

Nizami, Mojahid

FROM PAGE 1
Dhaka court on December 17 last year for killing two FFs during the Liberation War. The case was later treated as a regular one with Keraniganj police.

In the case filed yesterday, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Emran Hossain Chowdhury recorded the complainant's statement and directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of Pallabi Police Station to register the murder case as a first information report (FIR).

The court also asked the OC to investigate the case and submit report to it.

Amir showed 15 people, including himself and the victims' parents and relatives as witnesses in the case.

Other accused are assistant secretary generals of Jamaat Mohammad Abdul Quader Molla and Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, Jamaat central leader and former Islamic Chhatra Sangha president Sardar Abdul Salam and activist Khawza Ashim (dead), and Akhter Gunda, Newaz and Doma (non-Bangalees who later fled to Pakistan).

The complainant said 60-70 other unidentified non-Bangalees took part in the massacre.

The case was filed under sections 143 (unlawful assembly), 448 (house-trespass), 302 (murder), 34 (criminal liability), 326 (grievous hurt), 307 (attempted murder) and 436 (torching) of Bangladesh Penal Code.

Amir, an FF of Sector-2, said he received training at Lalapur army

camp in Assam of India and later joined the Liberation War to free the country from Pakistani occupation.

The complainant said Quader Molla formed a Razakar team consisting of 70 to 80 non-Bangalees to help save the integrity of Pakistan, and the occupation forces started killing hundreds and thousands of people in the country.

After fazi prayers on April 24, 1971, Pakistani forces and a gang of 100 to 150 led by Quader surrounded Alapdigram in Mirpur, raided the village with firearms and killed 344 people. Of them, 64 were locals including 21 of Amir's relatives. The others were farm workers from different districts.

Amir said in his complaint the killers then dumped the bodies in three mass graves. The authorities are yet to locate the mass graves but he has done so.

On December 18, 1971, a team of 100 to 150 FFs led by thana unit commander Jahiruddin Babar and assistant thana unit commander Mominul Haq surrounded some 'camps' in Mirpur and Mohamadpur areas. Nizami, Mojahed, Quader, and others then started firing that left freedom fighter Abdus Sattar dead, the complaint said.

Amir said he was wounded in the fight and is still physically impaired.

Advocates Abu Mohammad Abdur Razzak, Shafiqul Basar Bhandari and Ashraf Ul Haq appeared on behalf of the complainant.

City shivers

FROM PAGE 1
Commuters had trouble finding vehicles as CNG-run three-wheelers and rickshaws on the roads were few in number. Most of the malls and kitchen markets had a bad day as very few ventured to go shopping.

Those who live in the open air and cannot afford warm clothing suffered the most.

Meanwhile, people elsewhere especially in the north continued to contract cold diseases. Four people including a woman and child died in Tangail in last two days, report our correspondents. The chilly weather hampered farming as many day labourers could not go to work outdoors. The highest average temperatures fluctuated between 16 and 20 degrees Celsius in most places.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: Cold snap kept plaguing the four northern districts—Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Joypurhat—yesterday.

At least 300 people, mostly children were admitted to different hospitals for diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea and viral infections, according to the hospitals sources. In Joypurhat, around 30 hectares of potatoes have been damaged in Blight disease that affects the crop usually in cool and moist environment, said Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) officials.

Our Sirajganj correspondent adds: Seedbeds and plants have started to turn yellow for cold biting in the district.

Outbreaks of cold diseases continued to spread pushing further up the number of patients at hospitals and clinics.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Of the four who died Wednesday and Thursday, Hasmat Ali, 75, and Kalam Miah, 70, were from Chhikhiban Majil village of Nagarpur upazila, and Rabela Khatun, 58, and Khaleque, 5, from Char Afzalpur of Kalihati upazila.

Some 120 children down with cold diarrhoea and pneumonia have been under treatment at Tangail General Hospital for the last couple of days, said hospital sources.

Our Pabna correspondent adds: The Met office yesterday recorded 10 millimetres of rainfall.

"The temperature is going down as the sun has yet to break through. The situation would remain the same for the next two or three days," said Matiar Rahman, a weather official in Ishwardi.

Life and trade in the district were severely hampered due to rain and frigid temperatures. Day labourers especially the rickshaw pullers had difficulty continuing their jobs.

BSS reports: The gap between the highest and the lowest temperatures came down to only four degrees Celsius yesterday. According to reports from the char areas in Brahmapura and Ganges basins, cold weather has made life miserable in the villages of Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Jamalpur, Bogra, and Sirajganj districts.

