

Passengers, BDR men clash at Barisal steamer ghat: 50 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Feb 14: At least 50 people were injured in a clash between the passengers and BDR personnel in a BIWTC Dhaka-Khulna steamer at Barisal steamer ghat tonight.

Witnesses said that the clash broke out when the Dhaka-bound steamer — P S Masud — berthed at the ghat and a large number of passengers rushed to board it.

The trouble started as the BDR jawans numbering more than 90, who were on board reportedly declined to leave some space despite the rush of passengers.

The passengers were injured as the BDR men beat them with belts and lathis, according to witnesses.

The situation came under control when the DC and the SP intervened and took out the BDR personnel from the steamer.

Later, the steamer left Barisal for Dhaka at about 11 pm.

Meanwhile, arrangement has been made to send the BDR jawans to Dhaka by a special launch tomorrow, local administration sources said.

Programmes on Feb 15

By Staff Correspondent

Today is February 15, the first anniversary of parliamentary elections under the previous BNP government, which major opposition parties had boycotted.

The then major opposition parties — Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami — had termed the polls 'one-party farcical elections'. They had spearheaded a vigorous anti-government movement at that time demanding elections under a neutral caretaker government. Later, fresh elections were held on June 12 last year under the caretaker government of Justice Md Habibur Rahman.

The Sixth Jatiya Sangsad which was elected through the February 15 polls in 1996 was a short-lived one having only three days' sittings in a single session.

Ruling Awami League will observe the day as 'Democracy Killing Day' while the major opposition party BNP has declared the day a day of consolidating democracy. Jatiya Party

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Girl 'raped' in Ctg: one held

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 14: A girl of about 12 years was allegedly raped by two young men at Sardar Bahadur Nagar Lane, under Doublemooring thana last night, police said today.

A case was lodged with Doublemooring thana in this regard and the victim Nazma Begum, a maid-servant, was kept under thana custody for sending her to Chittagong Medical College Hospital tomorrow for medical check-up, police said.

Nazma was going to a nearby shop at about 8:30 pm when the young men forcibly took her to an abandoned building and allegedly raped.

When the alleged rapists, Sufian and Kallol, left the victim raised a hue and cry that draw people from surrounding

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Delhi confce opens with call to end bias against women

NEW DELHI, Feb 14: The President of India here today launched a global conference on gender equality in politics by calling for an end to bias against women, report agencies.

"We must root out prejudice against women and the negative attitude towards their participation in politics," Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma said, inaugurating the five-day Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) summit.

"Despite numerous guarantees and safeguards, gender discrimination and prejudice remain a distressing reality, he said.

He added: "Clearly we have to do more to promote gender as a central issue in our political advancement ... tangible and sustained progress is possible only by focusing on women and the girl-child who remain among the most vulnerable, weak and deprived sections of society."

Vice-president K R Narayanan, president of the Inter-Parliamentary Council Dr Ahmed Fathy Sorour, Lok Sabha Speaker P A Sangma and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha Mrs Najma Heptulla also addressed the function. Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations MS Angela King read out a message of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on the occasion.

Sharma said India had taken a giant step in reserving a third of its seats in local bodies for women in a prelude to similar moves in parliament and the state assemblies.

"A historic advance has been achieved," he said, adding that more than a million Indian women had joined politics as a result of this significant political and constitutional reform.

Najma Heptulla, Speaker of India's Upper House, backed him. She said: "this challenge binds us together, our achievements will inspire us to take resolute steps in future."

While women are key contributors to economic development

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on Namibian President Sam Nujoma at Rastrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday.

—PID photo

PM addresses IPU confce today

NEW DELHI, Feb 14: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address the plenary session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) here tomorrow, reports BSS.

Hasina arrived here this morning to a warm welcome to attend the specialised conference on Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics' that began later in the day.

She was received at the Palam Airport by Lok Sabha Speaker P A Sangma.

The Lt Governor of New Delhi, Tejendra Khanna, External Affairs Secretary, Salman Haider, Bangladeshi High Commissioner in New Delhi, C M Shafi Sami, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Deb Mukherjee and high officials of the External Affairs Ministry were present.

The Prime Minister's entourage included Minister for Environment and Forest, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Deputy

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Nujoma praises Ganges water sharing treaty

NEW DELHI, Feb 14: Namibian President S A M Nujoma today congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for signing the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India, reports BSS.

"Good neighbourly relations can contribute very significantly to socio-economic development," Nujoma told Hasina when she called on him at Rastrapati Bhavan here.

The two leaders flew to the Indian capital to attend the five-day Specialised Inter-Parliamentary Conference that began here today.

The Namibian President said the African countries are also under lining the need for further developing their good neighbourly relations.

Hasina said that Bangladesh was also benefitted through the Afro-Asian solidarity.

As the Namibian President spoke of shortage of skilled manpower in his country, Hasina said Bangladesh could send skilled manpower to Namibia.

The Prime Minister's entourage included Minister for Environment and Forest, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Deputy

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President tells CJ Delay in disposal of cases clear denial of justice

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday said undue delay in disposal of cases is a clear denial of justice, reports UNB.

The President made the observation when Chief Justice ATM Afzal called on him at Bangabhaban in the morning.

During the meeting, the Chief Justice cited some difficulties standing in the way of quick disposal of pending cases.

He also apprised the President of working conditions of the Supreme Court, including the accommodation problem.

Justice Afzal requested President Shahabuddin, who was also the Chief Justice, to visit the Supreme Court and discuss the matters with judges of both the High Court and the Appellate Division.

The President gave the Chief Justice a patient hearing and assured him of all assistance and cooperation for disposal of the long standing cases.

Flag meet on Tinbigha corridor today

LALMONIRHAT, Feb 14: A flag meeting between Bangladesh and India begins tomorrow to find out a permanent solution to various problems on both sides of 'Tinbigha' corridor, reports UNB.

The meeting, to be held at the 'Tinbigha' corridor at 10 am, was proposed by Bangladesh side early this month. The proposal was accepted by India on Thursday.

BDR Rangpur Sector Commander Col MASK Azad will lead the Bangladesh side that will also include Commanding Officer 27 Rifles battalion Lt Col Zahiruddin Mohammad Babar.

The Indian BSF team will be led by Deputy Inspector General of Siliguri.

The meeting's agenda includes setting up of Bangladesh security camps and hoisting of Bangladeshi flag on both sides of the 'Tinbigha' corridor, and ensuring supply of electricity, gas and water for the people of Dhamagram and Angarpota enclaves.

Earlier, another flag meeting was held in December last after the Indian side objected to the setting up of security camps by Bangladesh on two sides of the corridor. The meeting ended without resolving the issue.

Nari Samaj protests Shima's death in 'safe custody'

High-powered judicial probe body demanded

By Staff Correspondent

Sultana, Rokeya Begum, Elina Khan, Dr. Nayla Khan, Hamida Hossain, Habibunnesa, Shamina Anam and Barrister Sigmara Huda.

Farida Akhter read out a statement at the press conference on behalf of the organisation in which she said Shima 'murder' had questioned police administration's respect for

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law and justice.

She said that though Shima had embraced Islam in the jail, her body was cremated immediately after the Eid vacation when newspapers would remain closed and there would be none to protest this heinous act.

The

press conference was attended by, among others, Maleka Begum, Farida Akhter, Rawshan Ara, Khaleda Khatun, Seema Das Shima, Hamida Chowdhury was killed in a planned way and the time was fixed keeping in mind the Eid vacation when newspapers would remain closed and there would be none to protest this heinous act.

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