

**UP POLLS VIOLENCE
Men flee from
Haturia as
police file case**

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

Men of Haturia village in Bera upazila of Pabna fled as police arrested 10 people and filed a case with Bera Police Station against an unknown number of people including Upazila Parishad Chairman Md Chand Pramanik over Tuesday's incident.

A man was killed and 10 others injured during an exchange of fire between supporters of Chand, BNP backed candidate of local chairman election, and law enforcers on Tuesday. The supporters were trying to snatch the ballot boxes.

Sources said the half-day hartal called yesterday by local BNP was observed peacefully though tense situation still prevailed in the area.

Additional District Magistrate Md Rejaul Karim said the district administration inquiry committee began its investigation and would take statements of those related to the election centre from June 7.



Untreated sewage from industries and factories pollutes canals and water bodies at Ariar in Rugganj, Narayanganj. The photo was taken Wednesday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

**PM hailed
for assuring
journos of 8th
wage board**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different journalist associations yesterday appreciated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her assurance that the eighth wage board for newspapers, news agencies, and electronic media will be announced upon discussion with owners of the media outlets.

The prime minister gave the assurance at a press conference at her official residence of Gono Bhaban Tuesday.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Abu Jafar Surjo, and Bangladesh Federal Union of Newspaper Press Workers President Alamgir Hossain and Secretary General Kamaluddin in separate statements demanded the information ministry take necessary steps to form the new wage board.

**REGULARISATION OF BANGLADESHI WORKERS IN MALAYSIA
Govt to issue over 3 lakh
hand-written passports**

PORIMOL PALMA

Fearing complex procedures of tender process, the government has finally decided to issue hand-written passports to help regularisation of over three lakh Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

However, it decided that the handwritten passports will be replaced by the machine-readable passports (MRPs) by March 31, 2015.

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting chaired by Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain at his ministry on Wednesday.

The minister opted for hand-written passports when MRP Project Director (PD) Brig Gen Refayetullah proposed outsourcing

MRPs would make the job easy, said officials who were present at the meeting.

However, the minister told the meeting that Bangladesh high commission in Kuala Lumpur presently issues both hand-written and MRPs.

As per its present capacity, it is not possible for the mission to issue more than 200 MRPs, Khandker Mosharraf said.

Moreover, the minister said awarding the job to a particular company without tender will raise questions and complexities.

So, handwritten passports should be issued to the migrants alongside the process of outsourcing MRPs, the minister told the meeting.

Officials from the ministries of home, foreign affairs, passport department were also present at the meeting.

**TAX EVASION CASE
Partex Group
chairman's
son gets bail**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Shawkat Aziz, son of Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem, after his surrender in connection with a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Shawkat along with lawyer Mohammad Sanaulah Miah appeared before the court and sought bail in the case.

\$36m deal to protect wildlife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday signed a US\$ 36 million credit agreement with the World Bank (WB) to finance a project for protection of the wildlife.

The project titled "Strengthening regional cooperation for wildlife protection in Asia", first of its kind, will address illegal cross-border trade of wild animals through regional cooperation and capacity building, and support of the country's initiative for habitat protection, especially for the Bengal Tiger.

The credit from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's concessional lending arm, has a 40-year maturity, including a 10-year grace period and carries a service charge of 0.75 percent, a press

statement of the WB reads.

"This project will be the entry point to regional cooperation for wildlife protection and conservation," said Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Advisor Dr Mashiur Rahman.

The WB loan carries a 40-year maturity with a 10-year grace period and a 0.75pc service charge

"Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan are joining the project at this stage. Participation by other tiger range countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia is envisaged in later phases," said Mashiur who was present during sign-

ing ceremony.

The Indian ministry of environment and forests has also shown willingness to join the regional initiative and had participated in a regional consultation meeting, the statement added.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and World Bank Country Director to Bangladesh Ellen Goldstein signed the agreement on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and the WB respectively at ERD.

South Asia is home to 13-15 percent of the world's biodiversity and hosts some of the most endangered species on the Earth. But deforestation, habitat loss, pollution, and poaching of wild animals have exposed the environmental and ecological balance to serious threat.



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Sanjib Drong, Dr Mizanur Rahman, Dr Dalem Chandra Barman, and Shahriar Kabir at a roundtable discussion on "Constitutional recognition of indigenous people: Right to land and forest" organised by Research and Development Collective (RDC) at Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday.

'Recognise indigenous land inheritance system'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The indigenous people have inherited land through "collective property" system, which was not included in the constitution causing conflicts over their land, said Mizanur Rahman, chairman of National Human Rights Commission.

The indigenous people have been losing their land and forests as vested property since the collective land system is not recognised in the '72 constitution, he said adding that the constitution has created concepts of individual property, cooperative property and state property.

Mizanur made the remarks at a roundtable titled "Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous People: Right to Land and Forests" organised by Research and Development Collective (RDC) at Jatiya Press Club.

