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Break law, get punished

PM warns 'students and others' over violence, extortion at BCL's reunion rally; blames a section of media for criticising govt too early

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned 'students and others' of stern punitive actions, if they break the law, and get involved in violence and extortion.

"I want to make one thing clear, if any student or anybody else break the law and get involved in any internal conflict, violence, and extortion, the individual will be arrested right away and punished," Hasina, who is also the president of Awami League, said at a reunion rally of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the

student wing of her party.

She however promptly added, if any other organisation tries to take advantage of BCL's self control on her command, that also will not be tolerated. "I want to make that clear too," she did not leave any room for confusion.

"The trouble makers will be dealt with total expulsion from the organisation," she seemed to be warning her own student activists.

The prime minister's stern warnings came on the heels of media reports about quite a robust return of violence on cam-

puses of educational institutions all over the country, a large number of which were either initiated by BCL or happened among its own factions.

The reunion rally was held at the historic Paltan Maidan in the capital on the occasion of the 61st founding anniversary of BCL.

The programme itself also could not escape sporadic clashes among different units of BCL, over who will get what spot at the venue, leaving around 20 injured, while chairs were flying in the air.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

A quarter trying to carry out sabotage
Says Home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Tajim Ahmed Sohel Taj yesterday said 'a quarter' is trying to disrupt law and order to destabilise the country.

He made the comment while explaining the overall law and order situation on the heels of the recent gun battle between two feuding factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of ruling Awami League (AL), on Jahangirnagar University campus.

"A quarter is trying to carry out sabotage," Sohel Taj said adding, no one is above the law, and all trouble-makers, whoever they may be, will be treated equally.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Panic spreads as law enforcement slacks

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK with KAILASH SARKAR

Law and order is witnessing a slide with an increase in criminal activities in the city and elsewhere in the country, although law-enforcement agencies and the government claim to have the situation under control.

Despite such claims of the police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and other law-enforcement agencies, a large number of crime victims have the impression that they are not getting any remedy even after seeking help.

"This approaches have pushed people into a helpless situation," says noted human rights activist Sultana Kamal, who was also an adviser to the caretaker government. She adds, "The government should take necessary steps if the people don't get remedy from the law-enforcement agencies."

A minister of the ruling Awami League himself recently became puzzled to see traffic policemen standing in a reluctant mood instead of easing traffic movement amid severe congestion.

It has already been evident how law and order started to collapse centring establishment of supremacy in the students' dormitories, different bus and launch terminals, park-

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

- Remarkable slide in law, order
- Criminal-cop-politician nexus back
- Lax law enforcement panics people
- Victims not going to cops for harassment fear

ing places at airport and footpaths after the national polls.

Besides, the increasing incidents of murder, robbery, mugging, theft and forgery have reached such a level that people have become panicked and often dare not move freely even in the day.

Armed criminals have recently stormed a showroom of Butterfly in Jatrabari in broad daylight, shot a salesman and took away cash and other valuables. Another criminal gang broke into a Lalmatia house and robbed all the valuables.

These are a few examples of innumerable criminal incidents, which are spreading

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, left, releases doves during the reunion of Bangladesh Chhatra League at Paltan Maidan in the capital yesterday to mark the organisation's 61st founding anniversary. Scuffles break out between members of different units of BCL, right, during the reunion.



PHOTO: STAR

BCL men clash to lash reunion

20 hurt in their 30-minute antics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activists of different units of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday clashed with each other over a trifling matter during its reunion in the city's Paltan Maidan that left at least 20 people injured.

The clash ensued about 11:30am among the BCL activists from Dhaka College, Jagannath University, Government Titumir College and Dhaka Polytechnic Institute following an altercation over sitting at the venue before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived.

The BCL activists hurled plastic chairs at each other and chase and counter chase around the area marked the half hour-long mayhem, leaving at least 20 people injured.

A good number of BCL leaders and activists, particularly females were seen leaving the venue because of the clash.

The clash offended Awami League senior leaders and ministers who went there to attend the programme.

Finding no other alternative, Jubo League President Jahangir Kabir Nanak and General Secretary Mirza Azam took the loud-speaker and asked the troublemakers to calm down.

Through the loudspeaker, they also requested the activists not to leave the venue to make the programme a success and warned that stern action will be taken against the troublemakers as the footages were being taken.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Bad loans with SoBs decline for first time

Reforms, absence of political interference seen as reasons; loans with pvt banks rise

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Defaulted loans with state-owned banks (SoBs) decreased for the first time last year because of absence of political interference and reforms initiated by the immediate past caretaker government in the last two years.

However, default loans with the private, foreign and specialised banks went up significantly following their aggressive banking during the same period.

A high official of Bangladesh Bank said the increase in default loans of private commercial banks is a bad sign as they provide 61 per cent of the total loans.

According to Bangladesh Bank statistics, default loans with the SoBs dropped by 7.44 per cent on December 31, 2008 compared to the previous year while default loans with private, foreign and specialised banks increased by 10 per cent during the period.