Titas pipeline

FROM PAGE 1
Witnesses said gas started to spew out with massive force after the vessel loaded with sand damaged the pipeline at around 8:30am.

Soon after the propeller of the vessel hit the pipeline with a bang, a huge swirl was created in the river and we thought our boat was sinking," said Badsha Mian, sailor of the cargo vessel.

The colossal force of gas coming out through the damaged portion of the pipeline hit the 1.33-lakh KV live electric wires running above the river, causing sparks and the sparks resulted in the gas fire, said a Titas Gas engineer.

"The gas was discharging with such enormous force that the blaze reached as high as 80 to 120 feet," said a worker of a nearby brickfield. The flames of the gas fire were visible a few kilometres away while thousands of people from nearby villages gathered at the scene.

Eight of the electric wires caught fire and fell in the river, said witnesses. The firemen reached the spot at around 9:30am, but could not do much as the source of the fire was underneath the water.

Three divers from the fire service were later called in to help Titas Gas repair the pipeline.

"We will repair the hole on the pipeline through plumbing and we expect it to be finished by today," said engineer Aminur Rahman, director operations of Titas Gas.

Farmers

FROM PAGE 1
In regard, the Ministry of Agriculture sources said. A committee led by Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) will distribute the money among the farmers according to their needs.

Started from mid-January, the Boro season will continue until mid-April.

This year the government has set the target for cultivating Boro rice on 45 lakh hectares of land. Of the crop yield, 12.50 million metric ton would be hybrid.

In this season, the government will need 8.38 lakh metric tons of diesel in total to meet the irrigation demands across the country. However, at the moment, the country has only 2.88 lakh metric tons, which can meet the demands of next 40 days.

For this reason, the government is going to import adequate diesel, the officials said at the press conference.

Power Secretary Fouzul Kabir Khan said that during the peak Boro season, shops and markets would be asked to close down by 8:00pm so that the farmers can utilise the electricity for irrigation.

At present, there are 11,55,436 diesel-run and 1,70,921 electricity-run pumps across the country.

Run the fertiliser situation, Agriculture Secretary MA Aziz said that there is nothing to worry, as there is enough stock of fertiliser.

He also mentioned that the government has already appointed 14,000 dealers across the country for distributing fertiliser.

CA says talks soon

FROM PAGE 1
Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim also spoke at the function.

The CA, who arrived here to attend the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos, said efforts are underway to advance the election ahead of December 2008.

He spelt out his government's main aims to hold free and fair election and establish effective democratic process through various reforms.

Referring to his address to the nation on January 12, the CA said restrictions on indoor politics outside Dhaka would be lifted.

He said the Election Commission's dialogue with political parties is at the final stage and the commission is likely to announce its final regulations shortly to ensure free and fair elections.

The CA mentioned the reforms of the Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and separation of the judiciary from the executive control. The government will make the Election Commission truly independent, if necessary by making laws, he said.

Replying to a question, the head of the caretaker government said current anti-corruption drive would continue as the ACC is being strengthened as an independent institution so efficient and neutral people could run it with the support of the people in future.

He dismissed the notion that the anti-corruption drive is being conducted with partiality. "There is no scope for being biased," the CA said, adding that those who have been made accused through investigations are being put on trial.

He, however, admitted the institutional and time constraints that may cause it to appear that all corrupt people are not being tried. He said the ACC will carry on investigations against all corruption suspects and bring them to justice in future.

About incorporating expatriate Bangladeshis in the voter list, he said the Election Commission had already visited the United Kingdom and talked to the expatriate Bangladeshis. The commission is thinking deeply about it, but it may not be possible to accomplish the task overnight by a stroke of pen.

Asked about the reasons of resignation of four advisers at a time, the CA said the advisers resigned on their own after a year and the government accepted their resignations and appointed new ones. He said people will judge their performance or failures, if any.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury said the government is anxious about the welfare of Bangladesh expatriates and has already signed agreements with a number of countries to protect their interest.

He said all deputy commissioners have been instructed to deploy a magistrate in each district to look after Bangladesh expatriates or NRIs when they will be staying in Bangladesh.

DU teachers

FROM PAGE 1
teachers and students.

Speaking at the rally, the freed teachers and students urged the government to withdraw all the cases filed following the August violence, including the one filed against seven DU students in connection with torching an army car. They also demanded release of all detainees of other educational institutions across the country.

