

BNP memo President urged to advise AL not to go for 'special law'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A BNP delegation yesterday met President Shahabuddin Ahmed at the Bangabhaban and submitted a memorandum requesting him to advise the ruling Awami League not to go for a new law providing 'special security' to the Prime Minister and her family members after her resignation.

The 11-member delegation comprising BNP Standing Committee members was led by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Prof AQM Badrudozza Chowdhury.

The memorandum said BNP came to know that the ruling Awami League was going to place a bill as a money bill in the parliament session

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3 new directors of Petrobangla

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday appointed three directors in Petrobangla which has been without top level officials for long, sources concerned said.

Managing Director of Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL) a sister concern of Petrobangla— Dr M Ismail and senior petrobangla official Ahsanullah have been appointed Director (Operations) and Director (Mines and Minerals) respectively and BAPEX Managing Director M Muktadir Ali has been appointed Director (Planning).

Ahsanullah was on current

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BSF hands over bodies of two Bangladeshis

UNB, Sunamganj

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) handed over the bodies of two Bangladeshi construction workers, who died in the Indian territory, to BDR on Sunday night.

The bodies were handed over after a company-level meeting between BDR and BSF at Doluroy BOP here earlier in the day.

Sources said Billal Hossain and Azizul Haq of sadar upazila in the district crossed the border into Indian territory in search of jobs. Later, they were found dead in a frontier jungle on Saturday.

The two construction workers died after they fell sick in the jungle, BDR sources said quoting BSF.

Postmortem of the bodies was carried out at a hospital in Shilong, the capital of Meghalaya.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 29		6.41 pm
May 30	5-11 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-20	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Death penalty of 3 cops upheld in Yasmeen Murder Case



Yasmeen

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld trial court's judgement awarding death penalty to three policemen for rape and murder of 17-year-old Yasmeen.

The Death Reference Bench of the High Court(HC) Comprising Justice Mohammad Abdul Matin and Justice Marziul Huq observed that the policemen deserved no mercy since they raped and murdered the helpless girl who sought their protection.

The three policemen are Sub-inspector Mainul Huq, constable Abdus Sattar and constable Amrital Barman, driver of police van.

The trial court in Rangpur on August 31, 1997 sentenced them to death for raping and strangulating Yasmeen, a domestic help, in Dinajpur on August 24, 1995.

The HC Bench in its verdict said death penalty is the only punishment the accused deserve since it found no scope to reduce the sentence. Citing an Indian Supreme Court verdict in a case of rape of a seven-year-old girl, the judges observed that Yasmin was raped and murdered by such people who are maintained by the state and the people for their protection

The judges suggested brining changes in the penal code and evidence act in the light of recommendations made by the Law Commission to prevent custodial deaths and rape so that police cannot escape punishment. They noted that it is difficult to bring charges against police for crimes committed in custody without witnesses and evidence.

They further said they are forced to make such observations in view of a rising trend of crimes against women and in line with the international conventions and human rights.

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Hasina approves draft manifesto

AL gathering information on BNP's polls preparation

ZAYADUL AHSAN and REAZ AHMAD

Having drafted its next election manifesto, the ruling Awami League is now busy keeping an eye on the poll-strategies being designed by its political opponents.

AL sources told The Daily Star that designated people from the party were busy gathering information on election preparation by the main opposition BNP. The BNP is setting out its strategies, manifesto and nominees at Haowa Bhavan, its poll office at Banani in the city.

Ruling party sources also said that advance knowledge of the poll preparation plans by the opposition would

give the AL an edge over its opponents and offset their anti-AL propaganda.

Sources confirmed that party president Sheikh Hasina has already okayed the draft manifesto. However, she has suggested a few insertions, they added.

A nine-member drafting committee headed by Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, who is the chief coordinator of the AL Election Steering Committee 2001, is now working on the draft to further improve on the manifesto before the central working committee endorses it.

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Judgement in Nikunja murder case today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Judgement in the sensational Nikunja Bihari Devnath Murder Case will be delivered today, court sources said.

The Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge, AFM Aminul Islam, will deliver the judgement.

Both prosecution and defence sides completed hearing of arguments in the case on May 14.

The court recorded statements of

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PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Vanishing greenery

Barren tract of land in the T&T area at Ukhia thana in Cox's Bazar bears an eloquent testimony to indiscriminate logging. With blessing from local administration high-ups, political leaders and forest officials, unscrupulous timber traders continue to chop down trees, wreaking havoc on eco-balance.

Plunder of forest resources unabated in Rangamati

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD, from Rangamati

Plunder of forest resources in Rangamati continues unabated, making the government's costly afforestation efforts futile.

Illegal extraction of timber and firewood has virtually made forest resources limited to only a few 'primary forests' and 'forest stands' of the Department of Forestry (DOF) and some privately owned hills, sources concerned said.

Despite a ban on collection of timber from reserved forests till 2005, illegal extraction through 'jote permit' or 'free permit' is continuing due to alleged corruption by a section of DOF officials, they said.

