

# Allotment of govt property to Zia's family not okayed by JS, says AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday blamed the government for issuing the 'inaccurate statement' that the decision to allot government property to the family members of the late president Ziaur Rahman was approved by parliament.

"A decision on the matter in the Jatiya Sangsad was not possible as there was no discussion on it," AL Presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP said while addressing a press conference at the party office.

Selim wanted to know in which session of the Jatiya Sangsad it was decided that the two houses and other facilities would be given to Khaleda Zia.

The cabinet division in a hand-out on Monday said the houses at the Dhaka Cantonment and Gulshan were allotted to the family of the late president Ziaur Rahman as per a unanimous decision of the Jatiya Sangsad and as such it is pointless to raise any question on the issue settled long ago.

The AL press conference said government officials should keep themselves out of such political debates.

The press conference also raised the question whether the prime minister would return the houses, the current market value of which is over Tk 60 crore.

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim said he raised a question in the Jatiya

## 300 caught in Spider Web

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The joint forces arrested 300 persons, including a Jubo Dal leader, from Khulna city and different upazila of Bagerhat district yesterday and Tuesday night under the 'Operation Spider Web'.

Jubo Dal leader Mizanur Rahman Tinku was picked up from Khan Jahan Ali Road yesterday.

On Tuesday night, the joint forces nabbed two listed criminals from Phultala and four cadres of outlawed New Bangla Communist Party (NBCP) from Dumuria Upazila. The listed criminals are Raja Biswas, 23, and Ohidul, 24. Police also recovered a pistol and six bullets from them.

The outlaws arrested in Dumuria are Goussam Mistry, 26, Shankar, 24, Shishir Kumar, 34, and Samarendra Biswas, 38.

On the fourth day of the 'Operation Spider Web' yesterday, the joint forces sought active co-operation of people, particularly in rural areas in nabbing outlaws. The appeals were made over loud-speakers.

The chiefs of police, BDR and ansars left Khulna yesterday morning after staying here for nearly 72 hours in order to gear up the joint operation. During their stay, they held close-door meetings with officials of the joint forces now conducting the Operation. They also visited different camps set up in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts.

## Tests confirm

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soldiers trying to arrest them.

Around 200 soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division pounded the house using grenades, rocket-firing Kiowa attack helicopters, heavy machine guns and anti-tank missiles.

Sanchez said 10 TOW anti-tank missiles were fired at the villa. Planes, Apache helicopters and even a psy-ops team were on standby to help if needed, but were not used.

Sanchez said three adults in the villa were probably killed by the missile strikes. The last person left alive inside was a teen-ager who US officials say was Saddam's grandson. He was killed when he fired at troops who stormed the house.

Just hours after the brothers were killed in Mosul, a US soldier was killed and seven wounded when two vehicles hit a mine near the city, a US military official said.

In a separate ambush, another soldier was killed and two wounded when their convoy was attacked near the restive town of Ramadi, west of Baghdad, a hotspot in the 'Sunni triangle.'

US officials had said they feared an upsurge in attacks as die-hard Saddam loyalists sought to avenge his sons.

But officers said killing Uday and Qusay would ultimately help silence guerrillas who have killed 41 American soldiers since President Bush declared major combat over on May 1, and give

Sangsad on February 18, 1987 on the facilities given by the government to the family of the late president Ziaur Rahman.

"While replying to my question, then leader of the House Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury said that a government decision of June 6, 1981 permanently allotted a house on a 2.72 acre plot in the Dhaka Cantonment area to Khaleda Zia and her two sons against a premium of Tk 1 and a yearly tax of Tk 1", Selim said. "The then (1981) market value of the property was over Tk 6 crore and 69 lakh," he added quoting Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury.

The allotment did not seek permission of the Cantonment Board which was sole authority to allot cantonment property, he said.

AL leaders Motia Chowdhury, Kazi Zafrullah, Mukul Bose, Sultan Mohammad Mansur, Abdur Rahman and Abdul Mannan Khan also attended the press conference.

