

Court orders judicial probe into Gulshan land grab

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered a judicial inquiry into a case filed against Rajdhani Unnayan Katrapakkho (Rajuk) chairman, managing director (MD) of Mercantile Bank Ltd and seven others for forging documents to grab a land in Gulshan.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman issued the order following the filing of the case by Mohammad Amir Ali Mostafa, one of the owners of the land, on Tuesday.

The accused are Rajuk Chairman Mohammad Shahid Alam and its directors-- Shamsul Haq, Mohammad Shawkat Ali and Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Sarker-- and Mercantile Bank MD Shah Mohammad Nurul Alam and its assistant Vice-president Mohammad Hasanul Zayed and their accomplices Golam Faruq, Shahadat Hossain and Ehsanul Islam.

In his complaint Mostafa said the accused in collusion with others made a fake deed that his mother Mostari Begum, wife of late Akbar Ali, sold 33.20 decimal of land in Gulshan to Mercantile Bank Ltd on October 31 even though his father Akbar Ali is still alive.

Chairman of Mercantile Bank Abdul Jalil, also general secretary of Awami League (AL), and some officials of the bank went to the land concerned on November 2 and told Mostafa and his family members to vacate the house as the bank has bought the land, Mostafa complained.

They also attempted to abduct Mostafa and his father Amir Ali. An abduction case was filed against Jalil and nine others, the complainant added.

Mostafa said the accused made the sale's deed in Gulshan Sub-registrar office in presence of Mostari Begum on October 31 though she did not go there on that day. Moreover, Mostari Begum was not the owner of the land as she gave the land to the complainant and his two sisters as a gift on October 12, Mostafa added.

Former JCD leader shot dead in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Criminals on Tuesday night gunned down a former Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader of Dhaka University unit in front of Bhulta Police Camp at Rugganj.

Witnesses said four or five criminals on a yellow taxi opened fire on Shafikul Islam, 28, around 9:45pm as he was about to get into his car. The criminals left the scene firing shots into the air.

Shafikul, who hails from Rugganj, was found shot dead with gun shots to his chest and head.

Panic seized the area following the murder and locals demonstrating against police inactivity blockaded the Bhulta Police Camp. They also set up a barricade on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

Shafikul Islam had close relationship with Abdul Matin Chowdhury who is the local lawmaker and BNP steering committee member, sources said.

JS mosque imam held on rape charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The imam of Jatiya Sangsad Dakkhin Plaza Jame Mosque was arrested allegedly for raping a woman in the early hours of yesterday.

Tejgaon police held Sirajul Islam, 40, at his Sangsad Bhaban servants' quarters house following a rape case filed by the victim under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The victim in the first information report (FIR), filed with Tejgaon Police Station Tuesday night, said she went to visit the imam's house Tuesday evening.

Finding her alone in the house, the imam raped her, the police said quoting the FIR.

Police arrested the imam (prayer leader) and produced him before the court with a seven-day remand prayer.

JPC children's programmes begin today

UNB, Dhaka

To mark the 51st founding anniversary of Jatiya Press Club, a two-day programme for the children of the club members begins at 3:00pm today.

The programmes include painting, recitation, music, race, dress as you like, shooting and pillow passing. The programmes will conclude on Friday evening.

State Minister for Youth and Sports M Fazlur Rahman will distribute prizes among the winners, says a Press Club press release.

Declare northern districts as disaster area

Hasina urges govt

RAFIQUE SARKER, back from Kurigram

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the government to declare northern districts as the disaster area where thousands of people are passing their days without any foods.

She also urged the government to immediately start test relief and food for work programme for unemployed day labourers and adequate food assistance for thousands of the distressed people.

Hasina, also the chief of Awami League (AL), committed that the sufferings of the munga-hit people will come to an end if her party is voted to power again.

She said people in Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and Nilphamari districts are passing days in starvation but the prime minister did not visit the area for a single day.

Hasina also criticised the government for price hike of essentials and said the prices of all essentials have

been doubled during the four-year rule of the coalition government.

The AL chief was addressing four roadside gatherings and two huge public meetings in Kurigram district yesterday, the second day of her four-day-long tour to northern districts.

Addressing a rally at Mohendranagar, Hasina said the BNP and Jamaat want to rule the country by suppressing the opposition's movement through killing by police and party cadres.

She warned that the days are not far when the opposition along with the people will oust the government and form a "pro-people government led by the AL."

Hasina also distributed foodstuffs among the munga-hit people of Deular Patar and Jatrapur in Kurigram, and Mohendranagar in Lalmonirhat districts.