Default loans with private banks rose by 15.78 per cent, foreign commercial banks by 47 per cent and specialised banks by 0.43 per cent.

However, the overall default loans with all types of banks stood at Tk 22,481 crore or 10.79 per cent of their outstanding loans on December 2008 while it was Tk 22,624 crore or 13 per cent in December 2007.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Desperate mugger kills cop
Stabs 3 others before fleeing

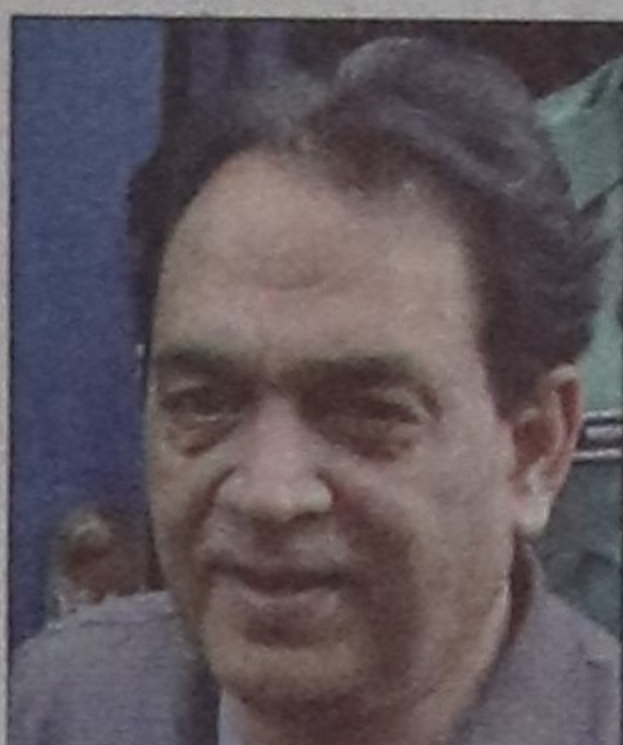
A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A sub-inspector (SI) of police was stabbed to death and three other policemen, including another SI, were injured by a mugger at Bhairabpur of Bhairab upazila headquarters last evening.

The deceased was identified as SI Mustafizur Rahman while the injured were SI Mizanur Rahman, constables Ruhul Amin and Al Mamun of Bhairab police station.

The injured policemen

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



Ziaul Haq arrested, sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Convicted former BNP state minister Ziaul Haq Zia, who entered the country on February 13 dodging

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

HC asks govt for list of unprotected level crossings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to submit a list of unprotected level crossings across the country following Tuesday's train-truck collision that killed at least 13 people and injured over 50 others in Joypurhat.

The court also issued a rule upon the government to explain within four weeks why it should not be directed to take steps to provide sufficient traffic systems at the railway crossings and proper treatment to the victims of the accident.

As per the ad interim order of the HC, the director general of railway department will have to submit the list of unprotected railway crossings to the court through the registrar of the Supreme Court (SC) within four weeks.

An HC bench comprised of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui came up with the order upon a prayer moved by Supreme Court lawyer Manzil Murshid following the Tuesday's accident.

Advocate Murshid told the court that train accidents take

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Probe report on train tragedy likely today
No compensation for those travelling without tickets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The enquiry committee, headed by Joypurhat Additional District Magistrate Setara Begum, is likely to submit today its report on Tuesday's rail accident in Joypurhat that left 13 people killed.

Besides, Roads and Railways Department formed a three-member committee headed by its Deputy Secretary (rail communication) M Shamsul Kibria and asked to submit its report within five days.

Bangladesh Railway has also formed two other committees and ordered to submit

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Student beaten to death by friends

Feud over beer supply suspected as reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A feud over liquor dealing resulted in a clash among friends that caused tragic death of a student of Shanto-Mariam University in the city's Uttara Tuesday night.

The deceased Mahfuzur Rahman alias Nasim, 20, a second semester student of Fashion Design Department, was brutally beaten up by his university friends.

Sources said Nasim and Touhid were mercilessly beaten by five of their friends—Rana, Azim, Arnab, Mishuk and Dolan—following a dispute over liquor. Injured Nasim was rushed to Apollo Hospital and Touhid was admitted to a clinic in Dhanmondi, they added.

Family sources said after the beating, Nasim died around 10:30pm at Apollo Hospital.

Nasim's uncle Mohammad Farid Uddin filed a murder case against the five students with Uttara Police Station. He alleged that the murder was pre-planned and committed over an earlier feud.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star 18th ANNIVERSARY THREE-PART SUPPLEMENT

Coming out in a series

On February 23, 24 and 25, 2009 *The Daily Star* will publish a 3-part 18th Anniversary Supplement. The central theme will be "Time to turn a corner" divided into three sub themes as follows.

- Part 1: Expectations from the new government - 23rd February, 80 pages
Part 2: Revisiting caretaker government - 24th February, 64 pages
Part 3: Global trends: Adversity or opportunity? - 25th February, 64 pages

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Information on Part 2 and 3 will be published on coming Friday and Saturday
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