

COMMITTEE REPORT

Pvt university students agitate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of several private universities yesterday staged demonstrations in the wake of the high-powered evaluation committee's report recommending closure of eight of the 52 private universities in the country, and stringent measures against many more.

Agitating students of Ahsanullah University in the capital demanded removal of Vice-chancellor Mosharraf Hossain Khan, branding him 'inefficient'.

The demonstrators said they were disappointed that their university, established in 1995, was not found on the list of 'top performing ones' mentioned in media reports. This will adversely affect their prospect in job market, they added.

"Our resentment is mounting as we have long been suffering from acute shortage of essential facilities. The university authorities have failed to provide a campus worth the name, adequate laboratory facilities and residential accommodation," said a student seeking anonymity.

On the students' demonstration, Registrar of the university Ali Ahmed Mandal said, "The committee report has naturally worried students, teachers and guardians over the fate of the institution."

Our Comilla correspondent reported that about 500 students of Comilla University gathered on the campus in the morning, ransacked the university office room and locked the main gate.

The university has been one of the eight the evaluation committee recommended shutting down.

The students alleged the university does not have full-time permanent teachers and its own building, and suffers from shortage of classrooms and residential accommodation.

They demanded that the university authorities should explain the fate of the institution.

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In a joint statement, Chairperson of the university Dr Hamida Banu Shova and Vice-chancellor Dr ATM Zahurul Huque expressed their surprise at the recommendation for closure of the institution, established in 1996. This has caused damage to the image of the university, they said.

Students of America Bangladesh University also demonstrated on the campus to give vent to their frustration that the evaluation report suggested its closure.

BNP men foil Dr Kamal

FROM PAGE 1
Witnesses said some 50 JCD attempts on their lives and blamed it on the prime minister and home minister. They demanded a proper explanation from the government.

The seriously injured include member of the National Executive Committee and Central Co-Ordinator of Gono Ishtehar Firoz M Hassan, former whip Abdur Rouf, Executive Convenor of Jubo Dhara ATM Kamal, B Chowdhury's bodyguard Mojibor Rahman and Gono Forum leaders Abdul Mannan Niazi and Wajed Ali Khan Parvez.

Barely five minutes into the programme, the Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jubo Dal cadres attacked the gathering at about 2:30pm, witnesses told The Daily Star.

Some JCD activists, who had already taken seats at the hall, began shouting 'catch', 'catch' and three rotten eggs, sandals and shoes at the leaders on the dais. People began running for cover, as the intruders swooped on them with sticks and iron rods, said witnesses.

Dr Kamal, B Chowdhury, Mannan and some other leaders, however, refused to leave the dais. A stick and a rotten egg were hurled on B Chowdhury, BDB and Oikya Mancha adherents shielded their leaders and moved them to safety.

Panic that followed the attack gripped the Durga Puja shoppers in the town as well. They also ran to safety as the participants were flushed out of the town hall.

1 killed in bomb blast, another beaten dead in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

One person was killed and another injured when two bombs blasted in front of a ruling BNP lawmaker's house in Chuadanga, while in Kushtia an angry mob beat a gang member to death on Monday night.

According to Chuadanga police, criminals threw two powerful bombs on a rickshaw as it reached the Girls' College road residence of ruling BNP lawmaker Sahidul Islam at about 10pm.

Rickshaw-puller Sahadat Hossain Mantu, 20, son of Tofazzel Hossain of Gorgari village, died on the spot. The passenger Happy, 25, wounded critically, was taken to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital and later moved to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka, as his condition deteriorated.

Police could not unearth clues behind the bomb blasts.

In Kushtia, an angry mob caught hold of an abductor and beat him to death in Daulatkhalai village of Daulatpur upazila.

Police said villagers cornered Sahidul Islam Sodu, 35, of the village when he was loitering in Daulatkhalai bazaar area at about 9pm. Sodu was a known criminal of the area and involved with an abduction incident.

Led by Daulatpur Union Parishad chairman and local leader of ruling BNP the locals beat Sodu dead, sources said.

Police rushed to the spot but failed to rescue the criminal from the mob's grip.

Earlier, on October 13, another abductor Rezaul Islam was killed in mob beating in the same area.

Police sent the body of Sodu to Kushtia General Hospital.

Mobile courts in dilemma on lack of co-ordination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mobile courts formed ahead of Durga Puja and Ramadan to solve the 22 mobile courts at a meeting yesterday instant punishment to law-breakers are facing problems due to lack of co-ordination among the officials of different government agencies engaged in the courts.

