

Fighter crashes

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Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH). Asma was later shifted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

The conditions of Rowshan Ara, wife of Al-Amin, and Asma, wife of Shamim Khandakar, were critical, hospital sources said.

Rowshan Ara received burn injuries and the others were injured when a wall collapsed on them.

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a press release said pilot Kabir took off from Tejgaon Airport in a training flight a few minutes before the crash.

"Preliminary investigations indicate that mechanical fault caused the plane crash," the ISPR press release said.

Witnesses said the plane fell on the tin-shed house, owned by Kuwait expatriate Humayun Kabir, and nosedived some 20 feet into the ground.

The ISPR press release said a four-member high-powered committee, led by a wing commander of BAF, has been formed to probe the accident.

WITNESSES ACCOUNT

"I heard a huge boom when I was working in my shop at about 12 noon. Then I rushed to my house," said electrician Mostafa, one of the five tenants of the house. "I found a burning plane in the middle of the house, which also caught fire."

"I managed to bring all the five members of my family out of the house safely," he added.

Hundreds of locals rushed to the house and poured water to douse the fire, said Jamal, a tailor.

"I saw Rowshan Ara, caught in fire, came out of the house and collapsed to the ground," said Osman Ali, caretaker of the house.

Rowshan Ara was feeding her daughter Albina and Sajeda was peeling vegetables when the plane crashed onto the house. Asma was giving a bath to her daughter Tia.

Eight vehicles of the fire brigade brought the fire under control by 3:00pm. Locals alleged the firefighters reached the spot about 40 minutes after the crash.

PILOT'S ESCAPE

Pilot Kabir jumped from the plane at the last moment but his parachute entangled with an electric pole, some 200 yards off the crash spot, said Jafar Ullah, an ex-army man.

"The parachute also caught fire, and I helped him get down," he said. Locals took Kabir to a nearby tea-stall and poured water on his burning suit.

BAF OFFICIALS VISIT SPOT

The air force officials rushed to the spot after the crash and started investigation.

"We are only observing the aircraft's condition and securing the locals from any further accidents," said one of the BAF officials at the spot. "Another team of the maintenance will come later to salvage the fighter plane," he added.

Govt pledges steps

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grade and require the same educational qualifications. The government refixed the salary of constables and sepoy from Tk 1,625 to Tk 2,600 and Tk 3,150.

The move caused a commotion among the lowest-rank cops, with the constables at Rajarbagh and Mirpur police lines reportedly getting united to demonstrate against the discrimination.

Tipped off, the government stepped up security measures at all police lines and deployed members of the intelligence agencies to keep a close watch on the constables.

Some 20,000 policemen at the Rajarbagh Police Lines and 5,500 others at Mirpur were also instructed to always carry their identity cards.

Some constables told The Daily Star their movement has been restricted. They also said they have been directed not to discuss the issue.

Although there was information that constables were preparing to demonstrate against the discrimination, top police officials termed it a 'lie' and said there was no commotion.

"The police are a disciplined force and the members cannot do anything in breach of discipline," IGP Quayum told The Daily Star. "They (constables) had a feeling that they have been discriminated against," he said.

Asked about the meeting with Babar held at Rajarbagh Police Lines auditorium, he said: "We

Cart-puller

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Selim but the bullet missed its target and hit the ill-fated pushcart puller, sources said.

Police and locals took critically injured Akbar to Hathazari Health Complex where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Hearing the news, local journalists and Akbar's relatives rushed to the health complex and staged agitation against the OC.

On the OC's instructions, Hathazari police picked up seven people from there and took them to the police station, sources said.

Later Additional Superintendent of Police (north) Jahangir Hossain Matubar went to the Hathazari Police Station and released the seven.

The OC, however, claimed that Akbar was shot dead by the bullet of fleeing criminal Selim.

Police doctor, 2 others caught with phensidyl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members held a police doctor and two others along with 140 bottles of expired banned Indian drug phensidyl from Charghat upazila yesterday evening.

The arrestees are Dr Mirza Khairul Kamal, 32, son of Sammun Islam of Dilapur of Pabna and a medical officer at the Bangladesh Police Academy at Sardah of Charghat upazila, Zahed Sarwar, 29, an MBA student of Stamford University in Dhaka, and Abdur Rashid, 22, a broker of local drug peddlers.

Acting on a tip-off, the elite force members challenged a private car at the Mukhtarpur crossing of Sardah and recovered the bottles containing phensidyl packed inside three baskets of mango.

