

44 battalion

FROM PAGE 1
shot as a signal of the mutiny on action on the morning of February 25, 2009.

"Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) Nasir Uddin, kingpin of the mutiny, ordered to shoot eight to 10 officers outside the Darbar Hall after having the officers knelt down in a line and hands above their heads, said Lt Col Kazi Aniruddha, prosecutor of the case freshly filed yesterday with the BDR mutiny court against 675 soldiers of the 44 Rifle Battalion.

Most of those who carried out Nasir's order and shot the officers were from this battalion, he said.

As per the prosecutor's submission, almost all the offences committed during the 33-hour bloody mutiny in Pikhana were carried out under the leadership of DAD Nasir, sepoy Salim Reza, Altaf and Kajal and some others of the battalion.

They were involved in every offence -- from setting the plan at the "Golap Bagan" (Rose Garden at Pikhana) in 2008-09 for executing the mutiny to devising the strategy of general amnesty from the prime minister hiding the killings inside the Pikhana headquarters, said the prosecutor.

"Sepoy Salim Reza led the oath taking meeting in a dark room outside Pikhana on the night of February 24, 2009," said Aniruddha.

Salim, who is now in jail since last year, also led in looting and distributing arms from the Pikhana arsenal while Altaf the magazines.

When the mutiny broke, the BDR officers on deputa-tion from the army tried to save themselves by hiding in different places inside the Darbar Hall. Sepoy Salim took the lead of finding out the officers, the prosecutor said.

The slain DG and other officers had to stand in a line inside the Darbar Hall on orders of sepoy Salim.

"Using a megaphone Salim Reza ordered the officers to move one by one," said Aniruddha in a choked voice, adding, "At such moment of crisis, the director general got out of the Darbar Hall following orders from an ordinary soldier. Another soldier of the 44 Rifle Battalion thereafter riddled the DG's body with SMG bullets."

Salim Reza also raided the

slain DG's house in Pikhana. He led a group of soldiers in looting, torturing, setting fire and killing the DG's wife in the house called Rifle Bhaban.

Twelve armed BDR personnel who were deployed there to ensure security of the residents did not prevent the group from raiding the house as they were also from the same battalion.

As per the court order, Sepoy Salim will be produced before the BDR special court-5 today at 10:00am along with 674 other accused in the case filed yesterday by Subedar Ismail Hosain of 44 Rifle Battalion.

DAD Nasir, however, has not been accused in this mutiny case because as per the BDR Act of 1972, the court of the paramilitary force is not empowered to try departmental officers of the force, said Col Aziz Ahmed, commanding officer of BDR Dhaka sector. The 44 Rifle Battalion is under this sector.

Prosecutor Aniruddha said when Nasir was going to meet the prime minister for a negotiation on February 25, he ordered one of his colleagues over mobile phone to burn the slain officers to ashes.

The BDR officials expect Nasir would be tried in the killing case, which is still under investigation of Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The total number of alleged killers will be known when the CID places charge sheet of the case filed with the police station for the Pikhana carnage.

Meanwhile, BDR officials told The Daily Star that the soldier of 44 Rifle Battalion, who killed the BDR DG, has not been accused in yesterday's case as he was attached with another unit. He will be accused in the case against the mutineers of that unit.

There were 957 personnel in the 44 Rifle Battalion during the mutiny. About two-thirds of them came under mutiny charge.

The three member special court-5 comprised of president of the court Maj Gen M Mainul Islam and members Lt Col AKM Golam Rabbani and Maj Sayed Hasan Taposh took the case into cognizance and ordered to arrest all the 675 accused in this case and produce them before the court today.

Businessman shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals gunned down a businessman in front of his house at the capital's Malibagh last night.

The deceased was Asaduzzaman Babu, 32, a textile businessman of Islampur and owner of Ideal Textile Mills.

Motijheel police said they are yet to ascertain the motive behind the murder.

Neighbour of the victim Saiful Islam said last night he saw three youths loitering in front of the building where Babu used to live.

