

BATAMUL CARNAGE

Trial begins in new court Sept 19

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Trial of one of the Ramna Batamul carnage cases will begin in a new court in the city on September 19.

After receipt of the case, Judge Fozila Begum of the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday fixed September 19, a fresh date, to start the trial.

The court also directed the jail authorities to produce five accused, including Harkatul Jihad (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, now in jail, before it on the scheduled date.

Maulana Akbar Hussain, now on a High Court bail, was also asked to appear before it while eight others including Maulana Tajuddin, brother of detained BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu, have been absconding since the case was filed.

Judge (in charge) Mohammad Ismail Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court transferred the case to the court of Judge Fozila Begum on May 26 as a speedy trial tribunal having failed to try within the stipulated 135 working days.

Judge Kaniz Akter Nasrina Khanam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 returned the case to Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court on May 24 to dispose of the trial.

The case was transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 on August 18, 2009 for its quick disposal.

So far it has recorded depositions of 50 witnesses, out of 84.

The tribunal, however, could not complete the trial in due time as most of the witnesses, including investigation officers, did not appear before it with their statements within the given timeframe. The case was then transferred to the previous court to complete the trial, the tribunal said.

The other case filed under the Explosive Substances Act is now pending with another Dhaka court.

Ten people were killed and scores injured in the blast at Ramna Batamul during Pahela Baishakh celebration on April 14, 2001.

UGC limits DU budget for next fiscal to Tk 204cr

DU CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has limited the budget for the Dhaka University for fiscal 2010-11 to Tk 203.79 crore, which is the largest in the history of the institution.

Of the total amount, UGC will allocate Tk 177.49 crore as allowances while Tk 26.30 crore will be collected from own resources of the university.

Around 90 percent of the total budget -- Tk 183.25 crore -- will be spent on salaries, allowances and pensions of teachers and other employees of the university.

The remaining amount will be spent on education-related activities -- research, examinations, books, transport facilities for students and laboratories -- and to pay electricity and telephone bills and income and other taxes, said Md Ashraf Uddin, director of accounts.

The last fiscal year's DU budget was Tk 158 crore.

This year, DU authorities placed a proposal for Tk 280 crore budget before the UGC, which limited it to Tk 203.79 crore.

The budget will be placed at the finance committee of the university on June 10 for its recommendations and later it will be approved by the university syndicate, he added.

The senate will finally approve the budget at its annual meeting in late June.



Oblivious of the World No Tobacco Day, a rickshawpuller smokes a cigarette in front of the National Press Club in the city while policemen look on, although a placard has been put up nearby to raise awareness and mark the World No Tobacco Day, which was observed across the globe yesterday.

Vow to resist fanaticism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left-leaning political parties observed the 22nd death anniversary of student leader Shaheed Jamil Aktar Ratan yesterday, with a renewed vow to unitedly resist fanaticism.

Jamil Aktar, a promising student leader of Bangladesh Chhatra Moitri, Rajshahi Medical College unit, was killed on May 31 in 1988 by Jamat-Shibir cadres.

Chhatra Moitri organised a discussion to mark the day.

Moitri leaders said the anti-liberation forces along with BNP is patronising the Islamist militancy in a bid to turn the country into a Taliban state.

Bappaditya Basu, president of Chhatra Moitri, Sadakat Hossain Khan, president of Bangladesh Juba Moitri, among others, addressed the meeting.

Dhaka committed to holding war crimes trial

Shafique tells Kampala confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the government is determined to conduct the trial of the 1971 crimes against humanity in accordance with international legal and human rights standards.

It is committed to bringing an end to the culture of impunity to crimes of genocides, crimes against humanity and war crimes at the national and international levels, he said.

The minister was speaking at the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court (ICC) in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Delegations from 111 countries are participating in the conference, a law ministry press release said yesterday.

"We have initiated the trail of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 war of liberation," he said. "This would bring justice to victims, heal the wound that we are carrying for the last 39 years, end the shameful legacy and help Bangladesh move forward with its agenda of development."

Shafique, himself a lawyer by profession, said Bangladesh is proceeding with the trial of the criminals who committed crimes under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

A tribunal has been set up to independently conduct the trial, and the government has also appointed an investigation agency and a team of prosecutors in accordance with the provisions of the act, he said, adding that the tribunal will be independent in the exercise of its judicial functions and ensure fair trial.

