

Afghan governor escapes Helmand ambush

AFP, Kandahar

The governor of Afghanistan's troubled Helmand province yesterday escaped unharmed from an insurgent ambush and gunbattle that left two attackers dead, his office said.

Mohammad Gulab Mangal was returning to Lashkar Gah, capital of the southern province, after an official visit to Sangin, a pocket of some of the worst fighting in Afghanistan, when his motorcade came under fire from insurgents.

"The security forces returned fire and killed two of the armed attackers. Their bodies were left on the ground," a statement from his office said.

Pictures released with the statement showed at least four bullet holes in Mangal's armoured vehicle.

Helmand is one of Afghanistan's most dangerous provinces and a major focus for US-led NATO operations in the war-torn country.

Mangal has survived numerous previous attempts on his life.

The attack came on the same day that the deputy chief of Afghanistan's spy agency, Ahmad Zia, escaped an apparent attempt on his life in Kabul when guards shot and killed a man who tried to ram a bomb-laden car into his motorcade.

JSC scholarship

FROM PAGE 20
formulating a policy on scholarship.

As a replacement for scholarship exams, the government last year introduced the JSC and JDC examinations with some 13.96 lakh students from 27,289 general schools and madrasas participating in those.

Eight general education boards and one madrasa board conducted the exams in grading system where a total of 8,556 students scored the highest GPA-5 (Grade Point Average).

On the day the results were published, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told the reporters that the scholarships would be announced soon after formulating a policy on it.

Admitting the sluggishness in preparing the policy, Khandakar Rakibur Rahman, joint secretary (secondary), said "There were some errors in the policy which took some time to solve."

"We hope the process would be complete within the stipulated time," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, sources at DSHE said they prepared the policy as per the direction of the ministry and sent it to the ministry on April 18.

But, the ministry split the policy into two parts—one for general boards and another for madrasa, creating more complexities, they said. Eventually the ministry merged it again under one policy, they added.

The ministry, however, did not bring any major change in the draft which said the scholarship would be in two categories -- talent pool and general.

In JSC, 30,800 scholarships would be awarded among the students of general boards while 6,000 were allocated for JDC, according to the draft.

GPA-2.00 would be the minimum eligibility to get scholarship in general category while GPA-3 would be the minimum eligibility to get scholarship in talent pool category.

In talent pool category under JSC exams, a student would get scholarship money of Tk 300 per month and Tk 375 per year for two years. In general category, the students would get Tk 200 per month and Tk 225 per year for two years, the draft said, adding the same amounts also apply for JDC or madrasa students.

After finalising the draft, the ministry would send a letter along with the copy of the policy to the finance ministry asking for its permission for issuing circular, said ministry officials.

Stand by Khaled

FROM PAGE 1

after Bangladesh-Thai Aluminium Ltd sued Khaled demanding Tk 100 crore as compensation for the damage caused for his statement linking the company with irregularities in the stock market.

"How can somebody file a case against someone for an enquiry report?" Suranjit said referring to the government-formed probe body's activities and the case by Bangladesh-Thai Aluminium.

He was speaking at a discussion on the 30th anniversary of Sheikh Hasina's return to Bangladesh organised by Bangladesh Awami Muktioddha Projonmo League at the Jatiya Press Club.

Stressing the need for taking actions against "gamblers", who were identified by the probe body, as key players involved in the recent share market crash, he said the market needs to be taken care of.

He said, "The Awami League won't tolerate that these [lower income and the middle-class] people would wander out in the field losing everything and some people would walk away with crores."

"We want justice for those people who lost everything and punishment for the culprits who took away the

money," he said.

He pointed out that a number of ruling alliance lawmakers on Monday decried the delay in taking actions against "gamblers" and asked the finance minister to take necessary steps.

Speaking at the discussion, the veteran AL lawmaker and member of the advisory council of the party also touched a number of current issues of the country.

He said talks in the country have been going on about Rapid Action Battalion. "Some suggested dismantling of the elite force but I think it cannot be dismantled rather we can reform the force," he observed.

