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No arrest until complete hearing

Public trial organisers granted anticipatory bail

By Staff Correspondent

The 24 persons against whom warrants of arrest were issued late Saturday for holding the "public trial" of Gohar Azam Thursday were granted anticipatory bail yesterday.

The 24 who included organisers, judges, witnesses were granted the anticipatory bail by a High Court Division Bench of the Supreme Court.

The two-member Bench comprising Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury and Justice Abdul Karim, granting the bail said "The accused shall not be arrested until a complete hearing of the petition."

The hearing may be held today (Monday) or tomorrow.

The Officer-in-Charge of Ramna Police Station lodged a case in the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Saturday charging the 24 with attempt to murder and anti-state activities. The CMM issued arrest orders.

The 24 persons accused including Committee Convenor and Chairman of the panel of Judges Jahanara Imam appeared in the court at 12-45 pm and prayed for bail.

"This is an extraordinary case which was never come up in any court in the country and (My Lord) you know their identity" Defence Lawyer Dr. Kamal Hossain told the Bench

while seeking bail.

Initially Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury suggested that they go to the CMM Court from where the warrants had been issued.

But Dr. Kamal and Barrister Amirul Islam pleaded "The issue has a national interest, you know the merits of the case, there is no evidence in favour of it. So we have come to your court."

"But I have to hear the government side," Justice Huq told the crowd of court adding "The matter will remain pending until complete hearing of the bail petition."

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Govt, 'trial' body talk after Eid

By Asiuzzaman

The authorities and the Trial Committee members are expected to start talks after Eid-ul-Fitr, in a bid to end hostilities, a committee source said Sunday.

"We had informal talks with two ministers who expressed a positive gesture to solve the issue through negotiations," the source, a member of the National Coordination Committee for Realisation of the Spirit of Liberation War and Resistance to Killers and Collaborators of 1971, said requesting anonymity.

The source declined to disclose the name of the two ministers beyond saying they were from southwestern districts.

"Although the Government has taken 'repressive' action against us, our door is open for

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More Rohingyas arrive

Eliasson's visit will help solve refugee problem: Mostafiz

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman Sunday hoped that the visit of UN Under-Secretary General Jan K Eliasson to both Bangladesh and Myanmar would pave the way for a solution to the Rohingya refugee problem, reports BSS.

Briefing newsmen on his return from the United States here the minister said the visit of Eliasson "is expected to draw us closer to bilateral solution of the problem."

General Jan K Eliasson will arrive here today on a three-day visit for an on-the-spot evaluation of the Myanmar refugee problem.

Referring to Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia's talks with UN Secretary General during her visit to the UN, he said "We discussed the refugee issue and urged him to use his good offices for peaceful and quick negotiated solution to the problem."

The Foreign Minister said the despatch of Eliasson for an on-the-spot evaluation was an indication of the efforts of the UN Secretary General in finding early solution to the refugee problem.

He said "we had discussions with the UN Secretary General on the refugee issue as it is difficult for us to find food and accommodation for the ever

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PM, Inu, Manik talk behind closed doors over Azam

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia had a close-door meeting with Five Party alliance leader Hasanul Haq Inu and Patriotic Democratic Front leader Saifuddin Ahmed Manik at her office yesterday (Sunday), reports UNB.

The meeting which lasted for about two hours discussed certain vital political issues of national importance. It was learnt.

The leaders were learnt to have exchanged opinion on the latest political development arising out of the "people's court verdict" against controversial Jamaat leader Gohar Azam and subsequent warrants of arrest against the sponsors of the court.

When contacted, Hasanul Haq Inu told UNB over phone that it was completely an informal meeting. "It's a meeting

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Jahanara Imam and other members of the 'public trial committee' are leaving the court with lawyers and supporters after getting anticipatory bail from the two-member High Court Division bench on Sunday. — Star photo

BCS (Admn) cadre to fill up 128 upgraded posts

By Mahfuz Ullah

The Government is going to upgrade 128 posts of Additional District Magistrate (ADM) and Secretary, Zila Prishad.

After upgradation, these posts will be manned by members of the BCS (Administration) cadre who have recently been promoted to the post of Deputy Secretary.

Also, the posts meant for other cadres will be upgraded to accommodate people promoted last month.

Authoritative sources said the final decision in this regard would be made public by mid-April as necessary formalities would be delayed because of coming Eid holidays.

The Government, on Feb 9, promoted "654 officials to higher levels in administration. The promotions, according to Government announcement, were aimed at making the administration more dynamic by removing the 'frustration' among the Government officials.

