

Shamsur Rahman

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class magistrate in the court of CMM, Dhaka last year.

Janakantha Journalist Shamsur Rahman was gunned down in his Jessore office at 8:20 pm on July 16 last year. His wife filed a case with Jessore Kotwali thana in the morning of July 18.

According to a reliable source, the ministry of Home Affairs has asked all units of the police department all over the country to immediately arrest Litu, Hirok and Nasiruddin Kalu.

Messages have already been sent to all border points of the country to prevent them from going to India. The police headquarters has also asked for dockets of all other criminal cases recorded against Litu, Hirok and Kalu with different police stations.

Police raided Litu and Hirok's Khulna houses several times, but failed to arrest them.

According to CID, Litu master-minded the murder of Journalists

Shamsur Rahman. Because, the slain Journalist wrote a series of reports on how the ward commissioner-cum-Jubo League leader maintained an organised gang of armed criminals in the southwestern zone for committing murders and other heinous crimes.

Jessore journalists yesterday warned the investigation officer (IO) not to save the real culprits and damage merit of the case by implicating innocent men.

"We shall not let this murder go unchallenged until and unless the killers and their godfathers are punished through an impartial trial," said Kiron Saha, president of Jessore Journalists' Union.

Hundreds of people went to the court chanting slogans demanding trial of the case in the special tribunal and arrest of the real culprits. Tight security was arranged in and around the court building and also at the residence of the slain journalists.

IU reels under loans

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Commission (UGC) during his tenure.

Although the commission did not sanction salaries to the newly appointed employees, the authorities have to pay them from the university's own fund, which is one of the key factors in the present crisis.

At present, the authorities have to spend Tk 10.5 crore every year on salaries of the teachers and other employees, while the UGC provides only Tk 7.14 crore.

The regularisation of sanction to the new appointments is still undecided due to lack of prior approval of UGC.

The current budget deficit of the university is about Tk 3. 85 crore every year. The authorities already increased all kinds of tuition fees two years ago to make up for the short-

age.

Despite all efforts on part of the authorities, the officials said, the situation seems to be spilling out of control. They fear that the administrative and even the academic activities may collapse in the near future if the crisis drags on.

When contacted, the IU Vice-chancellor Professor Mohammed Lutfur Rahman said being only one Islamic university in the country, it requires more allocation in the budget as it experienced less than others in the past. "I am trying my best to resolve the crisis", he added.

According to the sources, the vice-chancellor is likely to meet Education Minister AHSK Sadique today over the issues including fund shortage.

BNP to back EC move

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election tribunals and restriction on candidates barring them from contesting in more than three seats.

BNP sources said an election committee along with members of the Standing Committee are now reviewing the EC proposals and would again meet on May 23 to discuss the party's response to the EC proposals.

A Standing Committee member told the Daily Star yesterday that the election committee earlier put forward some suggestions to the commission before the latter in a letter had sought BNP's recommendations. The committee is now examining whether the EC accepted its suggestions.

About registration of political parties with the EC, he said BNP in principle has no objection to this, but there not enough time left for it to embark on such a time-consuming matter before the election. The issue can be dealt with after the election, he added.

He said the electoral reforms, particularly those relating to the Representation of People's Order (RPO) should be completed before the polls.

The BNP leader said the party has strongly recommended that the current system of sending polls result sheet from thana to DC office needs to be changed. Instead, there should be provision to send a result copy to EC and another one to Deputy Commissioner.

Moreover, it recommended, the EC has to ensure that the result sheet bears signature of polling agents, so that the Presiding Officer or any other quarters entrusted with election responsibility cannot manipulate the results.

Another top BNP leader, who would not be named, held that the EC needs to be further strengthened before and after the election, and the Election Tribunal should dispose off the cases much more quickly.

EC: Voter list

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voter list and to submit weekly reports.

As part of its plan to complete the voters' database, EC has taken a step to preserve the voter lists of three districts in Compact Disk (CD). Preservation of voter lists of 32 districts has already been completed. Work of the 'central voter database' will be completed shortly, an EC official said.

Meanwhile, the Commission has asked its officials to explain the aspect of setting up of new polling stations as opposition political parties complained to the EC that ruling Awami League has been manipulating the entire process by abusing its power.

AL fronts at the forefront

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leadership.

Underworld sources say that the Mamun group possesses formidable armoury, comprising five AK-47s, two M-16s, two light machine guns, several single and double barrel guns, cut rifles and 30 other types of firearms. When necessary, it turns to the Taiyab group of Fatikhkhara for more arms and ammunition.

