

DCC ward commissioner held during protest

UNB, Dhaka

Woman ward commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Awami League leader Shaheeda Tarek Deepi was arrested during protest against eviction drive in the city's Pallabi area yesterday afternoon.

Police said Deepi, commissioner in the reserved seat for Ward no 6, 7 & 8, was arrested on charges of "assault on police and preventing government officials from discharging their duties".

When contacted, a police official told the news agency that a police team, led Rajuk officials, went to Pallabi for demolishing illegal structures when the ward commissioner, also general secretary Dhaka north Awami League, led a violent protest.

Commissioner Deepi, along with others, was preventing the policemen from conducting the

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CLEAN-UP DRIVE

Railway land freed from grabbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Railway, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) authorities conducted eviction drive yesterday, knocking down illegal structures and boundary walls, to recover lands that have been grabbed and to ease urban life in the capital.

Bangladesh Railway authorities with the help of the army, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police recovered 23 decimals of land in Shajahanpur area that local influential people grabbed years ago.

Sources working with the railway department claimed Aolad Hossain grabbed the land and sold it to a local resident MA Bashar in 1994. Bashar made demarcation

walls and a one-storey building on the land.

Bashar, however, was able to produce papers before the law enforcers that show Aolad Hossain had received the land from Ministry of Housing and Public Works as compensation before selling it to Bashar.

Railway sources said they verified the papers from the ministry and found the documents to be forged.

"The Ministry of Public Works can not allocate railway property to anybody even if the papers are original," said a railway official requesting anonymity.

The workers of railway department yesterday knocked down the corrugated-tin walls of Shinepukur Holdings Ltd at Shahbagh as it was

of law enforcers.

The department had knocked down the demarcation walls two months ago but it was rebuilt.

Meanwhile, Rajuk authorities during their drive led by Magistrate ASM Emdadul Dastagir knocked down a market built on the land of Joy Kali temple in the city.

The caretakers of the temple built the market with the help of local influential people without any approval from the authorities, said a Rajuk official.

"We knocked down the market as it was illegal," Nurul Islam, a Rajuk official, said.

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Saraswati Puja today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Saraswati Puja will be celebrated across the country today with due religious enthusiasm and fervour.

The Hindus, especially the students, who invoke blessings of the goddess for success in learning arts and crafts, observe the festival wearing yellow clothes.

Bangladesh Puja Ujjapon Parishad President Chittoranjan Sarker and General Secretary Bires Chandra Saha greeted the people of the country on the eve of the carnival.

Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee will celebrate the puja at Dhakeshwari Temple, said a press release.

Saraswati is worshipped as the goddess of speech and wisdom.

Crowley for quick polls

BSS, New York

US Congressman and Co-chairman of Bangladesh Caucus Joseph Crowley has urged the Bangladesh caretaker government to hold the national election soon.

The US congressman was speaking at a meeting of Bangladeshi expatriates here on Sunday.

Urging the caretaker government to create a congenial atmosphere for holding a free and fair election, Crowley said, "There is no alternative to democracy and election in Bangladesh."

He said no political worker should be harassed without any specific allegation in the name of the state of emergency.

Welcoming the decision on separation of the judiciary from the executive taken by the caretaker government, he said it will enhance the image of Bangladesh in South Asia.

He said the US will give maximum priority to Bangladesh when it will prepare its trade benefit bill for the least developed countries (LDCs).

Crowley also said he will take special initiatives for mitigating the arsenic problem in Bangladesh with the help of American Geological Society.

Chaired by Shah Shahidul Haque, the meeting was also addressed, among others, by district leader of Democratic Party Mohammad Amanullah and New York City Councillor Jim Jinaro.

He said four soldiers were killed in the blast near the Khajoori check post, some 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Miranshah, and around nine were injured, including one who was in a critical condition.

Security officials speaking on condition of anonymity said that a woman who was travelling in a nearby car was hit by shrapnel and died. They also said up to 20 people were injured.

"It is now confirmed that it was a

suicide attack," a security official in Miranshah told AFP. "The vehicle used in the blast was totally destroyed," he said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast and pro-Taliban militants said in a statement faxed to the media that they were not linked to the attack.

"We have no link with the bomb blast ... and we want to keep our agreement intact and the government should also keep the North Waziristan agreement intact," the statement said.

Suicide attacks on Pakistani forces have previously been rare.

The army's Sultan added that it was too early to tell if the attack was linked to a Pakistani air strike in the area for interrogation. A case was filed with Uttara Police Station.

Robbers loot goods worth Tk 23 lakh from Uttara house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of robbers looted cash, gold and other valuables worth about Tk 23.65 lakh from a house in the city's Uttara area early yesterday.

Police said a gang of 15 to 20 entered the residence of Tobarak Hussain Shikdar in sector 9, Road 7/C, cutting the grille of the drawing room at around 2:30am.