The magistrates who head each of the 22 mobile courts at a meeting yesterday alleged they are not getting support from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in taking action against faulty vehicles running in Dhaka city.

State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar chaired the meeting held at his ministry. The magistrates and high government officials involved in the mobile courts attended the meeting, which discussed various problems facing the courts.

The magistrates alleged they could not conduct the courts' activities smoothly due to lack of transports. Besides, the sanitary officers of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) are not assisting the courts, meeting sources said.

The state minister told the meeting that the law-breakers must be given stringent punishment, preferably imprisonment, to make the courts more effective.

Each of the mobile courts comprises 16 officials from the BRTA, Sanitation Department of DCC and Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

The courts yesterday filed a total of 191 cases against people on various charges and fined them Tk 2.33 lakh during their operations in the capital.

A court fined a man of Bhatarar Bazar in Badda Tk 16,000 for preparing and selling adulterated bread and biscuits. Another court sentenced a butcher 15 days in jail for selling rotten beef, meeting sources said.

70 wounded

FROM PAGE 1
At about 5:00pm, the JCD activists damaged coaching centres of Shibir outside the campus and attacked their messes, leaving about 50 injured. They also stopped buses on the Khulna-Kushtia highway and assaulted some passengers.

Shibir activists surrounded by police also attacked and wounded at least three assistant proctors.

The injured were admitted to the university medical centre and clinics in Rajshahi city. Of them, condition of Jewel, Rashed, Anwar of JCD and Mukter, Fakhru, Saiful and Nasim of Shibir was stated to be serious.

Local MP Sohrab Uddin rushed to the campus at 7:00pm and met the leaders of the rival student bodies in a bid to resolve the dispute.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Rafiqul Islam separately held meeting with senior teachers of the university to take necessary measures to face the situation.

Ashrafal

FROM PAGE 1
Opener Hannan Sarkar was dismissed in the third ball of the innings when he edged Jacob Oram to Stephen Fleming at first slip for a duck while his seasoned colleague Javed Omar, who was 68 shy of 1,000 Test runs, unwittingly tried to dig out a yorker by left-armed James Franklin but only managed to drag it back on to the stumps.

Nafees Iqbal had a forgettable debut. The young right-hander scored only one when he was deceived by an Oram outswinger and wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum took a simple catch.

The crowd eventually started to find their voice with Ashrafal and Rajin's producing a brilliant fightback that took the Tigers to 38-3 by lunch.

Ashrafal sent the crowd wild in celebration when he hooked fast bowler Ian Butler for six over long-leg.

The Bangladeshi pair rattled 61 runs in the first hour of the second session and Daniel Vettori, whose first six overs were maidens, was cut for a boundary by the young batsman off the first delivery after the break.

Ashrafal launched a counter-attack on every Kiwi bowler playing some glorious cover drives on way to a fifth Test half-century. He reached the landmark in 122 balls with a four and a swept six in off-spinner Paul Wiseman's successive deliveries and lofted Wiseman for his third over-boundary before losing Rajin just before tea.

Rajin, who struck five fours and a six off Wiseman in 136 balls, flashed Franklin hard but Oram took a spectacular catch at gully to end the partnership.

Ashrafal in his three-hour essay struck eight fours and three sixes before perishing soon after tea when he tried to force Vettori against the spin but was caught at extra-cover.

Bangladesh were reduced to 136-6 losing three wickets in the space of 16 runs as Vettori struck again. The left-arm spinner had Alok Kapali caught behind by McCullum for his second wicket.

Verdict in Jail Killing Case today

FROM PAGE 1

The killings that were widely held as a desperate bid for power by some usurpers, came 79 days after the assassinations of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family on August 15, 1975.

First scheduled to be passed on September 7, the judgment was shifted to September 21 due to illness of the Judge Motiur Rahman. Additional Sessions Judge Mohammad Sirajul Islam set the fresh date. But on September 21, the court put off the verdict to entertain petitions by a defence lawyer.

The court held hearing of two fresh petitions submitted ostensibly in a last-ditch effort to get bail of accused Taheruddin Thakur. In favour of one of the petitions, the court asked key witness and second investigation officer Saifuddin Ahmed to appear before it on September 29 for deposition.

But the 84-year-old Saifuddin could not appear before court on September 29 due to illness. The court issued an arrest warrant for the former police officer's arrest. It also formed a three-member commission to check whether he is fit for giving deposition.

