

5 Shibir leaders held from DU hall, sent to jail

DU CORRESPONDENT

Five Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) leaders, who were arrested by police in the early hours of yesterday from Zahirul Haque Hall of Dhaka University (DU), were produced before the court that sent them to jail hajat.

They are Abdul Kuddus and Shikder Mujib, former hall unit presidents of ICS, Tofazzel Hossain, current president, and Habibullah Mahmud and Shimul.

"Those Shibir men were produced before the court today (yesterday) after the hall provost filed a case against them on charge of beating a student attached to the dormitory," said Shahidul Islam, office-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

Earlier, the hall administration temporarily expelled two Shibir leaders on charge of beating the student on Friday after he had refused to join their "organisational training programme".

The hall administration also formed a three-member committee headed by Dr Delwar Hossain, a

house tutor, to probe the incident. The committee has been asked to submit its report by the next 72 hours.

The situation became tense on Sunday after the attacked student submitted a statement to hall provost alleging that the ICS men took him along with 12 other students in a mess at Katabon area on Friday and asked them to join the organisation and tried to encourage them to engage in Islamist militancy.

Md Abrar Ahmed also alleged that as he refused to abide by their directives, they beat him and forced him out of the mess.

After hearing the incident the agitated students beat up five ICS leaders and activists at around 1:00am.

Three of the injured were admitted to a city hospital. They also ransacked two rooms of Shibir-affiliated students.

Police charged batons to bring the situation under control injuring three students.

A number of resident students,

many of whom are activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), alleged that the ICS men are instigating general students to militancy with the assurance of providing them seats at the hall.

The hall administration and police are also patronising them, they said.

When asked Prof Zahidul Islam said both the feuding groups are their students, so they have the responsibility to protect all of them.

About the Islamic books seized from the two rooms of ICS, he said, "Everyone has the right to keep the books of his own choice."

More over it is not the duty of the provost or the house tutor to keep an eye on what kind of books the students are reading, he added.

Meanwhile, Progotishil Chhatra Jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, yesterday met Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and alleged that the hall administration is patronising the ICS activities.

BURIGANGA TRAGEDY

Probe going on at snail's pace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation into the case filed in connection with the Friday Buriganga tragedy is going on at a snail's pace as the law enforcement agency is still looking for witnesses, who were in the pleasure trip.

As of yesterday, the investigation officer could not find many of the picnic goers to be interrogated and is still in the dark about the incident except for some statements made by Ansars.

Cellphone use while driving to be banned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to checking road accidents, the government will soon amend the Motor Vehicle Act to ban use of cellphone while driving.

The Ministry of Law yesterday approved the amendment after the communications ministry sought its opinion on issuing a circular in this regard.

The bar on use of cellphone while driving will soon come into effect.

Workshop on e-govt held

An 'Awareness creation workshop on e-government and knowledge management' was held at LGED Bhaban in the city yesterday, says a press release.

The main objective of the workshop was to make government employees familiar with the terms e-government and knowledge management.

Miah Abdullah Mamun, national project director, ASICT (Assistance to SICT task force), inaugurated the workshop.

The government formed the SICT (Support to Information and Communication Technology) Task Force to strengthen e-governance. Later, UNDP formed ASICT to facilitate SICT Programme's initiatives to enhance e-governance.

Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury, secretary, Planning Division, Salehuddin M Musa, joint secretary, and Rafiqul Islam, project director, SICT, spoke at the inaugural session.

They all agreed to implement the e-governance in the least possible time to ensure transparency and accountability in the government.

Prof Nazrul Islam, new UGC chairman

Prof Nazrul Islam has joined the University Grants Commission (UGC) as its 10th chairman yesterday, says a press release.

Prior to his joining UGC, he was an professor at Geography and Environment department, University of Dhaka.

Prof Islam also taught at Urban Development Planning at the AIT Bangkok, the UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark and India.

He was the founder and honorary chairman of the Centre for Urban Studies and member of the advisory committee on Urban Planning and Architecture at the Ministry of Housing and Public Works.

Before joining UGC, he was also the Chairman of the Board of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (DWASA).

Domestic help files case against her employer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 15-year-old domestic help filed a case against her employer on Sunday evening under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Hafeza Akhter, daughter of a rickshawpuller, filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Shahnaz Mahmud, wife of Khalid Mahmud, chief revenue officer at Dhaka WASA. They live at a government quarters at Iskaton Garden Road.

Hafeza said she has been working at their house for three years and a half.

In her complaint, Hafeza alleged that Shahnaz had been torturing her for four days since May 3.

She also alleged that her employer beat her with a stick on Sunday afternoon as she did not clean the house timely.