In the evening, the opposition leader visited the house of slain AL leader Samsul Islam Suruj and consoled the bereaved members of his family.

Later, she returned to Rangpur Circuit House to spend the night.

Hasina has extended her visit to northern districts by one day from November 11 to 12.

She will distribute relief among the munga-hit people of two upazilas of Rangpur.

AL leaders Obaidul Quader, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Akteruzzaman, Mojoy Gen (Retd) AMSA Amin, Mirza Azom MP, Jahangir Kabir Nanok, Bahauddin Nasim, Pankojdeb Nath and Nazrul Islam Babu also spoke on these occasions.

Our Kurigram Correspondent Md Abdul Wahed reports that Hasina visited some munga-hit areas of the districts and distributed relief materials among them.

Addressing a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar of the district, she said the BNP-Jamaat government has no sympathy for the people of the country who are passing a very hard time.

Hasina said her party would eliminate munga if it voted to power again.



Noor Hossain Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaheed Noor Hossain Day will be observed across the country today.

On this day in 1987, Noor Hossain, a young pro-democracy activist, sacrificed his life to oust the autocratic regime of H M Ershad.

Noor Hossain was killed in police firing near Zero point in the city while participating in a pro-democracy procession.

He had a slogan 'Swairachar Nipat Jak, Gonotantra Mukti Pak' (Down with autocracy, let democracy be freed) inscribed in white paint on his chest and back when a bullet pierced through his body.

His death strengthened the movement and expedited the fall of the autocratic ruler and restore democracy in the country.

On the eve of the day, President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages. Different political and student organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

These include discussions, rallies and processions.

The programme of Shaheed Noor Hossain Sangsad includes laying of wreaths at Noor Hossain Square at Zero Point at 8:00am, offering of Fateha at Noor Hossain's grave at Jurain graveyard at 9:00am and meeting with the family members of Noor Hossain.

The Awami League will also lay wreaths at Noor Hossain Square at 9:30am.

Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers' Party, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Gono Forum and student organisations against terrorism and communalism have also chalked out separate programmes marking the day.

Lawyers condemn selection of Zia for Saarc Award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 651 lawyers of the Supreme Court yesterday condemned the selection of former president Ziaur Rahman for 'Saarc Golden Award' to be awarded in the upcoming Saarc Summit scheduled for November 12 and 13.

The lawyers issued a statement for the different dailies protesting the decision of Saarc authorities as the High Court has recently declared the rule of Ziaur Rahman illegal.

They also urged Saarc authorities to drop the name of Ziaur Rahman from the Award list in honour of the High Court verdict.

The decision will go against the democracy, rule of law and the spirit of peace as Ziaur Rahman grabbed the power at the dead of night and killed many innocent army officers, the statement said.

M Amirul Islam, Shawkat Ali Khan, Shafik Ahmed, Abdul Baseed Mujumder, M Wazer Faruq, Mahbube Alam, Abdul Matin Khan, AFM Mejbah Uddin, Sahara Khatun, Abdul Mannan Khan, Subrata Chowdhury, Bashir Ahmed, Enayatur Rahim, M A Halim, Nurul Islam Sujan and Mahbub Ali and others signed the statement.

Two die after taking spurious alcohol in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two people died after taking spurious alcohol at Kumarkhali upazila of Kushtia on Tuesday.

The dead are Shahidul Islam, 40, son of Monohor Sardar of Gotria village and Golam Mustafa, 45, son of Akhter Hossain of Jodubaira village.

Police said they took rectified spirit allegedly smuggled in from India and sold by an illegal trader.

They were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital on Monday night as they fell ill after taking the alcohol at Kumarkhali Bazar.

ALLEGED WRONG TREATMENT

Mystery deepens over death of woman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified woman claiming to be the sister of a female patient, who died due to alleged wrong treatment at a private hospital, took away her body from Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) without an autopsy early yesterday.

The patient Marium Begum, 25, daughter of Hazrat Ali, a rickshaw mechanic, hailed from Purba Enayetpur in Gazipur.

Her father said Marium died due to wrong treatment by the doctors at Nightingale General Hospital and Diagnostic Limited at Ashulia Sarkar Market in Savar where she underwent an operation on Tuesday.

As her condition deteriorated, the doctors sent her to the DMCH where the doctors declared her dead at around 5:45pm on the day.

Hazrat Ali also demanded punishment to the doctors responsible for her death.

Mariam, mother of a three-year-old child, was first admitted to the clinic a month ago for treatment of a tumour on the middle finger of her right hand and the doctors then operated on her finger, her father said.