Following his acquittal in the Humayun Zahir Murder Case, Babu is learnt to have been strengthening is position in local politics. His armed cadre, led by Maichchha Kader, possesses one M-16, one AK-47, two eight-shooter, two seven-shooters and ten other firearms. The group purchased the M-16 three

years back from a smuggler in Pahartali named Hatkata Raju. Maichchha Kader is in jail now.

Two groups, led by Didar and Mashiur, operate in the city college area. Between them, these groups have two AK 47s, one G3 rifle, and 20 various other firearms, sources said.

There is another group based in the Islamia College, which possesses including one AK-47.

The terrorist gang loyal to AJM Nasir has two AK-47s, 10 cut rifles and two submachine guns. Nasir patronises another group led by BCL cadre Mehdi at the Polytechnic Institute that owns two AK-47s, six shutter guns, two cut rifles and six or seven other firearms, sources revealed.

Second Buriganga Bridge opens

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ing slogans "vote for boat", the election symbol of Awami League.

The prime minister said having failed to remove the government through movement, the opposition was now planning to launch movement on the issue of her personal security, as they want to see her slain.

"Possibly they are frustrated that they could not kill me and that's why they want to launch movement ... But I have full faith in Almighty Allah," Hasina said.

Questioning the opposition plan for movement on her security issue, she said: "What's my offence? Why do they like to see me dead?"

The prime minister said, "Possibly, they do not tolerate my work for welfare of the people. Possibly they feel jealous of my efforts making the country self-reliant in food and my schemes for widow, elderly, unemployed and shelterless people."

Bringing charges of corruption against Khaleda Zia, Hasina said while in power Khaleda Zia got kickbacks to the tune of US\$20 million in buying 2 airbuses and misappropriated huge amount of money from government exchequer.

Inquiry into cases of corruption against the opposition leader has proved that she has committed corruption, but those cases could not proceed due to court's instructions, she observed.

"If the trials of all those corruption cases could take place, she (Khaleda) would also have been punished like Ershad," the PM said amidst clapping and slogans in applause.

Hasina narrated how Khaleda occupied two houses in Dhaka Cantonment meant for the President's House and one in Gulshan with the blessings of Gen Ershad by making "false statements" about Ziaur Rahman that he had left nothing for his family.

Enjoying the facilities of all these

houses, Khaleda drew house rent from the exchequer as the prime minister.

But it was found that there was a 10-katha plot at Joarshahara and a bank account of Tk 10 lakh in the name of Zia, she said and questioned how Khaleda and her family could become the owners of crores of taka overnight having Marshal Distillery, Dandy Dyeing, Rahman Industries and luxurious launches Coco-1 to Coco-6.

"People want to know how broken suitcase and torn vest of Zia could turn into a magic box making Khaleda's the richest family," the prime minister said.

Calling Khaleda a great liar, Hasina questioned how 83 voters from her house could be enlisted in the election rolls. How Khaleda could fill up her voter form by showing her academic qualification as HSC when she could not even pass matriculation.

She recalled Khaleda's past campaign that 'Azan' would not be heard from mosque if Awami

League was voted to power and the country would turn into India if the CHT peace accord was signed.

People at the meeting shouted "no, no" by raising their hands when Hasina asked whether 'Azan' was replaced with 'Uludhan' or whether the area from CHT to Feni was ceded to India.

The PM said the opposition even resorted to falsehood about mosque and spoils the sacred places by doing politics. They killed police in mosque and kept bombs and stones there to kill innocent people and police "presenting Islam to the outside world as a religion of terrorism."

"How Islami Chhatra Shibir and Chhatra Dal leaders could say that they would burn down my tasbih and burkha? Do they have any faith in Islam? she asked and urged the God-fearing Muslims to say their prayers in mosques and protect its sanctity by mobilising public opinion against anti-liberation forces.

Legal systems

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Badarganj thana in Rangpur, Dr Siddique also found that corruption costs each of the villagers Tk 1001 a year and mis-governance Tk 500. Apart from this, a villager has to bear an extra cost of Tk 1501 a year thanks to corruption and mis-governance in 13 select government offices and authorities.

"This is not the total cost of corruption and only 10 per cent of what a villager pays because the study did not include the purchase tenders and food related programmes," said Dr Siddique at a seminar at the Grameen Bank auditorium yesterday.

She also calculated that six per cent of per capita income is wasted for corruption and if the cost of mis-governance is taken into account, it shots up to nine per cent.

