

Ex-MP Tripti held with his licensed revolver

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Former BNP lawmaker Mofiqul Hasan Tripti was sent to Jessore jail yesterday following his arrest on charge of carrying loaded firearms inside airport.

Tripti went to the Jessore Airport around 8:00am to catch a Dhaka-bound flight of United Airlines and deposited a loaded revolver at the airline's counter, said Mahamudur Rahman, an official of the airlines.

"A bullet accidentally went out as I was checking it for security reason," he said. "Nobody was hurt in the incident."

Munnujan Sufian, state minister for labour, manpower and employment and Awami League lawmakers Khalidur Rahman Tito, Mostafa Faruq Mohammad and Narayan Chandra were at the VIP lounge when the bullet went off. They were also to catch a flight to Dhaka.

Shafiullah, assistant police superintendent of Jessore, said the gun was licensed but Tripti broke the law by carrying a loaded gun in airport. Secondly, he could not explain as to why three of his 50 bullets were missing.

Also a former office secretary of Sharsa BNP, he was elected from Jessore-1 in the controversial election on February 15, 1996, which was boycotted by all major political parties including AL. He was expelled from BNP for his involvement with the so-called reformists during the immediate past caretaker government.

However, his elder brother Ariful Islam told The Daily Star over the phone that Tripti was unaware that his revolver was loaded.

"He was in a hurry, as his flight schedule was changed and he was not informed beforehand. The incident happened because he was busy," Ariful said.

Muhit makes

FROM PAGE 1

reached the peak on this very day last year. Muhit is a member of Bangla Mountaineering and Tracking Club. Several online news websites reported his feat quoting BMTC members and foreign ministry officials.

Bangla daily Prothom Alo today reported that BMTC President Enam Ul Haque told the paper that he spoke to Muhit yesterday evening over mobile phone. Muhit had borrowed the phone from a Sherpa.

Muhit told Enam that he conquered the Everest Saturday. He is expected to come down to the level-1 base today, the newspaper said.

The Daily Star contacted foreign ministry officials in Dhaka and Nepal and BMTC members who claimed that they heard the news but could not confirm.

Ambassador to Bangladesh Embassy in Nepal Prof Nim Chandra Bhowmik said they heard the news from several sources in Nepal but could not be confirmed.

"We heard it but the Nepal Tourism Board and Mountaineering Clubs in Nepal could not confirm us yet," Prof Nim told The Daily Star over phone.

Hailing from Bhola district, Muhit is an official of Paragon Group in Dhaka, said a BMTC member.

Muhit, the first Bangladeshi to conquer the sixth highest peak on earth (8,201 metres) Mount Cho Oyo in 2009, left Dhaka on April 8 this year and started his expedition on April 12 from the Tibet side of Mount Everest (8,848 metres).

Muhit was supposed to reach the Everest last year. He had climbed up to camp-1 of Mount Everest but had to come down due to bad weather after waiting at camp-1 for two days.

Tougher rules

FROM PAGE 1

the structure will cause no sufferings to the residents.

If enforced strictly, these rules will help ensure safe working conditions and stop child labour at workshops. They will also contain public nuisance in residential areas and help ease traffic congestion resulting from workshops blocking roads and footpaths, said BRTA and police officials.

Since the amended law stipulates that workshops keep a record of the vehicles they are working on, it might act as a deterrent to carjacking. Oftentimes, garages are used by carjackers to change the look of stolen vehicles beyond recognition.

The registration certificates for workshops will be issued by a high-powered selection board headed by the BRTA chairman.

For registration, an applicant must have a valid trade licence, a tax identification number and financial solvency.

Mahub-e Rabbani, deputy director (engineering) of BRTA, said they will soon place an advertisement in the national dailies asking the workshop owners to register with BRTA within a stipulated time.

Once the registration time limit is over, BRTA will launch a drive against unregistered workshops and punish their owners, he added.

According to Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983, a person might be jailed for a month and fined Tk 500 for breaching the government rules. Under the penal code, the punishment will be three months' jail and a fine of Tk 2000 for violating government orders.

