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64 sued under PSA in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police filed a case under Public Safety Act (PSA) against 64 people including leaders of BNP, ICD and Jamaat, in connection with the clash on Saturday at Agrabad Chowmuhani.

At least 20 people including four police personnel were injured during the clash between police and Opposition processionists.

The case was filed with Doublemooring Thana.

The clash ensued when a procession led by BNP leader Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury reached Agrabad Chowmuhani at 6-30 pm on Saturday evening. The procession was brought out in support of the hartal.

Meanwhile, opposition alliance threatened to launch greater movement if the case under PSA was not withdrawn.

Reports baseless, say Razzak Ali, Tayebur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali MP and city Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman have turned down press reports that they intend to join Awami League.

"I want to make it absolutely clear that our politics is for the welfare of the people under the banner BNP and not for joining any other party," the former Speaker said when contacted yesterday.

Razzak Ali said there are rumours and baseless reports about his political stance. "I am committed to BNP politics. So any report about my joining Awami League is intended to malign me and tarnish my political image."

Tayebur Rahman said, "My loyalty to BNP and confidence in the leadership of its chairperson is unquestionable."

"I have got enough from my party, being the city Mayor. Two MPs are elected from the entire city, of which I am Mayor," he added.

Tayebur did not rule out that he might seek party nomination in the ensuing general elections from any of the two constituencies Khulna-2 and Khulna-3.

None from Awami League has proposed them to join the ruling party for getting nomination in the coming election, both of them said.

Current trend dangerous for the country: Dr Kamal

BSS, Dhaka

Gana Forum chief Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday termed the "current trend of exchanging words" between the two major parties as "not favourable for elections" saying that it might bring dangerous consequences for the country.

"As a result the anti-liberation religion traders, extreme fascists and anti-constitutional quarters are in fact being encouraged which might bring about severe danger for the nation," he told the inaugural session of a Gana Forum central committee meeting at his residence here.

Dr Kamal urged his party leaders and workers to strengthen the party and its unity with the left leaning 11-Party to create a congenial polling atmosphere discarding communalism and influence of black money and muscle power.

Gana Forum leaders Pankaj Bhattacharya, Mofizul Islam Khan Kamal, Advocate Abdul Shahid Lal, Advocate Abdul Aziz, Fazlul Haq Khondoker, M Kafiluddin, Advocate Selim Akbar, Engineer Abul Hossain, Advocate Emdadul Islam and advocate Zahurul Islam took part in the discussion.

Anti-fundamentalist campaign begins
BSS, Dhaka

The fortnight long anti-fundamentalist campaign began here yesterday with a call to resist the fanatic and anti-liberation elements from everybody's respective position for the sake of social peace and progress.

The first day's programme of the campaign launched jointly by Nirmul Committee, Pathanotok Parishad and Abridya Samanya Parishad was held at the Bariidhara Nutun Bazar area with 1971 Independence War veteran Mozammel Haque, Bir Protik, in the chair.

Stampede at Pak Islamic shrine kills 40 devotees

AFP, Pak Pattan (Pakistan)

About 40 people were killed and more than 100 injured in a stampede at an Islamic shrine in Pakistan's central province of Punjab, ambulance workers and state media said yesterday.

Witnesses said the stampede at the shrine of the 13th century saint Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar in the town of Pak Pattan happened as thousands of devotees pushed forward to pass through a holy gate at the start of an annual feast.

"As a result ... 40 devotees were killed and dozens of others were injured in the stampede," the official APP news agency said.

Ambulance workers said 30 people were crushed to death at the scene as the pilgrims rushed forward after the Behishi Darwaza, or Paradise Gate, was opened before midnight on Saturday to inaugurate the feast known as "urs". Some of the injured died later in hospital, they said.

Ambulance workers and hospital officials said about 125 people were injured.

Followers of the saint believe that passing through the Behishi Darwaza will earn them a place in paradise after death.

"People ran over each other the moment the Behishi Darwaza was opened to inaugurate the urs," The News Daily reported. The atmosphere inside the shrine, about 165 km (100 miles) southwest of the provincial capital Lahore, was hot and suffocating because of the crowd and "many people fainted and got trampled", the newspaper said.

The district administration and the shrine management appeared to blame each other for the accident.

A statement issued by the district magistrate said the stampede happened because the ceremony was delayed for three hours and some people tried to enter the shrine from a northern gate that was not meant to be open for access.

But newspapers quoted a shrine spokesman as saying two magistrates on duty had not taken proper steps to control the crowd.

"It was almost impossible for the administration personnel ... to control the crowd which kept on moving, crushing the weak devotees dead," The news reported.

Military ruler General Pervez Musharraf expressed his heart-felt sorrow over the incident, state radio said.



