

New president passes a busy first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly elected President Iajuddin Ahmed passed a busy first day yesterday, mainly paying tributes to national heroes.

The Presidential Guard Regiment (PGR) drawn from the three services presented him a guard of honour at the Bangabhaban lawn in the morning. The President also introduced himself to PGR officers.

He also did some official work in the morning.

Later he visited the National Memorial at Savar, Martyred Intellectuals Memorial at Mirpur and the Central Shaheed Minar.

The President first went to the National Memorial at around 11:30am and placed wreaths. He stood there in solemn silence for some time to pay tributes to the memory of martyred freedom fighters of the Liberation War.

As the President placed wreaths, bugles were played to show respect to the freedom fighters. Chiefs of the three services were present.

In his comment in the condolence book, he said, "I remember the brave sons of the soil who laid their lives for the cause of the country's liberation."

From Savar, the President's
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All transfers since Sept 1 revoked Titas MD, GM pay for giving in to union pressure

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The government yesterday made the managing director of the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited officer on special duty (OSD) for transferring 50 employees under pressure from trade union leaders. Also, a deputy general manager was suspended.

Besides, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources cancelled all transfer orders, issued since September 1, including the 50 made Thursday last.

Earlier, immediately after taking control of the trade union office on September 3, leaders of two ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party-backed factions started pressuring the managing director, Anwaruzzaman, to transfer as many as 115 Titas employees.

They also laid siege to Anwaruzzaman's office for several hours on September 4 and 5. Eventually, the Titas management ordered transfer of 50 employees on Thursday night.

While talking to The Daily Star last night, State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharrar Hossain said the Titas managing director was made OSD for defying the ministry's order.

"I sent police to rescue him (Anwaruzzaman) from trade union siege on September 4. When he was besieged again the next, I gave him specific
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PHOTO: STAR

A bird's eye view reveals expansion of residential plot well into the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake by developers and owners in connivance with Rajuk officials, violating a prime ministerial directive and existing wetland laws.

Lake shrinks as Rajuk delays demarcation

Prime ministerial directive falls on deaf ears

JULHAS RIPON

As the authorities delay its demarcation, influential and private developers continue to encroach on the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Lake.

Fresh encroachments are visible all along the lake. Parts of the lake filled by Rajuk last year to build walkways are now 'new plots' well demarcated with concrete walls. At places, owners of lakeside plots have extended their boundaries well into the lake and started building

housing complexes.

Town planners and architects believe that, to protect the lake from land grabbers, fresh demarcation and walkways are required before implementation of the lake development project begins.

"Primary demarcation" of the lake will take at best 15 days, they say.

Due to lack of proper demarcation, the authorities could not take legal action against unscrupulous plot owners and land grabbers although they clearly violated the

Wetland Protection Act, 2000 and other environmental laws.

On June 19, the prime minister had directed the authorities concerned to demarcate the lake as soon as possible and initiate implementation of the lake development project.

But sources in the Rajuk say some of its top officials are delaying the project by creating 'confusion' in this regard to allot more plots for 'hefty bribes' from encroachers.

During a spot visit, this corre-

spondent found that some developers have constructed buildings extending their plot onto the lake at several places along the lake. There are more than 50 shanties along the lake in Taltola area and makeshift latrines at places.

Some residents claim the lake is being gradually destroyed and the neighbourhood area exposed to serious environmental pollution.

Meanwhile, toxic sludge runs
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Hundreds of students join demonstration at BUET

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) students skipped classes yesterday to join a demonstration on the campus in support of their hunger-striking fellows.

The slogan-shouting students demonstrated in defiance of a ban on processions and rallies of any kind on the campus.

A small number of students, however, did attend classes while the demonstration was on.

Meanwhile, at least eleven female students joined in as the fast-unto-death programme, under the banner of the 'BUET Students against Terrorism', went into its sixth day.

Another six hunger-striking students - Kallol and Rony of the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department, Sajib and Suddipta of the Civil Engineering, Indranil of the Computer Science and Engineering and Moin of the Industrial and Production Engineering - fell sick yesterday.

A medical team from the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), arranged by the BUET administration, examined students and advised them to get admitted to hospitals as they were suffering from acute dehydration and low blood pressure.

However, the students said they would continue until their demands were met.

BUET authorities are likely to meet the guardians of the hunger-striking students today and a meet-
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PHOTO: STAR

General students of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) stage a demonstration on the campus yesterday expressing solidarity with the hunger-striking students and their seven-point demand.

Sani's killer confesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khokon, the principal accused in the Omar Sani murder case, yesterday confessed to have killed the six-year-old boy out of revenge.

He gave confessional statements to a metropolitan magistrate.

