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Arrest warrants against 24 of 'people's court'

By Asiuzzaman

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Saturday issued warrants of arrest against 24 persons involved in the Mar 26 'Gana-Adalat' (people's court) including its organisers, judges and witnesses.

The 'people's court' in a public trial at Suhrawardy Udyan advocated for the death sentence to Golam Azam on charges of his activities during the Liberation War of 1971.

According to Magistrate's Court sources, Officer-in-Charge of Ramna Police Station lodged the case charging the 24 with seven criminal offences including those of attempt to murder and anti-state activities.

The 24 persons against whom warrants were issued included Jahanara Imam, Chairman of the 'Gana Adalat' and Convenor of the committee for implementation of the spirit of Liberation War and re-

sistance to the killers and co-laborators of 1971.

All other 11 members of the 'adalat', Advocate Gazul Huq, Dr Ahmed Sharif, Architect Mazharul Islam, Barrister Shaifq Ahmed, Foyez Ahmed, Kabir Choudhury, Kalim Sharafi, Maulana Abdul Awal, Lt Col (Retd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Lt Col (Retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury and Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, were also ordered arrested.

Warrants were also issued against three prosecuting lawyers, Advocate Z I Khan Panna, Advocate Shamsuddin Babul, Advocate Ummu Kulsom Rehka and defence lawyer Advocate Nazrul Islam.

Three plaintiffs, Dr Anisuzzaman, Dr Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir and Syed Shamsul Huq, and four witnesses, Shahrier Kabir, Yahya Mahmud, Aly Zaker and Dr Mustaq Hossain were also in-

cluded in the warrants.

The other person included in the warrants was Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Member Secretary of the Committee.

They were all charged under Sections 120b, 212a, 148, 124a, 307, 505a and 505d of the Criminal Procedure Code, court sources added.

The 12-member bench of judges at the public trial gave the verdict against Golam Azam on 12 charges including collaborating with the Pakistan occupation army, looting, arson, raping and killing in 1971 and waging propaganda against Bangladesh until 1978, and concluded that his offences were punishable by death.

Golam Azam, stripped of his citizenship after Independence, returned to Bangladesh with a Pakistani passport in 1978 and involved himself in Jamaat politics.

The agitation against Golam

Azam got momentum following his election as the Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh last December.

The government issued him a show cause notice asking why he should not be deported or legal action be taken against him for violating the country's Constitution by heading a political party despite being a foreigner.

He was arrested under the Foreigners Act and detained in the Dhaka Central Jail March 24 as his reply was not satisfactory to the government.

Meanwhile, a latent meeting of the public trial Committee decided that the 24 persons against whom warrants have been issued would surrender in the Supreme Court on Sunday and pray for bail, Committee sources said.

No one was arrested till the writing of this report late Saturday night, police said.

JS session on Apr 12, likely to be stormy

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has summoned a session of the Jatiya Sangsad at 3 pm on April 12 (Sunday), an official announcement said yesterday, reports BSS.

This will be the fifth session on the fifth Parliament.

Our staff Correspondent adds: In the backdrop of prevailing political situation the session of the Jatiya Sangsad is expected to be stormy.

The fourth session of the Sangsad was prorogued on February 19 and the coming session has been convened to meet the constitutional obligations.

The ensuing session, according to competent sources, is likely to be short-lived to accommodate the convening of

the budget session around mid-June.

Political observers feel the indemnity (repal) bill, issue of Golam Azam and the Rohingya issue would dominate the proceeding in the House.

In addition, Sangsad sources say, there may be some decisions from the Speaker on different privilege notices which might be embarrassing for the Treasury Bench.

One of the decisions to be given by the Speaker is a privilege notice which says ministerial status for non-MPs is a violation of the privilege enjoyed by an MP. The other one involves the role of the MPs in distributing wheat under Food for Works Programme.

Police raid DU hall, recover ammunition

By DU Correspondent
Police raided the Shahidullah Hall of the Dhaka University Saturday and recovered a large quantity of ammunition.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police started the raid at 5 am on the old building of the residential hall and in an hour recovered 244 bullets of Chinese rifles, 303 rifles and SLRs and a hand grenade.

Police also recovered a revolver holster and 15 bullet chargers.

Meanwhile, the Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) Saturday condemned the attacks on the 'pro-liberation press' by Jamaat-Shibir forces and demanded exemplary punishment to the attackers.

The GCO workers brought out a demonstration procession in the Dhaka University campus and held a rally in front of Madhu's Canteen to protest the attacks on Dainik Sangbad, Dainik Bhor, Dainik Al Amin and Chittagong Press Club by the Jamaat-Shibir circle.

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Shantibahini kills 2 women in Ramgarh

KHAGRACHARI, Mar 28: Shantibahini gunmen kidnapped and killed two women today at a village in Ramgarh upazila of the hill district, reports UNB.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) said Zobeda Khatun (45) and Karanmala (52) were picked up from Jagannathpara area while tending cows in the afternoon and chopped with dao at Pasha Barakheda.

