



Veteran singer Sohrab Hossain inaugurates a programme celebrating the World Music Day by releasing balloons at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

1971 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Trial to end culture of impunity

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will hold the trial of perpetrators of 1971 crimes against humanity to put an end to the culture of impunity and heal the wound of the nation, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday.

The Bangladesh nation has been carrying the stigma of crimes against humanity and war crimes for 39 years, he said, adding that the rule of law never permits impunity in any civilized country of the world.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at a discussion on 'International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973: Crimes against Humanity' organ-

ized by the Democratic Lawyers Association of Bangladesh (DLAB) at the Supreme Court Bar Association auditorium.

Shafique Ahmed said international standards will be maintained and all relevant legal procedures will be followed during the trial, so that no question can be raised about the fairness, transparency and neutrality of the trial.

The government has already started the process for the trial, he said, adding that the culprits must be put on trial to ensure justice for the victims.

DLAB President M Azizul Haq presided over the roundtable addressed by Cecilia

Wikstrom, member of the European Parliament, William Sloan, president of Canadian Branch of Jurist Association of America, BB Dutta, former speaker of Indian Lok Sabha, BB Chowdhury, president of International Forum for Secular Bangladesh, Dr Mansur Khan, a Bangladeshi expatriate in the USA, former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru MP, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, Awami League presidium member Yusuf Hossain Humayun and DLAB General Secretary Sheikh Akhtarul Islam.

The foreign participants expressed solidarity with the government in its efforts to hold a fair and neutral trial.

BDR MUTINY AT PILKHANA

Special court reads out charges against 143 more accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Special Court-5 trying BDR mutiny at the Pilkhana headquarters read out yesterday charges against 143 more accused personnel from 24 Rifles Battalion.

This raised to 183 the number of accused from this battalion against whom charges were read out in last two days.

The total number of accused from the battalion was initially 668, but one was exempted later as he died.

All the accused were produced before the court.

The Special Court-5 headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Rafiqul Islam resumed hearing at Darbar Hall around 11:00am and continued it till 3:00pm.

The court adjourned the hearing till 10:00am today.

The Special Court-5 is one of the six courts formed after the bloody mutiny at Pilkhana that left 74 people including 57 army officials dead.

BDR's Dhaka sector commander Col Aziz Ahmed told journalists after yesterday's hearing that attempts were made also in 1991 to stage a mutiny in Dhaka and Naogaon, and officers were given death threats. Some of the rebels involved in the attempted mutiny also led the 2009

mutiny.

He however did not name them for the sake of on-going investigations.

"I think if the soldiers involved in the attempted rebellion in 1991 were brought to book, the 2009 mutiny would not have taken place, and the loopholes of the BDR law would have surfaced and got corrected earlier," Col Aziz said.

Mentioning that punishment for any member of a disciplined force for such offence is death sentence, he said they have proposed death penalty for the accused in BDR mutiny.

CABINET OKAYS BDR ACT

The cabinet yesterday approved Bangladesh Rifles (Amendments) Act 2010 aimed at facilitating the ongoing trial of BDR mutiny.

The amendments provide that a BDR officer not below director level will head a court conducting trial of the mutiny.

Previously, the BDR director general had to head the BDR courts formed for the trial.

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told journalists about approval of the amendments after a regular cabinet meeting at the Secretariat with Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Earlier, the cabinet approved in principle the Border Guard Bangladesh

bill 2010. The cabinet will give its final approval later, and then the bill will be placed in parliament for enactment.

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2 new posts in police stations soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police is going to introduce two posts of inspectors in each police station except those in metropolitan areas in order to reduce workload and ensure quality investigations into cases.

Information officer AKM Kamrul Ahsan of police headquarters yesterday said the senior inspector of the two will serve as the officer-in-charge (OC) in a police station while the other will monitor investigations.

Currently an OC is to monitor case investigations, ensure protocols of the very important persons (VIP) and run the administration, which hamper investigations.

Due to lack of proper investigations, many criminals go unpunished, he said. The cases also pile up in the police station due to delay in investigation, he added.

Against such backdrop the government has decided to create one more post of inspector in each police station.

He, however, has not mentioned the time when such posting will start.



Freedom fighters stage a sit-in at the liberation war affairs ministry in the city yesterday demanding that the names of fake freedom fighters and razakars be dropped from the list of war heroes.