## Kulaura tea estate files lawsuit to evict Catholic welfare mission

ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Kulaura

A Catholic mission long engaged in social welfare services in Kulaura is faced with the grim prospect of losing its land following a lawsuit filed by a neighbouring tea estate which claims the piece of land as its own.

The Lakshmiipur Catholic Mission has been working in the area since 1982, helping the local poor including tribal people through its various welfare programmes. In 1988, the mission bought the two-acre land near the Rose Tea Estate, formerly Ranglichhara Tea Estate, from one Elias Miah.

Elias Miah said he had bought the land in the 70s from Nawab Ali Yawar Khan, whose family owned the then Ranglichhara Tea Estate. The Khan family later sold the estate to one Rashida Islam.

Elias Miah said he had made regular land tax payments and later sold the land to the mission.

Bijoy D Cruz, a priest of the Catholic Mission, alleged that the tea estate authorities were involved in a conspiracy against the mission and trying to grab its land by filing a false case.

Rose Tea Estate authorities have filed a case against Elias Miah, one Muhib Miah and Father Joseph of the Lakshmiipur Catholic Mission.

"We are here to serve local people. The land they are trying to occupy is used for the welfare of orphans and local people know it very well," Cruz said.

However, A Qaiyum Chowdhury, general manager of the tea estate, told The Daily Star that the case was filed on the basis of original documents. "A leased land cannot be sold. So we filed the case to recover our land," he said, adding that the tea estate owns 5000 acres of land and the idea that it is trying to grab the 2-acre land is absurd.

## River vessel workers threaten agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Bangladesh Nourjan Samik (river vessel workers) Federation (BNSF) yesterday declared to go for agitation if the government and launch owners failed to ensure safety of passengers.

The organisation held a rally yesterday in memory of the deceased passengers of MV Nasrin-1, its Master Jasimuddin and owner Mamun Khan.

They demanded of the government implementation of existing laws that hold owners and workers responsible for launch mishaps due to overloading.

They also urged the government to ensure compliance of the rules of building vessels so that structural problem does not cause accidents.

The MV Nasrin-1 incident should be thoroughly investigated, said another speaker.

Presided over by Golam Maola, president of BNSF, the rally was addressed by Chowdhury Ashikul Alam, general secretary of BNSF and trade union leader MYasin.

MV Nasrin-1 drowned at the confluence of Padma, Meghna and Dakatia with about 750 passengers on July 8. More than five hundred passengers died in the mishap.

## When death

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Mahmuda Manik Mitu, 8, and Monisha Moni, 6.

She bought a bottle of 'Furadon' pesticide from a shop at nearby Golaghar area, went to Yusufpur-Alipur road and asked her daughters if they were willing to die with her. Then she fed them biscuit and the pesticide and took the same herself. All the three were then screaming in pain.

The mother, who also has a son, narrated this tragic story to a group of journalists who visited her yesterday at Durgapur Health Complex where doctors washed her stomach.

Local people said they rushed them to Ujan Khalshi Community Hospital. Mitu died on way to the hospital at around 10am and Moni died at the hospital about three hours later.

Their mother was shifted to the health complex Tuesday evening.

"Why do you want to save my life. I do not want to live... We do not have food and clothing... Why should we lead such a life?" Dukhimon shouted at journalists at the health complex.

"Please let me go home and take the pesticide again. I do not like to live without my daughters and son", she cried out.

Her son Shahrul, 14, is a student of class seven at Alipur Madrassah. Manik and Shahrul were not found at their village.

Sub-inspector Majharul Islam of Durgapur thana filed a case against the mother.

## Result debacle

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2001 and 2002.

These include 230 madrassahs, 39 schools and 21 colleges.

However, the government is formulating a policy to evaluate the performance of educational institutions before taking measures like delisting from the MPO, said Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruq yesterday.

The minister said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has directed the ministry to slash budgetary allocations in case the institutions fail to live up to the expectations in a year.

The ministry had served show cause notice to 1,400 institutions last year for the educational downside.

Statistics show the government had spent more than Tk 50 crore in the education sector during the last two years.

## BNP urges

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oriented, productive, qualitative and free of criminals and black money.

The BNP leader said the prime minister has already come forward to build a national consensus by honouring Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the Independence Award and with the proposal for hanging the portrait of national leaders in government offices.

