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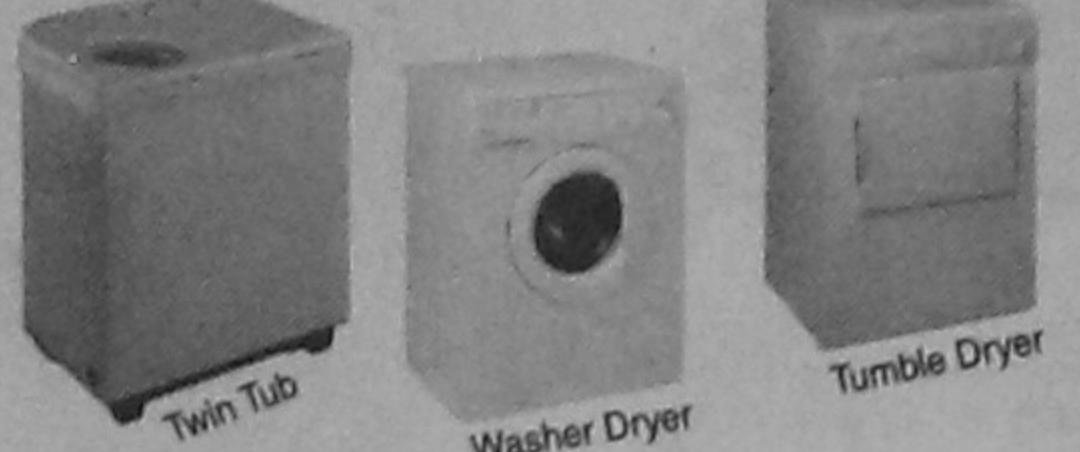
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Ctg. Export Processing Zone
Old Admin Building
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Hearing on case of Ershad's JS membership adjourned

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission yesterday adjourned hearing on the case of parliamentary membership of Jatiya Party chief H M Ershad till July 2.

Lawyers of JP faction led by Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Monju, which challenged Ershad's membership, sought the adjournment while Ershad's counsel Barrister Rafiqul Huq did not object to it.

Hearing both the sides, the Election Commission (EC) adjourned the hearing 20 minutes after it began at 11:00 am.

The three-member EC comprises Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed and Election Commissioners Abidur Rahman Chowdhury and Moshique Ahmed Chowdhury.

Requesting adjournment of hearing for two weeks, Advocate M K Rahman who led the lawyers for JP (Monju), told the Commission that his clients had reservation about an election commissioner and will therefore go to the High Court. The High Court was scheduled to go on vacation for some two weeks from today (Thursday), he mentioned.

JP (Monju) wrote to Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury in the last week of March demanding that Ershad's seat in parliament be declared vacated.

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Gold worth Tk 8.20 lakh seized from Dhaka bound Indian bus

BENAPOLE, June 14: Indian Customs seized 48 gold bars worth about Rs 8.20 lakh from a Dhaka-bound Indian bus here today, reports UNB.

The customs officials searched the bus of Bhutan Paribahan on Dhaka-Calcutta route and recovered the gold bars from under the seat of the driver.

Action officer of Bangladesh Immigration Mosharrif Hossain said the gold bars were being smuggled to the country from India.

Two buses on this route remained stranded for about nine hours following the incident causing immense sufferings to the passengers.

Steamer agents demand Withdraw enhanced store rent on empty containers at Ctg Port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 14: Bangladesh Steamer Agents Association (BSAA) has demanded immediate withdrawal of the decision taken by the Chittagong Port Authority to raise store rent on empty containers at the port by four times.

BSAA in a meeting held at Agrabad Finlay house with its chairman Tarek Anis Ahmed in the chair yesterday, discussed the situation and expressed grave concern over the decision to raise store rent on empty containers from June 21.

BSAA identified inadequate number of equipment for handling containers as the reason behind the problem.

In a release issued to the press the association blamed the Port Authority for its inefficiency to load and discharge containers timely.

It feels that the decision for imposing store rent on empty containers is 'irrelevant and unjustified.'

ISO certificate for Gonoshasthaya

The international ISO evaluation Institute of The United States of America, ABS Quality Evaluation Inc., has issued ISO: 9002 certificate to Gonoshasthaya Pharmaceuticals Ltd. after detailed evaluation of its manufacturing and quality assurance activities, says a press release.

**Magurchhara blast: Three years over, no compensation yet**

From Our Correspondent

MOULVIBAZAR, June 14: Today is the third anniversary of Magurchhara gas well explosion.

On the night of June 14, 1997, a massive explosion took place at Magurchhara gasfield located in Kamalganj Upazila of the district while US company Occidental was drilling a well.

The explosion triggered a huge blaze that damaged property worth crores of taka.

