

Vandalism at party confce Sylhet Jubo League secy, 13 others sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

The newly elected General Secretary of Sylhet district Awami Jubo League Azadur Rahman Azad and 13 others arrested Tuesday night were sent to jail custody yesterday.

A magistrate's court rejected the bail prayer of Azadur, also a ward commissioner of the city corporation, when he along with the others arrested was produced before the court.

The others however did not seek

One sentenced to death for murdering wife

UNB, *Barisal*

A young man was yesterday awarded capital punishment for torturing his wife to death at Bhonga in Mehendiganj about three years ago.

Standing in the dock, Bahauddin Sikder broke down in tears as the judge handed down the death penalty.

Others accused in the case -- the father and three sisters of the convict -- were acquitted.

According to the prosecution, Bahauddin beat his wife Mukta Begum to death as his father-in-law refused to give him Tk 50,000 as dowry on December 12, 2000.

In 1996, Bahauddin had received Tk 70,000 in marriage from his father-in-law to pay for expenses related to his overseas employment. But he squandered the money and kept urging his father-in-law for an additional Tk 50,000.

Being turned down, Bahauddin savagely beat Mukta, killing her on the spot. Mukta left behind a two-year-old daughter.

Kamal murder

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national flag atop the residence of Jahangir Mohammad Adel on August 14, the Independence Day of Pakistan.

The victim's brother Mohammad Nazir Hossain filed a murder case with Kotwali Police Station the following day, accusing Jahangir Mohammad Adel, his two sons -- Zobayed Adel and Tareq Adel -- and two others.

The investigation officer of the case submitted a charge sheet against the five on March 2, 2001.

Accused Jahangir, Tareq and Pappu are now on bail while Zobayed and Nitya Sarker have been absconding since the incident.

Municipal polls

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the BDR, will be invited to the meeting, sources said.

In a separate press release, the EC yesterday requested all the contesting candidates to abide by the electoral code of conduct for fair and peaceful holding of the by-election.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of introducing electronic voting system. CEC M A Sayed said the system should be introduced for better management of elections. The EC may buy some electronic voting machines in order to study how they work.

Meanwhile, none of the seven candidates for the by-polls stayed withdrew from the race as the deadline for withdrawal of candidature ended yesterday. They will be allotted symbols today, our Netrokona correspondent reports.

Death to 16

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to the High Court.

If the High Court upholds the verdict, the convict can appeal to the Appellate Division.

If the Appellate Division also upholds the verdict, the convict can file a review petition. In case of rejection of the petition, the convict can seek the president's mercy.

If the president rejects it, the authorities execute the death sentence within 21 days.

This whole process typically takes six to seven years.

At present, two benches of the High Court Division hear death references. There are over 300 cases pending before the High Court -- about 50 with the Appellate Division, half of which are ready for hearing. The High Court is now hearing cases which are more than two years old.

Because of frequent death sentencing, the number of convicts on death rows has increased fast in last few months. In 10 central jails across the country, there are more than 300 condemned prisoners although accommodation capacity is only 47.

Dhaka Central Jail alone has 55 condemned prisoners. They include the convict in the sensational Mammy murder case of Narayanganj. The High Court has

300 Bangladeshi, Vietnamese workers brawl in Malaysia

AFP, *Kuala Lumpur*

Malaysian police broke up a mass brawl involving some 300 foreign workers from Bangladesh and Vietnam and arrested six migrants in southern Malacca state, a police official said yesterday.

Onn Ahmad, Malacca state public order chief said the clash happened late Tuesday when the workers of a Taiwan-owned textile factory jostled to board a bus returning from work.

One Vietnamese and four Bangladeshi workers were injured in the fight, Ohn was quoted as saying by Bernama news agency. Onn said 20 policemen were rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control.

Police arrested one Vietnamese and five Bangladeshi workers, aged between 20 and 40, he said.

Tremor:2 bodies found in Rangamati

UNB, *Rangamati*

Bodies of two persons died in Sunday's earthquake were recovered from the remote hilly area of Barkal Upazila Tuesday evening.

The villagers said bodies of Kinakumar Chakma, 29, of Jakkobajchhara and an unidentified woman were recovered from beneath the earth.

