

Ziku Babul quizzed for second day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Notorious criminal 'Ziku' Babul alias 'Nine-shooter' Liton was interrogated by the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) for the second day yesterday, police sources said.

Officials of the JIC questioned him from 10 am to 5:00 pm about his political connection and criminal activities at the Special Branch (SB) office at Malibagh. He was taken back to Kotwali Police Station in the evening.

When contacted, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of the police station ABM Sultan Ahmed said they would take him (Babul) to Lalbagh Police Station 'tonight' (Thursday night) to check a nine-shooter rifle, which was deposited by former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Haji Selim.

They would verify if that nine-shooter is the one which was in

possession of Babul and picture of which was published in different national dailies. Babul would also check whether it is the rifle he possessed while chasing pickets during a hartal when AL was in power, the OC said.

According to sources, if the accused says it is that very nine-shooter, then some opposition political leaders might also be interrogated.

Babul was arrested from Islampur in the part of the city on Saturday by Kotwali police. He is facing several criminal charges including that for murder, extortion and possession of illegal firearms.

Photograph of Babul carrying a nine-shooter and chasing pickets for a hartal in the city during AL rule appeared in a number of newspapers.

Lawyers' human chain to press home demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawyers yesterday formed human chains across the country for implementation of their six-point demand, including withdrawal of enhanced court fees and stamp duty.

Human chains were formed in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogra, Dinajpur, Barisal, Rangpur, Kushtia, Narayanganj and Tangal under the banner of the Lawyers' Six-point Demand Implementation Parishad.

Other demands include immediate separation of the judiciary, amendment to the Section 115 of the Civil Procedure Code (CPC), scrapping of all 'black laws' including the Special Powers Act, the Public Safety Act and the recently enacted Law and Order Disruption Crimes (Speedy Trial) Act.

Hundreds of lawyers formed a human chain on the premises of the District and Sessions Judge's Court and the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday morning.

Later, they held a rally where SM Altaf Hossain, president of the Dhaka District Lawyers Association, urged the government to immediately implement their demands.

The government will face an 'uncompromising' movement of 30,000 lawyers, if it fails to meet their demands, he vowed.

Sardar Mohammad Suruzzaman, Syed Rezaur Rahman, Abu Monayem Zoarder, Sahara Khatun, AKM Sohrab, Anwarul Kader, Khondoker Abdul Mannan, Mohammad Israfil, Md. Kamrul Islam and Sayma Khanam, among others, were present at the rally.

Barrister Amir-ul Islam, convenor of the implementation parishad, in a statement yesterday hailed the lawyers for making the countrywide programme a success.

Gas export won't solve

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currency squeeze. That will have to be met from increased export earnings in the wider economy, although gas exports will help."

Contrary to the estimate of the national committee on gas resource, it has put the undiscovered gas reserve at 42 trillion cubic feet (TCF), an average of high and low probability. However, the national committee has estimated that there is probability of a gas reserve of 32.10 TCF, as estimated by the US Geological Survey (USGS) and Petrobrangla.

However, the Norwegian study says, "In general, the new discoveries are expected to be smaller in comparison with the existing large discovered gas fields."

Asked about the difference between the two estimates, a senior Petrobrangla official said the Norwegian study has taken into account smaller fields having reserves down to 12 to 15 TCF. But the USGS and Petrobrangla study did not include gas fields having reserve prospects below 42 TCF, he added.

Considering that the sector needs huge foreign investment, the study suggested linking export with further exploration commitment.

It said the new gas discoveries would need to come on-stream by as early 2014-2017, which may account for one-third to three-fourths of gas supply in 2030.

"What is important to

Bangladesh is not so much the amount of gas exported as ensuring that the licensing of export is linked to further exploration commitments."

It says by the year 2030, Bangladesh in terms of base case will need an investment of US\$ 4.1 billion for exploration, development, transmission and distribution network. The amount will be \$5.8 billion and \$2.5 billion in terms of high and low growth respectively.

However, the total investment cost on gas chain, including power sector transmission and distribution costs, by the period will be \$28.8 billion for base case. In terms of high and low growth, it will be US\$ 34.2 billion and 17.9 billion respectively.

The Oslo-based ECON Center for Economic Analysis was the consultative body for the study initiated in August 2000. The final approval for the study was given in last November.

3-wheelers

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The decision on metering and fare has attracted both optimistic and pessimistic responses from commuters.