Some workshop owners in the capital's Pallabi area said they were not aware of the new rules. "If such rules are introduced, we will abide by those," Mohammad Soheli, owner of a garage for CNG-run three-wheelers, told The Daily Star.

M Belayet Hossain, president of Bangladesh

BD Thai

FROM PAGE 20

complaint, Judge Al Shams Joglul Hossain of the Fourth Joint District Judge's Court issued summons upon Ibrahim Khaled to appear before it on July 20 and explain.

Lawyer Abdus Selim Miah, law officer of the company, filed the case with the court on behalf of the company.

In the complaint, Selim said after submitting the probe report to the finance minister on April 7, Ibrahim told the media that they found that Bangladesh Thai Aluminium Ltd siphoned off or took away Tk 15 crore from the share market.

The report damaged the company image and it caused a loss of Tk 100 crore to the business, the plaintiff claimed.

In the law suit, seven others also have been made pro-forma defendants.

On April 24, the same company appealed to a Dhaka court seeking an order to cancel the part of the stockmarket scam probe report which blamed the company of taking away Tk 15 crore.

After hearing the appeal, filed in the form of a case, Judge Aftabuzzaman of the Second Assistant Judge's Court asked Ibrahim Khaled and seven others to appear before it on June 12.

Spanish polls open amid mass protests

BBC ONLINE

Spain is voting in regional elections as thousands of young protesters remain camped out in squares across the country yesterday.

Demonstrators are angry at the government's economic policies and Spain's high youth unemployment rate.

Their numbers have swelled despite a ban on political protests ahead of elections.

Automobile Workshop Owners' Association, said there are about 20,000 automobile workshops across the country, and of them, only some 800 are registered with their organisation.

India okays

FROM PAGE 20

"The Northeastern Frontier Railway [of India] is likely to undertake work for laying tracks by October next year," the Economic Times reported quoting Kishore Ambuly, special secretary to India's transport department, as saying.

While the department of north eastern region railway ministry would pay Rs 105 crore for construction of rail link on the Indian side, the external affairs ministry will provide Rs 146 crore to carry out the project on the Bangladesh side.

Kishore Ambuly said another round of joint survey would be conducted next month to officially notify the proposed alignment. Earlier, a joint team comprised of representatives from both the countries had conducted a survey in November last year.

The detailed project report is almost ready and will be submitted to India's Ministry of Railways and Railway Board for final approval. The railway extension work from Agartala to Udaipur in South Tripura district of India is expected to be completed by December 2012, the PTI report added.

The conversion of broad-gauge (BG) line from Lumding to Badarpur in Assam has already started. On completion, the line will be extended from Badarpur to Agartala.

The northeastern frontier railway is also conducting a survey to extend railways up to Sabroom, southern border town of Tripura for setting up connectivity with Chittagong Port in Bangladesh, which is just 70 km from Sabroom.

Crop insurance

FROM PAGE 20

Shykh Seraj submitted a 53-point proposal to the minister. Of those, 17 are related to crop sector, 11 to fisheries sector, 14 to poultry sector and 11 to livestock sector.

The proposals mentioned that there is budgetary allocation for crop insurance in this fiscal year but farmers did not get the benefit. Agriculture sector is now much more at risk due to various factors including climate change.

Shykh Seraj proposed giving farm inputs instead of cash subsidy to farmers.

The finance minister said he thinks farmers are benefiting from the existing system of subsidy, and no major change to the system will be brought in the budget for next fiscal year.

The next budget will contain a number of measures to provide relief to the middle income group from the pressure of rising inflation.

Four more

FROM PAGE 20

70, of Ramchandrani and Shimla, 8, daughter of Hanif Gazi of Tongi in Gazipur.

The bodies were found floating in the river. The relatives of the missing are continuing their search for their dear ones.

Police quoting witnesses said hundreds of relatives of the missing gathered on the riverbank. Some took part in the search mission. Many of them were seen mourning.

According to the police report, two people are still missing in this incident, although local people claim the number of missing is a lot higher.

More bodies may be recovered, if the search is continued, locals said.

Narayanjan district administration has given Tk 5,000 to each of the victims' families.

