

Rahman, Bangla Bhai

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condemned JMB Majlis-e-Shura member Khaled Saifullah and suicide bomber Iftekhar Al Mamun submitted jail appeal against death penalty, for staying the execution.

Meanwhile, Additional Attorney General Abdur Rezzak Khan described the letters as jail petition and said the SC will decide whether to consider them as appeals against the verdict or not.

Of the seven condemned JMB men, only Majlis-e-Shura members Ataur Rahman Sunny and Abdul Awal are yet to submit any petition for appeal. The stipulated seven-day time for submitting such petition has already expired since they were read out the warrant for execution last Friday.

One of the seven JMB men has been absconding.

Inspector General of Prisons Brigadier General Zakir Hasan said yesterday they will now fix the date for execution of the condemned who have not yet sought to appeal against the verdict. "We will inform them about it later," he told The Daily Star.

Asked about the possible date of execution, he said, "Since there is a government circular for avoiding execution during the Ramadan, the execution will take place after the Ramadan."

Sunny and Awal still have the opportunity to seek to appeal against their execution, Zakir said. "They can submit an appeal in written within the noon on the day of execution. We will send it to the court immediately once we receive any such appeal."

CONTENT OF THE LETTERS

Referring to verses in the Quran and Hadith and the Islamic history, Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai said in their letters that they were out with a mission for Jihad to establish Islamic rule in the country.

"It is obligatory to hold an armed Jihad to establish Islamic rule in the territory of Muslims where it is absent," Rahman said in his seven-page handwritten letter, adding that those who are teaching Muslims about democracy instead of Jihad are oblivious that they are rather strengthening the kafirs (infidels).

"Some say that it is not justified to kill Muslims for establishing Islamic rule. They make up such notion to keep the Muslims away from the rule of Allah," he said, adding, "Those who seek justice from others without following the examples of the prophet [Hazrat Mohammad (SM)] deserve no less punishment than killing."

Nowhere in his letter Rahman

AL, BNP

FROM PAGE 1
My preparations for the talks are almost completed," Jalil, also coordinator of the 14-party combine, told newsmen at his Mercantile Bank office yesterday.

Bhuiyan, also LGRD and cooperatives minister, last night met a number of senior ministers at his official residence. He will sit with the secretaries-general of ruling coalition partners today to discuss different aspects of the proposed dialogue.

A party insider claimed that BNP's strategies have already been finalised at a meeting between Bhuiyan and Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman on Saturday night. Those strategies were discussed at the BNP secretary general's meeting with the senior ministers last night.

Bijoya Dashami

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"Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) picked Weiz Ghat on the bank of river Buriganga as the place from where the idols will be immersed in the river," he added.

Thousands of Hindu devotees yesterday observed Mahanabami with great festivity at all puja mandaps in the city as elsewhere in the country.

Devi Durga was offered the Nabami Bhog of food and fruits which was later distributed among the devotees visiting the mandaps.

Bijoya Dashami is the special ceremony to reaffirm peace and good relations among people. Families visit each other to share sweets during the Dashami festivities. Married Hindu women put vermillion (sindur) on each other's forehead on the eve of Dashami.

The Hindus believe Dashami is the day when Goddess Durga accompanied by her children Laxshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh started for Kailash, her husband's abode.

Mahalaya, the first day of the festivities, is followed by a series of unique rituals on the days of Sashthi, Saptami, Ashtami, Nabami and Dashami or Bijoya Dashami.

Festivities intensify on the days of Mahasaptami, Mahashthami and Mahanabami, culminating in Bijoya Dashami, which marks the end of Durga Puja.

Durga Puja, the greatest extravaganza of the Hindus, is the worship of 'shakti' or divine power symbolised by Devi Durga. The worship is a tribute to the fight between good and evil with the dark forces eventually succumbing to the divine.

President Iqjuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday

sought any relief from the death penalty or opportunity to appeal against it.

Despising the court that held his trial as "Taguti", Bangla Bhai in his letter reaffirmed that he will not submit any appeal to any such court for exemption from execution.

"I would seek justice if an Islamic Shariah board is formed to hold the hearing of the case," Bangla Bhai said in the six-page letter.

He asked the SC to allow him to appear before it and place his "logic to uncover a group of conspirator".

Blaming the judges for handing them death penalty "through a farcical trial on the basis of British laws and false witnesses", he said, "I think you [judges] have shown the proof of your disloyalty to Allah. You should be given the death penalty."

