

Orphanage case

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During the hearing, Khaleda, also leader of the opposition in parliament, was permitted to sit in a chair in the courtroom.

Defence counsels submitted to the court four petitions--two for not taking into cognisance the charges against Khaleda and Tarique, one for exempting Tarique from personal attendance and the other for upholding the bails of Khaleda and Tarique granted by the High Court.

Moving the petitions, Khandaker Delwar Hossain said the charges against Khaleda and Tarique are not tenable at this stage as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) did not get prior approval from the authorities concerned for filing the case. And it was filed as part of a conspiracy to harass them.

Moreover, there is a political motive behind the case, and it is intended to stop them doing politics, Delwar said.

He was assisted by Masud Ahmed Talukder and Sanaullah Miah.

Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Mosharraf Hossain Kjol opposed the defence contention saying the ACC got approval from the authorities concerned for filing the case. He appealed to the court to take the charges into cognisance.

Two of the accused--former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haque and Sharfuddin Ahmed--who were earlier granted HC bail were also present in the court yesterday.

During the hearing, defence lawyers raised a hue and cry when the SPP read out the charges in the case.

The court dropped from the charge sheet two persons--Syed Ahmed alias Sayeed Ahmed and Gias Uddin Ahmed--as the investigation officer (IO) prayed for it finding that they were not involved in the incident.

ARRIVAL OF KHALEDA
Several hundred leaders, workers and supporters of BNP and its front organisations gathered on the court premises and adjacent area to welcome the party chairperson. This caused a severe traffic congestion in the area.

They brought out small processions blocking the road from court area to Nawabpur crossing from 11:00am. As a result, hundreds of vehicles got stuck up for hours.

The situation caused sufferings to commuters and residents of the court area in old part of the city.

Khaleda arrived on the

court premises at 1:10pm.

Senior leaders of BNP including Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain received the chairperson, and party men chanted slogans demanding withdrawal of the case.

Security was stepped up in the court area ahead of Khaleda's arrival. She left the court at about 2:30 pm amid tight security.

Police and party men escorted her car from the court premises to Siddikbazar area. Party activists and supporters also brought out processions at the time.

Before leaving the court building, the former premier waved to the crowd waiting outside.

Party leaders present there included Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmad, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, TH Khan, Jamiruddin Sircar, Rafiqul Islam Mia, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Selima Rahman, Shirin Sultana, Mirza Abbas, Moazzem Hossain Alal and Rehana Akhter Ranu.

OSD pool

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In reply to a written query of BNP lawmaker Joyal Abidin, the LGRD minister, who is also in charge of the establishment ministry in parliamentary business, in a written answer said 10 secretaries, 10 additional secretaries, 32 joint secretaries, 19 deputy secretaries and 10 senior assistant secretaries are still OSD.

The minister said as many as 434 officials, including 42 secretaries, 89 additional secretaries, 109 joint secretaries, 39 deputy secretaries, 150 senior assistant secretaries and five assistant secretaries were given the OSD status during the reign of the present government.

Of them, 29 secretaries, 72 additional secretaries and 86 joint secretaries were made OSD following their promotion, the minister said.

Of the 434 officials, who were given OSD status, 24 secretaries, 57 additional secretaries, 77 joint secretaries, 39 deputy secretaries and five assistant secretaries have got positions and eight secretaries and eight additional secretaries already went on LPR (Leave Preparatory to Retirement).

OSD 10 SECRETARIES
The secretaries who are still OSD are: Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Abdur Rashid Sarker, Monirul Islam, Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Abdus Sabur, Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury, Abu Mohammad Moniruzzaman Khan, Montazul Islam, AMM Nasir Uddin and Abdul Majid.

Bill proposes

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According to a provision of the bill, an unregistered developer will be imprisoned for two years or fined Tk 10 lakh for advertising any property development project in the media.

The proposed law says all real estate developers have to be registered with the authorities concerned.

A developer will be awarded two years' imprisonment or fined Tk 10 lakh for launching development works without permission of appropriate authorities.

If a developer fails to keep the promise of providing utility facilities to the developed plots in line with its prospectus, he or she will be fined Tk 5 lakh, or awarded one year's imprisonment for failing to pay the fine.

Another provision of the bill says a developer will be imprisoned for three years or fined Tk 20 lakh or awarded both for constructing buildings in violation of the approved design.

