

No dinner, no lunch for PM during her tour

BSS, Dhaka

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday in a circular directed all concerned not to arrange any lunch or dinner for the prime minister during her tour of district headquarters without prior sanction of the PMO.

"If it is required, the administration concerned would be informed in advance, and the food would be very simple," the circular said.

As part of her official job, the prime minister has to visit district headquarters and other remote areas and accordingly a set of directives were issued on April 20 advising the local administrations and other local organisations to exercise austerity, the circular said.

The PMO in the circular expressed indignation over non-compliance of the directives and asked all to follow those from now on.

The circular also asked the authorities concerned not to disrupt routine academic activities at educational institutions by assembling students to receive the prime minister during her tour.

It called for a minimum but necessary use of transports to avoid unnecessary use and presence of

Mohiuddin granted anticipatory bail in sedition case

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail for three months to former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in a sedition case.

The court also issued rule upon the government to show cause why Alamgir should not be granted bail.

Mohiuddin was earlier granted bail in a criminal case for his involvement in pre-election violence in his constituency in Kachua, Chittagong.

The sedition case was filed against Mohiuddin and some others for organising Janatar Mancha in a bid to overthrow the government in 1996.

Ratna murder case

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Khandakar, told The Daily Star that Rubel gave the confessional statement during interrogation on Saturday night.

But talking to this correspondent at Sabujbagh thana yesterday, Rubel denied his involvement in the killing. He said he gave the confessional statement to police to escape torture.

During interrogation by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Majedul Haq and Assistant Commissioner (AC) Borhanuddin on Saturday night, Rubel also denied his involvement in the killing, police said.

But he admitted his involvement in the incident when IO Abul Hashem Khandakar interrogated him on the same night.

Talking to this correspondent at the thana Rubel's mother claimed that her son was compelled to give confessional statement following police torture.

The IO however denied the allegation. "He (Rubel) admitted to us when we warned him of torture. He also disclosed names of two youths who helped him in killing the minor girl," the IO said.

Enamul Khan, father of Ratna, took her body after autopsy at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The incident was a talk of Manda area yesterday. Hundreds of people went to the first floor of the under-construction building where Ratna was killed.

Rally at BUET

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teachers snatched their banner -- an allegation the director of BUET Students Welfare denied.

Again, the demonstrators during a break at 1:00pm between classes gathered in front of the cafeteria to bring out a procession.

The procession paraded down different campus streets to the Female Students Residential Hall. The students renamed the hall the Sabequn Nahar Sony Hall and fixed a plaque.

Later, the processionists entered the Ahsanullah Hall, breaking open the hall gate.

Speakers at a rally in front of the vice-chancellor's office condemned the BUET authorities for the suspension order on the 22 students who demonstrated against the killing.

On Saturday night, the students distributed leaflets among the halls, defying the ban on political posters and banners on the campus.

On July 21, the BUET banned political activities, including proces-

surplus transports. Divisional and district level officials who are not relevant with the programme have been asked not to attend the prime minister's reception or see-off functions. Their transports should not be included in the motorcade.

Presenting bouquets or gifts and showering of petals have been banned, but token presentation of one or two pieces of flower or books was permitted, it said.

No gate can be erected by any government, semi-government, autonomous or private bodies. But if the people in general spontaneously want to receive the prime minister, they can't be stopped, the circular said.

The prime minister can not be given any written felicitation. But written appeal highlighting local problems can be allowed.

The prime minister's programme should be brief and briefings at the functions should be concise and objective.

Prime minister's principal secretary asked the district administration or other organisations concerned to follow the directives carefully and strictly.

Police security of Mayor Mohiuddin Chy withdrawn

UNB, Chittagong

Police security of Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhry has been withdrawn.

Personal security provided to the Mayor since his election in 1994 was withdrawn at 4-30 pm yesterday on a directive from the Home Ministry, police said.

An 8-member security, including 2 Havildars and 6 Constables, was provided to Mohiuddin.

