

Guilty yet get off

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by a court on September 19 this year for reckless driving in October 2007. Covered van driver Nurul Islam was jailed for seven years, though in absentia, and also fined Tk 20,000, in default of which he will have to serve two more years behind bars.

In another rare judgment, the High Court on May 11 directed the Bangladesh Beverage Industries Ltd to pay Tk 2.01 crore in compensation to the wife and two sons of Mozammel Hossain Mintu, former news editor of the daily Sangbad. Mintu was hit on December 3, 1989 by a vehicle of the company and died on December 16.

Experts say as there is no comprehensive law, guilty drivers return to the road with the same vehicles, while employers of unregistered drivers cannot be tried.

As per section 304 (B) of the Penal Code, killing of a person due to reckless driving is a bailable offence and the highest punishment for it is three-year jail or fine or both.

Only the accused drivers can be implicated with sections 279, 304 and 304 (B) of the Penal Code. But there is no law to try the vehicle owners even though they employ such drivers, commented Tarana Halim.

There is no legal provision to keep the seized vehicles in police custody until the case is dissolved, although those should be kept in custody as evidence, she added.

Sub-inspector Didarul Alam of Ramna Police Station has been investigating the murder case concerning Wiles Little Flower School student Hamim Sheikh. Hamim was killed by a bus of Madhumati Paribahan in front of his school on February 3.

The investigation officer said Madhumati Paribahan employed a fake driver for that particular bus but he is unable to implicate the owners.

He added Madhumati Paribahan released the bus through a court order around four months into the accident, while the driver is also out on bail.

BNP sticks

FROM PAGE 1
Farroque told reporters that his party has not changed its stance against joining parliament.

"We will not return to parliament unless the government meets our demands for restoring law and order, checking price hike of essentials and ending the drama over BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment house," he said.

The opposition chief whip said that at the meeting he raised different issues including repression of opposition leaders and activists during hartal on November 30.

He also demanded that the speaker arrange a discussion between the government and BNP on the cantonment residence and Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman's returning home.

"The speaker made a few suggestions which I will place before my leader [Khaleda Zia]," he noted.

He said the BNP parliamentary committee is likely to hold a press conference today to clarify its position on joining the parliamentary session.

The current session of parliament is likely to be very brief as it has been convened mainly for constitutional obligation since the gap between two consecutive sessions should not be more than 60 days. The last and sixth session ended on October 6.

Sources of the parliament secretariat said a number of bills including the code of criminal procedures (amendment) act

Police to probe

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who had allegedly demanded bribe for her son's release.

After failing to realise the money they had tortured him to death, she alleged.

Sagor was an employee of an automobile workshop in Kutub Khali of Jatrabari, Lutfa claimed.

Police, however, denied the allegation saying, they had detained Sagor with four of his cohorts early November 26 after locals beat them up and handed them over to police on charges of mugging.

Sagor was placed on a remand for two days and was produced before the court on November 29 after which he was sent to prison.

Ismail Hossain Khan, investigation officer of the case said Sagor was physically fit when they had sent the victim to court.

Dhaka Central Jail authorities brought Sagor to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after he fell sick on the morning of November 30. He later died that night.

DMCH morgue sources said injury marks were found on different parts of his body and his lungs were badly infected.

Usually, it is hard to prove the guilt of drivers, as neither the accused nor the vehicles concerned remain in custody. The transport owners meanwhile put pressure on the victims' families for negotiations.

Sometimes the drivers even destroy the pieces of evidence from the vehicles after having those released. It also becomes tough to identify whether the accident occurred due to mechanical fault or callous driving.

In such situation, the victims' families lose interest in continuing the legal battle.

Shafiqur Rahman, chief of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's traffic wing, said in most cases drivers with valid licences obtain bail. Incidents of obtaining instant bail too demoralise the victims' families in pursuing the case.

Besides, if the drivers with fake licences can escape the accident spots, they do not appear before court and send their colleagues with valid licence as imposters to seek bail.

Several investigation officers of accident cases said they had little to do when imposters take responsibility to save the unregistered, unskilled and guilty drivers.

It is impossible to prove that these drivers were not driving the vehicles concerned, as the guilty ones escaped the scenes leaving no trace behind, they said.

