

PROFESSOR'S KILLING
Ruta to observe
strike today

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (Ruta) will observe a strike today demanding immediate arrest of and punishment to the killers of Professor Taher Ahmed and Professor Muhammad Yunus.

The university authorities have postponed all classes and examinations scheduled for today.

The RU teachers and students also formed a human chain in front of the university main gate yesterday on the same demands. Carrying placards and banners, several hundred teachers, students and officials joined the human chain stretching from Binodpur Bazaar to Kazla gate.

Later, a meeting was held in front of the university main gate with Ruta President Prof Nazrul Islam in the chair.

Addressing the meeting, Prof Islam said Ruta will form human chain on the Rajshahi-Dhaka

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Raped girl
commits
suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A teenage girl, who was raped on Friday night, committed suicide yesterday due to shame and being denied justice.

Quoting local people police said, Akbar Hossain, 24, of village Bansh Ghat entered into the 19-year old girl's room at dead of night and raped her. Hearing her scream, local people chased the culprit and caught him. Some influential locals released the culprit assuring the victim's parents that he will be punished, but they took no initiative to do so.

Out of shame, the girl took poison early yesterday. She died on the way to Satkhira Hospital.

Police sent the body to Satkhira morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Sadar police station but the police are yet to arrest the rapist.

The incident sparked anger among the local people who demanded arrest and punishment of the culprit.

CTG GARMENT FIRE
Human chain
formed for
compensation

UNB, Ctg

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) formed a human chain in front of the local press club yesterday demanding compensation for the fire victims of KTS Textile and garments Factory.

The leaders of the association demanded Tk 10 lakh for the family of each worker killed in the fire while Tk 2 lakh for the rehabilitation of each injured.

At least 54 workers were burned to death and over 100 suffered burn injuries in a devastating fire at the RMG factory at Kalurghat in Chittagong on February 23.

TEJGAON BUILDING COLLAPSE
Tk 1cr rescue cost,
owner pays nothing

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

The government spent about Tk 1 crore to clear the rubble of the collapsed Phoenix building at Tejgaon but the owners of the faulty building remain beyond any compulsion for bearing the costs due to lack of necessary law.

In absence of any law fixing the responsibility for bearing the costs of such operations, usually the government bears the expenses, said an official of the Dhaka City Corporation.

Such an accident seems to help the owner of the building as he can get the old structure removed without any cost, Fire Service and Civil

Defence Deputy Director Selim Newaz Bhuiyan said.

The cost of the operation that involved representatives of over half a dozen government agencies including more than 700 people in clearing the rubble would not be less than Tk 1 crore, he said.

He suggested enactment of laws to hold the owner and others concerned responsible for the clearing expense.

The DCC alone, deploying 26 pieces of heavy machinery, roughly spent more than Tk 10 lakh on fuel.

The 14 Independent Engineers Brigade of the Army coordinated the 119-hour-long rescue operation with arrays of rescue equipment and

people from the Fire Service and Civil Defence, Dhaka City Corporation, Bangladesh Rifles, Rapid Action Battalion, Police, Roads and Highways Department, Rajuk and the district administration.

Some private construction companies also helped with their excavators.

Rescue operation at the collapsed Tejgaon building officially ended on Tuesday after removal of some 2,500 truckloads of concrete debris since February 25.

The concrete debris was dumped on an open space 500 metres from the spot.

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A RARE SIGHT ...A female staff of a filling station pumps fuel into an autorickshaw yesterday. Five out of the eight employees of Plana Fuel Station in Langalbandh in Narayanganj are female.

Inflation rate dips
further in January

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The overall inflation rate on point-to-point basis declined in January by 0.48 percentage point and inflation rate of food, non-food items both in rural and urban areas dropped.

After marking a record inflation rise in November last year, it continued to drop in the next two months.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data say 7.95 percent national inflation rate in November came down to 7.07 percent in December last year. In January, the rate further decreased to 6.59 percent.

Experts noted that Bangladesh Bank's (BB) tight monetary policy,

price stability of different things except oil in the global market and stable prices of food items except a few in the local market during the winter due to easy availability of winter vegetables contributed to the decline in inflation rate.

Sources however said following the depreciation of taka in recent months, if production of boro rice is hampered due to fertiliser and diesel crises and in case the government under pressure from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) raises oil prices, inflation rate may very well

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Kushtia outlaw
killed by rivals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A regional leader of outlawed Ganomukti Fouz was killed Friday night allegedly by the operatives of Biplobi Communist Party (BCP).

The dead was identified as Siddiqur Rahman alias Siddique of Ailchhara village under Sadar upazila.

Police sources said a group of BCP men abducted Siddique from his house around midnight and took him to nearby Sudiazpur ground of Mirpur upazila. The kidnappers then slaughtered and shot him.