The proposal is still valid and the BNP is waiting for a response from the opposition parties, he said.

Regretting Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina's stinging criticism of the PM's recent call for political reforms, he said, "Let's build a healthy political atmosphere together... Many of our neighbouring countries moved ahead of us by reforming politics."

Bhuiyan said the AL had vowed not to call hartal when it was in power, but it has forgot about that promise fast finding itself in the opposition.

He urged all parties to join his party's roadmap for national development by responding positively to the prime minister's call for political reforms.

## Flood condition betters

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300 families homeless in the last 48 hours in three upazila -- Kazipur, Belkuchi and Chouhali in Sirajganj district.

A BSS report says 155 structures including the official residence of the upazila nirbahi officer of Louhajang in Munshiganj were washed away overnight as the Padma continued to erode its banks.

Experts blamed indiscriminate withdrawal of sands from near the Mawa Ferry Terminal area for flood this year in Munshiganj, the worst in a decade.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), both the Brahmaputra and the Ganges registered further fall at all points and are likely to fall further. The rivers around Dhaka also registered fall.

The FFWC said the Brahmaputra-Jamuna is flowing below the danger level at all points except Aricha. The Ganges-Padma also registered fall at all points, but the river is still flowing above the danger level at Goalundo and Bhagayakul.

Most of the rivers in these basins

registered further fall. The rivers in the Meghna and the South Eastern Hill basins also registered fall. Out of 85 monitoring stations, six points recorded rise and 40 points recorded fall and two points remained steady. The rivers were flowing above the danger mark at nine points during the last 24 hours.

With the recession of floodwaters, diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases have broken out in several north-western districts. Our correspondents reported that diarrhoea claimed at least six lives in Sirajganj and Kurigram and several hundred people contracted the disease.

Local sources claimed that four people, including two minors, died in the last two days at Tarash, Raiganj and Kazipur in Sirajganj district. Two other minors died at Nageswari upazila in Kurigram, one of the worst affected districts.

Hospital sources in Kurigram and Sirajganj said over one thousand people have contracted waterborne diseases. Health officials recorded more than 200 cases of diarrhoea in the last 24 hours in Kurigram alone.

## CPA confce in Dhaka Oct 4-12

BSS, Dhaka

The 49th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference will be held in Dhaka October 4-12.

About 600 representatives from 174 federal and provincial parliaments of 54 Commonwealth countries are expected to participate in the conference.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the main session of the conference on October 7, Parliament Secretariat sources said yesterday.

Meanwhile, the government has directed the authorities concerned to take measures for expensive media coverage of the conference at home and abroad.

The ministry of information and the Parliament Secretariat at a meeting yesterday decided that Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar would broadcast live the inaugural ceremony of the conference.

Besides, the BTV will linkup the inaugural session through the AsiaSat so that the people of Commonwealth countries can enjoy the programme by using satellite.

The meeting was held in the conference room of Press Information Department (PID) with Information Minister Tariqul Islam in the chair.

The PID has been given the responsibility to coordinate among the local and foreign journalists who will cover the conference.

The meeting decided to make documentaries on Bangladesh and present those to the foreign delegates for projecting the positive image of the country abroad.

The information minister directed the authorities concerned to work on a priority basis to ensure appropriate media management during the conference.

## 30 hurt as BNP factions clash in Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 30 people were injured, ten of them seriously, in a clash between two rival factions of the local unit of BNP at village Sani Arpara under Shalikhia upazila yesterday morning.

The two factions -- one led by Abdul Khaleque Meer and the other by Azizur Rahman -- clashed over control of Dhamesarwari union. The feuding groups used lethal weapons during the clash that continued for an hour.

On information, police from the local camp rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The seriously injured, identified as Zafar Ali, 42, Shaheb Ali, 30, Babul, 32, Rabbani, 35, Berek, 35, Babar, 30, Asad, 30, Farhad, 30, Sahadat Mian, 52, and Seraj, 30, were admitted to Magura sadar hospital.

## Michel remanded

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recovered on Tuesday from under water hyacinth at Rasulbagh, police said.