She went out of the house in the evening on the day on the pretext of dumping the garbage into a dustbin but went to the police station instead to file the case.

Police said they found marks of injuries on her body.

Police took Hafeza to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment yesterday afternoon.

Sheenah Anam termed the governance performance monitoring a 'cross-cutting' issue, explaining that development organisations have been involved in monitoring governance performance in various ways despite having separate goals.

"No organisations are beyond question. Every organisation has some faults and loopholes in its activities. So, the NGOs should ensure accountability and transparency in their activities before playing the role of a watchdog in society," she said.

She emphasised the coordination and synergy among the NGOs in order to get maximum output in good governance and accountability practices in society.

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Farzana Naim and Arif H Khan also spoke at the inaugural session.

Training workshop on governance issue begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day training workshop on governance issue began in the city yesterday, aiming to improve public services and the efficiency of service providers.

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), a leading NGO, has organised the workshop titled 'Governance performance monitoring' at the BIAM Auditorium.

Some 20 representatives from different NGOs are taking part in the workshop.

Speaking at the opening session, Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, called on the participants to ensure good governance in their organisations first before getting involved in monitoring governance issues.

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Indo-Bangla joint mountaineering expedition begins on May 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A joint expedition of the mountaineers of Bangladesh and India to a mountain in the Himalayan region begins on May 12.

A total of 12 mountaineers from the two Saarc countries will take part in the expedition to 6187-metre-high Rubal Kung.

The expedition titled 'AB Bank Challenge Bangladesh-India Joint Mountaineering Expedition 2007, Mount Rubal Kung' has been sponsored by AB Bank Ltd.

The details of the expedition, first of its kind in Saarc countries, were formally announced at a press conference organised by Kewkradong Bangladesh at the Bengal Shilpalya cafe in the city yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, leader of the team Muntasir Mamun Imran expressed the hope that the expedition will help strengthen peace through promoting regional cooperation.

The other members of the expedition include HM Sirajul Haq, ARK Reepon, Saad Bin Hossain and Enam Talukdar.

Besides, seven climbers from Mountaineers' Association of Krishnanagar in West Bengal will join the expedition which will end on June 14, he added.

Speaking as chief guest Riaz Hamidullah, director of Saarc and Bimstec of the foreign affairs ministry, said the governments have taken the initiative to boost communication among the Saarc countries at private level.

Director General of Bengal Foundation Luva Nahid Chowdhury and AB Bank Ltd President and Managing Director Kaiser A Chowdhury also spoke.

He pointed out that the rate of inflation is going up and it is mainly responsible for price hike of food items. He said more emphasis should be given on agriculture sector for increasing food production in the country.

The former bureaucrat said it is unpardonable that the previous government could not set up a single powerplant in its five-year tenure.

Akbar Ali Khan also stressed the need for action plans of the government for reducing the wastage of resources in the country and

strengthening local government for reaching the services to grassroots levels.

"If I were the finance minister, I would have given emphasis on technical education rather than primary or higher education," Khan said regarding the demand of increasing the allocations on primary and higher education in the budget.

"Despite many challenges, Bangladesh has demonstrated remarkable economic progress in the past decade with sustainable and robust growth rate of six per cent and more in the recent years," said Canadian High Commissioner Barbara Richardson.

This has been a result largely of private sector growth and activity, she said.

The Canadian high commission said in spite of some successes there are also serious challenges and concerns in Bangladesh economy in the areas like revenue collections and loss incurred state-owned enterprises.

The caretaker government must reduce expenditures to maintain the equilibrium which can sustain economic growth, she said.

"We would like to see allocations in the budget that would continue to reduce poverty at least by one per cent per year," Barbara said.

She hoped that the next budget

would allocate adequate resources for the rapid improvement of physical infrastructure in power, energy, transport and telecommunication sectors.

Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue said Bangladesh is currently standing at a critical crossroads on its way to development and to open up an avenue to prosperity in future the next fiscal year would be extremely important.

He said Japan strongly supported the caretaker government's priority programmes related to poverty reduction, human resource, infrastructure development such as power and port.

He expected that the government would put emphasis on successfully executing each of the milestones on time and remain accountable for the delivery.

He also called upon the caretaker government to assess the very low implementation rate of the projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Hafiz GA Siddiqi said the government should give attention to the private universities along with the public universities for improving the quality of education in the country.

The government spends lots of money for public universities but the private universities do not get any assistance, he said.

He left behind her two daughters to mourn her death. Her only son, Captain Alangir was martyred during the War of Liberation.

She was laid to rest at the Azimpur graveyard yesterday after Zohr prayers at the Zindabazar Jame-e-Masjid.