His personal aide Hasan Shamsheer said police refused security escort for the Mayor.

Mohiuddin faces 7 criminal cases. BNP leaders have been demanding his dismissal, saying he was re-elected in forged, voterless polls in 2000.

Eyes of young man gouged out in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Seven armed miscreants abducted a young man from Moulavipara on Saturday night.

They took him to their hideout at east Baniakhmar under Khulna thana and gouged out his eyes.

The victim, Kamrul Islam, son of businessman Nurul Islam of Moulvopara, was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) in a critical condition.

The miscreants have threatened his father not to lodge case.

Boat capsizes: One drowns, 7 missing in Savar

UNB, Savar

A housewife drowned and seven people went missing as a boat capsized in a canal at Chinail here yesterday.

Witnesses said the boat carrying 10 people, including women and children, sank in the canal in bad weather at about 11am.

The boat sailed from Begunbari in Kaliakoir upazila was heading towards Jadpur.

Local people recovered the body of Safura Begum, 21 after a hectic search.

SN Hall incident: Tenure of probe body extended by 2 more weeks

BSS, Dhaka

The government has extended the tenure of the probe body on Shamsunnahar Hall incident by two more weeks from the date of its expiry, a government announcement said yesterday.

The government formed the one-member commission on July 27 to investigate the incident at Shamsunnahar Hall of the Dhaka University in the early hours of July 24. The commission was asked to submit its report by two weeks.

The government has extended the tenure of the probe body on Shamsunnahar Hall incident by two more weeks from the date of its expiry, a government announcement said yesterday.

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Direct rail link with northern region in 5 days

BSS, Dhaka

Direct rail communication between the capital and the northern region of the country is likely to be restored within the next four to five days.

The rail link will be restored after repair of the eight kilometre railway section between Trimohani and Balasi Ghat in Gaibandha district which was affected in the ongoing floods, a railway press release said yesterday.

Clash at N'ganj

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Asad, 28, Jamal, 20, Khalek, 30, Hosne Ara, 35, Ahsan, 30, and Rezaur Rahman, 50.

Ten of the injured were admitted to the Arahazar Health Complex and the rest were taken to Madhabdi General Hospital.

Police arrested Judge Mia, 28, Julhas, 28, Tanvir, 22, Abdul Jalil, 50, and Raisuddin, 55.

No case was filed till filing of this report at 7.30pm yesterday.

Supply Inspection

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wrong and corrupted. It recommended further empowerment of the directorate for a transparent procurement system.

The directorate used to play a central role in purchase of goods, mainly stationery items, for the government organisations since independence.

However, the directorate's activities have been largely restricted with most government corporations having obtained permission to purchase goods on their own.

Now, only the Ministry of Establishment, Radio Bangladesh, Fire Brigade and jails take supplies from the directorate.

The directorate purchased goods worth Tk 20 to 25 crore a year.

The directorate has 150 officials and employees on its payroll. Fourteen officials are from the trade cadre while the director enjoys the rank and status of a joint secretary.

Landslide

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be still buried inside their collapsed homes.

"The situation in the area is grim as surface and telecom links with the villages have completely snapped," the chief bureaucrat said, as army and airforce prepared to launch a rescue mission in the four ravaged villages.

India's new president, APJ Abdul Kalam, said he was grieved by the tragedy.

He has expressed his sympathy with the bereaved families and he hopes that the relief and rescue operation will be undertaken with utmost speed and dedication," a statement from the presidential palace in New Delhi said.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League-leaning lawyers form a human chain in front of the High Court yesterday, demanding quick disposal of the Bangabandhu Murder Case and independence of the judiciary, while the car of the chief justice passes through the road leading to the court.

Good news for MPs

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Amanullah Aman, MP, the present state minister for health, was the biggest phone bill defaulter in the seventh parliament with an outstanding amount of Tk 14 lakh 47 thousand against his two telephones.

Ruling party legislator Manzurul Ahsan Munshi, elected from Comilla-4 constituency, is the second largest defaulter with an outstanding bill of Tk 13 lakh 30 thousand 955.

