

HC declares detention of Patal illegal

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal the detention of former state minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman Patal.

A two-member bench, headed by Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, delivered the judgment upon a habeas corpus petition filed by Patal's younger brother Harun-or-Rashid.

The court also ordered release of Patal "forthwith", if he is not wanted by police in any other criminal case.

Despite the High Court order, the central BNP leader from Natore won't get released from jail as he has been implicated in another criminal case, said his counsel Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon.

The former minister was arrested on May 29 and sent to jail with a 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act. Later, the order of detention was extended by 90 more days.

GRENADE ATTACK ON BRITISH HC Deposition continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Deposition of the prosecution witnesses in one of the two cases filed in connection with the grenade attack on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury continued for the 4th day yesterday.

Judge Diproman Sarker of Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal recorded the deposition of complainant Sub-Inspector Prodig Kumar Das and Constable Subinoy Dev, who were on duty in the shrine area on the day of the incident.

The judge also took deposition of Gias Uddin and Nurey Alam Alkas, who along with others sustained wounds in the grenade blast.

Along with others they went to the mosque attached to the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) for performing Juma prayers.

With them, deposition of 11 prosecution witnesses was taken against a total of 57 persons.

The judge fixed September 9 for recording more deposition, court sources said.

The Bangladesh-born British high commissioner and 70 others were hurt and three others killed in the grenade attack on May 21, 2004.



Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid speaks at a seminar on the present status of Dalit at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Dr Hamida Hossain and on his left are Taslimur Rahman and Shamsul Huda.

'Raise awareness to end discrimination against Dalit'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called on the government, NGOs and civil society members to raise awareness in order to eliminate discrimination against Dalit people from society.

Caste-based discrimination still prevails in the country, they said, adding that it would not be possible for the nation to achieve real development ignoring the Dalit people.

Bangladesh Dalits Human Rights (BDHR) and Nagorik Udyog jointly organised the seminar titled 'The situation of Dalit in Bangladesh: Possible way Forward' at the National Press Club in the city.

Prof Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury of Chittagong University said the backward Dalit people are still facing discrimination in various sectors such as job, education, health and politics.

"The word 'Dalit' means poor and oppressed person in society. There are around 17 crore Dalit people in India, 45 lakh in Nepal and 14 lakh in Pakistan. In Bangladesh, over 55 lakh Dalit people live under marginal conditions and no government has taken effective measures to remove the social stigma against them," he said in his keynote paper.

Prof Iftekhar also said over 60 percent of Dalit people are deprived of education and other basic rights.

Human rights activist Dr Hamida

Hossain called for launching mass awareness campaign to stamp out all forms of discrimination against Dalit people and ensure equal rights for all.

Babu Lal Sardar, general secretary of BDHR, said Dalit people are providing various types of services to society but received no rewards.

Dalit Women's Forum Co-ordinator Moni Rani Das and Paritran Director Milon Das also spoke at the seminar moderated by Chief Executive of Nagorik Udyog Zakir Hossain.



Grameenphone Deputy Director Ahmed Raihan Shamsi, left, hands over document to APON Executive Director Brother Ronald Drahozal, right, after signing an agreement at a city hotel yesterday while Health and Family Welfare Adviser Major General (Retd) ASM Matuir Rahman looks on.

Grameenphone supports drug rehabilitation centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameenphone has embarked on a partnership with Ashokti Punorbashon Nibash (Apon), a drug rehabilitation centre, to contribute to the rehabilitation process of drug addicts.

An agreement was signed in this regard at a ceremony at a city hotel yesterday, with Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (retd) ASM Matuir Rahman as the chief guest.

Under the agreement, Grameenphone will provide financial assistance in setting up a skill development centre at Apon drug rehabilitation centre in Manikganj. It will also provide an alternative income generating stream for the centre through establishment of a Grameenphone Community Information Centre (CIC).

Speaking on the occasion, Health Adviser Matuir Rahman said drug addiction is a sickness and the people should be kind to the drug users to help get them back on track.

The government has taken up some projects to eliminate drug abuse from society, he said and pledged to take tough action against drug peddlers.

The health adviser said there are over five lakh drug users in the country and about 30,000 of them are injecting drug users (IDU). At least seven percent of IDUs are HIV-positive, he added.

Brother Ronald Drahozal, executive director of Apon, and Ahmed Raihan Shamsi, deputy director of finance of Grameenphone, also spoke.

CU AUGUST 22 INCIDENT 6 more give depositions

CU CORRESPONDENT

Six more people gave depositions before the probe committee formed to investigate into the August 22 incident on Chittagong University (CU) campus on the third day of giving deposition yesterday.