They said tremor again shook the area yesterday that lasted for 17 seconds.

But there was no official confirmation about the tremor.

India to monitor money in politics

AFP, *New Delhi*

The Indian government yesterday moved a bill in parliament to increase monitoring of funding to political parties to make the system "more transparent".

"The bill is important because 56 years after independence, we have not been able to devise a system for funding of political parties," Law Minister Arun Jaitley said while moving the legislation.

"There is a need to develop a transparent system as an alternative to what some people say is 'no system' or an 'invisible system'."

The proposed amendments to the law include requiring all political parties to do internal auditing and to submit their reports to the Election Commission, which conducts polls across India.

20 missile tests cost India over \$16m

AFP, *New Delhi*

India conducted 20 tests of seven missile in the first half of 2003 at a cost of more than 16 million dollars, Defence Minister George Fernandes told Parliament yesterday.

"All the 20 flight tests have met the mission objectives set for them," the minister said in a written reply to a question.

Fernandes said the 20 tests conducted between January 1 and June 30 cost about 750 million rupees (16.3 million dollars), including the costs of the launched missiles.

Fugitive

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awarded death penalty by a court in Kiron murder case. Kiron was a former MP of Shibpur.

Yusuf was also a charge-sheeted accused in another murder case.

The body was sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case has been filed.

Wounds

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on phone, her voice trailing off.
"No comment, no comment," was all Naushin's uncle Golam Kibria could say after the judgement. Her aunt Quamrunnahar Begum burst into tears in the courtroom. "We know Naushin will never come back. But why not death sentences to the killers? How can crime be stopped if punishment is not harsh? Quamrunnahar cried.

All through the judge's pronouncement of the verdict, Mohammad Moslem alias Muslim Miah, standing in the dock, was reciting verses from the Qur'an and Mohammad Saiful Islam Ratan, also arrested after the incident, broke down hearing the verdict.

The other two convicts Abdullah-Al-Mamun popularly known as Ragkata Mamun and Sumon alias Baita Sumon went underground after the killing.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Ali Haider Kiron said he was satisfied with the judgement. Advocates Mohammad Hanif and Anwarul Kabir Babul, defence lawyers, did not comment on the verdict but said they would appeal to the High Court Division against the judgement.

Abducted Ctg businessman still untraced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Abducted Chittagong businessman Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury could not be traced till yesterday, six days after his abduction on Thursday.

The kidnapers, who called up Saturday night and demanded a ransom of Tk 50 lakh for his release, made no further contact in the last three days, causing his family members to fear for the worst.

During a phone conversation with Chittagong Chamber President Amir Humayun Mahmud on Tuesday night, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury assured him of launching a vigorous search and rescue operation for the abducted businessman.

Mahmud reportedly complained to the home minister about leakage of secret information on police raids leading to failure of the rescue operation and arrest of the kidnapers.

He also told the minister that kidnapping for ransom has gone unchecked due to lack of follow-up action on previous incidents.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, Mahmud also referred to the widespread allegation that police had nothing much to their credit in the rescue of previous abduction victims as ransom had to be paid in each case.

Meanwhile, abduction of businessman Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, also former vice president of Chittagong (south) district unit of BNP, has triggered strong resentment and grave concern among the business community and ordinary citizens in spite of the ongoing massive search and rescue operation and beefed-up security measures.

A huge contingent of 150 policemen led by DC (north) Mian Md. Lutfur Rahman has been posted at Fatikchhari since Tuesday night in connection with rescue operation.

High officials of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and District Police held a coordination meeting on Tuesday night, which was followed by another meeting

Housewife's death shrouded in mystery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mystery over the death of a young housewife at Mohakhali on Tuesday deepens as her parents' family call it a murder while the in-laws a normal death.

Tahmina Rahman Tania, 22, was found dead at her husband Kamal Hossain's residence at 143, Mohakhali Wireless Gate at around 4:30pm. Tania's in-laws informed her parents' family that she died of illness.

Gulshan police recovered her body in a bed in the evening and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy. No injury marks were found in the body.