The commission comprised of Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmood Hassan, Taheruddin's counsel Sharfuddin Khan Mukul and Officer-in-Charge of Sutrapur Police Station Awlad Hossain, on October 9, submitted a report stating that Saifuddin is unfit for deposition. The same day court accepted the report and dropped Saifuddin's name from the list of witness and fixed today for pronouncement of judgment.

About 400 undercover and

regular policemen will be on high alert. Besides the court building, they will guard the local high-rises and roads to Dhaka Central Jail.

The area has been declared off limits to the general public and traffic has been barred on Jail Mazar, Chak Bazar Crossing and the western and eastern sides of the Jail Road since midnight last night.

Members of the special and detective branches, equipped with video cameras, will keep the area under constant surveillance to avert troubles.

Of the 23 accused, three are in custody, five out on bail while 12 have been evading arrest and three died.

Eleven convicts in the Bangabandhu Murder Case are among the accused.

In the first information report (FIR) filed with Lalbagh Police Station on November 4, 1975, Kazi Abdul Awal, deputy inspector general (prisons), accused Captain Moslemuddin and four other army officers of the killings.

"One army officer in khaki fatigues identified himself as captain Muslemuddin attached to Bangabhaban. He, accompanied by four army personnel in the same uniform, entered the jail at about 4:00am on November 3, 1975. Armed with stengun and SLR (self-loading rifle), they killed four prisoners," the FIR reads.

The then officer-in-charge (OC) of Lalbagh Police Station ABM Fazlul Karim was tasked with the investigation. But the infamous Indemnity Ordinance blocked the investigation and trial for about 21 years until officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

AL finally joins JS bodies

FROM PAGE 1
know everything through the media." Opposition Deputy Leader Abdul Hamid told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said people did not know how the ministers and the ruling party leaders were making money through corruption. "How they (people) could know about corruption in the ministries if we do not discuss it in the standing committee meetings?"

Emerging from a meeting, AL President Member Suranjit Sengupta told reporters that they would not give walkover to the ruling party anymore. "We will try to ensure transparency in the ministries' activities and their accountability."

"We will demand reconstitution of dozens of parliamentary probe bodies formed to investigate irregularities in different ministries," said Suranjit who joined a meeting of the

parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry.

AL lawmakers also attended the meetings of the standing committees on the ministries of establishment and jute and textiles held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The standing committee on law ministry yesterday started scrutinising the bill placed in parliament proposing a system of election to the reserved seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad. The AL lawmaker at the meeting rejected the proposed bill terming it a document of sharing seats, which is contrary to basic constitutional principle.

"We will give a note of dissent against the bill when it will be finalised and prepared for submission before the House," Suranjit told reporters after the meeting.

The AL lawmaker demanded the government refrain from passing

opened a probe on August 18, 1996.

Former president Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed and former secretary Mahbul Alam Chashi were dropped from the chargesheet, as they died during the probe.

The court framed charges against Obaidur and 20 others on October 12, 2000 and began trial on April 12, 2001. The trial was completed in 282 workdays.

Six judges who sat the case are Golam Rasul, Sheikh Rezwana Ali, AK Roy, Ahmed Jamil Mostafa, Molla Mostafa Kamal and Motiur Rahman.

Of the accused, Obaidur, Nurul Islam, Shah Moazzam Hossain, Taheruddin and retired army major Khairuzzaman got bail soon after the present government took office. The government also reassigned Khairuzzaman to a foreign ministry job last year. Faruk Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid and Bazul Huda, who were convicted in Bangabandhu Murder Case, are now behind bars.

The accused on the run include retired resalder Moslehuddin, Lt col (dismissed) Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Lt col (relieved) Shariful Haq Dalim, Lt col (Retired) SHMB Noor Chowdhury, maj (retired) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed, Lt col (retired) AM Rashed Chowdhury, major (relieved) Ahmed Shariful Hossain, capt (retired) Abdul Majed, captain (relieved) Kismat Hasem, captain (relieved) Nazmul Hossain, dafadar (dismissed) Marfat Ali Shah and dafadar (dismissed) Abdul Hasem.

Lt col (relieved) Abdul Aziz Pasha is believed to be dead.

the bill as two writ petitions are pending in the High Court challenging the constitutional amendment by which 45 reserved seats for women in parliament has been introduced.

Committee Chairman Khondakar Mahub Uddin Ahmed told reporters they have just started scrutinising the bill and it would need a long time to finalise it. The committee will sit again today at 10:00 am to discuss the bill.

AL lawmaker KM Jahangir Hossain, who joined a meeting of the standing committee on establishment ministry, accused the government of politicising the administration. He demanded stopping recruitment of 60,000 employees in various ministries.

