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The World on Time

Bangabandhu murder

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register an FIR (first information report) with Lalbagh thana but was refused. In some other police stations, he was advised not to register the FIR till the situation is favourable.

Mahitil said he has registered the FIR now because the situation is not hostile.

Advocate Pran Nath while defending absconder Maj (relieved) Shariful Hossain, said that the principal witness himself was involved in the murder as he took such a long time to register the FIR.

Mahitil said that the allegation was totally baseless. He could not file the FIR due to adverse situation, he said.

Mahbubur Rahman, lawyer of absconder accused Bazul Huda asked Mahitil how long did he knew his client.

Mahitil said he first met Bazul Huda on a ferry at the Archia ghat in 1973. He was probably a captain in the army at that time, he added.

"Huda used to come to the residence of Bangabandhu to supervise the forces of his unit deployed around the house," Mahitil said.

Ruhul Islam, lawyer of absconder accused Nur Chowdhury asked, "How long did you know your client?"

The principal witness said that Nour was ADC to Gen. Osman and since Nour and himself were freedom fighters, they used to meet at 12, Theatre Road in Calcutta during the Liberation War.

Nour used to visit the residence of Bangabandhu as he had friendship with Sheikh Kamal, Mahitil said.

Advocate Mahfuza, lawyer of Dalim asked whether he saw Dalim at Bangabandhu's residence during the incident. Mahitil said he had seen Dalim there at that time.

To a question how did he know Dalim, Mahitil said Dalim used to visit the residence of Bangabandhu.

Advocate Nazrul Islam, lawyer of accused Col Shahriar Rashid Khan asked Mahitil how long he was in that job. Mahitil said he was in that job till 1978. He also told the court that he was demoted and transferred from that post.

The lawyer asked when he was transferred, Mahitil said that he could not remember immediately.

The lawyer also asked when he was demoted from his position. The principal witness said that he did not remember the exact time and that he had deposited related papers with the investigating officer.

The judge then told Mahitil that he was holding a very important post during the incident and that he should remember the developments regarding his own job.

The judge then asked if he was tired. Mahitil said he was tired. The judge then adjourned proceeding of the court.

The day's proceedings began at about 11:45 am. At around 12, the judge asked the state defence counsels to start their cross-examination. A total of 11 lawyers defending the absconders cross-examined Mahitil Islam till about 2:00 pm, before the judge ordered a break for 45 minutes.

As the court resumed again after the break, three other state defence counsels for the absconders completed their cross-examination of the witness by around 3:30 pm. Then the judge invited the state defence to start their cross-examination.

Gazi Zillur Rahman defended Lt Col (dismissed) Khandaker Abdul Rashid while Rahul Islam Khan defended Lt Col (ret'd) SHMB Nur Chowdhury.

Advocate Jashimuddin was the lawyer for absconder Lt Col (ret'd) Md Aziz Pasha while Fariduddin defended absconder Lt Col (relieved) AM Rashed Chowdhury.

Advocate Krishna Pada Bhoomik was defending Maj (relieved) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, Advocate Nurul Huq was the defence counsel for Risalder Moslemuddin.

Advocate Khalilur Rahman defended Capt (relieved) Md Kismet Hashem.

Advocate Khandaker Mokhlesur Rahman defended Capt (ret'd) Nazmul Hossain Ansar while Belayet Hossain was the lawyer of absconder accused Capt (ret'd) Abdul Majed. Mozammel Hossain Chowdhury defended Dafader Marfat Ali, and advocate M Hanif defended LD Abul Hashem Mirdha.

EC-Bangladesh working group meets today

A two-day meeting of the European Commission-Bangladesh working group will begin today in Brussels, an EC official said in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

The meeting will discuss the on-going EC-assisted projects in Bangladesh as well as projects in the pipeline.

The Bangladesh side will be led by Abu Saleh, joint secretary, Economic Relations Division, while the EC team will be led by Eric Muller, head of the technical unit of EC (Asia).

Presently EC is funding over 25 projects in Bangladesh in the fields of food security, water management, poverty alleviation and social development. The total cost of the projects is Taka 2000 crores.

Foreign co-office ransacked in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, July 7: The office of a foreign company, involved in constructing the approach road of Jamuna Bridge, at Naika village in Kamarkand thana was ransacked by a group of people today, reports UNB.

Police said 10 people, including site engineer JH King of Sam Whan company, were injured during the trouble that ensued at about 11 am after the engineer prevented the company's enlisted contractor, Haider Ali, from entering the office.

As Haider and one of his associates assaulted the engineer, local employees also swooped on them.