Prof Anwar Hossain urged the government to try the war criminals as it is a demand of the people.

He also asked the government to lift the state of emergency and declare a date for the stalled 9th parliamentary elections as soon as possible.

Prof Sadrul Amin and Prof Harun-or-Rashid also spoke at the rally.

The rally demanded release of Imtiaz Bijon, an HSC student of Western Institute of Business and Technology, who was arrested on August 31 by police in connection with the August violence.

Bijon's mother Sanjida Alam, his teachers and friends, who were present at the rally, said Bijon had no connection with the August violence. They alleged that Dhanmondi police tortured him in detention.

Meanwhile, Nirjatan Protirodhi Shikharthi, another platform of students led by Jatitatabadi Chhatra Dal, yesterday urged the government to lift the state of emergency from February 21, the Language Martyrs' Day, and keep all educational institutions out of the purview of the state of emergency from today.

At a press conference at Madhu's Canteen on the campus, its leaders urged the government to withdraw the case against seven DU students and allow activities of different students' unions in universities.

ACC looks

FROM PAGE 20
The ACC headquarters yesterday. He said a non-submission case might be filed against Sajeda and the commission is looking into the legal aspects in this regard.

He said they decided not to accept Sajeda's wealth statement as her signature on the statement did not have any dateline.

"My lawyer asked me to sign and I signed. I do not know anything more," said Sajeda in an instant reaction to the ACC decision.

"My lawyer went to the commission three to four times to submit the statement and each time the commission refused to accept mentioning problems, except the dateline issue, in the papers. They could have told me that the signature does not have any dateline and it required the dateline," she added.

"If they intend to punish me no matter what... there is nothing I can do," she said.

Earlier, the High Court declared the ACC notice asking Sajeda to submit her wealth statement illegal after she filed a petition. The ACC moved to the Supreme Court and Sajeda was directed to submit her wealth statement while the matter is being resolved.

The ACC had served notices against 11 people from the fourth list of 35 graft suspects published on October 4. Sajeda was among the 11.

The ACC yesterday also approved filing of a case against Firoz, constables Askan Ali, Farid Uddin, Babul and Chowbaria Hat lease-holder Nazer Ali.

The robbers also looted a pistol, a shotgun, a Chinese rifle, a 3.3 rifle and ammunition from those policemen.

About holding trial of war criminals, he said it is the demand of the time but it needs time. The trial could not take place in last 36 years, but trial of such crimes is not time-bound and it could take place in future.

He said any aggrieved person can file case against a war criminal, but it may not be possible for the incumbent caretaker government to start it because of the time constraint.

Asked about the foreign diplomats' frequent comments on internal affairs of Bangladesh, Fakhruddin said: "We're trying so they refrain from doing that. Perhaps, they perceive that it is unwarranted to make comments."

About agriculture subsidy and food production, he said since the acres of land are dwindling, the government is trying to increase the agriculture production through research work.

He said the government is trying to ensure adequate supply of seed, fertiliser and irrigation in time before the Boro cultivation. This time around, the government has set the target of procuring 28 lakh tonnes of urea and distribute those among the farmers from 12,000 points.

The CA said although the rise in rice price has put people in difficulty, but the poor farmers in rural areas are benefited out of it.

He said the private sector must be strengthened and made dynamic so unemployment problem could be tackled. The government is trying to generate employment through ADP programme. Besides, the poor and unemployed are being supported through various programmes like Food for Work and VGF.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury said the government is anxious about the welfare of Bangladesh expatriates and has already signed agreements with a number of countries to protect their interest.

He said all deputy commissioners have been instructed to deploy a magistrate in each district to look after Bangladesh expatriates or NRIs when they will be staying in Bangladesh.

DU teachers

FROM PAGE 1
teachers and students.

Speaking at the rally, the freed teachers and students urged the government to withdraw all the cases filed following the August violence, including the one filed against seven DU students in connection with torching an army car. They also demanded release of all detainees of other educational institutions across the country.

Prof Anwar Hossain urged the government to try the war criminals as it is a demand of the people.

He also asked the government to lift the state of emergency and declare a date for the stalled 9th parliamentary elections as soon as possible.

Prof Sadrul Amin and Prof Harun-or-Rashid also spoke at the rally.

The rally demanded release of Imtiaz Bijon, an HSC student of Western Institute of Business and Technology, who was arrested on August 31 by police in connection with the August violence.

