

Maulana Azizul Haq brought to Dhaka jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Shaikhul Hadith Maulana Azizul Haq, chairman of Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ), was brought to the Dhaka Central Jail from Barisal yesterday evening. Azizul Haq, was arrested in connection with the killing of police constable Badshah Mian on February 5. Police arrested him at Chandra in Gazipur district while he was returning to the capital from Rangpur.

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HC orders BIWTA, BIWTC to strictly enforce safety laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to immediately ensure that all passenger-carrying launches are equipped with adequate number of lifesaving buoy and other such gears before sailing as required by law.

A division bench of the HC also directed the authorities to take all necessary measures to prevent overloading of passengers during the coming Eid-ul-Azha.

The bench comprising Justice K M Hasan and Justice A F M Mesbah Uddin also directed the secretaries of the Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Home Affairs, the director-general of the Directorate of Shipping, and directors of BIWTA and BIWTC, the chief inspector of the Department of Shipping, and the chairman of Bangladesh Launch Owners Association to ensure wider dissemination of the provisions of the Inland Shipping Ordinance, 1976 pertaining to passenger safety

through media and ensure display of such legal provisions on the launches and at launch terminals during the Eid-ul-Azha. The court directives came upon a writ petition filed by Quazi Faruque, secretary-general of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) with legal assistance from Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA). The petition was filed against indiscriminate violation by the

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EC puts end to Langol row

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday passed an order not to allocate the 'Langol', the election symbol of Jatiya Party, to any faction of the split JP for any by-election of the Seventh Parliament.

However, the commission did not decide as to which group would avail the 'Langol' (Plough) in the upcoming eighth parliamentary election.

After hearing two petitions filed by Maidul Islam, a leader of the Ershad-led faction of JP and Sadeq Siddique of the Manju-led faction,

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BGMEA goes to polls

STAFF REPORTER

Members of the country's largest trade body Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday went to polls to elect a new leadership.

A total of 1474 members out of the 2113 cast their votes separately in Dhaka and Chittagong from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to have a 27-member executive committee in place for a two-year term. The voters' turnout was a little over 87 per cent.

A total of 1474 members out of the 1699 cast their votes to pick 20 members for the committee from Dhaka while 367 members out of the 414 from Chittagong cast their votes to choose the rest seven members.

The turnout was a little higher in Chittagong (88.65 per cent) than that in Dhaka (86.76 per cent). However, results of the elections could not be known till filing of this report late last night. The election board started counting votes at 8.15 p.m.

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Ekushey observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Mother Language Day commemorating supreme sacrifices of the valiant sons of the soil for the cause of their mother tongue was observed in the country.

The day was also observed all over the world for the second time after the UNESCO declared Ekushey February or the 21st February as the International Mother Language Day on 1999.

Salam, Barqat, Rafiq, Shafiur and Jabbar, the stouthearted sons of the soil embraced martyrdom on this day in 1952 to establish Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

Wreaths were placed at the altar of the Shaheed Minar that symbolises the historic event and discussions highlighting significance of the day were organised in the capital and elsewhere in the country. Bangladesh missions abroad also organised similar programmes.

In the capital, people from all walks of life started flocking to the Central Shaheed Minar to pay homage to the Language Movement martyrs since late Tuesday night.

The barefooted people wearing black badges walked to the Shaheed Minar, humming and singing the immortal chorus: Amar Bhayer Rokte Rangano Ekushey February/ Ami Ki Bhulitey Paari (Can I forget February 21, the day drenched in the blood of my brothers).

As the clock struck one minute passed zero hours, President Shahabuddin Ahmed first placed wreaths at the altar of the Central Shaheed Minar. The president was followed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Those who paid tributes to Language Movement martyrs in the first hour included Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleeda Zia, members of the Cabinet, chiefs of the three services, diplomats, DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif, Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof. A K Azad Chowdhury, leaders of the DU Teachers' Association and the Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

State-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and the privately owned

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Col Mohiuddin hints at Zia's involvement in Aug 15 killing

UNB, Dhaka

Deputy Chief of Army Staff Maj General Ziaur Rahman was involved in the conspiracy of killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said one of the army officers convicted of the murder.

Col Mohiuddin Ahmed of the Artillery Division in his confessional statement said he in 1976 had arrested Col Rashid, prime accused in the case, at the directive of Zia. "But Zia released him, which made me believe that Zia was also involved in the conspiracy of killing of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," Mohiuddin said in his confessional statement that was read out in the court yesterday.

In his statement Mohiuddin, who was acquitted by one judge of a two-judge High Court bench during appeal hearings, said Col Rashid, Col Farook and Maj Dalim came back to the country secretly in 1976 after they were pushed out on November 3, 1975.

On return, Rashid, who refused to take up diplomatic assignment after the killing of Bangabandhu, tried to

take the command of 2nd field Artillery defying order of the high command.