"When Babu was about to enter the building, the youths sprayed bullet at him leaving him seriously injured," Saiful Islam said.

The doctor declared him dead when he took Babu to Dhaka Medical College Hospital," added Saiful.

In another incident, muggers snatched Tk 2.5 lakh from a man and stabbed him in front of his house at Purbo Bashabo last night.

Victim Russel, purchase officer of Zakir Steel at the city's Bangla Motor, was admitted to DMCH.

Eden College student kills herself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A student of Eden Girls' College allegedly committed suicide in the capital's Uttar Kafur yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Veronica Bonna Costa, 21, a third year student of Accounting department and daughter of expatriate Alfred Dipok Costa. Bonna with her mother and siblings had been living at her grandfather's house.

Bonna's aunt Jamuna Gomes said they found her body hanging from the ceiling fan of her room around 2:30pm.

She said Bonna went into her room and locked herself inside for a long time after her mother had scolded her.

Suspicious, they first knocked on the door, she said, adding that getting no response they then broke into her room and found her hanging from the fan.

Bonna was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared her dead.

Sub Inspector of Kafrul Police Station said according to the family members, Bonna hung herself following an argument with her mother. He, however, did not say anything about the reason behind the quarrel.

RMG workers block highway for pay hike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Around 3,000 garment workers blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Kanchpur of Narayanganj for two hours demanding increase in their wages yesterday.

The workers of SF Garments took to the street at about 9:00am and blocked the highway near Nayamati to press home their demands.

A section of the agitating workers attacked the factory and broke its glass panes.

Traffic movement came to a halt on both sides of the road following the blockade. Several hundred vehicles on 18 routes of Chittagong and Sylhet divisions got stranded on Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet highways.

Traffic jam was created along the 15-kilometre stretch from Signboard to Meghna Bridge in Sonargaon thana.

The workers withdrew the blockade at about 11:00am after getting assurance from the local police and the owners of the factory.

Officer-in-charge of Sonargaon Police Station Mohammad Yunus Ali told The Daily Star that communications on the highway remained suspended for about two hours, causing severe traffic congestion.

EC to probe

FROM PAGE 1
Haziganj Government Primary School, a senior EC official said.

The decision came after a photo was published in a national daily showing that some people were stuffing ballots at the polling station in front of polling officials.

Out of 5596 voters, 3122 cast votes at this centre where AL candidate tallied 2022 votes and his lone opponent BNP nominee 1053 votes.

Govt eyes more

FROM PAGE 1
The PM also directed the authorities concerned to make it legally mandatory for all new buildings and establishments to be equipped with solar power panels to meet their internal demands.

She directed the power ministry to take steps to set up wind power facilities in Chittagong and Noakhali, and a third hydropower plant in Kaptai.

On the issue of signing unsolicited deals with rental power companies to quickly increase power generation, Hasina said she took the initiatives with honest intentions like in the past, to end the power crisis as quickly as possible -- and not for any personal gain, according to the second cabinet member.

For public interest the premier would take such steps even if someone sues her, the senior cabinet member quoted the PM as saying. The PM noted that during her previous term, she took a lot of initiatives in the power sector, and completed those honestly, but the last caretaker government nonetheless filed graft cases against her in connection with some of those projects.

She criticised the two past governments' lack of initiatives in the power sector, and attributed the present power crisis to their inaction.

"But this year, we will add 700 megawatt of power. And within the next one month, another 400 megawatt will be added to the national grid," PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad quoted the premier as saying to her cabinet colleagues. Azad was formally briefing the media at noon after the meeting at the Cabinet Division of Bangladesh Secretariat in the capital.

The PM urged the people to conserve energy and water, and avoid wastage. She thanked the people for already responding to her previous appeal for avoiding wastage of electricity.

She urged the officials and experts of all power sector related agencies to increase their management skills to help reduce system loss in the sector. She also suggested that

they improve their public relations, especially in regard to clients' complaints. She said the people are already suffering from the power crisis. When they call up utility agencies and face rudeness, it is most unfortunate, she added.

