

Hanif's son arrested on suspicion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Sayeed Khokon, Awami League leader and son of former Dhaka mayor Mohammad Hanif, was arrested in the city late Saturday night and sent to the Dhaka central Jail on a 30-day detention after rejection of his bail petition yesterday.

An AL nominee from Dhaka-7 (Kotwali-Sutrapur) constituency in the last parliamentary election, Khokon was arrested from his residence under Khilgaon thana by a team of DB police led by additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Ruhul Amin at about 11pm on Saturday.

Khokon, arrested without any warrant, was later shown arrested under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

DB police brought Khokon in the court hajat at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at about 3:15pm yesterday with a forwarding report. Later, he was brought to the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Nurul Karim Majumdar at 5:00pm.

In its forwarding report, police said Khokon is a criminal godfather and that it was necessary to restrain him from indulging in various criminal activities. The report further said Khokon had been making provocative statements against the government in public meetings of Awami League.

Police also submitted a petition seeking detention under the Special Powers Act of 1974.

Defence lawyers advocate Sayed Rezaul Rahman, M Saijwar Hossain, Kamrul Islam, Sahara Khatun, Sudhir Kumar Hajra, Abdullah Abu and Abdur Rahman Howladar submitted three separate petitions for Khokon's bail, first class division

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3 cadres of Hazari Bahini get life term

UNB, Feni

Two notorious cadres of 'Hazari Bahini' were yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment.

The convicts are Maidul Islam Lavlu, former district BCL president and chief bodyguard of Hazari and Asadullah Sumon, former BCL town unit president, were tried in absentia.

They were also fined Tk 5,000 each, in default, to suffer 6 more months of imprisonment.

According to prosecution, Lavlu and Sumon abducted Ashrafal Alam 22, from Trunk Road in the town on August 25, 1995 and beat him mercilessly. Alam was rushed to Pangu Hospital in Dhaka where he died on September 8 the same year.

In another case Didarul Kabir Ratan, a cadre of Hazari Bahini and Daganbhuiyan Thana unit of BCL, was awarded seven years' imprisonment and a fine of Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer six more months in jail.

Didar, who is now in custody, had kidnapped Mobashwera Akter from her house on May 4, 1991 and tried to violate her. As local people rushed for her safety, Didar fled the scene.

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PHOTO: STAR

COLOSSAL CLOSURE...the management of the Adamjee Jute Mills disburses the dues among workers (left) just ahead of its shutdown yesterday; two workers (middle) inside the mills embrace for one last time; and wives and relatives of workers leave the mill premises in tears.

Mapping soil fertility GIS being applied to prepare database for better yield

REAZ AHMAD

Amid the looming crisis of soil-nutrients depletion, the country has recently started application of 'geographic information systems' (GIS) to develop a database to maximise crop yields.

The study on soil nutrients in some parts of the country has begun on a pilot basis so that models can be developed to prepare a detailed database on soil fertility across the country, said official sources.

The study came underway at a time when Bangladesh had just attained food autarky two years ago despite rapid depletions of both croplands and soil fertility.

Experts apart, policymakers, agriculturists and scientists are now equally worried about the use of 'unbalanced' fertilisers with a far-reaching impact on the agrarian economy.

According to official statistics, 60 per cent of croplands are highly deficient in organic nutrients. Also, the country is losing 221 hectares of arable land each day to the development of urban and rural infrastructures, housings and industries.

Under the project called Poverty Elimination through Rice Research Assistance (PETTRA) of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), experts of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) and Agricultural Advisory Society (AAS) are applying GIS technology as well as farmers' indigenous knowledge to prepare the database of soil nutrient conditions in 12 villages in two northeastern districts -- Moulvibazar and Habiganj.

In this exercise, experts are using the farmers' maps and assessments on the fertility level of different plots in analysing the overall soil conditions. Besides, soil specimens are being examined at the BRRI laboratory.

GIS specialist Dr Tariful Islam recently told The Daily Star that the study had been carried out in January to June, 2002 and hoped the database derived from the study would help evolve better soil nutrient management.

"Besides, areas having similarities in eco-agricultural pattern can also exploit the results drawn from the 12-village GIS study programme," said Dr Islam. Dr MA

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Students of AJM-run schools to get admission elsewhere

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has instructed the Ministry of Education to ensure that students of the educational institutions run by Adamjee Jute Mills could get admission to any government/non-government educational institutions in areas where they will go or live with their guardians.

The instruction came in the wake of the situation created following the closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills.

These students would get the opportunity to register and appear at examinations from education boards with jurisdiction over their respective educational institutions, an Education Ministry handout said yesterday.

The government would also sympathetically consider the issue of alternative employment of the teachers and employees of the educational institutions in Adamjee Jute Mills area that have been shut down.

Three Indian ministers resign

AFP, New Delhi

Three Indian cabinet ministers resigned yesterday ahead of a major revamp of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's cabinet aimed at toning up the federal administration, officials here said.

Health Minister C.P. Thakur was ordered to resign ahead of Monday's revamp and linked the step to an alleged plot against him by the country's powerful tobacco lobby.

Thakur was widely expected to be kicked out from Vajpayee's ministerial council on Monday if he had not resigned.

