

Attack on Khulna AL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Awami League leader Intiaz Ahmed Bulu was attacked by a group of drug peddlers on Sunday night at Iqbalnagar Mosque Lane in the city.

He is undergoing treatment in Khulna Medical College Hospital with his hands and legs fractured.

According to sources, Bulu was attacked, as he protested sale of hemp and phensidil in that area.

A group of drug peddlers led by police informer Russel attacked AL leader after storming into his house at 10:00pm on Sunday. The attackers fired two shots from revolver while going away from the place.

Local people alleged that sale of drugs has been rampant at Iqbalnagar area for long in connivance with a section of policemen serving in the Detective Branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP). President of Khulna city AL Talukder Abdul Khaleque, General Secretary Mizanur Rahman, and President of Khulna district AL Shaikh Harun-ar-Rashid demanded arrest of the attackers and action against alleged policemen.

Reception to language veteran Matin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Language veteran Abdul Matin was accorded a warm reception by the National Credit and Commerce (NCC) Bank yesterday to mark the historic February 21.

NCC Bank Chairman Mahbubul Alam Tara handed over a crest and a cheque for Tk 1 lakh to Abdul Matin at a function at Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum.

The bank also distributed books worth Tk 5 lakh to different educational institutions of the country.

Thanking the organisers for the reception, Abdul Matin said, "We should keep up the dignity and significance of Bangla language for which we struggled in 1952."

It is yet to make literate all people of the country and praiseworthy the prevalence of Bangla in all spheres of life, he added.

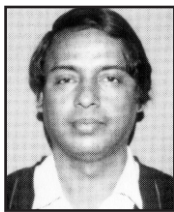
Terming Abdul Matin a leader, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, president of Biswa Sahitya Kendra, said everyone cannot be a leader and the nation owes much to the great hero.

He regretted that, "We are not working hard to promote the language for which once the people sacrificed their lives."

Editor of Jugantor Golam Sarwar said Abdul Matin possesses a sharp political thinking which can lead us.

Gulbadan Nessa, wife of Abdul Matin, and NCC Bank Managing Director Mohammad Nurul Amin were present on the occasion.

Death anniversary



Chhatra Union, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and memorial meeting will be held at his wife's Adabar residence after Maghrib prayers today.

Family members of Akram requested his relatives, friends and admirers to attend the programme to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Ataur Rahman Allahma



Foundation and freedom fighter, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence in Dhaka and village home at Deulgram Allahma Nagar in Beanibazar under Golapganj.

AKM Samsujjoa



Today is the 20th death anniversary of A K M Samsujjoa, one of organisers of the liberation war, former member of the

parliament and one of the founding members of Awami League, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at a mosque adjacent to his residence at Narayanganj after Asr prayers.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

SEPARATION OF JUDICIARY SC delivers orders tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court delivers tomorrow its orders whether the present government made and mended the judiciary-separation rules right in compliance with the SC directives.

And, therewith, the apex court will dispose of the contempt-of-court cases against the bureaucrats in the dock for "distorting" the SC directives regarding separation of the judiciary from the executive and "impeding" the process of separation.

The quartet rules relating to independent judicial service along with its regulating mechanism and the amended CrPC ordinance to separate magistracy from the executive control are now under last-minute scrutiny by the full hierarchy of the SC.

Facing two contempt-of-court charges are 13 government officials, including four top secretaries, for the foot dragging on the judiciary-separation implementation process.

Seven years ago, the SC had delivered its judgment on the much-talked-about Masder Hossain case on separation of the judiciary from the executive. It gave a 12-point directive to the government for implementation of the judgment.

Since then, all the successive political governments have secured extension of time repeatedly on the plea of their preparation for implementing the highest court edicts.

But immediate after taking office the present caretaker government headed by Fakhruddin Ahmed issued four rules relating to judicial service along with its regulating mechanism and promulgated an amended CrPC to separate magistracy from the executive control. All these have been submitted before the SC.



PHOTO: STAR
NCC Bank Chairman Mahbubul Alam Tara and Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed hand over a crest to language veteran Abdul Matin at a reception according to him at National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday.