If a developer doesn't comply with the agreement with landowners or buyers or keeps the construction work unfinished and does not give compensation for this, it will be considered as cheating, says the law. The developer might be imprisoned for maximum two years or fined Tk 20 lakh or awarded both for cheating.

The state minister believes once the bill is turned into a law, it will contribute to the country's development and ensure a congenial atmosphere in the real estate sector.

Meantime, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Enamul Haque placed a bill for amending Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission Act to re-set the qualifications of candidates for chairmanship and membership of the commission.

In defence of amending the law, the state minister said there are some anomalies in the existing qualification criteria.

Outlaw

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Sensing Rab's presence, the underground operatives opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

After the outlaws fled the scene, Asha was found dead on the spot.

The Rab members recovered a pipe gun and two bullets from there.

Police said Asha, one of the top Gono Bahini cadres, was accused in seven cases including two for murder filed with Kushtia Sadar and Islamic University police stations.

A total 681 'crossfire' incidents took place in 10 districts in southwestern region since 2004. Of them, Kushtia is on the top of the list with 237 such cases.

Sixteen 'crossfire' incidents took place in Kushtia in last 13 days.

Tenant-owner

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House at around 8:30pm and dipped the infant into mud leaving him dead.

Golam Azam, sub-inspector (SI) of Uttara Police Station and investigation officer of the case, quoting Hajera said Zahirul came to her house Sunday evening, played with Ismail and her daughter Urme, 5, on the veranda while Hajera was taking Iftar there.

When Hajera went inside the house and came back after a few minutes, she found Urme alone while Zahirul was running away from the marshy land, said SI Azam. Later, Hajera found her child lying dead in the mud.

Earlier on Sunday, Zahirul in an arbitration was compelled to apologise to Hajera for beating her during a dispute over water supply, said police quoting locals.

The arbitration also barred her from going to local police station for filing of a case against Zahirul, SI Azam said. The apologetic enraged Zahirul, which might have led to the killing, he added.

The body was taken to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy. Morgue sources said there was mud in the mouth and throat of the corpse.

Hajera, left abandoned by her husband, was supporting her two children by serving as domestic help at houses in the area.

Police said a case was filed with Uttarkhan Police Station yesterday. They are yet to arrest Zahirul.

Saifur laid to rest

FROM PAGE 16
Of Moulvibazar municipality Fayzul Karim Mayun, ex-lawmaker Ilyas Ali were present there, among others.

Earlier a namaj-e-janaza was held at the playground of Moulvibazar Government High School at 4:45pm. Thousands of people irrespective of political party affiliation attended the janaza.

After the janaza his body was taken to his village home in a motorcade. Hundreds of people stood on both sides of the highway to bid farewell to Saifur as the motorcade was progressing on Moulvibazar-Sylhet highway.

Earlier when his body was kept at his hometown thousands of people thronged to have the last glimpse of the late leader. Some were seen shedding tears. Several residential buildings and commercial establishments hoisted black flags mourning the death of Saifur.

Following a call from Moulvibazar Businessmen Association, local businessmen and traders kept their establishments closed from 4:00pm to 6:00pm in memory of Saifur Rahman.

Awami League lawmaker Syed Mohsin Ali, who defeated Saifur Rahman in the December 29, 2008 parliamentary elections by a margin of 42,000 votes, told The Daily Star that people of Moulvibazar including him have lost a guardian.

Our staff correspondent

in Sylhet reports: Over one lakh people from all walks of life and irrespective of political affiliation joined the former finance minister Saifur Rahman's janaza at Shahi Eidgah Maidan at 1:20pm.

Traffic movement on several streets of Sylhet city came to a complete halt for an hour as the body was brought to the Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar, where people paid their homage to the late leader.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran received the body at the Shaheed Minar at 12:05pm. Saifur Rahman's son Kaiser Rahman brought the body from the capital.

Local leaders of Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, JSD, BSD, CPB, Workers Party and others in addition to the social and cultural organisations mourned his demise and placed floral wreaths on the body.

Imam and Khatib of Central Bandar Bazaar Jame Mosque Maulana Abdur Rahman led the janaza at the Shahi Eidgah Maidan. Central BNP leaders Abdullah Al Noman and Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, former Sylhet municipality chairman AFM Kamal, Mayor Kamran and Saifur's son Kaiser addressed the packed Eidgah briefly before the janaza.

Then the body was taken to Moulvibazar for the last janaza before his burial.