A senior cabinet member criticised a section of the bureaucrats for holding back files in order to make illegal gains in exchange for moving the files. "When there is a major power project in the pipeline, we hear that some officers want benefits from bidders, like finances for their kids' education abroad," a cabinet member said.

Meanwhile, a parliamentary committee yesterday asked the power ministry to set up an operation room at the Prime Minister's Office, and form a high powered committee to monitor on a daily and monthly basis the progress in implementing the government's roadmap for generating around 9,000 MW power by 2015.

The Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings also strongly asked the Power Development Board, and the ministry to identify officials and staff who are "wilfully disrupting power supply to serve the opposition", committee chief Ghulam Mostafa told reporters after its meeting in Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"We do not want the government to be derailed from its roadmap for generating power. The committee therefore strongly recommends setting up an operation room, like the ones set up during wartime, to oversee the power generation activities over the next five years on a daily basis," said Ghulam Mostafa, also a ruling Awami League MP.

"The prime minister's power and energy adviser, or the state minister for power can be assigned to run the operation room, and to head the high-level committee," he added.

We also asked the officials concerned to make the existing public procurement rules easier if needed, to meet the objectives of the five-year roadmap.

Saarc leaders to take lead in reversing climate change

Says Bhutan's PM

UNB, Thimpu

Bhutanese Prime Minister Lyonchhoen Jigme Y Thinley, whose country is hosting the first ever Saarc summit, has called for taking a lead by the Saarc leaders in reversing the climate change.

"...Contemplate on some disturbing facts. The Himalayan glaciers are receding at an alarming speed. Our mountains are less majestic, less awe inspiring. The rising temperature has not only melted the fresh snow and stripped further layers from past centuries, they now look like a high wall of grey and jagged outcrop of rocks," he said.

The Bhutanese premier made the remarks while inaugurating the Saarc Journalists Summit at Hotel Zhiwaling yesterday evening.

The theme of the Saarc Journalists Summit-V is Environment and South Asia. Painting a gloomy picture of the climate change, the theme of the 16th Saarc summit, Thinley said the sea level is rising at an equally alarming pace and together with the glacial melt, causing climatic trends that are devastating South Asia.

"So, we are losing our water and food, suffering from calamities like floods, earthquakes and storms, and all that is basic to human well-being and happiness. South Asia cannot afford to ignore these common signs," he said. "We must take a lead in reversing climate change," he added.

Reaz Uddin Ahmed, who leads a 10-member South Asia Free Media Association (Safma) delegation, chaired the opening session of the two-day summit being participated by around 130 senior journalists from eight Saarc member countries. Secretary General of Safma Imtiaz Alam of Pakistan gave the welcome address.

JEWELLERY LOOT 200 tolas recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered 200 tolas of gold out of total 782 tolas, which was stolen from Dewan Jewellery of Muktijuddha Super Market in the city's Mirpur-1 Saturday night.

Officer-in-Charge of Shah Ali Police Station Abdul Latif said police arrested five security guards in connection with the burglary.

Tajul Islam, owner of Dewan Jewellery, filed a burglary case with Shah Ali Police Station yesterday accusing unidentified burglars, said the OC.

He said two youths left a bag with the gold in it at Jatrabari intersection and fled as policemen of Jatrabari outpost challenged them around 10:00am.

He added the gold has stickers of Dewan Jewellery and the bag was handed over to DB police.

Police will produce the security guards before a Dhaka court with a seven-day remand prayer today.

Assistant Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Solaiman said a key of room no 207 of hotel Golden Inn at Jatrabari was found in the bag. The key was lost a few days ago.

DB police has picked up 11 people, manager of the hotel Nazrul Islam, a hotel boy and nine people who were staying in room no 207 and 202 for interrogation, he said.

Govt asked

FROM PAGE 1
within 15 days, and directed the DC concerned not to play lawn tennis by misusing power for three months.

An HC bench comprised of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Md Delwar Hossain issued the directives following a writ petition filed by a rights body - Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

The bench also issued a rule upon the government to explain within three weeks why it should not be directed to take legal action against the DC for misusing electricity violating government instructions.

