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Murder of 2 brothers DB officer declines to investigate

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch investigation officer assigned to probe the murder of two brothers at Mohammadpur in the city on Friday has declined to do the job.

Sources said the IO, ABM Sultan Ahmed, wanted to go on leave to address some family problems.

The Deputy Commissioner of DB yesterday assigned Inspector AKM Mohsinuzzaman to investigate the case. The DB took up the case on Saturday.

Mohsinuzzaman visited spots of the murders yesterday. Top police officials also visited the spots on Saturday.

But police could not give any satisfactory reply when asked why Sultan Ahmed was assigned the job while he wanted to go on leave.

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5 ministers acquitted of charges

By Court Correspondent

Five ministers and a ruling party leader were acquitted yesterday of charges brought under the Public Safety Act.

The Special Tribunal Judge Court for Public Safety Act, Dhaka, rejected the 'naraji' petition against the final report submitted by Motijheel thana on May 5.

Advocate Golam Kibria submitted the naraji (no-confidence) petition seeking further investigation into the charges against Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, Foreign Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, State Minister for Planning Dr. Mubiddin Khan Alamgir, State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and central Awami League leader Mukul Bose.

Advocate Kibria lodged a complaint with Motijheel thana on April 25, accusing them of leading a strike procession in the city and threatening the High Court judges.

The police investigation report said the charges against the ministers were false.

Moving the petition against the police report, Advocate Abdur Razzak Khan submitted that the investigation was not proper and the investigation officer was highly biased.

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May	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
8	5:19am	6:31pm
9	5:19am	6:31pm

Prayer Timings

May 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-45
Zohr	1-00	1-30
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-35	6-38
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Yesterday, under the auspices of Petrobangla, a rally paraded through the busy city streets to mark the beginning of "Gas Security" week. We publish two pictures, one showing the rally, and the other showing the resultant traffic jam. We think it is highly irresponsible on the part of government bodies to block city streets during the peak traffic on weekdays already suffering from extreme congestion. Such useless and totally publicity oriented rallies are a nuisance and should be banned on weekdays. Isn't blocking traffic a crime under PSA?



Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Fresh cloud over reopening of CU

Opposition student bodies call off strike but BCL begins siege

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 7: Fresh unrest gripped the Chittagong University campus as Bangladesh Chhatra League, the ruling party's student front, today began a siege programme there for indefinite period demanding withdrawal of expulsion order against four of the activists, campus sources said.

As a result, reopening of the University remained clouded though the student bodies belonging to the opposition political parties called off their indefinite strike programme today, the sources said.

The All-party Student Unity, grouping mainly Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, student wing of BNP, and Islami Chhatra Shibir of Jamaat-e-Islami, announced withdrawal of their action programme at a press conference in the evening.

They had called the strike protesting killing of two Shibir activists on December 19 in a gunfight with Chhatra League.

The APSU signed an agreement with CU authorities to end the campus crisis and reopen the varsity. They withdrew the strike following Syndicate order for expulsion of four BCL workers.

They, however, demanded withdrawal of a similar expulsion order on a Shibir worker and end to a moratorium on student politics on the campus.

But the punitive measures angered BCL activists who started agitation and called a siege programme for indefinite period from today demanding withdrawal of the expulsion order.

Police said the BCL workers staged demonstrations outside

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LC for powerful Ombudsman, law to forfeit illegal assets

By Nurul Kabir

The Law Commission strongly feels that the country should immediately have an Ombudsman to combat widespread corruption by public functionaries.

The Commission also believes that a law should be made, supplementary to the Ombudsman Act, 1980, providing for forfeiture of illegally acquired property of public functionaries.

The Commission argues that the mandate of the Ombudsman should be wider, compared to that specified in the yet to be enforced Ombudsman Act.

These were revealed in a working paper on the Ombudsman Act, prepared by the three-member Law Commission (LC) headed by Justice Kemaluddin Hossain. It is yet to prepare a final report.

A law seeking to set up the Office of Ombudsman was made, under Article 77 of the Constitution, in 1980. But the law - The Ombudsman Act, 1980 - was not given effect through gazette notification. However, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs referred the Act to the LC on February 7, 1999 to examine whether it meets the needs of time, if not, what amendments were required to update the law.