A total of five standing committees on different ministries will sit today.

Robbers loot

FROM PAGE 1

When the launch reached Maizchar area of Bajitpur at about 9:00pm, the gang swooped on the on-duty ansars and snatched four rifles and 35 bullets from them.

They then looted Tk 5 lakh and other valuables from the passengers at gunpoint and fled in a trawler they kept waiting.

Police along with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday raided adjacent villages in a bid to recover the rifles and ammunition, but they could not recover any of the looted guns till evening.

Ahsanullah murder

FROM PAGE 1
FROM the Gazipur Jail at 10:00am yesterday.

Moving the bail petition, Nurul's lawyer Mohammad Sanaulah Miah claimed as part of a political conspiracy his client was implicated in the murder.

Special Public Prosecutor Latif Talukder and Advocate Mahub Ahmed opposed the bail move, arguing that 27 prosecution witnesses in their statements to the investigation officer pointed to the involvement of Nurul in the killing of the Awami League leader.

The court also rejected the bail petition of Rakib Uddin Sarker (Pappu), Ayub Ali, Monir, Dulal and Nurul Amin (Amin). Accused Kabir Hossain, who obtained bail from High Court earlier, got bail from the court yesterday.

The court earlier issued a warrant of arrest on Chhatra Samaj leader Nurul Islam Dipu and 17 others, who are absconding since the murder.

Gunmen opened fire on Ahsanullah at a rally of Awami Svecchhasebak League, the volunteer front of the AL, at Noagaon near the legislator's house in Tongi on May 7. Schoolboy Omar Faruq Ratan was also killed and at least five others were hurt.

Ahsanullah's brother Motiur Rahman filed a case against 17 with the Tongi Police Station the next day.

The Criminal Investigation Department on July 10 pressed charges against 30 people and accused Jubo Dal leader Nurul of masterminding the assassination.

As many as 78 people have been shown prosecution witnesses.

6 Iraqis, American

FROM PAGE 12

fighting between US troops and insurgents as the Americans carried out sweeps around the northern town of Duluyia, considered a hotbed of Islamic extremism, medical sources said.

A US military spokesman said soldiers had been sealing off neighborhoods and conducting searches for several days and had carried out detentions in the town, 75 kilometers (40 miles) north of Baghdad.

"Two Iraqi corpses and six wounded were brought here," said Doctor Mohamed Jaafar Moahmed at the general hospital in neighboring Balad.

At least 12 people had been arrested by the Americans in the sweeps, said local council member Talal Kahtan.

Meanwhile, an oil pipeline in an area north of the capital was ablaze on Tuesday, the US military said, suggesting it may have been attacked by saboteurs.

Soldiers discovered a fire on a pipeline north of a refinery in the town of Baiji early Tuesday, US military spokesman Robert Powell said, adding: "The oil pipeline was shut down until the fire is put out and repairs have been made."

Asked about the possible cause of the blast, he said: "I'm sure they are looking in the possibility of an IED (improvised explosive device)."

Earlier the British-born head of CARE International's Iraq operations, Margaret Hassan, was kidnapped in Iraq early Tuesday, the aid organization said in London.

Hassan, who is married to an Iraqi and is a naturalized Iraqi citizen, has worked for CARE in Iraq since 1992 and has lived for more than 30 years in the country, a CARE spokeswoman told AFP.

Pvt firms may get vehicle fitness certificate job

BSS, Dhaka
Communications Minister Nazmul Huda yesterday said the government is planning to hand over the responsibility of issuing technical fitness certificates of vehicles to the private sector.

The minister said this while speaking at a discussion titled "Safety is the Life" at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital, an official handout said.

He said lack of awareness and negligence of the law enforcers to strictly execute the traffic laws are the main reasons for road accidents. Besides, fake fitness certificates issued by some unscrupulous employees of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) are also a reason for road accidents, he added.

Film Actor and Convenor of "Nirapad Sarak Chai Movement" Ilyas Kanchon, Film Producer Monjur Hossain and BRTA officials, among others, spoke at the function.

Industry ministry won't stop gas to urea plants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The industries ministry would not entertain the energy and mineral resources ministry's request for stopping and, in some cases, reducing gas supply to the urea fertiliser factories across the country.

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"We're not going to stop production in the fertiliser factories as requested by the energy ministry", Motiur Rahman Niazi, the industry minister, told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

He said that considering national interest, it is not possible to honour the energy ministry's request. "It's not new, whenever there is a scarcity of gas, the energy ministry makes such requests. But we never honoured those," he added.

