

Pabna admin

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"It seems police on that day worked for the attackers, not for the government."

Moirta, also a journalist, said all the good activities in the district have been diminished by the incident. Senior AL leaders should immediately act to resolve it, he added.

Talking about the view exchange meeting, Prince said he has already complained against the DC to his party high-ups. "Being a government servant, he (DC) can't organise a meeting that goes against the government, and tarnishes the image of the ruling party," he told The Daily Star.

He alleged the DC invited some selected persons who would speak in his favour.

Meanwhile, police yesterday arrested Jony, also known as Dim (egg) Jony, a BCL activist, in a case filed in connection with the attack. With this, six out of 31 persons accused in the two cases have been arrested.

Freedom fighter and veteran AL supporter Baby Islam questioned police administration's ability to provide security to general public when security of government staff is "at stake".

Criticising inaction of the police during the attack, Baby said the attackers must be punished.

Mosharaf Hossain, additional superintendent of police in Pabna, said at the meeting the role of police during the incident is being investigated. He, however, could not explain the police failure to arrest the attackers immediately.

"We've intensified drives by setting up check posts at different points so the attackers can't flee," Mosharaf, who is now supervising the two cases filed against the attackers, told the meeting.

Pabna chamber of commerce Vice-president Mahub-ul Alam Mukul said he cannot accept that the people of Pabna will be held hostage by a small group of "criminals".

Zakir Hossain, Workers Party's district secretary, hoped the criminals would get punished.

District Mohila AL Joint Secretary Shamsunnahar Rekha said the crisis will worsen further if the administration keeps dragging its feet on the incident.

She termed the attack

shameful, but claimed many innocent people were implicated in the cases. "We should not blame all for a few bad people," she said.

Earlier at the meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) (general) Bijoy Bhushan Pal, ADC (revenue) Imam Uddin Kabir, ADC (education) Saïdur Rahman and magistrate Israt Farzana, who were on duty in the two examination centres, described the attack.

DCAFM Monjur Kadir said, "I'll not bow down to any pressure. I'll not allow irregularities and corruption."

He also said one of prime minister's personal secretaries called him on Wednesday night from New York to know what is happening, and he [DC] clarified his position.

Commander of Pabna district Muktijoddha Sangsad Habibur Rahman Habib, Pabna Krishak League president Shahidur Rahman, district Jubo League secretary Ragib Hasan Tipu, Sathia upazila chairman Nizamuddin, Chatmohor pourashova chairman, also a BNP leader, Prof Abdul Mannan, educationist Shibujit Nag, Principal of Pabna College Mahtab Uddin Biswas, among others, addressed the meeting.

Meanwhile, around 200 people, many of them Jubo League and Chhatra League activists, brought out a procession in the district and chanted slogans against the DC in presence of the police.

They also protested the arrests of some of the accused, and demanded their immediate release.

Four expelled, one show-caused

Meanwhile, the central council of BCL last night issued a show-cause notice against its Pabna district unit president asking him to reply within three days why organisational action will not be taken against him for his involvement with the attack," BCL president Mahmud Hasan Ripon told The Daily Star.

The four expelled leaders are Sheikh Sabuj, Mohammad Jony (already arrested), Abdul Mannan and Sheikh Sanwar.

Stalker stabs college girl

UNB, Savar

A college girl was injured in an attack by a stalker yesterday by turning down his love proposal in Savar.

Police said Sumon, son of Golam Mostafa, resident of local pourasabha area, hit Mukta Akhter with a sharp weapon near Jatri Bazaar Mosque while she was going to her college, leaving her critically injured in the morning.

Local people caught the youth, gave him mass beating and later handed him over to police.

Police later admitted the youth to upazila health complex.

The injured girl, XII class student of Savar Model College and resident of the poura area, was admitted to a local clinic.

Sumon used to stalk the girl, daughter of school teacher Abdul Majid, on her way to college since long.

Rab man

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bullet when he was sitting in a patrol pick-up van of Rab-1 with five other members, and the van was crossing a check post on the north side of the US embassy on Gulshan-Baridhara Link Road at 7:40am, Rab sources said.

Rab-1 Commander Lt Col Rashidul Alam told The Daily Star that the incident seemed suicide to them, but they don't know the reason behind it.

