



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presides over a cabinet meeting at the Cabinet Division Conference room at Secretariat in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

13 Dinajpur BDR men on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 13 BDR jawans who mutinied at Dinajpur BDR Sector on February 26 are still on the run, according to the BDR and police sources.

On the day, the BDR members from 2 Battalion in Dinajpur Sadar and 40 Battalion in Fulbari fired bullets, creating panic among the villagers. Later, a total of 22 BDR jawans fled the battalions. But only nine members returned, according to the BDR officials.

Members of the army-led Operation Rebel Hunt started its operation in Dinajpur on Sunday after holding a meeting with Dinajpur District Administration and BDR officials.

Md Nabiul Haque Molla, deputy commissioner of Dinajpur, presided over the meeting attended by SP of Dinajpur Md Abu Kalam Siddique and army officials.

According to police officials, BDR jawans of Dinajpur sector and 2 Battalion kept two army officers confined to their respective places on February 26, but they managed to escape along with their family members.

Anti-liberation forces behind all subversive activities

Says Menon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party President and lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said it's the anti-liberation war forces that carried out all the subversive activities, including the Pilkhanna massacre on February 25, since the liberation war.

He said this while addressing a discussion to mark the 60th birth anniversary of Bishreshtha Captain Mahiuddin Jahangir.

Bishreshtha Shaheed Captain Mahiuddin Jahangir Smriti Parishad organised the discussion at the Liberation War Museum in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Menon said Jatiya Sangsad would decide the future of the Bangladesh Rifles as an organisation, which played an important role during the liberation war.

"Any individual or organisation should not take any decision regarding the issue, especially changing the name of BDR which will make the country more unstable," he added.

Criticising those who made the prime minister's speech with the army officers at Senakunja public, he said this is not a good sign for the country.

At the discussion, Bishreshtha Shaheed Captain Mahiuddin Jahangir Smriti Parishad urged the government to name the newly established hospital at Babuganj in Barisal after the martyr.

The parishad also demanded erecting a memorial at Chapainawabganj where Shaheed Jahangir was laid to rest.

Prof Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, vice chancellor of Jagannath University, Dr Sarwar Ali Bhuiyan, trustee of the Liberation War Museum, and Nawajesh Ali Khan, head of programmes of ATN Bangla, also spoke at the programme chaired by Sirajuddin Ahmed, advisory editor of the Bangladesh Shomoy.

Dewanbagh, Charmonai Pir followers clash: 20 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Niganj

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between the followers of Dewanbagh Pir and Charmonai Pir at Simrail intersection near Narayanganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

Witnesses said activists of both the groups engaged in the clash with sticks, which created severe traffic congestion on Dhaka-Chittagong road.

Atiqur Rahman Nannu Munshi, Narayanganj unit president of Islami Shashantantra Andolan, said followers of Dewanbagh Pir had hung banner with objectionable quote on Islam at Simrail intersection. We took out a procession protesting it. Then they attacked us.

On the other hand, Hanif, a follower of Dewanbagh Pir, said a quarrel was untangling our banner. We protested it, which caused the clash.

Additional police were deployed in the area to avert further clash.

JOURNALISM AWARD TIB invites reports

METRO DESK

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has invited reports on corruption from journalists of both print and electronic media for its Investigative Journalism Award 2009.

This year the award will be given in three categories -- reports published in dailies and magazines under national newspapers, reports published in regional dailies and magazines under regional newspapers and reports telecast on BTV and other private TV channels under television, says a press release.

In the national newspaper category, reports published in any newspaper and magazine from Dhaka city will be considered. The winners will get Tk 60,000 in cash, crests and certificates.

Reports published in the print media or telecast in electronic media from January 1 to December 31, 2008 are eligible for the competition.

The reports will have to be sent to the Advocacy Department, Transparency International Bangladesh, Progress Tower, House-1 (6th floor), Road-23, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212 by March 31.

The main copy of the report will have to be submitted. If the main copy is not available, attested photocopy will also serve the purpose.

TV reports will have to be submitted with full scripts after converting them into CD. The report will contain a photograph of the participant, contact address and telephone number and 'Investigative Reporting Award 2009' should be written on the envelope.

The reports could be sent to advocacy@ti-bangladesh.org. An entrant cannot submit more than one report except series reports. Investigative features may also be included.