Respondents to the writ petition include the establishment secretary, commerce secretary, energy secretary and the DC of Rangpur.

The rights body filed the petition following a press report on April 21.

Advocate Manzil Murshid appeared for the petitioner.

3 involved

FROM PAGE 16
the city's Sutrapur and Mohammad Zakir Hossain alias Kailla Zakir, of Meradia of Jatrabari.

Additional DIG SM Kamal, director of Rab 10, at a press briefing at Rab headquarters said Gautam killing was a preplanned one as the killers had two meetings with Gautam's friend Shamim.

On April 20, SI Gautam, also the second officer of Bangshal Police Station, was gunned down while his friend Shamim sustained bullet injuries to his right hand in Dholaikhal of Sutrapur.

Witness Mona who was a night guard in the area said Zakir shot at SI Gautam while he was searching Haider. Manik fired blank shots when they were fleeing, he said.

He added that Shamim did not receive injuries in the firing.

Major Mahub-ul-Haque of Rab 10 said Haider and Zakir had two meetings with Shamim on April 15 and 17 and Shamim handed over Tk 10,000 to Zakir.

He, however, said the agenda of the meeting could not be known immediately.

Lafarge mining

FROM PAGE 16
dependent on limestone extracted from East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.

The court yesterday asked the Ministry of Environment and Forests to prepare a report on detailed and comprehensive bio-engineering plan.

The ministry last week submitted an affidavit to the court saying it had given a go-ahead to mining on condition that the company works for the welfare of the locals.

The bench also directed Lafarge Umiyam Mining Pvt Ltd, sister concern of France's Lafarge, to come out with a time-bound plan for conservation of flora and fauna of the region, apart from the comprehensive bio-diversity plan.

The ministry directed Lafarge to deposit Rs 90 crores for the creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle, which would be headed by the chief secretary of Meghalaya.

The development projects, which will be solely for the welfare of local community and tribal people, could be in areas like health, education, economy, irrigation and agriculture.

Stop BCL's

FROM PAGE 16
of five other noted educationists who have urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to cut all relations with BCL, the RU teachers said the call has been made in time.

In a joint statement issued yesterday the teachers said, expressing words like "concern, apprehension and despair" is not enough to describe the reality of the educational institutions. The anarchic situation, which prevails at the institutions, is also being infiltrated into the state activities like an incurable disease, it added.

They termed this situation destructive to the state and society.

The signatories are Hasan Azizul Haque, Sanat Kumar Saha, Zulfikar Matin, Mokhlesur Rahman, Shah Newaj Ali, Moloy Bhowmik, Abdul Mazid, Mahbubur Rahman, Jalal Uddin, Chhitta Ranjan Misra, SM Abu Bakar, Ananda Kumar Saha, Sujit Sarker, Shamsuddin Ilias and Hasibul Alam Prodhon.

Pointing out the PM's remark that all achievements of the nation would not go in vein for BCL, it said the govern-

PM leaves

FROM PAGE 16
summit, Bhutan will assume the chair of the eight-nation regional forum comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives and Pakistan.

Hasina will make a statement at the opening session to be held at the Grand Assembly Hall. Leaders of seven other Saarc countries will also make statements at the opening session.

After the opening session, the permanent secretary of the Saarc Development Fund will be inaugurated at the Grand Assembly Hall.

On the second day, the Saarc leaders will go for a summit retreat at Bhutan House, in Saarc Village.

Later, the leaders will make joint royal audience with his majesty the King of Bhutan.

On the sidelines of the summit, Hasina will hold bilateral meetings with South Asian leaders including Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The premier will return home on April 30.

Haider told reporters that Gautam searched him first and Zakir shot at him when he started searching Manik.

But Zakir told the journalists that Haider shot Gautam while he was frisking Manik.

Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan, chief of Rab intelligence, said the case was handed over to DB and he requested them to interrogate Gautam's two friends Shamim and Azam who accompanied him during the incident.