Restriction on RU Ekushey programmes

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities yesterday imposed restriction on holding all sorts of cultural programmes, processions and rallies by student and cultural organisations to observe Amar Ekushey and the International Mother Language Day.

They asked all the organisations to observe Ekushey February under the banner of the university where all can perform.

They also postponed the previous permissions given to some organisations to hold Ekushey programmes, sources said.

14 girls, teacher suddenly fell unconscious

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Fourteen girls and a female teacher of Benapole High school fell unconscious at a time yesterday noon being affected by an unknown virus raising panic among the students of the entire school.

School Headmaster Nazrul Islam said they provided first aid to those fainted students after declaring the school closed for the day.

The doctor could not identify the reason and said probably they were affected by virus.

The students who fell unconscious are Putul, 12, Mousumi, 13, Bithi, 13, Disa, 13, Bristi, 12, Apon, 13, Masuda, 14, Munni, 13, Sonali, 14, Ruma, 12, Smriti, 13, Salma, 12, Resma, 13, Sahana, 13 while teacher is Lailu Nahar, 26.

Their condition is better now.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

It also said night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 30.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 09.5 degree Celsius at Sirimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:57pm today and rises at 6:28am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.9	15.3	57	38
Chittagong	30.2	15.9	47	40
Rajshahi	26.4	12.2	78	54
Khulna	27.4	16.0	89	60
Barisal	26.5	15.0	82	79
Sylhet	27.2	13.3	58	46
Cox's Bazar	28.5	17.5	64	46

US-funded school opens in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia A Butenis yesterday opened Memorial Christian School and Flood Shelter at Malumghat in Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar district.

Funded and designed by US Army Pacific and the 412th Engineering Command from the United States of America, the school cum cyclone shelter was constructed by Impulse Engineering and Construction, a local firm, at a cost of three lakh US dollars or over Tk 2.1-crore on around 2-acre land, sources said.

The project, first of its kind by the US Army in Bangladesh, was a part of the US effort under its humanitarian aid programme to increase disaster preparedness for people living in flood-prone areas, they said.

Referring to the US financial support and Bangladesh's labour and materials Butenis said the school building using the resources of both Bangladesh and USA has now become an enduring symbol of the partnership of the two countries.

"The school location is accessible to the public and to any relief supplies that will be brought in, and it seems clear to me that as a shelter the school site does offer protection from the tides and is accessible to people of this community and to the delivery of relief supplies," the ambassador explained the dual-purpose viability of the school that has around 736 students.

Obituary



(CMH) in the city yesterday morning at the age of 84, says a press release.

A Second World War veteran Rahman had served in the British Air Force, Pakistan Air Force and Bangladesh Air force before retiring in 1982.

He left behind his wife, one son and two daughters to mourn his death.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at the Azad Mosque in Gulshan after Zohr prayers yesterday. He will be laid to rest in his family graveyard at Panishara in Jessore.

Mir Fazlur Rahman is the father-in-law of Morshed Ali Khan, Special Correspondent of The Daily Star.

Akikunnesa Chowdhury



passed away due to old-age complications at her Habiganj residence on Sunday night at the age of 93, says a press release.

She was buried at her family graveyard at Dinarpur at Nabiganj in Habiganj.

Mahtabun Akter Khandaker

Mahtabun Akter Khandaker, wife of Johadur Rahim Khandaker, passed away due to old-age complications at Birdem hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 88, says a press release.

She left behind a son, a daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She was the mother of Alibardi Khandaker, chairman of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board.

Dil Mohammad

Dil Mohammad, brother of Mohammad Ali, former vice president of Federal of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBBCCI), passed away due to a cardiac arrest at LabAid Cardiac Hospital in the city on Sunday at the age of 40, says a press release.

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

He was buried after a namaz-e-janaza on Dhaka Vegetable Oil Mill premises at Fatullah yesterday.

His qulkhwani will be held at his Fatullah residence on February 23.

Abul Khair Mir



to a cardiac arrest, says a press release.

All the members of the governing body, teachers, guardians, students and employees of the school expressed deep shock at his death.

