

Batamul carnage

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case in the court against "such falsehood."

Moudud alleged that a campaign had been launched to destroy his reputation and the image of the judiciary.

"Where was Zillur Rahman when his party colleagues paraded the street with sticks chanting slogans against the High Court."

"It's totally politically motivated. Since the image of the Supreme Court is involved, they should say something. We believe in transparency of the judiciary and now it's up to the Supreme Court."

Moudud explained about his role as a senior lawyer in the bail prayers for accused Abdul Awal, Enayet and Habibur Rahman moved by Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian following the co-counsel's request as he was present at the courtroom at the time.

"For the prayers, we submitted five annexures as grounds but no medical report," he said adding that the reference of the medical report was mentioned in the court order. "So it's up to the honourable court," he told journalists.

While granting bail, the High Court bench comprising Justice Hamidul Haque and Justice Abdur Razzaque wrote: It appears from the medical report that the doctors found the injuries to have been caused by gunshots and no other

type of injury was found on the body of the victims.

The bail order in the case of the gruesome killings by bombing Pahela Baishakh celebrations at Ramna Batamul on April 14, 2001 was passed on August 29 last during the caretaker government of Justice Latifur Rahman.

"We know it was a bomb explosion and not a shooting incident in Ramna on that day. But the order shows only one victim describing his wounds to have been caused by gun shots," said Moudud Ahmed again declining to elaborate further.

Cement clinker

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cial import of clinker.

President of the association Ahmed Akbar Sobhan could not be reached for his comment. But an official of the association told The Daily Star last night that the step would not have any negative impact on genuine cement producers.

"Cement prices would also not be affected due to the regulatory duty," he said.

The existing 73 plants have a capacity of producing around one crore tones of cement annually against the current requirement of 60 lakh tones.

BNP, Jamaat bare

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session, stunning many in the House, as such ministerial statements are usually made between two listed items.

Law Minister Moudud first protested the incident after the Maghreb recess when the deputy speaker took over the chair.

"I don't understand how a statement could be allowed to be made interrupting the question-answer session. We are surprised by it," Moudud told the deputy speaker.

In his bid to defend the chair, the deputy speaker said the speaker has the prerogative to allow a minister to issue a statement any time under Rule 300.

As the law minister referred to the parliamentary practice, the deputy speaker admitted that the speaker's act was 'unprecedented' and that such statements are generally issued between two agenda.

Joining the debate, Industries Minister MK Anwar said he did not know of any such practices. "No uncheduled issue can be raised even in the zero hours (between two agenda) excepting questions pertaining to the running of the House," he said.

However, the deputy speaker insisted that any minister could issue a statement any time if permitted by the chair as the rule does not specify the time of issuance.

The law minister rose again to contradict the chair. "A minister cannot issue a statement whenever he or she wishes to" he said. "It must be done between two agenda with the chair's approval."

Angered by Saifur's statement, Jamaat MP Abdus Sobhan reminded the chair that he and another lawmaker of his party asked for a general discussion on Saturday on the killings of Muslims in India. He said the prime minister's parliamentary affairs adviser assured them of holding such a discussion on the premier's return.

"I am disgusted to note that Mr. Saifur only mentioned the killing of people in the Indian communal violence and not the gruesome killing of Muslims. Is he ashamed to say this?" an angry Sobhan said. He compared Saifur with opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who he said also avoided issue of killings of Muslims.

The Jamaat lawmaker also asked the chair to expunge the government's statement. But the deputy speaker said this is not possible.

AL: Arms

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deposition of arms before the election (October 1) was not applicable to Hasina and Rehana, as they were under the cover of the Special Security Act, the letter said.

It said that as the opposition leader is now out of Dhaka and Rehana is abroad, necessary legal steps will be taken after their return.

Alauddin Ahmed Chowdhury, APS to the opposition leader, submitted the letter to Home Secretary Dr Sada't Hossain requesting him to take necessary steps in this regard.

Party sources said Hasina's arms licence was originally issued to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and after his assassination in 1975 it was transferred to her.

Teenage girl gangraped in Dohar

UNB, Dhaka

A teenage girl was gangraped by a group of young people at Haller Bazar in Dohar in Saturday night.

The victim hailing from Faridpur was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Police said the girl was a domestic help at a house in Dohar. She was sacked by her employer a few hours before the incident.

Later, the girl went to Haller Bazar for shelter. At one stage, some youths raped her at the Bazar. As she cried for help, local people rushed the spot but could not catch any of the rapists.

Police rescued the girl and sent her to DMCH for treatment and medical report.

