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Biman pilots call off strike

PM assures them of looking into their demands

RASHIDUL HASAN and SOHEL PARVEZ

In a late night development, pilots of Biman Bangladesh Airlines called off their strike following assurance of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"From now on all the pilots have joined our respective duties on assurance of the premier to look into our demands," Captain Shah Alam told The Daily Star coming out of Gono Bhaban.

Captain MA Basit Mahtab, general secretary of Bangladesh Airline Pilots' Association (BAPA), and Shah Alam went to the residence of the premier on her invitation to talk about the deadlock between the pilots of Biman and its management.

"But the prime minister could not see us as she had family engagement. She sent her Assistant Personal Secretary Saifuzzaman Shikhor with her message," Shah Alam added.

"We placed our demands before him and he assured us that the prime minister would look into our demands seriously," added the senior pilot of Biman.

The pilots and Saifuzzaman had talks for over two and a half hours.

They, however, declined to give The Daily Star details of the discussion.

Following the pilot strike, Biman had cancelled all its flights scheduled for yesterday and today but three flights did take off yesterday under special arrangements with foreign crew flying the planes, sources at Biman's operation department said.

Flights for Sylhet, Kolkata and Jeddah took off yesterday.

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Aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines remain on the tarmac and inside hangars at Shahjalal International Airport yesterday after pilot strike forced the national flag carrier to cancel all flights scheduled yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Hi-tech fraud in admission test of DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab yesterday arrested a gang of eight students who sent answers to multiple-choice questions via SMS to freshmen aspirants inside Dhaka University admission test halls.

A team of Rab-3 and officials of DU administration tracked the gang for a week after an admission seeker, who was approached by the gang, gave them the lead.

Rab caught kingpin Aminul Islam inside a Kha unit admission test hall when he was sending out answers to admission seekers via text messages.

THE FORGERY

Aminul prepared well for the exam and entered the hall with a fake identity and a hidden mobile phone. He got set number three of the question paper. He then texted "3" to five of his gang members, who forwarded the text to their client students. The client freshmen aspirants had also smuggled in mobile phones inside the test halls.

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WAR CRIMES

Probe agency finds evidence against SQ Chy, Kasem

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agency probing 1971 war crimes has obtained enough evidence to arrest BNP standing committee member Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mir Kasem Ali on charges of war crimes.

"We have all the evidence and proof required to arrest Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Kasem Ali. We have also prepared a report to make the arrests," said Mohammad Abdur Rahim, member of the investigation agency.

They would submit the

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Army sues 50-60 for Rupganj violence

Estimates loss of Tk 45 lakh; says 'vested quarters' obstructing housing project, instigating villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Bangladesh Army yesterday filed a case against 50 to 60 unidentified people in connection with the recent clashes between law-enforcers and villagers in Rupganj of Narayanganj.

Aminur Rahman, a warrant officer of unit 34 of East Bengal Regiment in Dhaka Cantonment, filed the case with Rupganj Police Station around 12:30am.

The case statement claims that the accused inflicted a loss of Tk 45.2 lakh on the army by attacking its camps during the violence.

It also says a local vested interest group had been creating various types of obstacles to an army housing scheme in the area over the last

few months. The group created a negative image and fear of the army and the housing scheme among the local people including landowners through instigation, the case reads.

A total of 138 army personnel including officers who were deployed in four camps in Rupganj on that day have been made witnesses in the case.

More than 50 people including law-enforcers were hurt in a string of clashes between the law-enforcers and villagers over "forced purchase of land" by army personnel for a private army housing scheme in Rupganj upazila on October 23.

A villager who had sustained a bullet wound

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SIRAJGANJ ACCIDENT

BNP's probe commission talks to witnesses

A CORRESPONDENT, from Sirajganj

A number of people yesterday gave their statements about the Sirajganj train accident before the enquiry commission formed by the BNP.

They claimed that the train was at speed while passing the rally venue and they realised that the train was on fire after they saw smoke coming out of it.

The level crossing gate was open and the train did not stop even though the gateman was waving the red flag, said a local

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AGITATION TO PROTECT KHALEDA'S HOUSE, SONS

Pressure mounts in BNP to go tough

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Mid-level leaders of the main opposition BNP are putting tremendous pressure on the top leadership to launch a tougher anti-government movement to resist what they term the government's move to "oust" their Chairperson Khaleda Zia from her Dhaka Cantonment house, and "harassment" of her two sons.

Under the pressure, the party is considering calling a hartal soon after the upcoming Eid vacations, along with other political demonstrations, party sources said.

Among the group, a considerable number are those who were very close to Khaleda's elder son Tarique Rahman and his alternative powerhouse Hawa Bhaban during the last

BNP-led regime, the sources added.

Senior leaders, however, are saying that a "tougher" anti-government movement cannot be launched overnight. BNP must go step by step to gain mass support. Regarding the issue of "harassment" of the chairperson's family, they are saying it must be dealt with politically.

The government served a notice to Khaleda Zia to vacate her Cantonment house that had been given to her by the erstwhile chief of army staff in 1981. The notice was served on grounds that it had been given to her illegally. The High Court also recently declared that leasing out the house to Khaleda was illegal.

Moreover, there are graft charges against both her sons.

The pressure group of mid-level leaders

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SANAULLAH MURDER

Widow submits names of 28 more accused

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Another 28 Awami League (AL), Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), and Jubo League activists were yesterday accused for their alleged involvement in Baraigram upazila chairman Sanaullah Noor Babu Murder in Natore.

