

BDR CARNAGE

Hearing on charge framing against 850 on June 20

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday deferred the hearing on charge framing against 850 accused in the BDR carnage case till June 20 following a time petition submitted by the prosecution.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Special Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol appealed to the court to defer the date of charge framing hearing.

Kajol in the petition said the accused, now in different jails, could not be produced before the makeshift court at Bakshi Bazar due to the ongoing 36-hour hartal called by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami.

So, the date of hearing scheduled for Monday should be deferred, he mentioned.

The court on May 23 adjourned the trial proceeding till yesterday after the prosecution had completed reading out charges against 847 accused, including former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and Awami League leader Torab Ali in the BDR carnage case.

Besides, on April 12, 26 and May 9 charges against 803 accused were read out by the prosecution. Of the 850 accused, three have died while 21 others are absconding.

The CID pressed charges against 824 jawans and 23 civilians for murder, arson, looting, hiding of bodies and sedition in July last year.

At least 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the February 25-26 carnage in 2009 at the Pilkhana headquarters of BDR now the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).



This fountain supposedly built to enhance the beauty of the Judges Court in the city lies in ruins for the last few years. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Developers see profit, not bldg code

Says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan yesterday said most buildings in Dhaka are built by profit seeking people not following proper building code.

"Most buildings that collapsed recently were put up by modern developers. On the other hand, century old buildings constructed by uneducated masons stand firm till this day," he said.

The difference between early and modern developers lies in honesty, patriotism and sincerity, something modern developers lack, he said while addressing a workshop at Cirdap auditorium in

the city.

The workshop titled "Nation-wide Implementation of Building Code: The Way Forward" was jointly organised by Disaster Management Bureau and Comprehensive Disaster Management Project (CDMP).

Speakers there stressed on strict implementation of building code to minimise casualties during possible earthquakes.

The government should stand firm against real estate companies and individuals who do not abide by the code, said Prof Dr Muhammad Hossain of civil engineering department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

Two buildings collapsed in Dhaka's Nakhla para within one year, both for not complying with the code, he said.

Another big problem lies in faulty foundations of buildings, said Dr AMM Shafiullah, former vice chancellor of Buet.

Different tasks of building construction should be given to relevant experts to ensure safety and quality, he added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Food Minister Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said the government would form a national body to formulate policies in enforcing building code.

The speakers stressed on the

need for an independent national building authority and bringing soil testing organisations under law.

Earlier, CDMP National Project Director Muhammad Abdul Qayyum presented the keynote paper at the programme, chaired by acting secretary of Disaster Management and Relief Dr M Aslam Alam.

Chief Engineer of Public Works Directorate Deoan Muhammad Yeamin;

Institute of Architect President Mobassher Hossain; Chief Architect of Department of Architecture Muhammad Ismail; and Disaster Management Bureau General Manager Ahsan Zakir also spoke.

Housewife beaten to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was beaten to death allegedly by her husband following a row in the city's Motijheel on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Farida Khatun, 40, wife of Tazul Islam, an employee of postal department.

Police said the couple began quarrel over family matters in the evening. At one stage of quarrel Tazul beat up Farida mercilessly, leaving her dead on the spot.

The couple has two children -- Sumon, 11, and Tania, 19. Sumon lived with his parents at T&T Colony while Tania with her husband in Gazipur.

Tania's husband Shahidul Islam told this correspondent that the quarrel began over Sumon's visit to his house at Gazipur. His father-in-law Tazul rebuked his mother-in-law Farida for allowing Sumon to visit their house in Gazipur alone.

Neighbours said they informed the matter to police when they found Farida dead around 9:00pm.

Mohammad Tofazzal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Motijheel police station, said a murder case has been filed in this connection and Tazul is absconding after the incident.



Journalists stage a sit-in in front of BNP central office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday as police barred them from performing duties.

PHOTO: STAR

Babylon group celebrates silver jubilee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Babylon group, a business organisation, celebrated its 25-year at the city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday, says a press release.

The silver jubilee began with raising flags and releasing pigeons.