Suranjit, also the co-chairman of the parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendment, said the opposition have been demanding mid-term elections, which is totally a comical, unconstitutional, undemocratic and unacceptable demand.

"The next parliamentary elections will be held in due time," he said.

The discussion was also addressed by Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, General Secretary of AL city unit, and Baloram Poddar, Janata Bank director and former Chhatra League leader, among others.

Noakhali University

FROM PAGE 1

to Sonapur Royal Hospital, while six others were undergoing treatment at the campus clinic.

Witnesses said a group of BCL activists, led by computer science final year student Monzurul Islam Mohsin, occupied 11 rooms on the second floor of the under-construction Bhasha Shaheed Abdus Salam Hall around 11:00pm on Monday.

Another faction of the student organisation brought out a procession on the campus yesterday morning protesting the incident. A final year student of fisheries science Nurul Afsar Kajol led the group.

At one stage both the factions locked in chases and counter chases. They used hockey sticks, Chinese axes and other lethal weapons during the clashes.

Incensed, students ransacked the academic building

and Bhasha Shaheed Abdus Salam Hall.

They also confined Provost Anwarul Bashar to a room for two hours until police freed him around noon.

Students of Bibi Khadiza Hall staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the academic building demanding removal of hall Provost Abdullah Al Mamun, Assistant Provosts Afsana Mousumi and Nahida Akhter for their alleged misbehaviour.

The clash erupted due to a misunderstanding between students, said AKM Sayedul Haque Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of the university, adding they were trying to settle the dispute.

A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Md Mahbub Rashid said law enforcers have enhanced their strength to maintain peace on the campus.

Nazrul's birthday

FROM PAGE 20

Bengal on this day in 1899.

Through his poems, Nazrul had inspired people to fight against injustice and repression during the British colonial rule. His songs and poems were also a major source of inspiration for the freedom fighters during the Liberation War in 1971.

As part of the national celebration, the three-day main programme will be held at Darirampur under Trishal in Mymensingh. President Zillur Rahman is expected to inaugurate the function.

This is the first time the national poet's birth anniversary is being observed officially in all districts of the country at the initiative of the Cultural Affairs Ministry.

The poet's birth anniversary is being celebrated with special importance this year as his extraordinary creation 'Bidrohi' (poem 'Rebel') completes its 90th year.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia have given separate special messages describing the colourful life of the great poet and his contributions to the Bengali language and literature.

President Zillur said, "He was a fighter, a social reformer and a proponent of nationalism, and at the same time an worshiper of love and pioneer of equality and peace."

In her message, Prime Minister Hasina said, Kazi Nazrul Islam was a poet of equality, humanity, love, youth and rebellion. His works immensely enriched Bangla language, literature, music, society and culture.

"He is the 'rebel poet' and the 'bulbul' (nightingale) of modern Bangla songs," she said.

Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia in her message said Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings would inspire every people to love the motherland.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations will place wreath at the poet's tomb on Dhaka University campus in the morning.

Special programmes on Nazrul's works including his plays, poetry and songs will be broadcast by TV channels and radio stations marking the national poet's birthday.

Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy, Nazrul Institute, Dhaka University, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote and other social and cultural organizations have drawn up various programmes to observe Nazrul's birth anniversary.

Nazrul-Promila Parishad central committee will organise a discussion at Promila's birthplace Tewta, under Shibbalaya upazila in Manikganj to celebrate the day.

Bangladesh missions abroad will also celebrate the day through different programmes.

5 drown

FROM PAGE 1

Begum, 12, Zainul, 8, and Belal, 7, sons of Mokhles Ali, and Manfar Ali, 40 were recovered from the waterbody yesterday, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.

Police and fire fighters with the help of locals were continuing their search for the missing passenger Faruque Ahmed, 47, of Mirzanagar of Dakkhin Surma upazila, till yesterday afternoon, the DC said.

Locals said a rice-laden boat carrying 8 to 9 passengers capsized in the beel after being caught in the stormy weather.

The boat was going to Kotalpur Bazar from Mirzanagar.

The bodies were handed over to their families.

