.

Attorney General Aminul Haque said that the contents of the petition were not true.

Intimation of transfer of the case was once given to the trial court on March 27, 1991 but since then no question had been raised by the Defence Lawyers about the fairness of the Judge till May 12, 1991, he added.

Attorney General said that the petition was made at this stage for inordinate delay of the trial which is if so fact illegal.

About the alleged bias of the trial court the Attorney General presented the Court proceedings published in the daily newspapers and said that the allegation was false and without sufficient grounds.

He said that the materials in support of the allegation of bias of the trial court produced by the Defence, was not correct and practically not relevant.

Again the non-intimation of the petition to the trial court if so-facto rendered the petition illegal, the Attorney General said.

The Division Bench comprised of Justice Anwarul Haque Chowdhury and Justice Habibur Rahman Khan gave a patient hearing to the arguments of both the parties and fixed the next date for hearing

today (Monday).

Justice Anwarul Haque Chowdhury is arguing on behalf of the Court with both the Attorney General and the Defence Lawyers trying to come to a conclusion by interpreting the laws from different angles.

Last Thursday the High Court Division Bench issued a rule on the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka asking him why will the case not be transferred from the Special Tribunal.

Due to hearing of this petition the Special Tribunal scheduled to resume today, was adjourned till May 21.

The judgement on the petition to the High Court may be given today.

Shahabuddin

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Rehabilitation Lutfar Rahman. In many places the marooned villagers were seen drying paddy on parts of roads not yet inundated.

When the Acting President landed at Osmani Airport in Sylhet the local administration briefed him in detail the latest situation in flood affected areas.

Accord with US

till writing of the report on Sunday night. A Foreign Ministry source told The Daily Star that the Government was yet to decide whether the agreement should be signed by the Foreign Ministry or by the Relief Ministry. The agreement was due to be signed on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the legal experts of the Foreign Ministry have been asked to scrutinise the agreement. There is a strong opinion among a section of the Foreign Ministry officials that the agreement is not at all required for participation of the US Task Force in short-term humanitarian activities. The Government can, instead, extend all-out cooperation to the activities of the Task Force.

But the US Government is learnt to have been pressing for signing an agreement which is, according to them, required under the international convention.



CLINGING TO HOPES: An old woman, whose family has been rendered homeless by floods in Fenchuganj is drying paddy on a patch untouched by waters. — Star photo

JCD rivals clash

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four halls of the university at around 3.30 a.m. The attackers were armed with automatic and other lethal weapons. Acting general secretary of JUCSU Abdul Awal Mollah identified the attackers as local JCD activists.

The attackers first raided the D-block of Al-Beruni Hall. They fired about 70 rounds of gunshot and damaged windows of several rooms.

The attackers then went to Shaheed Salam-Barkat Hall and beat the inmates of Room No. 311, Rezaul Karim and Shahroj. From there, the attackers went to AFM Kamaluddin Hall and shot Runu on his shoulder and stabbed Jewel.

The attackers then forced their way into Mir Mosharrar Hossain Hall. They went to Room No. 357 and stabbed Liton and Moazzem while they were in sleep. They also stabbed VP of the hall Golam Faruq and Aminul Islam Mukul who came out in the corridor hearing a commotion.

The attackers chased the acting VP of JUCSU and also beat him. They left the campus after about one hour of rampage. The injured were rushed to hospitals immediately after the incident.

Later, in the morning, general students of the halls caught Abdul Halim whom they identified as a member of the attacking group and beat him with iron rods.

At around 9 am, police entered the campus with permission from the Vice-Chancellor. The university authorities held a joint meeting at

syndicate, deans, provosts and political leaders at 10 am and decided to keep the university open.

Acting general secretary Abdul Awal Mollah, acting general secretary of JUCSU Abdul Awal Mollah identified the attackers as local JCD activists.

Saidur Rahman, acting VP and Abdul Awal Mollah, acting general secretary of JUCSU told the university correspondents that local students who are also members of JCD provoked the violence because they failed to secure any nominations in the ensuing JUCSU election from Mir Mosharrar and Kamaluddin halls.

JUCSU leaders also demanded punishment to those against whom cases were filed.

The JCD central committee of Jahangirnagar University expelled 17 students for their involvement in the attack.

JCD brought out a procession with slogans against terrorism. Other student organisations also called for bringing back peace in the campus.

The group of local students also stopped the university buses on this way to the campus from Dhaka and searched for their rivals.