But when gangrene developed on that finger later, she again consulted with the doctors of the hospital and they suggested amputation of the finger.

Her finger was amputated at the clinic on Tuesday, but suddenly her condition deteriorated during the operation and she died on way to the DMCH, her father added.

DMCH sources suspected that a fault on the part of anaesthetist might have led to her death.

But the incident of taking away her body from the DMCH has been shrouded in mystery. The woman who took away the body claimed to be her sister while her father said Marium was her only daughter.

'Set up Saarc disaster management fund'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former minister Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Nooruddin Khan yesterday called for establishing an information cell and a disaster management fund for the Saarc countries to tackle natural disasters, such as earthquake.

He called on the Saarc leaders to discuss the issue in the upcoming summit and take steps to this end.

Speaking at a press briefing, General Nooruddin also urged the leaders to request the United Nations to set up a regional office of World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) for the benefit of Saarc countries.

Referring to Monga, a near-famine situation prevailing in northern districts, he called on the government, World Bank and other donor agencies to establish a long-term fund to cope with the situation.

Mehbub Sadik, chairman of Social Centre for Opportunity and Optimistic Programmes (Scoop), said about 10 lakh people in 11 upazilas of Kurigram district face Monga for three months every year.

Dr NI Khan, president of the Academy of Development Science and Life Long Learning, was also present at the press briefing at the National Press Club.

On Eid day, Nooruddin Khan, who is the chief advisor of Scoop, has distributed relief among 300 Monga-hit families at village Khalilganj in Kurigram, he said.

The Scoop, Academy of Development Science and some local NGOs jointly arranged the relief distribution programme.

CITIZENSHIP ISSUE

SPGRC seeks meet with Pak PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stranded Pakistanis yesterday demanded a meeting with Pakistan prime minister during the Saarc summit with a view to resolving the issue of their citizenship.

At a press conference at the National Press Club in the city, leaders of Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC)

urged Bangladesh foreign ministry and Pakistan high commission in Dhaka to arrange the meeting.

"We want an open discussion with Pakistan prime minister about the sad plights and sufferings of stranded Pakistanis languishing in different camps in the country," said Abdul Jabbar Khan, president of SPGRC.

He said the 34-year-long problem of stranded Pakistanis cannot be solved without a bilateral meeting.

SPGRC leaders said General

Pervez Musharraf during his visit to Bangladesh on July 30 in 2002, promised to solve this problem after listening the pains and agonies of stranded Pakistanis.

But no positive step has yet been taken even three years after the promise, they added.

The SPGRC general secretary criticised Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka M Shawkat Ali for his interview in a TV channel in which he rejected the term 'Stranded Pakistanis' by calling them as 'Bangladeshi Biharis' and said Pakistan has no obligation towards them.

He said anger and anguish have been created among the stranded Pakistanis for giving such statement.

SPGRC Vice-president Ah-Sam Uddin Khan, Advisor Nesar and Member M Mahmud Khan were present at the press conference.

The woman identifying herself as Mosammat Nazma took away the body in the early hours of yesterday without a post-mortem.

None of the Nightingale Hospital officials were available for comments despite repeated attempts.



Publication ceremony of 'Bangladesh Wins Freedom' tomorrow

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Bangladesh Wins Freedom' by Musa Sadik, a distinguished columnist and writer and war correspondent of Swadhin Bangla Betar, will be held at the TSC of Dhaka University at 11:00am tomorrow, says a press release.

Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) AK Khondakar Bir Uttam will attend the programme as the chief guest while former chief justice Kemal Uddin Hossain will be present as the keynote speaker.

Veteran war heroes KM Shafullah Bir Uttam, CR Dutta Bir Uttam, Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam, Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam and cabinet secretary of the government-in-exile HT Imam, Dr M Anisuzzaman and Prof Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed will be present as special guests.

The book which runs into about a thousand pages contains the writer's nerve-breaking experience on the battle fronts, interviews, valuable documents and more than 150 rare historical photographs -- a result of 30 years of research and collection of facts and data.

The book is available at Mullik Brothers at New Market and at Words 'n Pages at Gulshan.

All profits from the sale of books till December this year will be donated for the Monga-affected people in northern districts.

One killed, 70 injured as villagers clash in Narsingdi

UNB, Narsingdi

A man was killed and some 70 people were injured in a series of inter-village clashes in Raipura upazila in the last two days.

Police and locals said the inhabitants of Darigaon village and neighbouring Gopinathpur village were locked into a fierce clash in their bid to establish respective supremacy.