Bijon's mother Sanjida Alam, his teachers and friends, who were present at the rally, said Bijon had no connection with the August violence. They alleged that Dhanmondi police tortured him in detention.

Meanwhile, Nirjatan Protirodhi Shikharthi, another platform of students led by Jatitatabadi Chhatra Dal, yesterday urged the government to lift the state of emergency from February 21, the Language Martyrs' Day, and keep all educational institutions out of the purview of the state of emergency from today.

At a press conference at Madhu's Canteen on the campus, its leaders urged the government to withdraw the case against seven DU students and allow activities of different students' unions in universities.

British minister quits over funding row

AFP, London

A British minister announced his resignation yesterday over a funding row clouding the governing Labour Party, in a new blow to embattled Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Works and Pensions Secretary Peter Hain, who has resisted growing pressure over recent weeks, said he wanted to clear his name over the funding row, which has added to a string of woes for Brown.

His announcement came minutes after the electoral commission referred a probe into alleged funding irregularities in the contest for Labour's deputy leadership to the police.

"In view of the electoral commission decision today, I will be resigning to clear my name and I will be making a statement shortly," said Hain, formerly Northern Ireland minister.

Brown's Downing Street office said: "The prime minister has accepted Peter Hain's resignation."

Kenya-born Hain, 57, is the first minister to resign from Brown's government since he succeeded Tony Blair as British prime minister last June.

Hain faces the prospect of suspension from parliament if complaints are upheld that he failed to declare more than 100,000 euros (137,000 euros, 202,000 dollars) to the electoral commission.

The main opposition Conservative Party says he broke parliamentary rules, which require donations to be registered. But Hain, who is also the Welsh secretary, has blamed "poor administration" rather than a cover-up.

London's Metropolitan Police confirmed it was taking over the probe.

"We can confirm that the Met has today received a formal referral from the Electoral Commission in connection with potential offences under the Political Parties and Referendums Act 2000 regarding donations received," it said.

Zillur

FROM PAGE 1
case to isolate her from her people. It has been proved once again from his (Chowdhury's) remarks.

Clarifying his position Azam J Chowdhury yesterday said he did not file any case against Sheikh Hasina.

Zillur said Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim has already told the special court that he made the confessional statement implicating Sheikh Hasina under duress in police custody.

JP for forming

FROM PAGE 20
JP leaders said an elected 'bad government' is 'better than' an unelected government as the elected one is accountable to the people.

They called upon the government to begin dialogue with the political parties to bridge the gap between the government and the political parties.

Mentioning their five-point proposals, the JP leaders urged the government to complete the voter list and hold national elections as early as possible.

They also urged the caretaker government to identify the war criminals and try them. "It has been proved in the last one year period of the caretaker government that an elected 'bad government' is better than an unelected government," the JP secretary general said.

"Caretaker government has done several good things but the country's economy also suffered at that time," he said.

Shahidul said only 16 percent of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) was achieved in last one year while the prices of essentials have gone beyond the reach of people of low income.

He urged the government to hand over power to an elected government as soon as possible.

Presided over by Abdur Rahim, the meeting was addressed, among others, by JP Presidium member Shah Rafiqul Bari Chowdhury, Azam Khan, Habibur Rahman Habi, Mazlul Haq Babu, Ameena Bari, Additional Secretary General Sadeq Siddique, Vice-chairman Abu Syed Khan, Sheikh Joyal Abedin, Jatiya Chhatra Samaj President Nazrul Islam.

Hasina's trial

FROM PAGE 1
The High Court gave the order within two hours after the trial court, Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, adjourned the commencement of trial for three days.

This is the fourth time that the apex court has overruled High Court's stay on the operation of the trial proceedings on different grounds since the initiation of the trial process.

Following yesterday's order, the trial court can now resume proceedings of the case under the Emergency Powers Rules.

Attorney General Fida M Kamal stood for the government while Barrister Rafique-ul Huq spoke for Hasina. A disappointed Rafique-ul Huq termed the court order "unprecedented".

Meanwhile, Advocate Golam Kibria, one of the special counsels for the Anti-Corruption Commission, told UNB yesterday afternoon that the apex court's order has been communicated to Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

"The date for resuming the trial will be fixed after receiving the certified copy of the Supreme Court order," he said.

Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of East Coast Trading Pvt Ltd, filed the case.

Hasina's younger sister Sheikh Rehana, who lives in London, and their cousin Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim are also accused in the case.

