

Explain 'crossfire' in 48 hours

HC asks govt after deaths of two brothers in custody; Sahara claims 'no crossfire' since AL took office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court issued a suo moto rule yesterday asking the government to explain extra-judicial killings within 48 hours.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun however claimed that no such killings are being carried out in the country.

"We are not carrying out any crossfire right now. No such incident has taken place since our government assumed office," she told journalists after a special meeting on law and order at the home ministry.

The court in the rule directed the government to show why appropriate actions should not be taken against Rab officials—Major Wahiduzzaman and Lieutenant Hasan and their companions—for the killings of Lutfor Rahman Khalasi and Khairul Haque Khalasi in custody in Madaripur.

The High Court bench of Justice AFM Abdur Rahman and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad issued the rule following a newspaper report on the killings.

Besides, the court directed Rab director general to give an explanation in this regard, as heinous activities of extra-judicial killings are carried out in his battalion.

During the court proceedings, Supreme Court Bar Association Chairman advocate AFM Mesbahuddin told the court that any extra-judicial killings should be investigated and the responsible persons should be tried and punished.

Deputy Attorney General Kazi M Ejazul Haque Sagor told The Daily Star that the home secretary, DG of Rab, Major Wahiduzzaman and Lieutenant Hasan have been made respondents to the rule.

The lawyers concerned said the High Court bench issued the rule since a few pending writ petitions challenging the killings in custody had not been disposed of.

Lutfor Rahman and his younger brother Khairul Haque, who were operatives of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party, were killed during a "shootout" between their

'Shootout' continues
Another outlaw killed in Jhenidah
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A cadre of Purba Banglar Communist Party (ML-Janajuddha) was killed in a 'shootout' between his cohorts and police at Baniakanda village under sadar upazila here early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Hasan alias Boma Hasan alias Batam, 35, son of Sayed Ali of Defolbaria village in sadar upazila.

Two police constables—Mohsin and Jafar—were also injured during the gunfight.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Motiur Rahman of Jhenidah Sadar Police Station said, police raided Baniakanda village where the outlaws were holding a secret meeting around 2:00am.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the criminals opened fire prompting them to fire back that triggered a

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The banana plant pricked with so many syringes testifies to the social ill called drug addiction. This picture was taken from the BM School campus in Barisal recently. The number of junkies, especially the Pethidine users, is on the rise in the district with authorities turning a blind eye to the menace.

PHOTO: STAR

VERDICT DAY
AL men asked not to bring out processions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling party lawmakers held a special meeting yesterday to discourage party activists from holding rallies or processions after the final verdict on the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case is announced.

They also urged party members to support the efforts of the law-enforcement agencies and to encourage vigilance rather than excessive enthusiasm.

"Remain watchful so that no untoward incident takes place in your constituencies," Awami League leader and

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32.5 KM ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY \$2b project up for tender today

SHARIER KHAN

The Ministry of Communications is finally floating tender today for building an elevated expressway of 32.5 kilometres or more in Dhaka on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis.

The Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) under the ministry will receive pre-qualification documents for this \$2 billion project from interested bidders till January 20.

A tender evaluation committee will select qualified bidders on the basis of several criteria and the pre-qualified bidders would then be asked to submit their bids for financing and construction of the project. The qualified bidders would arrange necessary finances for the

project.

"We want to make significant progress in this project within the tenure of the government," said Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain.

"The traffic situation in the city is a mess. A party's popularity in Dhaka decides the party's fate in the election. So our political commitment is to make this happen within our term."

He said, "We started the project overcoming serious difficulties. We had waived some government rules so that it does not get tangled in red-tapism."

The applicants should have experience and financing capabilities to construct express

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CONTINENTAL SHELF
UN body defers action on Myanmar claim

UNB, Dhaka

Further action by the UN commission concerned on Myanmar's claim on the outer-limits of the continental shelf in the Bay of Bengal has been suspended.

An official announcement from the ministry of foreign affairs here yesterday said the Union of Myanmar submitted their outer-continental-shelf claim on December 16, 2008 to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS).

The presentation on the

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Bangladesh betters its graft grading

Moves 3 notches down on Transparency's list of top corrupt countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh this year has been ranked 13th from the bottom, three steps up its position last year, in the annual corruption perception index (CPI) of 2009 released by the Transparency International (TI) yesterday.