"According to Islamic rules, you are guilty of a crime by being judges of the Taguti laws and deserve death."

In the wake of a series of violent militant attacks across the country, senior assistant judges Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed were killed in a suicide bomb attack at Purba Chakdabi in Jhalakathi town on November 14 last year.

Additional District and Sessions Judge of Jhalakathi Reza Tarik Ahmed on May 29 ordered for hanging Rahman, Bangla Bhai, Sunny, Awal, Khaled Saifullah, Mamun and Asadul Islam alias Arif until death.

The High Court confirmed the death sentences on August 31.

As the militants earlier said they will not appeal to any "worldly court" against the penalty, the government hurried to complete the hearing at the death reference bench hoping to execute the verdict before handing over power.

But following the SC registrar's letters staying the executions of Rahman, Bangla Bhai, Saifullah and Mamun, the four cannot be executed during the ruling government's tenure as it will now take more time before the matter is disposed off at the Supreme Court.

Rallies

FROM PAGE 1
as fasting people scrambled for any available transport to reach home from workplaces," said a traffic sergeant.

He, however, said apart from the political rallies the situation had been aggravated in the month of Ramadan as many poor and low-income people poured into the capital. "They moved into the city during the month of Ramadan to earn extra money by taking up odd jobs like pulling rickshaws."

"I had to spend additional two hours to come to Mirpur from Motijheel due to the traffic jam," said Kabir Ahmed, an employee at a private firm.

He expressed his resentment at the authorities' failure to tackle the traffic situation. "It seems that the authorities concerned do not bother about our problem."

"I have waited for over one and half hours near Kakrail intersection as my vehicle was almost standstill. Then, I had to walk for my destination to Rampura," said one Iqbal Hossain.

He said traffic in the city has been bad since the start of Ramadan, but yesterday's situation was the worst.

All NGOs

FROM PAGE 1
told the reporters after the first meeting of the board yesterday.

The micro-credit operators will also have to include all income and expenditure statements, details of foreign donations and local sources of funds with the applications and also have to pay the licence and annual fees.

The meeting also formed a five-member technical committee for preparing a policy guideline for monitoring micro-credit activities with deputy managing director of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) as the convener. Two central bank officials and one representative from each of NGO Bureau and law ministry will be included in the committee.

The MRA will look into the interest rates of the different micro-credit organisations after it starts working in full swing, apart from issuing a guideline in this regard, Dr Salehuddin said.

The Micro-credit Regulatory Authority Act 2006 was passed in July, with effect from August 27.

An eight-member board was formed last month with Executive Director of Bangladesh Bank Khondokar Majharul Huq as chief executive officer.

Finance, commerce and social welfare secretaries, director general of NGO Bureau and managing director of PKSF will be ex-officio members of MRA, with Rashidan Islam Rahman, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) as another member of the board.

1 killed

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Trying to flee, Abdul Awal, 35, vice president of Merung Uttar Union Awami League, was drowned.

Aggrieved relatives of the deceased AL leader damaged the puja mandap.

However, the statue of Durga remained intact. Dighinala upazila Awami League Secretary Abul Kasem and witnesses said police went there to take bribes.

The body was sent to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

At least 10 people were injured in a clash over watching blue film on the same night.

Seriously injured Mainul Hoque, 45, a naik of Khagrachhari police, was admitted to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital.

Some people of Pancha Mai area were watching a blue film for Tk 5 tickets beside a shop near a puja mandap when a group of youths came in a jeep and tried to enter the shop without any payment, police and locals said.

After they were denied entrance without ticket, they attacked the locals who retaliated using lathi, knives and bricks.

Police beat the attackers and shot in the air to control the situation, witnesses said.

At least 10 were injured in the incident but they were not admitted to hospital in fear of arrest, locals said.

Tarun Kumar Bhattacharya, secretary of the local Puja Ujjapon Committee, said they urged the administration to take proper action as they apprehended attack on the minority community.

Sufficient policemen have been deployed in all puja mandaps from the very first day of the puja and security has been provided for the minority community, Khagrachhari police superintendent said.

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Govt gives in

FROM PAGE 1
Operation of essential air-conditioning and lifting system at shopping malls while the market owners will operate their standby generators for keeping their lights on.

The meeting decided to form area-wise coordination committees comprising three members from among the shop owners and another three from local power offices to execute and monitor the decisions.

