

22 jailed at Barisal for murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A court here sentenced 22 persons including two in absentia to life imprisonment yesterday.

According to the prosecution, the convicts murdered one Jasim and gouged out the eyes of three Selim Reza, Delwar Hossain and Dulal in Lamchari village under Sadar thana of the district on the evening of August 8, 1996, following an enmity.

Each of the convicts was jailed for 32 years. They were also fined Tk 12 thousand and in default to suffer five more years rigorous imprisonment each.

After examining records and 20 witnesses, Additional District and Sessions Judge Md. Jahangir Mollah handed down the punishment acquitting seven people of the charge.

Beauty Begum, Jasim's relative, filed a case with the Kotwali thana accusing 29 people.

Businessman shot

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the area when muggers waylaid his auto-rickshaw.

The muggers dragged Amran out of the vehicle, opened fire on him and took away Tk 40,000 from his possession.

Amran was admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Later, a large contingent of police was sent to the spot to carry out raids to arrest the gang of muggers.

In another incident at Halishahar area at around 12 noon yesterday, a group of terrorists lobbed cocktails at a team of patrol police when the team challenged them.

As police gave chase, the terrorists fled leaving behind the auto-rickshaw at the spot. None in the patrol team was however hurt.

UNFPA staff

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informed that many of his colleagues were also suffering from the stomach cramps.

"Don't worry . You are the 10th person to report sickness so far," the official was told.

ERD officials said they were not sure actually how many of them fell sick as many field level officials from outside Dhaka left here after eating the food.

"Some of our colleagues could not turn up in office today while some have reported for duty despite their sickness," one ERD official said.

UNFPA sources said they ordered 120 snack packets containing a club sandwich, a piece of fried chicken and a vegetable roll for the function when the ERD and UNFPA signed an agreement under which Bangladesh would receive 808,767 dollars for the Adolescent Health Programme.

Nikunja Bihari murder

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Nikunja Bihari Devnath, 55, Joint-Secretary to the Ministry of the Local Government and Rural Development, was knifed to death by muggers near the Swadhinata Sangram Sculpture on the Dhaka University campus at about 7:15 am on January 11, 2000 while he was returning to his Azimpur residence from the Kamalapur Railway Station.

His son Nirupam Devnath filed a murder case with the Ramna police station the same day.

The investigation officers of the case submitted a charge sheet before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM's) Court, Dhaka on February 22 last year, accusing eight people of the killing.

Charges were framed against the accused on July 9 the same year.

Shukur Ali and rickshawpuller Abdul Matin, the only eyewitness, gave judicial statements at the CMM's court, Dhaka during the investigation.

The court recorded statements of 25 of the 28 prosecution witnesses in the case and the prosecution and defence completed hearing of arguments on May 14 this year.

Metropolitan Public Prosecutor (PP) Quamrul Islam and Assistant Public Prosecutor SM Rafiqul Islam appeared for the prosecution while Advocate M A Sattar, Kazi Shahanara Yasmin, Haris Uddin, and Mohammad Magfur Rahman Sheikh pleaded for the defence.

The PP said the judgement was in accordance with law. Magfur Rahman, lawyer of Shukur Ali, refused to comment on the verdict.

However, he said he would file an appeal with the High Court against the verdict.

No representative of the complainant could be found at the court during the judgement.

SQ Chy detained

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men on board a Pajero jeep were brought to Kotwali thana and detained for questioning.

"We may arrest him if we get a decision from higher authorities" said a police official at the thana.

Another senior official of CMP said, "We will arrest Salahuddin if we find his involvement in the murder of Nitol".

Meanwhile, tension brewed in the port city after the killing of the JCD activist. BNP supporters brought out processions in the city protesting the killing. Additional police forces have been deployed.

The authorities have tightened security at Rangunia, 20 miles off the city, fearing clash between supporters of Salahuddin and BNP leader Abdullah Al Noman there. Several platoons of police have been deployed, police sources said.