Former MP Advocate Abdul Latif of Brahmanbaria has an overdue bill to Tk 9.50 lakh.

Mohammad Nasim, former minister in charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs as well as the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, owed over Tk 2.60 lakh when he was an opposition MP in the fifth parliament.

Former commerce minister Toifal Ahmed defaulted on phone bills amounting to over 2.59 lakh as an opposition lawmaker in the same parliament.

Shegufra Yasmin, an MP of the seventh parliament and a former member of the Standing Committee on the MoPT owed Tk 3,12,614, Mustafizur Rahman of Chittagong-3 Tk 3,15,630, Golam Mohammad Siraj of Bara-5 Tk 6,65,000, Zainal Abedin Faruk of Noakhali-1 Tk 5,58,000, Jainal Hazari of Feni-3 Tk

2,02,000, Syed Ashrafur Islam of Kishoreganj-3 Tk 5,36,000, Mohammad Shahjahan Tk 3,17,000, Ali Reza Raju Tk 3,78,000, Nadim Mostofa Tk 3,43,000, Kabir Hossain of Rajshahi-2 Tk 3,90,000, AKM Mustafizur Rahman 4,31,000, Sultan Mohammad Monsoor Ahmed of Moulvibazar Tk 4,89,000, Karimuddin Bharsah of Rangpur Tk 3,90,000, Kader Siddiqui MP Tk 1,67,000, Nazimuddin Alam of Bhola-4 Tk 5,17,000, Latif Siddique of Tangail Tk 3,86,000, Barkatullah Bhulu Tk 2,79,000, Dr. HBM Iqbal Tk 1,80,000, Dr. Mizanul Huq of Kishoreganj-4 Tk 1,12,000, Sadek Hossain Khoka Tk 74,000, Rawshan Ershad Tk 58,000, and Morshed Khan, an elected MP from Chittagong-10 constituency and chairman of the country's first cellular mobile phone company Tk 64,000.

MPs numbering 460 of the third, fourth and fifth parliaments have outstanding bills of over Tk 3.51 crore.

No action was taken against the defaulters except issuing of letters to realise the huge amount of outstanding bills. Moreover, many of the former MPs has got new phone connections.

The BTBT had earlier sought permission from the telecom ministry to take legal action against the

defaulting MPs. But despite an initial nod, the MoPT later reversed its decision and instead asked the BTBT to submit a proposal seeking permission from the cabinet in that regard.

The BTBT however finds itself in a dilemma about the legal action as some of the former defaulting MPs are presently holding portfolios with the status of ministers.

From July, the BTBT has introduced multimetering in local calls on some 7.5 lakh fixed line phones in the country claiming that it will help keep individual phone bills low and thus give people more access to telephones.

Observers at the telephone sector said that if the cabinet enhances the telephone allowance, arrangements should be made for book adjustment so that the allowance goes directly to the BTBT to ensure payment since most MPs draw the allowance but never pay their phone bills.

The BTBT was able to realise a tiny amount from some MPs of the now defunct seventh parliament when speculations were rife that the Election Commission (EC) might ban defaulters of utility bills from participating in the election.

Imported for sure

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minister's directive on Saturday with civil aviation and tourism acting Secretary Shafiqul Islam as its head began its probe. It is to submit a report on the alleged wheat scam within 15 days.

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman told The Daily Star yesterday that they would furnish the committee with all the documents relating to wheat purchase, if need be.

Noman asserted, "No matter how powerful the culprits are we'll not let anyone go unpunished, if found guilty. Let the probe report come first."

Meanwhile, following formation of the two committees, investigation by a food directorate committee has been suspended.

There have been many allegations against the Entajul Haq, a food

directorate official, who was heading this probe committee. Noman yesterday acknowledged suspension of this committee's work.

The Bogra deputy commissioner told The Daily Star that he had sent 27 wheat samples from all the seven warehouses to the committee led by civil aviation secretary.

