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Ustad Allarakha Khan dead

MUMBAI, Feb 3: Ustad Allarakha Khan, the country's leading tabla exponent of Punjab Gharana, who raised the tabla to the status of a solo instrument, died of a heart attack here today. He was 81, reports PTI.

The tabla maestro, who was in a state of shock following the death of his younger daughter, a widow, yesterday evening of a heart attack, passed away at 03:30 am at his 'Simla House' residence at Napean Sea Road, family sources said.

He was born on April 29, 1919, at Bhagwal village of Jammu, 80 kms from Lahore. Khan was fascinated with the sound of tabla since the age of 12, when he was staying with his uncle at Gurdaspur.

The young lad ran away from home and became a disciple of Miya Kader Bakhshi of the Punjab Gharana, who initiated him into the world of music.

He learnt 'Raag Vidy' (melody aspect) from Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan of Patiala Gharana.

He started his career as an All India Radio staffer in Mumbai in 1940 and later composed music for a couple of Hindi films from 1934-48.

In 1958, Khan made his first international stage appearance in Japan along with Pandit Ravi Shankar.

Khan on the tabla and Ravi on the sitar, the Jugalbandi, created a rare blend of music, making waves internationally. It was during this period, foreigners took an instant liking for Indian music.

In Mumbai, he has been tutoring students on the finer aspects of tabla at his 'Ustad Allarakha Khan Institute of Music' at Shivaji Park.

Among his acclaimed disciples are all his three sons — tabla wizard Zakir Hussain, Faisal Quereshi and Taufiq Quereshi — and Mick Hart, a US-based drummer of international fame.

Khan was honoured with the 'Padmashri' in 1977 and was recipient of 'Sangeet Natak Akademi' award in 1982.

Just last month-end he celebrated Pandit Jasraj on his 70th birthday at Shanmukhananda Hall here.

He is survived by three sons and a daughter.

Zakir, who is in Kozhikode, is rushing to Mumbai for his father's funeral this afternoon.

Chief Justice warns judges None will be spared if found dishonest

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman yesterday asked the judges to discharge their duties with utmost honesty and devotion and warned that none would be spared if found dishonest, reports BSS.

"True, be true to yourself—do your job honestly, you will ultimately see the nation heading towards development," he said at a function as the chief guest at the Old High Court Building in the city last night.

Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) organised the function to award certificates among senior assistant judges.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru attended the function as the special guest while Justice Bimalendu Bikaash Roy

Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Badruzzaman spoke on the occasion.

Justice Latifur Rahman said the judges especially the freshers must have a modern outlook and be equipped with latest development of the burning topics of the globe including the issues of human rights, consumers law and environmental law.

He said besides dispensation of justice as early as possible a judge should simultaneously look into the administration of his own court. "If you do not look into the court management the trial will be ultimately frustrated," he said.

He asked the law minister to look into the existing problems of the judiciary.

Justice Bimalendu Bikaash Roy Chowdhury asked the judges to do justice according to law and with confidence. He said a judge have to find out the truth cautiously. "The moment judges will lose people's respect the country will enter into the highest level of sufferings," he said.

Abdul Matin Khasru requested the new judges to follow the rules of court management and case management properly. He said the judges themselves have to fix the date of hearing so that the harassment of people is reduced. The law minister also requested the judges to realise the pains and problems of commoners and put in their best efforts for quick disposal of cases.

Maersk now after seismic survey in Blocks 19 & 20

By Sharier Khan

European oil company Maersk Olie is seeking a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) mainly for conducting seismic survey in blocks 19 and 20 in the deep sea, instead of drilling exploratory well for oil and gas.

The company had been seeking a 'clear cut option' from the government for gas export under PSC. As the government gave negative indications about gas export, it recently gave the new proposal for seismic survey, sources concerned said.

Maersk, which specialises in deep sea oil and gas exploration, has been negotiating with the government for these two blocks under the Second Round Block Bidding. It is currently holding meetings with Petrobangla.