Citing an example, Shahbagh police said they learned that a driver of Labbaek Paribahan fled after his vehicle crushed ATM Anisuzzaman to death at Banglamotor intersection on April 21.

Later in May another driver of Labbaek Paribahan who had valid licence appeared before court and obtained bail, police added.

The law enforcers said they come to know of incidents like this from sources, but they can do little to prove those before court.

Labbaek Paribahan sources said they have got their driver released and he is driving the bus again.

2010, the voter list (amendment) act, 2010 are likely to be passed in this session.

Opposition lawmakers of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party attended the first day of the budget session in June but boycotted the rest of the fifth session. They were also absent from the sixth session.

Talking to The Daily Star, a senior BNP lawmaker said they will continue boycotting the House.

Besides, most BNP lawmakers have already submitted their resignation letters to the party chief.

A few of them, however, said seeking release from parliament by the opposition lawmakers is nothing but a tactic to exert pressure on the government.

"It would be a suicidal decision for us to resign from parliament when the next election is far away. We will even lose influence on our constituencies if we resign now," a BNP lawmaker seeking anonymity told this correspondent.

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed, meanwhile, at a press briefing at his chamber yesterday said the BNP-led opposition will not join the session.

Dhaka may get

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Replying to a query, Mohiuddin said, "The parliamentary committee on the local government and rural development ministry will decide on this issue after consulting the minister concerned and the city MPs."

After the meeting, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperative Jahangir Kabir Nanak said the city corporation needs to be decentralised to ensure better services for the city dwellers.

Earlier on September 22, the Election Commission decided to hold the long overdue DCC polls by December and union parishad between January and February next year.

After the killing, the excited armed mutineers ran to Darbar Hall, he added.

Meanwhile, the lawyers of the accused told The Daily Star that the prosecutor is assisting witnesses unfairly while cross-examining.

"The prosecutor can not suggest anything during cross-examination as such suggestions may thwart justice by influencing witness", said advocate M Sultan Mahmud, a lawyer of the accused.

The prosecutor Lt Col Shamsur Rahman, however, refuted the allegation saying that his discussions with the other lawyers during the proceedings might have misled the opposition lawyers.

The court was adjourned till 9:00am of December 7.

Mob kills

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roadside ditch.

As locals came forward sensing trouble, the criminals opened fire at them, leaving three locals -- Kazi Mohammad Siraj, Zakir Hossain and Vanu Bhushan Saha -- injured, said witnesses.

The mob caught three gang members and beat them to death on the spot. The identities of the deceased trio could not be known immediately.

The rest of the gang, however, fled.

Locals caught one unidentified person on suspicion and handed him over to police.

Bullet-hit Siraj died at Comilla Medical College Hospital. The two other wounded have been sent to Dhaka for treatment.

Law enforcers recovered one pistol, one revolver and five bullets from the crime scene.

Industries

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however, said anything new takes some time to function. "Now the newly launched Industrial Police are working under administrative orders, but in future it will work under separate rules, which are now being formulated," he said.

Sobhan said all of the forces approved by the government could not be deployed, as their offices are not yet ready. The Industrial Police will operate in all industrial zones across the country, overseeing garment, tannery, ship breaking and shrimping industries.

The unit has been formed for proactive policing based on intelligence to prevent labour unrest that results in deaths and injuries and damage to properties.

It also aims to resolve problems among the owners, workers and others involved in the sector.

According to police sources, the government initially approved 1,580 members for the unit to work in Dhaka, Gazipur and Chittagong. Of them, 163 are inspectors and sub-inspectors assigned to gather intelligence and carry out investigation, while 1,315 are constables, nayek and assistant sub-inspectors.

Some 200 of them received a 10-day training, the sources added.

The force was also supposed to work in Narayanganj but the police department could not arrange this due to insufficient manpower.

Replying to a query over insufficient manpower and their training, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandaker said, "The Prime Minister gave assurance of approving 3,000 more members for the Industrial Police soon. It will strengthen the new force."

He said they are also trying to resolve the accommodation problem the force is now facing.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong unit of the force formally started its journey yesterday. Home Minister Sahara Khatun inaugurated the unit at dock labour colony adjacent to Chittagong EPZ.

It has 391 police members under one assistant police superintendent.

Pilkhana trial

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Baset made arrogant comments without the permission of the court on December 1 for which he received a double blow, a six-month imprisonment and dismissal from his services.