Sources said the arrestees are involved in trading the contraband Indian cough syrup consumed by many as drug and that they were taking the bottles in the private car (Dhaka Metro Kha 11-9962) to Dhaka.

They bought the drug expired from Sardah bazar, a place well-known for drug smuggling, sources said.

Dr Mirza admitted to newsmen that he used to take the drug, but denied his involvement in the trade.

A married man, the police physician, however, was silent when asked why he was carrying the drug.

The Rab was likely to hand the three over to Charghat police by the night.

Budget session

FROM PAGE 1
delivering their speeches on the floor of the House.

Apart from treasury bench members, Jatiya Party (Ershad) and Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League lawmakers were present in yesterday's sitting.

The main opposition party has not been joining parliament since the 15th session protesting the government and the speaker's indifference to the opposition demands.

The speaker did not agree to the opposition's demand for holding discussion on the killing of former minister Shah AMS Kibria by adjourning day's business during the 15th session.

The Business Advisory Committee yesterday decided that the House will discuss the supplementary budget of fiscal year 2004-05 on June 12 and 13, and it will be passed on June 14.

The House adopted an obituary reference at the death of four former lawmakers and a member of Bangladesh Army killed in Congo while carrying out his duties in the UN peacekeeping mission.

India to resume

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took the decision to withdraw restriction on the import of fish from Bangladesh, Kironmoy said.

India imports about 4,000 tonnes of fish including 500 tonnes of Hilsa annually from Bangladesh but import of all types of fish from Bangladesh was stopped for last one and a half months.

Directorate of Fisheries of the West Bengal government will set up an office adjacent to Benapole land port for providing certificate to ensure the quality of imported fish.

Welcoming the decision of the central government, a representative of Hilsa Exporters' Association said the issue was resolved as West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya took initiative.

KL to back

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particularly 'halal' meat all over the world.

Process for introduction of 'halal' certification standards for Muslim countries is on the way for OIC endorsement, an official said after the meeting.

The Malaysian foreign minister came to Dhaka to attend the Joint Commission meeting that concluded yesterday.

Cooperation in education, agriculture, biodiversity, trade, investment, and investment in the rubber sector were discussed.

On recruitment of manpower from Bangladesh, Hamid Albar said the workforce will be recruited through negotiation between the authorities concerned of the two countries.

The Malaysian foreign minister told the prime minister that the Joint Commission meeting was fruitful and hoped the new areas of cooperation would be opened up.

He also responded positively as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said Malaysia could buy more Bangladeshi products to reduce the widening trade gap.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin, Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Ashaari Bin Sani and senior officials of the Malaysian Foreign Ministry were present.

Six mayors to join

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Mohammad Hanif and recently by Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Asked about his failures as a mayor during the three years of his office since May 15, 2002, Khoka blamed it on the limitations of a mayor and the "ancient" conditions of the infrastructure and administration of the DCC.

Regarding the utility service organisations, he said although the water supply in other city corporations is under the authority of the mayor concerned, the case is different in Dhaka.

"There are no public representatives in the Water and Sewerage Authority [Wasal], Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority [Desa] and the Titas Gas. So these organisations go without accountability for their work to the people," Khoka said.

About the suffering of the citizens caused by rampant road-digging, the mayor said that the work hopefully will end by this month. Regarding the problem of water-logging he mentioned the Wasa, not the DCC, as the responsible authority.

Khoka said the situation of the DCC was so bad when he took office that there were no funds left even for the payment of its staff. Besides, there was the debt of Tk 631 crore on the DCC. The condition of many roads was dilapidated and people did not have any faith in the DCC.

"At first I tried to bring back the confidence of the citizens. I have so far paid off 80 percent of the debt and now the DCC has its own fund to run its regular development works," Khoka said.

On the issue of mosquito control the mayor said, "We don't claim we

have been able to control mosquito fully but the situation has now improved a lot. We concentrated on cleaning up the ponds and water pits in the city, which are the breeding grounds of mosquito."

On the conservancy work of the DCC the mayor said if the DCC had been allotted Tk 180 crore yearly instead of the current 60 crore for this purpose, the city would have looked different. The DCC earns Tk 17 crore only for the conservancy purpose from the citizens, he informed.

Besides, the DCC lacks cleaners required proportionate to the population of Dhaka. For an estimated population of one crore under the DCC, the organisation needs 20,000 cleaners instead of the existing 7,000, Khoka said.

He said the DCC recently gave the conservancy work of 10 wards to private organisations so that the DCC workers could compare their works in other wards and improve in a competitive way.