Last year, Bangladesh was ranked 10th from the bottom and 147th among 180 countries, the report says.

This year it has been placed 139th among 180 countries in the corruption perception index.

According to the report, Bangladesh has made a significant progress in curbing corrup-

tion raising its score to 2.4 compared to last year's 2.1.

Bangladesh is one of the nine countries that performed the best. The other countries are Belarus, Guatemala, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Syria and Tonga. The worst performers are Bahrain, Greece, Iran, Malaysia, Malta and Slovakia.

"However, with the score remaining below the threshold of 3, the country continues to be in the league of those where corruption continues to be pervasive," said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive

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Hasina asks Malaysia to ensure facilities for expats

UNB, Rome

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the Malaysian government to ensure maximum facilities for the Bangladeshi expatriates living in the ASEAN country.

She made the call when a five-member delegation led by Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Mohd Yassin paid a call on her yesterday.

The latter highly hailed Hasina's leadership for her strong role in saving Bangladesh's economy from the recent recession and its people from the global food crisis.

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina co-chairs a roundtable on climate change and food security at FAO headquarters in Rome yesterday.

Give top priority to worst victims

Hasina tells UN, rich nations about climate change impact

HASAN AHMED TUSHER, from Rome

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the UN and the advanced developed countries to give priority to the most vulnerable countries (MVC) and least developed countries (LDC) and keep them in a separate group to face the effect of the climate changes caused by global warming.

And there should be a separate adaptation and mitigation fund for MVCs and LDCs to face the consequences due to climate change, the premier said while addressing a joint working dinner with heads of 10 government and state here in the Italian capital Rome Monday night.

The dinner was organised jointly by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and Italian Foreign Minister Frattini.

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Road thru' Azimpur graveyard illegal: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday in a verdict declared illegal the construction of a link road through Azimpur graveyard in Dhaka.

It also declared the Dhaka City Corporation's (DCC) project undertaking illegal.

The court directed the DCC authorities to remove construction equipment and pillar, if any, from the graveyard within three months, and to construct the walls around it, which were earlier demolished.

The HC bench of Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque

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Govt asked not to pay Niko

HC for quick disposal of Tengratila compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday in a verdict directed the government to refrain from making any payment to Niko, a Canadian oil and gas exploration company in Bangladesh, which probe bodies found responsible for the damage of Tengratila gas field in Chhatak.

As per the HC verdict, the government cannot make any payment to Niko until the case, filed by the government seeking compensation for the damage, is settled or any agreement is made between both parties in connection with the compensation.

The compensation case, filed last year, is now pending with a judge's court in Dhaka, said advocate Iqbal Kabir, a lawyer in the case.

The HC bench yesterday asked the parties concerned to take steps for early disposal of the matter.

On December 6, 2005, the Petrobangla in a letter to Niko claimed 8.9 billion cubic feet (BCF) gas and a bank guarantee of Tk 250 crore from Niko Resources Bangladesh Ltd as part of a three-stage compensation for the Tengratila gas field blowouts.

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BNP summons its 4 Ctg stalwarts

Party hints at coming down hard on council-spoilers

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain summoned four top party leaders of Chittagong unit for making decision regarding city unit council, which was foiled on Monday due to intra-party clash, sources said.

Party insiders said the high command took the matter seriously and decided to take stern actions to send a message to the squabbling party leaders across the country so that the plan to hold councils is not hampered.

The BNP secretary general summoned M Morshed Khan, Abdullah Al Noman, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Mir Nasir to discuss the issue today.

The party high ups are worried as most of the district units are facing internal conflicts that may hinder the party's reorganisation process, said the insiders.

On instructions of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Delwar, also the chief of the probe body formed by the standing committee, will hear the four leaders before finalising party's decision on the city committee.

However, insiders said the standing committee members were divided over the issue as some leaders including the secretary general want to form a committee on the basis of understanding amongst all the factions while others proposed a fresh council.

Earlier, before discussing the matter in the standing committee meeting Monday night, Khaleda held a meeting with Delwar and her adviser Brig Gen (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah.

Later the standing committee also discussed the matter and the chairperson asked the secretary general to investigate the incident and take tough actions against those who were

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