Occidental was widely blamed for this devastation, but compensation for damages is yet to be realised from the company even three years after the incident.

During a recent visit by this correspondent to Magurchhara area, the affected people expressed dissatisfaction over the role of national political leaders from Sylhet region. They wanted to know the mystery behind long silence of the leaders over settlement of the compensation claims.

No headway in some sensational murder cases

DB takes over after police fail to nab accused

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Police could not arrest any of the accused in some sensational murder cases, despite orders from high-ups.

The Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police took over some of these sensational cases, but there has been no headway.

The case regarding the double murder in Mohammadpur was transferred to the DB soon after the incident. The then DB inspector A.K.M. Mohsinuzzaman was given the responsibility to investigate the case. Mohsinuzzaman was later transferred to the Mohammadpur thana as its OC.

Mohsinuzzaman said on Tuesday the DB officials would investigate the case since it was transferred to their department. The deputy commissioner of DB said he had asked Mohsin-

uzzaman to continue with his investigation. He, however, suggested that the CID take up the double murder case.

Two brothers - Ashfaq Hosain Jewel, 28, and Mohammad Ali Rebel, 24, were gunned down in the space of 15 minutes by Kamal Pasha, allegedly an professional killer, on May 5, according to an FIR lodged with Mohammadpur police station.

Pasha, a distant relative of a ruling party MP, is still at large.

The case regarding murder of a cell phone trader in Banani was recently transferred to the Detective Branch. Iftekhar Ahmed Shripu, the trader, was gunned down at the staircase of UAE Maitri Market in Banani on the night of May 24. The victim's brother in a case accused three young men, including Jewel Majumder, son of Awami League MP Kamal Majumder, of

the killing.

The case was handed over to the DB after two weeks of investigation by Gulshan police.

The triple murder case registered on April 5 was also handed over to the DB. The detectives so far failed to arrest the main accused who is reported to have links with political heavyweights of the locality.

Three young men were shot dead near the Mohakhal police box on April 5. Police filed a murder case ignoring the presence of the victim's family.

Later, the family filed separate petition case with the CMM's Court, Dhaka, accusing 11 people of the killing. Motahar Hosain, main accused in the case, reportedly enjoys blessing of an influential ruling party leader.

From page 1 works related to the party and politics will be kept there, said BNP Secretary-general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

New staff will man the office. Even Khaleda's private and party security men, who stays with her round-the-clock, will not be allowed to enter the Banani office.

The leader said a panel of senior leaders, ex-bureaucrats, academics and experts belonging to BNP will sit at Banani office and carry out research works. They will decide party activities, suggest the party chairperson about her speech on different important issues, enquire about party candidates and their performances in constituencies, observe the political situation and BNP's position in each constituency, make contacts with foreign countries and their representatives, give necessary guidelines to the party's publicity wing.

BNP central office will run the organisational activities and the secretary-general will look into entire political affairs and organisational activities side by side with supervising the activities of different wings.

Party sources said BNP will soon rent a office for its publicity wing to start publication of poster, leaflets, booklets, audio-video cassettes etc. for distribution all over the country prior to the next polls and during the election campaigns.

It also plans to rent a "big office" to conduct election activities and hold small gatherings like joining programmes and meetings with district unit leaders and activists.

A BNP senior leader said the party will open an Election Monitoring Cell soon to administer the future polls and keep in touch with each constituency and thana headquarters. A separate office is expected to be set up in the city for this cell. It will also maintain close contact with Election Commission, district and thana administration, election observers, both local and foreign, and other polls related matters.

Meanwhile, the new office has created mixed reaction among the party leaders and

BNP hardliners are dead against of this office, saying this will isolate Khaleda Zia from party leaders and activists since the entry will be restricted. But party insiders said the hardliners have long been giving various "ambitious, imprudent and unrealistic" advances that apparently threw the party into serious crisis and precarious position.

Khaleda Zia is now convinced that she made some major mistakes taking moves on advice of the hardliners, said a top BNP leader. He added she is now trying to proceed in a "well-planned and systematic" way.

The Sylhet JCD began a 9-day programme on June 10 to press for immediate withdrawal of the cases against the JCD activists under PSA and police harassment.

The programme would be concluded with a dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 19. Fresh agitation programme would be launched if their demands were not met immediately, it said.

The district JCD brought out a procession and held a brief rally at the Court Point today.

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The Sylhet JCD began a 9-day programme on June 10 to press for immediate withdrawal of the cases against the JCD activists under PSA and police harassment.

The programme would be concluded with a dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 19. Fresh agitation programme would be launched if their demands were not met immediately, it said.

The district JCD brought out a procession and held a brief rally at the Court Point today.