The trawler with 30 to 35 passengers on board sank in the river near Biswanadi under Arahazur upazila around 6:00pm Friday after it hit a sand-laden vessel.

Acting Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Arahazur Police Station Sayed Nazrul Islam said the bodies were handed over to the relatives after recovery.

Stop forced

FROM PAGE 1

Foundation (BHRE) on the same day. In response to the petition, the court also issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why it should not be directed to eliminate such forced labour.

In the petition filed as a public interest litigation, the rights body claimed that a number of people, including women and children, were reportedly forced to work at different brickfields with their limbs bound in chains to prevent them from escaping.

The acts are inhumane and go against the very spirit of labour law along with universal declaration of human rights and provisions of international law, the petition said.

Alena Khan, chief advocate of BHRE, said all employers must refrain from adopting brutal means of slavery or forced labour following the HC order.

In light of recently published reports by several news dailies, Alena said employees of several brickfields at Savar and Bandarban were found in shackles.

Secretaries to the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Home Affairs as well as chief inspector of labour were made respondents to the rule.

Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain represented the government.

2 more

FROM PAGE 20

the four who were shot dead in an attack allegedly orchestrated by Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) at a village of Barkal upazila, reports our Rangamati correspondent.

Deceased Purno Bhusan Chakma alias Nabadip, 40, was identified while another remained unidentified.

Earlier, police recovered the body of Sukkra Sen Chakma alias Prabin, 37, and 12 empty shells of bullets from the spot on Saturday.

Idris Ali, sub-inspector of Barkal Police Station, confirmed the recovery of two bodies from Kaptai Lake.

No case was filed till the evening, Idris said. "Saturday's incident occurred over establishing supremacy and toll collection as Suvalong is the most vital place," said Masood-ul-Hasan, Rangamati superintendent of police.

He also feared a revenge attack as UPDF central committee member Animesh Chakma was killed.

Meanwhile, PCJSS wants implementation of the peace accord whereas UPDF demands full autonomy in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

PCJSS leaders urged the government to ban UPDF terming it the main barrier to implementation of the peace deal.

"I don't see any way to solve the problem between the two groups without dialogue," the SP told this correspondent.

Sahara defends

FROM PAGE 1

with US Ambassador James F Moriarty.

On Thursday, Tarique Ahmed at a news conference claimed both Limon and his father are members of a criminal gang.

His statement differs widely with Rab Director General Mokhesur Rahman, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Mizanur Rahman and rights activists, all of whom termed Limon a shootout victim.

On March 23, a Rapid Action Battalion team shot and injured college student Limon, drawing a lot of flak at home and abroad. Later, the 16-year-old's left leg had to be amputated.

The elite force also filed two cases -- for possessing illegal firearms and obstructing law enforcers from carrying out their duties and attempted murder -- accusing the boy.

Asked whether Tarique's statement will influence ongoing investigations by different agencies into the matter, she replied, "I think it will not impact upon the investigations as he made the comment after a charge sheet was pressed against Limon."

US would repeat

FROM PAGE 20

to a location in Pakistan or another sovereign territory, he said the US would take unilateral action if required.

"Our job is to secure the United States," he told the BBC's Andrew Marr during a wide-ranging interview.

"We are very respectful of the sovereignty of Pakistan. But we cannot allow someone who is actively planning to kill our people or our allies' people."

"We can't allow those kind of active plans to come to fruition without us taking some action."

Tense partnership Bin Laden, the Saudi-born leader of al-Qaeda, was killed in a raid by US Navy Seal commandos. They stormed the compound where he was living in Abbottabad, a town that is home to Pakistan's main military academy.

The discovery that Bin Laden had been living there embarrassed the Pakistani military, and led to renewed suspicions that he had enjoyed protection from some members of the

Pakistani security forces.

The Islamabad government strongly denied such suggestions and said the US raid had undermined the country's sovereignty.

A resolution approved by Pakistani MPs earlier this month said the country would "no longer tolerate such actions and a repeat of unilateral measures could have dire consequences for peace and security in the region and the world."