Meanwhile, thirty-one suspected mutineers of 24 Rifles Battalion cross-examined two witnesses after Special Court-7 resumed its day's proceedings around 9:30am.

Some 285 accused out of 667 cross-examined 20 witnesses till yesterday.

In his disposition Sepoy Fazul, a witness, stated that Sepoy Al Masum shot Major Mohammad Mominul Islam Sarkar, the then intelligence officer of battalion 24, dead just after the mutiny began on February 25 last year.

After the killing, the excited armed mutineers ran to Darbar Hall, he added.

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Climate talks

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gases and aiding poor countries exposed to climate change.

The two tracks are essentially interlinked, which explains why delegates fretted over a repeat of the logjam that drove last December's climate summit in Copenhagen to the brink of disaster.

One track gathers all 194 parties under the UNFCCC, including the United States, while the other gathers the 193 parties to the Kyoto Protocol -- everyone but the United States.

Developing countries have said they will commit to a deal in the first track provided there is a deal in the second track for renewing commitments under the Protocol after the first roster of pledges expires at the end of 2012.

But on Monday, Japan bluntly gave notice it would refuse to sign up to a second commitment period.

There was "no sense" in renewing its pledges if the Protocol's cuts, applying just to rich economies, covered less than 30 percent of the world's emissions, it said.

Top carbon emitter China does not face these constraints as it is a developing country, while the United States, which is number 2, abandoned Kyoto in 2001.

On Friday, a group of left-wing Latin American countries warned an overall deal in Cancun would be "very difficult" without a Kyoto second commitment period.

The so-called ALBA group -- Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and the Caribbean island nation of Dominica -- led headline opposition at last year's summit to the Copenhagen Accord, a last-minute compromise cobbled together by a couple dozen leaders.

The European Union (EU) is Kyoto's biggest champion, but even so there are differences of opinion toward the treaty within the 27-nation bloc, a European diplomat said. Canada and Russia,

meanwhile, are lukewarm or hostile to a second period if it does not include the world's biggest carbon polluters.

Scientists say unbridled burning of fossil fuels has brought concentrations of carbon dioxide, a colorless, odorless and tasteless greenhouse gas, to record concentrations.

Without urgent action to stem these emissions, the world is on track for worsening drought, floods, storms and rising seas, spelling a threat for hundreds of millions of people, they warn.

By 2030, climate change will indirectly cause nearly one million deaths a year and inflict 157 billion dollars in damage, according to estimates presented at UN talks.

A report found the biggest misery will be heaped on more than 50 of the world's poorest countries, but the United States will pay the highest economic bill.

"In less than 20 years, almost all countries in the world will realise high vulnerability to climate impact as the planet heats up," according to the study, compiled by a humanitarian research organisation and climate-vulnerable countries.

Nothing wrong

FROM PAGE 1
had diverted nearly \$100 million aid money to its sister concern Grameen Kalyan.

The claims--settled in May 1998--are based on a trove of letters and documents relating to the transfer, which the documentary's director Danish filmmaker Tom Heinemann said he had discovered in the Norad archives in Oslo.

On Friday, Grameen Bank denied any wrongdoing, saying it had transferred 96 million dollars of aid to Grameen Kalyan and had it back as loan the same day to enlarge funds for micro-borrowers.

Shifting

FROM PAGE 16
Cantonment Board and Inter Services Public Relations and high officials of police.

Saleh Ahmed, personal secretary to the opposition leader, and assistant personal secretary Shuratuzzaman were also present there.

BNP leader Amanullah Aman, a lawmaker, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee and Khaleda's counsels Nasiruddin Ashim and Kaiser Kamal were present at Jahangir Gate of the cantonment when the vehicles carrying the goods were moving out.

Amanullah Aman yesterday alleged that many of the household belongings were not found.

Talking to journalists, the former lawmaker said the BNP chief is looking for a suitable house in the city's Gulshan or Baridhara.

Khaleda's counsels also spoke of non-cooperation from the Cantonment Board in shifting her belongings.

The leader of the opposition in parliament left the house on November 13. The Cantonment Board gave her 72 hours from yesterday to take away her possessions, said Ashim.

Perform neutrally

FROM PAGE 16
The constitution and existing traditional laws of the country would be the guideline for the judges, Hasina said.