A documentary titled 'Babylon Spirit of Ethical Business' was shown at the programme.

Babylon group began its businesses in 1986 and currently around 12,000 people are working with 16 different organisations in Bangladesh.

Re-fix tax-free income up to Tk 2.5 lakh

CITA leaders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Leaders of Chittagong Income Tax Lawyers Association (CITA) urged the government to re-fix tax-free income limit up to Tk 2.5 lakh instead of Tk 1.8 lakh proposed in the budget.

They demanded it at a press conference organised by the association at Chittagong Press Club yesterday.

They said as per the government records there are 25-30 lakh tax payers in the country but the figure should be above two crore. People lose their interest to be enlisted as taxpayers due to complication in taxation process.

They said to encourage paying taxes there must have initiatives from the government but it is not seen in the proposed budget.

The speakers said the process of paying tax should be eased and there must be resemblance between imposing of tax and collection of tax.

Terming the budget ambitious, unrealistic and traditional, they said it will not bring any welfare for the nation.

Advocates AH Khan, Mamta Uddin, Shah Alam, Abdul Wadud, Kazi Mohsin Chowdhury, Salauddin Chowdhury, Akhter Uddin, Ehteshamul Alam and Mostafa Kamal Mosur were present among others.

Spot trials to victimise general people: ASK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights watchdog Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) expressed deep concern over spot trials by mobile courts following arrest of pickets on the first day of 36-hour countrywide hartal beginning yesterday morning.

In a written statement, ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal said mobile court's involvement in political programmes like hartal will only victimise general people in name of punishing offenders.

In the past, country experienced harassment of general people and politicians during mass arrests by law enforcers.

Law enforcers arrested 54 BNP activists on the eve of hartal when they tried to bring out processions and were sentenced to different terms of punishments, which is not acceptable, the statement said.

BSTI logo on weights mandatory

Committee formed to amend law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) yesterday made its logo mandatory on weighting machines and scales to ensure consumers rights.

The decision came at a council meeting of BSTI at its central office with Industries Minister Dilip Barua was in the chair, says a press release.

The meeting gave an approval in principal for expenditure to run the mobile courts against adulteration.

A 10-member committee led by additional secretary of the industry ministry was also formed at the meeting to amend the existing BSTI act to upgrade its standards.

They were asked to submit the report within three months.

Dilip Barua said that the necessary reforms would be brought out to speed up the activities of BSTI.

He also directed the officials to maintain proper standard of the imported goods with the country's goods.

BSS adds: Industries Minister Dilip

Barua underscored the need for carrying out reforms in BSTI.

Industries Secretary KH Masud Siddique, BSTI Director General AK Fazlul Ahad, Vice-chairman of Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) Jalal Ahmed and Chairman of Bangladesh Council of Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR) Prof Dr SM Imamul Haque addressed the meeting, among others.

The industries minister said BSTI has an important role to play in issuing certificates and monitoring the quality of foods and manufactured products as all these have a link to export diversification.

He said the use of weighing machine with BSTI logo would be made mandatory to maintain accurate measures of goods, and the system will be launched across the country in phases.

Barua, also chairman of the council, said from now on budget of the institution would be placed before the council, which will help reduce misuse of funds.

Echoing the minister, Masud Siddique said more transparency and accountability has to be ensured in

overall activities of the watchdog agency.

Prof Huq said introduction of digital weighing machine is a must considering the interest of consumers since Bangladesh is the lone country where consumers get 900 grams of goods out of one kilogram while it is 1000 grams all over the world.

Citing the budget of a BSTI project, Jalal said sometimes its budget does not match the expenditure, which should be addressed.

Ahad laid emphasis on a wide range of consultations with traders at field level before introducing and marketing digital weighing machines.

He pointed out that traders are reluctant to replace the existing machines with digital ones (made of risk-free stainless steel).

Issuance of new license for packet goods, increasing testing fees and maintaining standards of Thai aluminum, which is widely used as construction materials, also came up for discussion during the meeting.

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