But members of Tania's parents' family, who rushed in from Goyahata village in Nagorpur, Tangail, could not accept the account of Tania's death as given by her in-laws.

Tania's in-laws told them that she was suffering for a long time as she came under the influence of 'some evil spirit' and an ojha exorcised her four days ago.

But her aunt, Shahnaz Parvin Ranu, told journalists at the DMCH yesterday that Tania's in-laws killed her in a planned way as they failed to give them Tk 1 lakh that they had demanded.

"Immediately after Tania's marriage three years ago, the in-laws cut off relations with us as they learnt about our poor financial position," the aunt said. They started torturing her since then, she added.

"Tania's husband, mother-in-law and other in-laws would not allow us to see her at their residence at Mohakhali," she said.

"They called us to their house three months ago and asked us to collect the money anyhow, but we were in no position to arrange it," she said.

"They intensified the pressure on her since then and did not let us know about her condition," Tania's uncle Rafiq said.

While waiting to receive her body at the DMCH yesterday afternoon, the uncle informed some journalists over phone that Tania's husband and some 20 others, who were roaming in front of the morgue, were threatening them for terming the death a murder.

However, Tania's uncle Abdul Majid received the body on completion of autopsy in the evening and took it to their village home in Tangail for burial.

On a complaint filed by Tania's relatives, Gulshan police recorded an unnatural death case yesterday.

yesterday of high officials of district police at the police superintendent's office at Sholoshahar.

Police suspect the kidnapers are holding the businessman in the remote and inaccessible area of Charoilryerchar of Kanchon union under Fatikchhari upazila.

Police suspect involvement of top terrors Gittu Nasir, BDR Salim and Habib Khan, and three UP chairmen of Fatikchhari and Satkania, and have arrested some relatives of some of the accused as part of a strategy to secure the businessman's release.

Police during a raid at Kanchon Nagor yesterday arrested one Zakaria Chowdhury, 55, brother of local UP Chairman Abul Kashem who is one of the suspects.

Three others -- Abul Hossain, 34, brother of Gittu Nasir, and Nasir's two associates Osman, 30, and Azim Ullah, 25, -- were also arrested from the city yesterday and taken in for interrogation.

Four other persons undergoing police interrogation are No. 9 Parioyakora Union Parishad Chairman Akhter Jamal Chowdhury of Patiya, Zakaria Chowdhury, brother of a local UP chairman in Fatikchhari, Gittu's sister-in-law Noor Banu and Peyar Ahmad.

Noor Banu was released while Peyar was reported arrested in connection with another case, sources said.

Outlaw beaten to death by villagers in Rupsha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Paban Roy, 32, an armed cadre of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), was beaten to death by villagers at Natundia in Rupsha upazila at midnight Tuesday.

Police recovered the body from behind Natundia Primary School yesterday morning.

Police and witnesses said Paban Roy is an armed cadre of PBCP and a listed criminal wanted by Rupsha police.

The VDP (village defence party) with the help of villagers caught him while he was returning from his father-in-law's house at Dhopakhola village.

They lynched him to death on the spot.

Paban's associate, Biddut Majumdar, who was accompanying him, escaped.

Son of Jatun Roy of Boloti village, Paban Roy was an accused in fish trader Anadi Das murder case, Rupsha police said. Besides, he was an accused in 12 other criminal cases.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Rupsha Police Station has lodged an FIR as complainant naming none as accused for killing Paban.

DU students

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ours degree. Dhaka University earlier declared the four-year combined honours degree would be held equivalent to the three-year honours and one-year masters degree and the degree-holders would be eligible to apply for all first class jobs excluding those of the university teachers.

Some students said they will withdraw the strike if the government issued a gazette notification saying the four-year honours degree would be equivalent to all previous three-year honours and one year master's degree.

"We demand the same opportunity as the students of BUET, medical and agricultural universities," said a student.

About 300 students gathered at the Curzon Hall and went to the vice-chancellor's residence at about 11:00pm Tuesday. They also held a rally at the TSC earlier.

The students put all the classrooms, office rooms and the main gate of the Curzon Hall under lock and key. They also locked up the central library after a demonstration rally in front of it.