Incidentally, promotions to higher posts in government service during the Ershad regime were made more on the basis of political loyalty than on efficiency and merit. This created frustrations among the Government servants and in some cases created tensions.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government, since its coming to power, initiated the process of regularising the promotions.

After the promotions were made the Government found it difficult to accommodate all the promoted officers against vacancies. Of the total promotions, four were promoted to the post of Secretary. 32 were made Additional Secretaries, 191 were promoted to the posts of Joint Secretaries and 427 were made Deputy Secretaries.

So far, the Government has almost completed the postings of the promoters other than

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Two HC benches reject writ challenging Azam's detention

By Staff Correspondent

The writ petition challenging the detention order on Gohar Azam and for the restoration of his citizenship was rejected twice Sunday by two High Court Division Benches of the Supreme Court, court sources said.

One of the benches comprised Justice Fazle Hossain, Md Habibur Rahman and Justice KM Hassan felt embarrassed and referred it to the Chief Justice.

The Chief Justice instructed that it be moved to another court.

The petition was later moved to the court of Justice Abdul Jalil and Justice Kazi Ebadul-Huq but one of the Judges again felt embarrassed.

The case is now pending with the Chief Justice who is expected to form a new Bench for it.

Barrister Abdur Razzak, Barrister Korban Ali and Advocate Nazrul Islam moved the petition on behalf of Abdullahi Momen Azmi, son of Gohar Azam.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hasina visits camps today

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina leaves for Cox's Bazar today to see the condition of Rohingya refugees. Hasina will visit different refugee camps sheltering thousands of Myanmar minority Muslims who have crossed into Bangladesh to escape persecution by the Myanmar military junta, reports UNB.

Ration shop holiday

All the rationing shops of the Dhaka rationing area will remain closed on Eid day and the following day. Ration items are available on any rationing day of the week for those who could not have their ration on those days, says an official handout, reports UNB.

Ray's condition unchanged

CALCUTTA, Mar 29: The condition of Satyajit Ray remained "unchanged" at the Belle Vue Clinic tonight (Sunday) according to his family. No medical bulletin was issued during the day. A medical team was closely monitoring the film maestro's health, reports PIT.

Shopowners allege harassment

Bangladesh Shopowners Association Federation yesterday alleged that members of the anti-smuggling task force were harassing the shopkeepers in the name of conducting anti-smuggling drive. In a statement, Chairman and Secretary General of the Federation Amir Hossain Khan and SA Kader Kiron said that some unpleasant incidents had occurred during a recent raid in Reazuddin Bazar of Chittagong as the chamber representatives were not consulted by the task force members, reports UNB.

Sheri, Ifar timings

Ramzan March Sheri Ifar
 24 30 6.21 pm
 25 31 4.31 6.21 pm

Commentary

Despite signs of crisis, let us try for national consensus

By S.M.Ali

The move by the government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia against Jahanara Imam and 23 others involved in the "public trial" of Gohar Azam, by issuing warrants for their arrest, provides an ominous signal for a possible confrontation between the administration and the opposition.

The move could not have come at a worse moment. Moderate elements within various groupings, especially within the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Opposition Awami League (AL), had been busy in trying to ease the tension and to prevent the deepening polarisation affecting the two major parties, with the Jamaat making the most political gain of the changing situation.

Now, hardliners in the BNP,

AL and Five-Party Alliance will be asserting themselves in favour of a showdown between the opposing forces, which, in effect, may well result in a long period of uncertainties in our national life, if not worse, such as work stoppages, car-burning and violence.

What prompted the administration of Begum Zia to move against some of the organisers of the Azam trial is something of a mystery to those who had welcomed the arrest of Gohar Azam on Tuesday. The move against the Jamaat leader was not only legally correct but also politically a wise one for defusing the growing tension.

Now, it seems, the hardliners within the BNP have persuaded the Prime Minister to move against Imam and her associates for three different but

interlinked reasons: To treat the Thursday's "public trial" of Azam as an act of defiance of the so-called stern warning served on the organisers and, to that extent, a threat against the established authority; to strike a balance between the detention of Azam and warrants of arrest against the 24 persons involved in the trial; and to pacify some elements in the Jamaat who had regarded the arrest of Azam as a kind of betrayal by the BNP administration.

The mistake in the approach of BNP hardliners is to see the "public trial" of Thursday as a challenge to the government of Begum Zia. It was far from that. Another mistake committed by the same group maybe no more

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Execute verdict: Hasina 11 parties demand withdrawal of arrest warrants

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of 11 political parties including the Awami League at a joint meeting Sunday strongly demanded the immediate withdrawal of the warrants of arrest issued against 24 organisers of the "public trial."

