

NEWS IN *brief*

Huji leader placed on 5-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed banned militant outfit Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) leader Moulana Abdur Rouf on a five-day remand in connection with the August 21 grenade attack case filed under the Explosive Substances Act.

Metropolitan Magistrate AGM Al Masud passed the order after Abdul Kahar Akand, special superintendent of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police, produced Abdur Rouf before it with a seven-day remand prayer.

He was so far placed on eight-day remand in three phases before CID started further investigation into the case.

HC asks Uttara University to maintain status quo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed Uttara University authorities to maintain status quo on constructing any structure for its campus near the bank of Turag River till further order.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain passed the order during hearing on a suomoto rule.

It also fixed April 26 for hearing the matter. Earlier on March 7, the bench issued the suomoto asking the university to explain about its encroachment on Turag River to set up the campus. The order came following photos published in The Daily Star on March 7 with the headline "River Grabbing Now & Then".

Man dies in police custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man arrested on suspicion of being a mugger allegedly died of torture in the city's Dhanmondi police custody yesterday.

Refuting the allegation, police said Md Faisal alias Roni, 40, succumbed to his injuries from a mob beating during the arrest from Dhanmondi playground area on Tuesday. Roni was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 3:00pm where doctors declared him dead. The hospital morgue sources said the body bore several marks of injury.

Worker crushed to death under iron plate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A worker of a ship-breaking yard was crushed to death under an iron plate at Sheetalpur under Sitakunda upazila in the district on Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Md Nurunnabi, 30, a cutter-man of the yard. He was the son of Meheruddin of Teknapara of Lalmonirhat. Nabi who was working at the yard of Mahin Enterprise around 4:45pm, was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he died around 11:50pm.

Boy drowns in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-year-old boy drowned in a ditch at Maniknagar in city's Sabujbagh yesterday. Nayan, son of Khalilur of the area, went missing since 3:00pm. After a frantic effort, some neighbours found the body in the ditch at 6:00pm, family sources said.

First conference of BotTala today

METRO DESK

The first biannual conference of Bottala will be held at Chhayanaut Cultural Centre of Dhanmondi in the city at 3:30pm today.

A new committee will be elected for the next two-year in this conference, says a press release.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presides over a joint meeting of the board of directors of NDC and DSCSC at the conference room of the department of armed forces in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

Refrain from making 'indecent' comments

PM urges Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday in the parliament urged Leader of the Opposition, Khaleda Zia to refrain from making "indecent" comments about the present government.

The premier described Khaleda's recent remark that the incumbent government is "illegal" as "unacceptable, baseless and motivated".

"There is no scope to call a government illegal which has been elected through a free and fair election," the leader of the House said while answering to lawmakers' queries.

Pointing at Khaleda Zia, the premier said, if the incumbent government is "illegal", then her remaining as the opposition leader is also illegal.

She also questioned the legality of the salaries and perks of the opposition lawmakers.

"It is unacceptable that activities of an elected government will be considered illegal after change of government through a fair poll," Hasina said in response to Khaleda's remark that all activities of the present government will be declared illegal after its tenure.

In another scripted answer the prime minister informed the House of the government's various ongoing activities and plans for the welfare of freedom fighters and their family members.

Chaos in JS

Lawmakers use 'abusive' words ignoring Speaker's request

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Certain lawmakers of the ruling party and the opposition used "abusive" and "aggressive" words in their speeches in parliament yesterday, ignoring the speaker's repeated calls for restraint.

They used indecent words to launch a broadside against father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, BNP's founder Ziaur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia and the sons of Hasina and Khaleda.

Speaker Abdul Hamid, presiding over the sitting, instantly expunged some non-parliamentary and indecent words by Awami League lawmaker Apu Ukil and BNP lawmakers Sheikh Shujat Mia and Rehana Akhtar Ranu.

The speaker said he would examine the lawmakers' deliberations on the thanks giving motion on the president's address and will expunge words, if necessary.

BNP lawmaker Moudud Ahmed took the floor before the discussion and said the opposition lawmakers will walk out of parliament, if indecent words are used against Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia.

He said a minister in parliament on Tuesday termed Ziaur Rahman a killer and the opposition lawmakers walked out of the House to protest it.

"We will walk out whenever anyone uses indecent words against my party leaders. But, we will return to the House again," Moudud said.

The BNP lawmaker said he believes their protest will keep ruling party lawmakers from using any "abusive" words.

BNP-led opposition lawmakers on Tuesday walked out of parliament in protest at the jute minister's comment that Ziaur Rahman was involved in the assassination of Bangabandhu.

In response to Moudud's speech, the speaker again urged the lawmakers not use

"abusive" and "aggressive" words in their speeches.

He said nobody can term anyone "killer" until the highest court of the land holds the person responsible for a murder.

The speaker said a lawmaker, however, can raise allegations in a decent way if the parliamentarian has information about it.

BNP lawmaker Rehana Akhtar Ranu participated in the discussion and criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her son Sajeeb Wajed Joy. She accused the two of involvement in corruption.

The BNP leader also blasted Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque for the landmark verdict that declared illegal and void the Fifth Amendment Act, which validated the regime of military ruler Ziaur Rahman and others.

State Minister for Law Kamrul Islam came down hard on the main opposition.

Mentioning the US journalist Lawrence Lifschultz's statement to the High Court, the minister said Ziaur Rahman was involved in the assassination of Bangabandhu.

His remark set off an uproar in the House as the opposition lawmakers started shouting in protest at his speech.

Opposition lawmakers launched a blistering attack on the government portraying it as a failed one.

State Minister for Religion Affairs Shahjahan Miah expressed strong disappointment at the languages used by some MPs.