For further information, interested people are requested to visit www.ti-bangladesh.org

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tomorrow is the 18th death anniversary of Principal Abul Kashem, founder of Government Bangla College in Mirpur and one of the architects of the historic Language Movement.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani, milad mahfil will be held on Bangla College premises at 9:00am. Principal Abul Kashem Literary Academy organises 'Principal Abul Kashem Memorial Festival' at Nazrul Square at Chittagong DC hill. Principal Abul Kashem Trust will organise a discussion at the National Press Club on Friday. A discussion will also be held at Barma College at his village in Chittagong on Saturday.

Afzal Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 2nd death anniversary of Afzal Hossain, a former lawmaker, a freedom fighter and founder of Narayanganj Diabetic Hospital, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held at his residence at 1 Baburail in Narayanganj after Zohr prayers today.

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Solution lies in gas supply

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, water crisis at the Kaptai dam is also a headache for PDB that operates the Karnaphuli hydropower plant with five 50 mw hydropower units. The water level at the dam should be at least 92 feet, but it is now 80 feet.

As a result, this plant is now producing 80-85 mw during peak hours.

"The PDB's present requirement of gas is 850 million cubic feet of gas per day to generate around 4,000 mw power, but it is getting 685 million cubic feet, leaving a shortfall of 165 million cubic feet," says a PDB source.

The next gas-based power plants will need another 175 mmcf of gas by June-July.

Already unable to supply more than 1850-1900 mmcf of gas due to inadequate pipeline, gas supply compressor and other infrastructure support, Petrobangla does not have much to promise for this year.

"This year, the only possibility of increasing power supply would be maximum 70 mmcf," says a competent Petrobangla source.

"Of this, around 15-20 mmcf may come from drilling a new development well in Titas Gas field and another 50 mmcf from Chevron's Jalalabad field," he adds.

This shortfall is adding to non-production of 634 mw power by different power plants which are undergoing routine or sudden maintenance and rehabilitation programmes.

The PDB officially puts the present demand at 4,400 mw, while it could supply maximum 3,600 mw yesterday. If there was no gas supply problem, PDB could have ensured up to 4,200 mw power and minimise the crisis by handling only 200 mw load shedding.

"There will always be a percentage of power plants which will undergo maintenance," says a PDB official ruling out the possibility of turning on all the plants, including those under maintenance, all the time.

Then again, the "official" load-shedding claim does not

even match power demand forecast by the power distributing bodies.

Desa and Desco demand more than 1,800 mw, while the Rural Electrification Board (REB) seeks 2,200 mw and PDB itself needs another 1,500 mw. This means that the real load-shedding is around 2,200 mw.

Against such a demand, PDB gives REB around 800 mw, making it look like the official demand. But during the irrigation season, the government would increase this supply to REB.

Many of the power projects under maintenance programme are expected to begin operation within this month. However, when these would come online, some other plants will go for maintenance.

Sources say the government is trying to fine-tune the maintenance schedule to increase the generation capacity during the irrigation season and take up other measures to lower the power demand.

One of the measures that the government undertook is to close marketplaces after 8:00pm. But this is not reducing the load-shedding.

"The peak hour for power consumption is 7:00pm to 8:00pm. If the market places should be closed to save energy, it should be done before 7:00pm," observes a PDB source.

Another measure undertaken by the government is asking irrigation related power consumers to operate their pumps between 11:00pm and 5:00am so that the irrigation can be carried out unhindered. The PDB would divert power from the cities to ensure power supply for irrigation.

Besides, as per a schedule set by the past caretaker government, industrial holidays are being staggered in a way so that the demand load is spread throughout the week.

SOLUTIONS

Following a suggestion by Adviser to the Prime Minister Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Petrobangla is

considering an idea to address the gas crisis by importing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from gas exporting countries.

Japan is a country that is heavily dependent on LNG import for power generation. Japan is also the world's one of the biggest power consumers.

Another short-term quick solution for power crisis may be installing "genuine" rental power plants without patronising any business groups.

Sources say already a British rental power company Aggreko proposed that in the present state of the country, it could install power plants in Khulna, Chittagong and Bheramara and add 50 to 100 mw power to the national grid in a very short notice, for a short period or a mid-term period.