Police were deployed in the campus.

Freedom Party

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by one Abul and his group to come to Osmani Uddyan and when he did so Abul and 12 others brought him to the old railway colony building and tied him hands and feet. They then cut his tendons and shot him through the kidney.

Some street urchins brought Shahid to the DMCH after Abul and his group left the spot.

Freedom Party chief Colonel Tarik visited the spot and demanded punishment of the assailants.

Jamuna

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on import of construction material for the project and another Tk 500 crore through internal resource mobilisation.

Already, Tk 281 crore has been raised from levies for the project, and the meeting observed the government would be able to mobilise the rest Tk 219 crore.

Although the World Bank, the principal donor which coordinated studies on the project, accepted the economic feasibility of the bridge, it has been questioning its "affordability" on the plea that it would absorb investments from other priority projects like health, education and poverty alleviation.

The Bank document on next Paris Club meet May 29-30 said the government of Bangladesh had not considered what investments in other sectors might be potentially squeezed by the Jamuna Bridge, to determine whether or not the bridge is "affordable."

"World Bank also suggested for deferring the start of construction of the bridge till the end of next fiscal.

The ECNEC meet, reliable sources said, considered several steps to make the project more cost-effective and affordable.

Superfluous expenditure from other projects might be diverted to the bridge project. Some 25,000 employees of Bangladesh Railway and BADC, declared surplus, may be employed to the project instead of engaging new manpower.

It was also decided that the government would try to convince donors to exclude the power interconnector from the bridge project. The volume of land acquisition might also be slashed.

Today's ECNEC meeting also approved another project involving Tk 35.17 crore, including Tk 24.55 crore in foreign exchange, for procuring 80 railway wagons to carry 40-ft high cube containers.

Flood victims

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further, also paralysed normal life during the last two days.

The Surma at Kanaihat was flowing 54 cm above danger level and at Sheola 36 cm above the red mark.

Diarrhoeal cases were reported from different parts of the flood affected areas.

The authorities confirmed eight death by diarrhoea.

The upazila chairman of Goainhat Dilder Hossain Selim claimed that the diarrhoea death toll was much higher. He said that six people were killed in his upazila alone.

A Sylhet Medical College Hospital source told the Daily Star that 40 to 50 diarrhoea patients were being admitted to the hospital daily.

Relief operations in the affected areas were allegedly inadequate. Five US cargo planes carried relief materials to Sylhet on Sunday. The relief materials were later dropped by two Indian helicopters, in the worst affected Baniabazar, Zakiganj and Golapganj upazilas.

People in remote areas are passing their days in agony. Relief materials have not yet been sent to those areas, a local leader complained.

Uttar Amuta union of Golapganj upazila is now under five to six feet of water that has forced residents to leave their houses.

Several thousand flood victims have taken refuge in 121 flood shelters. Another 31 shelters were abandoned on being submerged on Saturday.

Our Correspondent S B Das adds: Add at least 15,00,000 people taking shelter in multi-storied buildings, machans, highways and hillocks in eleven flood affected upazilas of Sylhet district continue to be in distress due to storms and rainfall. Rescue and relief operations carried out by the government and non-government voluntary organisation appear to be far short of their actual needs.

Those in remote areas with whom all surface communications have been cut off are left to their fate. Food, safe water and medicines are the need of the hour. Reaching relief materials to the victims is a great problem as boats or other watercraft are not available in sufficient numbers. Relief teams of different clubs returning from Zakiganj and Baniabazar complained that people here are starving and shivering in the cold.

BUET experts

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construction of the embankment along nearly 800-kilometre coastline will involve a total of Tk 3,200 crore.

"The embankment should be constructed keeping all important water outlets (river estuaries) open," he said.

He referred to such embankments in Japan and the Netherlands and the "Tames Barrier" in England to combat natural calamities.

Prof Kabir, a notable natural disaster management expert, also suggested massive afforestation along the coastal belt to face the furies of sea-borne storms and tidal surge.

President of the association Prof Isauzzaman and Secretary Dr Nizam Ahmed also spoke at the news conference at the National Press Club.

The BUET Teachers Association in a meeting has decided to form two committees to undertake various action programmes for mitigating the sufferings of the April 29 cyclone victims.

Tornado

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Our Magura correspondent Md Hossain Straj reports: Over 15 persons were injured in a severe tornado which hit our unions of Sreepur upazila of the districts on Saturday night.