They also conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

67 killed in Indian train blasts

FROM PAGE 1
and other littered belongings of the passengers bore mute testimony to the ghastly attack that took place a day before the visit of Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri for talks in New Delhi.

So far 67 bodies have been recovered from the ill-fated Samjhauta Express, Haryana State Director General of Police Ranjiv Dalal said.

One person, who was travelling in one of the two coaches destroyed by the blasts, was detained in connection with the incident, Indian Railways Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav said.

It was a horrific scene as the train sped with the two burning coaches through the countryside in northern state of Haryana before slowing down at an isolated place, witnesses said.

Indian Home Secretary V K Duggal said in New Delhi that two IEDs with timers were used to trigger the explosions, adding that three IEDs were defused at the site.

He said that the blasts led to the spread of the fire rapidly in the speeding train, which was evident from the fact that the bogies had melted from inside due to enormous heat.

The investigators have got "preliminary leads" into the blasts, Duggal added.

Forensic experts at the site said a deadly cocktail of low-intensity explosives and kerosene bombs were used to trigger the blasts and the fire.

A senior Railway official V N Mathur said in New Delhi that two suitcases containing IEDs were recovered from the train and the track and were defused. One of those contained petrol or kerosene, he added.

Of the injured, 12 were taken to Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi where the condition of some was said to be critical.

Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil told reporters here that a "new type" of explosive material, essentially incendiary in nature, was used in the blast, as a result of which, two bogies of the train were charred from inside. "These explosives were packed in suitcases," he said.

Asked about any suspected group responsible for the terror strike, Patil said, "We have got enough inputs, but we are not going to divulge them at this moment for the sake of investigation." No names should be hastily concluded, he added.

Asked repeatedly whether this was an intelligence failure, Patil retorted, "We are not in the game of blaming each other. If I have to answer this question, I will answer this on the floor of parliament."

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Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee's position expressed during his discussion with AL President Sheikh Hasina at Sudha Sadan yesterday.

The Indian minister also met the immediate past prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in her Hawa Bhaban office at Banani, in the capital.

"As a democratic country India hopes that democracy in Bangladesh will continue and its foundation will become stronger, India also hopes that power will be handed over to elected representatives after holding an election as early as possible," Nazrul Islam Khan, joint secretary general of BNP briefed newsmen after the meeting.

Nazrul said Pranab Mukherjee met Khaleda Zia to inform her about the affairs of the upcoming 14th Saarc summit as the regional organisation had received much international kudos during her tenure as the prime minister of Bangladesh, who had also been elected the chairperson of Saarc by its last summit held in Dhaka.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, adviser to the BNP chairperson and former minister M Morshed Khan, and former state minister Riaz Rahman were also present during the meeting while the Indian high commissioner and officials of Indian foreign ministry accompanied Pranab.

Late president Ziaur Rahman was the visionary of Saarc, which expanded and got worldwide recognition while Khaleda Zia was the chairperson of the organisation, Nazrul Islam quoted Pranab Mukherjee as saying, adding that Afghanistan became a full member of the organisation while China and Japan became observers under her leadership.

"The BNP chairperson and the Indian foreign minister also discussed bilateral issues and expressed hope that the efforts will continue to further improve the relations between the two countries," Nazrul said.

Pranab Mukherjee conveyed the greetings of Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi to the BNP chairperson, and Khaleda Zia also requested Pranab to convey her greetings to both the Indian leaders.

The BNP chairperson expressed her deep sorrow at the day's train bombing in Haryana of India that took 64 lives.

Nazrul Islam Khan said Khaleda Zia earlier also expressed her sympathies for those who had been killed in a bomb blast at Queta in

Indian President A P J Abdul Kalam, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and leaders from various parties strongly condemned the ghastly killing of passengers of Samjhauta Express while opposition BJP attacked the government for its "complete failure" in tackling terrorism.

Kalam and Singh expressed anguish and grief over the loss of lives and conveyed their condolences to the next of kin of those killed and wished speedy recovery to the injured.