With this, a total of 12 people gave depositions before the committee.

Arts Faculty Dean Prof Mansur Uddin Ahmed, head of the four-member committee, said that they were taking depositions from cross sections and progress in the investigation is satisfactory.

However, he opted for keeping the names and identities of the witnesses a secret and refused to disclose anything about the findings before the completion of the investigation.

The committee would also take depositions from more people tomorrow, the last day for giving depositions.

At least 40 students, teachers and policemen were injured in a clash between the students and police on August 22 on the university campus where some outsiders allegedly took part.

Following the incident, CU authorities formed a four-member committee on that day.

City hawkers to get ID cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Identity cards will be given to all hawkers in the city.

This was decided at a meeting between Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Adviser Anwarul Iqbal and hawker leaders at the secretariat yesterday.

The meeting was convened to discuss different problems of evicted hawkers.

About 35 hawker leaders joined the meeting which was held a day after the chief adviser and army chief met with the business leaders.

The adviser claimed that the present caretaker government did not evict the hawkers although the responsibility fell on its shoulder.

"Hawkers were not evicted due to our decision, but you know how they were evicted," the adviser added.

He asked the hawker leaders to help government identify the hawkers who were involved in recent vandalism in the city.

"We are telecasting pictures of those days and you can help us identify them from those pictures," he added.

Hawker leaders expressed satisfaction for re-arranging their business at different places in the city.

LGRD Secretary Safar Raj Hossain, DMP Police Commissioner Naim Ahmed and Joint Commissioner (traffic) Jasim Uddin were also present at the meeting.

One gets death for killing uncle

CU CORRESPONDENT

A Chittagong court yesterday sentenced a person to death for killing his uncle in the city's Aturer Depot area in 1997.

Judge Mohammad Shamsul Huda handed down the verdict to Iftekhar Ali Haider alias Khokon who has remained at large since he obtained bail.

According to the prosecution, Khokon stabbed his uncle Mohammad Mostafa, a government official, to death with a machete following an altercation with him at his house at around 4:30am on April 25, 1997.

The altercation took place as Mostafa refused Khokon's proposal to marry his daughter.

A guard of the house caught Khokon red-handed, said the sources.

A case was filed with Panchlailash Police Station in this connection.

The police submitted charge sheet against Khokon on July 30, 1997 as he confessed to the murder, sources said. The charge was framed on August 3, 1999.

National power grid trips

Northeastern region plunged into darkness

UNB, Dhaka

The national power grid partially failed yesterday evening, plunging the entire northeastern region into darkness.

Official sources said the electricity system in all the districts in the northern, western and southern regions broke down due to a glitch in the 230KV East-West Interconnector (EWIC), the only power transmission line between the country's east and west crossing over the Jamuna.

According to reports received from the region, the tripping of the grid set off electricity black-out in many districts, including Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, Patuakhali, Bogra, Sirajganj and Pabna.

According to officials of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB), the double-circuit EWIC tripped at 6:22pm, which also led to the shutdown of power plants located in the northern and southwestern regions.

The 100MW Baghabari and 90MW Westmont plants and 100 KPCL plant in Khulna and 125MW unit of Barapukuria plant were among the plants that came to a grinding halt due to the grid failure.

Sources said the power transmission system was restored at first circuit of EWIC at 6:52pm while the second one came into operation at 6:54pm.

However, the operation of the power plants could not resume as of 8:00pm.

PGCB Managing Director Harunur Rashid told UNB that they were trying to ascertain the cause of the tripping of EWIC.

Take steps to reduce health hazards

DCC cleaners urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cleaners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) at a workshop yesterday urged the government to take steps to reduce health hazards facing the workers involved in the waste management.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and DCC jointly organised the 'Workshop Towards Clean Dhaka' at Nagar Bhaban.

The cleaners said they are exposed to health hazards as they have to work in an unhygienic environment.

They called for taking necessary measures for their safety.

Project Director of Landfill Improvement Project Dr Tariq Bin Yousuf said the cleaners' suggestions would be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate authorities.

DCC Chief Conservancy Officer Maqsood R Chowdhury and Conservancy Supervising Inspector Asaduzzaman also spoke.

A total of 49 cleaners, 50 conservancy inspectors, 32 drivers, three conservancy supervising inspectors and four conservancy officers took part in the workshop.



DIG (prison) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui talks with the wife of Arafat Rahman Koko, younger son of detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia, outside the sub-jail in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex yesterday. Koko's wife along with the wife of Tarique Rahman came to meet Khaleda at the sub-jail, but she was not allowed to meet her mother-in-law.