Pakistan has been a major ally in the war against militants in neighbouring Afghanistan.

But US-Pakistani relations have also been strained by drone strikes targeting militants in the border area in recent years.

Reflecting on the raid - which he and his aides followed from the White House - Obama said "that was as long as 40 minutes as I care to experience during my presidency".

He added that the killing of Bin Laden could be a "wake-up call where we start seeing a more effective cooperative relationship" with

Pakistan.

On Afghanistan, Obama said that while the conflict could not be solved militarily, raising troop levels had put the Taliban "back on its heels" in a way that could facilitate the brokering of a political reconciliation.

"Ultimately it means talking to the Taliban," he said, adding that the "Taliban would have to cut all ties to al-Qaeda, renounce violence and they would have to respect the Afghan constitution".

In a discussion that ranged from the US economy to Middle East peace talks and his family's fondness for the British monarch.

President Obama is due to leave for Europe later yesterday. He will first visit the Irish Republic, then the UK, France, and Poland.

He is expected to discuss a range of issues, including the upheavals in the Middle east and North Africa, the war in Afghanistan, and the downturn that has forced European governments to adopt austerity measures.

Move to speed up ADP

FROM PAGE 1

the prime minister's approval -- may take effect from July, a planning ministry official said preferring anonymity.

The ministries will also enjoy more financial authority. For instance, a minister will be able to approve his ministry's project expenditure revised upward or downward by 15 percent, instead of 10 percent, in the first revision.

In case of second revision, a minister can approve a cost hike in a project by 25 percent, instead of 20 percent.

According to the draft policy, a ministry can approve a survey or study of a project involving up to Tk 5 crore, which is now Tk 2 crore.

Besides, the finance and planning ministries have outlined a specific timeframe for project implementation for all ministries.

The government earlier decided to make feasibility study mandatory by June 2012 for technically complicated projects that involve more than Tk 500 crore.

The decision came at an inter-ministerial meeting in

March with the finance secretary in the chair.

The official said the ADP taken by the government is revised downward at the end of the year and ministries fail to implement the revised ADP. It has compelled the government to amend the draft policy on project formulation and revision.

The draft policy suggested that a ministry will not need to send a project proposal with requirement for manpower to the Finance Division for consent before forwarding it to the Planning Commission. It should directly get the proposal approved by the Planning Commission.

According to the draft policy, information on land value should be collected from sub-registrar's office, not deputy commissioner's office, for using it in project proposal since many ministries have identified improper valuation of land and complication in land acquisition as a major impediment to project implementation.

The government has taken a number of reform programmes to check cor-

ruption and prevent misuse of funds.

Central Procurement Technical Unit of the planning ministry will review procurement plans of 10 ministries from the next fiscal year.

Twenty ministries will be brought under the review after June 2012.

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 20

southern soldiers, a southern military spokesman told the BBC.

South Sudan is due to become independent in July, but Abyei's status remains to be determined after a referendum on its future was shelved.

In a fighting, a mortar shell destroyed a car near the UN sector headquarters in Abyei, while two members of army were killed by mortar shells in the Egyptian camps of the UN.

However, all Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Sudan are safe," said the ISPR press release signed by its Assistant Director Md Noor Islam.

The UN has called for an end to fighting between the two sides.

DAB leader Zahid

FROM PAGE 20

Udayan Tower of Moghbazar.

"We arrested him following a requisition and later handed him over to Tejgaon Industrial Police Station which kept him in Cantonment Police Station's custody for security reasons," said Monirul Islam.

Tejgaon Industrial Police Station Officer-in-Charge Omar Faruq said the victims of the disaster filed six cases accusing 12 high officials of Impulse Hospital and College while the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) filed another case for the violation of the Real Estate Development and Management Act, 2010.

Former professor of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Zahid was sacked from service on August 3, 2008. In May that year, during the caretaker government rule, Zahid was sentenced, in absentia, to 13 years' rigorous imprisonment in a corruption case.

Representatives of Medical College and Hospital, being built on a 2.9-acre land, or the Islamic Trading Consortium Ltd were unavailable at the site for their versions.