Body of Sani was recovered from a water tank at Norda in the city's Gulshan area as per the information Khokon provided Friday afternoon. Police arrested Khokon, his mother and two sisters from their house.

Gulshan police produced Khokon, his mother Jhama Begum and two sisters Rashida and Khuki before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at 2:00pm with a prayer for a seven-day remand.

Later, Khokon was taken to the
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Modi-Agarwal scam

BB finds more shady deals

SHAHRIAR KARIM

Transaction to the tune of Tk 62.11 crore took place in the span of three months through an unapproved accounts of a private commercial bank branch.

And through two more accounts of the same branch, transaction worth nearly Tk 138 crore and Tk 17 crore took place in a very short period.

In all the cases, the bank officials did not know the account holders or what were the reasons for such huge transactions.

These are snapshots of some shady transactions of the Bangladesh Bank (BB) team found while probing the financial scam of three Marwari businessmen and their enterprises.

The BB started its probe into the financial scam on August 10 after press reports that three businessmen and their business groups, namely Giridhari Lal Modi and his Uttara Group, Om Prakash Agarwal and his six enterprises and the Doel Group owned by Deokinandan Kejrival and Ashok Kejrival were

involved in shady deals and took loans against fictitious accounts from different banks.

The BB probe found many such dubious transactions against various shady accounts, and it concluded that these were linked with the informal hundi transactions, according to sources.

The BB investigation found three 'shady accounts' at the Motijheel branch of the National Credit and Commerce Bank Ltd. (NCCBL) through which huge amount of transactions took place.

Also, they found clues that point to the involvement of the said businessmen and also a director of the NCCBL in those transactions.

The BB has asked the Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC) to further investigate how and to what extent the businessmen got involved in those shady transactions, the sources said.

The BB probe found money came from the Uttara Group of Giridhar Lal Modi to an account of one Mostofa in the NCCBL Bank. The investigation further
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AI concerned 'Stop politically motivated criminal charges against rivals'

UNB, Dhaka

The Amnesty International (AI) yesterday urged the government to stop the "opportunistic use of criminal charges" for detaining political opponents.

Expressing concern over the "recent wave of arrests" of opposition activists, the London-based international human rights watchdog said, "The government must stop using politically motivated criminal charges to harass the opposition."

The AI in a press statement said court orders for the release of Awami League detainees should be respected and all allegations of torture should be promptly and thoroughly investigated to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

The AI alleged that several hundred activists of the opposition Awami League were detained last week by police without warrant of arrest ahead of a general strike.
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Alamgir in jail despite bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir was not released till yesterday despite getting bail in all the six cases filed against him by the government.

The High Court Court granted him bail in a seditious case on Wednesday while he obtained bail in five other cases earlier.

Still, he was kept detained in the Dhaka Central Jail on grounds of fresh scrutiny of all documents relating to the cases.

His lawyers including Amir-ul-Islam yesterday met Additional District Magistrate (ADM) of Dhaka Abdul Haque in the absence of Deputy Commissioner (DC) and handed over to him the bail bond for Alamgir.

But the ADM refused to forward the bond to the jail authorities saying, "the court order needs to be
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Shazneen Case

Latifur Rahman cross-examined for over 2 hrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Questions about identification, address and profession of witnesses dominated cross-examination of the second prosecution witness in the Shazneen case in the Second Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, yesterday.

"I know some witnesses and do not know some others," the second witness and father of the victim, Latifur Rahman, told the court.

He was cross-examined for over two hours by the lawyer for principal
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Bush, Blair set for 'crucial' talks US to disarm Iraq unless world leaders take action

AFP, Washington

US President Bush will tell the United Nations next week that United States will act on its own to disarm Iraq unless world leaders take action to do so, the Washington Post reported yesterday.

Bush will deliver the hard line message at the UN General Assembly on Thursday, amid growing debate over when the UN should set a deadline for Iraq to readmit arms inspectors.

Reuters from London adds: Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair left for talks with President Bush yesterday, declaring Iraq was a threat to the world that had to be countered with broad international backing.

"I do think it's important we get the broadest possible support for what we do and that is one of the things I will discuss with the president," Blair told reporters aboard the plane. "We have always got to act lawfully and that we will do."

Blair's lightning visit to Bush's Camp David presidential retreat follows a flurry of diplomatic contacts with skeptical big powers France, China and Russia, and jitters at the prospect of a pre-emptive US strike on President Saddam Hussein.

British media have portrayed the talks as a "council of war" to light the fuse for a military strike against

Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction programmes and topple Saddam.

But opponents argue there is no justification for an attack and warn that it could seriously undermine the "war on terror."

"The threat is very real. It is a threat not just to America, or the international community, but to

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