About 20 cattlehead were also killed. According to a preliminary report, over 1,000 dwellings were blown away and a large number of trees, telephone and electric poles were uprooted. The damage to standing crops including jute and mango was heavy. In all, 20 villages were affected.

The Midnight File

Osirak N-plant bombing on Israeli TV

JERUSALEM, May 19: The Israeli Air Force on Saturday made public for the first time a film of the 1981 bombing of the Iraqi Osirak Nuclear Plant near Baghdad. The film, shown on Israeli television, was made by the pilots carrying out the strike on June 7, 1981. It first shows the port of Aqaba in southern Jordan, with King Hussein's yacht anchored off it, then some desert landscapes in the area of the Jordanian-Saudi border, and then the bombing of the plant, reports AFP.

4,000 Kuwaitis still missing

JEDDAH (Saudi Arabia), May 19: Nearly 4,000 Kuwaitis are still missing and believed to be held by Iraq more than 11 weeks after the end of the Gulf War. Kuwait Deputy Justice Minister Abdel Aziz al-Dakhlil said today. He told the Saudi Ash-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper that 6,686 Kuwaiti prisoners of war captured by Iraqi troops during their occupation of the Emirate have nevertheless returned home since the war ended in February, reports AFP.

30 killed in Nigeria

LAGOS, May 19: About 30 people were killed during clashes between two communities over the ownership of a fish pond in Benue state of south-eastern Nigeria last week, reported the daily "Punch" today. Another 42 people were seriously injured and about 600 families were displaced during the clashes, said the paper, reports Xinhua.

3 killed in Pak ethnic violence

HYDERABAD, May 19: Three people were killed and 16 others wounded on Sunday by gunmen passing through a deserted market as shopkeepers observed a province-wide strike organized by a radical secessionist group. Police said the gunmen were enforcing a strike called by the Jeay Sindh Progressive Party, a radical group demanding independence for Sindh province, which has been troubled by years of ethnic fighting, reports AP.

Ilias Ahmed Chowdhury

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mourn his death. The Namaz-e-Janaza of Chowdhury was held in the afternoon at the South Plaza of the Sangsad Bhaban.

After the Janaza, the Leader to Opposition in Parliament and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina placed a wreath on the coffin, which was later taken to the Banglar Bari office of which Chowdhury was the Chairman of the Board of Editors, and the Awami League office.

Later the body was flown to Shibchar by a helicopter for

burial. Ilias Ahmed Chowdhury was elected a Member of the then Provincial Assembly in 1970 and later a Member of the Jatiya Sangsad in 1973.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia visited his Dharmondi residence immediately after hearing the news to pay her last respect to the deceased parliamentarian.

Sanullah Noori and A Q M Zatul Abedin, President and Secretary General of Bangladesh Editors Council in a statement on Sunday expressed deep shock at the death of Ilias Chowdhury.



State Minister for Land Zamiruddin Sircar receiving Malaysian Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Dato Abdullah Fadzil Binchiwan at Zia International Airport on Sunday. — PID photo

India goes to polls

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city where curfew was imposed at the weekend ahead of the elections.

Police slapped a curfew on parts of the Hindu holy city of Varanasi on Saturday after supporters of rival parties clashed using homemade bombs and hurling stones. At least one person was killed, 50 were injured and two slum districts were set on fire, police said.

Some 1.5 million police and paramilitary forces were deployed across India on Sunday ahead of the parliamentary elections that analysts say could be the bloodiest ever.

Security

About 40 per cent of India's voters will cast ballots on Monday. The remainder will vote on May 23 and 26. Watching them will be the largest security force deployed for an election in India, where seizures of poll booths by armed gangs and voter intimidation are common.

Most 11th-hour opinion polls had Gandhi, scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty that has ruled the country at the head of the staid Congress (I) almost without interruption since independence in 1947, as a firm front-runner.

But almost to a man the polls doubted whether Gandhi, 47, who bungled his last bid for power in 1989 losing out to VP Singh, and now running on a stability manifesto could win enough seats in the 545-seat Parliament to rule alone.

PM's directive

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Lutfar Rahman Khan, who accompanied the Acting President during his visit to the flood affected areas in Sylhet district Sunday morning, also gave a brief account of his experience at the meeting.

The meeting was informed that Taka one crore was earlier sanctioned for repair and reconstruction of educational institutions in the cyclone affected areas. Another Taka one crore will be sanctioned to complete the immediate repair work of the affected educational institutions.