IDB gives \$140m

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to journalists later, Muhith said Padma bridge project is the largest one in the country, and work in this regard is progressing quickly as per schedule.

The IDB chief referred to the assistance from other development partners for the bridge project, and said his institution is willing to cooperate with the institutions interested in the development of Bangladesh.

"The future Bangladesh will be brighter... together we'll build a better Bangladesh," he said.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain said, "I want to assure you (IDB president) that my ministry will implement this project with the highest level of transparency and integrity."

At each stage of implementation of the project, media will be invited to help maintain transparency, he added.

The project includes 6.15 km main bridge, 3.8 km road viaduct and 0.532 km rail viaduct. Besides, 14 km river training and 12 km approach road are part of the project.

When completed, Padma bridge will connect 19 south-western districts with the capital and eastern region of the country.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20

the treasury bench and opposition members of New Jersey State Senate unanimously adopted a resolution honouring Khaleda Zia.

Shamser Mobin said the senate resolution termed Khaleda as fighter of democracy, special leader of women empowerment and a role model for present and future women generations of the US.

New Jersey Senate President Stephen Sweeney handed over the senate resolution to Khaleda Zia.

All the senators gave Khaleda a standing ovation.

This was the first such honour accorded to any foreign personality by the New Jersey State Senate, Shamser Mobin said.

Addressing the Senate, former prime minister Khaleda Zia sought cooperation of the state senators in pursuing duty-free access of Bangladeshi products in the US market.

On democracy and human rights, she said Bangladesh and USA have identical views on both these issues.

On counter-terrorism, the leader of the opposition in parliament said people should be involved for sustainable and effective curbing of terrorism.

Khaleda also expressed her happiness and gratitude for inviting her to the New Jersey State Senate.

Govt handling

FROM PAGE 20

government handled the issue of Yunus was not smart," he said at a luncheon meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) at city's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel yesterday.

Countries around the world respect their Nobel laureates but we could not, said Prof Wahiduddin, also a former caretaker government adviser.

"Think of Nelson Mandela, a Peace Nobel laureate," he pointed out.

Not that the country should respect someone because of diplomatic pressure. As a Nobel hero, Prof Yunus deserves respect of the nation, he added.

On politics, he said leaders should leave behind the culture of confrontation and agitation to better the country's image, which is vital for the development of the nation.

According to him, corruption and lack of good governance are harming the country's progress.

"We've still the problem of corruption," he said, adding that the civil administration in African countries is smarter than that of Bangladesh.

Non-elected institutions in other countries are very strong, and they can therefore function freely, said the just-retired Dhaka University professor.

Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank, stepped down as its managing director on May 12 after losing a legal battle with the government over the post.

Ministry investigator

FROM PAGE 1

His left leg had to be amputated after a Rapid Action Battalion team shot him to injury in Jhalakathi on March 23.

Yesterday, ADC Akbar allowed the media in the room where he asked Limon a wide range of questions about the March 23 incident, his childhood and education.

He threw a volley of leading questions minutely examining the alibi of Limon and parents.

As the questioning continued, tears started rolling down the cheeks of Limon. His mother Henoara Begum, touched by her son's ordeal, also failed to hold her tears.

Akbar also asked details about how much the poor family had received from visitors and well-wishers and whether or not any editor had ever visited the maimed boy.

The interrogator also wanted to know who gave them the money and how much, and who helped the family open bank accounts.

Limon's father told the ADC that people from all walks of life helped them according to their ability.

The interrogator eagerly noted down when the father told him that BH Haroon, a local Awami League lawmaker, was so moved that he gave the family Tk 20,000 and promised to help Limon complete his education.

Akbar also took notes when Limon's father told

him that a top Rab official gave the family Tk 5,000 for his son's treatment.

Dr Kazi Enamul Kabir, a doctor on duty, recorded Limon's statement and read it out to the boy who later signed it.

After Limon, the ADC quizzed the father for one hour till 1:45pm.

The home ministry had asked Shawkat Akbar to submit a report within 15 working days after the probe began on April 29.