Police posted at the campus aided by additional forces were deployed around the campus from Tuesday night to avoid further untoward incidents.

In a written statement the DU authorities requested the education ministry, the establishment ministry, the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) to allow the four-year honours degree holders to be eligible for all first class professions including BCS education, technical cadre posts, government and NGO posts.

The DU authorities decided to mention 'four-years combined honours degree' in the certificates and issue new certificates to replace the older ones.

The DU authorities called for an emergency syndicate meeting at 8:00pm yesterday.

Shammi Kapoor's condition 'critical but stable'

PTI, *Mumbai*

The condition of yesteryear's Indian filmstar Shammi Kapoor, undergoing treatment at a city hospital for congestion in lungs, continues to remain "critical but stable", hospital sources said here yesterday.

Kapoor, who is in ICU, had been suffering from bronchitis. He was admitted to the Breach Candy Hospital in the city after he developed serious lung congestion and renal problems, the sources said.

"Kapoor had developed renal problems on July 28 and is under observation constantly for urine output and creatinine level," the sources said.

18 Bangladeshis held in Bihar

AFP, *Patna*

Eighteen Bangladeshis illegal immigrants were arrested in the eastern Indian state of Bihar for travelling without tickets and travel documents on state-run Indian Railways, police said yesterday.

Indian Railways Police deputy superintendent Shankar Jha told AFP the Bangladeshis males, all less than 25 years old, were arrested in Gaya town, 120 kilometers south of Bihar's state capital Patna on Tuesday.

"The Bangladeshis intruders were travelling without tickets on the Howrah-Bombay Mail. Later the ticket checker found that they had no passport and visas," said Jha, adding that the migrants had told the police that they had come to India in search of jobs.

The immigrants said that they had used a boat to sneak into West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh and then boarded the Howrah-Mumbai Mail at Calcutta's busy Howrah railway station.

They also told police they had first arrived in India with 50 other labourers from their hometown of Jauwa Bazar in Bangladesh, but split up after they were abandoned by their guide.

Writ hearing on Gram Sarkar Act on Aug 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The formation of much talked about Gram Sarkar and a hearing on a writ on Gram Sarkar Act-2000 filed by the Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) challenging this act will be held on August 2.

A High Court Division Bench comprising Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice AFM Ali Asgar yesterday fixed the date for hearing. The decision came following a petition filed by Barrister Tanjibul Alam, an associate of Dr. Kamal Hossain, on Tuesday.

Earlier on July 6, the writ was filed by Dr. Kamal Hossain on behalf of BLAST.

Robbery at met office security official's house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted cash and gold ornaments allegedly worth Tk 1.5 lakh from a Weather Office Staff Quarters residence at Agargaon yesterday.

Gias Uddin, a met office security official, and his family members were sleeping when six armed youths barged into their second floor room at 2:30am by cutting the window grill.

The looters took them hostage at gunpoint and took away 20 tola jewellery and Tk 7,000 in cash.

In the first information report, filed with the Mohammadpur Police Station, Gias said the robbers threatened him of dire consequences if they shouted at the time of their leaving.

However, police could not recover the booty or arrest anyone till writing of this report at 7:00pm yesterday.

Landslides

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Cox's Bazar police and fire fighters went to the scenes yesterday morning and retrieved the bodies.

Landslides during rains in the seaboard town and its environs hit in tragic frequency.

Yesterday's incidents evoke the memories of earth collapse that claimed the lives of five people of a family at Kalatalai last month.

Meanwhile, life in the town and eight upazila in the district was disrupted by flooding worsened by three days of incessant rain and raging high waters.

Floodwaters washed away two schoolboys on Tuesday and their bodies were retrieved from the monsoon-swollen Matamuhuri river yesterday.

Ariful Islam and Tofael Ahmed, both 11 and students of Veola Government Primary School, were carried away by river currents when they were bathing in the river after a football match.

3 US marines hurt in Baghdad attack

Jafari named first president in rotation

AFP, *Baghdad*

Three US soldiers have been wounded in rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attacks in Samarra, 100 km north of Baghdad, an American military spokesman said yesterday.