The Rab members in the van suddenly heard a firing sound and found that Milon sustained a bullet injury, he said. Milon's colleagues rushed him to United Hospital at Gulshan where doctors declared him dead.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. After the post mortem, morgue sources said, a bullet pierced Milon's chin and went out through the skull of his head.

Lutfur Rahman, deputy assistant director of Rab-1, filed an unnatural death case with Gulshan Police Station. In the case statement, he mentioned that Milon committed suicide firing from his own rifle.

Gulshan police, however, were investigating the incident.

Sub-Inspector KM Ashrafuddin, investigating officer of the police station, told this correspondent that they were investigating to know whether it was a case of misfiring or suicide.

The Rab-1 commander said Milon had joined Rab from police about three months back.

Meanwhile, Milon's wife Lipi Khatun said she suspects that her husband was murdered.

"There is no reason behind his (Milon) committing suicide," she commented.

Media asked

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comments of some individuals.

Azad was addressing a national seminar on Right to Information Act at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Management and Resources Development Initiative arranged the event.

The minister's observation came following recent statements of Syed Modasser Ali, health affairs adviser to the prime minister, and also the media bashing by some ruling alliance leaders.

Syed Modasser Ali on Monday said the health department wouldn't provide any information to journalists.

He, however, later told The Daily Star that he specifically had talked about tender evaluation of the civil surgeon's office in Gopalganj, and not on the information of the health ministry in general.

Speaking at Gopalganj Sadar Hospital, Modasser also said none outside the ruling Awami League would be selected for 13,350 posts of community clinics.

On Tuesday, a number of Awami League-led alliance lawmakers and two ministers threw up a barrage of flak at several national dailies during a parliament session.

They demanded action against the daily Prothom Alo and its editor for "tarnishing the image of the House and its members".

They also questioned the role of some media during the state of emergency. According to them, "information terrorism" is now taking place in the country and legal action must be taken against such activities.

However, the information minister said the government is very supportive of the press freedom and trying to establish the right to information.

Hasina wants new MDG

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the new economic MDG would be the base and core of all MDGs," she said at the first roundtable on 'Poverty, Hunger, and Gender Equality' at the General Assembly Hall of the UN Headquarters yesterday evening.

Termining poverty the number one enemy of mankind and source of most social disorders and terrorism, the premier said development partners have a vital role to play in combating the poverty and its offshoots.

"Indeed, when the MDGs were being adopted, only social issues were considered and not financing of the same, which is so essential for implementing the social targets," the premier said.

Hasina, who was a signatory to the Millennium Declaration containing the eight-point MDGs adopted by the UNGA in 2000, said MDG-1 had three specific targets to halve the proportion of people whose income was less than \$1 per day by 2015, achieve full and productive employment for all, including women and young people by 2015, and halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015.

"Unfortunately, we have failed to achieve any one of these three targets," she said, adding another billion people have been pushed below the poverty line due to the recent global economic meltdown.

The PM said the MDG report depicts reduction of world poverty from 46 percent to 27 percent and in South Asia from 49 percent to 39 percent by 2015.

"The progress has been different in different countries and even within an individual country depending on policies and availability of funds to implement them."

In Bangladesh, Hasina said, the government has adopted extensive programmes targeting poverty while micro-credit and micro-financing have been intensified.

She said a new measure has been introduced to provide assistance to poor farmers and rural folks for opening a bank account with a nominal deposit of Tk 10 or 14 cents provided to them by the government.

Hasina said the purpose is to enable them to learn handling money now loaned to them through their bank accounts at a substantially reduced rate of interest, and also to integrate them with the banking system.

She said this would facilitate them to develop agriculture, small farming and other small businesses. Another innovative measure taken is to provide

Tax return

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A high official of the NBR said they will analyse the situation in the last couple of days for submission of tax returns, and might seek the prime minister's directive in this regard.

The finance minister is now in Washington, and he is due to return home by the middle of next month.

Education policy

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eight education commissions and committees have been formed to formulate an education policy. But their recommendations were not implemented due to the lack of political will, Nahid said at a number of public occasions.

And in the absence of a policy, some kind of discrimination has developed in the country's education system, officials concerned point out.