The oil company has suggested some changes in the model PSC for blocks 19 and 20 under which it would operate in Bangladesh, the sources said.

One of the suggestions is extension of the present three-year initial Exploration Period (IOP) by more than six months. An oil company has to conduct seismic survey covering a pre-agreed area, analyse the data and drill at least one exploratory well within the IOP.

Maersk argued that operations in deep sea areas could be conducted only during certain period of the year due to weather conditions. The government has agreed in principle to this proposal, the sources said.

It also argued that heavy investment would be required for development of gas or oil field in the deep sea (in case of discovery) and supply of oil or gas to consumers. Therefore, it wanted the government to ensure purchase of its gas. In addition, Maersk sought a safety cushion by securing an option for gas export.

But the government kept its discussions within the local gas market scenario.

So, Maersk decided to limit its PSC activities to seismic survey. In case the survey results show good prospects for oil or gas discovery, it will go for drilling and development operations after fresh negotiations with the government, the sources said.

Like Maersk, another oil company — Pangaea — has also proposed to limit its activities

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Rokeya Hall employee hurt in sun-shed collapse

By DU Correspondent

An employee of Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University sustained serious injuries when a sun-shed of the second floor of the extension building of the hall collapsed yesterday.

The injured was identified as Razu Lal. He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Hall sources said Razu Lal fell down on the first floor from the sun-shed of the second floor when he was cleaning it at about 12:30 pm.

Meanwhile, the residents of Rokeya Hall brought out a procession from the hall and marched toward the VC's office demanding immediate renovation of the building.

Residents of the hall also demonstrated when the VC came to the hall where a brief rally was being held protesting DU authorities' silence despite repeated reminder to renovate the old extension building.

The demonstrators chanted slogans against the DU authorities and said they did not want the repetition of the tragic incident of Jagannath Hall.

Sources of the hall said that the building might collapse any time as its condition was worsening day by day.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof A K Azad Chowdhury along with the pro-VC Prof M Shahadat Ali, deans, proctor and house tutors of the Rokeya Hall visited Razu Lal at the hospital soon after the incident.

The VC also rushed to the hall to see the extent of damage of the extension building. He also visited the other buildings of the hall and assured the students of quick renovation of the extension building.

BRTA

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are available on payment of bribe to inspectors.

A section of BRTA officials are opposing issuance of fitness certificates after fitness testing with the machines because it would stop their huge illegal income, one source alleged.

Admitting this, a senior BRTA official said, "Changes have to be made in the sector. Thousands of people are killed in road accidents every year in the country due to faulty vehicles. It has been found that faulty vehicles were also issued fitness certificates."



Under fire
Angry students of Rokeya Hall mob the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University after a sun-shed of one of the residential buildings crumbled injuring a sweeper yesterday.
Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

Division for Ferdous pleaded

By Court Correspondent

A delegation of the Dhaka University teachers went to see the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, yesterday to pray for division for Ferdous Hossain, the arrested secretary general of DUTA.

Earlier, the ad-interim bail petition moved on behalf of Hossain in the Woman and Child Repression Prevention Court, Dhaka, was also rejected yesterday.

The delegation led by Prof Mahmudul Amin also included Prof Tawhidul Anwar, Prof Amjad Hossain, Prof Saiful Islam, Prof Fazlul Haq, Dr Yar ul Kabir, Dr Aftab Uddin and others.

K M Abdullah, the CMM, told the teachers, that he might order to grant division inside the jail on the basis of police report regarding the arrested DUTA leader.

The CMM then ordered the investigating officer to submit a report by February 6, and point out whether Hossain was entitled for such facility during his period of custody at the Dhaka Central Jail.

Pakistan sets up nuclear command

ISLAMABAD, Feb 3: Pakistan's military government has set up a command and control mechanism for the country's nuclear arsenal, officials said today, reports AFP.

The system was approved by the country's top policy-making National Security Council which met under military ruler General Pervez Musharraf here late Wednesday.