Khoka admitted that Dhaka has not been built in a planned way. "In future we have to make towns around Dhaka through a proper plan," he said adding that in the next 10 to 15 years towns will be built centring around Keraniganj, Savar, Gazipur and the eastern side nearby the Stalakkha river.

Khoka also shed light on some future work plans under which the DCC will construct some new roads, start the work of the Jatrabari-Gulistan fly-over very soon and the development of the Osmani Udyan this month.

Among others, DRU President M Shafiqul Bashar and General Secretary Shakhawat Hossain Badsha attended the programme.

Budget size

FROM PAGE 1
against the revised budget for the current fiscal year.

Non-NBR and non-tax portion may be raised to Tk 1,660 crore and Tk 8,410 crore in the upcoming budget.

The annual development expenditure has already been raised to Tk 24,500 crore, which is about 20 percent higher than the revised Annual Development Programme (ADP) of the ongoing fiscal year.

The revenue expenditure may see a 13 percent rise to stand at Tk 39,400 crore.

Only the pay and allowance of the public officials would cost the government an additional Tk 10,600 crore, some 18 percent rise on this year's revised budget.

About Tk 6,720 crore may be allocated for paying interests on domestic and foreign loans. The government may also borrow Tk 3,630 crore from the banks to offset the budget deficit.

REVISED BUDGET

In the revised budget for the current fiscal year, the total revenue income may be decreased from Tk 41,300 crore to Tk 39,200 crore. In the NBR portion, the original figure of Tk 32,190 crore may be lowered to Tk 30,500 crore.

The non-NBR portion may, however, be left the same as before at Tk 14,500 crore, while the non-tax revenue is likely to be cut down from Tk 7,660 crore to Tk 7,250 crore.

Total expenditure in the revised

budget may be decreased from Tk 57,248 crore to Tk 55,500 crore. The ADP has already been re-fixed at Tk 20,500 crore from Tk 22,000 crore.

The revenue expenditure is likely to be lowered from Tk 35,248 crore to Tk 35,000 crore. Expenditure for pay and allowance of the government officials may rise about 9 percent from Tk 8,218 crore to Tk 9,000 crore.

The government's borrowing from the banks for deficit financing was originally earmarked at Tk 2,599 crore, but it may be spiked to Tk 3,600 crore.

WHAT'S THERE IN THE BUDGET?

The government plans to make public the resource and expenditure plans of four line ministries in the coming budget. Besides, it may also announce when it would go public with the plans of the other ministries.

The safety net programme may be broadened in the coming budget. A new programme for the disabled people may be there. Again, a special programme may also be included for the people exposed to Monga or near-famine.

The government is not going to give subsidy on diesel, but it may subsidise interests on farm loans. The budget may have a provision for the banks giving the farmers loan at a low interest rate, about 2 to 3 percent, and the government will pay the banks back later on.

Cops probe bank

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"We have already found Tk 6 crore in her two accounts in Bangladesh and are going to check how much she deposited with another foreign bank outside the country," a source close to the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) said.

He added they have taken steps to know the amount that Bidisha, who is now on a three-day remand, has deposited with a foreign bank outside the country. The source, however, refused to name the banks.

He also claimed that they are sure that Tk 75 lakh has been deposited in a bank account of Bidisha and the money was sent from abroad. "We are still quizzing her to squeeze information about the source of the money."

Bidisha was arrested on Saturday after Ershad filed a theft case against her.

QUIZZING CONTINUES

Members of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Special Branch (SB) of the police and National Security Intelligence (NSI) continued questioning Bidisha for the second consecutive day yesterday.

The police took Bidisha out of Gulshan Police Station on Monday afternoon and continued to interrogate her at several offices.

Sources said Bidisha was kept at the city SB office on Bailey Road Monday night and questioned about her alleged foreign connections and the bank accounts.

The police also raided a number of houses of some influential people and Bidisha's offices.

A top police official asking not to be named said they have raided seven places including her office Manchitra, boutique shop 'Isabella' in Banani and elder sister Manisha's house in Uttara.

COURT ORDER

The vacation bench of the High Court yesterday directed the government to immediately transfer ailing Bidisha to the prison cell of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and Hospital (BSMMUH) for treatment during her remand in police custody.

It also ordered the police to allow Bidisha's lawyers access to her for consultation and let them take her signature on vokalatnama for filing a writ petition.

The court passed the interim order upon a petition filed by Bidisha's father Abu Bakr Siddique, a former Rajshahi University professor. The court also referred the matter to a regular bench for hearing when the court reopens on June 11.

Upon a separate petition, the court ordered the government not to arrest or harass Bidisha's father and her two sisters, and allow them to see her during police custody or remand.