To establish a unified schooling system and bring all the students irrespective of their religions, genders, physical limitations, socio-economic condition and geographic locations under one education system, the government formed a 16-member committee on April 6 last year to formulate a policy.

The committee reviewed the reports of Shamsul Haque's education committee of 1997 and Quadrat-Khuda's education commission of 1974, and came up with the draft report on September 2 last year.

The education minister on many occasions said the government would start implementing the policy from January 2010. But that could not happen, as the draft policy sparked protest from some religion-based political parties and organisations.

The ministry then

employment to one person from each poor family over the next five years.

Moreover, she said education has been made compulsory and free up to primary level. An MDG has been fulfilled with removal of gender inequality in net enrolment of boys and girls in primary and secondary schools.

As for MDG 3, she said it targets elimination of all obstacles, which deprive women from social, political, economic and state facilities. In Bangladesh, she said, an era opened encouraging women to participate in politics, administration, armed services and all other professions to bring them at par with men.

"Our women are thriving in all professions and forms 85 percent of workers or over 2 million, in our growing garments industry. MDG 3 is one where I am proud to say, Bangladesh is on target," said Hasina amidst cheers from the delegations attending the roundtable.

The premier said progress of all MDGs can only continue in a steady world economic condition and its stable influence on national economies, and indeed, on sustained, predictable flow of funds to the developing and especially to the least developed world.

Crackdown

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illegal structures in the area.

The team, consisted of 60 police personnel and other officials, conducted the drive with around 100 labourers and a bulldozer.

The drive took place in pursuance of the High Court directives for river demarcation and eviction of the encroachers in the river areas.

Aug 21 attack

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But CID Special Superintendent of Police Abdul Kahar Akond, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, prayed for a three-day remand for Zandal and also submitted a forwarding report where he said Zandal admitted his involvement with supplying grenades used on the rally.

The forwarding report also said, after consultation with Hujji chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, Zandal brought grenades from Pintu, another accused in the case, and threw those on the rally on August 21, 2004 that AL Chief Sheikh Hasina was addressing.

Moreover, Zandal had given important information about the grenade attacks. So, he needs to be remanded to realise more clues, the IO said.

The case was filed for killing people during the grenade attack and another case was filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

Zandal, who was arrested from Gazipur on February 14, 2008, was earlier remanded for 14 days in the two cases.

At least 23 people, including Ivy Rahman, were killed and scores were injured in the grenade attacks on the Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

ANTI-POLYBAG DRIVE Equipment seized from 2 factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE), yesterday, concluded its six-day drive against polythene bags by seizing equipment worth Tk 18 lakh used in manufacturing bags from two factories in the city's Lalbagh area.

Babu Plastic Industry and Mintu Miah Polythene Karkhana were sealed, last Monday, for producing and selling polythene bags illegally.

Yesterday, DoE officials revisited the factories, hauled the equipment in two lorries and brought them to the DoE office.

"The equipment will be destroyed soon," said Sukumar Biswas, director of DoE, Dhaka division, who led the drive.

"Cases have already been filed against the owners of the factories who are currently absconding" he added.

Executive Magistrate Mohammad Al Amin is conducting the drive along with the police and other DoE officials.

Since the drive began on Saturday, the DoE has fined 45 shop owners and polythene traders a total of Tk 3,13,000 for producing, storing or trading the poly bags that were banned eight years ago.

They have also distributed posters, leaflets and stickers to spread awareness regarding the adverse effects of polythene on the environment, during the drive.

"Fresh drives will be carried out regularly to discourage the sale and use of poly bags but we need to refrain from using them ourselves," he added.

The department has conducted over a 100 drives against polythene and sealed 22 polythene factories since 2009.

Currently, the maximum penalty under the Environment Conservation Act 1995 for manufacturing and marketing polythene bags is a 10 years' rigorous imprisonment, or a maximum fine of Tk 10 lakh, or both.

Sukumar Biswas added, they would appeal to the government to amend the laws in a way so that the lawbreakers face more serious consequences.

Meanwhile, the government is also enacting a new law to enforce the use of jute bags in packaging foodstuff and agricultural products, in a hope that the law, once passed, would significantly reduce the use of polythene, jute ministry officials said.