According to the study, Tk 4596 crore is wasted across the country due to corruption and mis-governance. "This is only 10 per cent of the total," Dr Siddique said. "But even this 10 per cent means 1.90 per cent of GDP."

The speakers at the seminar said honest political leadership is now needed to fight corruption. Some of them suggested that the government go for privatisation of some services to curb corruption.

"Strong political will holds the key to weeding out corruption," said Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, executive director of the BRAC, who chaired the seminar. "It is more necessary to eradicate corruption

from the higher level than low level rent-seeking."

He also suggested that evaluation reports of all government contracts be posted on the Internet to ensure transparency and tackle corruption.

Domestic help at Hamdard Lab chairman's house found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mystery shrouds the death of a domestic help at a residence at Kakrali in the city.

Zakir Hossain, 15, hailed from Baufal, Patuakhali was working as domestic help at the residence of Yusuf Harun, chairman of Hamdard Laboratory.

He was found hanging with a scarf from the grills on the second floor of the house at mid night on Saturday night.

Hospital sources said there were marks of injuries in victim's body. Alamgir, caretaker of the house, found him hanging from the grill.

Police recovered the body and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

An unnatural death case was filed with Ramna police.

From criminal

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local people said.

In the early nineties, Mamun joined Chhatra League. He and his associates took over the MES College in the city and gradually built up a big terrorist force and an arms cache.

From the MES College base, he controls Zakir Hossain Road, Khulshi, Nasirabad, Nizam Road and Mehedi areas.

There are 19 criminal cases against Mamun pending for long, including murder and rape charges. However, Mamun roamed about in the city at large and had been holding on to his terrorist activities.

He accumulated wealth worth crores of taka by grabbing railway property, and tender awards and

through extortion. He now has a spacious house, drives several cars, which in fact belong to different dealers, but no-one dares to raise voice against the crime lord because of his strong political connections.

It is widely known that Chittagong Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury is the prime source of Mamun's power. However, when contacted, Mohiuddin Chowdhury refuted such allegation. "My politics is transparent. I have been involved in politics from a very early age. I never needed a terrorist. I have people on my side."

Although Mamun has 19 cases against him, the police are actually pursuing only one case against him on charge of attacking journalists and newspaper office.

Haris fell prey to police

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and thights to torture him.

He also told his mother how the group of policemen kicked him with their heavy boots accusing him of being involved in a crime.

Born to a family of ten brothers and sisters, frat Haris soon gave in to the police torture. As the policemen sensed that the boy became very sick, they handcuffed and shifted him to the local 50-bed hospital. His condition deteriorating, he was transferred to the DMCH in the afternoon.

The following day, still under police guard and accused of "possessing a 12-inch knife and mug-

ging", the young man died at ward no. 22 in the hospital.

Before Haris' death, Tongi police filed a case against the boy under the Arms Act and designated Abdus Sattar, one of the police assailants, for investigation.

Even after four days of the death yesterday, the body was lying at the DMCH morgue where his relatives were waiting outside for hours on end to take him for burial. Constable Delwar at the morgue told the Daily Star that the delay in carrying out autopsy was caused by the magistrate's mistake in his statement on the death.

"First it was reported that the

News Analysis

Battle over, time now for stock taking

Both BJP, Cong get down to organisational business

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

It is time for stock taking for the ruling BJP and the principal opposition Congress, as results of last week's assembly elections in five states have significant implications for both.

The outcome may not rock the government of Atal Behari Vajpayee but have certainly hit the alarm button for the BJP. The Indian prime minister has himself admitted as much immediately on his return. The poll result has come as a "wake-up call for us," he said.

There would be fall-outs in two specific areas. First, the BJP will try to shore up the strength of the alliance it leads, especially after the exit of the Trinamool Congress. Second, the Congress, boosted by its victory in Kerala and Assam states and the federally-administered territory of Pondicherry, will be more aggressive and seek greater co-ordination with other opposition parties.

Spurred by the assembly election debacle, the BJP leadership held two days of brainstorming session with the leadership of its spiritual mentor RSS at a resort near Delhi. In the next couple of days, the BJP office-bearers will hold yet another two-day meeting in Mussorie, the famous hill resort town in Uttar Pradesh. There is clearly an ideological churning within the BJP, which clearly came out in the interaction between leaderships of the saffron party and the RSS a few days back.

When BJP came to power winning the 1999 general elections, its top leadership made it clear that a large part of its ideology had nothing to do with the business of governance. It might have been the party's justification for keeping on backburner its ideological tenets, including temple construction and

uniform civil code, in order to lead a rainbow alliance. But, as it later turned out, the BJP sought to use the stand as a shield against possible criticism from within of its departure from the concept of economic nationalism (swadeshi) and espousal to radical economic reforms by the Vajpayee government.