Executive President of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee (forum for secular Bangladesh and trial of 1971 war criminals) Shahriar Kabir said if "Bismillah" is included in the preamble of the constitution it will be the implementing agenda of BNP and Jamaat.

RDC General Secretary Prof Mesbah Kamal said the country has failed to give the indigenous people recognition over the last 40 years.

Urging the government to give constitutional recognition to the indigenous people, General Secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum Sanjib Drong said the state will be insulted and deprived if they insult and deprive the indigenous people.

Representatives from different indigenous organisations also spoke at the event while Professor of Peace and Conflict department of Dhaka University Dr Dalem Chandra Barman was in the chair.

CJA protests death of Pak journalist

IANS, Toronto

The Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) expressed on Wednesday outrage over the slaying of Pakistani journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad and urged the Pakistan government to do all it can to find the perpetrators.

CJA president Hassan Shahriar said he and his colleagues at the CJA were alarmed and dismayed over the rising incidents of violence against journalists in Pakistan, especially those journalists who were working in tribal areas.

The body of Syed Saleem Shahzad, an Islamabad-based journalist, was found May 31, two days after he was reported missing.

Shahzad's latest article for Asia Times was about a Taliban-led attack on Mehran naval base in Karachi May 22 in which 11 soldiers and four attackers were killed.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Razia Zaman, a former teacher of Holy Cross College, passed away at Labaid Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 78, says a press release.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Baitul Aman mosque in Dhanmondi on Saturday after Zohr prayers.

Later, she will be buried at the Banani graveyard.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 15th death anniversary of Syed Golam Kibria, an eminent journalist and politician, says a press release.

On the occasion, qurankhwani, milad mahfil, destitute feeding programme and discussion will be held after Juma prayers at his residence at Ananda Nagar of Badda in the city today.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Saleha Akhter, a former principal of KBI College of Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh, will be held in the conference hall of Easel Dream at Road No-3/A, Sector No-5 of Uttara in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

War heroes vow to observe hunger strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sector Commanders Forum, a platform of commanders who led the country's Liberation War in 1971, yesterday vowed to observe hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban "if religion-based political parties are not banned by constitutional amendment".

The war heroes also demanded that the government delete the phrase "Bismillah hir Rahmanir Rahim" from the constitution and withdraw the status of state religion given to Islam so that the spirit of the Liberation War is restored.

They said this at a views-exchange meeting on constitution amendment at the Jatiya Press Club.

Some of the discussants opined for calling for hartal if the government failed to meet their demands.

"The government will push the country to the brink of destruction if it does not amend the constitution in light of the spirit of our Liberation War," AK Khandker, president of SCF, said at the meeting.

"Three million people irrespective of their religion and identity sacrificed their lives with an aim to build our country as a secular state. A democratic country cannot have a particular religion as its state religion. Besides, reli-

gion-based political parties should be banned in the country," Khandker added.

"We urge the Jatiya Sangsad special committee and the government not to go wrong with this issues."

Maj Gen (ret) KM Safiullah, vice-president of the forum, said, "We will be bound to observe hunger strike if the government does not meet our demands regarding constitutional amendment."

"People will treat you [government and the JS special committee] as betrayers if you keep Islam as the state religion and Bismillah in the constitution."

Tofail Ahmed, an Awami League MP and a member of the JS special body on constitution amendment, said he supports all the demands of the SCF leaders but he cannot disobey his party's decision on those issues.

Putting the blame on two former army bosses--late president Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad--Tofail said, "They shattered all our dreams by incorporating Bismillah in the constitution and making Islam the state religion."

Shahriar Kabir, acting president of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, said the government would put the country into a civil war if it does not amend the constitution in light of the Liberation War spirit.

**Anarchy won't be tolerated in name of hartal
Says Tuku**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urging BNP to discuss the caretaker government issue in parliament, State Minister for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku said any sort of anarchy in the name of hartal would not be tolerated.

He made the comment at a press briefing at his secretariat office in the city yesterday following a meeting with the chiefs of law enforcing agencies.

BNP and its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami on Wednesday called down-to-dusk hartal across the country for June 5 demanding the caretaker system to hold parliamentary elections.

The decision came when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told a parliamentary committee that her government would go by the recent Supreme Court judgement that declared the caretaker system illegal.

BNP gave passports to Rohingyas: Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Minister Dipu Moni held the past BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance government responsible and having "special motive" for issuing Bangladeshi passports to Myanmar nationals (Rohingya) living in refugee camps.

The foreign minister said this in parliament yesterday while replying to lawmakers' queries.

Dipu Moni said the government would take action against officials responsible for such activities as the government has evidence. She however did not elaborate on the special motive.

Replying to a query, she said around 5,035 Bangladeshi citizens, jailed in 29 countries for committing crimes of various natures, would be bought back after their prison terms.

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