Some commuters have said it will never check hassles, if there is no monitoring mechanism.

"We want proper enforcement of the rules," demanded Aminul Islam, student of the Dhaka University.

Shaheed Minar rule

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vented them as they did not have prior permission from the authorities concerned. Police also set up barbed wire fences on all roads leading to the Minar.

Agitation against this is intensifying following the government decision that prior permission has to be taken from the DU authorities for any programme on the Minar premises.

As part of the agitation, eminent personalities have called for a grand rally at the Shaheed Minar on October 1.

A total of 41 noted persons in a statement on Wednesday called upon all political and other organisations, people in general and family members of martyrs of the Liberation War and the Language Movement to attend the rally.

They termed the Shaheed Minar a symbol of all democratic movements and hoped that people would be able to free it from 'siege.'

Twelve Language Movement heroes in a statement on Wednesday said they would gather at the Mukhtang on October 5 and march towards the Shaheed Minar. They urged all to take part in the march.

2 teenage girls raped and killed in Magura

UNB, Magura

Bodies of two young girls kidnapped on September 24 were recovered from the field at Khasiara in Sreepur upazila yesterday.

On information, police recovered the bodies of Yognmaya, 18, daughter of Priyanath Baroi and Kajol Bala, 18, daughter of Arbindu Bala of village Dhurun Nagar.

Locals said a group of four or five youngsters kidnapped the girls at gunpoint while they were returning home from Dariapur Health Complex on September 24.

The gang is suspected to have strangled the girls after rape and dumped the bodies in the field.

Police sent the bodies to the Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

No case was filed in connection with the murder. Police declined to comment on the killing till the availability of autopsy report.

Tourism Day

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The 'International Year of Ecotourism' is providing an excellent opportunity to clarify the significance of tourism, to disseminate guidelines for its development and to stress the need for co-operation among stakeholders to ensure that benefits are fairly distributed.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin also gave a message on the occasion.

State-run BTV and local private television channels will telecast special programmes and newspapers will bring out supplements.

Bangladesh Parjaton Corporation (BPC) will bring out colourful processions in the city and in Sylhet, Cox's Bazar and Rangamati today.

The BPC will give special discount on food and accommodation at important hotels and motels run by it.

BPC organised a seminar on 'Ecotourism- The Key To Sustainable Development' yesterday at a local Sadakala Forum, a magazine, will organise a discussion on 'World Tourism and Investment Opportunity in Bangladesh' today at the Sufia Kamal auditorium at 5:00 pm.

Journalists' arrest

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The leaders said the fundamentalists have lodged a case with a police station of Faridpur, but police arrested two journalists—Amaresh Roy and Ashokesh Roy who were not listed in the case.

They said the fundamentalists are now threatening that they would kill the people who were involved with the drama.

They demanded a judiciary inquiry into the staging of the drama and immediate release of the two journalists.

Signatories of the statement include Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, Kalim Sharafi, Shawkat Ali, Shamsur Rahman, Gazali Haq, Syed Shamsul Haq, Mawlana Abdul Awal and Kamal Lohani.

Meanwhile, leaders of Bangladesh Shamprodaik Sampriti Parishad (association for communal harmony) in a statement yesterday expressed their deep concern over the fundamentalists' threat and police action on minority community in Faridpur.

They said the failure of the government to ensure safety and security to the minority communities would not do any good to the country. They called upon the people to resist all the fundamentalist activities.

Signatories of the statement include Justice KM Sobhan, Subrata Chowdhury, Prof. Mosharrif Hossain, Dr. Rangalal Sen, Prof. Ajay Roy, Mostafa Amin and Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah.

BSF

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When contacted, 35 Battalion BDR Commander Major Abdur Rashid told The Daily Star that he had an exclusive talk with Commander of 62 Battalion BSF Major Rajiv Kumar Hajela at 9:30 pm on Wednesday.

"Our fishermen do not commit any punishable crime; they might have just made a mistake unknowingly by going very close to the zero line during fishing. Besides, it is difficult to know water where the zero line is as it is under water..."

Rashid said quoting his written version of the incident he gave to Major Hajela after the talks.