Honkers fined

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But the penalty under the Noise Pollution Control Rules, 2006 is Tk 5,000 or one month's imprisonment for the first time offence while Tk 10,000 or six months imprisonment for the next time offence.

The noise pollution control rules are not included within the purview of a mobile court. So, the DoE has to file cases with the environment court for noise pollution.

"We have no preparation for filing regular cases with the environment court to apply the rules during the ongoing drive, as we have lack of manpower and logistic support," said DoE Dhaka Division Director Jamshed Ahmed.

The primary aim of the drive is to create public awareness about the environmental and motor vehicle laws, said Ahmed.

BRTA Motor Vehicle Inspector Abdur Rashid who was present during the drive said only BRTA chairman has the authority to update the motor vehicle ordinance.

JS sits amid

FROM PAGE 1
Meanwhile, the House adopted an obituary reference on the deaths of former Filipino president Corazon Aquino, ex-finance minister M Saifur Rahman and US Senator Edward Kennedy.

Parliament also mourned the deaths of former ministers Shafiqul Gani Swapan and MA Sattar, ex-lawmaker Abu Abbas, language movement veteran Gaziul Haq, poet Alauddin Al Azad, former naval commander Mojabarullah, and former president of Mahila Parishad Hena Das.

Speaker Abdul Hamid placed the obituary motion at the session's beginning and the House adopted it unanimously. Copies of the obituary resolution will be sent to the families of the deceased.

PROBE REPORT TO BE DISCUSSED
Speaker Abdul Hamid told the House that a discussion on the all-party parliamentary probe report would be held in the House in time.

"It [probe report] has become a property of the House and a discussion on it will be held in time," the speaker said replying to a lawmaker's demand for holding the discussion.

Taking the floor on point of order, Jatiya Party lawmaker Mujib-ul-Haque Chunnun, a member of the all-party probe body investigating corruption in the parliament secretariat in last seven years, said the committee has already placed its report before the House.

"You [speaker] gave assurance in the last session that the discussion will be held in

The DoE officials with the help of the mobile court measured the sound emitted from the vehicle horns with decibel metre while the level of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon with emission analyser and the court penalised the violators of law.

The permissible sound limit for a motor vehicle is 85 to 100 decibels at certain distances.

According to the environment conservation act, the permissible level of carbon monoxide for a motor vehicle is 4 percent while hydrocarbon is 180 PPM (parts per million).

According to the noise pollution control rules, the permissible noise level is 50 decibel during daytime and 40 during night at silent zone. It is 55 decibel during daytime and 45 during night at residential areas. The permissible level is 60 decibel during daytime and 50 during night at mixed areas while 70 decibel during daytime and 60 during night in commercial areas and 75 decibel during daytime and 70 decibel during night in industrial areas.

Bullet-hit body

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Being informed by local people, police went to the spot at around 7:00am and recovered the body.

Ershad Hossain Kochi, Babuganj upazila BNP joint secretary, said Nanna was abducted by an unidentified gang from Dainik Bangla crossing in the capital while returning home on Friday night. He attended an iftar party of Babuganj Upazila Samity at Dhaka Officers Club on the day, Kochi added.

Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Babuganj Police Station, claimed that Nanna was a listed outlaw and wanted in several cases including one for murder.

Police sent the body to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death case was filed with Babuganj Police Station.

On June 4 this year, body of Sarbahara leader Mahbubur Rahman Badal alias Kana Badal was found three days into his abduction at Chowhari Bari area under Rajoir upazila of Madaripur.

Young

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Bengal tiger, two fresh water crocodiles, one zebra and a lesser adjutant stork died in February.

The zoo is located on about 186 acres of land in Mirpur housing around 2,160 animals of 157 species.

Of them, 57 species are mammals including elephant, Royal Bengal tiger, lion, cheetah, rhinoceros, zebra, monkey, chimpanzee, and hippo. There are 61 species of bird, 11 species of reptile including snakes and crocodiles and 28 species of fish.

Every day the zoo attracts about 10,000 visitors.

Meherpur

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Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) for long.

Sources said Mukul was a close aide to Tanajuddho founder Abdur Rashid Malitha Tapan alias Dada Tapan who was first arrested from Mukul's house in 1994. During the time, he was Gangni upazila unit AL publicity secretary. Dada Tapan was killed in a 'shootout' with Rab-12 in Kushtia on June 18, 2008.