40 militants

FROM PAGE 20
"It is not known whether he was taking part in the fighting or present in those areas," Abbas told AFP.

"We have recovered a few bodies and there will be investigations about their origin," Abbas added, saying it was not clear if any of the bodies were those of foreign fighters.

The latest casualty figures could not be independently verified as the rugged area where fighting is occurring is out of bounds for journalists.

But hundreds of families had fled the area and there was a severe shortage of food and other essential supplies, residents told AFP by telephone.

Mehsud tribesmen have refused to seek shelter in a refugee camp set up by authorities in the nearby town of Jandola and had asked family in other districts to accommodate them, local tribesman Alam Khan said.

"The Mehsud are angry that the military is bombing innocent people and that is why they have refused to take any help," Khan said.

The instability in the nuclear-armed nation ahead of crucial elections on February 18 has caused concern among Islamabad's international allies, especially in Washington.

Pakistan has been wracked by

75,000 MT

FROM PAGE 20
The import is part of the caretaker government's move to import 5 lakh tonnes of rice from the neighbouring country.

The Advisory Committee on Public Purchase, equivalent to Cabinet Purchase Committee, also gave the go-ahead to a number of other purchase proposals at a meeting.

Following the meeting, Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam said the rice would be imported to meet the domestic demand.

He, however, ruled out any possible food crisis in the near future, claiming that the country has a larger stock of food than last year's.

"I'm not aware of any situation where there might be any shortage in running the VGF (vulnerable group feeding) and other food-distribution programmes," he told reporters.

50,000 MT of rice will be imported at US\$ 397 per tonne while the rate for the rest 25,000 MT was fixed at US\$ 403 per tonne.

The purchase committee rejected another proposal for 10,000 MT rice import from Thailand as the bidder offered a much higher price, US\$ 447 per tonne.

Apart from the rice procurement, the committee approved five other proposals on different issues.

According to a proposal placed by the finance ministry, Bangladesh Bank will procure 180 million pieces of metal coins of two-taka denomination at a cost of Tk 30.25 crore.

Under another proposal, Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) will import 15,000 metric tons of rock phosphate at a cost of Tk 30 crore.

The purchase committee also gave the nod to a proposal of the LGRD ministry to procure 4,000 metres portable steel-bridge materials under a project financed by DFID of the UK.

Also, a proposal of the housing and public works ministry for earth-filling work at Uttara Residential Model Town Project at a cost of Tk 53.63 crore got approval.

The committee approved a food ministry proposal to procure 1.12 crore pieces of jute bags from the state-owned Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) at a cost of Tk 54 crore.

Tony Blair

FROM PAGE 20
reporters after a meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at Congress Centre on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum meeting.

Blair said Bangladesh would be badly affected due to change in climate. "So, it is very important that we take it into account in details and help Bangladesh adapt with the adverse impact of the climate change," he said.

On trade issue, Blair, who is the co-chair of the World Economic Forum meeting, said Bangladesh has got a very strong case for access to the EU and American markets.

"Bangladesh is a very poor country but people want to do their best to make a change and stand on their own feet. They need access to wealthy countries and markets," he said.

Asked about Bangladesh's role in the Middle East peace process, Blair, who is a special representative to UN, USA, Russia and EU, said Bangladesh might have a role in helping the peace process in the Middle East. He said, "Bangladesh is predominantly a Muslim country and very responsible country. I think this country shows how people can live together from different backgrounds, which is very important."

During the meeting, the chief adviser raised Bangladesh's concerns about climate change and duty-free access to developed markets.

Bangladesh also offered to help resolve the Palestine issue. Blair assured that he would apprise the concerned forum of Bangladesh's intention.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to UN office in Geneva Ambassador Debapriya Bhattacharya and Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim were present at the meeting.

violence and suicide bombings since troops crushed an uprising at a headline mosque in Islamabad last July, and the bloodshed has escalated since Benazir's killing on December 27.

A suicide bombing late Wednesday, the fourth in Pakistan this year, killed one person at a checkpoint on a highway that links the separate Khyber tribal agency with Peshawar city, in the northwest.

But President Pervez Musharraf used a European tour this week to dismiss fears that the country and its nuclear warheads could slip into al-Qaeda's hands, saying there was a "zero percent chance" of a takeover by extremists.

Hillary

FROM PAGE 20
Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee (18 percent), former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney (17 percent), and former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani (12 percent).