Advocate Salahuddin Ahmed and Barrister Tanjibul Alam moved the petitions.

ERSHAD'S CLAIMS REFUTED

Bidisha's mother Anwara Siddika yesterday refuted Ershad's allegation that Bidisha had not divorced her first husband Peter Wilson. She said the separation between Bidisha and Wilson was legally settled before her daughter married Ershad.

"Ershad invited Peter to Bangladesh and settled the matter after days of talks with him," Anwara said, adding the divorce between Bidisha and Peter is undoubtedly true.

She said the divorce documents have been kept at Ershad's Baridhara house, 'President Park', and if the documents were not handed to Bidisha, those would again be collected from Wilson.

5 killed in road crashes

STAR NEWS DESK

Five people, including a doctor, died and eight others were injured in road accidents in Mymensingh and Sirajganj yesterday.

Our Mymensingh correspondent reported that a private car collided head on with a Sherpur bound bus on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Dhigarkanda in Sadar upazila at about 8:15am, killing a doctor of Rangpur Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) and his assistant on the spot and injuring the driver of the car.

The doctor, AKM Sayeedul Islam, 50, prof of orthopaedic of the RMCH, and his assistant Nural Islam, 26, were going to Community Based Medical College (CBMC) at Churkhali in Sadar upazila in the car.

The injured car driver, Osman Ali, is undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH).

Soon after the accident, the students of Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) and the CBMC put up barricades on the roads, damaged at least 20 vehicles and clashed with transport workers. At least 50 people, including ten students of the MMC, were injured in the clash.

Police fired tear gas shells and rubber bullets to bring the situation under control. The road barricades were withdrawn at about 2:30pm after the local chapter of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) gave a 48-hour ultimatum to the authorities concerned to nab the killer bus driver.

Meanwhile, the members of the BMA local chapter will wear black badges and hold a condolence meeting at Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) today.

Prof Sayeedul Islam, also a freedom fighter, left behind his wife Dr Piara Islam of the MMCH and two sons.

Police seized the bus, but its driver managed to flee. Sayeedul's body was taken to his village home in Bogra after namaj-e-janaza at Jamia Islamia Madrasa ground.

In Sirajganj, three people died and seven others were injured when a truck skidded off the road and fell into a ditch on the western side of the Jamuna Bridge yesterday, according to a correspondent.

Of the dead, two were identified as Ripon, 16, and Millat, 25. The identity of the other could not be known.

The injured are now undergoing treatment at Sirajganj Sadar Hospital.

Price hikes

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members of the ministers are engaged in plundering the state's wealth," she alleged.

Besides, the AL chief once again accused the government of killing AL leaders and activists in the name of 'crossfire'.

"The ALN-Jamaat alliance is killing the AL men to avenge its [Jamaat-e-Islami] ignominious defeat in 1971," she observed.

Referring to Gias Hazarika's death in 'crossfire', she said, "Had he been interrogated, some of the ruling coalition ministers' involvement in crime would have been disclosed."

She also said the current situation of the country is alarmingly similar to that during the then East Pakistan.

The former prime minister alleged that the ruling party cadres in concert with police yesterday foiled the Chehlum of Dud Mia, who was killed in 'Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) custody'.

She urged the countrymen to unite in opposition to the ruling four-party alliance and force it to step down.

Speaking at the discussion, AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed said the 'state-sanctioned terrorism' has turned the country into a 'valley of death'.

Amir Hossain Amu, another member of the AL Presidium, said the country's independence was not gained through a mere declaration, rather 1952's Language Movement and then the Six-Point Demand had culminated in the glorious Liberation War.

Dr Harun-ur-Rashid, dean of social science faculty in Dhaka University (DU), read the keynote paper titled 'June 7 in the context of autonomy to independence'.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Presidium Members Motia Chowdhury, Sajeda Chowdhury, DU Teachers Association President AAMS Arefin Siddique, former vice chancellor of DU Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, city AL President Mohammad Hanif and General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya also spoke at the discussion.

Newspaper editors

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In the wake of the price hike of newsprint in the international market, the country's newspaper industry is facing a tough time, they told the PM.

The team also included Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) President and The Independent Editor Mahbubul Alam, National Press Club President and the News Today Editor Reazuddin Ahmed, Prothom Alo Editor Motiur Rahman, presidents and general secretaries of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists Gias Kamal Chowdhury, Manzurul Alshan Bulbul, Shah Alamgir and Elahi Newaz Khan.

Earlier, on Sunday the Noab, BSP and leaders of journalists unions formed the eight-member joint steering committee to face the problems of the newspaper industry.

