

30 AL men hurt

FROM PAGE 1 police charged batons and fired teargas shells to disperse a procession of the AL's youth wing in front of its Bangabandhu Avenue office.

Police went into action as the procession tried to break through police barricade after a rally on the party office premises, protesting the activities of militant groups in the country, repeated grenade attacks and price spiral of essentials.

The agitating opposition activists threw stones and damaged a number of passenger buses during a nearly half an hour clash with police that broke out soon after 5:00 pm.

Two policemen were injured in the clash. Sergeant B Amin had a fracture in his left hand and Faruk Hossain, a nayek, in his legs.

Mirza Azam was given first aid for head injury.

Of the other injured, 20 were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. All are Jubo League workers of different ward units in the city.

To protest the police action, Jubo League will stage demonstrations across the country tomorrow, its Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanok said.

He accused police of attacking

their peaceful procession without any provocation.

Earlier, addressing the rally, leaders of the AL and its youth front warned of tough programmes if the government tries to hinder their planned March 2 rally in the capital where opposition leader Sheikh Hasina is likely to announce the next phase of the oust-government movement.

Fall of the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government is now only a matter of time, they said and urged opposition workers and members of the public to intensify the current movement to end the misrule of the alliance.

The leaders accused the government of harbouring religious extremist groups and said anti-liberation forces want to avenge their defeat in 1971 by turning the country into a dysfunctional state.

Speakers at the rally included AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Quader, Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Jahangir Kabir Nanok and Mirza Azam. City unit Jubo League leader Mohiuddin Mohi presided.

SC asks govt

FROM PAGE 1 repeatedly been seeking time for submitting documents and implementing the task.

So far the government has sought time on 20 occasions showing various excuses since the Supreme Court issued a 12-point directive to the government in 1999 to implement the separation of the judiciary.

"Take time for the entire year of 2005 or for eternity — is it a separation or a hide-and-seek?" the court angrily said.

"We want to see the separation of the judiciary in the light of the 12-point directive of the Supreme Court and the constitution. Everyone's responsibility is to carry out their tasks according to the constitution, but in this case it is not being done so," the court added.

"How this order (12-point directive) will be implemented depends on the sincere intentions (of the government)," the court pointed out.

On behalf of the government, Additional Attorney General (AAG) Mohammad Ali stated, "The government has taken the initiative to separate the judiciary from the executive as per the 12-point directive."

"Will the government implement the Supreme Court's directives as per the wisdom of the president or Khaliur Rahman (a senior assistant secretary)? Don't separate the judiciary from the executive as per the theory of Khaliur Rahman," the court said.

Khaliur Rahman is one of nine senior government officials against whom the Appellate Division had issued a contempt rule late last year for distorting the judgment of Masdar Hossain versus Bangladesh case popularly known as judiciary separation case.

One of the judges then pointed to an attempt of distorting the 12-point directive by a bureaucrat and reminded again: "The government initiative must follow the Supreme Court directive and the constitution."

The court said the draft rules and other documents related to the separation of the judiciary submitted by the government were all unclear. This prompted the court to order the government to finalise them and re-submit

Saifur satisfied at Washington meet outcome

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday expressed satisfaction over the outcome of the donors' meeting in Washington and said the donors praised Bangladesh's development efforts in different areas including social sector.

"I was confident that there would be no tough decision against Bangladesh in the Washington meeting," Saifur told reporters.

"They (donors) expressed concerns about some non-economic issues only," observed the minister.

He however once again expressed his disappointment over the donors' meeting outside Bangladesh and without any government representation.

"Any meeting on Bangladesh should be held here instead of in a foreign country. The World Bank also share the same view," he said. Asked about possibility of future meetings like the Washington one, he said there will be routine meetings with the Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Local Consultative Group (LCG) in Dhaka to discuss different aspects of Bangladesh's development.

Saifur will fly to Paris tomorrow to attend a ministerial level meeting titled "the second high-level forum on enhancing the effectiveness of development aid". During the visit, he is scheduled to meet World Bank Vice President for South Asia Pratul C Patel and discuss the outcome of the Washington meeting.