The BDR men recovered the body of Zobeda, but the body of another woman could not be traced yet.

Another report says a self-styled second lieutenant of the so-called Shantibahini surrendered to the security forces at Mahalchari in the district this morning.

Kushuma Kumar Khisha laid down one pistol and five rounds of ammunition.

Meanwhile, an officer of Khairan forest beat in Chittagong Forest Range was released today from more than two and half months of captivity in the hands of the insurgents. Manjurul Haq was abducted and six others were killed on January 10 by the Shantibahini.

Tk 3.27 lakh robbed, one stabbed

By Staff Correspondent
A group of muggers snatched away after stabbing a filling station manager, Halder, Taka 3,27,000 early Saturday morning near Bulbul Lalitkula Academy at Waz Ghat.

The victim was on his way to a nearby Agrani Bank branch to deposit the money.

Soon after the incident, Kotwali police arrested on Yakub and recovered taka 68,000 from him, police said.

Yakub admitted his involvement in the robbery to the police and said there were four of them.

Haider was admitted to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital where doctors stated his condition to be critical.

Hartal in Khulna observed partially

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Mar 28: A half-day hartal called by Islami Chhatra Shibir to protest the killing of a Shibir activist was partially observed in Khulna Saturday.

Amin-ul-Islam Birman, a final year student of BL College, Khulna and a Shibir activist was killed in a clash with a rival student group on March 24.

During the hartal shops were closed and vehicular traffic was off the road. However, a number of rickshaws plied in different roads of the city.

Banks, private and autonomous bodies kept their shutters down but carried on their normal activities of the day.

In Khulna, Khaltepur, Daulatpur, Atra and Rupsa in-

See Page 12 Col 8

Trial body plans next course of action

By Nural Kabir

The organisers of the 'public trial' of Jamaat chief Golam Azam in the 'people's court' are likely to counter the government's issuance of warrants of arrest against them through various programmes including hartal.

Political parties involved with the public trial of Golam Azam in the 'people's court' on Thursday are learnt to have decided to extend active support to the planned move.

The government issued warrants of arrest against 24 persons involved in the public trial held Thursday last. Of these 24 persons, 12 were 'judge', four lawyers, and six witnesses in the 'people's court' and two were members of the trial committee, sources said.

The organisers of the trial and the political leaders supporting it expressed this view yesterday at an iftar party hosted by Awami League chief

Sheikh Hasina at her official residence at Minto Road.

According to the sources the planned hartal call would come from the 'public trial' committee protesting the government move to arrest 24 persons involved with the 'public trial'.

The political parties would extend support immediately after the trial committee's call, sources said.

The political leaders and the organisers of the trial committee who took part in the informal discussion on the issue yesterday include among others AL chief Sheikh Hasina, five-party leader Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haque Inu, PDF leaders Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and the Convenor of the public trial committee, Jahanara Imam.

According to sources, they will meet soon to finalise their course of action.



A passenger minibus which skidded off the road into a ditch at Tarabo on Dhaka-Narsingdi Highway on Saturday being salvaged. —Star photo

Move to foil Monday's march Security tightened in Kashmir

UNDATED, Mar 28: Indian and Pakistani security forces say they intend to foil a planned march Monday by Kashmiri nationalists who want to breach the line of control that divides the Himalayan territory, reports AP.

Senior officers of an Indian infantry brigade said today that security had been tightened in the entire Kashmir valley to foil Monday's cross-border march by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) activists.

"Security has been beefed up around the line of control," one officer said.

Members of JKLF's Indian chapter plan to hold a reception at the frontier when the marchers cross over from the Pakistani side.

Sardar Abdul Qayyum, Prime Minister of Pakistani-controlled Azad (free) Kashmir, said Friday the marchers would not be allowed to move beyond the provincial capital, Muzaffarabad.

"The official machinery will make all-out efforts not to resort to use of force," Qayyum said.

Sources in Islamabad said all roads leading to Muzaffarabad had been blocked by Pakistani security forces, and that a ban had been imposed on gatherings of more than five people.

Some 400 Pakistan-based JKLF activists, including senior leaders, have been arrested since Friday, the organization said Saturday.

Paramilitary forces deployed overnight Friday were patrolling Muzaffarabad, witnesses said. JKLF said authorities had directed truck drivers not to ply their vehicles after midnight Saturday (1900 GMT).

Special checkpoints have been set up at main busstands to prevent marchers from reaching Muzaffarabad.

An unofficial curfew was expected along the line of control. See Page 12 Col 6

Jamaat accuses trial body, govt of unleashing anarchy

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami has accused both the sponsors of the 'Gana Adalat' (people's court) and the government of unleashing anarchy in the city Thursday last.