"We all should speak very carefully here to uphold dignity of the House," he said.

Referring to the use of indecent words, AL lawmaker Sohrab Ali Sana said nobody was paying any heed to the speaker's repeated requests.

"People may question our ability to use language while we speak in parliament," AL lawmaker Abdul Mannan said, participating in the discussion.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present in the House yesterday, but the Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia did not join proceedings.

Rizvi advised Hasina not to overstay

Latest leaks on PM's India tour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Adviser Gowher Rizvi did not want her to extend her visit to India in January last year fearing criticism from her political rivals at home, according to an op-ed article published on Tuesday in The Hindu.

Hasina's international affairs Adviser Rizvi believed even a 24-hour delay to accommodate a trip to Ajmer was too much, the leading Indian newspaper said.

Rizvi "sabotaged" her planned stopover in Kolkata during a "transformational" 2010 visit to India as he believed any delay in returning to Dhaka would give her opponents time to "put their spin" on the visit before she had a chance to tell the nation about it, reads The Hindu article.

Nirupama Subramanian, the writer, said the adviser informed the United States envoy to Bangladesh James F Moriarty about this, hours ahead of the January 10, 2010 visit and that Moriarty reported it in a cable sent on the same day.

At Rizvi's insistence, it had been planned that after returning home the PM would address the House detailing the results of her visit, the write-up added.

The foreign minister had been brought into the loop only in the last week before the visit, Nirupama wrote adding, the adviser was dismissive of the foreign ministry bureaucracy.

In his negotiations with the Indians, the focus had been on implementing past agreements on transit and connectivity that had long been dormant, the article quoted the adviser as saying.



The unhealthy environment inside the room used for baking biscuits in Haque Brothers Industry Ltd at Tejgaon in the city. A mobile court of BSTI yesterday fined the factory Tk 2 lakh for running its operation without licence from BSTI. PHOTO: STAR

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 51th death anniversary of Shirumoonnesha Shiru Begum, mother of Waheed Murad, a poet and banker, says a press release.

Indu Prova Bhowmick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Indu Prova Bhowmick, mother of Barun Bhowmick Nayan, office secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), says a press release.

TIB worried over bill to repeal tax ombudsman act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials of the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday expressed concern over placing the bill to repeal the tax ombudsman act to shut the ombudsman's office.

This initiative will hinder the process of ensuring transparency and accountability in taxation system and will accelerate corruption and irregularities, they said.

They also demanded that the government review the decision and take effective steps for necessary amendment of the existing laws to establish an effective ombudsman's office.

In a statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said if there is any contradiction between the ombudsman act and tax related laws, that should be removed through reformation of laws. Finance Minister AMA Muhith on Monday placed the bill in parliament seeking to repeal the act.

BDR MUTINY IN 2009

147 BGB men jailed in three districts

STAR REPORT

One hundred and forty-seven jawans of Border Guard of Bangladesh's (BGB) three battalions in Jamalpur, Netrakona, and Mymensingh yesterday were sentenced to various jail terms ranging from four months to seven years for their involvement in the 2009 BDR mutiny.

The sentenced BGB men include 52 jawans of 6 Rifle Battalion in Jamalpur, and 53 jawans of 16 Rifle Battalion in Netrakona, and 42 jawans of 45 Rifle Battalion in Mymensingh. In addition to the jail terms, the court also fined each convict Tk 100.

The Special Court-17, headed by Kushtia Sector Commander Col Md Nazrul Islam Sarker, delivered the verdicts -- the first one in Jamalpur, the second in Netrakona, and the third in Mymensingh, report our district correspondents.

In Jamalpur, five were jailed for seven years, six for six years, six others for five years, 13 for four years, seven for three years, another seven for two years, three for one year, three for six months, and two for four months.

The jawans were convicted for revolting against their officers, taking control of the battalion headquarters, and looting firearms and ammunition from armoury.

In Netrakona, two BGB men were sentenced to seven years term, while three to six years, three to five years, five to four years, two to three years, one to two and half years, seven to two years, one to one and half years, ten to

one year, 16 to six months, and the remaining three to four months of imprisonment.

In Mymensingh, three jawans were sentenced for seven years, two for six years, six for five years, one for four years and six months, three for four years, one for three years and six months, six for three years, one for two years and six months, six for two years, three for one year and six months, seven for one year while three for six months of imprisonment.

Meanwhile, in the capital depositions of witnesses against suspected accused of 24 rifle battalions of BGB and cross-examination of the witnesses were ended at Pikhana BGB headquarters yesterday. The accused will produce defense witnesses in the next proceeding day of the court.

A total of 58 witnesses gave depositions against the 667 accused and were cross-examined on the earlier days of the court proceedings.

The court was adjourned till 9:00am of March 27.

The allegations against the accused include leaving Darbar Hall, showing solidarity with the mutineers, mutinying with firearms, staying inactive to prevent the mutiny, and failing to control unruly subordinates.

Seventy-four people, including the then BDR director general and 56 army officers, were massacréd at the Pikhana headquarters during the mutiny on February 25-26, 2009.



Change in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in next 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:08 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:05am.

Country's highest temperature 35.7 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 14.4 degrees at Ishwardi.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.7	21.2	49	78
Chittagong	30.4	22.8	81	40
Rajshahi	34.6	17.8	53	39
Rangpur	32.8	16.3	45	52
Khulna	32.6	19.8	68	60
Barisal	34.0	20.0	78	55



PHOTO: COURTESY

WFP Country Representative Christa Räder hands the 75gm high energy biscuit to a student of Khorda Government Primary School at Kalaroa, Satkhira on Tuesday.