Both the groups are trying to take hold of the first graveyard of Ziaur Rahman at Rangunia to observe his death anniversary.

Meanwhile, supporters of Salahuddin have called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in greater Chittagong district protesting the detention.

UNB adds from Chittagong: Expelled BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury was arrested yesterday after a top JCD cadre was shot dead near his hilltop home.

4 PBCP activists arrested in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

Four members of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party were arrested from village Chandrabash under Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga district after an hour's gun-battle with police at around 5pm yesterday.

Damurhuda thana police said SP of Chuadanga acting on a tip-off raided village Chandrabash with a heavy contingent of police when Sabuj, 28, the group leader, was holding a meeting with Taposh, 28, HayatAli, 27, and Asadul, 26.

As the four realised that police surrounded them from all sides, they opened fire on the police in a desperate bid to escape but were arrested after an exchange of fire for an hour.

Taposh was injured during the fight. Police seized a Chinese gun and 100 rounds of ammunition.

Sabuj and his men have been wanted in 30 cases of murder, robbery, rape, kidnap, looting arms, etc. The home ministry had earlier declared a one-lakh-taka reward for arresting Sabuj.

Ctg port

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The demands include introduction of incentive bonus, exempting the port from corporate tax and rescinding the provision of corporate tax in the proposed 2001-2002 budget and a special reserve of 20 per cent of foreign currency earned by the port for its own revenue.

The state minister held a close-door meeting with the port authority and discussed various issues, including corporate tax and filling up of the vacant posts and setting up of a container terminal.

The meeting decided to import 145 pieces of equipment for the port, including gantry cranes.

Port Chairman commodore Golam Rabbani and other high officials were present.

Ctg port worker leaders invited for talks

Flag meeting

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The BSF team included Commandant Risal Singh, Commandant Jagmohan Singh, Commandant D S Shidhu, Commandant P Ekka and Commandant M P S Khorana.

The officials of BDR and BSF also agreed to hold discussion on easing tension in the bordering areas, resisting smuggling, trafficking of women and identifying border pillars.

The two sides expressed the hoped that tension in the border areas of Rangpur and Dinajpur would be reduced to a large extent. They also hoped that normalcy would be restored in the areas.

'Save the Karnaphuli' movement to be launched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Concerned over the increasing pollution of river Karnaphuli, environmentally conscious people of Chittagong are going to launch a movement to protect the river.

Forum for Planned Chittagong a platform for scientists, social leaders, architects, engineers and journalists has taken the initiative under the banner 'Save the Karnaphuli'.

The movement aims at saving the Karnaphuli, a river that has contributed a lot to the development of the port city.

Exchanging views with the newsmen at a meeting in the city yesterday, the Forum leaders expressed grave concern over the increasing pollution of the river. Dumping of garbage and chemical wastes in the river and unplanned and illegal construction of installations on both sides of the river are obstructing the natural flow of the river, they said.

The leaders called upon all to come forward to create public awareness about the issue.

The Forum will organise a rally at

BCL leader shot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A leader of the ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was seriously injured, when his rivals fired on him in front of Dhaka College yesterday morning.

Witnesses said a group of youths suddenly turned up in front of the college at about 10:30 a.m. and shot Sheikh Ripon, the organising secretary of Dhaka College unit of BCL, who was in a rickshaw at that time. Two bullets hit his abdomen.

Ripon is a second year student of the Department of Botany and resident of room-12 in International Hostel at Dhaka College. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was operated on.

Sources said the incident was a sequel to the long-continued rivalry between two factions of BCL. When contacted, Dhaka College unit BCL President SR Palash, however, blamed the attack on Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP.

Two separate cases were filed

2242 arrested on third day of special drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested 2242 people including three identified terrorists and 1408 wanted criminals on the third day of month long country-wide special drive.

A total of 45 arms were recovered during the drive and 13 cases were filed in this connection.