Son of Saiful Islam, Mishel was kidnapped by local youths including Sohail alias Shoyeb from near their residence at 787, Dania for a ransom of Tk three lakh on July 5.

Police said they are giving maximum effort to arrest the other accused.

Mishel's family alleged that Shyamur police arrested the prime suspect Shoyeb and released him the same day.

The gang attacked the house of Saiful Islam as the case was filed. Instead of taking action, police asked the members of the family to leave the house on July 7, victim's family alleged.

## BNP leader's body found In farm land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The decomposed body of a missing BNP leader was recovered from a sugarcane field at Keshabpur village of Bagha upazila in Rajshahi on Tuesday.

The victim, Dulal Sheikh, 45, was a member of the convenor committee of the district unit and former general secretary of Pakuria union BNP.

There were several injuries in the body with the eyes and nails gouged out, police said.

Dulal was last seen returning home by a motorcycle from Narayanpur bazar in Bagha at around 10.00pm Saturday.

The motive behind the killing could not be known. But the police suspect it was a pre-planned murder.

Local BNP leaders, however, blamed Awami League (AL) for the incident.

The AL leaders denied the allegation and claimed it was the result of the internal conflict in local BNP.

## 3 get life term for acid attack on housewife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An acid crime tribunal here yesterday sentenced three people to life imprisonment for throwing acid on a housewife in 2002, which eventually led to her death.

The convicts are Zabeed Ali, Golam Rasul and his son Abdur Razzak, all from Sherpur Upazila of Bogra District.

The additional district and sessions judge of Bogra who handed down the verdict also fined the convicts Tk 60,000 each, in default of which they would have to serve an additional three years of rigorous imprisonment.

The court instructed the deputy commissioner of Bogra to realise the amount from the convicts and pay the sum to the victim's family.

Two of the convicts, Golam Rasul and his son Abdur Razzak, are absconding.

The prosecution story in brief is that the three men threw acid on Bilkis on the night of August 19, 2002 while the housewife was asleep with her aunt Ayesha Begum. Both women were critically injured in the attack.

Later on September 14, Bilkis died at a clinic in Dhaka where she was undergoing treatment.

Bilkis's father Saraf Uddin Pramanik filed a case with Sherpur Police station.

Charge sheet against the accused was filed on October 10, 2002. BRAC provided legal support to the prosecution.

## Shamsunnahar Hall

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directive of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia headed by Justice M Tafazzul Islam, submitted the 500-page report to the home ministry on September 3 last year, holding some police officials responsible.

The report held Additional Deputy Commissioner Abdur Rahim responsible for the raid along with the then DU authorities.

The report submitted by the DU committee said intolerance, lack of mutual trust and conflict between the provost and the house tutors of the hall had led to the incident.

The nine recommendations of the report include cautioning the assistant proctors, transfer of the hall employees, and actions against the house tutors and Jannatul Kanon.

The committee formed by the police submitted its report on August 7 last year and found none of their officials guilty.

Kanon, one of the masterminds of the incident, is still staying at the hall while Lily and Mou, the associates of Lucy and Shanta, the other masterminds, have become president and general secretary of the JCD hall unit.

Sources said the JCD is ready to foil yesterday's protest programmes. DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz said some steps have been taken while some other steps would be taken soon.

The civil surgeon offices in the affected districts claimed that there were adequate stock of medicines to treat diarrhoea patients and mobile medical teams have started visiting the affected areas.

Flood victims in different areas, particularly in greater Rangpur district, are passing through a grave crisis because they are unemployed. Local sources said poor people in these areas are borrowing money on high interest and many day labourers are selling their services in advance at a much lower rate.

But our Barisal correspondent reports that the flood situation is worsening in the district.

According to the local administration, new areas have been flooded in Agailjhara, Gournadi and Uzirpur upazila of the district. Ten villages including Basail, Batra and Bahadurpur in Razihar union and four villages including Ambari and Madar in Bakal union under Agailjhara upazila have been flooded.

Twenty-five villages of Khanzapur and Barthi unions under Gournadi upazila have also gone under floodwater.