This has made the rate of felling threes more than the rate of planting, causing gradual depletion of valuable

timber resources and rise in government's expenditure.

Legal extraction of forest resources has also fallen drastically. Extraction of timber and firewood was 2.7 lakh cft (cubic feet) and 8.3 lakh cft respectively in 1999-2000 financial year against 16.9 lakh cft and 82 lakh cft in FY 1983-84, according to figures available from the DOF.

But this did not raise the number of standing trees, the sources told this correspondent during a recent visit to some forest areas.

In this regard, the sources quoted the latest ADB (Asian Development Bank) report which said the DOF "has failed in its role despite its full control over forest resources in the CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts)"

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Sale of duty-free imported fabrics in local markets

NBR identifies 37 garment factories

RAFIQ HASAN

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has identified 37 garment factories in Dhaka and Chittagong, which are directly involved in selling duty-free imported fabrics in the local market.

According to sources, these factories import materials under bond licence without paying any duty and tax, and then sell those using false and forged documents.

"It is believed that more than Tk one thousand crore have been evaded over the last decade this way," said a senior official at the NBR. "Owners of some of those garment factories have already made confessional statements to the customs investigation officials regarding their involvement."

In their confessional statements, these people have said that a group of clearing and forwarding agents, a section of the customs officials, some fabric whole-sellers in

Islampur and a number of bank officials are also involved in the corrupt practice.

The factories formed a syndicate in collaboration with the clearing and forwarding agents and some unscrupulous customs and bank officials, in their turn, helped release goods, which the whole-sellers sold in the local market.

The main body of the gang comprised owners of the factories, but the licenses of other houses were used for imports.

NBR investigators are sure certain that Khwaja Clearing and Forwarding Agency of Chittagong is involved in the crime, sources said. The owner of this agency has stopped using his license since

customs officials started monitoring activities of the firm. Now he is reportedly working with the license of other factories for clearing materials.

The NBR officials feel that criminal cases should be filed against owners of those garments and other

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An enthusiastic group of people scans the new voter list at Paltan Community Centre in the city yesterday to make sure their names have not been left out.

EC to prepare a voter list 'exclusively' for CHT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) will not prepare a voter list exclusively for the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), as demanded by the chairman of the CHT Regional Council recently.

"We have prepared a voter list in accordance with the Constitutional provisions. We have no option to go beyond the Constitution," Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed told a group of reporters yesterday.

At a recent press conference in Dhaka, Chairman of CHT Regional Council Jyotirindriyo Bodhipriyo Larma, popularly known as Shantu Larma, demanded a separate voter list for the CHT, which will enlist only the permanent residents. He

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Global Forum confce for fighting corruption opens in The Hague

SYED FAHIM MUNAIM, from The Hague

Ministers and experts from over 100 countries have gathered here at the Conference of the Global Forum for Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity.

Organised by the Netherlands government, the four-day (May 28-31) inter-governmental conference is taking place at the Netherlands Congress Centre.

This Global Forum II is a follow-up of the Global Forum I, held in Washington DC in 1999.

The general objective of Global Forum II is to confirm governments' commitments to fight corruption and promote integrity.

It is expected that the conference will adopt a Final Declaration containing a number of ideas related to future legal UN instrument against corruption, monitoring of effectiveness of national anti-corruption strategies and best practices.

The conference got off to an impressive start with an introductory speech by The Netherlands Minister of Justice, Mr Benk Korthals, who is the host of this conference.

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Crisis in JCD surfaces again

DU CORRESPONDENT

Crisis in BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) has resurfaced following announcement of its 251-member full-fledged committee on May 25.

Calling the new committee 'an organisation of non-students and terrorists', a substantial number of party leaders and activists who failed to get the expected posts in the committee refrained from JCD activities on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

JCD leaders fearing internal feud had postponed its planned processions and rallies on the Dhaka University campus on May 26 and 27 to celebrate the formation of the new committee.

Sources said three feuding JCD groups had taken positions on the campus on May 26.

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Mother, two sons rescued from traffickers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two children and their mother were rescued by a CID team from the Zia International Airport Sunday night while they were being trafficked to Dubai.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers said the boys were being taken to Dubai via Doha by a Qatar Airways flight to be used as camel jockey while the mother would have been subjected to sexual abuse.

Rubina, the mother, later said to the CID officials that she was told that her two children Tanjil, 5, and Shahidul, 3, would be provided with job and shelter in Dubai.

The CID also arrested four people- Iqbal, Mostafa and Ataur- from the airport area and Rafiq from his

Mohakhali residence- Sunday night on trafficking charges and took them into custody.

The victims have been kept at the CID office.

Police said Iqbal is the leader of the syndicate and his mother Morsheda, a domestic help in Dubai, arranged the act. Morsheda came to Bangladesh and contacted Rubina to work at a house in Dubai. When Rubina said that she could not go there as she had two children, Morsheda replied that she could take them with her.

Mostafa, an unmarried bearded youth was shown in the document as Rubina's husband. Iqbal and his

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