Female family members of one of the stampede victims mourn in the eastern Pakistani city of Pak Pattan yesterday. At least 40 pilgrims died in a stampede at the 13th century shrine of Baba Farid Shakar Gunj in Pak Pattan.

Arms seized from BNP MP's house in Kushtia

UNB, Kushtia

As Awami League and BNP activists fought a gunbattle in Bheramara town yesterday, police recovered arms and ammunition during a raid on a BNP lawmaker's home.

At least 20 people were injured, five by bullets, in the fighting between the armed cadres while police fired 7 blank shots and 6 teargas shells to disperse the warring groups.

At one stage of the clash, police stormed into the house of BNP lawmaker Prof Shahidul Islam and recovered 3 locally made and one foreign-made revolvers and one gun along with 17 bullets.

Prof Islam, an MP from Kushtia-2 constituency, is now on a state visit to Cuba and his wife resides in Dhaka. In their absence, Islam's brother, Touhidul Islam, and a caretaker look after the house.

Acid attack on two sisters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Two sisters suffered acid burns in Bhatichaira village under Nandail upazila last night.

The victims were identified as Taslima Aktar Lakhvi, 16, a Dakhil examinee from the Deulinga Mahila Madrassah, and Shamima Akhtar Bely, a student of class eight at Panchani High School. They are daughters of Abdus Samad Bhuiyan, a clerk of the same school.

Taslima was injured seriously. Her face and eyes have been burnt. She cannot speak easily. The only thing she can do is to give a vacant look.

According to police and family sources, some unidentified miscreants entered the house opening the door at about 2 a.m., when the victims were asleep. When Taslima woke up to the torchlight, the miscreants poured acid on her face and fled the scene. At the time, Shamima also received acid burns.

Border talks conclude Dhaka, Delhi to adhere to '75 guidelines

BSS, New Delhi

The five-day border talks between Bangladesh and India ended here yesterday with both sides agreeing to cooperate to check cross-border crimes and adhere to the provisions of border guide lines of 1975 in this respect.

The Director-General of Bangladesh Rifles, Maj Gen. ALM Fazlur Rahman, led a 15-member delegation to the talks while the Indian side was headed by the Director-General of Border Security Force, Gurbachan Jagat.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ratification of 1974 Indo-Bangladesh land boundary agreement, demarcation of non-demarcated border areas and exchange of adversely-possessed land, meeting sources said.

The two sides noted with satisfaction the discussion at the foreign secretary-level meeting held

Govt may okay use of female condom soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After condom for man, now comes condom for woman as a precaution against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The safe contraceptive having virtually no side effect is now being tested on sex workers and will be marketed soon.

A senior official of Family Planning Department which is implementing some pilot projects through NGOs said the government will soon approve use of condom for woman as part of its population control programme.

The pilot projects began in January last year. A study in Tangail said it is acceptable to six out of ten sexworkers.

The condom being tested in the country is made by the Female Health Company (FHC) of US with technical help from the UNAIDS, a UN body.

UNFPA, WHO, UNAIDS, the US

Thousands take holy dip at Langalbandh

BSS, Ngonj

Thousands of devotees defying hartal took their holy dip in the waters of the Brahmaputra River early yesterday, marking the 'Astami Snan' held once in a year at Langalbandh about 20 kilometers from here under Bandar police station.

The holy bath, which started at 3:30 am yesterday, was to continue till 11:30 last night, according to Tithi.

Due to hartal, Hindu devotees, men, women and children, came to Langalbandh for the holy dip seeking divine blessings on foot and by country boat, push cart and buses. Some made an overnight stay in different temporary shelters like schools and Musapur Union Parishad compound.

Different voluntary organisations including Narayanganj district unit of Bangladesh Sonatam Dharma Mahamandal, Sebok Sangha, Deobhog Sadhu Nag Mahasava



Hindu devotees offer prayers yesterday after a holy dip in the river Brahmaputra at Langalbandh on the occasion of Astami Snan (a ritual for purification).

Road accidents kill 7 in Ctg, Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Seven people were killed and 40 others injured in road accidents in Chittagong and Khagrachhari in past two days.

Five people including two women died and at least 15 others were injured in a road accident on Arakan Sarak on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazaar Highway at Anowara Saturday night.

The accident occurred when a Chittagong-bound public jeep, locally known as Chandler Gari, was knocked into a roadside ditch near Hatipara intersection by a speeding truck from Cox's Bazaar at around 11:30 pm.

The ill-fated were identified as Hussenuzzaman, 70, Abu Syed, 60, Chemon Ara Begum, 65, Parvin Akter, 25, and Shahabuddin, 30. The

764 murdered, 135 raped in country in last 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

During the first quarter of the current year, several incidents of human rights violation under the umbrella of the Public Safety Act and Section 144 were reported, a survey report of Ain-o-Shalish Kendro said.