The ministry has given him additional seven days, from May 23 to 29, to complete the probe, the ADC told The Daily Star after completing the questioning.

Asked whether it was necessary to question Limon as the home minister backed the statement that Limon has criminal link, the ADC replied he received no instruction from the ministry or any other quarter regarding how to conduct the probe.

"I have nearly completed the probe and I shall submit my findings to the home ministry," said Akbar.

Limon was transferred to Nitor after being released from the Jhalakathi jail on a six-month bail granted by the High Court. The HC order came following a petition of a rights body claiming his innocence.

On Monday, the Rab claimed that Limon and his

family had links with a local criminal gang.

This statement was based on reports of four probe committees ordered by Rab and police after the March 23 incident, said Rab officials.

The reports found that Limon was a member of Morshed Bahini, a local gang of criminals, and he suffered the bullet wound in an encounter between the miscreants and Rab personnel.

The Rab filed two cases against Limon accusing him of possessing illegal firearms, and of obstructing law enforcers from carrying out their duties and attempted murder.

Limon's mother also filed a case against the Rab personnel who went to her village to hunt the Morshed gang.

Also on Thursday, serving yet another hard blow to the maimed teenager, Prime Minister's Defence Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique at a news conference claimed both Limon and his father are members of a criminal gang.

Later on Sunday, Home Minister Sahara Khatun backed Tarique by saying his remark on Limon must be a government statement.

On April 11, Rab Director General Mokhlesur Rahman, however, said Limon was not a "notorious criminal".

No respite from overcharging

FROM PAGE 20

One of the two mobile courts of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) yesterday continued with its ride at the city's Jatiya Press Club area. It confiscated nine buses for overcharging passengers and not having valid documents. The court filed cases against 13 bus services and fined them Tk 5,500 in total.

Most of the buses were charging more than the fare mentioned in the chart provided by the BRTA, Magistrate SM Rezaul Karim said, adding that some minibuses of Mirpur route were charging passengers Tk 20 for all stoppages.

The BRTA Sunday afternoon circulated a comprehensive fare chart among bus operators directing them to put them up on buses and stoppages.

"According to the law, it is a crime and we took actions against those bus services," said the magistrate, adding that the buses of Savar and Mohammadpur route from Motijheel were charging passengers Tk 40 instead of Tk 37 and Tk 20 instead of Tk 13.

Meanwhile, the government-run BRTC buses also did not follow the new fare chart. They were charging Tk 8-10 instead of the minimum Tk 7. Asked about it, BRTC General Manager [operations] Major Quazi Shafique Uddin said it could be due to computer programming error. "But I have directed the official concerned to correct it immediately and start taking Tk 7 as the lowest fare," he told The Daily Star at his office.

The High Court on Monday asked the authorities concerned to prevent

transport operators from collecting extra fares from passengers in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Manikganj. In a six-point directive, the court ordered the communications and home secretaries to form a seven-member monitoring committee immediately to enforce the government-fixed fares.

The HC asked the communications secretary to set up several mobile courts in Dhaka city, and also the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority chairman to make sure that the chart of the government-fixed fares is hung inside all buses and minibuses as well as at stoppages.

The communications secretary said they have already given the fare charts. He said after getting the copy of the HC directives, he would consult with the home secretary regarding the formation of the seven-member committee. "We have already directed the BRTA chairman to take whatever actions necessary to implement the government fixed fare in line with the high court directives," said the communications secretary.

The court also ordered the joint commissioner (traffic) and all deputy commissioners (traffic) in Dhaka to form a vigilance team under every police station. It also ordered the inspector general of police and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner to instruct all police stations to monitor bus and minibus stoppages regularly to prevent collection of additional fares.

Deputy Commissioner (Traffic-West) Mofiz Uddin

Ahmed told The Daily Star they would take steps soon after getting the copy of the HC directives.

He said they would act according to the HC directives upon getting instructions from his high-ups and the copy of the court directives.

Bomb kills two police officers in Thai south

AFP, Narathiwat

Thai police said two officers were killed and another was wounded when a powerful bomb exploded beneath their truck in Thailand's violence-prone south yesterday.