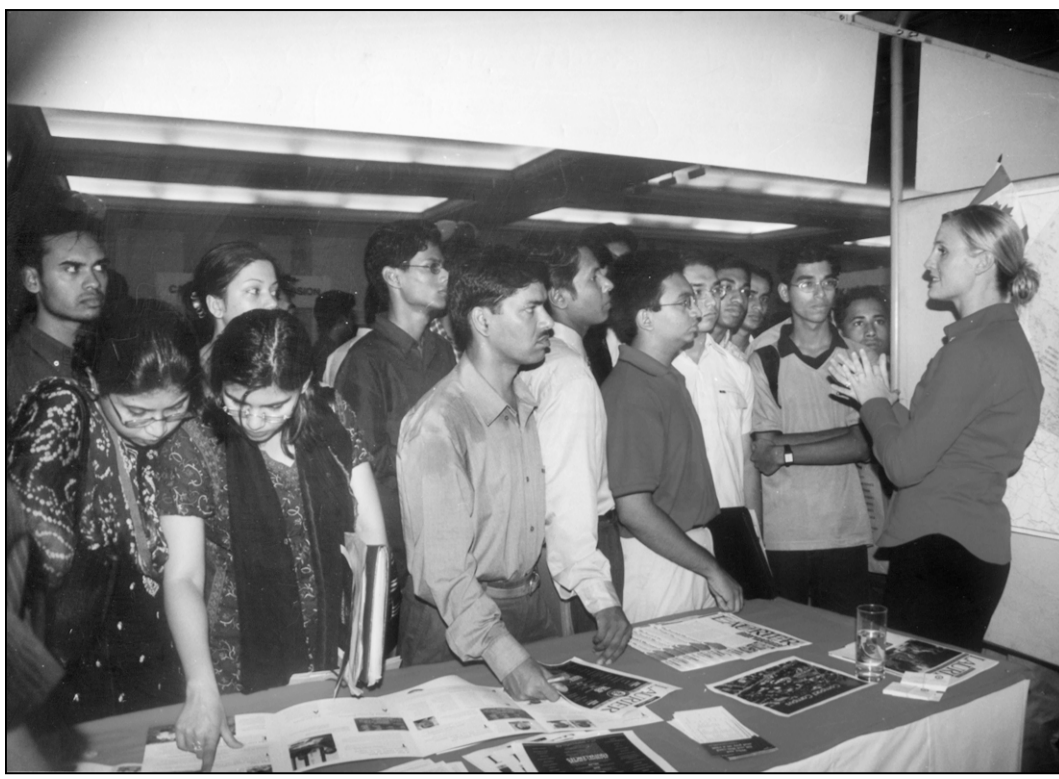
Earlier, a series of talks over the issue at the company commander level proved futile.

The BDR also brought similar charges against the Char Labongola Company BSF on September 25 when the Kahharpara Company BSF denied the allegations of kidnapping the fishermen.

But having been informed that the kidnapped fishermen were kept in the Harudanga BSF camp under the Kahharpara Company, the BDR asked the Indian side in the strongest terms to return the fishermen.

Meanwhile, some of the fishermen alleged that they cried out for BDR help during the kidnapping, but no-one came to their aid, sources said.

However, the 35 Battalion BDR commander refuted the allegation and said no BDR personnel were at the place of occurrence during the incident.



A teacher briefs visitors at a stall at the Canadian Education Fair, which was inaugurated at a city hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Police keep another procession at bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday barred a procession of the Bangladesh Jubo Union (BJU) from reaching the Central Shaheed Minar.

The procession was first stopped at the Phoenix Road in front of the Nagar Bhaban and then at the High Court crossing in the evening.

Police wanted to see permission of the Dhaka University and when the processionists said they do not have any, they were not allowed to proceed any further.

Meantime, different socio-cultural organisations continued to condemn the government's decision to prohibit rallies and demonstrations at the Central Shaheed Minar without permission from Dhaka University.

Leaders of the eleven-party, a coalition of left-leaning political parties, expressed solidarity with the rally called by language veterans on October 5, protesting the government directive.

In a press release yesterday, the left leaders also supported Wednesday's joint statement of 12 language veterans and said the Central Shaheed Minar is an inspiration against the evil and for the

good. The government cannot bar people from going there, it said.

The press release termed the government order 'dictatorial'.

General Secretary of the Sammiito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) Golam Kuddus in a statement yesterday said the SSJ never took any permission to hold programmes at the Shaheed Minar in the last 18 years.

The Dhaka University authorities have no right to give permission as the Shaheed Minar is maintained by the Public Works Department (PWD). "And, the PWD is the only authority to look after the place", he said.

Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir (BLS), a forum of writers, would hold a rally of writers, artists and cultural activists in front of the National Museum at Shahbag in the city on October 7 to protest the Shaheed Minar rule.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) held a rally in the city yesterday to protest the new rule.