JS session resumes today

Quorum crisis feared

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament session resumes today after a four-day recess, while uncertainty of smooth functioning of the House is foreseen as quorum crisis is likely to deepen further.

A large number of the ruling party lawmakers have remained absent from the House proceedings for the last two weeks although the ruling party whips communicated with the party lawmakers with urge to join the House, sources said.

With absence of the main opposition Awami League, the House that began its session on January 31 witnessed quorum crisis almost every day due to the ruling party lawmakers' thin appearance.

Besides, Jatiya Party (Ershad), the second largest opposition in parliament, which boycotted the House on Thursday, is planning to stage a walk-out in protest against 'non-realisation' of its demand by the government, party sources said.

The House was forced to adjourn its sitting for four days on last Thursday due to quorum crisis.

Earlier on February 10, the speaker adjourned the sitting for the same reason.

Rab sets free listed criminal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested on Friday night a listed criminal and Jubo Dal leader but set him free within hours, giving rise to questions.

Rab yesterday gave contradictory versions to different national and local dailies about the identity of the Jubo Dal leader.

Tipped off, a team of Rab personnel in the guise of a bridal party went to a marriage ceremony at a community centre in the port city's Bahaddarhat area at about 9:00pm and caught Md Shafiqul Khan, a listed criminal and vice president of Chittagong south district unit of the ruling BNP's youth front.

He was taken to Rab-7 headquarters at Patenga but released the same night.

Shafiqul is an accused in 12 criminal cases for murder, abduction, robbery and other crimes, sources said.

Meanwhile, Rab officials yesterday morning told reporters the arrestee was Nurul Absar, an innocent person, and not Shafiqul. But in the afternoon, they confirmed Shafiqul was arrested and later released as they found he was on bail in all the 12 cases.

SAARC SUMMIT

Islamabad yet to communicate with Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has not yet received any official communication about Pakistan's reported intention to hold the stalled Saarc summit in Dhaka in mid-April.

Indian news agency PTI said quoting a Pakistani daily, the Nation, that the current Saarc chair had conveyed its intention to all member-states about the mid-April summit.

"We've not received any formal request from current Saarc chair Pakistan," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told reporters yesterday.

He however said, "I think the Saarc chair is trying to find a date convenient to all member-states, including host Bangladesh."

He added that it should also be looked into whether the reasons, for which a member-state had pulled out from the Dhaka summit scheduled for February 6-7, are still there or not. "I don't know whether that situation or their position has changed."

The foreign minister expressed the hope that the member-states will soon find a consensus date for the 13th summit of the seven-nation South Asian forum.

"Our commitment to the Saarc is total," he told the reporters.

5 of a family die in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Five people of a family, including two children, were killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Patulia highway in Bathulia in Dhamrai upazila in the early hours yesterday.

The dead are Tazul Islam Khan, 42, and his wife Rahima Begum Mukta, 35, their daughters Tania Akhter, 20, and Tonni Islam, 6 and son Apu Khan, 12. They hailed from Zoar Sahara in Badda in the capital.

Police said the accident occurred at about 4:30am when the family's Dhaka-bound yellow taxi cab collided with an unidentified vehicle coming from opposite direction. The five died on the spot.

However, Tania's one-year-old daughter Amreen escaped unhurt.

Tazul was driving his own taxi home after visiting his father-in-law's house in Barisal, said his brother Abdul Haque Khan.

Bodies may arrive

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several ethnic and political armed militias, were killed at Bangladesh time 2:15pm Friday in one of the bloodiest attacks on a UN peacekeeping mission in recent years.

Eight of them were members of Bangladesh Army and one of Bangladesh Navy. They were part of a company protecting a camp for internally displaced people.

According to the ISPR release, after an emergency recovery operation, the nine bodies were kept at the Bangladesh battalion headquarters in Bunia, the capital of Itura province of Congo.

With Friday's casualties, 48 Bangladeshi soldiers have been killed while in UN peacekeeping duty in the last 15 years.

DHAKA TO CONTINUE PEACEKEEPING

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said, despite Friday's casualties, Bangladesh will continue participating in UN peacekeeping missions.

He also mentioned that though many other countries had pulled back their troops earlier from Congo, Bangladesh did not. "However, we are thinking to be more cautious in the missions," he added.