Suicide bombers

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In the latest killing of a cleric, Salam Abdul-Karim, a Sunni, was found dead in the mainly Shia city of Basra on Monday, relatives said. They said he had been abducted the previous day by men in Iraqi police uniforms.

Police denied any involvement in the killing. The death followed that of a Shia cleric in Basra last week.

In an effort to defuse sectarian tensions and undermine the Sunni-Arab dominated insurgency, the Shia and Kurdish blocs that emerged strongest from Iraq's Jan. 30 polls are trying to involve more

Sunni Arabs in the writing of a new constitution, the next key step in Iraq's path toward full democracy.

Sunni Arabs dominated Iraq during the rule of Saddam Hussein but few voted in the January elections due to calls from Sunni Arab parties for a boycott and fears of insurgent attacks.

There are only 17 Sunni Arab lawmakers in Iraq's 275-member parliament, and only two in the committee of 55 Iraqis that is tasked with overseeing the writing of a constitution.

The Shia chairman of the committee has said it will be expanded to include more Sunni Arabs, but the names of the new members have yet to be agreed.

Near the western city of Falluja, two US Marines have been killed by roadside bombs since Sunday, the military said.

Since the US-led invasion in 2003, at least 1,676 American military and Pentagon personnel have lost their lives in Iraq.

Criminals hurt

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Anis were admitted to Kaliganj hospital. Injured SI Abdur Rahim was given first aid.

Later police recovered the fire-arms with the help of villagers, Officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station Kamruzzaman said.

Malaysia agrees

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tourism and other areas so that we can have a win-win situation."

Morshed, who had a breakfast meeting with Hamid, said they also discussed regional, sub-regional and international issues and how to face together the challenges facing the two nations.

A top official of Bangladesh said the Malaysian side agreed in principle to give either duty-free entry or concession to 19 categories of Bangladeshi export products.

Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin told reporters Malaysia expressed keen interest in investing in trade and service sectors, and importing agro-based products, fruits, rice, and goods like jute and ceramics.

The Malaysian side proposed to send students to study medical sciences in Bangladesh, he said.

Malaysian companies are especially keen to invest in infrastructure development projects in Bangladesh, he mentioned.

The Malaysian side has agreed to accept the proposal to set up an exchange house in Malaysia, solely to provide remittance services to Bangladeshi nationals working in Malaysia.

Meeting sources on condition of anonymity said Bangladesh would prepare a list of 26,000 workers for sending them to Malaysia after studying the requirements there.

Talking to reporters after the press conference, Morshed said the commerce ministries of the two countries will soon take appropriate steps to reduce the trade gap.

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammed Qumrul Islam, ERD Secretary Ismail Zabihullah and high officials of both the sides were present at the signing ceremony and press conference.

Advani quits BJP

FROM PAGE 16
RSS and Vishwa Hindu Parishad top brass, he said he has not said anything in Pakistan which needs to be retracted or reviewed.

Advani, born in Sindh province of Pakistan, had gone on a nostalgic trip with his wife, son Jayant and daughter Pratibha to Pakistan where he visited the structure, which was once his family home. He had his school education in Karachi.

The resignation decision came a day after the Sangh Parivar fountainhead RSS demanded that the BJP president "review" the statements made in Pakistan, especially about Jinnah, seen by many as the proponent of two-nation theory based on religion, went against the fundamental ideological posturing of RSS.

RSS spokesman Ram Madhav said there was no question of compromising with basic ideological issues of the Sangh Parivar and ruled out apology from Advani would be enough to sort out the problem.

After returning from Pakistan on Monday Advani called Sanjay Joshi, RSS pointman in BJP, to his residence last morning and handed him over a letter announcing his resignation as party chief.

Soon after Advani shot off his resignation letter, senior BJP leaders rushed to his residence to persuade him to withdraw his resignation. RSS also had asked the BJP chief to withdraw his statements, which he refused to do.

Earlier in the day, former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee endorsed Advani's comments about Jinnah.

"Advani's comments have created a lot of misunderstanding. Advani was talking about a Jinnah who fought for independence. Jinnah was a nationalist. He made no discrimination on the basis of religion," Vajpayee said.

Senior Congress leaders like Sarojini Naidu had also made similar remarks about Jinnah who had played an important role in the freedom struggle, Vajpayee told reporters.

The most vocal against Advani's remarks about Jinnah and Babri Mosque demolition was VHP whose general secretary Pravin Togadia

even accused Advani of being a "traitor" and asked him to apologise or quit as BJP chief.