"Culprits will be caught", Singh said.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi described the blasts as "barbaric act of violence" and appealed to the people of India and Pakistan "to stand up firmly against such enemies of humanity."

Targeting the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, BJP leader L K Advani said the blasts showed that terrorists were still operating and were in command. "The UPA government's approach lacks a concerted policy to tackle terrorists," he said, adding that BJP felt the government should adopt zero tolerance policy against terrorism.

The Left parties said the terror strike was aimed at destroying the

Indo-Pak peace process and asked the government to continue the dialogue with Islamabad. They also demanded proper treatment and adequate compensation to the victims.

An alert has been sounded across New Delhi and Mumbai following the blasts in the train.

Reuters and AFP add: Like all Indian trains, most of the windows in the lower class compartments were barred with metal rods, meaning many people were trapped inside the train.

One survivor said passers-by pulled some survivors out of the doors and emergency exit windows. Local villagers also rushed to the scene to help passengers.

"I took a visa to come to India and see relatives, but I never realised it would become the last journey for my family," said Tara Chand, whose three sons and two daughters are missing and feared dead. He was returning to Pakistan after a month in India.

The rest of the train, which had been carrying around 600 passengers, continued to the border town of Attari yesterday. Passengers were due to get off there and transfer to a Pakistani train.

Relatives gathered at railway stations in Old Delhi and in the Pakistani city of Lahore for news.

230 tonnes of milk powder seized

FROM PAGE 1
reports our Chittagong correspondent.

Last week, the same magistrate had collected samples of the ingredients and sent those to Bangladesh Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) for laboratory tests.

As the samples turned out to be 'unfit for human health' through tests, the court raided the factory again and seized around 30 tonnes of harmful milk powder imported from Australia.

During yesterday's drive, the court found another 200 tonnes of milk powder imported from Czech Republic and seized those items while sending samples of the item for laboratory test. It also seized a ton of palm oil from the factory and sent its sample for lab test, said the sources.

A case was filed under Special Powers Act with Bayezid Police Station.

Pabna
A mobile court yesterday fined 15 restaurants with over Tk 6 lakh for selling adulterated and unhygienic foods, reports our correspondent.

The court of Magistrate Motiur Rahman fined Pabna Birani house, Adarsha Hotel, Shahi Hotel and Saddam hotel with Tk 50 thousand

each, sources said.

Furthermore, it fined Tk 25 thousand each to Shyamoli Hotel and Laxmi Sweet Store while Tk 5 thousand to Naz Hotel.

It also fined a number of restaurants in the town with different amounts for selling adulterated foods in unhygienic conditions.

Gazipur
A mobile court yesterday fined 47 brickfields with a total of Tk 23.50 lakh for burning logs to bake bricks. First class magistrate Fazlur Rahman led the mobile court and fined Tk 50 thousand to each of the 47 brickfields.

The court ordered the owners of the brickfields to pay the dues by today or the court would issue arrest warrants against them.

Dhaka
A mobile court fined Nito Cables in Azimpur with Tk 1 lakh for manufacturing electric cables without BSTI approval.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rokunud-Dowla's court found that although the company was approved by BSTI for manufacturing only one brand of cables, it was manufacturing three types of electric cables under three different brands.

India hopes for early election

Pakistan, which had taken many lives including of a judge.

During the meeting between Pranab and Hasina, which lasted about 45 minutes, senior AL leaders including Sayeda Zohra Tajuddin, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofal Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, Kazi Zafarullah and Saber Hossain were present.

Zafarullah said his party chief told the Indian minister that AL wants the caretaker government (CG) to hold a free and fair election as early as possible. He said the AL chief expressed satisfaction over the performance of the CG so far.

"The primary task of the caretaker government is to hold a free and fair election as early as possible," said the AL leader adding that they are happy to see that the CG has taken initiatives to fully reconstitute the Anti-corruption Commission.

Briefing the newsmen, Sheikh Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said the two leaders discussed regional and bilateral issues. "Matters relating to Saarc, regional cooperation and security, terrorism, militancy, and poverty alleviation figured prominently in the discussion," Saber, also an AL organising secretary, said.