Paying tribute to the dead peacekeepers, the foreign minister told the press yesterday, "We are in close contact with the UN headquarters and the UN mission in Congo to bring the bodies back home at the earliest possible time."

He said the government had talks with the UN headquarters on a possible route to fly the bodies in but did not elaborate.

On compensation to the victims' families, Morshed said the UN will do it as per its procedure and they will also get benefits from Bangladesh as per our rules.

CONDOLENCE

Condolence messages poured into Dhaka yesterday from across the world.

Paying homage to the murdered peacekeepers, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called on the transitional government of Congo to make every effort to find and hold accountable those responsible for the attack.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said, "Nothing can justify the attack on soldiers who were entrusted by the international community to ensure security and peace," adding

that the German government condemns the criminal attack in the strongest terms.

Fischer said, "In these hours, our thoughts are with the families and friends of the murdered peacekeepers."

BEREAVED FAMILIES

Of the nine killed in peacekeeping mission, Captain Shahid Ashraf Khan hailed from Kahu upazila of Bogra district. Warrant Officer Sohrob Hossain Talukder hailed from Dhuly Gathy of Netrokona, Sergeant Sirajul Haque from Mehendiganj of Barisal and Corporal Ataur Rahman Sarker from Palashbari of Gaibandha.

Leading Seaman Nurul Islam hailed from Monglapot of Bagerhat district, and privates Abdus Salam (1) from Arajee Choraikhola of Nilphamari, Abdus Salam (2) from Charabongkhari of Manikganj, Zahurul Islam from Shibganj of Bogra and Belal Hossain from Astodrone of Noakhali.

People from crosswalks of the society thronged the houses of the murdered peacekeepers to condole the bereaved families.

BDNEWS reports: A pall of gloom descended on Choraikhola village of UN peacekeeper Abdus Salam (1) as the news of his death spread. Salam had gone to Congo on August 14 last year.

His wife Sirajunnahar Lovely, a sub-inspector of police at Rangpur Kotwali Police Station, was weeping and repeatedly fainting. His eight-year-old daughter was crying aloud while his one and a half-year-old son remained speechless.

His father Akbar Hossain was weeping and muttering. Wiping tears, Akbar said, "I want to bury my son with my own hands." He requested the government to make arrangements to that effect.

Salam's maternal uncle said, "We are concerned about when we will get the body. The government did not inform us anything regarding this."

Our Manikganj correspondent reports: Private Abdus Salam (2) shifted to Thakurpara village in Kaliakair upazila of Gazipur district two years ago after the Padma river had eaten away their ancestral village of Charabongkhari.

He left behind his wife Fatema Begum, son Adnan, 6, and daughter Akhlin, 2.

BB finds MD's hand

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and Policy Department (BRPD) and Anti-Money Laundering Department of the central bank do so, the sources explained.

According to a circular of BRPD, the banks should collect photographs of every account holder and his or her nominee while opening an account. But the Premier Bank branches did not comply with the rules in most cases.

Besides, the Anti-Money Laundering Department has a guideline — 'know your customer' — that clearly says what to do in opening bank accounts.

A client is supposed to fill in a prescribed form of the bank concerned with his or her own signature, mentioning name and address and providing photocopy of passport or a domicile certificate from local ward commissioner.

"But it was found that in some cases accounts were opened without filling in such forms," a source added. The BB probe team also found that some accounts did not have any address of the account holder while same address was mentioned in opening several thousand accounts, sources said.

In some cases the branches did not take the initial deposit needed for opening an account while no transaction took place against the accounts.

The way these bank accounts have been opened is a criminal offence," said a former top official of the central bank. "It is clearly understandable that these accounts have been opened with a specific motive."

There may be some mistakes in opening one or two accounts. But hundreds of accounts have been opened in this particular case and it is obvious that it cannot happen without the involvement of the top management, a private bank official said.

According to sources, the BB has almost finalised an interim report of its investigation into the scam.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on February 12 suspended a Tk 55 crore public floating of Premier Bank after around 25,000 fake beneficiary owners (BO) accounts were found in its preliminary investigation.