He added that the reason behind the killing will be unearthed if Shamim is interrogated.

However, Haider, Zakir and witness Mona said they did not know the man named Ahmed Ali alias Haider alias Hadi who was arrested by police in connection with the murder.

Indian films

FROM PAGE 16
Daily Star preferring not to be named.

The premier was informed that more than 600 movie houses across the country have remained closed for months not because of the ban on import and display of movies from South Asian countries. Quality local films could be displayed at those halls, said sources who attended the meeting.

She was also told that if the ban is withdrawn, the local film industry might face a disaster. "So, the decision of allowing import and display of South Asian films has to be cancelled," the premier was quoted by a cabinet member as saying.

Another minister noted that the commerce ministry decision might add fuel to the BNP-led opposition camp's possible anti-government and anti-Indian campaign.

Following the ministry's decision, producers, artistes and film industry people staged demonstrations demanding cancellation of it. Prior to yesterday's cabinet meeting, some noted actors and actresses talked to high officials at the Prime Minister's Office urging them to bring to the PM's attention the need to scrap the decision.

Later, the prime minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad conveyed to them the PM's decision that the government would not do anything that could harm the local film industry as well as the artistes.

Anti-graft body

FROM PAGE 1
"We have given our statement regarding the proposed amendments and their implications.

Now it's the responsibility of parliament to make those a law. The Anti-Corruption Commission will function the way parliament wants it to and the framework they set for its functioning," ACC chairman Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star.

The cabinet also approved a five-year jail term and fine for filing a false complaint or case against any individual, and appointment of the ACC secretary by the government.

People playing a key role in fighting corruption observe these amendments would make the ACC laws discriminatory and allow the government executive branch to control the anti-graft body.

After the cabinet meeting, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said the premier emphasised having an effective and accountable commission as her government is strongly committed to curbing corruption.

"We have to ensure an atmosphere in which the Anti-Corruption Commission can work independently," Azad said quoting the premier as saying during the cabinet meeting.

"We have decided in principle that ACC must be accountable to the president since no organisation within the state is above accountability," a senior minister told The Daily Star wishing anonymity.

Speaking on the issue, Transparency International Bangladesh executive director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said: "The amendment of taking prior permission indirectly allows government officials to remain out of ACC reach as it would be complex and time-consuming."

"This also implies that we are treating someone in a different way when no permission is required in filing a case against a politician or any other person," he added.

"It's a clear violation of our Constitution that ensures equal rights of the people."

On ACC being accountable to the president, he said it increases the possibility of partisan political influence on the commission.

observed, "Apparently it may seem good. But it would result in creating deterrence against prosecution of any case of corruption."

Dr Iftekhar believes appointing the ACC secretary by the government has no logic at all and it only establishes administrative control over the anti-graft body.

The cabinet also approved enabling the commission to engage any agency, department and their officials in its investigation, if it wished.

"Following the amendments, ACC can take help of any expert or experienced government officials to probe any allegation," said the premier's press secretary.

Earlier, ACC in its opinion submitted to the government-formed committee stated that taking prior permission would make its laws discriminatory and encourage high officials in the said offices to get involved in rampant corruption.

Currently, the Anti-Corruption Act allows ACC to initiate probe and file cases if the offences are included in its schedule.

Regarding accountability to the president, the commission in its opinion said this amendment would bring the anti-graft body under control of the government's executive branch as the president cannot take any decision without having advice from the prime minister, except for appointing the chief justice and the prime minister.

Cabinet Division Additional Secretary Tariqul Islam was the chief of the government-formed committee that prepared the amendment proposals.

The Cabinet Division now will send the approved amendments to the law ministry for vetting before those are placed in parliament for passage.

Daughter sues

FROM PAGE 16
Complex due to their financial inability.

Shilmoni Chakma, officer-in-charge of Baufal, said police will take lawful action in this regard.

On Saturday, Abdul Aziz of Char Baaret under Baufal upazila, tortured her wife Anwara and gouged her left eye out at night as he smelt kerosene in his supper.