At the same time, incidents of death in jail and under police custody, and harassment of journalists also increased, it said and added that 10 prisoners and 15 persons under custody died during the same period.

Meanwhile, the incidents of religious edict have increased. The report noted that 21 incidents of repression on women by means of religious edict took place across the country during the period between January and March.

As many as 764 people were murdered and 135 women raped while 27 people died in custody across the country in the last three months from January through March, according to survey reports by several human rights organisations.

According to the Institute of Democratic Rights (IDR), two hundred and forty four people were murdered in January, 216 in February and 304 in March, the report added.

Odhikar, another human rights organisation, said that 15 people suffered acid burn while 19 women died failing to pay dowry during the same period.

Fifteen women, 61 men and a child were physically assaulted by police and BDR, of whom five were killed.

Four persons died in police custody under different circumstances, while one drowned in a pond at Mirpur in the city when chased by police.

Police harassed 11 journalists, nine others were issued death threats, while hoodlums attacked 10 others. Fifty-one cases were filed against journalists for publishing reports.

During the same period, 61 cases were filed under the Public Safety Act across the country in which 2017 people were accused.

Girl shot dead in N'ganj

UNB, N'ganj

A teenage girl was shot dead allegedly by her 'boyfriend' at her house at Mizmizi Dhanuhazi Road of Siddhirganj thana Saturday midnight.

The dead was identified as Shilpi, 13, daughter of Abu Yusuf Bhuiyan hailed from Chulhas village in Davidwar upazila of Comilla district. She lived with her mother at Mizmizi.

Just before the killing, police said, one Faruk of the same area, who had an illicit affair with the girl, got into a scuffle with two other youths Rony and Shipon at Shilpi's house.

"At one stage, Faruk snatched a pistol from Shipon and shot Shilpi at about 1 am," hospital sources said quoting witnesses. She was rushed to Narayanganj hospital where the doctors declared her dead.

A case was filed with Siddhirganj thana.

Nor'wester lashes Kushtia, Pabna 18 hurt, many houses damaged

UNB, Dhaka

Season's first nor'wester in Kushtia and Pabna yesterday left 18 people wounded besides damaging many kutcha houses and standing crops.

Strong storms lashed eight upazilas of the district leaving 15 people injured and over 200 houses damaged.

Besides, papaya and banana plantations on vast tracts of land of 33 unions of Ishurdi, Suzanagar, Atgharia, Bhanguta, Chatmohar, Sathia, Bera and sadar upazila were destroyed in the scourge of nature.

The badly hit unions are Dougachi, Bharar, Goespur, Malancha and Hemaetpur.

Char Gargaria, Basherbadha, Ruppur, Pakshi, Newruppur, Bilkadar, Newbharenga, Zaitshakini, Khanpur, Alokdia and Zadupur village were also affected by the storms, sources said.

Nor'wester also swept Kushtia and its adjoining areas yesterday afternoon damaging mud-and-straw houses and standing crops. Three people were also injured during the calamity.

The nor'wester packing a speed of 80 km per hour continued for about half an hour, damaging banana gardens and uprooting many trees.

The town plunged into darkness due to power disruption, and in many areas telephone lines snapped.

At the tail of the storms came heavy showers that continued for two hours from 3:50 pm cooling down the scorching heat of summer.

7 Bangladeshis 'recaptured' in Malaysia

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Fourteen illegal immigrants who escaped into the jungle while they were being led out of a Malaysian detention camp for deportation have been recaptured, police said yesterday.

The 10 Indian nationals and 21 Bangladeshis fled Saturday after attacking a policeman as they were being taken out of the centre in the southern state of Negeri Sembilan, police said.

A manhunt has been mounted and seven Indian nationals and seven Bangladeshis have been recaptured so far, said district police chief Abdul Khalid Abu Hassan.

He was quoted as saying by Bernama news agency that the search would cover villages and plantations near the area.

According to the New Sunday Times, the immigrants aged between 21 and 35 started to jostle each other on reaching the gate where trucks were waiting to take them to the airport.

Despite the presence of 10 armed security personnel, they scrambled into different directions in the dark and fled into the jungle, it said.

Housewife beaten to death in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband at Krishnapur Daripara village in Sadar upazila early Saturday.

The victim was identified as Azeda Khatun, 30, mother of four children, and wife of Refazuddin, a milkman.

Local people said Refaz was fined Tk 5,000 in a village arbitration on Friday for trying to violate a minor girl of the village.

Refaz suspected that his wife had masterminded the arbitration. Returning home Refaz beat his wife severely causing fatal injuries. He later hanged the body in the house and went into hiding.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the hospital morgue for autopsy.



Two teenagers brave their way through drizzle and gusty winds along the pavement at Bijoy Nagar in the city yesterday. The late-afternoon rain came as a relief after scorching heat dominated the early half of the day.