Sammiito Nari Samaj and Jatiya Samajtantrik Sramik Jote also condemned the rule and demanded its withdrawal.

1 killed in road accident in Gazipur

UNB, Gazipur

A man was killed and two persons were critically injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred when a truck hit a rickshaw in Chandon area on the highway, killing rickshaw-puller Ramzan Ali, 35, on the spot and injuring two rickshaw passengers.

The injured were admitted to the Sadar hospital.

Earlier on Wednesday, 20 people were injured when a Dhaka-bound bus overturned in Hazirpukur area after hitting a truck on the highway.

47 hurt in Manikganj road accident

UNB, Manikganj

Forty-seven people were injured in a road accident at Muljan on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Sadar upazila yesterday.

Witnesses and police said the accident took place when two minibuses collided in the area at about 11:30 am.

Hasina's Sept 30 deadline

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government for virtually laying siege to the Central Shaheed Minar, the symbol of the nation's spirit of struggle.

"Why did they (the government) lay the siege? It is because they are afraid of people. Unless they withdraw police from Shaheed Minar by September 30, lakhs of people from across the country would enter the Shaheed Minar premises and free it from siege," Hasina cautioned.

Referring to the imprisonment of the BCL leaders, Hasina noted that though these student leaders were elected to top BCL posts by direct voting, they were implicated in false cases one after another and subjected to inhuman torture.

She said thousands of her party men were being implicated in false cases and their houses raided.

Besides, they are being tortured and harassed routinely.

Hasina alleged that ministers of the present government were smuggling in goods without paying

taxes. She asked Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman why they levied enhanced taxes on general people in the last budget when ministers themselves do not pay taxes and smuggle in goods. She, however, did not name any particular minister.

Holding the prime minister and her eldest son Tarique Rahman responsible for the recent wheat purchase scam, Hasina wondered why only the government officials were being punished.

She suggested that the prime minister should also lose her job for approving the purchase of low quality additional wheat.

She was equally critical of the government's failures in containing skyrocketing prices of essentials and high inflationary rate.

She alleged that opposition lawmakers were not allowed to speak in the Jatiya Sangsad on various pressing issues. "Even if I want to focus on misdeeds of 73 ministers of the government, it

would require me 73 minutes if I speak for one minute on each of them. But my mike was switched off time and again."

Hasina noted that corruption, repression on the opposition and women, large-scale violence and illegal toll collections testify to the government's ill governance.

She also came down heavily on the government for coming up with a judicial commission report holding the AL responsible for all the incidents of bomb explosions during the rule of the previous AL government from 1996 to 2001. Hasina said instead the parties now in the government had exploded the bombs at Udichi the function in Jessore, Narayanganj, Ramna and other places.

The BCL leaders also spoke briefly at the function and urged the students to stand up against the 'tyranny' of the government.

No case filed yet Killers threaten Ajmiri's family

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Any case is yet to be filed even seven days after the murder of college student Wahid Sadiq Ajmiri as the killers are allegedly threatening the victims' family.

When contacted, Narayanganj Police Superintendent Shafiqul Islam said they will file a case after receiving the post mortem report from Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

But some senior lawyers said police can file a murder case before getting the post mortem report as the victim's family is feeling insecure to file a case.

Azmiri was tortured to death allegedly by activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), ruling BNP's student wing, at the Chashara office JCD.

Sources at DMCH said the killers are keeping contact with some persons there so that the post

mortem report is given in such a way that a murder case can not be filed in this connection.

After the killing, the killers forced Azmiri's family to leave their house in the town and threatened them not to file any case.

Three JCD cadres were arrested in connection with the killing. Immediately after the arrest, JCD activists took Azmiri's mother Nurunnahar to Narayanganj thana on gunpoint and forced her to tell police that the arrested persons were not responsible for her son's death.

Police however produced the arrested persons before court.

In a bid to keep the incident concealed, the killers had also threatened the victim's family not to hold Azmiri's janaja in the town.

New DCs

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Kabir Khan, Fazle Kabir of the health and family welfare ministry, Anwarul Karim of the establishment ministry, Mohammad Mostafa of the land ministry have been made DCs of Patuakhali, Laxmipur, Narail, Khagrachari, Kishoreganj, Narayanganj and Feni respectively.

Dhaka DC Barrister Mohammad Haider Ali has been appointed as a joint secretary to the Cabinet Division.