The decision is in line with Pakistan's 'well-known nuclear policy of responsibility and restraint,' an official statement said.

The Council approved an 'institutionalised command and control mechanism, consistent with Pakistan's obligations as a nuclear power,' it added.

The national command authority will be responsible for policy formulation and will 'exercise control over all strategic nuclear forces and strategic organisations.'

Pakistan conducted nuclear weapons tests in May 1998 in reaction to similar blasts by arch-rival India.

Neither of the newly-nuclear states have signed the Nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The new authority will comprise an employment control committee to include the ministers of foreign affairs, defence and the interior as well as the chairmen of the joint chiefs of staff committee and armed forces chiefs.

The new body will also have a development control committee and a strategic plans division, which will act as a secretariat.

Both committees will be led by the head of the government.

Clinton's visit: Advance US team arrives Feb 8

An eight-member advance site-survey team comprising White House officials arrived in Dhaka February 8 to lay the groundwork for US President Bill Clinton's Dhaka trip, reports UNB.

Economic issues are likely to dominate the official talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Clinton.

Talking to journalists at Foreign Office yesterday, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad said Clinton would hold official talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 25 when issues relating to bilateral economic cooperation would figure in prominently.

Leading US oil companies are operating in Bangladesh's gas sector that is unfolding is rewarding business prospects.



Bonfire?
A young boy rejoices setting an old tire afire as part of demonstration in Jatrabari during the hartal hours yesterday.
Star photo: Sk Enamul Haq

Police helps hartal!

By Special Correspondent

A bride-to-be had to walk a long way home after getting her make-up at a beauty parlour at Kakrail in the city as police virtually helped enforce the Opposition-called hartal in some places.

Rickshaws plied on the city streets, ignored by pro-hartal pickets. But policemen prevented those from plying on the road from Kakrail crossing to Fakir Pool crossing. The BNP central office is situated on this road.

The law enforcers did not allow movement of rickshaws on that road from 2 pm till the strike ended at 6 pm.

The young woman with bridal make-up and her companion coming by a rickshaw were stopped by police at Kakrail at about 3 pm.

Despite being told by her companion that she was going to be married in the evening and that they were returning home from a beauty parlour nearby, police did not change their mind.

The bride-to-be told the policemen that with all her make-up, it would be difficult for her to walk home under the sun and requested them to allow her to go by rickshaw. Obviously she was pleading with a heartless creature and had to return home on foot.

No reason was given for the sudden enthusiasm of police to enforce the hartal in that area. Neither there was any public notification on closure of the road.

Teenager shot dead by dacoits

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage boy is dead and a maid is in critical condition following a break and enter in Azampur colony last night.

Faisal, the 18-year-old son of Anwar Hossain, a deputy secretary in the agriculture ministry, and Tanzin Saleha, the principal officer of Prime Bank, was shot in the stomach by dacoits who broke into the family's home.

The gang also stabbed Parul, the family's 22-year-old maid, in the head and stomach with a machete before fleeing the scene with cash and valuables worth several lakh taka.

Hossain and Saleha rushed Faisal, a first-year HSC student at Dhaka College, and Parul to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared Faisal dead.

Parul identified Suja and Sumon, sons of Jalil Jamader of Nalchiti, Barisal, as two of the attackers after she regained consciousness, said hospital sources.

News of Faisal's death quickly spread through the community. Residents said it might have been responsible for the death of Lili Begum, Faisal's 60-year-old neighbour and mother of Shafuddin, an assistant judge at the Dhaka Court.

Sources said Begum suffered a heart attack after she heard the news.

Fourteen pickets were arrested from different parts of the city during the hartal.

A large number of rickshaws plied on the city roads while other vehicles stayed off the roads and highways.

Railway sources said, train service to and from Chittagong was as usual.

Delivery of goods to and from Chittagong remained suspended during hartal though some foodgrains were taken to government godowns under police escort, port officials said.