"Early this morning, two soldiers were wounded in an RPG attack in Samarra," said Specialist Brian Sharkey, adding there were no further details.

A military spokesman later said another soldier was been wounded in the area in an RPG attack at 9:30 pm (1730 GMT) Tuesday.

Samarra, on the road to Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit, sits on the frontlines of the battle between loyalists of the fugitive former president and US troops.

Since US President George W. Bush declared an end to major

combat in Iraq on May 1, the US-led coalition says at least 50 American soldiers have been killed in guerrilla attacks, while another 56 have died in non-combat incidents.

Iraq's interim Governing Council meanwhile yesterday named Ibrahim Jafari of the Shiite fundamentalist Dawra party as the US-approved body's first president, said a Kurdish official.

Jafari, the Dawra spokesman, was chosen to be the trail-blazing council's president based on his name being the first alphabetically among the nine council members who will share the rotating presidency, Barham Saleh of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan told AFP.

The line-up includes five Shiite Muslim, two Sunni, and two Kurdish members of the 25-strong council, reflecting Iraq's ethnic diversity.

Naushin killing

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394 of the BPC and given seven years RI.

The punishment to the fugitives will take effect from the date of their surrender or arrest, stated the judgement, which was read out in about half an hour.

Hearing the verdict, Moslem and Saiful broke down in tears. They claimed that they were victimised and implicated as part of an unexplained conspiracy.

Masudur Rahman, owner of Masud Enterprise, filed a murder case with the Badda Police Station on May 9, 2002, the day of the incident.

In the case, the complainant alleged his manager Mohammad Tareq Rahman alias Palash went out at around 12:30pm to collect Tk 30,000 arrears from Sumon Enterprise at 16, DIT Road, Malibagh and Shakal-Shandha Traders at Maddha Badda. Tareq went to the MA Hotel at Uttar Badda at around 1:40pm for lunch.

All of a sudden, the gang of four

entered the hotel, encircled him and asked him to hand over valuables. As he refused, they shot him in the left leg and took away the Tk 30,000 and a mobile phone. But others in the hotel chased the miscreants.

They fled the place boarding a three-wheeler, firing indiscriminately at their chasers. A bullet hit the baby narrowly missing her father, who was going to meet his brother at a rent-a-car shop behind the hotel. Naushin was rushed to a local clinic and then to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared her dead.

The Detective Branch (DB) of Police submitted a charge sheet against the four on August 21 last year, showing 27 people as prosecution witnesses.

The court framed charges against the accused on March 27 and the trial began on May 5. Twenty prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

Grains purchase

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drive to achieve the target of procuring 1.54 lakh tonnes of paddy.

The meeting was attended by Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman and Anwarul Kabir Talukdar. Besides, Cabinet Secretary Sadat Hossain, Agriculture Secretary Aiyub Quadri, Planning Secretary Badiur Rahman, Food Secretary Khairuzzaman Chowdhury and high officials of the food ministry, food directorate, Economic Relations Division and Finance Division were present.

Some food officials later told The Daily Star it was too late to meet the target as farmers had already sold out bulk of their produce in the open market.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a senior food official said, "Success of any such drive entirely depends on the political will of the government. It is possible to achieve paddy procurement target and reach price support to the farmers only if there is no political pressure to procure more rice from the millers."

To substantiate his contention, he mentioned that the FPMU meeting decided to raise rice procurement target to 7.5 lakh tonnes due to pressure allegedly from the ruling BNP men to procure more rice from the millers.

But some officials pointed out that revising the rice procurement target will require cabinet approval. Besides, there is no need to raise the target as public food silos have already a stock of seven lakh tonnes, over 50,000 tonnes of food aid is in the pipeline and 80,000 tonnes of wheat are going to be purchased from the domestic and international markets, they added.

It will not be wise to procure more rice under 'political pressure,' one official said.

Meeting sources said the food secretary proposed a two-stage procurement strategy -- paddy procurement first, followed by rice procurement.

The planning secretary mentioned farmers usually avoid selling their produce to government purchase centres because of complexities in the procurement process.

Flood situation

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30cm at Sunanganj. The Kushiyara recorded further rise by 8cm at Amalshid and by