

Train burnt

FROM PAGE 1
The dead are -- Shaban Mirza, 60, son of late Sharif Mirza, Suruzzaman, son of late Maram Ali, both of Bagmati; Faruk, son of late Abul Nayem of Halaakhandi; Thandu, son of Abul Hasnat of Beltoid; and Baset of Kayempur, Tangail. Ages of four of the deceased could not be ascertained immediately.

The railway authorities could not give any information about the whereabouts of the train driver till filing of this report at 9:00pm.

All 11 compartments of the train were completely burnt as the fire brigade was obstructed by the mob from reaching the spot, 150 yards away from the rally stage, where the train finally stopped.

The incident occurred when the intercity train reached the rally venue around 3:05pm, but the ralliers on the tracks did not get enough time to get off it.

At least four persons were killed on the spot, and few others were severely injured with some of their legs cut off by the train wheels, while another died on the way to a hospital.

BNP supporters said they did not hear the horn of the train which was not slowed at all near the rally point, although that is also a signal post.

Shahidul, 35, an ice-cream vendor who was standing near the spot, told The Daily Star that the horn could not be heard as the loudspeakers at the rally were also blaring with addresses.

Sohel Rana, president of a local unit of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, the BNP backed student organisation, claimed the train was in full speed when it ploughed through the crowd.

After the accident, the train was slowed down, and some of the ralliers jumped onto it and started beating the driver, witnesses said.

Managing Director of the Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway Anar Mahmud said over the phone that they did not receive any application for permission to hold any rally on the railway track, and they did not give any such permission either.

Iqbal Hasan Mahmuduku, president of the district unit of BNP, said there was no train scheduled to pass through the area yesterday between 3:00pm and 6:00pm.

Sirajganj Superintendent of Police Mosharrar Hossain said the rally organisers did not ask for police permission to hold the event near the tracks, they only requested for police protection, and forces were deployed accordingly.

When asked why the rally was allowed to be held so close to the tracks, the SP said, "If we wouldn't allow, they would say that the government put obstacles to holding the rally."

The ralliers turned into a mob right after the incident and started throwing stones at the train, many of them got on it and started beating the crew. Passengers alleged that the mob looted their luggage and other valuables. A group of people also vandalised many buses on nearby streets.

Police and Rapid Action Battalion rushed to the spot

Mahmudur

FROM PAGE 16
This judgement after hearing a contempt of court petition for a commentary headlined "Swadhin bicharer name tamasa" (farce in the name of fair trial) published in his daily on May 10.

A three member-bench headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque gave the judgement.

The contempt petition was filed by SC lawyers Reaz Uddin Khan and Kazi Mynul Hassan.

Earlier, on August 19, the SC convicted Mahmudur of contempt of court and sentenced him to six months' imprisonment, and fined him Tk 1 lakh.

The verdict followed a petition filed by the same lawyers -- Reaz and Mynul -- for a report headlined "Chamber manei sarkar pakkhe stay" [Chamber bench means stay order in favour of the government] published in his daily on April 21.

The SC verdict yesterday said Mahmudur was scandalised this court through such commentary, and committed contempt of court.

The court however said it has taken the matter leniently. Earlier in the morning, the jail authorities produced detained Mahmudur before the court as per its earlier order.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam appeared for the government and an Additional Attorney General MK Rahman for the petitioners. Barrister Abdur Razzak argued for Mahmudur and Hasmat.

right after the accident. Police charged batons, and fired at least ten rounds of teargas shells and the same number of rubber bullets to bring the situation under control.

The passengers panicked, and a number of them were injured trying to jump off. Majority of the injured were women and children.

Shamsunnahar, a passenger whose forehead was bleeding from being hit by a stone, told The Daily Star that some young men entered their compartment and looted their luggage. "They looted my bag and purse," she said.

Bimal Kumar Chaki, officer-in-charge of the Government Railway Police Station of Sirajganj, said over the phone that the mob burnt the whole train including the engine room.

They threw brickbats at police and did not let the fire brigade reach the train in blaze, he added.

"The gateman at the nearby crossing had put down the iron bar, but the train ploughed through the crowd after passing through the crossing. The accident occurred as the place was overcrowded," he said.

The crossing is a very busy one, around twenty trains pass through it daily, and everybody knows that, he added.

