

lawyers for Huda collect copies of HC verdict

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The lawyers for Major (rtd.) Bazlul Huda, sentenced to death in the Bangabandhu Murder Case, collected certified copies of the High Court verdict yesterday.

The defendants would get a 30-day statutory period from the day the copies were given to file a petition for leave to appeal against the sentence in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, court sources said. The copies were dated May 24.

The judgement was given by a third court on April 30 after the Death Reference Bench of the High Court gave a split verdict on December 14 last.

A trial court in Dhaka on November 8, 1998 sentenced 15 former army officers to death on charge of killing the then President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and much of his members at his residence on August 15, 1975.

The Death Reference Bench of the High court gave a split verdict, with one judge acquitting five accused and the other confirming the sentence of all the 15.

It was referred to a third court on January 7. The third court acquitted three accused and confirmed sentence of 12 accused.

Of them, four are in the death row of the Dhaka Central Jail. They are Lt. Col. (dismissed) Syed Faruq Rahman, Lt. Col. (rtd.) Shahriar Rashid Khan, Lt. Col. (rtd.) Mohiuddin Ahmed and Maj. (rtd.) Bazlul Huda. Others are absconding and staying out of the country.

Bandits kill truck driver, godown labourer, loot foodgrains

UNB, Joypurhat

Bandits looted 303 sacks of foodgrains worth about Tk 3 lakh from a truck after killing its driver and a godown labourer on Joypurhat-Bogra road Saturday night.

The dead were identified as truck driver Habibur Rahman, 28, and godown labourer Nilok, 25.

The truck carrying 268 bags of rice and 35 bags of lentils was bound for Ranibazar of Kushtia from Bangla Hill land port in Dinajpur.

Police said the gang, riding another truck, followed the grain-laden truck and stopped it near Sarail in Kalai upazila at about 11:30 pm.

Some of the robbers took the truck driver, helper Firoj and godown labourer Nilok to a nearby paddy field at gunpoint and fed them something toxic, rendering them senseless.

In the meantime, other members of the gang unloaded the grain, loaded in their own truck and fled. Later police recovered the empty truck from Akkelpur Pilot High School ground.

Helper Firoj regained his senses and informed nearby villagers who rushed to the spot where the driver and godown labourer were found dead.

Firoj was taken into custody for investigation into the desperate dacoity, police said.

CPB demands reinvestigation into Ratan Sen murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The rival group of Khulna CPB demanded reinvestigation into Ratan Sen murder case yesterday.

Leaders and activists of the CPB faction have demanded immediate arrest of CPB leader Feroze Ahmed for his alleged involvement in the conspiracy to murder Ratan Sen, a communist leader in Khulna.

The leaders said a group of 'capitalist' saboteurs in the party masterminded the murder of Ratan Sen just at the time when he was about to reach his goal by pioneering a movement against the 'class enemies'.

They said the 'misled' leaders implicated some BNP and dedicated CPB activists in the murder case to save the killers.

The dissident leaders blamed a section of police officers for twisting the truth and suppressing fact during the investigation.

They declared Feroze undesirable in Khulna CPB, and warned that severe consequences will occur in case of failure by police to start reinvestigation and arrest the real criminals.

When contacted, Feroze denied the charge and accused some of the dissident leaders of their involvement in the murder. He said, "I don't find it necessary to demand reinvestigation."

Methanol being imported despite restriction

RAFIQ HASAN

Methanol, a 'restricted' chemical item, is being imported by a section of traders in the name of 'wood naphtha' and 'thinner', according to sources in the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The government in 1997 'restricted' import of methanol because of its use as a drug, sometimes causing death. Only some 'listed companies' are allowed to import methanol for 'industrial use'.

The customs authorities recently seized two big consignments of methanol illegally imported by two trading houses in the city.

The consignments, one of 26.08 tons, imported by Saad-E-Tejera, Matuail, as 'wood naphtha', and the other of 52.16 tones, imported by New Bright Industries, Keraniganj, as 'thinner', reached Chittagong port on April 19 and April 23 respectively.

The customs authorities seized the consignments, which were found to be crude methanol in laboratory tests.