"The authorities might go for more such rental powers from various power companies, based on petroleum, as a short term solution," quips a PDB official.

When the idea of rental power was first introduced in 2005, rental power schemes turned out to be a costly farce during the alliance rule as power deals were being offered in a manner of offering plots for land.

As that failed, the caretaker government in 2008 also resorted to the idea of getting rental plants totalling 300 mw capacity. Of this, four plants totalling 160 mw were awarded to inexperienced Energy Prima, another 35 mw to inexperienced Venture Aggreko and a 40 mw to Aggreko.

They were supposed to commission these plants by May 2008 for three years. Experience issue was overlooked despite repeated press reports pinpointing that rental power was not the same as other private power projects which are long-term.

Due to inexperience and ill-conceived business model, Energy Prima has not delivered two plants totalling 70 mw capacity and Venture Energy its 35 mw plant till date.

BDR MASSACRE Iran, Turkey hail govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Iran and Turkey have lauded the steps taken by the government in overcoming the crisis created by the barbaric killings at the BDR headquarters recently.

The two countries also praised the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for facing the crisis with efficiency.

Iranian Ambassador Hassan Farazandeh and Turkish Ambassador Sakin Ozkan Torunlar expressed this in separate meetings with Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni at the foreign ministry yesterday.

The two envoys expressed deep shock at the death of the army officers at the BDR headquarters and conveyed sympathy to the government and people of Bangladesh.

Different aspects of bilateral relations were also discussed at the meetings.

The foreign minister proposed import of rock phosphate and crude oil from Iran on credit basis. The Iranian ambassador responded positively.

He informed the minister in the last fiscal year trade between the two countries increased.

Dr Dipu Moni said Bangladesh is the most investment-friendly country in South Asia. She also welcomed Iranian investment in Bangladesh.

The envoy said, "Iran considers Bangladesh as a very important country and lay high emphasis on the bilateral relations."

During the meeting between the foreign minister and the Turkish ambassador, political, economic and military cooperation between the countries were discussed.

The ambassador informed the minister that Turkey has increased the number of scholarships given to Bangladeshi students by 50 per cent.

He also invited the foreign minister to visit Turkey next month to attend the conference on 'Alliance of Civilisation'.

Probe on to find JMB patron link

FROM PAGE 16

"We have asked the BDR Headquarters for a list of new recruits from Rajshahi and neighbouring districts. Identifying the recruits will take time as necessary documents are now scattered," says a senior officer.

He adds they are likely to take help from the computerised database prepared during the voters' registration with photograph for properly identifying these men.

The official informs that they will emphasise how many soldiers were recruited since 2004, if any of them was involved with Pilkhanna mutiny, who recommended their recruitment, and whether those were engaged to militancy before.

"If any soldier is found to have links to militancy before, the people concerned who issued their clearance will also be brought to book," he says replying to a question.

Militants might have been recruited as their prize for taking part in the so-called vigilante actions against underground operatives

belonging to Purba Banglar Communist Party, the investigators argue.

Meanwhile, a rebel hunt team of police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and army personnel raided different villages including Polasi, Kamarbari, Maria, Sakoa and Goalkandi in Bagmara upazila Wednesday night.

The targeted fugitives -- Anwar, Altaf, Ismail and Kawsar -- escaped the dragnet, while a mobile set of a fugitive was seized.

Relatives of the families told newsmen some 10 to 12 mutinous soldiers took shelter at Ismail's house in Sakoa after they fled from Pilkhanna on February 26. The soldiers include Rohidul, Saiful, Hossain Ali, Barik and Golam Rabbani.

Locals say all these BDR men were directly involved with JMB as they were seen roaming with hockey sticks with JMB's executed leader Siddique Islam Bangla Bai in 2004. They were present during the Pilkhanna carnage, their family members confirm.

After hiding for two days, they left Ismail's house

saying they were returning to the headquarters.

"We have yet to know whether the fugitives have joined Pilkhanna," an investigator told The Daily Star. He added, "We knew four of them had links with JMB."

MILITANT PATRONS

JMB under the banner of Bangla Bhai's Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMJB) emerged in a "jungle rule" for the first time in Rajshahi allegedly with state sponsors during the BNP-Jamaat coalition rule in April 2004.