Our correspondent from Magura said police arrested 26 people including two listed criminals on the third day of the drive.

Separate cases were filed with concerned police stations.

6 ex-army officers

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six officials had violated the Official Secrets Act, 1923. The act provides for punishment in the form of two years' imprisonment or fine or the both in violation of the provisions of the Act.

After a hefty debate over the report submitted by DGDFI Maj. Gen. Nazrul Islam, the meeting suggested action against the former military officers as quickly as possible.

Committee members Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, Col. (retd.) Shawkot Ali and Faruk Khan of the ruling party, Prof. Rezaul Karim of opposition BNP and Golam Mohammad Kader of Jatiya Party participated in the debate. The meeting was presided over by committee chairman Lt. Gen. (retd.) M Shafiullah.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is also in charge of Defence portfolio, was scheduled to attend the meeting for the first time but did not turn up, the sources said.

When asked by the meeting members, the defence secretary said that there should be a joint investigation by the home and information ministries before going for any action against the former officials. He said the two ministries are concerned about the matter.

G M Kader told the meeting that the six officials had violated the rule, and the government should act against them. He said the delay in taking action against them is a failure on the part of the government.

BNP lawmaker Rezaul Karim said they (the six officials) made a mistake by giving the interviews.

Anniversary of Zia's death today

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dom fighter and former President. Zia's praiseworthy role as the commander of 'Z' force during the War of Liberation is an inseparable part of the history of Bangladesh. He held general election in 1979 to withdraw the martial law promulgated in 1975, President said.

President Shahabuddin said all political parties took part in that general election and after the polls, Zia had withdrawn the martial law and re-established the presidential form of government.

The killing of President Ziaur Rahman by some army personnel at Chittagong Circuit House on the night of May 30, 1981, is another disgraceful event in the nation's history, he added.

The President prayed for peace of the departed soul of Ziaur Rahman.

BNP and its front organisations have taken up elaborate programmes in observance of the death anniversary. The programmes include laying of wreaths at the mazar of Ziaur

One in every 10 in N-dists has Filaria

FROM PAGE 12

affected regions after Africa.

According to WHO, one billion people or 20 per cent of the world's population are at risk of being attacked with the disease.

It is caused by 'Wuchereria Bancrofti' parasite, which remains inactive for several years before it attacks small tissues (lymph) in the body. It gradually destroys the capacity of tissues to produce white blood cells, thereby destroying the defence system in the body.

"It is better to start prevention now before the disease spreads to other areas. Those carrying the parasite can easily avoid developing the disease by taking curative drugs", said Dr Moazzem Hossain, Programme Manager for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (PELF), while talking with a group of journalists in Panchagarh.

There are three stages of the disease - chronic, acute and 'asymptomatic'. In asymptomatic stage, the parasite attacks its host but shows no symptoms what so ever for several years. It gradually attacks the lung and the kidney, leading to complications, especially in the kidney.

In chronic stage, the parasite remains inactive for 3 to 20 years before it attacks limbs and breasts. In case of boys, the attack leads to massive enlargement of testes,

the Engineers Institute auditorium in collaboration with Poribesh Rakkha Shapoth (Parosh) of Dhaka and NGO Alliance of Chittagong at 4 pm on May 31.

Presided over by executive vice president of the Forum Engr ABMA Baset, the meeting was attended by Engr Q S Touheed, Abul Momen, Engr AKM Fazlullah, Faruq-e-Azam, Md Shahidul Islam, Engr Shubhashis Chandra Barua, Zarina Hossain and Dr. Shafiq Hyder Chowdhury.

Nikunja's wife

FROM PAGE 1

became furious and tried to break the police bastion.

However, they failed as there was tight security at and around the court premises. Hundreds of policemen cordoned off the entire court-house where more than 500 people had come to hear the verdict.