Finance Minister Salfur Rahman told the meeting that Taka two crore was sanctioned for immediate repair and rehabilitation of the Export Processing Zone in Chittagong.

The meeting was further informed that the morale of the cyclone affected people was high and the reconstruction work was in progress.

The post tornado situation in Gornadi upazila under Barisal district and Magura also came in for discussion at the meeting.

minedly egalitarian platform, which poll pundits have predicted will woo not only the poorest of India's poor but a large slab of the Muslim vote from the Congress(I).

National newspapers in their poll eve editions were nervously predicting yet another hung parliament, and the Press Trust of India (PTI) ran a lengthy analysis of the pros and cons of coalition government and on whether India was destined to or could live them from now on.

New Delhi at the weekend was under a red alert after suspected Sikh separatists opened fire on a crowd attending an election rally late Friday, killing two and wounding 35.

Tension was also reported in the eastern port city of Calcutta ruled by a Marxist government, and in Bihar, India's most violent state where 44 of the 100 poll related deaths have been reported.

The tussle in Bihar's with those in many of the crucial northern Hindi "cowbelt" states centered on the fight between VP Singh and the other candidate, for millions of lower caste and "untouchable" Harijan votes.

Uneasy calm in DU as dispute stays unsettled

By DU Correspondent

An uneasy calm was prevailing in the Dhaka University campus on Sunday as the dispute between two feuding student organisations remained unsettled.

Sirajganj

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ceaseless blockade on Saturday to press for withdrawal of lay-off and reopening of Sirajganj Spinning and Cotton Mills, reportedly owned by the brother of a ruling party MP. The mill was closed on November 17 last year.

Workers of Goumi Jute Mills in a large procession led by General Secretary of the Mill Workers Union Nazrul Islam marched through the main thoroughfare of the town chanting slogans against BNP and later merged with those staging sit-in in the DC office premises.

Due to the SKOP blockade, train, bus, truck and launch transportation in different routes was disrupted. About 1,000 trucks were stranded on Sirajganj-Bogra road with goods.

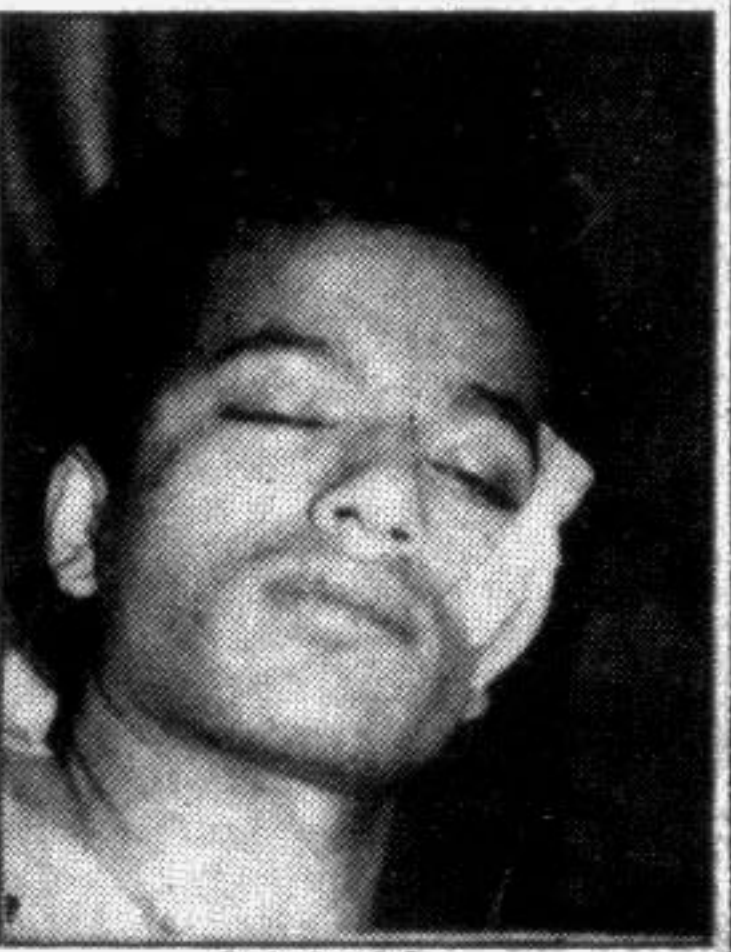
Bangladesh Railway Sramik League activists detained a train for eight hours in support of the SKOP action.



A Halim



Mominul Haque



Jalaluddin



Moazzem Hossain

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