Marfat Ali led the Gopinathpur villagers while Jasim Uddin led Darigaon villagers during several bouts of fightings.

"Both the groups armed with locally made harpoons engaged in the fighting in a field while many around the arena looked on to see the savagery," says an eyewitness.

The mayhem in the backwater area-- far off the police station-- continued till 1:00pm, leaving at least 30 wounded on both sides.

On Tuesday midnight, the villagers again were locked into a clash that left Ohid Mia, 40, of Gopinathpur village dead and some 10 people injured seriously.

As the death news of Ohid spread fast, Gopinathpur villagers attacked Darigaon villagers yesterday morning with harpoon ensuing a bloody clash that left 30 people injured.

Twenty of the injured were admitted to the Sadar hospital.

Officer-in-Charge of Raipura Police Station Farid Ahmed said police force was sent to the spot in the remote area. "It takes 4-5 hours to reach the spot," he added.

Cadet collage exam date for lecturers' shifted

Due to unavoidable circumstance, the written test for appointment of lecturers in the cadet colleges will be held on November 25 instead of November 11, a press release of Inter-Service Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) said yesterday.

Time and venue for the test will remain unchanged.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at the meeting of 14-party at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

Low birth weight main nutrition problem of newborns

Experts tell confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Low birth weight and inadequate breast-feeding are the main nutrition problems of newborn infants in the country, said the experts at a conference yesterday.

The conference titled 'Future Directions for Better Nutrition in Bangladesh' was organised by National Nutrition Programme (NNP) at ICDDR,B auditorium in the city.

Chaired by Executive Director of NNP Mohammad Abul Quasem the conference was attended by Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain as chief guest.

The NNP in its monitoring report of July 2005 mentioned that of the 27,371 infants born at 105 upazilas across the country in July, a total of 3,922 babies had low birth weight.

The report also mentioned infant

mortality rate as 34 per 1000 live birth in the project area.

Major causes of child mortality were pneumonia and diarrhoea.

At the same time maternal mortality ratio was estimated as 1.78 per 1000 live birth.

One in 21 deaths occurred due to complications during delivery and post-delivery complications.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said to address the malnutrition problem is the constitutional obligation of the government, but the NNP could not achieve its success as expected for various complications and misunderstanding.

"Bangladesh is considered as one of the successful countries among the developing nations in reducing maternal and infant mortality rate," he said, adding that multi-sectoral approach is needed to make the project more effective.

Acting head of World Bank Office in Dhaka Qaiser M Khan said due to lack of specific efforts child nutrition could not meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in the country.

"The ministries concerned need to reach a consensus decision and transparency and accountability should be enhanced," he said.

Among others Implementation Specialist of NNP Dr Mohammad Asirul Hoque, Executive Director of ICDDR,B Dr David A Sack, Dr M Q K Talukder, and Joint Secretary Delwar Hossain also spoke.

Maulana Akbar passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Hafiz Maulana Akbar Ali, Khatib and Pesh Imam of the Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) shrine mosque, passed away due to old age complications at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University hospital on Tuesday at the age of 90.

He was buried in the graveyard close to the shrine yesterday.

Earlier, his namaz-e-janaza was held at the MC College playground.

Maulana Obaidul Haque, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, led the janaza.

Prior to the janaza, Maulana Obaidul Haque, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, AL presidium member AMA Muhit and city Mayor Badar Uddin Kamran briefly addressed the gathering.

He left behind his wife, a daughter and a host of students and admirers to mourn his death.

He served the Hajrat Shahjalal (RA) shrine mosque for 58 years.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina expressed their deep shock at the death of Maulana Akbar.

They also conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Dewan Farid Gazi MP, Shafi Ahmed Chowdhury MP, and Maulana Shahinur Pasha Chowdhury MP also condoled the death.

Weather Today Thundershower likely UNB, Dhaka. Light rain or thundershowers is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country till 6:00pm today. Slight fall in night temperature is expected over Rajshahi, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country during the period, Met Office said. Highest temperature 32.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 16.4 degree Celsius at Dinajpur. The sun sets in the capital at 5:14pm today and rises at 6:11am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature in Celsius Humidity in percentage Morning Evening Dhaka 30.5 24.2 80 78 Chittagong 28.4 24.0 91 84 Rajshahi 30.8 18.0 79 -- Khulna 30.6 22.7 76 87 Barisal 31.5 23.0 90 88 Sylhet 32.9 22.0 67 75 Cox's Bazar 26.8 24.5 91 93