The sources said the two companies were not

among the 'listed' ones allowed to import methanol for industrial use and the consignments were meant for sale as drug.

"We have been monitoring import of methanol after death of a good number of people from consumption of the poisonous liquor in the last few years," said an NBR official.

He however, could not say the quantity of methanol imported in the country for industrial use.

The customs authorities have proposed filing of criminal cases against the illegal importers of this item, the sources said.

As many as 120 people died after taking rectified spirit made from crude methanol in Narsingdi district in May 99. Before that, over 70 people died in another such tragedy in Gaibandha.

According to the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), more than 250 people died after taking the poisonous liquor since 1996.

Four companies in the country produce methanol for industrial use.

Tk 15 lakh, rifle looted from bank staff at Feni

UNB, Feni

A group of armed men yesterday looted Taka 15 lakh and a rifle from an official of Janata Bank and its guard while they were carrying the money from Feni main branch to Gunabati branch by a tempo.

Police and bank officials said the armed gang riding a microbus stopped the tempo and looted the money from bank official Safiul Anwar at gunpoint and snatched the rifle from guard Safiqur Rahman while they were crossing Dewanganj area.

The gang beat up the guard and fled the scene firing shots. The guard was admitted to Feni Hospital.

A case was filed with Feni thana in this connection.

Police said tempo driver and his assistant were taken into custody for interrogation.

PM's directive to DESA

Avoid loadshedding in city at any cost

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) to avoid loadshedding in the capital at any cost by adopting peak-hour load management measures.

The directives came up at a review meeting on power supply, especially by DESA at the prime minister's Secretariat Office.

Secretary to Power Division Mofazzal Hossain and DESA Chairman S M Shamsul Alam informed the prime minister of overall power generation and distribution situation in the country.

Sheikh Hasina also gave an order to rapidly implement various programmes of DESA to improve the power transmission and distribution system.

Shamsul Alam informed the prime minister that DESA usually

distributes electricity to its six lakh subscribers through 3,500 km electricity line. The peak hour demand for electricity is 1267 MW against 1170 MW supply from Power Development Board (PDB), he said.

The DESA chairman said three projects under crush programme would be completed by June this year to overcome the power transmission problems. Moreover, 11 grid sub-stations, 27 33/11 KV substations, 700 km transmission line and necessary equipment would be installed under Greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project-4, he added.

Referring to the low-voltage problem, he said, DESA installed 500-set capacitor bank during May 1-15 along with the previous 538-set. More 500-set capacitor banks would

Khaleda tells Japanese envoy

AL out to obstruct fair election

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Khaleda Zia has accused the ruling party of resorting to various 'unholy' activities to obstruct free and fair election.

The BNP chief expressed her doubt about the fairness of the forthcoming election when newly appointed Japanese Ambassador Jiro Kobayashi made a courtesy call on Khaleda Zia at her 29 Minto Road official residence yesterday evening.

Terming the present political situation "anarchic and critical", the opposition leader told the ambassador that the government is carrying out various negative activities, indulging in corruption and terrorism with an ulterior motive so that the next election cannot be held in a free, peaceful and neutral manner.

The former prime minister requested the Japanese diplomat to

send a strong team from Japan to observe the election.

Responding to Khaleda Zia, the ambassador said the matter is under consideration of the Japan government as the same request was made to his predecessor.

He hoped that the Japan government would shortly make a decision on this matter. He said Japan wants that the next election in Bangladesh would be in a free, fair and neutral way.

Khaleda Zia's advisor MM Rezaul Karim briefed newsmen about the meeting that lasted more than an hour from 7:10 pm.

The BNP chairperson offered an exclusive hi-tech industrial city if the Japanese entrepreneurs set up hi-tech industries in Bangladesh during her government.

Khaleda also made another

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Gulf War victims to get Tk 67 cr compensation

BSS, Dhaka

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), based in Geneva, has decided to release 11,803,031.26 US dollars (about Taka 67 crore) as payment of compensation to Bangladeshi claimants of Iraq-Kuwait war in categories A, B, E and F under phase two and phase three payments, a press release said yesterday.