## Anu murder

## One placed on remand

BSS, Dhaka

One person, arrested in connection with the murder of BNP leader Anwarul Haque alias Anu on Tuesday, was placed on three-day remand yesterday.

Police proceeded Russell Ahmed alias Bhutto in the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court seeking a seven-day remand.

After hearing both sides, the court granted a three-day remand.

Kotwali police arrested Bhutto, a close associate of notorious criminal Shahid in the city, in the early hours of Tuesday.

Anu, 40, a joint secretary of the Sutrapur unit of BNP, was shot dead by armed miscreants at Johnson road in the old part of the city on July 17.

## Shazneen case

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adjoined the hearing till today.

Earlier, the lawyer of the principal accused Shahidul Islam alias Shahid completed cross-examination of the witness.

Replying to a question by the lawyers of the five accused, Mojibur Rahman said he took over the charge of investigation into the Shazneen murder case on April 27, 1998 and the rape case on September 4, 1998.

The witness also told the court that he arrested Parvin on June 11, 1998 from Tongi bus stand, Gazipur and she gave a confessional statement before a magistrate on June 16, 1998. He arrested Minu from near Rajarbagh police hospital on July 1, 1998 and she gave her confessional statement before a magistrate on the same day in a court, the IO said.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Ltd., was raped and murdered at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Special public prosecutors ABM Sharfuddin Khan Mukul, Mahubul Ahmed and Arfan Uddin Khan appeared for the state while advocates Mosharraf Hossain Kajol and Mizanur Rahman defended the accused.

## DU students

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on the campus yesterday morning. Later, they held a discussion meeting at the hall auditorium and demanded publication of the probe body report and action against those responsible for the incident.

The female students also alleged that JCD workers and the hall authorities are harassing them.

Opposition Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out a candle procession from the Central Shaheed Minar in the early hours of yesterday. Police stopped the procession on its way to the hall and the participants then held a protest rally at the Shaheed Minar. The BCL also formed a human chain at Aparajeyo Bangla at 10am and held a photo exhibition and a discussion meeting at Battala on the campus.

General students of the university under the banner of Students Against Repression submitted a memorandum to DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz. The memorandum contained a five-point demand including punishment of those involved in the police atrocities and cancellation of the proctorial laws of the university.

The other student bodies which observed the day included left leaning Progratishel Chhatra Jote, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Bangladesh Chhatra League (pro-JSD), Bangladesh Chhatra Federation, Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri, Biplobi Chhatra Moitri.

Besides, the Cultural Platform Against Torture held a discussion, expressing solidarity with the students' demands.

## Industrial park

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coordination body in its previous meeting held in May decided that the park would be exclusively for readymade garments, weaving and processing (dyeing, printing and finishing) industries. The state-run BSCIC was assigned to prepare the PCP.

As per the executive summary of the PCP, 37 per cent of the area has been earmarked for the RMG sector, 38 per cent for weaving and 24 per cent for the processing units.

The RMG sector can accommodate 1,368 units in the multi-storied buildings on 319 plots, while the weaving sector will get 84 plots each having one unit and the processing industry 54 plots for 27 units.

Total employment, as envisaged in the PCP, will be around 8.78 lakh, with the RMG sector alone accounting for 8.21 lakh.

The prices of plots, which vary in size as per requirement, have been estimated at Tk 4.75 lakh per katha, Tk 95 lakh per bigha and Tk 287 lakh per acre.

The Park will have a central effluent treatment plant on five acres, to be built by the processing industry.

Besides, there will be a multi-storied administrative building with floor spaces for banks, insurance companies, post office and T&T office, cafeteria, shopping centre and medical services.

The meeting yesterday, also attended by ministers concerned and leaders of the textile sector, discussed all aspects of the PCP, including sharing of the cost between the government and the private sector.

It was proposed in the meeting that the project cost should be shared equally by the government and the private sector. It also discussed the modalities for allotment of plots -- whether these would be leased out or sold outright.

Leaders of three associations in the textile sector -- BGMEA, BTMA and BKMEA -- have pointed out that the unit prices

for plots seemed to be very high. The united prices would not be cost-effective for the industries, they said.