Suspected Islamic militants detonated a device buried under the road as 10 officers drove past on their way to a function with villagers in Narathiwat, one of three provinces to have suffered more than seven years of insurgency.

The 38-year-old driver and a 33-year-old woman were killed instantly in the blast, police said. Another female officer sustained serious injuries and was taken to hospital.

Thailand's southern provinces have been plagued by almost daily violence since shadowy insurgents launched an uprising in Thailand's southernmost region in early 2004.

More than 4,500 people, both Muslims and Buddhists, have died in the attacks, which have appeared to become more brazen in recent months, with car bombs and assaults on military bases or outposts.

Nato air strikes rock Tripoli

FROM PAGE 20

deserted military barracks but which instead hit civilians living nearby.

An AFP journalist said the raids lasting more than half an hour began at around 1:00am when powerful blasts were heard in the sector around Gaddafi's Bab al-Aziziya residence.

More than 15 strong blasts were heard in the neighbourhood, with the sound of warplanes roaring overhead.

Nato rejected the claim that the strikes had targeted a barracks and said in fact a vehicle storage facility had been struck.

In another boost to forces fighting to oust the Libyan strongman, France said it would provide attack helicopters for Nao's air campaign along with Britain, and the EU widened sanc-

tions against Gaddafi's forces.

The helicopters, a weapon that has yet to be used by Nato in Libya, will help the Western alliance strike regime military assets hidden in urban areas while avoiding civilian casualties, French ministers said.

On Monday, Washington urged Gaddafi to leave Libya as Feltman, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, held talks in the rebel capital Benghazi.

Feltman told a media conference in Benghazi yesterday that the rebels' National Transitional Council had been invited to open an office in Washington.

On the issue of calls for US recognition of the NTC as the "sole legitimate interlocutor" of Libyans, Feltman noted the council was in fact

already the only representative of the country in Washington.

Britain, France, Gambia, Italy and Qatar have already recognised the rebel council as their sole interlocutor in Libya.

On Monday, the European Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, opened an EU office in Benghazi and declared the 27-member bloc's "long-term support" to the rebels.

On the ground, there was little movement in the battle lines.

Rebel military spokesman Ahmed Omar Bani said the frontline between the rebel-held east and the mainly government-held west remained between the strategic crossroads town of Ajdabiya and the oil refinery town of Brega.

Ukraine ex-premier taken in for questioning

BBC ONLINE

Ukrainian ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who is facing charges of abuse of office, has been taken in for questioning in Kiev yesterday.

Prosecutors announced she had been detained by district court order in order to enable investigators to pursue their inquiry.

ACC opposes

FROM PAGE 1

says any law so made shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void.

Legal experts also said requiring prior government permission for filing corruption cases against government officials is discriminatory, as it offers undue privileges to public servants.

The government placed the bill in parliament on February 28, and this provision in the bill drew widespread criticism.

Different non-government organisations, individuals working for good governance, and various donor agencies and countries also expressed concern over the proposed change.

ACC's letter signed by its chief Ghulam Rahman termed the proposed change inconsistent with the spirit of an independent ACC, and said for this the same proposal had not been accepted during the enactment of the anti-graft body law in 2004.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who also sent a letter to the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry, opposed the proposed provision.

He said, "Big fishes will not be caught and only small fry will be punished if the government permission is required before filing corruption cases."

The Daily Star obtained copies of both letters sent by the finance minister and ACC.

The parliamentary body on law ministry last Thursday started scrutinising the bill. Members of the committee also questioned the proposed provision of awarding blanket protection to government officials.

The committee will sit again soon to discuss the proposed changes and prepare its recommendations to be placed in the parliament.

THE PROPOSAL

The government came up with the bill to bring amendments to the ACC Act 2004 introducing the provision of prior government permission for filing cases against government officials, and for beginning trials of the cases.

With the inclusion of this provision no court shall take into cognisance any offence by public servants, including judges and magistrates, without prior government sanction for trying them.

Prosecutors must submit a proof of government permission to a court before it begins trial of a public servant.