As Khaleda started her speech at 4:38pm, the train was burning nearby with a dead body lying next to the tracks. The fire brigade was blocked from reaching the burning train by the mob. And when she ended the speech in about 45 minutes, black smoke was still rising from the smouldering skeleton of the locomotive.

Aminul Haque, deputy commissioner of Sirajganj, told reporters in a briefing in his office around 9:00pm that a four-member probe committee with Additional District Magistrate Dipak Ranjan Odhikari as the convenor was formed to investigate the accident. The committee was given seven days to submit a report, he said.

The other members of the committee are Assistant Superintendent of Police Delwar Hossain, Bimal Kumar Chaki, and Divisional Transport Officer of the Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway Shahidul Islam.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 16
Babu was killed by ruling Awami League activists on Friday.

After addressing a student mass rally in Sirajganj, Khaleda came to Babu's house at about 7:00 pm.

Ctg port

FROM PAGE 16
However, leaders of Dock Bandar Sramik Karmachari Federation decided to halt its movement around 7:00pm yesterday following assurance from the CPA of fulfilling of their demands which include recruitment of the scrutinised workers, issuing of identity cards among the workers and introduction of labour department under CPA's Traffic Department.

But the private berth operators refused to work with those who worked under CPA supervision since May 10.

Berth Operator Owners Association President Shahadat Hossain Selim said "We want to continue working in way we did till May 10 and will engage our own workers." But the CPA is trying engaging the container handlers who have been working for the last four months, he alleged.

CPA Member Hadi Hossain said they urged the berth operators to start the work engaging the existing workers primarily. Earlier, dockworkers beat up two workers of a private berth operator of Fazle & Sons Limited when they went to jetty No 9 at about 12:30pm to perform their duties.

The injured named as Md Mainuddin and Ali Asgar were admitted at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), said sources at CMCH.

Bus located

FROM PAGE 16
"Besides, the bus is stuck in a hole under water, making it harder for us to salvage it," he added.

Momrez Hossain, station-master of Mansur Ali Station, which is before Sayedabad, said there is no telephone connection between the stations.

Usually, Sayedabad is informed about schedule of train arrivals there by Jamtoil station, which is before Mansur Ali Station, he said.

But, it could not be known immediately whether Jamtoil informed Sayedabad about the arrival of Drujtajan.

Police role

FROM PAGE 16
Baraigram Police Station, said Babu neither took permission for the agitation programme nor did he seek police protection.

On Friday Sub-Inspector Lutfur Rahman, who was in charge of Bonpara Police Camp, rushed to the scene immediately after the incident, Anwar said adding the camp is several hundred yards off the place of incident.

Talking to The Daily Star a number of locals at Bonpara Bazar said they had seen a group of policemen positioned along Bonpara-Lalpur road before the clash.

During the occurrence the policemen had been the silent onlookers, according to a shopkeeper in the area.

He and many others blamed the police for the killing. Many still can't believe the scene of the merciless beating and chopping in public.

"Instructed by the inspector general of police we have intensified our drives to nab the killers, but the culprits went into hiding," Sub-Inspector Md Abdul Hannan told The Daily Star.

He said cell numbers of "the main culprits" were collected, although many of them changed their numbers. "We will find them out by using mobile tracker."

Hannan and Natore Superintendent of Police Rafiqul Islam visited the slain leader's wife yesterday and pledged her the arrest of the killers.

"Babu was killed in broad daylight. We have enough evidence to prove their guilt," Hannan told the wife of the slain BNP leader.

Police so far arrested Russell Hossain Rappu, a Bangladesh Chhatra League activist of the Baraigram upazila.

Mahua Noor Kochi filed a murder case with Baraigram Police Station accusing 27 persons by name and some 20 unnamed.

She alleged KM Zakir Hossain, ex-information and research secretary of the Natore district unit AL, led the attack.

NATORE SP MADE OSD
A home ministry press release yesterday night said the Natore Superintendent of Police has been made officer on special duty (OSD).

Rally venue

FROM PAGE 1
selection of the venue.

While Mosharaf Hossain, superintendent of police of Sirajganj, claimed that the BNP did not take permission from local administration to arrange the rally at Sayedabad ground but sought security measures.

"If we asked them [BNP leaders] not to hold the rally at the ground, they could raise allegation that the government is putting obstacle before the opposition to hold the rally," he added.

Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku, president of the district unit of BNP, said, "We thought that we got the permission as we did not face any obstruction and we arranged the rally."