On information, police recovered the body the same night and sent it to the Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

According to police, Siddique was a listed criminal and accused in 12 cases, including four for murder.

Embattled Thai
PM vows to
fight on despite
poll boycott call

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said yesterday his political future would be decided at the ballot box as the political opposition pressed ahead with a boycott of snap elections next month.

"You cannot defy the voice of the people and you don't have the right to make decisions on their behalf," Thaksin said after the three main opposition parties rejected his offer of political reforms on Friday aimed at defusing a growing political crisis.

"You cannot assume that your judgement is better than theirs," he said of the boycott of the April 2 poll the opposition says would legitimise a corrupt government.

He was speaking to reporters before flying to the northern city of Chiang Mai for a rally.

Thaksin told a huge crowd of supporters in Bangkok on Friday, which police and others estimated at 150,000 to 200,000, he would adopt political reforms within 15 months of the April 2 election, then call another.

He also offered to step down if his ruling Thai Rak Thai (Thais Love

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Bomb blast
injures 2 in
Jhenidah

UNB, Jhenidah

Two people were injured in a bomb explosion near Government Women's College in the town last night.

The injured are rickshawpuller Mujibur Rahman, 38, and Shipu, 15, a student of Kanchan Nagor High School. They were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

According to the pedestrians, three young men blasted the bomb at about 8:00pm and soon left the place.

On Friday night, an explosion at Sher-e-Bangla Road in the town left five people wounded.



A displaced railing on the stairs of the foot over-bridge at Science Laboratory intersection in the capital remains uncared for, leaving pedestrians in danger for over a week.

US, Pakistan renew
vow to fight terror

Bush convinced of Musharraf's commitment

AP, Islamabad

President Bush and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf recommitted their nations yesterday to the difficult task of hunting down terrorists still hiding here and across the globe.

Bush came to Pakistan -- despite terrorist dangers that demanded extraordinary security -- to bolster Musharraf, who straddles a delicate political divide in this impoverished but growing Islamic nation.

The US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are unpopular here, and Pakistan's strong anti-American sentiment was reflected in the thousands who demonstrated across the country against Bush's visit. While there are suspicions that al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives

maintain some degree of safe sanctuary inside Pakistan, Musharraf has defied criticism he is too cozy with Washington to be a strong US partner in the anti-terrorism campaign.

Bush said his visit convinced him that Musharraf is as committed as ever.

"We will win this fight together," Bush said after more than an hour of private talks with Musharraf. "While we do have a lot of work to be done, it's important that we stay on the hunt."

The United States also sees Musharraf as a leader who favours a more open, moderate and tolerant Pakistan. Standing alongside the Pakistani leader whom Bush

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Indo-Pak leaders
firm on ending
Kashmir row

Says Bush

AFP, Islamabad

US President George W. Bush said yesterday that Indian and Pakistani leaders whom he met this week were committed to resolving the decades-old Kashmir dispute.

"In order for the deal to get done, it requires commitment at the leadership level and (from) my perspective, I have seen the commitment, and the role of the United States is to continue to encourage the parties to come together," Bush told a joint news conference with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

"In other words, the atmosphere is changing," Bush said, referring to the confidence-building measures being taken by the two governments to ease tensions over the Himalayan region dispute.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars since 1947

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Galib, Rahman on same
boat of 'revolution'

Observe investigators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman started the so-called "Islamic Revolution" with support from international patrons and by joining hands with Ahle Hadith Andolon, Bangladesh (Ahab) chief Asadullah Al Galib.

Galib and Rahman came closer over their similar opinions about the revolution, say investigators. They became stronger when they were able to have contacts with Indian Ahab leader Abdul Matin Salafi. Salafi was expelled from

Bangladesh in 1988 for his role in militancy but he still continued to work with Ahab leaders.

In the late 70s, Galib was criticised for some actions he had taken and he was detached from Jamayate Ahle Hadith which was founded in 1945. He formed Ahle Hadith Juba Shangha (AHJS) and recruited members following the detachment from Jamayate Ahle Hadith.

On Galib's recommendations, Rahman studied in Madina University in Saudi Arabia and worked at the Saudi Arabia and

Kuwait embassies in Dhaka. Galib established Ahab in mid 90s and during this time he formed a countrywide underground network to work for Rahman.

Investigators quoting Galib's nephew and AHJS leader Sadrul Alam, arrested after August 17 countrywide blasts last year, said Galib and Rahman met several times in Chittagong in 1998 to discuss their plans for "revolution". They worked among Muslim Rohingya and Arakan militants.

Rahman later cut the militants

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Two robbers
lynched in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two unidentified robbers were lynched by an angry mob at a remote village in Lohagara upazila of the district in the early hours yesterday.

Police said a gang of 20 robbers broke into the house of Jamal

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Prayer Timing		
March 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-07	6-11
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		