

Milon sent to jail

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A Chandpur court yesterday sent former state minister for education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon to jail in a case filed for vandalising a car of Awami League lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in 2003.

Chandpur Judicial Magistrate Asaduzzaman Nur passed the order after the BNP leader surrendered to the court seeking bail.

Later, he was shifted to Comilla Central Jail at around 9:00pm.

Sources said local AL leader Kalim Ullah filed the case with Kachua Police Station accusing 38 people including Milon and his wife on May 6, 2009.

Meanwhile, Milon told journalists that he has been implicated in a "false case" and people expect a fair judgement.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal later brought out a procession in the district town demanding release of Milon.

On October 18, 2003 Mohiuddin's car came under attack in Kachua upazila.

Call for separate laws for construction workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Imarat Nirman Sramik Union yesterday placed an 11-point demand including formulation of separate laws for construction workers to ensure their just wage and other facilities.

The union placed their demands at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

Union General Secretary Farid Ahmed read out a written statement at the press briefing.

The statement said a total of 25,000 workers are involved in this sector that contributes an annual revenue of Tk 1,000 crore to the government coffers.

But, there is no specific law or policy to safeguard the interest of construction workers, the statement added.

"Property developers and private individuals are deceiving us," Farid said.

The demands include eight-hour work day, fixing Tk 10,000 as minimum wage for skilled workers and Tk 5,000 for unskilled

ones and ensuring Tk 1 lakh as compensation if any worker dies while at work.

The other demands are inclusion of a representative of the union in tender selection committee of government, non-government and autonomous organisations, introducing group insurance and training for the construction workers.

Farid alleged that the housing company Megha Builders Ltd had not yet paid the workers after completion of the construction work of its four projects in Dhanmondi area.

He said Imarat Nirman Sramik Union would hold a rally on March 24 at Muktangan and lay siege to the office of Megha Builders Ltd on March 29 and form a human chain in front of the REHAB office on April 6 if the outstanding wages of workers are not paid.

Union leaders Lutfar Rahman and Hiru Miah were also present at the press conference.



Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin places a wreath at the coffin of noted journalist KG Mustafa on the Central Shaheed Minar premises yesterday.

KG Mustafa laid to rest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Veteran journalist and Language Movement hero KG Mustafa was laid to eternal rest at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard yesterday.

KG Mustafa passed away due to various ailments, including kidney-related complexities and bronchial asthma, at a city hospital on Saturday at the age of 84.

He was buried at around 6:30pm after two namaz-e-janazas at Iqbal Road in Mohammadpur and on the National Press Club premises, family sources said.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Food Minister Dr Md Abdur Razzaque, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique and noted journalists leaders and his admirers attended the second namaz-e-janaza on the National Press Club premises.

Earlier, his coffin was kept on the Central Shaheed Minar premises, where people from all walks of life paid their last respect to the noted journalist.

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad placed wreaths at the coffin of Mustafa on the Central Shaheed Minar premises on behalf of the premier.

President Zillur Rahman expressed profound shock at the death of KG Mustafa.

In a message, he said Mustafa had restlessly worked in the movements for freedom of mass people and people will recall his contribution with respect.

Speaker Md Abdul Hamid Advocate and Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali in separate messages also condoled the death.

Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin, Awami League leaders, including Motia Chowdhury and Tofail Ahmed, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim and other personalities also paid their last respect by placing wreaths at his coffin.

They also observed one minute's silence and signed the condolence book kept on the premises.

Different socio-cultural, non-government and political organisations and professional bodies also condoled the death of KG Mustafa yesterday.

Recalling the veteran journalist's contribution for the nation, they said he would be long remembered for his invaluable contribution as an honest journalist and a secular man.

They prayed for peace and salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to his family members.

Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Nari Mukti Andolan, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Ain O Salish Kendra, Jatiya Gonotantrik League and Fenil Press Club also condoled the death.

QULKHWANI

Quoting family members, a press release of the Press Information Department said the Qulkhani of KG Mustafa will be held at his Mohammadpur residence in the city after Asr prayers on March 17.

Participatory dev planning at final stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is at the final stage of formulating the first Participatory Perspective Planning (2010-2021), which will be the main guideline to development in the proposed sixth and seventh five-year plans, Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khandakar said at a consultation yesterday.

The minister said development of communication especially railway and waterway would be given special priority.

The national consultation on infrastructural development of the country under the Participatory Perspective Planning (2010-2021) was organised by the General Economic Division (GED) of Planning Commission at the NEC auditorium in the city.

The planning minister added that the rich waterways and railways of the country have been severely neglected over the years damaging its possibility. Construction of unplanned

roads led to many problems. There are plans to revive these two sectors.

Among many other plans to revive the rail sector, construction of 836kms of rail track, 213kms of double track, 2 rail bridges, procurement of 186 locomotives and 1403 wagons is on the pipeline, he said.

Currently there are 2157kms of road network in the country and 2855kms of rail network.