Menon blasts govt for failing to fulfil electoral pledges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rashed Khan Menon, president of the Workers Party, a component of the AL-led grand alliance, strongly criticised the government yesterday for its failure to implement electoral pledges in the last 16 months.

Participating in the budget discussion in parliament, he also criticised the ruling AL for its 'go alone' policy, saying that it has been running the state without paying heed to the opinions of the alliance partners.

Menon, also the chief of the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry, said that lack of concerted efforts has raised doubts among the grand alliance partners as to whether the trial of war criminals will be held.

It will also be difficult to implement the government's development projects and 'Vision 2021' if coordinated efforts are not made to this end, he warned.

About power and gas crisis, Menon said it is unfortunate that the government could not resolve the crisis as yet.

He criticised the government move to encourage installation of rental and peaking power plants.

The Workers Party chief also criticised the government move to extract coal through open pit mining, saying that Sheikh Hasina had opposed this method when she was the opposition leader.

Menon said the ruling AL in its electoral manifesto promised to set up a land reform commission, but no step has been taken to this end so far.

He described the proposal to impose tax on saving certificates as one of the weak points in the National Budget for 2010-11.

He also decried extortion, crimes and tender manipulation by the ruling party men.

Participating in the discussion on the proposed budget, a number of ruling AL lawmakers lauded the proposed budget and termed it a people- and development-oriented budget.

Road crashes kill 2

METRO DESK

At least two people were killed and 42 others injured in separate road accidents in Jhenidah, Madaripur and Lalmonirhat yesterday.

Our correspondent from Jhenidah adds: A helper of a truck was killed in a road crash on Chandpur-Bagmara bridge under Sadar upazila in Jhenidah yesterday.

The identity of the helper could not be known immediately.

Police and locals said, the accident occurred when a sand-laden truck from Pakshey Ghat was going to Magura as its driver lost his control over the steering, leaving the helper dead on the spot. The driver was injured.

The driver has been rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital. On information police reached the spot and recovered the body and sent it to Jhenidah Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy.

A correspondent from Madaripur reports: At least one person was killed and two others were injured in a road accident in Natun bus stand area under the Sadar upazila in the district yesterday.

The victim was identified as Rabiul Talukder, 20.

Police said the accident took place at around 12:00pm, when a Takerhat-bound local passenger bus from Madaripur hit a motorcycle on the Madaripur-Shariatpur highway in Natun

busstand area.

Rabiul died on the spot, leaving Monir and Salam critically injured.

The injured were admitted to the Madaripur Sadar hospital.

Our correspondent from Lalmonirhat says: At least 40 passengers were injured when a passenger bus fell into a roadside ditch in the Sarpukur area of Aditmari upazila yesterday.

In Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway at around 5.45 pm yesterday.

Of them, 10 critically injured were taken to Aditmari Upazila health complex and Lalmonirhat Sadar hospital. Rests took primary treatment locally.

The critically injured are Mohana Rani, 25, her husband Nirmol Sarker, 35, Ashrafal Haque, 30, Maminul Islam, 28, Salam, 30, Hazrat Ali, 42, Aditi Sarker, 35, Nehanur, 12, Beauty, 10, and Khleque Miah, 36, police said.

Police and the injured said a Rangpur-bound passenger bus of Ballobandhu Paribahan from Patgram with 45 to 48 passengers fell into the roadside ditch as its driver was talking over mobile phone.

Injured Ashrafal Islam, 35, of Chaparhat village of Kaliganj upazila said, "We the passengers in the bus requested the driver not to talk over mobile phone as bus was running. But he did not listen to our request causing the accident."

Teenage domestic help kills self

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage domestic help allegedly committed suicide at Pallabi in the city yesterday.

The dead identified as Asma Akhter, 15, used to work in the household of Tahera Parveen, wife of expatriate Rakib Hossain, at a flat on the 5th floor of a six-story building Victoria Castle at Mirpur-12.

Tahera took Asma to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 2:00pm where on-duty doctors declared her dead.

Tahera said Asma, who hailed from Narail, had been working in her house for the last six months. She, however, could not give address of Asma's village home.

She said Asma had gone to the bathroom but did not come out even after a long time. Then she broke open the door of the bathroom and found Asma hanging from the ceiling with a scarf.

Pallabi police station officer-in-charge (OC) Iqbal Hossain said Asma had an affair with a youth of a neighbouring house. They suspect that Asma might have committed suicide as the house owner scolded her over the matter, Iqbal said.

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