

lawyers for Huda collect copies of HC verdict

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The lawyers for Major (rtd.) Bazil 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 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.) Bazil 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 Rainibazar 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 Kalaij 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, Matali, 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 Saiful 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.



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 government'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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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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Ad-interim bail for Amini

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mufti Fazlul Huq Amini, general secretary of the Islami Oikya 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.

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?

The Daily Star- অথবাওনা

Tipu Treatment Fund

Donate generously to this Fund
Save Tipu from Disability

Send donations to: Savings Account No. 25002111
Dhaka Bank Ltd, Karwan Bazar Branch, Dhaka



Members of the Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh, display banners and placards during a demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday protesting a move to establish an Engineering Staff College and introduce professional registration.

Batamul blast Mass hunger strike at Shaheed Minar June 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different cultural organisations of the country will observe a daylong mass hunger strike on June 1 at city's Central Shaheed Minar demanding a special tribunal to try those responsible for the bomb blast at Ramna on April 14.

Leaders of seven cultural organisations said this at a press conference in the city yesterday. They were, Ramendu Majumdar and Golam Kuddus of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, Sarwar Ali of Chhayanot, Syed Hasan Imam of Udichi, Wahidul Haque of Jatiya Rabindra Sangit Sammilon Parishad, Hasan Arif of Bangladesh Abritee Sammanoy Parishad and leaders of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation and Charu Shilpi Sangsads.

Ten persons were killed and 20 others injured in a bomb blast at Ramna Batamul during Pahela Baishakh celebrations on April 14.

The leaders expressed their dissatisfaction at the slow progress of investigation and authority's failure to identify the attackers and their patrons even a month and a half after the incident.

They demanded immediate arrest of and punitive action against all the culprits and also demanded involvement of international intelligence agencies in the investigation process.

"Those who do not believe in our independence and culture are the attackers. If we fail to try them, they will continue to attack," they said without identifying any political groups.

Terming the bomb blast incident as an attack on the heart of Bangladeshi culture, they said such attacks that have become frequent nowadays are

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No date finalised yet for Musharraf's visit to India

AP, Peshawar

Pakistan's Military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf will visit India soon for talks to resolve the protracted Kashmir dispute between the two nuclear powers, foreign minister Abdul Sattar said yesterday.

No date for Musharraf's visit to India has been finalised yet, the foreign minister told a news conference. But there won't be any delay from the Pakistani side in arranging talks with India, he said.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee Friday invited Musharraf for talks to end decades of tension over the Himalayan territory of Kashmir.

Vajpayee's surprise invitation to Musharraf marked a major shift in Indian policy. Until recently New Delhi refused to open talks with Pakistan, saying that Islamabad should first stop supporting Islamic militants fighting to end Indian rule in Kashmir.

Pakistan, which rejects Indian allegations, wants unconditional talks.

Musharraf, a hard-liner on Kashmir, was accused by India of masterminding a bloody border war between the two countries in Kashmir's Kargil region in the summer of 1999.

Sattar said Pakistan gave a positive response to the Indian invitation in the interest of peace. But he has no detail whether Musharraf formally replied to Vajpayee's invitation letter.

"The resolution of Kashmir has to be in conformity with the will of the

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