A meeting of the party's central working committee strongly condemned the role of both sides saying, the 'holding of the 'Gana Adalat' was aimed at destroying democracy, establishing fascism and enslaving Bangladesh to expansionists."

Chaired by the Acting Ameer of the party, Abbas Ali Khan, the meeting said that the 'failure' of the government to take action against the organisers of the Gana Adalat had caused doubts to arise among the people regarding its existence.

Some people gathered and demanded their political opponent's death sentence, and the act was termed verdict of the 'people's court', the meeting in a resolution remarked adding that if such a situation is allowed to continue then

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Dress-rehearsal for Special UN envoy's visit Yangon takes foreign envoys to border area today

A number of ambassadors, notably of Japan, China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Laos and South Korea would be taken in a conducted tour to the Bangladesh-Myanmar border by the Myanmar government ahead of the visit to the area by the United Nations Under Secretary General Jan Eliasson, according to diplomatic sources in Dhaka, reports BSS.

The Charge D'Affaires of Singapore, Malaysia and Australia and the defence attaches stationed in Yangon will also be in the tour today.

Ambassador of Germany, who is the dean of the diplomatic corp, and the ambassadors of the UK, France, India and the Charge D'Affaires of the United States have declined to participate in the tour as their nominated representatives with background knowledge of the area were not accepted by the Myanmar authorities, the sources said.

Bangladesh formally approached the UN Secretary General last month to exercise his influence to bring about an early solution to the refugee problem triggered by the continuous influx of the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar into Bangladesh.

The UN envoy will call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, besides meeting with officials of the Foreign Ministry, Additional Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan said in Dhaka Saturday.

He is also scheduled to discuss with heads of the UN agencies in Dhaka on the situation arising out of the fleeing of Myanmar Muslims to Bangladesh to escape atrocities and persecution of the Yangon military junta.

Eliasson, the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, will visit the country's south-eastern frontier districts of Cox's Bazar. See Page 12 Col 3

'Barter trade' continues along Bangla-Myanmar border

By Farid Hossain

TEKNAF, Mar 28: When the wooden motor boat pulled into this river front town last week, it was greeted by four rifle-toting border guards.

But the boat was flying the maroon-and-blue Myanmar (Burma) flag, and its passengers were not refugees seeking sanctuary from marauding Myanmar soldiers.

These were shoppers, traders and smugglers still doing business at this crossing point, despite the refugee tragedy here that has overburdened Bangladesh and seized the attention of the UN bodies, human rights groups and

world governments.

Boat's 30 Myanmar passengers, armed with transit documents, were villagers from the frontier regions of Mandgwe and Butthidong arriving for an eight-hour visit.

They brought Chinese-made crockery, bedspreads, Burmese sarongs and mango pickles, in high demand in Bangladesh. In exchange they bought Bangladeshi biscuits to sell at home.

Technically, this bartering is illegal. But the region has long been a point for smuggling and gray-market activity. Border guards and Customs

officials admit that this is also an act of smuggling, but they often ignore those who don't bring more than one item.

The carriers of these goods are mostly teenage boys and girls. "It's okay if they bring only a dozen glasses or half-a-dozen plates. After all these people are really poor," said a border guard checking travel documents.

Since December, when the Myanmar army began a crackdown on Rohingya Muslims in Arakan province on the Bangladesh frontier, most of the people arriving here have been refugees.

More than 190,000 refugees have poured into Bangladesh, saying soldiers were conscripting men for forced labour, raping women and evicting them from their land.

Despite the increasing exodus a high degree of normalcy exists along the 175-mile border. The Teknaf and three other crossing points were closed for a while after the Dec 21 Myanmar attack on a BDR outpost that killed one border guard and one villager. Soon after the transit points became operative.

According to local BDR officials about 60 Myanmar citi-

zens travel through Teknaf point every day, and about 30 Bangladeshis go in the opposite direction.

The Myanmar visitors usually do not speak about their condition at home. "I don't know anything about it," said a 12-year-old girl when asked how Myanmar soldiers treat them.

One mile from the transit point is the C and B Ghat on the bank of Naaf, which has become the floodgate for the tens of thousands of refugees fleeing the Myanmar military crackdown. Sitting among a group of

300 refugees, 20-year-old Arifa Begum said soldiers came to her Rasithong village one night early this month and "took away my eldest brother to work as porter for them." She said she hid in a bush to save herself.

The refugees are now arriving at a rate of 1,000 per day, but many of the three million people in the Arakan province are trying to hold on.

"Nobody wants to be a refugee by choice," said Zafar Ahmed, Editor of newly launched Arakan News Agency based in Dechuapalong refugee. See Page 12 Col 8

Sheri, Iftar timings

Ramzan March	Sheri	Iftar
23	29	6.21pm
24	30	4.32 6.21pm