Most of the shops and markets remained closed while at thin in the offices was thin. Production was disrupted in the mills and factories at the industrial belts at Nasirabad, Sitakunda, Kalurghat and Patenga, sources said.

PM heaps scorn on opposition Development efforts to go on despite disturbance

BRUSSELS, Feb 3: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here on Wednesday the government will go ahead with its development effort for the welfare of the people despite disturbances by the opposition, reports UNB.

"Whatever they (opposition) do we'll continue our work for the welfare of the people," she told a reception accorded to her by the Bangladesh community at the Hotel Sheraton conference room.

Criticising Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia for her announcement to continue hartals one after another, the Prime Minister said her BNP doesn't believe in parliamentary democracy and want to topple the government by any means.

She said she wished to talk to the opposition leader during the Armed Forces Day programme, but Khaleda did not attend the function. Later, Hasina said, she herself tried several times over telephone to contact the BNP chief, but could not get her on the line.

About the opposition allegation that they were not being allowed to speak in Parliament, Hasina said the government is very much keen to make the House lively and wants the opposition MPs to take part actively in its activities.

But the BNP is not interested in making the parliament effective, she added.

Hasina said the Prime Minister's question hour was introduced in Parliament and she gives answers to various questions of the members. "But it's unfortunate that the opposition leader never asked any question to me."

She criticised "unruly behaviour of the BNP members inside the House during which they manhandled the officials and the BTV crew and also misbehaved with the Speaker" in the past.

On the hartals, the prime minister said, "People don't support such hartals without any logical issue; they have no interest in it as they'll get nothing out of these hartals."

She bitterly criticised the BNP leaders for their alleged comments on re-enacting another August 15 and said these comments proved that 'they wouldn't hesitate to kill me to capture power.'

"The only target of the opposition movement is to save the killers of Bangabandhu by ousting the present government."

They tried to undo the verdict of the Bangabandhu murder case to save the killers, she alleged.

Referring to the enactment of new laws against terrorism and women repression, Hasina said the government introduced the laws to stop terrorism, extortion, damaging of cars and other such crimes. "And above all to totally stop repression and torture on women."

These laws have been made to speed up the process of trial and punishing the real culprits, she said. "But BNP and its allies are opposing the laws. This will encourage the terrorists and the criminals."

The prime minister said there is provision in the new law to punish its abusers. If anybody lodges any false case, he or she will be punished.

Action will be taken if the investigation is not done properly and there is also provision for appeal, she added.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury also addressed the function.

Stray incidents mark hartal in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 3: At least 10 people were injured in stray incidents of violence and bomb explosion during hartal hours today, police and witnesses said.

Two of them were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital with bomb injuries. They were identified as Abdul Mannan, a pushcart driver and Abul Hossain, a rickshaw-puller, police said.

They were injured when homemade bombs were hurled at them at Omar Ali ghat at around noon today, police added. The pickets also damaged some rickshaws there.

Eight others were injured during chase and counter chase amid brick-bats at Nur Ahmed road and Bohaddardhat area between 9 am and 10 am today, witnesses said.

Fourteen pickets were arrested from different parts of the city during the hartal.

A large number of rickshaws plied on the city roads while other vehicles stayed off the roads and highways.

Railway sources said, train service to and from Chittagong was as usual.

Delivery of goods to and from Chittagong remained suspended during hartal though some foodgrains were taken to government godowns under police escort, port officials said.

Most of the shops and markets remained closed while at thin in the offices was thin. Production was disrupted in the mills and factories at the industrial belts at Nasirabad, Sitakunda, Kalurghat and Patenga, sources said.

Bomb attack on DC's car in Ctg: One arrested

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 3: One person was arrested in connection with bomb attack on Chittagong Deputy Commissioner's car during hartal hours on Wednesday.

Abul Kalam, 26, was arrested by Kotail police from Dewan Bazar area last night.

Police source said Kalam confessed his involvement in the attack on DC's car at Cinema palace at Loyal Road during the hartal.