A source in the district administration, involved with a local probe team, said, "We did not find any purchase of wheat after the scheduled date."

"If any wheat was purchased after the date, it was done unofficially and the food ministry's team had an enquiry into the matter," the source added. Meanwhile, the district BNP General Secretary Rezaul Karim Badsha told The Daily Star that none of the local BNP leaders and workers were not involved in the wheat scam.

"It is Awami League leaders who are involved directly in the scam...have you not heard of Parimal (Singh)? He is an Awami League leader and a close associate of the district AL Treasurer Abul Kalam Azad", he said.

Azad, also a foodgrain trader in Jaleshwariata area in the town, could not be contacted.

According to sources in one of the intelligence branches in the district, about 15 people belonging to both the BNP and Awami League

are involved in the scam, while about 150 others directly supplied imported wheat to the warehouses.

In a written speech, Sadar BNP Organising Secretary Mahidul Islam claimed that the wheat he supplied to the Sadar warehouse was of "high quality".

Denying his involvement in the scam, he also said, "If the party high command wishes, I would inform it as far as I know about the scam and the persons involved in it."

HSC student

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afternoon.

Sources said Molin and some residents of the mess were involved in crime. He took a firearm from one Babu at Lalbagh and kept it home. All mess residents went into hiding after the killing.

Molin's parents were not happy with their son for his irregularity in study, the sources said.

Some students of the college told The Daily Star that Molin was not regular in attending classes.

Akhterul Islam filed a murder case with the Khilgaon Police Station without mentioning any name.

Sub-Inspector of the Khilgaon Police Station Kazi Wazed Ali is investigating the killing.

BNP looks for dynamism

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Attendance of party Standing Committee members and joint secretaries general has been made mandatory at the August 24 meeting.

Besides, other central leaders including advisory council members, vice chairman, national executive committee leaders and members, respective district BNP president, general secretary, first vice president and organising secretary, and president and general secretary of district unit of all front organisations have been invited to the representative meeting.

Moreover, ministers and ministers in charge of districts concerned and the BNP candidates, who lost in the last general election, have also been invited.

BNP sources said over 1000 representatives from all districts and thanas under the Chittagong and Sylhet divisions will attend the meeting. They said the meeting would review the overall performance of the 10-month-old government, states of the party's local chapters, implementation of party commitments at the local level, among other things.

Party insiders said the meeting primarily aims to identify the weaknesses of the party at field level and find out ways to overcome them.

It is learnt that a set of secret questionnaire will be given to the participants at the representatives meetings to have their views about the party's strengths and weaknesses, and involvement of party leaders and activists in anti-unauthorised activities.

At the representative meetings, speeches of the participants will be recorded and later, those will be reviewed at special meetings of the party Standing Committee to prepare recommendations and suggestions for implementing those. A database system with biodata and photographs of Thana, district and city level leaders will be stored at the party central office.

Sources said the party has decided to take tough steps to eliminate squabble at all levels.

They said the BNP is planning to launch massive organisational programmes in the winter. A plan is also there to hold representatives meetings to do the spadework to this end.

It has also been decided to dissolve all the convening committees and inactive committees at all levels and subsequently form fully-fledged committees to infuse dynamism into the party.

BNP's new Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman has been assigned to look into the party's organisational matters and he is taking steps through consultation with party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Sources said Tarique has already received reports on the current status of all city, district, municipal and thana committees and is now mulling over steps to revamp the party.

They said the party has decided to buy land in each thana headquarters for setting up permanent party offices. Plans are also there to equip the thana level offices with computer, telephone, fax and Internet services.

According to sources, the BNP's central office will soon have direct communications with the thana offices instead of district offices.

Former VC, proctor

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she thought they would turn down such a request.

"Police stormed into the hall in a military-like action by breaking the hall gate. I thought if I request them to stop, they may not listen," she said.

The newsmen told her about the allegation that she retained the post of hall provost by dint of her good terms with former VC Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury.