UNCC since last October had suspended all payments in these categories on the ground that a very small number of the claims could not be reconciled, the release said.

The issue was taken up very firmly with UNCC by the Bangladesh Mission in Geneva and it was due to the persistent efforts of the mission that the impasse could be resolved and the funds released for payment.

The Bangladesh initiative, which has led to the withdrawal of the suspension, will also benefit claimants from many other countries

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PHOTO: AFP

Former Argentine president Carlos Menem (R), 70, is fed wedding cake by his new bride Chilean former Miss Universe Cecilia Bolocco, 36, at the reception following their civil wedding ceremony in La Rioja, Argentina, on Saturday.

Terrorism Ctg newsmen to form human chain on June 4

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The journalists and employees of local dailies will form a human chain in the port city on June 4 protesting terrorism.

Chattagram Sangbadpatra Oikya Parishad at a meeting at the local press yesterday took the decision.

The meeting also urged all other organisations to join the programme on the day.

Chaired by parishad convenor MA Malek, the meeting was addressed by Purbokone editor Taslim Uddin Chowdhury, Press Club president Akterunnabi, Secretary Faruq Iqbal, CUJ President Muhammad Idris, Arun Das Gupta, Asif Siraj, Nasiruddin Chowdhury, Zahidul Karim Kachi, Shahidul Alam and Moazzamal Haq.

Ad-interim bail for Amini

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mufti Fazlul Huq Amini, general secretary of the Islami Oikyo Jote (IOJ), was granted ad-interim bail for six months in a PSA case by the High Court yesterday.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice Nurul Islam and Justice Iman Ali granted the bail following a petition moved by Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia on behalf of Amini.

Amini was charged with rioting in Dhaka city on February 13 during a general strike.

Menem marries Chilean beauty queen

AFP, La Rioja, Argentina

Argentina's flamboyant former president Carlos Menem married his queen Saturday morning in a simple ceremony here.

Menem, 70, and his bride, the Chilean former Miss Universe Cecilia Bolocco, 36, said their vows in a civil ceremony that lasted 38 minutes in front of a downscaled group of friends and relatives.

The two had planned to marry in a lavish ceremony at Menem's family estate, La Rosadita, in his hometown of Anillaco, but a blazing row with his daughter Zulemita -- who is several years senior of her new stepmother -- forced the wedding's relocation to here, at the governor's residence.

Residents of Anillaco spent months preparing Menem's hometown for "the wedding of the century." They've repaved the roads, repainted the sidewalks and lit the entrance to the town in anticipation of the return of their favorite son.

All the hotels in town were booked, stores were crammed with merchandise -- all to no avail.

Menem, never one to shy away from the press, told reporters he spent the night before his wedding -- a second marriage for both -- "reading some Arab proverbs," and slept well. "I'm never nervous," he boasted.

'Noise pollution' hampers DU academic activities

SHAMEEM MAHMUD

Indiscriminate use of loud speakers by student fronts of political organisations on the campus is not only causing serious noise pollution but also hampering academic activities at Dhaka University (DU).

Moreover, noisy processions on the academic building premises seriously disturb. Although students and teachers alike are annoyed with the noisy political activities, they are too scared to protest.

The DU authorities are yet to do anything to tackle the problem. Dean of Arts Faculty Prof. Kazi Shahidullah told The Daily Star that they had received complaints from both students and teachers. He said he himself had often faced the same problem during class hours.

The DU ordinances and regulations prohibit partying and other forms of entertainment at the university premises. Playing music and using loud speaker without permission from the Proctor during university hours is also barred. Non-compliance of the rules may lead to expulsion from the university.

"We are humbly appealing to the leaders of political parties at the university to stop using loud speakers during class hours, which start at 8 a.m. and finish at around 4 p.m.," Shahidullah said.

DU sources said Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student body of ruling Awami League, contributes most to noise pollution. Other organisations, no matter small or big, also play their part in total disregard of academic activities of the country's highest seat of learning.

Student leaders at the DU look at this from a totally different viewpoint, though. They say any ban on use of loud speakers on the campus will tanta

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Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?

The Daily Star - প্রথম আলো

Tipu Treatment Fund

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