Golam Azam

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nation does not expect it." Jamaat assistant secretary general Mohammad Kamaruzzaman told newsmen.

Addressing a post-hartal press briefing of the 4-party alliance yesterday evening at 29 Minto Road, Quamaruzzaman said they condemn such gesture from the President.

He said Jamaat sought an appointment on Tuesday and got the reply yesterday.

Bomb victim's body remains unclaimed

By Staff Correspondent

None claimed the body of the victim who died in an explosion inside the BNP central office at Naya Paltan in the city in the early hours of Wednesday.

Soon after the incident, police identified the young man as Ismail Hossain Babu, 25, and said that he was a resident of Nilamber Saha Street in the old part of the city. But they failed to trace other details regarding the victim till yesterday.

Matlur Rahman, the DMP Commissioner talking to The Daily Star wondered why none came to receive the body.

The relatives have been informed already, he said, adding that they would wait for some more time and then hand over the body to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam for its burial.

Motijheel police said they have sent their team to Nilamber Saha Street but they failed to get whereabouts of the young man.

A team of army explosive experts who visited the spot, seized alamat Wednesday night. Talking to the newsmen the experts said they will be able to make comments after an analysis of the alamat but till yesterday ISPR did not answer to the queries.

Police so far arrested 12 people for their alleged involvement in the same day. Lati's wife was seriously ill. Police were placed on three-day police remand by the CMM's court yesterday.

Afsana's burial today

By Staff Correspondent

Afsana Mosharrat, wife of Mosharrat Hossain, President of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, will be buried at Banani Graveyard today (Friday) after Nama-e-Janaza on the premises of Rajuk School and College, Sector 6, Uttara at 10:30 am.

Afsana, also mother-in-law of Saima Wajed Putul, the only daughter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was found dead in the first floor bedroom of her Uttara residence in the city late Monday afternoon.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to attend the qulhuwani of Afsana on Saturday, said family members of the deceased.

Demonstration

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added.

Later, police also arrested Lati's wife and a maid at the office on the same day. Lati's wife was seriously ill. Police also arrested her grandson when he went to supply medicine to her. Police however released the two women yesterday morning, Mannan said.

Bhuiyan alleged that bomb explosions at the BNP central office and its Chittagong office were pre-planned as part of a government conspiracy to tarnish the image of the main opposition party and justify enactment of the 'black' Public Safety Act.

The incidents were followed by a press conference by three ministers — Mohammad Nasim, Tofail Ahmed and Matiya Chowdhury, which proved that the bomb explosions were part of a pre-planned conspiracy, the BNP secretary general claimed.

He said police 'sealed' the BNP office Wednesday morning without any valid ground, and even did not show any paper for this.

"There were valuable documents and party papers at the office. We do not know what has happened to those and other things," Bhuiyan said. "The government may have kept harmful materials inside the office again to blame the BNP."

Mannan said the BTV has launched a 'false propaganda on the bomb explosion incident. He strongly protested the BTV news and said police and Army 'raided' the office and took photographs. They (police and Army) found nothing but BTV telecast false, fabricated and motivated news."

BTV officials and staffs will have to be accountable to the people for their acts, he said. "You (BTV officials) should remember that your salaries come from people's money. People do not pay you to telecast false news, assassinate characters of opposition leaders and act as a mouth piece of Awami League."

He also refuted the claim by police that bombs were made at BNP office. "There is no fool in the country who will believe that bombs were made inside our party head office," he observed.

Bhuiyan said the 36-hour countrywide hartal was a 'complete success'. Through this hartal, people have expressed their no-confidence in the government and demanded repeal of the Public Safety Act. He also thanked the people for 'spontaneously observing the hartal'.

He demanded immediate release of all leaders and activists of BNP and its office staff.

Jatiya Party leader Kazi Firoz Rashid, Jamaat leader Mohammad Kamaruzzaman, IJO leader A R M Abdul Matin and city BNP Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka also spoke at the press briefing.