He said the two leaders discussed how the potential of Saarc could be used in poverty alleviation for faster change in the people's lifestyle.

"As the Election Commission has been reconstituted, we hope that it will let us know about its work plan," Saber added.

Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty and Deputy High Commissioner Sarbojit Chakravarty accompanied Pranab during his meeting with Hasina.

PRANAB TALKS TO REPORTERS AT ZIA

Our diplomatic correspondent reports: The Indian external affairs yesterday termed the current state of affairs in Bangladesh "internal matter of Bangladesh" and hoped that people of this country will get the opportunity of electing a government of their own through free, fair and credible democratic elections.

"So far the present state of affairs is concerned, it is the internal matter of Bangladesh. We always want that the people of Bangladesh will have the opportunity of electing a government of their own choice through free, fair, peaceful and credible democratic elections," he said.

Talking to reporters at Zia

"My mother, father and brother are on the train. They went to Attari for a wedding," said Israel Mohammed in Delhi, tears streaming down his face. "I am trying to call them on their mobiles but their mobiles are not working."

"It's sabotage -- it's an act of terrorism like the one in Mumbai," Yadav told reporters, referring to serial bomb blasts in Mumbai last July that killed 186 people.

"This is what it suggests, that it was an act of terror," spokesman Sanjaya Baru told Reuters. A top state government official said most of the victims were Pakistanis but included some Indian security personnel.

AL gets nod

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More than two weeks earlier, AL had sought permission from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner to hold the same discussion outdoors in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on road 32 at Dhanmondi. The DMP commissioner rejected AL's request to hold the discussion outdoors since there has been a state of emergency in effect in the country.

"We gave the permission when the matter was brought to our notice," said the law adviser clarifying that the lower level administrative officials refrained from giving any permission to any political party to hold any programme as they could not understand its nature.

Mainul told reporters that such permissions would be given to other political parties for holding the Amar Ekushey programme if they requested for it. He however said because the country is under a state of emergency, they hope the political parties would refrain from delivering any political speech at the Ekushey programme.

Jalil, also coordinator of the 14-party alliance, told the reporters that their reason for going to the adviser's office was to seek permission to hold a discussion marking the International Mother Language Day.

"Since there has been a state of emergency in the country, the law adviser advised us to hold the discussion at any indoor auditorium," the AL leader said thanking the government for the permission.

AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta and deputy publicity secretary Asim Kumar Ukil accompanied Jalil.

for excellence.

He said India attaches the highest importance to its relations with Bangladesh and reiterated India's desire to strengthen and further enhance the friendly cooperative relations between India and Bangladesh.

He informed newsmen that he met President Iajuddin Ahmed and extended an invitation letter from Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Bangladesh to participate in the 14th Saarc Summit.

He further said he had a detailed discussion with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed who graciously agreed to attend the Saarc Summit.

The chief adviser will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the 14th Saarc Summit.

Pranab Mukherjee also met former prime ministers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina before he left Dhaka in the afternoon.

TALKS WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER

Earlier, at the foreign ministry-level talks at the state guesthouse Padma, officials said Bangladesh and India discussed all outstanding issues of mutual interest, including water sharing, trade imbalance and security concerns.

When asked about the para-tariff and non-tariff barriers that block access of Bangladesh products to the Indian market, Foreign Affairs Adviser Ittefakur Ahmed Chowdhury told the reporters that India had already declared the withdrawal of non-tariff barriers to trade and would issue a notification to this effect. "It will be beneficial for all Saarc countries," he added.

Emerging out of the hour-long meeting with Pranab Mukherjee, Ittefakur said the Indian minister gave assurance that they would not divert the flow of waters at Tipaimukh, so that Bangladesh is unaffected.

On Tata's investment, he said the company proposal was not specifically discussed but Dhaka welcomed investment in general from India.

About the security concerns, the foreign affairs adviser said, "Bangladesh reaffirmed its position that we would not allow any terrorist or insurgent groups to use our soil."

He said the present caretaker government wants to strengthen the foundations of bilateral relations with India so the future government could build on that. He said both sides agreed to continue discussions on bilateral issues within the set framework.