Mukul is now owner of two garment factories in Uttara of Dhaka and has business in Jessore.

Govt to go

FROM PAGE 1
League lawmaker, Apu Ukil, the minister in a scripted answer said the BFR had conducted a research on the culture of pearls in sweet water in 1999 on special interest of the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

"The outcome of the research is encouraging. Scientists of the institute have already gathered experience in pearl culture," Biswas said.

Referring to the result of the research, the minister said that a maximum of 12 pearls could be produced from an oyster. But the pearl in our country is small in size due to the size of oyster.

El Salvador

FROM PAGE 16
Captain Maximiliano Corado Sunday said that the boat set sail a week ago from the Ecuadorian port of Manta.

He said all the migrants appeared to be undocumented, and all except the Ecuadorians are to be deported.

The Ecuadorians were turned over to police for investigation of possible migrant trafficking.

Meanwhile, news agency ANA from New York reported yesterday that the 25 Bangladeshi migrants--all from Noakhali and greater Dhaka--paid Tk 20 lakh each to the manpower brokers to reach the USA.

It reported those migrating to the USA from Bangladesh were students of college or university and were leaving the country in search of better lives.

The journey to the USA using the route of India-Africa and Central America is very risky.

There are allegations that to avoid arrests, the human traffickers even sank the boat carrying migrants under water, ANA reported quoting police sources as saying.

Officials in Bangladesh Embassy in Washington said they would soon inquire about the arrest of the Bangladeshis, but their deportation may take a few weeks.

Flu confusion

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Daily Star yesterday that the Saudi government should consider the issue for this year. Like Naser, many Hajj candidates have already prepared themselves to perform the pilgrimage.

"We are concerned over the issue and already communicated the Saudi government, but we are yet to get any clarification," said MA Rashid Shah Shamrat, secretary general of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab).

According to the Haab, a total of around 60,000 people are scheduled to perform hajj this year.

Shamrat said around 50 percent of those preparing for hajj will not be able to perform the annual pilgrimage if Saudi Arabia approves Arab health ministers' decision.

"Around 363 under 12 years of age people will miss the ritual this year if they are not allowed to go," he said adding, "And then their guardians won't go too."

Moreover, all the hajj pilgrims had submitted the money to the authorities concerned in Saudi for house rent and food, and other necessary fees through agencies, he said. Haab's fee this year was fixed at Tk 2.25 lakh.

"We will face trouble if Saudi Arabia does not allow the people above 65 and below 12 to attend hajj, as it will be almost impossible to get their money back," Shamrat said.

He opined that the Saudi government could set strict rules for medication and health cautionary measures for the pilgrims, as there are already vaccine and treat-

Admin

FROM PAGE 1
the promoted officers posts.

Many fear that this high number of promotions may not have any positive impact on the administration. They said more sluggishness would grip the administration.

Expressing surprise at the high number of promotions, former cabinet secretary and adviser to a caretaker government Dr Akbar Ali Khan apprehended that discipline in the civil administration might collapse after this.

"It will not only cause economic loss but also the total discipline of the top civil service will collapse," said Akbar, now chairman of the Regulatory Reforms Commission.

He said there would be competition among the promoted officials to get better posts and the officials would then end up getting involved in politics.

The entire administration would be politicised, said Akbar, a former official of civil service of Pakistan.

Sources in the establishment ministry said the merit list was not properly used while deputy commissioners appointed by the last caretaker government were not considered for promotions, which will cause commotion.

They also said the entire administration would be overburdened by this mass promotion as a large number of promoted officers would have to wait a long time to get an office.

The sources also said officials of ninth and 10th batches were given priority for elevation to deputy secretary from senior assistant secretary.

Earlier, LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam told the parliament yesterday morning that 81 government officials, including 10 secretaries, are OSDs.

Land survey

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Sourendra Nath Chakrabarty, other members of the Commission, representatives of Bandarban and Khagrachhari district administrations were present.

Justice Khademul said alongside the survey the commission would also start the work on dispute regarding land of the affected people.

Replying to a question on internal refugees, he said applications would be called from them to know from which land they have been evicted. He said the commission would also look into the illegal lease of land in the hill areas as it has been tasked with the matter.

Justice Khademul said the commission would obviously look into illegal settlement and extra land settlement or transfer and sale of land violating the settlement rules.

After the meeting, the commission members visited some plots of the refugees who returned from India at Rangapani of Rangamati. They also talked to the refugee families.

ments for H1N1 flu virus.