He also said there was no scheduled train to cross the Syedabad station in between 3:00pm to 6:00pm yesterday.

The Dhaka bound Drujtajan Express was supposed to cross Sayedabad station around 2:20pm like other days. But, yesterday it came there 45 minutes later at 3:05pm starting from Dinajpur.

The reason for delay starting of the train from Dinajpur could not be known immediately.

Meanwhile, the central BNP leaders started delivering speech from the stage and thousands of BNP men and locals took position at a spot on the rail track, which was 10 to 15 yards away from the main stage.

Witnesses said though the signalman was waving the red flag hearing the whistle of the coming train, people were not paying much attention to him. They were rather busy hearing the speeches of BNP leaders over loudspeakers.

And suddenly the train ran through a crowd on the track leaving five dead on the spot.

Witnesses said the train driver probably tried to stop the train at the last moment as it stopped 100 yards away after hitting the crowd.

However, details on the role of station staff could not be known, as none of them was available after the accident.

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"It went out of the control of my volunteers to tackle the huge number of people who stood on the railway track," said BNP leader Iqbal.

Tigers stroll

FROM PAGE 1
Shuvo who caused the major damage in the New Zealand innings by claiming three wickets for 14 runs in his 10-over spell after skipper Shakib Al Hasan chose to field on a slow turning track.

The trio of Bangladesh's left-arm spinners comprising of Shakib, Abdur Razzak and Shuvo were into the game early after Shafiqul removed hard-hitting McCullum and they tore into the batting lineup, reducing them to 101-7 in the 33rd over.

Jesse Ryder and Bradley Watling looked well set after the early damage as the pair added 55 runs for the second wicket before Razzak removed Watling for 20 and then in the very next over, Shuvo dismissed Ryder for 30 to put pressure on the visitors.

New Zealand never bounced back from this early hiccup as they lost wickets at regular interval, thanks to Shakib and Shuvo who bowled with nagging accuracy and forced them into false strokes including inspirational Kiwi captain Daniel Vettori, turned a ranked full-toss into a simple return catch to Shuvo after scoring only nine runs.

An aggressive 72-run partnership between Ross Taylor, who brilliantly capitalised the batting Powerplay during his unbeaten 72-ball 62 that contained three fours and four sixes, and Kyle Mills seemed to revive the innings but Shakib broke the partnership to open the window for off-spinner Mahmudullah Riyad to mop up the tail quickly.

It was a plot

FROM PAGE 1
Khaleda told the rally they had ousted the autocratic government of Ershad and another "autocratic" government has to be ousted through a tougher movement.

She called upon the people to take preparations for the movement. She said BNP will announce systematic and democratic programmes against "illegal" activities of the government.

Textbooks

FROM PAGE 16
speaking at a discussion on the implementation of the Right to Information Act with the representatives of print media at the commission's conference room yesterday.

The CJC said he has already discussed the matter of including some chapter on human rights issues in school, college and madrasa education syllabus with high level policy making bodies and individuals.

They favoured the idea and accepted the proposal in principle, he said.

Zamir underlined the role of news media and sought cooperation from them to attain the major objectives of the commission. He informed the journalists about various successes attained by the commission within a short period of time.

Information Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser informed the meeting that the ministry has taken a Taka 10 crore project to train up the information officers under the Mass Communication Department and Press Institute of Bangladesh.

No programme would be successful without a strong political will of the government, he said.

In this connection he referred to the commitment of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for establishing a digital Bangladesh and said the success attained by the information commission within a very short period bears the testimony of the sincere gestures and strong pledges of the prime minister and her government.

A power-point display on future action plan of the commission, particularly on its proposed web-portal, was shown at the very outset of the meeting.

Prof Sadequa Halim, Information Commission Secretary Nepal Chandra Sarkar spoke on the occasion among others.

Senior media personalities also took part in the discussion.

Four 'outlaws'

FROM PAGE 16
The other outlaws, however, managed to flee.

Police teams from Kushtia Sadar and Islamic University rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies at about 1:00am.

Police recovered one foreign-made rifle, one LG, four bullets and eight bombs from the spot.

"All of the dead were branded as outlawed Janajuddho cadres and accused in different cases, including murders," the ASP said.

Rezaul was accused in three cases, including two for murder; Robiul in four cases, including one for murder; Sirajul in five cases, including two for murder; and Sagar in two robbery cases, police said.