Later, nearly 100 people, allegedly led by Haider, attacked the office at about 2:30 pm and damaged property worth over Tk 1 lakh, company sources said.

One killed, 48 hurt in Jessore road accident

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, July 7: One person was killed and 48 others were injured in a road accident near Barinagar bazar on the Jessore-Jhenaidah highway this afternoon.

Witnesses said Abdul Karim, 76, of Bhazondanga in Faridpur district succumbed to his injuries on way to Jessore General Hospital. His daughter-in-law and a grand daughter were also injured.

The injured were rushed to the local Combined Military Hospital, the Kaliganj Thana Health Complex and the General Hospital.

The mishap occurred when a speeding bus from Faridpur collided with another one and fell into a roadside ditch at Mathurapur.

Repatriated tribals demand proper rehabilitation

KHAGRACHHARI, July 7: Tribals who returned from refugee camps in India in 1994 staged demonstration today for their proper rehabilitation through full implementation of the 20-point deal with the present government, reports UNB.

Hundreds of repatriated tribal men and women massed in the hill district headquarters and in processions paraded different areas to voice their grievances.

They are among the 5,186 tribesmen of 1,027 refugee families who returned in 1994. They submitted a nine-point memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner today to hand it over to the Prime Minister.

Kukis kill 25 in Manipur

GAUHATI, India, July 7: At least 25 people were killed and five injured today when tribesmen armed with rifles attacked a village dominated by a rival community and sprayed bullets and later set their homes ablaze, a domestic news agency said, reports AP.

Activists of the Kuki tribe in India's remote northeast raided a village of Paitet tribespeople in the state of Manipur. The raiders destroyed more than 18 village homes, Press Trust of India news agency said.

Mongla customs

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why they do not want to come and work here," said a preventive officer requesting anonymity.

The Mongla Customs House Employees Coordination Committee said it would continue to organise rallies and wear black badges if their demands for transfer were not met within the deadline. From July 15 the committee will observe one-hour work abstention. On July 22 it will observe three-hour work abstention.

When contacted, a high official of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) said the law doesn't allow such transfers. He also denied having any file for transfer order in the NBR office. However, he admitted such transfer of preventive officers from Mongla to Chittagong took place in the past but that happened through "mutual understanding."

"I have invited the representatives from the Mongla Customs House to come and talk to me," said the official. "But I can only tell them that there is no such provision for transfer."

Enough time given

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in the current session of the parliament," she added.

About BNP's demand for proportionate representation in the committees according to each party's strength in the House, the Prime Minister said, "we like to assure them that representation of Opposition lawmakers in standing committees will be higher than what they (BNP) had provided us in the fifth Parliament."

She reminded that four of the Sangsad Business Advisory Committee (BAC) members were taken from the Opposition whereas there were only two Opposition MPs in BAC in the Fifth Parliament.

Yet, the Leader of the Opposition (Begum Khaleda Zia) did not attend a single meeting of the BAC," said Hasina, adding that as chairman of the standing committees on establishment and defence ministries in Fifth Parliament the then Leader of the House also did not preside a single meeting of those committees.

"We are showing magnanimity. Several letters were sent, dialogue was on so that they give us the names of their nominees", Hasina said.

Replying to a question, the Prime Minister said that relationship between her party and the Opposition has become

BNP activist kidnapped

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, July 7: A BNP activist was kidnapped by some persons from a wine shop here Sunday midnight.

Eye witnesses and police said, four persons, wearing masks, stormed the wine shop and dragged out the BNP activist Abdul Aziz Nikari, 40, at gun point.

The kidnapers, soon left the place in a microbus firing two shots.

Cricketers

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highly rejuvenated after winning the ICC Trophy in Kuala Lumpur.

Bangladesh will take on Pakistan on July 16 at Premadasa Stadium in Colombo. However, Pakistan will play against host Sri Lanka at the same stadium on the inaugural day.

Mahbub's body

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BSS adds: State Minister for Planning and Civil Aviation Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday informed the Jatiya Sangsad that Bangladesh Biman would pay Tk one lakh to the family of late Mahbub.

Making a statement under Rule 62 of the Rules of Procedure in reply to the adjournment motion moved by Jafrul Islam Chowdhury (BNP-Chittagong) and M Shahidul Islam (BNP-Jhenaidah), Alamgir said Biman would return the body of Mahbub to his family after the completion of all formalities. The body is now under the custody of Saudi government, he added.

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Power import Indian team to visit Pakistan shortly

CALCUTTA, July 7: A high-powered Indian delegation will shortly visit Pakistan to explore the possibilities of importing electricity for the country's northern region, reports PTI.