Indian Speaker

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Global Peace Initiative is a Washington DC-based interfaith relief group, founded by an Indian Christian.

Huckabee, who traveled in another helicopter to Hyderabad, was safe. Huckabee, a former pastor, is in India at the invitation of Global Peace to see their programmes for orphans and homeless women.

Balayogi, a trained lawyer and magistrate, was elected speaker of the Lok Sabha, the decision-making lower house of parliament, for a second term in 1999. He belonged to the regional Telugu Desam Party, which is based in Andhra Pradesh, Telugu Desam, a secular party, is the second largest member of the 21-party governing coalition led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Balayogi's death was unrelated to the ongoing religious clashes in western India.



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina waves to the crowd before addressing a rally at Tanor Gollapara in Rajshahi yesterday.

Dead people vote in Zimbabwe

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led by President Robert Mugabe has come under intense criticism by the media following reports of political violence initiated by the ruling party.

With the elections scheduled for March 9 and 10, Zimbabwe has been the main focus of the media at CHOGM.

According to Holland, there is a possibility of vote-rigging in the elections, as the government militia controls most polling stations.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), she thinks, should set up an electoral mission in Zimbabwe to ensure fair voter registration.

"There are one million dead people, who vote every year," says Holland alluding to false registration of voters.

"There are roadblocks in rural areas and the soldiers will ask you for a ruling party card. If you do not have it, they will confiscate your ID card so that you cannot vote. Alternatively, they will kidnap you and take you to a 're-education centre' called Pungwe where they will 'teach' you all night on the identity of the ruling party candidate and that you should vote for it."

Despite such alleged intimidation, Holland and her party members believe they will win the election. "More than 80 per cent of the people do not want Mugabe. They want the MDC. We are confident because they can reduce only a margin of the votes by rigging. Also we don't believe all militiamen support Mugabe," she went on.

Led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the

MDC which its members nickname 'Mummy, Daddy, Children' includes everybody.

Holland's party has submitted a statement to the Commonwealth listing the allegations against the Mugabe government, including rape, torture and murder of MDC supporters.

The breach of the international standards, including the United Nations Charter and the Commonwealth Harare Declaration, unplanned land reform that is displacing thousands of black farmers, lack of access by the opposition to the public media, limited access of international monitors and journalists and infringement of voting rights have also been included.

The statement, signed by Holland and MDC's shadow foreign minister, also made four demands -- suspension of Zimbabwe's membership to the Commonwealth, a warning to the Mugabe Government against a stolen election, presence of election observers in Zimbabwe for four weeks after the election, and the Commonwealth's preparation for emergency food and medical assistance.

"You see if Mugabe steals the elections then at least CMAG will already know that we have appealed for suspension. If we don't ask for suspension we will have to wait another two years when the Commonwealth will meet again."

Holland alleges that she herself has been the target of repression. There were five attempts to kill the MDC presidential candidate, she

Tale of rape

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involvement in the incident, the arbitration yielded no result.

Left with no way out, Johura lodged a petition on February 12 with the magistrate's court that ordered the authorities concerned to receive the complaint as a regular case.

But police did not respond to the court order, which resulted in another remorseful incident.

Again on February 28, the miscreants kidnapped her from her residence within 19 days of the first incident and killed her after a gangrape.

Police recovered the body from in front of Sayem's house and filed a murder case against 12 people. Arrested were only four accused.

The preliminary report by a board of three physicians -- formed for autopsy -- showed evidences of rape.

Superintendent of Police (SP) in Natore Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star that nobody informed the police about the incident earlier.

"Sayem had a love affair with Sabina and her mother pressed Sayem to marry her daughter," said the SP adding that the village arbitration fined Syem Tk 15,000.

Taraj murder

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CMM's Court on December 26 last year.

After hearing both sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Kazi Meraj Hossain instructed CID on January 6 to reinvestigate the case.

But the same court stayed the order for 15 days when the defence lawyers filed a petition stating that they would file a criminal revision with the higher court against the order.

Later, the defence lawyers filed a revision with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka on January 19.

Slum dwellers

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Colony' after obtaining a court verdict. A previous bid to clear the land five months ago was postponed due to protests by the dwellers.

Eleven platoons of police including one platoon of female law enforcers took part in the about three-hour eviction drive at around 11:00am.

According to witnesses, the eviction team faced stiff resistance from the slum dwellers. After two hours of scuffle, some agitated slum dwellers set fires to the vacated houses.

Several hundred thatched houses were gutted in the fire before fire fighters could bring it under control.