Bangladesh, the law minister said, was one of the 120 countries that voted in favour of adoption of the ICC Rome Statute.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in her previous term in office, signed the Rome Statute on September 16, 1999, he added.

HC bail to BNP ward councillor Arif stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for six weeks a High Court (HC) verdict that granted bail to BNP ward councillor Arif Islam Arif in the August 21 grenade attack case.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC Justice SK Sinha also asked the government to file a regular leave-to-appeal petition with the SC against the HC verdict within this six weeks' period.

AHC bench on May 26 in a verdict granted permanent bail to detained Arif in the August 21 grenade attack case.

The government yesterday filed a petition with the SC, seeking stay on the verdict.

Attorney General Mahubul Alam appeared for the government, while Advocate TH Khan argued for Arif.

Schoolboy killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bus rear-ended a motorbike killing a class-X student and injuring his cousin near Kamalapur Inland Container Depot late last night.

Rahatuz Zaman, 16, of Briton High School in Dania, died on the spot and Zaman, 22, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Police and witnesses said the bus hit the bike at South Kamalapur when the two were returning to Zaman's Maniknagar home around 10:30pm. Zaman was riding the bike and Rahatuz was on the pillion.

Motijheel Police Station Sub-Inspector Badaruddin Khan said the bus sped away after the accident.

World No Tobacco Day observed

BSS, Dhaka

The World No Tobacco Day was observed across the country yesterday as elsewhere across the world in a befitting manner.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) selected this year's theme for the day as "Gender and Tobacco" with an emphasis on marketing to women.

Various programmes were chalked out to mark the day at different places of the country including the capital city. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also gave a message on the occasion.

On the occasion, a number of 13 anti-tobacco organisations including Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) and Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA) jointly organised a colourful rally in the city.

Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on Women and children affairs ministry Meher Afroz Chumki, CAB General Secretary Advocate Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan, coordinator of Unnayan Samannaya Chimmoy Mutshuddi and Syed Mahubul Alam of WBB Trust addressed the rally.

Armed police to be deployed at airport from today

KAILASH SARKAR

Armed Police Battalion (APBn) is supposed to be deployed from today at Shahjalal International Airport in the capital in addition to two other security agencies performing duties there.

The government recently decided to deploy 1,100 APBn personnel at the airport to beef up security and reduce harassment of passengers, sources mentioned.

At present 1,350 security personnel -- 750 from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and 600 from Ansar are deployed at the airport.

Contacted yesterday, airport director Wing Commander Shahidur Rahman said, "We have not yet received any directive from the government about the role of the CAAB and Ansar personnel who have been carrying out security duties."

He mentioned that of the security personnel from CAAB, over 350 are permanent employees and about 300 others work on daily basis. The Ansar members are on hire. And all of them have been trained by the CAAB.

The APBn personnel will also need similar training he said.

Chief Security Officer at the airport Nurul Islam said, "We have heard that APBn personnel are being deployed for security purposes. But I do not know whether we will discharge our duties in coordination with them."

Sources said that in the wake of terrorist threats recently, the CAAB proposed to the government forming a security unit under it. The government however decided to deploy APBn, including 100 women members of the force.

Asked about this, APBn chief Deputy Inspector General Mahubul Mohasin said they would deploy their personnel at the airport in phases.

APBn Senior Superintendent Hasan Ul Haider, who is coordinator of APBn at the airport said, "On the first day, we will deploy around 450 personnel."

JOBS OF 312 EMPLOYEES HC asks govt to maintain status quo for 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to maintain status quo for three months on the employment of 312 fourth class employees serving under different projects at the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD).

The court also issued a rule upon the government to explain within three weeks why it should not be directed to include their jobs in the revenue budget.

An HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore came up with the order following two writ petitions filed by the employees seeking a direction from this court on the government to include their jobs in the revenue budget.

The petitioners stated in their petitions that they had been serving under around 20 different projects of LGRD ministry for five to 21 years, but their jobs were not confirmed.

They also stated that the government has already absorbed the jobs of few hundred employees like them in the revenue budget.

The secretaries of LGRD ministry, finance ministry and establishment ministry and high officials have been asked to comply with the order and reply to the rule.

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