The World Bank has already expressed its willingness to negotiate in the matter.

"With the emergence of a number of independent power projects, Pakistan has come out as a power-surplus country and India seeks to import energy from that country," according to Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCI) sources here.

BNP MPs

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fuzullah Farid.

The MPs alleged that the local leaders of the ruling party were interfering with the normal activities of the port for their own interest and to establish their dominance over the port.

The Chittagong port has become the pawn of a vested quarter, they said, adding that a local leader of the ruling party recently said "India has a right over the Chittagong port."

The opposition BNP lawmakers said the deadlock had been "created by this political quarter conspiratorially to pave the way for implementing the government's plan to allow India to use the Chittagong port."

Crisis at Ctg

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stranded, creating congestion. A senior official said, each stranded ship had been incurring an average demurrage of 10,000 dollars a day, which ultimately would be passed on to the importers.

Commissioner of Chittagong Customs House Abul Kasem said that the deadlock had caused a loss of revenue earning of the Customs authorities by about Tk 100 crore in the past five days.

President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Jafrul Islam Chowdhury has urged the Prime Minister and the Minister for Shipping to take immediate steps to restore activities at Chittagong Port.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister for Port and Shipping arrived here this evening for holding a meeting with all concerned for resolving the issue, officials said.

PM: Ganges barrage

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He roughly calculated that Ganges Barrage would cost five to 10 billion US dollars and Rupsha Bridge 400 million dollars.

The finance minister also said that Bangladesh had approached Japan to reconsider its earlier decision of stopping debt relief from 1998.

Responding to a query, the Prime Minister said, JICA had already completed an assessment study and hoped that an EPZ exclusively for Japanese investors might be set up.

She also said that Japan was eager to invest in social sector, specially for projects enhancing mother and child care facilities in Bangladesh.

Bus service from Barisal suspended

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, July 7: Bus service between Barisal and Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna, Pabna, Kushtia and other places remained suspended from this morning. The transport strike followed clashes between rival groups of workers at Mostafapur in Madaripur district.

28 shops gutted at Sitakunda

CHITTAGONG, July 7: At least 28 shops were gutted at Baraiyhat under Sitakunda thana, some 30 km off here early today, reports BSS.

The fire originating from an electric short-circuit at a shop engulfed the entire bazar quickly. Fire Service and police said.

Two fire units from Sitakunda and Feni stations rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after two hours. The loss could not be ascertained immediately.

JMB project

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2000 will get compensation from BRAC if they apply for their land to the organisation.

BRAC would also help the district administration in rescuing the marooned people if floods caused by the bridge project. As they would get compensation for riverbank erosion, the land owners would not lose their ownership. If his or her property accreted again in a natural way within 30 years, the owner could again take possession of his or her land.

BRAC will set up four offices in the specified area and appoint 35 persons to implement the process of giving compensation to the affected people till the year 2000.

audience with the Japanese Emperor and meeting with the and Japanese Prime Minister, she had talks on various bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern.

She noted that for implementation of the ambitious Ganges Barrage Project, protection of environment of the region will have to be considered seriously. She mentioned about three agreements involving Tk 525 crore signed during her visit and also about a fourth agreement on protection of investment. This, she hoped, would go a long way in restoring confidence of the Japanese investors as regards investing in Bangladesh.

"Keidanren has already formed an investors team, which will visit Bangladesh soon to explore investment opportunities here", Hasina said.

Speaking about her visit to the Japanese city of Nagata, Hasina said she had seen how river training projects salvaged people from floods and helped generate power and provide irrigation in Nagata Prefecture.

In reply to a question if frequent disruption of work at Chittagong Port discourage foreign investments, the Prime Minister said "Such disturbances will in no way help our efforts for attracting foreign investment. If necessary, I will take stern action resolve the problems at the port."

She told another questioner, foreign investments totalling 1675 million US dollars were made in power sector alone in 1996-97 and another 265 million dollars are already in the pipeline to be invested in 1998.

Sheikh Hasina dedicated the honorary Doctorate of Law, conferred on her by the Waseda University of Japan, to the people of the country.

Walkout

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Blasting the BNP and M K Anwar who opposed the bill, she said the nomenclature of the bill was changed by those who illegally grabbed the state power through military coup.

She was also very critical about the personality of the BNP legislator.

However, she told the House that the people had voted the AL to power to correct the distortions of the country's history and renaming of the Award was an attempt to correct the history.

Then the bill was introduced with the BNP members absent in the House. Jatiya Party did not oppose the bill. The proposed legislation was eventually sent to a special committee for scrutiny.