Agitated female slum dwellers put up barricades and scuffled with female police personnel. This led to a clash between the slum dwellers, eviction workers and the police.

Gujarat violence

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other communally sensitive parts of India, the violence was largely restricted to Gujarat.

However, the sense of national crisis was palpable and Vajpayee's government remained under intense pressure to prevent any further communal outbreak.

AP from New Delhi reports: Police have begun clamping down on thousands of Hindu nationalists streaming into Ayodhya town to build a temple at the site of a Muslim mosque razed by Hindus in 1992.

The temple building campaign was a factor in the fierce religious fighting that tore through Gujarat.

Hundreds of Hindu volunteers who flocked to Ayodhya were being moved out in buses, and police blocked the gates of the workshop where carved stones for the temple have been stacked ahead of the planned March 15 construction.

The head of a powerful Hindu nationalist group on Saturday urged an end to this week's deadly rioting in which hundreds of Muslims have been killed.

In a statement released in New Delhi, Hindu Volunteer Corps chief K.C. Sudarshan also blamed "Pakistani-inspired" forces for the burning of a train full of Hindus on their way out of Ayodhya on Wednesday.



Namaz-e-Janaza for journalist Harun-or-Rashid was held at Hadis Park in Khulna yesterday.

Afghan peacekeeping

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They feel that the interim government of Hamid Karzai is still heading a shaky coalition and Dhaka should take more time before it enters into any "collaborative arrangement". Recently, there were reports of firings on peacekeepers in Afghanistan.

The British led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is now leading the peace enforcement action in Kabul.

The ISAF, popularly known as Afghanistan Stabilisation Force, was set up by the Security Council following a request on December 19 by British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw.

At a news briefing last week, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mabin Chowdhury said the issue of Bangladesh's participation in the peacekeeping came up for discussion with his British counterpart Sir Michel Jay during his recent visit to London.

Asked about Dhaka's current position, he said, "We do not want to go (to Afghanistan) in a combatant role. He also referred to the Trust Fund created for funding the participation of foreign peacekeepers and said there was yet to be any significant development in raising the Fund.

Foreign Minister to Dhaka, Foreign Minister Morshed Khan was asked about Bangladesh's position on sending peacekeepers. He did not rule out participation but said there was no decision yet. "We are looking into the funding", he had said.

Informed sources however said that there has been a re-thinking on the issue.

"Funds would be no problem if Bangladesh decides to participate in the peacekeeping role in Afghanistan," said a senior diplomat.

Although normal peacekeeping operations are under Article VI of the UN Charter, the Stabilisation Force in Afghanistan has been created under Chapter VII of the Charter, which gives scope for "enforcement action".

He said, "Troops are always ready to play a combatant role even if peacekeeping generally involves the role of being an armed observer. Even de-mining operations has risks. Bangladesh soldiers earlier involved themselves in such risky operations and earned reputation as in Kuwait."

Another official said, Bangladesh is bypassing an opportunity to participate in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process of Afghanistan, which he preferred to term a "big business opportunity."

s a i d . Holland got only 3,000 votes in the parliamentary elections in 2000, and about 23,000 votes had been 'stolen', she said. Holland challenged the election results in court.

Holland, a former teacher of journalism, is now a full-time politician. She is the founder member of MDC. Married to an Australian, she has two children and one grandson.

Hartal in Khulna

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and terrorists of political parties, police officials believe.

Harun joined Dainik Purbanchal in 1987. Since then he has been boldly writing stories against terrorist activities of all outlawed organisations, corrupt practices of government and financial institutions and politicisation of administration.

Harun received death threats over phone from BPCP cadres for writing a story on the investigation of 'KU treasurer murder case' recently published in Dainik Purbanchal.

Besides, he was also on the 'hit-list' of PBCP, said his relatives.

He was given threat by PBCP armed cadres for his story on the gunbattles between BPCP and BCP in Rupsha and Terokheda upazilas recently, sources said.

Meanwhile, an unidentified young man was shot dead allegedly by PBCP cadres at Daspara under Fakirhat thana of Bagerhat district yesterday noon.

Witnesses said the victim was shot in his chest, neck and back. He died on the spot.

Tale of rape

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Altaf: Law & order

FROM PAGE 12
ent and talked to the newsmen.

The home secretary said terrorism spread across the country for various reasons and the government was trying to check it with utmost sincerity.

Various matters came up at the meeting that started with observation of one-minute silence in memory of journalist Harun-ur-Rashid who was killed in Khulna Saturday night.

Expressing his good intentions to control violence the home minister claimed that the situation was now far better than what it was in the past, before they came to power.

