

Teachers to be 'freed'

Duta claims after talks with education adviser detained DU students also to be released

DU CORRESPONDENT

All the detained teachers and students of Dhaka University (DU) and the convicted teachers of Rajshahi University (RU) will be released in the next two weeks, according to DU Teachers Association (DUTA).

"On the basis of a clear assurance from the high-ups in the government and the negotiations with the education adviser, we have learnt that all the detainees and the convicted of both the universities will be released within two weeks," Acting President of DUTA Prof Tazmeri SA Islam told

reporters last night.

She, however, did not clarify the identities of the 'high-ups'. But, Duta said the day before that its representatives had a negotiation with some army officials on the DU campus on Saturday in presence of DU Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof SMA Faiz.

Later on Saturday, Education Adviser Aiyub Quadri talked to the DU VC, Prof Tazmeri and Duta's former president Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique over the phone.

The negotiations and over the phone talks were held after Duta on Friday had announced a two-day protest programme demanding

immediate release of all the detained teachers and students who had been arrested following the August violence that ensued after three DU students had been beaten up by army personnel on the DU campus on August 20.

Duta members yesterday wore black ribbons in protest at the incarceration of their colleagues and students, as part of their two-day protest.

On yesterday's government assurance, Duta postponed its protest programme scheduled for today for the next two weeks.

Asked what if the detainees are

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ACC sues Akbar, family for having illegal wealth of Tk 600cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday evening filed a case against Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam, his wife, and their four sons on charges of amassing illegal wealth worth about Tk 600 crore from beyond the known sources of their earnings.

ACC Deputy Director Abdullah Al Zahid lodged the case, with the capital's Ramna police station accusing Shah Alam, his wife Afroza Begum, and their sons Shahadat Sobhan, Safayat Sobhan, Safian Sobhan, and Safwan Sobhan.

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NIKO GAS DEAL
Hasina, Khaleda, 10 others sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sued former prime ministers Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina along with 10 others for inflicting an enormous loss to the state through awarding gas deals to Canadian gas exploration company Niko by abusing their power.

In two separate cases -- one filed against Sheikh Hasina and six others, and the other against Khaleda Zia and four others -- complainants alleged that primary investigations found involvement of the accused in illegally awarding

contracts to Niko for exploring and developing three gas fields in the country.

ACC Deputy Director Sabir Hasan, in the case filed against Sheikh Hasina and her co-accused with Tejgaon police station, said the deal with Niko caused a loss of over Tk 13,630 crore to the government exchequer.

In the case against Khaleda Zia and her co-accused filed with the same police station, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam said although Khaleda Zia was the custodian of the country's wealth

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Trade deficit shot up
by 223pc in 3 months

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Country's trade deficit has increased by 223 percent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year due mainly to huge increase in food import.

Despite strong remittance growth, the current account balance of the country stands at \$23 million against strong surpluses of \$445 million during the same period of FY2006-07. The balance was \$629 million in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal year.

Asked about the huge increase in trade deficit, a Bangladesh Bank (BB) official said, "There was huge increase in import, especially food items, and at the same time export has decreased." Increased prices of petroleum products and food items in international market have also caused the trade deficit.

The central bank is conducting a study on the possible impacts on the balance of payment for the price increases in global market.

According to the latest issue of the BB Quarterly Report, the total trade deficit in July-September period in 2007-08 is \$1,167 million, which was \$361 million in the same period of the previous fiscal year.

In the first quarter of FY2006-07, import increased by 17.14 percent

whereas food grains import in the same period of this fiscal year has increased by 239.7 percent due to shortfall in domestic production and higher price in the international market.

Import of other food items also increased by 51.6 percent in the same period.

The import growth of food items in the first quarter has been mainly because of sharp increase in imports of milk and cream (55.6 percent), spices (50 percent), edible oil (105.9 percent) and all sorts of pulses (32.4 percent).

Export decreased by 5.5 percent in the same period because of steep decline in readymade garment (RMG) exports.

The BB report said the main reasons for declining RMG export are fewer orders received from buyers during the third quarter of the last fiscal year due to political instability, labour unrest in the RMG sector, and fewer orders received from the European buyers because of an unusually warm winter.

However, the central bank is not much worried about the pressure on the balance of payment as the growth in workers' remittances is healthy and it hoped the export

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DANGEROUS DEMOLITION
Lack of safety steps, expertise led to collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of experience and adopting no proper plans in demolishing the 22-storey Rangs Bhaban have apparently caused the Saturday night disaster.

In early August experts warned the authorities of the lack of safety measures as well as a proper plan under supervision of engineers in demolishing the building. But the warnings went unheeded and the demolition work was clearly proceeding to a disaster.

Following Saturday's disaster, a probe committee was formed headed by the Rajuk chief engineer to find out why the building's 17th floor caved in, triggering a series of breakdowns to the second floor. Cracks developed on the first floor as well.

Fire Service and Civil Defence Deputy Director Selim Newaj Bhuiyan shared with The Daily Star one probable cause of the disaster.

He said demolition workers were piling up rubble on each of the floors. At the same time, the workers drilled and cracked the floors with a view to demolish those one by one.

It is most likely that the 17th floor became too weak to contain the heavy debris and caved in on the 16th floor, causing a chain reaction down to the second floor

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4 killed, dozen feared trapped inside Rangs

Rescue operation stopped for fear of further collapse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death toll in Saturday night's Rangs Bhaban cave-in on the city's Bijoy Sarani rose to four yesterday while the fire service stopped

rescue operation on safety grounds.

As of last night, at least a dozen people were feared trapped inside.

Fire Service and Civil Defence has so far rescued 12. Of them, one

died at the city's orthopaedic hospital yesterday and the rest were undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

Meanwhile, the government has

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PHOTO: STAR

A fireman yesterday morning tries to figure out the best way to recover the mangled body of a demolition worker who died when several floors of the Rangs Bhaban caved in Saturday night.

4 RU teachers
appeal against
verdict

300 teachers urge CA
for release of their
colleagues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The four convicted teachers of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday lodged an appeal with the District and Sessions Judge's Court challenging a lower court order that sentenced them to two years' rigorous imprisonment.

Judge AR Masud of the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Rajshahi admitted the criminal appeal petition and set December 27 for the hearing on the appeal. The judge also subpoenaed case documents from the lower court.

Advocate Golam Arif Tipu and Nurul Islam Sarker Aslam submitted the petition on behalf of the appellants who sought bail until

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Remains of war
hero Hamidur
due today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The remains of Birshreshtha Hamidur Rahman will finally reach his beloved homeland today, 36 years into his martyrdom during a battle with Pakistani occupation forces.

The remains will be brought from the Indian state of Tripura by road through Bibirbazar land port in Comilla at 3:00pm and will be received with a guard of honour.

Youngest among the seven Birshreshthas, the liberation war hero will be laid to rest tomorrow at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur in the capital with full state honour.

According to reports from India, the Tripura government yesterday formally handed over the remains

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এলো

City

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- মাসিক সর্বনিম্ন ব্যালান্সের ওপর নয়
- প্রতিমাসের শেষে মুনাফা প্রদান -
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