Narayanganj DC Mia Mostaq Ahmed has been made a joint secretary to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

Member of Chittagong Tea Board M Ali Ahmed has been made a joint secretary to establishment ministry.

Meanwhile, Pabna DC Ashraf Makhul, Patuakhali DC Shafiqul Islam, Kishoreganj DC Mahfuzur Rahman and Narail DC AKM Jahangir have been transferred to Dhaka, Mymensingh, Jessore and Pabna respectively.

ADAB protests police raid in Proshika office

UNB, Dhaka

The Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) yesterday condemned the September 23 police raid at the central training centre of Proshika at Manikganj.

ADAB director M Aminul Islam in a statement said the raid would create a negative impact in the poverty alleviation and development programmes of the leading NGO.

The association called upon the government to refrain from carrying out such anti-NGO activities and provide support to the NGOs in their development programmes.

A refreshing event

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tions and don't plan to strike any agreement with any publishing house here," said Puijop Ranjan Bhowmik of Nirmal Book Agency in India.

There are 22 Bangladeshi book-stalls with a wide variety of books. Sixteen stalls represent India, while Nepal and Pakistan have two stalls each.

However, visitors are deprived of the opportunity of looking at the publications of the Maldives and Bhutan, as these two countries did not take part in the fair.

The Pakistan Publishers and Booksellers Association has brought a number of books on Islamic studies, besides some on current global affairs and Pakistan.

Some travelogues at the Nepalese stalls will transport readers back to the Himalayan kingdom. Books on Tibetan studies are also available at the Nepalese stalls.

"Mostly, the books on Buddhism are popular," said SC Wanniatchi of the Sri Lanka Book Publishers' Association. The stall also provides books in Sinhala language.

The Indian stalls are enriched with a wide range of books of different genres.

Quality and promotion of books count, said Tapas Saha, member of the Federation of Indian Publishers in reply to some visitors' comment that Indian books flooded the markets of the SAARC countries. "You must reach the readers," he said.

Some participating publishers

observed a lack of application of technology in publishing.

The fair also displays books on 'Women Studies', which is the theme of the event.

The organisers have imposed a restriction on display or sale of books that are anti-state and hurt feelings of any religious community.

Rare unity

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oment of the port city will bring more foreign investment for the country, now needed most."

Food minister Abdullah Al-Noman said, "Development of Chittagong is a matter of concern for all of us, irrespective of political affiliation."

State minister Ziaul Haq Zia said appreciated efforts of the mayor for development of Chittagong and hoped that he would actively cooperate with the government in various development works here.

Mayor and AL leader Mohiuddin Chowdhury said he would 'cooperate with the government wholeheartedly' in all its initiatives for development of the port city.

"It may be a tough critic of this government at Laldighi Maidan, but that does not mean I have any problem to work together for the good of Chittagong and its people," he said.

The mayor requested the ministers to ensure implementation of some development projects shelved for years due to bureaucratic tangles.

Jailed Bangladeshis

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different jails in India. Of them, 20 have been released recently.

"The government has sought IOM initiative, especially in countries where we do not have any mission or consular office," said State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam.

In many countries, particularly in Central Asia, Bangladeshis do not have any diplomatic mission.

"In those countries, a significant number of Bangladeshis have remained in jails or detention centres for years together," the minister said.

In others, the country's foreign missions are working for release of detained Bangladeshis and also providing legal assistance to expatriates in trouble, he claimed.

It would be easier to secure release of Bangladeshis arrested for not having passports and other immigration documents, the minister said.

However, it would be difficult to release those who have been arrested for criminal offence, he added.

"It would be difficult to convince the governments to release the Bangladeshis before their jail terms

expire. Still, we would request them to reduce their terms on humanitarian grounds."

The IOM representative for South Asia Shahidul Haque told The Daily Star yesterday that they had received the letter and was working on it.

"We have sent a formal proposal to our headquarters in Geneva on the basis of the government's request," Haque said.

The formal actions would be taken upon approval from Geneva and disbursement of required funds in this regard, he added.

If necessary fund is available, the IOM will also help the government in releasing Bangladeshis from jails where the country has diplomatic missions, Haque said.

The IOM has helped secure release of several Bangladeshis from foreign jails earlier and arranged their repatriation from Southeast and Central Asia.

It has also intervened in cases where Bangladeshis were convicted for criminal offences and arranged for reduction of their prison terms.