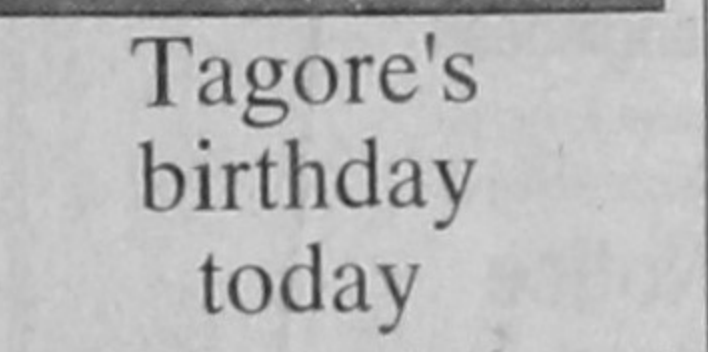
Analysing the legal mandate of the Ombudsman specified in the 1980 Act, the LC says it empowers the Ombudsman to investigate only those actions of a ministry, a public officer or a statutory public authority that (1) have caused injustice to any person, (2) have resulted in undue favour being shown to any person and (3) have resulted in accrual of undue personal benefit or gain to any person.

Noting that the Act confines the powers of the Ombudsman to investigate only certain types of action of a ministry, a public officer or a public statutory authority, the LC said 'acts of corruption', 'illegal acquisition of property' etc. by the public functionaries 'remains outside the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman.'

The Commission stressed that the Ombudsman should therefore be empowered to probe, along with administrative actions, acts of corruption and illegal acquisition of property by public functionaries. In this regard, it referred to some observations by the Indian Law Commission.

"One of the essential requirements of good governance is the absence of corruption. But unfortunately, corruption has struck deep-roots in our society, including its administrative apparatus. At every rung of the

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Tagore's birthday today

The 139th anniversary of birth of Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore will be celebrated today, reports UNB.

Rabindranath was the first Bangalee to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. His song "Amar Sonar Bangla" was adopted as the national anthem of Bangladesh.

On the occasion, President Shahabuddin Ahmed and

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Protesters besiege ADB meeting



Anti-globalisation protesters break through barricades yesterday after piercing through a police line to reach the venue of the 33rd Asian Development Bank (ADB) conference in Thailand. A furious anti-capitalist mob surged to the entrance of the Westin Hotel, hosting the ADB meeting.

— AFP photo

'Stop policies that punish the poor'

CHIANG MAI, Thailand May 7: Thousands of demonstrators bulldozed their way past Thai riot police today, besieging a hotel where the Asian Development Bank was holding its annual meeting and demanding an end to policies they said punish the poor, reports AP.

Meanwhile, the United States cautiously welcomed an agreement reached between 13 Asian nations to come to the rescue of each other's currencies to fend off economic crises like the upheaval that struck the region in 1997.

The US and Japan also ruled out membership in the Manila-based bank for North Korea, rebuffing an appeal by South Korea's Finance Minister for help in bringing the reclusive North into the international financial system and possibly increasing stability on the peninsula.

Outside, 4,000 protesters inspired by demonstrations in

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Dhaka's concern over hardened terms for ADB loans

CHIANG MAI, Thailand May 7: Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria today expressed concern over the hardened terms and conditions of ADB for both Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR) and Asian Development Fund (ADF), reports BSS.

The finance minister told the 33rd meeting of Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that the cost of its fund is high and the maturity period shorten now. These were tougher compared to certain other multilateral development institutions.

"Further, OCR loan has been extended to some countries - including my own - which used to borrow only from the soft window of the bank. Though the level of development of these countries argues for continued access to concessional funds to meet all their needs, the substitution to some extent compensates for the shortage of ADF resources."

Kibria hoped that ADF VIII, which is in the process of negotiation, will be adequate and actual flow of funds will be more predictable.

He, however, pointed out that the successive replenishments witnessed decline in resources, whereas the loan receiving countries' expectations were that the resources would keep pace with the increased demand and focus on social investment.

Kibria said lending from the ADF, the soft loan window of the bank, has fallen below the level of 1996. On the other hand, conditionalities have increased in terms of both multiplicity and complexity of actions to be taken by the borrowers, he said.

The finance minister said during most of ADF VII period agreements with ADB stipulated that loans sanctioned were to be effective if resources were available.

"It is desirable that such qualifications should be avoided as this creates uncertainty in the minds of the borrowers and makes the bank's advice for reforms less persuasive."

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Female hacker behind 'Love Bug' virus?

MANILA, May 7: Authorities suspect a young female hacker is behind the "Love Bug" virus that infected computer systems worldwide but fear she may have destroyed key evidence, police sources said, reports AFP.