The Bangladesh Bank on February

Curb terrorism

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of leading women activists, while staging a candle light vigil at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

"Stop killings in the hands of Rab, Cheetha, Cobra and so called Bangla Bhai," they said in a written statement at the vigil attended by top women activists, eminent cultural personalities, teachers, human rights activists and NGO workers.

Expressing concern over the sense of insecurity in the public mind, they demanded fair and transparent probe without government interference into each of the killings and grenade and bomb attacks.

The government must bring back people's trust in the country's laws, judicial system and public institutions, they said.

People of all age groups lit candles in several rows at the foot of the Shaheed Minar in the evening and kept vigil for an hour and rendered protest songs.

Hamida Hossain of Ain O Salish Kendra, Khushi Kabir of Nijera Kori, Shaheen Anam of Manusher Jonno, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Prof Ajay Roy, theatre personalities Sara Zaker and Tarana Halim, noted film makers Tareq and Catherine Masud and painter Rafiqun Nabi, among others, were present.

Student 'poisoned by husband' finally dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mousumi Hasan, a student of University of Asia Pacific, died at Ibne Sina hospital in Dhanmondi yesterday allegedly due to injection of poison by her husband.

Mousumi, 22, was declared clinically dead on February 22.

She was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) on February 16 night after she became ill at her in-laws' house in Mohammadpur.

Mousumi's parents transferred her to Ibne Sina hospital the next day when she was senseless.

Mousumi's father Daud Hasan alleged that Mousumi's addict husband Ariful Islam Emon, 25, injected her poison sometime on February 16, as Mousumi protested Emon's taking drugs with the money given for buying an air cooler.

Mousumi took Tk 24,000 from her father on February 16 saying that she would buy an air cooler and gave it to her husband the same day, he said.

Mousumi's family received the dead body after autopsy at DMCH morgue.

Mousumi's father filed a case with the Mohammadpur Police Station on February 22 under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Annan's sympathy

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unidentified militia groups near Kafé in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

He extended his deepest sympathy and condolences to the Bangladesh government and the families of the victims, who have sacrificed their lives in the service of peace, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

The secretary general called on the Transitional Government of the DRC to make every effort to find and hold accountable those responsible for this reprehensible and criminal attack.

He also vowed the killings would not deter the UN's mission in the troubled African nation.

"He reaffirms that this attack will not deter the UN mission from carrying out its mandate in helping move the peace process forward in the DRC," his spokesman Fred Eckhard said in the statement.

Brac chief

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Advancement Committee) and Grameen Bank offices in different areas, Abed said "we earnestly hope that the government will ensure an environment favourable to development and progress" by tracking down and routing out "the root causes of such destructive acts."

He also pointed out that "the organisations [Brac and Grameen Bank] are pursuing poverty alleviation and development programmes in furtherance of the Millennium Development Goals to which our government is fully committed."

He mentioned that Brac, the country's leading non-government organisation, alone has 2,667 offices and works in 68,408 villages of Bangladesh with 4.81 million women and 1.44 million children engaging more than 90 thousand full- and part-time employees. "For the security of all these offices and people associated with Brac we have to depend on the government," he noted.

Abed appreciated the recent government steps against the forces behind the attacks, and said, "We hope that as a result of the government action the situation will improve and that such incidents will not recur."

JS body

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in the same year. The judgement was delivered in absentia.

The second issue to be discussed at the parliamentary body meeting is the appointment of 19 additional judges to the High Court that evoked controversy, sparking severe criticism from the lawyers and the opposition parties.

They termed the appointment 'political' and the Supreme Court Bar Association started a movement demanding cancellation of the appointment. One of the judges was withdrawn last year after he was accused of tampering with his LLB results.

The parliamentary body would also discuss the much talked about judicial inquiry commission report on the August 21 grenade attack on an Awami League rally in the capital that killed 23 and injured over 200.

The government formed a one-member probe commission comprising a High Court judge who submitted a report pointing fingers to a neighbouring country for the attack. The government however did not make the report public.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Committee Chairman Khandakar Mahbub Uddin Ahmed said, "We will discuss the issues as those were raised for discussions."

Awami League lawmaker and committee member Suranjit Sengupta on Thursday's meeting demanded discussions on the issues. "We want to have the explanations of the law ministry about the presidential amnesty to a convict of double murder."