Truck-car

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Dhrubo, 5, brother Sondhan, 16, relative Liza, 22, and the car driver whose name could not be known immediately.

The injured, Rana, 18, was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police and locals said the Dhaka bound jute-laden truck rammmed into the car at Bathuli around 10:00pm. They added the victims were on their way to attend the bridal party of a relative at Satura.

Witnesses said the truck driver and his associate ran away leaving their vehicle on the road.

Dhamrai Police Station officer-in-charge said they had seized the truck.

Fighter jet

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Station Officer-in-Charge Aminur Rashid said, quoting witnesses.

After rescuing the pilot, local boatmen brought him to Juldha Matabbar Ghat. Later, an Air Force helicopter rushed there and took him away, added the OC.

"The aircraft appeared to develop technical problem and plunged into the river after faltering in the air," said Yakub Ali, a driver of a private speedboat and also a witness.

"However, the pilot jumped immediately before the aircraft plunged into the river Karnaphuli," he said adding, "I along with two other boatmen-Mohiuddin and Yusuf- rescued the pilot with a boat from the river."

An ISPR press release said Chief of the Air Force Air Marshal Shah Mohammad Ziaur Rahman reached Chittagong from Dhaka by a helicopter and inquired about the condition of the pilot. A probe into the accident was underway.

Rescue teams of Bangladesh Navy and Coastguard were searching the river to salvage the wreckage of the jet, said the sources.

The aircraft plunged away from the port channel and it will not hamper movement of vessels to and from Chittagong port, said Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Secretary Syed Farhaduddin Ahmed.

Earlier, on June 16 last year, an FT-6 training aircraft of the BAF crashed into the Karnaphuli river channel at Patenga immediately after taking off from the Sergeant Zahurul Haq Airbase. Pilot Flight Lt Abdullah-Al-Mamun also ejected from the jet with a parachute safely.

Al Jazeera accuses Nato over Afghan reporter arrests

AFP, Kabul

Al Jazeera television yesterday accused NATO of trying to suppress its coverage of the war in Afghanistan after arresting two of its cameramen this week.

The Doha-based television network, which has been critical of Nato and the Afghan government, said the two Afghans were detained as part of "an attempt by the ISAF leadership to suppress its comprehensive coverage" of the conflict.

Nato's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said earlier this week that it had "captured a suspected Taliban media and propaganda facilitator, who participated in filming election attacks".

Al Jazeera named the journalists as Mohammad Nader, detained in the southern province of Kandahar on Wednesday, and Rahmatullah Nekzad, who was arrested on Monday in Ghazni province, south of Kabul.

The network provided AFP with a transcript of a telephone conversation with ISAF, in which a spokesman confirms the arrest of the cameramen and accuses them of "propaganda facilitation" on behalf of the insurgents.

Both provinces, especially Kandahar, are hotspots in the

BCL men

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already been opened at 3:00pm for counting. The deadline for dropping tenders was 1:00pm.

The BCL activists became furious at the refusal and gave threats to the WDB official. They also damaged his table in a rage.

On-duty policemen there forced the BCL men to leave the WDB office.

Additional law enforcers were deployed there after the incident.

Ahsanul Haque, officer-in-charge of Chapainawabganj Police Station, said the WDB authority had not lodged any complaint with them about the incident.

BCL leader Rakibul Hasan Biru denied any involvement with the incident saying he was not there when it happened. He claimed that he went to the WDB office after hearing about the incident.

No discussion

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briefing at the party's central office in Naya Paltan today.

Meeting sources said the standing committee members discussed participating in parliamentary by-election at Chandpur-1, attack by ruling party men on government official at Pabna and missing of forward councillor Chowdhury Alam's for six months.

Party's top leaders in principle agreed to take part in the Chandpur-1 by-election and primarily selected Ehsanul Haque Milon as the candidate.

The election commission on Wednesday declared the constituency vacant following a Supreme Court verdict.

As per the committee decision senior leader Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, MK Anwar and Rafiqul Islam Mia will oversee the issues regarding by-poll.

The party also decided to form a committee to find out the government failure in last two years and draw comparisons with the BNP ruling to place before the countrymen.

Special body

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make it to yesterday's meeting.