Economic policies of the Vajpayee government have come under fire from the RSS and its affiliate bodies and the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, trade union front of the BJP. The latest instances are the government's announcement of allowing 100 per cent domestic private and 26 per cent foreign investment in defence manufacture sector and labour reforms which empowers an employer with not more than a 1,000-strong workforce to go for retrenchment without prior government permission.

The RSS is understood to have conveyed to the BJP leadership not to compromise too much on ideology for the imperatives of coalition politics.

On the other hand, buoyed by its splendid victory in West Bengal assembly elections, the Congress and the CPI (M) are likely to mount fresh move to drive a wedge between the BJP and its allies. The Congress and the Marxist party has asked the BJP allies to rethink their association with the saffron party saying it would not be beneficial for them in view of the defeat of the DMK in Tamil Nadu and the AGP in Assam. Both the DMK and the AGP are allies of the BJP. The assessment in the Congress and other opposition circles is that the outcome of assembly poll will put BJP's allies under increased pressure.

The BJP is, meanwhile, trying to woo some regional parties like Jat leader Ajit Singh-led Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), the PMK, a party in Tamil Nadu, some breakaway members of

parliament belonging to the Trinamool Congress into joining the Vajpayee government. These regional groups as well some as independent members of parliament can increase the government's strength by 15 to ensure that the parliamentary arithmetic is safe for the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The BJP is dangling the carrot of ministerial berths for these regional parties and the Trinamool rebels. Interestingly, Vajpayee said a few days back that he would expand his cabinet.

There are reports that Ajit Kumar Panja and three other Trinamool Congress MPs are ready to quit the party and join the Vajpayee government. Panja, for one, has been in most rebellious mood. He not only flayed Trinamool chief Mamata Banerjee for quitting the BJP-led alliance and aligning with the Congress but also shared the electoral dais with Vajpayee and attended the swearing-in ceremony of Left Front ministry in Calcutta yesterday defying Trinamool's call for boycott of the event.

Meanwhile, both the BJP and the Congress are turning their attention to Uttar Pradesh where fresh assembly elections are due end of the year. Both parties are acutely conscious that capturing power in Uttar Pradesh holds the key to ruling India.

But both the parties are worried by the outcome of a parliamentary by-poll in Shahjahanpur constituency in the state. The Congress failed to retain the seat and the BJP was relegated from second to fourth position. The Samajwadi Party won the seat.

Consequently, the Congress and the BJP are trying to gear their organisational machinery to meet the challenge of the battle of power in Uttar Pradesh.

BNP-FFs rally

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Paltan Maidan for which leaflets were also distributed.

Khaleda is expected to address a public meeting at Kishoreganj on May 24 and the partymen will be busy preparing for Ziaur Rahman's death anniversary observance on May 30, Sadeq Hossain said.

Convener of the rally's preparation committee Major General (Retd) Mohammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik, however, told UNB that it is a question of rescheduling the meet.

He said Khaleda is expected to give a fresh date in this regard soon.

Banglar Shikha

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losses."

He went on, "We have already placed funds with a foreign bank and now we are waiting for a clearance from Bangladesh Bank. We hope the vessel would be released soon."

A Bangladeshi consignee claimed a compensation of about Tk six crore against the damage of his cargo while carried by a BSC ship to Mongla port from Hull port of UK in 1999. The damage was caused as the BSC vessel was caught in a storm in the sea, Chowdhury mentioned.

25pc rice procurement

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Food Minister Amir Hossain Amu could not be reached last night for his comment.

BNP member of the JS body, Shamsuddin Ahmed, who was present at the meeting, said he would not make any comment about the decision.

Initially, it was proposed in the agenda of the meeting that 50 per cent quota would be allocated to the Food Minister.

Allocation of such a big special quota ahead of the general election is considered politically significant.

The government's procurement target during the current Boro season (April 20 - July 31) is four lakh metric tons (MT).

"Under the reserve quota of the Minister, special allocations can be given to lawmakers for distribution at district level and outside their constituencies as well," the decision says.

The Standing Committee meeting, presided over by ruling party lawmaker Abdul Hakim, also took up another long-drawn issue -- 'food import forgery' --for discussion yesterday.

Members of a sub-committee, formed by the Standing Committee

earlier, burst into anguish at the Ministry's indifference and the Standing Committee's reluctance in placing an investigation report on the alleged forgery.