"We also want to know the fate of the judicial inquiry commission report on August 21 grenade attack. The law minister earlier said the report will be made public, but he did not keep his word," said the opposition lawmaker.

GDP growth rate

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Minister M Saifur Rahman at the Planning Commission.

The move follows the government's conviction that the country's economic growth, inflation and unemployment are not being properly monitored. As a result, it is unable to take right decisions at right times, said a meeting participant.

The meeting was also of the opinion that financial year 1995-96, the current base year for compilation of growth rates, is by now a decade old and outdated, and so decided to re-base the data compilation. "Rebasing would relate to re-fixing a new base year for computing constant price GDP," said a meeting source.

The two committees will have separate mandates. One of them will be the steering committee and decide the action plans to be implemented by the second one.

Eminent economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud will head the steering committee, which will also comprise Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, former secretary Dr Golam Rabbani and a few others of similar stature.

The member of the General Economic Division of the Planning Commission will head the implementation committee, which will also have the director generals of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Morshed denies

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name of religion, who are being hunted down.

"There is a difference between international terrors and local goons," he said, asserting that there are no international terrorists in the country.

He said the government will not spare any person or group engaged in any anti-state activities by capitalising on Islam. A large number of Islamic thinkers hailed the government decision for launching a crack down on Islamist militants, he added.

The minister also rejected a suggestion that the government ban on two radical Islamist groups came in the wake of donors' meeting in Washington on Feb 23-24.

The government had earlier banned Harkatul Jihad in Rajshahi, he said.

In the latest action against the Islamist extremists, the government on Feb 23 banned Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh and arrested one of their chiefs, Prof Galib.

Abdul Latif passes away

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treatment at home, family sources said.

As his condition deteriorated, he was taken to Suhrawardy Hospital where doctors declared him dead. He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and a number of disciples, well-wishers and admirers to mourn his death.

His body, now preserved at the Birdem Hospital, will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar at 11am tomorrow for his innumerable admirers, disciples and well-wishers to pay their last respect.

His namaj-e-janaza will be held on the Dhaka University campus after Johr prayer tomorrow and he will be laid to eternal rest at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

AHSANULLAH KILLING JCD leader hired killers, says witness

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Killers hired by a Jatiyatibadi Jubo Dal leader assassinated Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master, a prosecution witness in the case told a court yesterday.

"Jubo Dal leader Nurul Islam Sarker, prime suspect in the murder case, hired the killers," said Mahbubur Rahman alias Mahal while giving his statement before Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1.

Mahal appeared before the tribunal in a wheelchair, as he was bullet-hit in the attack on the AL lawmaker on May 7 last year.

He told the court how the killers led by Jatiya Chhatra Samaj leader Nurul Islam Dipu carried out the attack.

He was also cross-examined by a defence lawyer on behalf of accused Nurul Amin. He will be cross-examined again at 2:00pm today.

Mahal told the court that Dipu, Shipu, Tipu, Chhoto Ratan, Khokon, Alamin, Faisal, Bulu, Roni, Monir and Dulal opened fire on Ahsanullah with pistols and revolvers.

The AL lawmaker attended a conference to form a committee for the Sechhasebok League.

Another group of Mahbub, Anu, Kana Hafiz, Bara Ratan, Sohag, Jahangir, Salam, Amir, Mohammad Ali and Moshir also took part in the shooting, the witness said.

Twelve of the 30 accused in the case were present on the dock during the hearing. Of them, Kabir Hossain, Ayub, Pappu Sarker and Alamin are on bail, while Dipu and 17 others are at large.

It was decided that the committees will plan and conduct country-wide economic surveys with the help of local consultants.

"One cannot take realistic economic decisions without having correct statistics," Saifur told the press following the meeting. "For instance, if we cannot figure out whether the cost of living has gone up by 6 percent or by 8 percent, we cannot take the measures appropriate for the situation."

"Once upon a time, jute was an important sector. Now it's not. Now textiles, pharmaceuticals, food and beverage, and construction sectors are growing fast and contributing more to the GDP," he noted, "That's why we should give appropriate focus on them in the annual national accounts compilation process."