She refuted the allegation and said that during her tenure, resident students stayed at the hall 'peacefully', regardless of their political affiliations. General students were 'happy' with her. That is why the university authorities could not remove her, she claimed.

She claimed that the 'sad events' could be averted had the administration helped her.

Sultana Shafi refuted the allegation made by the assistant proctors that she did not cooperate with them. The assistant proctors were present at Shamsunnahar Hall on that night.

Shafi said she sent two house tutors - Shamsunnahar Chapa and Suniti Biswas - with the assistant proctors when they went to Room No-235, and one of the house tutors reported to her the situation in the room.

"Even, I sent two employees of the hall to that room to know their condition when the house tutors were

confined there", she said.

Earlier the assistant proctors alleged that Sultana Shafi did not cooperate with them on that night.

After his deposition before the commission, former proctor of DU Prof Nazrul Islam declined to say anything to newsmen.

Before his deposition, he told newsmen that he would not say whether male police had entered the hall. "Those who were present at that time will answer this", he said before his deposition.

Former vice-chancellor Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury also declined to talk to newsmen. "I have decided that for the sake of proper investigation, I will not say anything. If I have anything to say, I will say after the judicial commission submits its report", he said.

The acting director of public relations department told the probe body that the four assistant proctors had issued the press statements on the incidents as per instruction of the DU authorities.

Earlier, the assistant proctors disowned the press statements on the incidents, sent by the former authorities of DU and published in different newspapers.

Frigate scam case: Ex- navy chief gets anticipatory bail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail for three months to former Navy Chief Rear Admiral (ret'd) Mohammad Nurul Islam in the frigate scam case.

A division bench comprising Justice Gour Gopal Shaha and Justice Mohammad Abdus Salam passed the order after hearing an application filed by Islam who personally appeared before the court.

The court also issued rule upon the government to show cause why the petitioner should not be granted bail.

Bureau of Anticorruption on August 7, filed a case with Tejgaon Police against Admiral Islam and four others including former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accusing them of taking kickback in frigate purchase from South Korea.

Earlier, on Saturday, the High Court granted anticipatory bail to former FBCCI President Abdul Awal Minto, one of the accused in the same case.

Just across the Naf

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tion inside the refugee camps over the last ten years. Only a week ago the government had instructed the local administration to register every marriage but the procedures are yet to begin.

Since 1992 some 250,000 Rohingya from 20 refugee camps have been repatriated through negotiations between the government of Bangladesh and the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) of Myanmar. At present, roughly 22,000 refugees still wait for the approval to go back home.

Like Malek, many refugees said that the incentives of 20,000 kyat, housing loans and six months' supply of food offered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) increase the potential for a smooth adjustment after returning home.

The Kutupalong camp is smaller of the two remaining camps with a population of 8,543 people squeezed into an area of about three square kilometres. The refugees are divided into those who are 'cleared' by the SPDC, and those who are not.

The 'clearance' process is slow, according to the camp-in-charge Salaudinn Chowdhury. Only three to four families are 'cleared' each week by the SPDC,

he says. At this rate it would take at least nine years for repatriation of the remaining refugees.

According to Chowdhury, the SPDC 'cleared' 2,402 refugees in 1995 but have since gone back on that promise, claiming that they needed to 're-verify' their legitimacy as citizens of Myanmar. As a result, the repatriation process has slowed down to a trickle.

"Every Monday we travel to Mangu in Myanmar and meet the officials concerned. On an average they ask for around five families to be sent back but if anyone of these families is sick or unwilling, we have to wait," Chowdhury said.

Several hundred young Rohingyas have never been to their homeland. They have remained unlettered and have had nothing to do other than hanging around at different parts of the camp, where several banners have been put up in Bangla to announce the package benefits for refugees willing to return to their country.

In the meantime, these refugees wait. Children, who have only heard stories of their homeland, attend schools where they both learn Burmese and Bengali, a sign of the continuing uncertainty of which country will be their homeland in the future.

High-speed train

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