Police launched a drive in the area to arrest other outlaws, who went into hiding, soon after the incident.

In reply, Bangladesh got off to a flying start with Nafees and Kayes producing 35 runs in 5 overs before the lunch break. When they returned after a satisfying lunch they attacked more fiercely with boundaries coming thick and fast.

It was exciting to watch a free-flowing Nafees, who made a bright return to the one-day game after two and a half years in wilderness. His partner-in-crime Kayes never wasted the opportunity to punish a loose delivery or play audacious bowlers back drive. The good thing about their innings was that they were comfortable both against the pacers and the slow bowlers.

Nafees brought up his half-century with a magnificent cover drive off Andy McKay in the 16th over. The left-hander's stroke-filled innings of 73 that contained 13 boundaries came to an end when he softly chipped spinner Nathan McCullum only to reach the hands of his brother Brendon.

Kayes was quick to follow his partner after completing his half-century. Kayes, who struck four boundaries during his 83-ball 50, was caught at deep midwicket by Grant Elliott off Nathan McCullum.

Zunaed Siddiqui was the other batsman dismissed for 14 runs.

Rokibul Hasan slowed down the chase as he played 53 balls for his unbeaten 18 but the ever-confident Bangladesh skipper Shakib (13) smashed three boundaries to finish the game in style.

GAYEBANA JANAZA TODAY

Khaleda Zia in a condolence message demanded a neutral probe into the Sirajganj train accident.

The BNP chair claimed the incident injured more than 100 leaders and activists of the party. She demanded the authorities concerned take proper steps for the treatment of the injured.

In the message, Khaleda expressed shock at the deaths, sympathised with the bereaved families and prayed for the peace of the departed souls.

BNP Secretary General Khandker Delwar Hossain, in a separate message, demanded unearthing the mystery behind the accident and exemplary punishment to the persons responsible.

The main opposition will arrange a gayebana janaza in front of its central office in the capital after today's sjohr prayer.

After the janaza, Delwar will announce the party's next course of action.

5 jute mills

FROM PAGE 16
The mills include Kawmi Jute Mills, Daulatpur Jute Mills and Rajshahi Jute Mills unit-2, People's Jute Mills and MM Jute Mills.

Of these, People's and MM Jute Mills were leased out to private sector.

The cabinet decided to place these two also under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation for reopening along with the three mills, said prime minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Azad said the government envisions a revival of the lost glory of the golden fibre, and plans to reopen other big jute mills including Adamjee Jute Mills, shut down by BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

The cabinet meeting also approved a proposal to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and a mode of operation with India for setting up four border markets at Balamari in Kurigram and Laoghor in Sumangjan, and West Garo Hill and Balat in India's Meghalaya state.

The border markets will operate for three years from the date of signing of the MoU. But the authorities concerned can shut down those 30 days after issuance of notice, Azad said.

The meeting also gave final approval to the draft Upazila Parishad (Amendment) Act 2010.

According to the proposed amendment, the post of upazila chairman or vice-chairman will be declared vacant in case a no-confidence proposal brought against them is approved by the government, or they are charged with moral turpitude.

The cabinet also approved proposals to amend the policy for temporary recruitment of at least SSC-passed youths for national service, and setting up a permanent office of the International Red Cross Committee in Bangladesh.

Criminal killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in an "encounter" with Rapid Action Battalion in the city's Tejoan Industrial area last night.

The shootout between the man, identified as Nazrul Islam, and the Rab-2 team took place around 11:00pm near the BG Press, said Rab officials.

Bullet-hit Nazrul was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he expired around midnight.

He was accused of murders and extortion in a number of cases, Rab officials said.

Omar Faruk, the officer in charge of Tejoan Industrial Police Station, said a firearm and three rounds of bullet were recovered from Nazrul.

KOKO'S PAROLE

HC extends stay order by 20 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday extended for 20 days its earlier order that stayed the government decision cancelling the parole of Arafat Rahman Koko, younger son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The court also directed Koko, now in Bangkok for treatment, to file a fresh application along with his medical documents to the Ministry of Home within the days for granting him parole again.

The government may consider his application for parole, it said.

An HC bench of Justice MA Wahab Miah and Justice Quazi Reza-ul Hoque came up with the verdict after disposing of a writ petition filed by Koko.