At this stage, Col Mohiuddin in his statement said that he was asked to arrest Rashid and bring him before Ziaur Rahman. But Zia later sent Rashid out of the country, which Mohiuddin in his statement said "made me believe that Zia was also involved with the conspiracy of killing the President (Bangabandhu)."

Reading out the paper book on the 5th day yesterday in the third-judge bench of Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim, prosecutor Adv Anisul Huq placed three confessional statements of Col Syed Farook Rahman, Col Sultan Shahriyar Rashid Khan and Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed (Artillery).

By reading the statements of Farook and Shahriyar the prosecutor tried to give a clear picture of the conspiracy and narrated how it was organised.

Farook and Shahriyar in their statements said while they two along with Col Rashid were briefing the troops at Balurghat on August 14, 1975 night, Maj Ahmed

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3 Murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three persons including a confectionery trader were killed in separate incidents in the city in last two days.

SM Atiqur Rahman Tuku, 40, a confectionery trader, was shot in front of a super market at Kachukhet in the Kafrul area Wednesday night, police and hospital sources said. Bullet-wounded, the trader was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Tuku, a resident of DCC Ananda Road, Ibrahimpur, under Kafrul

thana came under attack by a gang of local miscreants in front of Bhagyakul Sweetmeat near his shop, when returning home at about 9:30 p.m. In a critical condition, he was rushed to the DMCH.

Local people said the armed gang who had earlier demanded tolls from the trader might have killed him, as he refused to meet their demands. Tuku was father of two sons. The body of the victim was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed with the Kafrul thana

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Haunted by hartal

Political programmes tell on academic calendar

ABUL KALAM AZAD

An increasingly volatile situation now prevailing in the political arena has cast a pall of uncertainty over educational institutions in the country.

The recent spate of hartal (general strike) has already put the academic clock backward at different schools, colleges and universities. A couple of months would be lost from the academic calendar, fear observers.

In a bid to make up for the lost hours due to hartal, many educational institutions, including preparatory and grammar schools, have started taking classes

and examinations on the weekends.

The National University has already scheduled its law examinations for Fridays and Saturdays. Professor Durgadas Bhattachariya, vice-chancellor of the university, said other examinations could also be held on the weekends so that such political programmes as hartal don't get in the way.

Private universities like North South University have resorted to similar arrangements.

The secondary schools have been worst affected by the forced breaks. Already plagued with textbook crisis, frequent stoppages have wrought havoc on the

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Storms lash Jessore, Barisal: 400 houses damaged, 50 hurt

BSS, UNB

Storm lashed Jessore and Barisal districts, injuring at least 50 people and damaging over 400 houses and standing crops in the early hours of yesterday.

In Jessore, more than 400 kutcha and tin-shed houses as well as crops on 3,000 acres of land were damaged when a storm lashed as many as 20 villages under Bagharpara upazila of the district.

According to the district administration, the storm hit the villages under Darazhat and Jaamdia unions at 3-30 am and lasted about 30 minutes.

At least 50 people were injured in the storm.

The roofs of two primary schools and two madrasahs at Chandpur and Vitabillah villages were blown away by the storm.

The storm uprooted a huge number trees and damaged standing crops including paddy, pulse and vegetables in the affected area.

In Barisal, storm hit the district, damaging huge standing crops and kutcha houses.

The storm at a speed of upto 70-km per hour continued till 3am and damaged standing crops on a vast tracts of land in Hizla, Muladi, Mehendiganj, Babuganj and Ujirpur upazilas.

A large number of kutcha houses in these upazilas were also damaged. Local Met Office recorded 8.2mm rainfall during the last 24 hours.



Bangladeshis in UK plan to take arsenic issue to court

Actions from HR organisations also sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh International Action Network (BIAN), an organisation of Bangladeshi expatriates in UK, will seek action from courts at local and international levels as well as human rights bodies to resolve the problem of arsenic contamination in Bangladesh and ensure compensation for the families of those who have died and those affected due to this.

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, leaders of the organisation said they would file a writ petition with the High Court in April seeking a ban on installation of new tubewells (shallow) in the country and then initiate a process for compensation for families of the dead and for the affected. They will also take up the issue with the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

"In the globalisation era, many decisions that affect

Bangladesh's future are taken outside the country by international agencies, donor governments and multinational companies," a BIAN leader said. "Therefore we have a responsibility to put pressure on institutions both local and external to ensure that their policies are beneficial to all Bangladeshis and not damaging to development."

BIAN also put forward some demands for immediate action. These include a ban on sinking of shallow tubewells, formulation of a regulatory framework for drinking water and ensuring accountability and transparency of domestic and international agencies involved in this sector.

Leaders of BIAN said they have launched an international campaign against arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh.

They said the short and long-term effect of arsenic

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