The forgery involved procurement of a consignment of 12,000 MT of 'rotten rice' and another 'fake consignment' of 12,000 MT of rice from India in 1998.

A member of the Standing Committee said that Ramesh and Pearial Company of India took Tk. 30 crore against these two 'consignments'. The sub-committee found a 'major corruption' in the whole process and pressed the Standing Committee at several meetings earlier to allow it place its report before parliament.

After heated debates over the issue, the Standing Committee finally agreed to place the sub-committee report during the last session of current parliament beginning on June 6.

Committee members, Dr Alauddin Ahmed and Bharati Nandi of AL and Joinal Abedin Sarkar of Jatiya Party were also present at yesterday's meeting.

DU student shot dead

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Eva and Zayed were planning to move out of their Shewrapara resident at the end of this month.

Police sent Zayed's body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. No case was filed with the Mirpur police station till filing of this report.

Earlier on Saturday, Jahangir Hossain, a resident of Hazi Mansoor Road at Noorbagh, succumbed to injuries he had sustained when miscreants hurled crackers on him at around 11:30pm. Fatally injured, Jahangir was rushed to the DMCH where the attending doctors declared him dead in the early hours yesterday.

An auto-rickshaw driver, who received injury during the incident, was sent the National Orthopaedic Hospital for treatment.

Police said that the victim was returning home after closing his shop when four people stopped him. They had an altercation and at one stage the assailants hurled a bomb on his left chest.

Police suspects that the killing could be a sequel to rivalry.

Jahangir's father Shorab Hossain filed a case with Kamrangirchar thana in this regard. Kamrangirchar police arrested ten people including Kashem, Rubbel and Koli.

Tk 19000cr ADP outlay

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is given to development of Chittagong Hill Tracts in line with avowed government policy for balanced uplift of all parts of the country.

Briefing newsmen about the new development plan, State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir said the country would achieve close to a 7 per cent growth rate next year and poverty would come down to 40 per cent if the development programmes, incorporated in the ADP, were implemented.

About 52 per cent of the population lived below poverty line in 1990 and the percentage came down to 44 in 1999.

"Bangladesh will rise to the level of sustainable development if the current pace of progress continues for next five years," the minister said.

The ADP allocation for 2001-02, the terminal year of the present

Awami League government, is around triple the amount allocated in 1995-96, the last year of BNP rule.

The ADP 2001-2002 incorporates a total of 1381 development projects, 231 of them new. The number of projects in the current ADP was 1302.

Education sector has been allocated 14 per cent (Tk 2,480 crore) of the total ADP budget 2001-02.

More employment, rural development, improvement of rural infrastructure and promotion of private-sector investment are among the priorities of the new ADP.

Besides, it will give priority to the current projects, which are nearing completion. Special steps will also be taken to ensure timely disbursement of local component of finances for aided projects.

Meghnaghat plant: Marubeni

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Marubeni offered a complex package of "benefits" to PDB.

Marubeni offered to give 1,395 million kWh of free electricity worth 5 million dollars during the 22nd year of operation and to hand over the plant to PDB after the 22-year contract period.

After 22 years' service, the plant will be worth 31.4 million dollars and PDB will have to spend 25 million dollars for its rehabilitation in the 28th year. The plant will remain operational for 35 years, Marubeni says.

As Marubeni's proposal raised a lot of questions, the Energy Ministry sought Power Cell's opinion last month.

The Power Cell observed that the Marubeni proposed a 'build, own,

operate and transfer' (BOOT) project against the government policy for a build, own, operate (BOO) one.

Regarding supply of free electricity during the 22nd year of operation, the Power Cell observed that actually PDB will not get any free electricity if it becomes unable to take the power in its system at that time. Besides, getting free electricity during the 22nd year instead of IPO is less attractive, it said.

"Considering PDB's financial health and the condition of country's foreign currency reserve, PDB would be much more benefited if it gets 34 million dollars worth of free electricity (as per the original understanding)," the Cell said.

While most of the combined

cycle power plants have 25 years' life, Marubeni claims that its plant will last for 35 years.

Marubeni will not be accountable if the plant does not operate after 22 years.

Besides, all other Marubeni proposals did not actually offer anything financially better although those looked much lucrative than the AES contract, the Cell observed. Rather, Marubeni's proposal regarding land development passes all risks on to PDB, it said.

As per the contract signed for the Meghnaghat first phase plant, AES will supply power at a 'levelised' rate of 2.79 cents per kWh for 22 years. Marubeni proposed more than 3.5 cents per unit in its original offer.