Presidents of Bangladesh Shop Owners Association Amir Hossain and Dhaka City Shop Owners Association Helal Uddin Helal spoke at the meeting.

However the ERL also a government owned body, has taken a tough stance against Harbin for the first time.

"It only proves that Harbin can not even set up a small power plant," noted an expert of the power sector.

In a letter to Harbin in August, the ERL wrote that Harbin has failed to bring its steam turbine generating system to the 'final acceptance test' as stipulated in the contract.

"In fact, (the) steam turbine generating system supplied by you [Harbin], could not be run reliably even at considerably lower than rated load on continuous running basis since Provisional Acceptance," it added.

The letter noted that to rectify inherent faults and to make the system operational, Harbin kept its experts with the ERL for almost two years, but failed to improve anything. It could not even integrate the plant with ERL's existing power generation units.

Keeping the tradition of Harbin's Tongi plant, the ERL plant also tripped frequently and brought misery to the operation of ERL that processes crude oil and produces refined petroleum.

The purpose of installing this plant was to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the refinery. But that has not been served," said a source quoting the ERL.

The ERL letter added, "Failure to deliver the required performance of the said steam turbine generation

Talukder's removal

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However, the provisions have not been followed while removing Talukder as the PM neither requested him to resign nor advised the president to terminate his appointment.

Talukder told the media several times that he was not asked to resign from his post; rather, he decided to resign consciously taking all responsibilities for the failures in the power sector.

Just hours after his Friday announcement to resign the next day, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) relieved Talukder of his office at late night.

State-owned news agency BSS disclosed the dismissal at 10:22pm on Friday quoting a PMO source. A late night government handout also said the state minister was removed from his post.

"What will happen to the minister in charge of the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources when its state minister resigns admitting the failures in the sector?" Suranjit said pointing to the PM who is in charge of the power ministry.

"Isn't the resignation of the state minister a symbolic resignation of the prime minister too?" he said amid repeated interruption by the Speaker.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar

ultimately switched off the AL lawmaker's microphone, saying the state minister "has resigned on his own".

On another point of order, AL lawmaker Faruk Khan said people in his constituency welcomed the state minister's resignation and they now demand for the resignation of the PM.

Avoiding answering the reporters' questions, the law minister advised them to ask Talukder about the matter. "He [Talukder] may even make a statement in parliament about it as a lawmaker," he said.

Moudud said there is no specific and proper system for ending the tenure of a minister's office. "A minister can resign or be removed

from the post," said the law minister who responded to the query of an Awami League (AL) lawmaker on Talukder's removal in parliament yesterday.

AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta on a point of order in parliament yesterday congratulated Talukder upon his resignation taking responsibilities for the failures in the power sector.

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FM to talk direct road link in Myanmar

Flies there Oct 5

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Moshred Khan will visit Myanmar on October 5-7 at the invitation of his Myanmar counterpart UNNyan Win.

Direct road link, repatriation of the remaining Rohingya refugees and bilateral trade would come up at the official talks between the two foreign ministers.

Moshred will return home today after leading the Bangladesh delegation at the NAM Summit in Havana and attending the 61st UN General Assembly session in New York.

Officials said a last-ditch effort would be made during the visit to pursue Yangon to sign an agreement for establishing proposed road link between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The 153-km road is considered a major component of the "Look East" policy of the present government, which was launched in 2002 to strengthen ties with countries in Southeast Asia, especially with China.

Officials said Yangon has been lukewarm in implementing the road link project despite Dhaka's repeated attempts to sign an agreement in this regard.

Yangon has promised several times to finalise the agreement in the last three years, but it has not been implemented so far.

The proposed road link from Taungpoo to Kyauktaw in Myanmar via Ramu-Gundum to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. It is planned to be constructed in two phases at an estimated cost of Tk 933.46 crore.

The Bangladesh government, according to the plan, will construct a 43-km stretch of the road in the first phase, of which 20km will be in Bangladesh and 23km in Myanmar.

Israel completes

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halut himself aimed unusual criticism at his own troops, saying "the result in Lebanon is mediocre." Asked whether he had thought to resign, Halut said "the thought has crossed my mind more than once," though he had decided to remain.

Hezbollah hailed the war as a victory over the Middle East's mightiest army, boosting the group's leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

UN Resolution 1701, which ended the war, authorises up to 15,000