Chaired by the AL Chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina, the meeting termed the government action as anti-people and contrary to the country's spirit of Liberation.

Held at the Minto Road official residence of Sheikh Hasina, the meeting congratulated the people for making the public trial of Jamaat leader Gohar Azam and called on the government to execute the verdict of the people's court within the given period.

It also condemned the attacks by the 'government-backed' communal forces in different parts of the country and demanded action against

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Students burn truck Police raid DU hall, arrest BCL leader

By DU Correspondent

Police arrested Awami League-backed Chhatra League (S-A) leader Manjurul Alam Tokon (28) and three others, including two outsiders, during a raid Sunday on the Zahurul Huq Hall of the Dhaka University at around 2 am.

Agitated Chhatra League activists set fire to a truck loaded with goods at Sonargaon Road near Nilkhet at about 6 am yesterday following the arrest of their leader, Tokon.

Police lobbed around 20 tear-gas canisters at that time to disperse the agitators.

Police sources said that Tokon, the Vice President of the Zahurul Huq Hall Students' Union and a Masters final year student of Library Science of DU, was arrested from room 105 of the eastern building of the hall in connection with the Mirza Galib and Liton murder

case.

Galib and Liton were killed in a gunbattle on the Dhaka University campus between the two rival groups on October 27 last.

The three others arrested are: Sarwar Hossain (27), a masters final year student of Islamic Studies of DU, Abul Bashar alias Badsha (27) and Khandaker Abul Kasem (27) of Dhaka College.

Campus sources said that a group of armed activists of BCL (S-A) allegedly fired several rounds of gunshots near the hall premises after the raid.

The unidentified group also created disturbances in front of the Provost's residence and cut off the telephone line, sources said.

The armed activists also ransacked the Dhaka

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Dozens of JKLF leaders nabbed ahead of today's march

MUZAFFARABAD (Pakistan-controlled Kashmir), Mar 29: More than 150 district leaders of a pro-independence Kashmiri group have been detained to thwart a planned crossing into Indian Kashmir, its acting chairman said today, reports AFP.

"A campaign of harassment has been under way following the arrest of our leader Amanullah Khan," said his close lieutenant Raja Muzaffar in a pre-down interview at a hide-out here as a heavy police contingent patrolled the city.

Party sources had said some 400 Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) activists had been nabbed Saturday in a bid to thwart a march to the Line of Control dividing the Indian and Pakistani parts of Kashmir tomorrow (Monday).

Muzaffar, 42, received reporters at a home here for the first time since he assumed

command of the planned march after the arrest of the JKLF's Pakistan chapter chairman on Wednesday.

At the organization's headquarters here in the capital of the Pakistani part of Kashmir,

SRINAGAR, Mar 29: Kashmir Muslim militants Sunday called a planned cross-border march. Javed Ahmad Mir, the self-styled commander-in-chief of the JKLF said late Sunday "the procession has been deferred indefinitely as we have not been getting clear signals from across the border, where JKLF members were planning to march into India."

all telephone connections were cut and police stood by as well as plainclothes security officers.

JKLF sources said a few hundred supporters had man-

aged to sneak into Muzaaffarabad from across Pakistan.

Officials said foolproof precautions had been taken to prevent anyone from proceeding to the Line of Control.

"We are taking no chances this time," an official said, recalling the JKLF's February 12 attempt that led to clashes with security forces, leaving about 16 dead and scores injured as marchers approached the border town to Chakothi.

AP adds: The Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front promised to defy the ban.

"We're going to cross. We don't care what Pakistan does," said Faisal, a Liberation Front spokesman who uses only one name.

"It is our hope that force will not be used this time," said Deputy Foreign Minister Siddiq Kanju.

Several Liberation Front leaders went underground.

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Women activists of the JKLF staging demonstration in Muzaaffarabad yesterday to protest the arrest of Amanullah Khan in a bid to foil today's march. — AFP photo

Attack on newspapers condemned

Leaders of Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad, Editors Council, BFUJ, DUJ, Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Press Samikha Federation and Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Karmachari Federation Sunday strongly condemned recent armed attacks on newspaper offices and said newspapers should not be viewed from individual, group or partisan angle, reports BSS.

In a joint statement issued after a meeting of the leaders of the newspaper industry, they said that attack on newspaper offices for political reasons was not acceptable on any plea.

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