In the water transport sector there are plans to increase navigability of rivers, prevent water transport accidents and provide cheaper, safer and comfortable journey through the waterways, he added.

The construction of the Second Padma Bridge, Second Meghna Bridge and Second Meghna-Gomti Bridge is also being considered, he mentioned.

Dr Shamsul Alam, member of GED, and Md Habibullah Majumder, secretary to planning division, also addressed the inaugural session.

DAE kills 4cr rats in six yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told the House yesterday that the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has killed around four crore rats in the last six years since 2004.

It has saved around three lakh metric tons of food grains, she added.

Replying to a query of BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid, Matia said the government has decided to strengthen the 'Rat Killing Drive'.

She said DAE has taken various measures to strengthen the drive, which will be carried out from the end of September to October through formation of committees at national, regional, district and upazila levels.

"Rallies will be held and processions be taken out across the country engaging people by upazila-levels committees."

Agriculture experts said rats destroy some 20 lakh metric tons of food grains every year, which is very alarming for the country.



(Top) People who were injured in Indian Border Security Force (BSF) firing near Jaintapur border in Sylhet were admitted to the Jaintapur Upazila Health Complex. (Right) A deserted hut in the area as the villagers fled their homes. (Story on Page 1)



Investment vital to ensure food security

Says Razzaque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday called for increased investment in agriculture to ensure food security of the country.

He made the call when Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Director Stamulas Kotas and its Country Representative Ad Spijkers met the food minister at the latter's office in the city.

"It is imperative that investment in agriculture, especially in the northern and southern

coastal parts, has been increased to boost productivity," Razzaque told the FAO officials.

He said the government is talking to various organisations on improving food security and nutrition and incorporate the issues in the National Food Policy.

However, investment is important in research and technical innovation, human resources development and institutional capacity, the minister added.

Kotas appreciated the government's efforts to ensure food security and pledged to continue FAO cooperation with Bangladesh.

GRAFT CASE SC asks ex-envoy Nazimullah to surrender in trial court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday directed ATM Nazimullah Chowdhury, a former Bangladesh ambassador in Abu Dhabi, to surrender before the trial court in connection with a corruption case filed against him during the past caretaker government.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on May 14, 2008 filed the case with Shahbagh police station against Nazimullah on charges of causing a loss of Tk 21 lakh to the state exchequer through misuse of power and deception.

ACC Deputy Director Abdullah Al Zahid filed the case accusing Nazimullah of irregularities in renting the ambassador's house and corruption in purchasing furniture and appointing gardeners at his residence.

It was also mentioned in the first information report (FIR) of the case that Nazimullah shifted his residence in Abu Dhabi through misuse of power for his own benefit.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice MA Matin passed the order upon a leave to appeal petition filed by ACC against a High Court (HC) order that stayed the proceedings of the case against Nazimullah on November 12, 2008.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq appeared for Nazimullah.

Death anniversary of Dr Aleem Al-Razee today

UNB, Dhaka

The 25th death anniversary of Dr Aleem Al-Razee, a celebrated jurist, parliamentarian and educationist, will be observed today, says a press release.

An iconic figure, Razee was in the vanguard of all political struggles and social and cultural movements to win democracy, freedom and rights of the people.

He was a leading honorary defence counsel in the historic Agartala case.

Different voluntary, socio-cultural organisations and educational institutions have taken up separate programmes to mark the day.

Dr Aleem Al-Razee Memorial Council will place wreaths and offer fateha at Razee's graveyard at Banani, feed the orphans and hold a milad mahfil.

Participatory action research stressed to resolve problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Community people can identify their problems and find out ways to resolve the problems through Participatory Action Research, which is comparatively new in the country, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

Brotee, an NGO, is presently working on 6,803 households in Rajshahi and Naogaon through the project. It organised the seminar on the people-oriented methodology to protect rights of the village women at Cirdap auditorium in the city highlighting the outcome of the project.

Under another project launched in assistance with CIDA, Brotee also conducted a survey at Tanore upazila in Rajshahi to justify its application for protecting women's rights.

Sharmeen Murshid, chief executive officer of the organisation, said a few groups of the school and college-going students can identify the problems in the villages.

For the last five years, the students who are mostly known as Gono Gobeshak Dal prevented more than 1,000 early marriages and exchange of dowries, she added.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said, "The Participatory Action Research can be a model for development in the country."

Canadian High Commissioner Robert McDougall and Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive Director Dr Mustafizur Rahman also spoke.

Noted litterateur Selina Hossain moderated the seminar.

Firearms, ammo recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered seven firearms, some bullets and cartridges from a village at Chandanaish here yesterday.

Rab personnel, however, could not arrest anybody in this connection, says a press release.

On information that a gang of miscreants were trying to commit a crime at Maithana village, a Rab-7 team reached the area around 3:30am and started a drive.

Sensing the presence of Rab, the criminals fled the spot, leaving some firearms and ammunition, the release added.

The elite force later recovered four locally made light guns (LGs), three one-barrel guns, 10 rounds of bullets and five rounds of cartridges.



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