Shimul shifted to Sonadanga thana for questioning

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, June 14: Leader of outlawed PBPC Mahmud Hasan Shimul was shifted to Sonadanga thana from Khulna district jail at noon today.

He will be interrogated by a three-member high-level team of police officials there.

Apart from five days' remand by Sonadanga thana police, Shimul has also been remanded for questioning by Phultala thana police for three days with effect from today.

According to KMP and district police sources, Shimul will be interrogated first by Phultala thana police in connection with the murder of UP chairman Abul Kashem. He is the principal accused in this murder case.

The interrogation began this evening and Shimul told police about the entire blue print drawn up for the murder of Abul Kashem.

He will also be questioned about other murders committed in different places under Phultala thana during last two years, according to police.

Shimul will be interrogated by Sonadanga police in connection with Ganesh Murder Case, of which he is one of the accused.

Ganesh was one of his armed cadres. But he killed Ganesh on charge of adultery and extortion as has been confessed by him to Jessore police.

Matters relating to looting of arms from local Cable Factory and Sundarban Sea Foods will also come up during interrogation in addition to questioning about some political and non-political murders, said a KMP source.

She will address the freedom fighter-peoples grand rally at the local Madrasatul Maidan in the city at 2 pm on June 20. Shammilto Mukti Joddha Front will organise the rally.

About 5000 members of the Mukti Bahini, Mujib Bahini and other freedom fighters will honour Sheikh Hasina at the same venue.

Mukti Joddha-Janata Bivagya Mohasamabesh Bastabayan Committee (BJBMC) arranged press conference at the Rajshahi city Awami League office this evening.

BJBMC member secretary and Rajshahi city Awami League general secretary A H M Khaireuzzaman Liton, Mukti Joddha Command Divisional Coordinator Abdul Malek Chowdhury, District Awami League organising secretary Anil Sarker and Assistant Political Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Selim Jahangir.

JCD observes strike in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, June 14: Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) observed strike at all the educational institutions here as part of its 9-day agitation programme.

The Sylhet JCD began a 9-day programme on June 10 to press for immediate withdrawal of the cases against the JCD activists under PSA and police harassment.

The programme would be concluded with a dawn-to-dusk hartal on June 19. Fresh agitation programme would be launched if their demands were not met immediately, it said.

The district JCD brought out a procession and held a brief rally at the Court Point today.



Bristled beauty: Her face glowing just as the kadom flowers she holds, a teenager stands on a city road yesterday hoping to do some brisk business ahead of the first day of Ashar, the Bengali month that traditionally marks the dawn of the rainy season, which is today.

— Star photo

Suicide bomber rams his bike into military bus in Lanka

COLOMBO, June 14: A suicide bomber rammed his bicycle into a bus carrying 25 sick military troops today, killing himself and two passengers by a highway that links the capital with the international airport, the defense ministry and police said, reports AP.

In the north, where most of this island nation's 17-year Tamil separatist war is being fought, troops shot and killed five rebels in three overnight encounters, a government statement said.

The government blamed the bus explosion on the Tamil Tiger rebels who are fighting to establish an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's 3.2 million Tamils minority.

The suicide bomber and two passengers were killed and another seven civilians were wounded, said Premalal Ranagala, the police chief in the Wattala section of Colombo.

"Today ... a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam suicide cadre exploded a bomb targeting a bus carrying air force personnel," government spokesman Ariya Rubasinghe said in a statement.

An evasive action by the bus driver minimised the impact of the blast damaged the rear portion.

"The bus had slowed down and the driver saw the bicycle man and became suspicious ... He managed to swerve his vehicle, thus not allowing the bomber to hit the target properly," said the Defense Ministry spokesman, Brig. Palitha Fernando.

"It could have been a huge disaster had not the driver of the bus reacted quickly," Fernando said.

None of the air force men or drivers was killed or injured, Fernando said. The troops were being shifted from a base hospital near the airport to various hospitals in the capital, he said, adding that they had not been injured in battle.

The male bomber attacked the bus about 10 kilometers north of Colombo and the main impact of the explosion was at the rear of the bus, which was damaged, Ranagala said.

Police SI stabbed, mugged Tk 90000 in city

By Staff Correspondent

A sub-inspector of Special Branch was stabbed and robbed of Tk 90,000, while he was returning to his residence at Shankar in the city yesterday noon.

The injured police officer was rushed to the Suhrawardy Hospital from where he was shifted to the Chest Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali, hospital sources said.

Mohammadpur police confirmed the incident but could not give details.

Sub-Inspector Abdul Motlib, 42, drew the money from Mohammadpur Janata Bank Corporate Branch and came under attack while returning home in a rickshaw.

A gang of three muggers stopped him near the Mohammadpur Housing and stabbed him before taking away the money.