Mohua Noor Kochi, wife of the deceased, submitted the names to Siddikur Rahman, deputy inspector general of police (DIG) of Rajshahi range Thursday afternoon.

The additional accused are Idris Molla, Zaber Hossain, Jinnah Mollah, Masud Mollah, Aziz, Shakib, Mintu, Korban, Mithu, Shawon, Razzak Kobirazz,

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Twin sisters Hira, right, and Mukta, left, along with their father mourn for their mother Chanpa Rani Bhowmik, who was killed by a stalker on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REZAUL KARIM

CHANPA MURDER CASE

Five arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An uncle and four associates of Devashish Saha Rony, the prime accused in Chanpa Rani Bhowmik murder case, were detained yesterday in an overnight drive in Madhukhali upazila of the district.

Police, however, are yet to arrest Rony who killed Chanpa, an employee of Faridpur Sugar Mill and wife of Swapan Biswas, by running his motorbike over her on Tuesday in Madhukhali for protesting the harassment of her twin daughters Hira and Mukta.

The detainees are Rony's paternal uncle Gopal Saha, 55, his friends Shovon Bhattacharia Tutul, 23, Shyamol Kumar Saha, 21, Saiful Islam Raju, 20, and Abul Hassan, 22, said Syed Mohsinul Haque, officer-in-charge of Madhukhali Police Station.

Local lawmakers Abdur Rahman and Hasanul Haque Inu, also president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, told reporters about the drive while visiting the house of Chanpa Friday morning.

During the visit, the lawmakers on behalf of the prime minister handed over Tk 1 lakh to the bereaved family members and

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FLASH FLOOD-HIT HAOR AREAS

Tk 50cr rehabilitation scheme for farmers

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The government is going to launch a Tk 50 crore agricultural rehabilitation programme for about 4 lakh farmers affected by flash floods in the last Boro season in the haor areas of northeast region of the country.

A total of 3,83,160 farmers in five districts -- Kishoreganj, Sunamganj, Netrakona, Moulvibazar and Sylhet -- will be given farm inputs worth Tk 1,077 each under the programme, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Each farmer will get 10 kg of paddy seeds, 25 kg of urea, 12.5 kg of muriate of potash (MOP) and 12.5 kg triple super phosphate (TSP) fertilisers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the programme from Sunamganj in the first week of next month, officials said.

Of the farmers, who will get the farm inputs, 2.5 lakh are of Sunamganj, 70,000 of Sylhet, 40,000 each of Moulvibazar and Netrakona, and 30,000 of Kishoreganj. They were badly affected as flash floods destroyed their Boro crop in April this year.

"We have decided to rehabilitate these farmers so that they can overcome their loss of Boro crops," Matia Chowdhury said.

Two bags of urea and one bag each of TSP and MOP fertilisers will be given to four lakh farmers, she said, "We will not open the

bags so that no farmer can say he got less than the specified quantity, or no one can misappropriate the agricultural inputs."

Distribution will be completed within one week of inauguration of the programme so that the farmers can prepare Boro seedbeds for the next season. If seedbeds are made early, there will be less risk of damage of the crop in flash floods, the minister said.

The farm inputs will be given on the basis of farmers' cards, which the agriculture ministry already issued to the farmers in the country. If any farmer has not yet received this card, he can get it by following the procedure for this. And he

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NATORE MURDER

Asif sent to jail, Rajon produced to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi with A CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Police yesterday produced Abdul Awal Rajon, the prime accused in Natore college teacher Mizanur Rashid killing case, before a court seeking seven-day remand and sent the co-accused Mamunur Rashid Asif to jail on completion of his three-day remand.

The arrested murder suspect Rajon in primary police interrogation claimed innocence and maintained that he

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FEMALE RMG WORKERS' RECRUITMENT IN JORDAN

Govt won't allow pvt agencies to handle

PORIMOL PALMA

The government has decided to send female garment workers to Jordan only through state-owned recruiting agency BOESL fearing a rise in migration costs and malpractices by private agencies.

"We have asked the private recruiting agencies to reduce the migration charge but they have not done that as yet," Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told The Daily Star recently.

"Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Ltd will charge each female migrant worker a nominal fee of Tk 12,000. It will also keep a watch on their well-being during their stay in Jordan," he said.

A few Jordanian employers and Bangladeshi recruiting agencies, who have long been partners in recruitment, are unhappy at the government decision.

They said the BOESL is not efficient enough to send workers abroad quickly for work.

Some Jordanian employers warned that they might look for an alternative source of manpower if the Bangladesh government does not allow the private agencies to send workers to Jordan.

Quoting some Jordanian employers, Bangladesh Embassy in Jordan informed the authority concerned in Dhaka of the matter.

In a letter to the expatriates' welfare ministry on October 6, Toufiq Islam Shatil, first secretary of Bangladesh Embassy in Amman, said Jordan lifted a ban on recruitment of Bangladeshi workers in July after nearly three years.

The embassy has been trying to convince the Jordanian employers to recruit

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13 hurt as SUST students clash with workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least 13 students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) were injured during a clash between students and transport workers at Kodomtoli here on Thursday night.

The clash ensued when a group of 20 students of SUST were beaten up by the transport workers following a row over not providing transport services to them.

The students vandalised vehicles and shops during the

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