She asked the judges to remain alert so that the culprits get punished instead of the innocent people.

Citing the proverb 'justice delayed, justice denied', the premier also said that the judges should be more cordial.

In this connection, she said that most of the people of the country are poor, and many lack the courage to go to the court due to its time-consuming nature.

"I have asked you all to finalise the cases at the earliest possible time," she said, adding the judges have to remember that the call of justice never cries in silent and quiet places.

"Let there be justice for all, rich and poor," she said.

The rule of law and democracy are complementary to each other. It cannot be established in absence of democracy, just as democracy cannot be strengthened in the absence of the rule of law, she mentioned.

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Army men

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said the victims and eyewitnesses.

Incensed, locals confined the army men. Later, some other army officers along with the military police rushed to the spot and freed them.

Harun-ar-Rashid, additional deputy commissioner of metropolitan police (Tejgaon), told The Daily Star at 1:40am the army men were taken back to barracks as arrestees.

Contacted earlier, Capt Ashraf and his colleague Capt Badrul Haque had refused to talk to this correspondent. They even declined to give their identity.

Boutique owner Talha said the landlord was pressing them to vacate the shop though the deal allows them to stay till December 31.

The building owner however claimed the deal expired a year ago.

Health ministry

FROM PAGE 16
including any non-cadre officer to the short list.

The association questions, when promotion of at least 500 cadre doctors are halted even for 10 years, then what is the point of promoting the non-cadre doctors to the cadre posts?

"A vested quarter is trying to promote non-cadre doctors who are less qualified and in no way eligible for the senior posts of the cadre service," said Nazmul Islam, secretary of the association.

While talking to The Daily Star yesterday health secretary Humayun Kabir also admits that no non-cadre doctor can be promoted to the senior cadre posts.

But non-cadre doctors argue that Bangladesh Civil Service Recruitment Rules, 1981, says doctors who passed Bangladesh Civil Service exams or have been regularised through Public Service Commission are members of health cadre.

Cadre doctors say following the regularisation the non-cadre doctors took undue privilege.

If these non-cadre officials secure a position of seniority, it would mean less qualified doctors are overtaking eligible doctors. It would ultimately create unrest in the cadre service, they said.

She said that to bring peace, and to ensure transparency and accountability in the judiciary, her government has taken steps to digitalise the judiciary.

The government has taken measures to increase various facilities for the judges including enhancement of their salaries, the premier informed the judges.

BJS Chairman M Jahangir Hossain presided over the conference while Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Shafiqe Ahmed, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs advocate Quamrul Islam were, among others, present.

RMG unrest

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the workers gathered at Jamgara Government Primary School compound and started chanting slogans against the authority. At one stage they gathered by the Dhaka-Tangail highway in a bid to block it.

The clash ensued when the agitating workers tried to put a barricade on the highway around 9:30am, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Ashulia Police Station.

The workers also started throwing brickbats at the law enforcers, to which the police retaliated with tear gas shells and rubber bullets, added the OC. The workers were dispersed around 10:00am.

Sub-inspector Shahan Shah Parvez said "I with a team of six police personnel reached the spot. The workers hurled brickbats at us leaving one of my colleagues and myself injured."

The SI added they took shelter behind a shop and on information another team rescued them.

At least eight factory workers sustained injuries during the clash, said locals.

Managing Director of the factory Hossain Shah Zaved, however, claimed the factory management was compelled to shut down the factory temporarily fearing more unrest.

The workers had been agitating since Wednesday demanding almost double the rate per piece for production of sweater. Zaved termed the demand unusual.

The factory will resume production once normalcy returns, he said, adding a negotiation between the workers and the management was going on to resolve the crisis.

Police arrested three factory workers at noon in this connection.

Meanwhile, around 3000 workers of Palmal Sweater Ltd abstained from work at its factory at Ashulia from 11:00am demanding pay hike.

SI Parvez said police personnel were deployed in and around the factory to avert any breach of peace.

One of the directors of the factory said they would sit with the workers today to settle the matter.

He added the workers left the factory in the afternoon.

Fire burns

FROM PAGE 1
workshop, the SI said, adding, however no causality was reported.

Fire fighters reached the spot and doused the fire at 6:00am with the help of locals but could not save the belongings as the most of the families were asleep.

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