Locals claimed that the hospital is also owned by a physician Prof Ali Zaher Al-Amin, who could not be reached.

Imarat Shramik Union Bangladesh--a trade union of construction workers--brought out a procession and demonstrated near the site during the briefing. The workers alleged a number of workers had gone missing since the incident.

Abul Kalam Azad, whose one-storey tin-shed house tumbled down into the pit, told The Daily Star that despite repeated objections and

piles were driven 60 feet deep into the ground.

Siddiq said they, in association with Rajuk, would fill the pit with 10 lakh cubic feet of sand in four days.

Replying to a question, the army officials said the fate of the construction now depends on Rajuk.

A 60-member team of the army engineering corps mobilised Saturday noon and immediately started filling up the pit.

Talking to The Daily Star, Major Ahmed Tanvir Mazhar Siddiqui said the builder did not take proper soil protection measures.

"The collapse occurred due to carrying out construction work during the rainy season and inadequate protective measures in the piling work," he assessed primarily. The soil loosened and eroded due to the downpours and the protective measure failed causing the subsidence, he said.

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Abul Kalam Azad, whose one-storey tin-shed house tumbled down into the pit, told The Daily Star that despite repeated objections and

appeals by locals, the developers paid no heed to their inadequate safety measures.

Another local Alim Uddin said Rajuk supervision was absent during the construction.

Bus operators

FROM PAGE 1

But until yesterday, the bus operators were charging the passengers beyond the rate.

Meantime, two mobile courts run by BRTA magistrates yesterday filed cases against 20 bus services on different city routes, fined Tk 26,600 and confiscated seven buses for overcharging passengers and not having valid documents.

Magistrate SM Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that he conducted the drive at Mirpur-10. He confiscated five buses and filed cases against seven others for charging beyond the government-fixed fare.

He hoped that public sufferings will ease from today, as everybody will know the exact fare from the chart.

Another Magistrate Mohammad Tofael Islam, who conducted the drive at city's Shyamoli area, filed cases against 13 bus services, fined Tk 21,400 and confiscated two buses for flouting the government order.

The communications minister said more mobile courts will be deployed to monitor whether the bus operators are following the government decision taken yesterday.

DoE fines 2 mills in Ctg

River pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Department of Environment (DoE) in separate drives yesterday fined two textile mills more than Tk 50 lakh on charge of polluting the river Karnaphuli.

A DoE enforcement team led by its Director (Enforcement) Munir Chowdhury conducted the drives at Kalurghat heavy industrial area in collaboration with Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

During the drive the team found Sanji Textile Limited, a sister concern of Well Group, discharging its effluent in the river. The company is owned by Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman and Awami League leader Abdus Salam.

Though the mill possessed an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) it was not being used, sources in the team said.

The DoE team tested the water in presence of the mill authority and found the quantity of liquid oxygen to be 3.0 mg/l against the Environment Protection Act standard of 4mg/l and the Total Dissolved Solid (TDS) 3340 mg/l against 2100 mg/l. The Ph level of the water was found to be 9.68.

The team fined Sanji Textile Tk 22.84 lakh. The DoE had earlier warned the mill regarding the pollution, Munir Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

The DoE team later conducted a similar drive at nearby Shah Amanat Textile Mill, owned by another leading business venture SA Group, and also found them discharging poisonous waste into Karnaphuli. The team found that the mill had been running without any ETP and did not possess a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the DoE.

The mill was fined Tk 28 lakh and shut down temporarily on charge of polluting the environment. The DoE team also directed the authority to install an ETP immediately.

Sanji Textile Ltd authorities have already paid the full amount of the fine while Shah Amanat has paid only Tk 20 lakh.

US DRONE STRIKES

Pakistan warns of retaliation

PTI, Islamabad

The powerful ISI chief Lt Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha has warned the US that Pakistan will be "forced to respond" if it does not stop drone strikes in the country's tribal belt, according to a media report yesterday.

Pasha, who faced tremendous criticism after the May 2 US raid that killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in the garrison city of Abbottabad, made Pakistan's stand clear during a meeting yesterday between visiting CIA Deputy Director Michael More