Law Minister Arun Jaitley and Rural Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu also put in their papers Sunday evening amid speculation

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Kuwait hangs three Bangladeshis despite int'l outcry

AFP, Kuwait City

Kuwait hanged three Bangladeshis convicted murderers yesterday before letting the public view the dead bodies still dangling from the gallows, despite international appeals to spare their lives.

Mohammad Zahar Abdul Sattar, Anwar al-Zamaan and Anwar Khan Mohammad were executed behind closed doors around 8:10 (0510 GMT).

Hundreds of Kuwaitis and expatriates, including a few children, gathered around a specially constructed scaffold to take a 15-minute look at the bodies.

It was the first time in 20 years that the public was permitted to enter an execution site to see the bodies.

People watched as doctors pronounced the three men dead.

They took nine, 12 and 13 minutes respectively to die, according to Kuwait's prosecutor general Hamed al-Othman.

The bodies were then lowered and the noose taken from around their necks. They were wrapped in white sheets before being taken away.

Some spectators told AFP they were disappointed that they had not been allowed to watch the hangings.

Bangladesh expressed shock at the hangings, which came despite appeals by its government and human rights groups to spare the men.

"We are naturally shocked," Bangladeshi foreign ministry

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Undercover deal DCC rents out 62 shops at Karwan Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) had rented out undercover a thoroughfare at Karwan Bazar to set up 62 shops, each at Tk 4,500 a month, since January.

The deal to rent out the road was made at the fag end of Mohammed Hanif's tenure as mayor. Similarly, Hanif had earlier leased out a large parking space and a footpath to set up shops in the area.

Karwan Bazar houses the largest wholesale vegetable market in the country and a number of prestigious business houses.

The thoroughfare known as Alir Foot was originally built to connect the WASA Bhaban Road with the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue on the

eastern side of the market. The width of the road was kept large to use it as an unloading bay.

Asked if he had any plans to recover these public properties, the incumbent Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka told The Daily Star that he would have to look into the legal aspects of each case before taking action.

Sources in the Nagar Bhaban said the new mayor is yet to decide the fate of public parks, playing fields, roads and thoroughfares, w h i c h

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Kaikobad murder: Jakob placed on fresh remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader Abdullah Al-Islam Jakob, arrested Thursday in connection with the murder of Jubo Dal leader Morshed Alam Kaikobad, was placed on a one-day fresh remand yesterday.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police produced Jakob yesterday afternoon before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court, Dhaka on expiry of a one-day earlier remand. Police submitted a petition seeking fresh remand for five days for further interrogation.

The DB police arrested Jakob from his Mirpur house in the city in the early hours of Thursday on charge of his involvement in the murder of Kaikobad. Jacob contested the last general election as an Awami League nominee from Bhola-4 constituency.

Police in the forwarding report said they got some important pieces of information about Kaikobad's murder from Jakob during his earlier one-day remand. The information was being verified.

The defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer, saying that Jacob was falsely implicated in the case to destroy his political image.

The prosecution side opposed the petition.

After hearing both sides, Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon rejected the petition for bail and

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Lightning kills 3 in Barguna

BSS, Barguna

Three persons were killed by lightning at village Sonakhali under Amtali upazila yesterday evening.

The victims were identified as Jaynab, 40, Sahera, 35, and Rasel, 14.

Witnesses said the three were struck by lightning while working at the house of one Sohrab Sikder of the same village. They died on the spot.

Malaysian amnesty Most illegals still refusing to return home

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

With only one month remaining before the end of an amnesty period for illegal immigrants in Malaysia, some 450,000 workers are still refusing to return home, a report said yesterday.

Only 160,000 migrants, a fraction of the estimated 600,000 illegal workers in the country, have responded to the amnesty which has been in place since March 21, said Jamal Kamdi, head of the Immigration Department.

Some 70 per cent of the total illegals who have returned were Indonesians, followed by Indian nationals and Bangladeshi workers, Jamal was quoted as saying by the Malay-language Mingguan

Malaysia newspaper as saying.

He warned remaining workers to take heed of the looming deadline of the amnesty period which ends on July 31.

The amnesty enables illegal immigrants, who are mainly Indonesian, to return home without being prosecuted.

However, Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had announced that changes to Malaysia's immigration law for illegal workers and their employers would take effect on August 1.

Under the new law, anyone found guilty of illegal entry or harbouring illegal immigrants would face a mandatory six months in jail and/or up to six strokes of the cane.

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Vajpayee should lead party in 2004 polls: Advani

New DPM denies rift with PM

PTI, AFP, New Delhi

Home Minister LK Advani yesterday said his elevation as Deputy Prime Minister should not be seen as a move to succeed Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who he stated should lead the party in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections.

"The move should not be seen as paving the way for a successor to Vajpayee as both of us are of the same age group," Advani told Aaj Tak. He said that in the BJP, Vajpayee, Khushabhai Thakre and himself were all over 70 years of age and any question of a successor would have to fall on a younger leader.

Advani said it was the party's view that Vajpayee should lead the BJP in the next general elections.

"My view on this is firm and I believe that he (Vajpayee) will abide by it," Advani said.

Advani said he felt the appointment might have been made with a view to dispelling any rumours in the media about differences with the Prime Minister.

Asked whether his appointment will find favour with NDA allies given his

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