Within half an hour of the pronouncement of judgement in the crowded room, the accused were led to a police van to be taken to the Dhaka Central Jail. Police struggled to take them to the van that was about hundred yards from the courtroom.

The accused shouted at the judge and also swore outside the court premises.

The families of the convicts broke in tears. Some of them threw themselves on the floor trying to prevent the police from taking the convicts to the van.

They rejected the verdict and some of them also tried to unleash violence.

Police also prevented the public from reaching the convicts.

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"But why did the Awami League government not take action against them?" he asked.

Faruk Khan of the ruling Awami League said there was no need to conduct any inquiry against them. "They didn't disown or contradict the statements published in the press even after eight months. It is clear now that they have violated the oath they had taken for the state."

He, however, suggested action against them, which the meeting unanimously agreed.

G M Kader also told the meeting that General Mustafizur Rahman, currently on LPR, has been availing himself of army facilities while pursuing politics in Rangpur, which is unlawful. A ruling party lawmaker, in reply, said many army officials had done so while they were in service in the past.

'India trying to resolve border problems under '74 agreement'

BSS, New Delhi

India trying constantly to resolve all outstanding issues relating to its 1974 land boundary agreement with Bangladesh, a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said here yesterday.

At a press briefing, the spokesman said the two countries had set up two working groups on it and the terms of reference of the committees were proposed.

Replying to a question on a press report that the official level talks between the two countries would be held in the first week of June in New Delhi while the second round in Dhaka in the middle of the same month, the spokesman said, "We understand that there are proposals for a back to back visit from Bangladesh to India and from India to Bangladesh".

These proposals, he said, were under active consideration of the government.

He said the dates for the proposed visits would be announced officially as soon as they are finalised.

Musharraf

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Meanwhile, violence in Indian Kashmir continued unabated yesterday.

Islamic guerrillas tried to assassinate a federal minister who is the son of the top elected leader in Kashmir but missed their target and injured three schoolgirls, officials said.

The grenade attack was carried out at a girls' school in Srinagar, summer capital of Indian Kashmir.

Omar Abdullah, the junior minister for commerce, escaped unhurt and the schoolgirls were admitted to a local hospital, a federal Home Ministry official said. Abdullah is the son of Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, the highest elected leader of Jammu-Kashmir state.

Rupsha Bridge

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construction of the project is Shimizu-ITD, while RHD will act as executing agency, sources said.

The total cost for construction of bridge has been estimated at Tk 582 crore of which JBIC will provide Tk 422 crore. Tk 416.21 cr will be spent for construction of the main structure of the bridge. Tk 38.63 crore will be spent for compensating the landowners while Tk 36.16 cr as consultation fee. Another Tk 100 crore will be spent for development of 17 kilometre Bangabandhu bypass road which is not directly part of the Rupsha Bridge Project (RBP) but essential for the operation of the bridge, sources said.

Meanwhile, security measures have been beefed up in the entire city. All roads from Rupsha to Labonchora have been beautifully decorated. A large podium has been built at Labonchora where Prime Minister will address a public meeting.

Jail killing

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Eight of the 21 accused, Taher udding Thakur, Shah Moazzem Hossain, KM Obaidur Rahman, Nurul Islam Monsoor, Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farookur Rahman, Lt Col (Retd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj (Retd) Bazlul Huda and Maj (Retd) Kharuzzaman are now detained at the Dhaka Central Jail. They were produced before the court during the hearing.

Metropolitan PP Quamrul Islam appeared for the state while Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, TM Akbar, Haji Nazrul Islam, Abdul Majid Munshi, ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul, Mohammad Hanif, Mohammad Arshadul Haque, SM Rafiqul Islam for the accused.

BNP protests reports on expelled leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has protested some newspaper reports that party policymakers are under pressure to backtrack from its expulsion order on two BNP leaders.

In a statement yesterday, Ahmed Nazir, the information and research secretary to BNP and press secretary to BNP chairperson, expressed surprise on the reports published in some newspapers in last few days.