The robbers confined Tobarak and the members of his family in a room at gunpoint and took the key of the almirah from them. The gang then looted Tk 1.2 lakh, 150 tolas of gold ornaments and other valuables, police added.

Police picked up Tobarak's car driver and two night guards of the area for interrogation. A case was filed with Uttara Police Station.

25 hurt as students clash with cops at Jagannath

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least 25 Jagannath University students and two policemen were injured in a clash between the students and law enforcement agencies on the campus yesterday noon.

The injured students received first aid at nearby hospitals and clinics, sources said.

The clash erupted at around 12:00 noon when the Rapid Action Battalion and police personnel charged batons on the students, who vandalised windows of the Sadarghat branch office of Bangladesh Bank while demonstrating for their seven-point demand including solving the crises of teachers, residential dormitories and trans-

port.

The law enforcers indiscriminately beat up both the agitating and general students and also pedestrains, witnesses said.

The clash spread to the adjacent areas including Laksmi Bazar, Bangla Bazar and North Brook Hall Road.

The students went to the campus at around 11:00 am to submit a memorandum including the demands to the Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Sirajul Islam Khan.

The angry students brought out a procession on the campus after not finding the VC in his office.

Proctor Prof Abul Khair approached the demonstrators and assured them that they were

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Canada, Denmark, EU offer support in voter ID card preparation

UNB, Dhaka

The envoys of Canada, Denmark and European Union (EU) yesterday met Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Mainul Husein at his office and discussed matters relating to the next general election.

During the meeting, they offered support to the preparation of voter ID cards and procurement of transparent ballot boxes ahead of the election.

The diplomats also assured their necessary cooperation in holding a free and fair election.

The law adviser urged the envoys to discuss the matter with the Election Commission (EC).

He said tenure of the incumbent caretaker government will not be a day longer than its necessity. The prime objective of the government is to hold a free and fair election desired by the people, he added.

The envoys appreciated the steps taken for separating the judiciary from the executive and assured that they are ready to extend necessary cooperation in accomplishing the process of the separation of judiciary.

Govt warns illegal VoIP traders

UNB, Dhaka

The government has warned all against clandestine overseas phoning through Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) that deprives the exchequer of a huge amount of revenue.

An official handout yesterday said the government noted with grave concern that a section of dishonest persons are involved in such illegal "call termination" and "call origination" using VoIP.

It also requested the subscribers to desist from taking such facility, as "it is unlawful and punishable offence".

"Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) is the lone legitimate organisation approved by the government for call termination and call origination abroad," said the official release.

Suicide car bomber kills 5 Pak troops

AFP, Islamabad

A suicide car bomber blew himself up near a Pakistani army convoy in a troubled tribal zone bordering Afghanistan Monday, killing four soldiers and a woman civilian, officials said.

Several other people were wounded when the blast hit the lead vehicle of the convoy travelling to Miranshah, the main town in the North Waziristan region, from the nearby town of Bannu, security officials said.

Pakistani authorities signed a controversial peace deal with pro-Taliban militants in North Waziristan last September. Foreign forces in Afghanistan say attacks in the neighbouring country have since

risen.

"The incident took place at about 10:30 am (0530 GMT) on Bannu-Miranshah Road. A white car came and exploded near the convoy. It appears to be a suicide attack," military spokesman Major General Shaukat Sultan said.

He said four soldiers were killed in the blast near the Khajoori check post, some 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Miranshah, and around nine were injured, including one who was in a critical condition.

Security officials speaking on condition of anonymity said that a woman who was travelling in a nearby car was hit by shrapnel and died. They also said up to 20 people were injured.

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ANTI-CRIME DRIVE

7 Poura commissioners among 2,166 more held

STAR REPORT

The joint forces arrested 2,166 people, including seven municipal commissioners, on various charges across the country in the ongoing anti-crime drive during the last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

An official press release of the home ministry said that police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), nabbed 1,893 people while the army held 273 people during the period.

Police and Rab members also

recovered 14 firearms and the army seized 8,325 sacks of fertilizer and 6,820 litres of diesel during the drive.

In Rangpur, Rab personnel arrested municipality ward commissioner Bahadur Islam Zeplin, an accused in several cases, from court area, reports our correspondent.

In addition, 74 alleged criminals were nabbed by police in the last 24 hours from different upazilas in the district as part of the ongoing drive.

Meanwhile, our correspondent

BDR, BSF trade gunshots at Benapole

UNB, Benapole

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded 50 rounds of bullet on Orobholot border here on Sunday night.

BDR sources said the BSF troops of Borobaria camp opened fire on the BDR men patrolling the border at about 11:00pm "without any provocation".

In reply, the paramilitary Bangladesh troops fired several rounds of bullet.

No one was injured during the exchange of fire, but the nighttime border skirmish created tension among the frontier villagers.

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Police arrests a Jagannath University student following a clash between the law enforcers and the students demonstrating for realising their seven-point demand on the campus yesterday.