Meanwhile, an official at the Ministry of Religious Affairs said the ministry told the Saudi government that the people of Bangladesh usually perform hajj after retirement from their job. A good number of above 65-year-old people try to attend the holy duty every year.

"This is a sensitive issue and we can't just ask them to stop performing hajj," said the official.

Asked about how the money deposited in Saudi will be withdrawn if the authorities restrict travel of the elderly and children, he replied, "It will be a delicate issue. But we hope that Saudi government will allow all, but ensure strict health measures."

Meanwhile, Egypt decided to reduce the number of hajj pilgrims by 40 per cent this year as precaution against the spread of the swine flu, according to the Arab News.

Until September 3, Saudi Arabia has so far reported 23 swine flu deaths.

British minister to make maiden Tibet trip this week

AFP, London

Foreign Office minister Ivan Lewis will visit Tibet this week as part of a fact-finding mission to China, the first such trip by a British minister, his office said yesterday.

Lewis will visit Lhasa, the administrative capital of Tibet, and Beijing between Monday and Thursday.

"It is the first visit to Tibet by a British minister ever," a spokeswoman for the Foreign Office told AFP.

The ministry said in a statement that Lewis "will be meeting key contacts in the Chinese government in Beijing, to take forward our co-operation with China on a range of international and bilateral issues."

It added that Lewis will also "engage with the regional authorities in Tibet and explore at first hand the political, economic, social and cultural situation of Tibetans there."

Pro-Tibet campaigners urged Lewis to speak out against China's rule of the Himalayan territory and what they argue are increased human rights abuses since last year's unrest in the region.

The authorities say rioters killed 21 people in the March 2008 unrest, but exile groups claim more than 200 people died, many as a result of the security crackdown.

Israel approves

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Before a halt to the settlement building," Abbas's spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina told AFP on Monday in Saudi Arabia, just hours before the announcement of the new units.

The Israeli anti-settlement Peace Now group said in a statement that 'these building approvals transform any peace process into a political farce.'

"The settlers are receiving... a significant gift from the government of Israel in the form of settlements extending tens of kilometres deep into the West Bank," it said.

Washington has for months pushed Israel to freeze all settlement activity and for Arab states to take steps towards normalising relations with the Jewish state in order to revive Middle East peace talks.

Amid media speculation that some Arab states may answer Obama's call and agree to normalisation steps, such as the issuing of visas or overflight authorisation, Abbas on Monday called "for a unified Arab stance in face of Israel."

The spurt of settlement building is part of Netanyahu's efforts to appease the hawks in his rightwing Likud party who virulently oppose any freeze, Israeli analysts say.

Any moratorium on construction would exclude some 2,500 homes already being built in the West Bank, as well as any building in annexed east Jerusalem.

Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem -- home to some half a million Israelis -- are considered illegal by the international community and one of the thorniest issues in the decades-old Middle East conflict.

Israel and the Palestinians revived their peace talks in November 2007 after nearly a seven-year lull, but the negotiations had little progress before they were suspended in late December over Israel's war in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip.

Trade, Tipai

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and security issues are expected to figure prominently during the Dipu-Krishna talks.

The talks would be followed by a joint media interaction by Dipu Moni and Krishna after which she will meet Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee at his North Block office and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at his official residence on Race Course Road.

The Bangladesh foreign minister is likely to meet some other senior Indian ministers during the visit, diplomatic sources said.

The delegation-level talks between India and Bangladesh today, apart from reviewing the entire gamut of bilateral issues, could finalise some agreements that would be signed during the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India possibly in October, the sources said.

The last foreign minister-level meeting was held in Dhaka on February 9 this year between Dipu Moni and F. nab Mukherjee.

Dipu Moni was received yesterday at the Indira Gandhi International Airport by senior officials of Indian external affairs ministry and Bangladesh High Commissioner Ahmad Tariq Karim among others.

Sources said Bangladesh is likely to seek greater access to Indian market for its exports through easing of para- and non-tariff barriers in a bid to narrow the trade imbalance.

Security is going to be high on the agenda of Moni's meeting with Indian leaders in New Delhi, according to sources. The Indian side is likely to press for ULFA leader Anup Chetia whose prison term in Bangladesh has ended.

Officials in New Delhi said handing over Chetia to India could serve as a confidence-building measure in security cooperation between the two