"If you compare the present situation with previous one we must say it is now fully under control."

Replying to a question about cancellation of arms licenses, he said that on average 34 arms licenses were given everyday in the last six months of the Awami League government.

And, he further said, on average 84 arms licenses were issued everyday in the last month of AL's rule. "How is it possible?" the minister posed a question.

The home secretary said the government was now verifying all the licensed arms (pistols and revolvers) issued in haste from

WB consultant

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Humayun Azad Box participated in the dialogue.

CPD executive director Debapriya Bhattacharya said callous remarks by WB consultants could damage the image of Bangladesh.

Local business people also contradicted Pursell when he, in his presentation, exclusively praised India for initiating steps to liberalise its market.

"All the South Asian countries have liberalised much faster than India," said FBCCI executive member Rauf Chowdhury.

South Asian countries would do much better if they increased their trade integration with the rest of the world rather than pursuing regional preferential arrangement, the WB consultant observed.

About SAFTA, Garry Pursell said it would benefit Bangladesh only if maximum tariff of respective countries is ten per cent.

The consultant was also apprehensive about the complexity in monitoring exporting and importing countries.

But leading industrialist Latifur Rahman rejected the notion of any such complexity. In this regard, he referred to the Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector where intermediate goods are being imported and finished RMG products exported.

"This is well accepted by the EU and I see no complexity here", Latifur Rahman said.

Trade barriers

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The average Westerner consumed 200 litres of milk a year, compared to the average African who drank just 30, he said. The situation was the same for beef and textiles. The result starvation in Africa, and a glut in the West.

Secretary General Don McKinnon in his opening speech on Saturday took pains to stress the need to tackle poverty by harnessing the benefits of globalisation.

"The widening gap between rich and poor is one of the gravest problems we face today. Poverty means disease, hunger, no clean water, limited communications. It is deeply destabilising and one of the greatest threats to democracy.

"No one in the world can have a secure future when half the world has no future at all."

The issue of globalisation has polarised peoples around the world, with riots breaking out on the streets of major cities such as Seattle as anti-capitalist demonstrators drummed home their message outside international conferences.

But McKinnon sought to allay the fears of those who believe many smaller nations have nothing to benefit from globalisation.

"In the Commonwealth we want to have a spirit of generous globalisation. We must be committed to ensure that the benefits of technological advances and real liberalisation are shared more equitably.

Mahima rapists

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cases by Mahima's father.

Mahima, daughter of an Awami League worker, was kidnapped from the backyard of her house on gun point on February 15 and gangraped allegedly by four BNP activists -- Selim, Faruk, Farid and Uzzal. They also took photos of the rape incident and distributed those among local people to humiliate the family as they worked for Awami League in the last general election.

Local people alleged that Uzzal's father Mosahraff Hossain, an influential businessman and a BNP worker, helped the culprits distribute the photos among shopkeepers in the area.

It all started before the October general election, centering the Bangabandhu Club there. Mahima's brother Jahangir Hossain Pramanik was its secretary. After the election, more than 100 BNP activists came from Puthiya Bazar and raged the club to the ground.

The brutalities on Mahima took place within a month of demolition of the club.

The incidents sparked widespread condemnation and outcry throughout the country.

Speaking about the four youths accused in the rape case, a small trader in the area said, "Annoyed by the indecent and unruly behaviour of the four gangsters, many women of this area avoided village roads not to see them on the way".

The middle-aged trader said in anguish, "I once heard the gang-

sters calling Mahima 'a heroin of American blue film' to humiliate her in public as she came out of her house after the February 15 incident".

Another neighbor of Mahima, said he saw Mahima at hospital after she took pesticide to commit suicide. He also confirmed involvement of the four accused youths in the gang-rape.

The same gang had kidnapped another girl earlier. "Had the earlier kidnapping been tried, the gangsters would not have dared to kidnap Mahima," he added.

The names of the trader and the neighbour are not being published for the sake of their security.

Police so far arrested six of the FIR-named accused including Ujjal who was directly involved in the gang-rape, investigation officer of the cases Sub-Inspector Sanaullah told this correspondent yesterday.

"We are working round the clock to nab the absconding culprits at any cost," Nurul Islam, OC of Puthiya thana said.

Replying to a question, the OC said there is no political intervention regarding this case.

As the opposition Awami League is trying to expose the identity of the culprits, local lawmaker Advocate Nadim Mostafa of BNP has circulated a poster demanding punishment of the culprits.

In the poster, he said criminals have no party and demanded their trial.

During the recent visit of Iranian