Her Qulhwani will be held at the residence at 25 Zindabazar First Lane after Asr prayers on May 9.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the qulhwani.

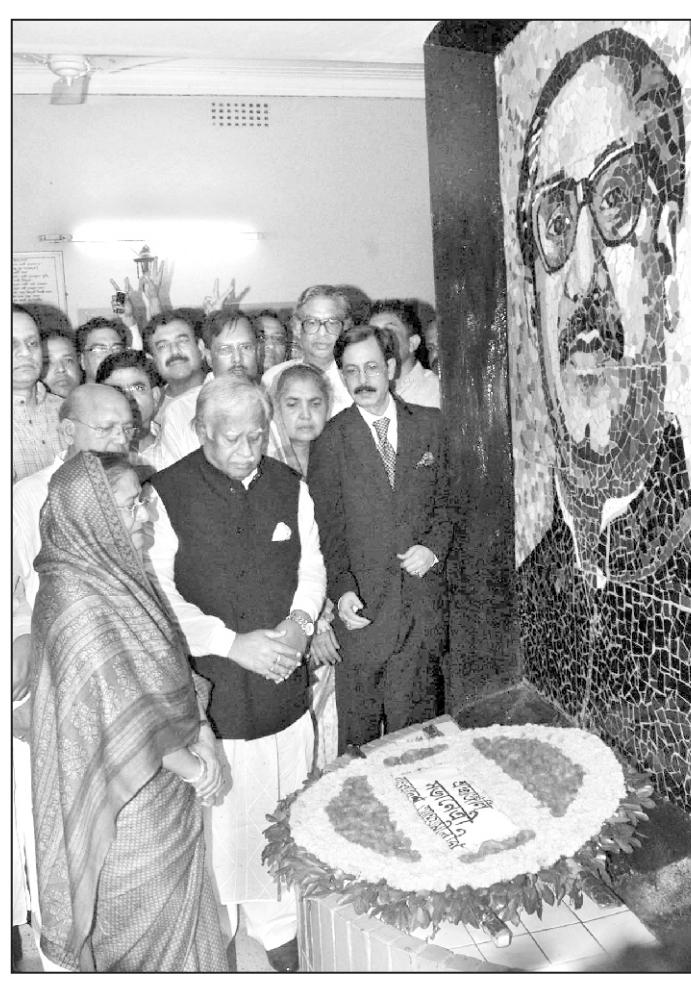


PHOTO: STAR
Showered with petals, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina arrives at her Sudha Sadan residence from Zia International Airport in the city yesterday. (Left) The AL chief places a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi on her return from abroad.

Army chief presently has no plan to visit India: Army HQs
UNB, Dhaka

The Army Headquarters yesterday contradicted a report on the army chief's visit to India published in several national dailies.

The Army Headquarters is not aware of such a visit, an ISPR press release said and termed baseless the report regarding the Bangladesh army chief's bilateral talks with the Indian army chief.

"Presently, the Chief of Army Staff has no plan to visit India," the release added.

It said if any such plan is set, the Army Headquarters would inform the newspapers and the mass media timely through proper channel.

15 JMB men remanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Mymensingh court yesterday granted a five-day remand for 15 Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants detained on Sunday.

First Class Magistrate Shefali Begum of cognisance court-2 of the district passed the order after the militants were produced before the court praying for a seven-day remand.

Rapid Action Battalion arrested the militants from Iskhali Bazar of Chatol village under Muktagacha upazila of the district.

Two mobile sets, copies of case filed against Bangla Bhai, newspaper cuttings of the stories published on the hanging of Bangla Bhai and other top militants, some books on jihad were also seized from them.

BANGLADESH OBSERVER

SSKOP urges govt to resolve salary issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite a reminder from the information adviser, journalists and employees of The Bangladesh Observer are yet to receive their salary arrears for the last 50 months.

Expressing deep concern over the issue, Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) in a statement yesterday urged the government to resolve it by appointing an administrator.

The signatories to the statement are Oikya Parishad leaders Md. Mizanul Haque, Md. Ahsan Bulbul, Fazle Imam, Rabi Amin Gazi, Md. Matiur Rahman Talukdar, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Khairul Islam, Abul Hasem, Alfaraf Farid Ahmed, Newaz Khan Shaju, Omor Faruq and Sardar Farid Ahmed.

Obituary

Principal Nurjahan Begum, mother of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Presidium member Prof. Johanna Begum, passed away due to kidney and old age complications at the Apollo Hospitals in the city at the age of 90, says a press release.

She left behind her two daughters to mourn her death. Her only son, Captain Alangir was martyred during the War of Liberation.

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