Constitution experts Justice Syed Amirul Islam, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, former attorney generals Rafique-ul Huq and Tawfiq Newaz and Awami League lawmaker Fazle Noor Taposh attended the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan.

The experts told the committee that they had been invited to the meeting on a short notice and would need time to give opinions on the matter, said a source close to the meeting.

"We hope all invited experts will join the next meeting. We will seek opinions from experts and proceed with the task of preparing proposals for changes to the constitution," Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the special committee, told a press briefing at the Parliament Media Centre.

He said they discussed the consistencies and inconsistencies between the High Court and Appellate Division's verdicts on the fifth amendment to the constitution.

Suranjit, also chief of the parliamentary body on the Ministry of Law, Justice and

Taliban insurgency that has raged for nine years in a bid to evict foreign troops and bring down the Western-backed government of President Hamid Karzai.

The governor of Kandahar, Toryalai Wesa, confirmed Nader's arrest, telling AFP: "We are doing our best to win his release as soon as possible."

Al Jazeera accused ISAF, which has almost 150,000 Nato and US troops in Afghanistan fighting the insurgency, of targeting the network and threatening staff in Afghanistan "to change the editorial line".

The network said it was committed to covering all sides of the story in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, ISAF and the Afghan government.

Al Jazeera said ISAF had obliquely accused the two men of working with the insurgency to spread Taliban propaganda and intimidate ordinary Afghans.

"The insurgents use propaganda, often delivered through news organisations as a way to influence and in many cases intimidate the Afghan population," it quoted ISAF as saying.

BDR protests

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requested them [BSF] to stop such incidents," BDR DG Maj Gen Md Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The BSF personnel requested us to restrict the crossing of borders after the evening," he added.

The BDR DG said, "It's true that most of the shooting incidents took place in Indian territory after dark. We'll now impose restriction on crossing the border at night. The local administrations will also be notified on the matter."

During the five-day talks at BDR headquarters at Pilkhana, Dhaka, the two forces will exchange lists of criminals hiding in India and Bangladesh.

"We have agreed to improve our relation," said Maj Gen Md Rafiqul Islam.

Issues of adversely possessed land, construction of illegal structure, abduction of Bangladeshi people by BSF men were discussed at the meet.

The conference agenda also includes preventing smuggling, human trafficking and improving law and order in the border areas.

The BDR DG said they talked about the Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) and expressed concern over its inactivity. The JBWG has not held any meeting since 2006. "If the JBWG activities resume, it will help to improve law and order in the areas."

The BDR DG also observed, "As many places along the borders are not demarcated, members of BDR and BSF remain confused about their territory."

BSF DG Raman Srivastava is leading a 20-member delegation while BDR chief a 22-member team in the conference.

At the end of the first session, both DGs called on Home Minister Sahara Khatun and State Minister for Home Shamsul Islam Tuku at the secretariat in the afternoon.

Six-storey hazard

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foundation using metal pipes, wood and corrugated iron sheets. He also violated the Building Construction Act 1952 by housing a chemical factory in a residential building.

Considering life and property risks, Rajuk directed Jahiruddin to demolish the structure at his own cost using skilled manpower under the supervision of expert engineers.

Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda told The Daily Star that the building would be demolished without delay and stern actions would be taken against its owner.

Abul Kalam Azad, second officer of Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station, told The Daily Star that if the owner did not start demolishing the house right away, Rajuk, as he was notified, would bring down the structure from Sunday.

During a visit yesterday several residents told The Daily Star that the caretaker of the building told them to pay two month's rent if they are to leave. The families living there pay Tk 2,200-2,500 a month for each room.

This risky building happened to be a two-storey structure in the first place. Last January-February the owner expanded the structure to six storeys using corrugated iron sheets on wooden frame.

Bricks were used only for the exterior of the first two floors while rest of the structure was constructed of wood,

Afghan president not depressive, says his office

AFP, Kabul

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's office hit out yesterday at claims in a new book that he is being treated for manic depression, calling them inflammatory and an attack on his personal integrity.

The allegations appear in the book "Obama's Wars," by legendary US journalist Bob Woodward, which says the illness and its treatment contribute to Washington's unease with him. "are not new" and are raised "whenever President Karzai has taken a stance on issues of Afghanistan's national interest" that returned him for a second five-year term.

iron sheets and