Earlier on Sunday, energy and mineral resources ministry sent a letter to the industries ministry proposing suspension of gas supply to the Polish Fertiliser Factory and reduction in supply to other fertiliser factories as the demand for gas was set to get higher than the production during the Ramadan.

The industries ministry however called for normal gas supply to the power plants and households during the same period to spare the public from sufferings.

Sources at the energy ministry said the gas production now in the country is around 100 mcm (million cubic feet) short. The ministry hopes that in about 20 days, it will sort out the shortage by doing gas extraction in two new fields in Shrikail and Feny.

Planned OMS

FROM PAGE 12
Aubergine was selling at Tk 80 to Tk 60 a kg and green chilli at Tk 120 to Tk 100 a kg.

A day after panicky traders released their onion stock at as low as Tk 15 a kg in Chittagong amid interventions by the Rab, the essential item was still selling at Tk 26 a kg at Karwan Bazar in Dhaka.

The onion traders who started a strike in protest against Rab's intervention alleged the Rab members had forced them to sell onion at lower than purchasing price, reports our staff correspondent from Chittagong.

Some Rab members yesterday visited a kitchen market at Doyaganj in Old Dhaka but did not intervene in pricing of vegetables and fishes.

Veerappan

FROM PAGE 12
manhunt in Indian police history.

The bandit, who leapt to notoriety when he held Indian film star Rajkumar hostage for more than 100 days in 2000, was killed in a forest in southeastern Tamil Nadu state, said Special Task Force (STF) chief K. Vijay Kumar.

He said police, acting on a tip-off, surrounded Veerappan and three associates while they were travelling in an ambulance near Dharmapuri in the west of the state late on Monday.

"We announced on the speakers fitted to our jeeps that since he was surrounded and there was no way he could escape, he and his associates should give themselves up," Kumar said by telephone from Dharmapuri.

"There was silence for about a minute and then, there was firing from the other side. We took cover and returned the fire, killing Veerappan and his three associates."

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3 killed in Ctg road crash

BSS, Chittagong

Three people were killed and 22 others injured, 10 of them seriously, in a bus-truck collision on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Sonar Pahar area of Mirersarai upazila yesterday.

Police and witnesses said a Dhaka bound truck of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and a Chittagong bound passenger bus from Bhairab collided head on at about 2:50pm, killing a bus passenger on the spot and injuring 12 others.

Two of the injured aged between 30 and 40 were declared dead on arrival at Mastan Nagar Health Complex, while others brought to Chittagong Medical College Hospital. The identity of the dead could not be known.

Police seized both the vehicles.

'Myanmar PM sacked, arrested for corruption'

AFP, Bangkok

Myanmar's prime minister General Khin Nyunt -- among the most reformist of the military regime's leaders -- has been sacked and placed under house arrest for alleged corruption, a Thai government spokesman said yesterday.

"The Thai government has learned through diplomatic channels from the Thai ambassador in Yangon that the Myanmar prime minister Khin Nyunt was dismissed and detained under house arrest on corruption allegations," said Thai government spokesman Jakrapob Penkair.

The move took place on Monday night after the premier returned to the capital Yangon from a visit to the central town of Mandalay and the isolated junta closed its border checkpoints.

Khatunganj

FROM PAGE 1
Khatunganj and adjoining Chaktai and Asadganj. The strike also hampered sales of ginger, garlic and some other items sold by the same dealers.

The agitating onion dealers resented Rab's intervention into their 'rightful and honest' business. They demanded the government should ensure their safety and dignity. Otherwise they would go for tougher agitation programme, they said.

On Monday, Chittagong Rab raided different shops at the city's traditional wholesale markets of essential commodities at Khatunganj, Chaktai and Asadganj. They compelled the dealers to sell off stocked onion at Tk 15 per kg, ginger and green pepper each at Tk 40 per kg.

The drive created mixed reaction among consumers and sellers. The dealers complained that it was the importers who should be blamed for the price hike. Forcing a few wholesalers to sell essential items at a usual price would bring no good, they observed. It rather might have an adverse impact on the market situation as the dealers, who suffered loss due to the forced sell at a lower price, might charge much higher in absence of the law enforcers, they said.

General consumers, however, were upbeat that the market would improve if the Rab continues the drive putting a check on the prices of essential commodities.

Meanwhile Rab sources said that they continued anti-price-hike drives at different areas of the port city for the second day yesterday. But, they refr