



Chiefs of three services give salute after placing wreaths on the coffin of Maj Kazi Ashraf Hossain, who was killed in the mutiny at the BDR headquarters, at his namaz-e-janaza at the Army Stadium in the city yesterday.

BDR MUTINY
SSC examinees
asked to submit
application
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The SSC examinees, who were unable to appear at the examinations due to the BDR mutiny, have been asked to apply to the exam controller of the concerned education boards through their headmasters by March 10.

The affected examinees will get the opportunity to appear at specially arranged examinations under the new schedule beginning from March 19, a government handout said yesterday.

However, the ongoing Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations will continue as per the schedule.

The affected mathematics examination on February 25 will be taken on March 19, the handout said.

1,323 more held
UNB, Dhaka

Police in separate raids arrested 1,323 people on different charges across the country in last 24 hours as of 6:00am yesterday.

Eight firearms and eight bullets were also recovered during the countrywide drive, said a release of police headquarters.

Shafique's holding of 2 posts challenged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed yesterday with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed holding post of the minister and the post of a member of Bangladesh Bar Council simultaneously.

Advocate ABM Nurul Islam filed the writ praying for issuing a rule upon the law minister and two others concerned to show cause as to why their non-recognition and non-appointment to him (petitioner) as a member of the Bar Council following the Shafique Ahmed's assumption of the ministry should not be declared illegal.

Two other respondents are Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, ex-officio chairman of Bar Council, and its secretary.

In the petition Nurul Islam said as per Article 12 of Bangladesh Bar Council Order 1972, if any elected member of the Bar Council assumes another office of the government or any statutory body, the post of that member will be vacated and the candidate, who received the next highest number of votes in the Bar Council election, will be entitled to be the mem-

ber.

According to the petition, Nurul Islam is the receiver of the next highest number of votes in the election and he (Islam) should be entitled as a member of the Bar Council in the absence of Shafique Ahmed as per the law.

The petition said Shafique Ahmed is holding two statutory posts - the ministry of the law, justice and parliamentary affairs and the member of the Bar Council. As per provisions of Article 58 (2) of the Constitution, a person cannot hold two statutory posts at a time, he said.

Advocate Nurul Islam yesterday told The Daily Star that Law Minister Shafique Ahmed is his very close friend; he has given up the post of vice-chairman of Bar Council, but still holds the post of its member.

"If he gives up the post of the member of Bar Council, I shall be entitled to be a member of the Bar Council, as I am the receiver of the eighth highest number of votes in Bar Council election. There are seven posts of general members in the council," he said.

He added that the hearing of the writ petition will be held on Sunday.

Maj Ashraf laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj Kazi Ashraf Hossain, who was killed in the mutiny at BDR headquarters, was laid to rest with state honour yesterday.

A pall of gloom descended during his burial at the Banani Army Graveyard in the capital as his family members and colleagues broke down in tears.

Earlier, his namaz-e-janaza was held at the Army Stadium. Chiefs of three services, bereaved family members, army officers, politicians and general people attended the janaza.

After the janaza, military secretaries to President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths on the coffin on behalf of them. Chiefs of three services also placed wreaths on the coffin.

As army personnel carried the coffin of Major Ashraf to the grave, a smart team of army men gave a gun salute.

So far, a total of 74 victims, including 55 army officers, of massacre at the BDR headquarters were identified. On Tuesday, the family members of Major Ashraf identified his body at Dhaka Medical College morgue.

Four army officers still remain missing while two unidentified bodies are lying in the Dhaka Medical College morgue.

2 held on charges of triple murder at Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four days after the killing of a mother and her two daughters in the city's Jatrabari area, police arrested two youths on March 3 and 4 and recovered a bangle of the mother.

Jatrabari police said criminals strangled Shahjahan Akther Nazma, 38, and her daughters Urmia Akther, 14, and Rumi, 4, at her residence on February 28 only to take revenge on Nazma.

Jatrabari police produced the criminals before a court yesterday to record their statements under section 164.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Mazharul Islam said they arrested suspected killer Masud Chowdhury alias Sumon, 21, who was brother of Nazma, from South Surma area in Sylhet Sadar on March 3.

According to his confessional statement, the same team arrested Sumon's accomplice Kamal Ahmed, 28, from Kotwali area of the town the following day.

Quoting Sumon, the SI said he was severely beaten up by his elder sister Nazma at the age of 10 and at that time he determined that he would kill his sister some day.

The accused mentioned that he made several futile attempts to kill his sister. On February 28, he along with his two accomplices reached Dhaka in the morning and took position near his sister's residence.

When Sumon's brother-in-law Abdul Rashid Khan and his nephew left the house, they entered it and strangled Nazma and Urmia, while Rumi was drowned in a big water container on their fourth floor flat in a six-storey building.

Acting on a tip-off, the SI said, they conducted a drive in Sylhet and arrested the two suspected killers, while the other suspect Anwar, 30, is still at large.

Peshajibi Nari Samaj forms a human chain in the city yesterday to mourn the deaths of army officers killed in the BDR mutiny.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Statements of 4 more PWs recorded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday recorded statements of four more prosecution witnesses in connection with the August 21 grenade attack cases.

Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 Judge Mohammad Masdar Hossain recorded the statements of Nizamuddin, Sajiduddin, Abdul Jabbar and Shafiqul Islam. Later, they were cross-examined by defence lawyers.

The court then fixed March 11 as the date for next hearing of the cases and summoned five other witnesses to appear before it on the day.

In his statement, Nizam told the court that on August 21, 2004, he learned that his brother Belal Hossain was injured in the grenade attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally at Bangabandhu Avenue.

On hearing the news, he went to the scene and took his brother to Midford Hospital from where he was shifted to Bangladesh Medical for better treatment.

Later, the victim was shifted to Metropolitan Hospital at Mahakhalia in the city as his condition was deteriorating. But he (Belal) succumbed to his injuries at about 8:30pm the same day, the witness said.

Three other witnesses - Sajiduddin, Abdul Jabbar and Shafiqul Islam said Nizam is their friend and they went to Metropolitan Hospital after hearing the news of Belal who was injured in the grenade attacks on August 21, 2004.

Later Tejgaon police went there and made an inquest report on the victim Belal.

They put signatures on the inquest report that was prepared by police in their presence.

Earlier on January 27, February 12, 18, 23 and March 1, the court completed recording statements of nine people, including the complainant SI Sharif Faruque Ahmed.

The 22 people accused of launching the grenade attacks on the rally include detained former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu, Harkatul Jihad (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, Huji members Abu Sayeed, Shahdatullah Jewel, Rafiqul Islam alias Rafiq, Abu Taher and Maulana Tajuddin.

Fourteen of the accused, including Pintu and Hannan, who are now in jail, were produced before the court during yesterday's hearing.

Eight others, including Pintu's younger brother Maulana Tajuddin, have been absconding since the cases were filed.

Acting on a tip-off, the SI said, they conducted a drive in Sylhet and arrested the two suspected killers, while the other suspect Anwar, 30, is still at large.

Cut in maternal mortality rate not significant

Reveals WB report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) report on 'Sparing lives -- Better reproductive health for poor women in South Asia' yesterday revealed that despite significant progress in some areas of reproductive health, the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is not reduced significantly.

The report that highlighted the reproductive health situation and a comparative situation analysis in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka also said Bangladesh needs to cut maternal mortality into half to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

The report was launched simultaneously in these five countries and representatives from the countries took part in the programme through video conferencing.

For Bangladesh, it is a challenge to bring MMR to 120 per thousand live births which is now 320. Still 50 percent girls are forced to marry in their teens, while over 13 percent bear a child at this age for lack of education and poverty, added the report.

These teenagers also suffer from malnutrition and give birth to malnourished children that further lead to increased rate of infant mortality ratio (IMR).

The report also showed that mothers with no education are almost 2.5 times more likely to be undernourished than mothers who have completed secondary education, while poor women have substantially worse reproductive health than better off women in all the five South Asian countries.

The major risks faced by poor women widely include gender discrimination, early childbearing, poor nutrition, high fertility, poor awareness about health, low access of quality health services and ultimately child loss and death themselves.

The report also recommended increasing the supply of reproductive health services for poor women substantially. The complete essential package of reproductive health services must be provided in an interesting manner.

Maternal and child health care, family planning, nutritional care, safe abortion, treatment of reproductive infections, referral and all relevant information and counseling should be made available through a 'single window' and demand for

available services should be enhanced.

World Bank Bangladesh Country Director Xian Zhu said, "We will continue our support to nutrition and girls' education. The government of Bangladesh has already initiated innovative ways in order to provide better health services to poor pregnant women. One such initiative is the maternal health voucher scheme that is operational in 35 upazilas in Bangladesh."

Family Planning Director General Mohammad Abdul Qayum said, "Bangladesh is committed to reducing maternal, neonatal and child mortality, while family planning forms an integral part of the national response," adding that a number of packages with interventions at different levels from community to hospital are in place.



Leader of the opposition in parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia leads a mourning procession from the party's Naya Paltan office in the city yesterday. The BNP organised the procession in memory of the army officers killed in the BDR mutiny. (Story on Page 1)

PILKHANA TRAGEDY

'Form credible probe committee'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday demanded a fair and credible investigation committee headed by a retired justice instead of calling foreign investigators.

Chirantan Bangladesh organised the roundtable titled 'The Pilkhana tragedy: Sovereignty and national security' at the National Press Club in the city.

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed said those who tried to prove Bangladesh as a failed state in the past have committed the brutal killings at Pilkhana against the army officers.

Strong forces are working in the country for long to prove it a failed state.

Unfortunately, the plot was hatched during the interim caretaker government, he added.

Presiding over the roundtable, Wing Commander (retd) M Hamidullah Khan said the government is now calling FBI and Scotland Yard to conduct a proper

investigation into the killings.

"But I haven't found these organisations solved any such problem in recent time. They even could not give any solution to the terrorist incidents of their own countries."

Senior Assistant Secretary General of Jamaat Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, former BDR DG Maj Gen (retd) Anwar Hossain, Editor of the daily Amar Desh Amanullah Kabir and Jubo Dal General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alal also spoke.

They speakers echoed the demand for a credible probe committee headed by a retired justice.

Emphasising the need for national unity, they urged the government to unite all political parties to overcome this national crisis instead of handling the situation alone.

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