Govt slated

FROM PAGE 16

"Partisanship and nepotism also took place during the past BNP government but the present situation seems to have reached an extreme level," Khan added.

"I don't see any ray of hope at any corner. The government is dividing the nation in such a way that I feel afraid about the country's future," he said. He, however, did not elaborate what he meant by "dividing" the nation.

"They [BNP-led opposition parties] are equally, if not more, responsible for the present situation of the country as they do not join parliament though they enjoy all facilities as lawmakers. They have even failed to do constructive criticism of the government," Khan added.

Columnist and executive-member of Shujan Syed Abul Maksud said, "Anarchic situation is prevalent in the country. People are being killed like animals."

"It cannot happen in a civilized country," lamented Maksud.

"But the opposition is more responsible than the government. They are not doing anything against such activities of the government," he said.

Reading out the evaluation paper of AL's electoral pledges and its progress, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said none of the pledges have been fulfilled except formulating an education policy and empowering some women in the high-level of administration.

Evaluating the government's progress in the last 20 months, the Shujan evaluation said the government has failed in arresting price of essentials, has curtailed the power of the Anti-Corruption Commission, and has engaged in business, partisanship and nepotism in government recruitment etc.

It severely criticised the government for creating disorder in civil administration and eroding the moral courage of civil servants.

Toxic scrap ships

FROM PAGE 16
mercury, organic liquids (benzene etc), battery, is hard and involves huge cost.

BELA stated in its petition that some ship-breaking companies recently obtained orders from the HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Syeda Afsar Jahan for importing ships through filing separate writ petitions. In those petitions they suppressed the previous directives of an HC bench.

Earlier, the HC bench of Justice Imman Ali and Justice Obaidul Hasan had directed the DOE not to issue NOC to any company, without ECC issued by DOE and decontamination certificates issued by the vessel exporting countries.

The Supreme Court on August 22 directed Bangladesh Ship Breakers' Association (BSBA) to execute the HC order to get all scrap ships decontaminated at source and outside Bangladesh territory.

Advocate Iqbal Kabir Lytton appeared for BELA while Barrister Ajmalul Hossain for the BSBA.

PM offers

FROM PAGE 16
came at an informal discussion with a few of her cabinet colleagues immediately after the weekly cabinet meeting at the Secretariat with her in the chair.

At the meeting, Hasina, also the president of the ruling Awami League, expressed deep shock over the killing of Babu, and said her government expresses sympathy for his family members, a cabinet member said.

She, however, said no mass arrest or harassment should be made in connection with the murder case.

The premier directed the home minister to take all measures to nab the criminals upon identifying them through video footage.

The BNP always puts the blame on others even if it commits the crime in a planned way, said Hasina referring to Gama murder in Natore and August 21 grenade attack on an AL rally during the last BNP-Jamaat government.

She said AL could not protest the killings of its lawmaker Mantaz Uddin and party leader Ainul Haque in Natore after 2001 elections when the BNP assumed power. Even the then administration did not take cases.

But the opposition could observe hartal in Natore peacefully under the present government, she noted.

Hasina also directed the home minister to find out the Jubo Dal men who were seen wielding firearms in broad daylight in Comilla, sources at the meeting said.

She also talked to Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain and inquired about Padma Bridge, Dhaka-Chittagong four-lane highway, elevated expressway, traffic situation in the capital, etc.

"It seems that all pledges of the government after assuming power were mere words." One third of the tenure of the government has passed and most pledges remain unfulfilled," claims the evaluation paper.

Shujan outlined that failure to introduce new political culture is the most fundamental failure of the government.

In the concluding remarks, Shujan President Mozaffer Ahmed said government has deviated from its electoral pledges, which won people mandate leading to a landslide victory.

Former adviser ASN Shahjahan, BNP leaders Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman and Enam Ahmed Chaudhury, Jatiya Party leader Sheikh Shahidul Islam, AL leader Mahmudur Rahman Manna and other speakers urged government to bring change in the political culture to improve the situation.

Global hunger

FROM PAGE 16
think-tank ranked under five categories, four fall under extremely alarming category; 25 including Bangladesh, India and Nepal under alarming; 30 under serious; 25 under moderate, and 38 others under low categories.

IFPRI along with two other NGOs-- Welthungerhilfe of Germany and Concern Worldwide of Ireland-- prepared the index for the fifth