"With all the publicity in the last three days, we fear that she has destroyed by now all evidence that could link her to the hacking. The timing of the operation was really bad," a source said.

National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) sources said NBI agents had identified the suspect late Friday, but could not arrest her due to the absence of an arrest warrant.

"She may have destroyed the evidence or may have covered up the hacking job and we can't do anything about that," the source added.

The virus, which originated in a Philippine Internet service provider, appeared Thursday and spread around the world in a matter of hours via an e-mail

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4 girls forced into prostitution in city rescued: Three arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) along with Tejgaon police rescued four children, allegedly forced into prostitution, from a residential building, from a residential building, yesterday afternoon.

Three people, including two women, were arrested during the operation. They were identified as Shefal, 28, her cousin Jahanara, 17, and Sekandar, 18.

After preliminary investigation by The Daily Star it was revealed that the girls, aged between 6 to 13, were brought from different parts of the country by pimps promising them better job in the capital.

They (the arrested) used to torture us if we refused to enter.

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Triple murder All 4 taken on fresh remand

By Staff Correspondent

Four people arrested in connection with the triple murder case in the city were taken on fresh remand for two days.

The four - Abul Hossain Alam, Shaht Akram, Golam Mohammed Rafiqul Islam and AKM Khairul Alam Nantu - were arrested from Belkuchi thana area in Sirajganj on Tuesday.

Police produced them before the CMM's court yesterday with a prayer for seven days' remand but the court granted remand for two days.

Three young men Babar, Selim and Russel were shot dead at Rasulbagh in the city on April 5 at Mohakhali in Gulshan thana.

6 jts, 31 deputy secretaries promoted

By Special Correspondent

The Superior Selection Board (SSB) at its meeting yesterday recommended promotion of seven joint-secretaries as additional secretaries and 31 deputy secretaries as joint-secretaries.

But posts of four additional secretaries and four joint-secretaries remained to be filled up.

The recommendations will go to the Prime Minister for confirmation.

NIB to take shape in 4 yrs PM to lay foundation May 14

By Reaz Ahmad

The National Institute of Biotechnology (NIB), first of its kind in the country for genetic research, will come into being on May 14.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lay the foundation of NIB at Savar on the day, almost a year after the government decided to establish such an institution.

Sources in the Ministry of Science and Technology told The Daily Star that a 10-acre plot was acquired from the land of Atomic Energy Research Establishment (AERE) at Ganakbari, Savar, to build physical infrastructures for NIB.

The infrastructures will be built in four years at a cost of Tk. 21 crore, said Prof Najyum Choudhury, Member (Bioscience) of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission and Project Director of NIB.

Biotechnology is a technique that uses living organisms to make or modify a product, improve plants and animals, or develop microorganisms for specific uses. Use of biotechnology products is rapidly increasing throughout the world, experts said.

They feel that Bangladesh falls far behind in founding a biotechnology institute. Such institutes were set up in India and Pakistan over two decades ago.

The National Science and Technology Committee in its meeting on April 29, 1984 first felt the necessity of establishing such an institute.

According to a study report of the Ministry of Science and Technology, "Till Bangladesh develops its own homegrown biotechnology products, it will have to import these products including genetically modified (GM) seeds from abroad at an exorbitant price to meet the country's growing demand for food."

Meantime, the government has collected some GM seeds from abroad free of any cost. But in near future none will give any biotechnology product free, the experts said.

The NIB will develop GM crops which will be resistant to pests and diseases and tolerant to flood and drought, they said.

Besides, research will be conducted in a wide range of fields for diversified use of biotechnology, from waste management to arsenic detoxification.

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Putin takes oath of office

MOSCOW, May 7: Vladimir Putin took the oath of office Sunday, becoming Russia's second democratically elected president at a lavish ceremony in a former czarist throne room at the Kremlin, reports AP.

Putin took the oath in the ornate Andreevsky Hall as hundreds of top officials and political leaders watched. Standing next to him was Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin.

With his right hand on a copy of the 1993 Russian Constitution, Putin, 47, swore "top protect and respect the rights and freedoms" of the people.

Yeltsin, whose unexpected resignation Dec 31 made Putin acting head of state, smiled during the ceremony that marked a peaceful and voluntary transfer of power unprecedented for Russia.

With a war in Chechnya, police were maintaining heavy security around Red Square and streets leading to the Kremlin.

Vladimir Putin (L) takes the oath as new Russian president as former president Boris Yeltsin (R) looks on yesterday in Moscow's Kremlin Palace.

— AFP photo

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