He said the reports relating to SQ Chowdhury and Anwar Zahid are false. The BNP Standing Committee expelled these 'controversial' persons from the party on charge of anti-party activities after it found them guilty, he added.

"The decision was unanimous. Therefore, the reports are fabricated and imaginary," Ahmed Nazir said.

Another report that some diplomats in Dhaka are lobbying BNP hierarchy to get the expelled leaders back is also false, the press secretary added.

"The expulsion order is not related to diplomacy or international relations in any way. So, the question of lobbying by the foreign diplomats cannot arise at all. Besides, this type of lobbying is contrary to diplomatic norms," Nazir observed.

PSA ultra vires Constitution Says Dr Kamal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain has said the Public Safety Act (PSA) *ultra vires* the Constitution as it denies bail to an offender.

Arguing in favour of the writ petition filed by BNP MP M Murshed Khan challenging the PSA, Dr Kamal also said that the government "committed a fraud" by getting the PSA passed in parliament as a money bill.

Citing two rulings of the US Supreme Court scrapping special powers of police in Chicago and California states to arrest criminals, he said the court agreed that those were for nabbing criminals but were detrimental to fundamental rights guaranteed by the US Constitution.

The PSA provides a Sub-inspector of police arbitrary powers to override the powers of a Magistrate to grant bail, Dr Kamal said

Jubo Dal activist murdered in Shahjadpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal activist was stabbed to death by the miscreants at Narina Kheaghat under Shahjadpur upazila in Sirajganj on Monday night.

The victim was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 26, son of Abdur Rahman of village Char Angaru under Shahjadpur upazila and a member of local Jubo Dal.

Some miscreants called him out of his house at about 11-30 pm and stabbed him indiscriminately. He died on the spot, police said. His body was sent to Sirajganj General Hospital for autopsy.

A case was lodged with Shahjadpur thana. None was arrested in this connection.

Ahmed Nazir said BNP is a democratic political party and all activities of the party are determined by its constitution.

The BNP press secretary requested the national dailies to refrain from publishing such "untrue and fabricated" news in future.

On May 10, BNP Standing Committee expelled Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury and Anwar Zahid on charge of violating party discipline and acting against its interests.

Gunfight at Comilla slum in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two groups of armed miscreants traded fire at Comilla slum in the city's Agargaon area to establish their supremacy in the drug trading.

Police said armed groups one led by Hasan and another led by Rokon clashed over drug trading at about 10 am yesterday.

They also exploded several crackers during the gunfight which lasted for about half an hour.

7-yr-old boy drowns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seven-year-old boy drowned in a pond in the city's Najirbagh area yesterday noon.

Riaz alias Apon, son of Mujibur Rahman, was playing with his friends in the field just close to the pond yesterday morning. At one stage, the ball fell into the water. When Riaz tried to pick up the ball from the pond, he drowned in the water.

The local people rushed to the spot on hearing his friends' cry for help. Police recovered the body from the pond at about 12:15 p.m. and sent it to the Mirford Hospital for autopsy.

Father of the victim filed a case with Kotwali police station.

Taliban activists were going to join workshop on jihad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The suspected Taliban activists told police that they were bound for the Sundarbans to attend a workshop on how to wage jihad.

After completing the training in the workshop we were scheduled to go to a Muslim country of the sub-continent, they said during interrogation to a five-member team.

Police continued hunt for three more suspected Taliban activists of the same group who escaped from the trawler during raid on Monday morning. The three were commanders of the arrested young Taliban activists, it is learnt. Our commanders have their permanent shelters somewhere in the Sundarbans, they said.

The arrested were allegedly tortured by SI Siddique of Khulna thana on Monday night beyond knowledge of the 5-member team of interrogators.

They have vowed not to disclose their motive for going to a Muslim country, said one of the interrogators said.

The suspected Talibans complained that police did not allow them to offer prayers. Which the OC denied.