The outfit brutally killed some 25 people in broad daylight and maimed some 500 others in Rajshahi region in only three months in the name of vigilante actions against the underground communist operatives.

Former BNP bigwigs Barrister Aminul Haque, Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu, Alamgir Kabir, Nadim Mostafa and Mizanur Rahman Minu and a number of other former ruling coalition leaders allegedly blatantly patronised the militants using the police

and administration. Even the then government high-ups supported the militants in 2004-05.

Aminul went into hiding since the 1/11 changeover. Later he was convicted in a case for militancy abetting and jailed for 31 years, while Dulu has been sentenced to 18 years imprisonment in two cases for abetting arson prior to the launch of militant activities.

Haque and Dulu are facing trial in some other militancy abetting cases that are now stayed.

Alamgir Kabir was sued in two cases for abetting militancy, but his name was dropped from police charges.

Minu was named in a militancy abetting case, but the case was withdrawn later.

Former BNP lawmaker Nadim Mostafa, who is sentenced to ten years imprisonment in two cases of extortion and criminal activities, is also named in three cases for abetting militancy. He went into hiding after the 1/11.

BDR HQ hardly cordoned off

FROM PAGE 1

personnel at Ganakuti and Hazaribagh areas but soon they retreated amid indiscriminate firing from inside the BDR headquarters by mutineers.

"As the areas were unguarded some BDR rebels even easily came out of their headquarters after the revolt and returned to it after 11:00pm on February 25," said Mohammad Russel, a fruit vendor at BDR Gate-1. Some others also gave similar account.

After 8:00pm on February 25 a group of eight to 10 policemen were seen patrolling at the BDR Gate-1 while only one patrol team of Rab went past the area soon after 10:00pm.

"After 2:00am on February 27, two Rab patrol vans pulled off at the Gate No 5 and till morning they were seen foraging in the sewerage lines in the area," said Mozammel Hossain, a resident of Ganakuti Sweeper Colony.

While talking to The Daily Star around 50 people of the areas gave the same account of how the rebel border guards escaped.

Around 6,700 BDR members fled their headquarters mostly on February 26 soon

after the prime minister's address to the nation.

Locals said they saw a team of army men on February 25 at Azimpur Battola near the graveyard, which is about 200 yards off the places through which BDR jawans fled away.

The locals added they did not see the army team there for a few hours from February 25 midnight and then again they came to the spot at 11:00am the next day.

The army personnel, however, rounded up a handful of BDR rebels when they were passing by the army team, they added.

Rab Director General Hassan Mahmood Khandker said, "We instructed our force to arrest the fleeing rebels and they worked accordingly." He also claimed his force arrested over 200 BDR jawans from across the country.

When asked whether Rab members were deployed along the boundary wall of BDR headquarters, he said, "I don't know whether they were near the boundary wall or not. They were instructed and worked as per the directives."

When asked Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Naim Ahmed said they also directed their

force to arrest the runaway BDR personnel and they arrested a number of fleeing BDR personnel on the day of mutiny and after it was over.

"Our force was busy with various duties. So we could not deploy enough manpower to cordon off the vast stretch of the areas along the boundary of BDR headquarters," he said replying to a query.

Locals said as around 1,800 BDR families reside at Ganakuti, Hazaribagh, Badda Nagar, Moneswar Road and Nabaganj areas next to the BDR headquarters locals initially helped them to flee.

Some of them even provided BDR men with clothes, shelter and information about the position of law enforcers to ensure their escape.

As the brutality by the disgruntled BDR personnel came to light, now many of the locals feel repented for all the assistances they extended to the BDR rebels.

"If I had known that they had killed so many people and looted their valuables we would not have allowed them to flee," said sexagenarian Habibur Rahman of Azimpur area venting his pent-up anger on BDR personnel.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind may occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Noakhali and Comilla.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:06pm today and rises at 6:11am tomorrow.

Highest temperature 35.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 16.2 degrees Celsius at Sayedpur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.6	24.0	69	54
Chittagong	30.9	21.5	93	60
Rajshahi	35.0	19.4	94	44
Khulna	34.0	23.0	85	63
Batal	33.6	23.5	79	73
Sylhet	34.5	19.8	68	53
Cox's Bazar	35.0	21.5	73	60