



PRESIDENTS OF BANGLADESH

Syed Badrul Ahsan gives short sketches of the men who held that position

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MID-CAREER CRISIS

Changing organisations is not the only remedy

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ARGENTINA SACK BATISTA

Copa failure costs Sergio Batista his job

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Interference in recruitment

Lawmakers fight with minister over 7,000 jobs in railway

RASHIDUL HASAN

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain and members of a parliamentary committee yesterday fought over lobbying and interference in recruitment of some 7,000 class-III and class-IV employees for the railway.

At a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the communications ministry, several ruling Awami League lawmakers alleged that the minister has been interfering in the appointment of staff at Bangladesh Railway.

They said the railway's director general does not accept their recommendations. Instead, he asks them to talk to the minister, as he is the one who is overseeing the recruitment, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

At one stage, Abul Hossain said so many requests were coming in for the jobs that he had to be involved in the process.

Riled by the minister's reply, the lawmakers requested the standing committee chief, Sk Muzibur Rahman, to ask Abul Hossain to stop meddling in the appointment process.

"Whenever we phoned the director general to request for our candidates, he asked us to call the minister instead," said Omar Faruk Chowdhury, a member of the committee.

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Influential grabbers have encroached upon a portion of the river Buriganga by fencing it off with bamboo poles to the west of Kamrangirchar Bridge on the city's outskirts. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

IFTAR PARTY Khaleda invites Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday invited Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to an Iftar party on August 4.

The leader of the opposition in parliament will host the party in honour of the political leaders at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, BNP sources said.

Assistant office secretaries of BNP Shamimur Rahman Shamim and Abdul Latif Jony handed over the invitation card to Awami League deputy office secretary Mrinal Kanti Das at the AL president's Dhanmondi office.

Besides inviting leaders of the four-party alliance and like-minded parties, the BNP high-ups also invited Gono Forum President Dr Kamal

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DCs want judicial clout back

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The deputy commissioners yesterday demanded the authority to conduct summary trial, the power they had enjoyed before separation of the judiciary from the executive in November 2007.

They made the demand at the inaugural session of a three-day DC conference at the Prime Minister's Office.

The DCs said they want the authority back because without it they cannot try anyone while operating mobile courts in their districts, said sources who were present at the session, held behind closed doors with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Those held by mobile courts do not admit to crime, and it leaves no alternative but to send them to court, which is a lengthy process, said the DCs.

The offenders later come out as innocent; and for this, the victims do not appreciate mobile-court drives, they added.

Contacted, noted jurist Shahdeen Malik said the demand is unacceptable, as the Supreme Court has revoked judicial powers of the executive magistrates.

"Such demand can only stem from misunderstanding and lack of knowledge about the rule of law, constitutionalism and separation of power. It is totally unacceptable," he added.

Calling for immediate passage of the Contempt of

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PM asks DCs to check price hike in Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the deputy commissioners (DCs) to step up vigilance to contain price hike of commodities and maintain law and order during Ramadan beginning next week.

Addressing the inaugural session of a three-day DC conference at the Prime Minister's Office, she cautioned that vested quarters may become active during Ramadan to make extra profit by hoarding essentials or by other means.

"They want to fill their pockets by increasing the prices of essentials and fleecing people. This is

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Ethnic minority, not indigenous people

FM tells diplomats, editors

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The tribal people living in Chittagong Hill Tracts are "ethnic minorities" and they should not be called "indigenous" in the region, the government said yesterday in clearing what it said some recent misconceptions about their identity.

Briefing foreign diplomats and UN agencies in Dhaka, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said Bangladesh is concerned over attempts by some quarters at home and abroad to identify the ethnic minority groups as indigenous people in the CHT region.

Neither Bangladesh constitution nor any international laws recognise these people as indigenous, she said.

Dipu Moni also explained the issue to editors and senior journalists from print and electronic media in a separate briefing yesterday and urged them to take note of it.

She told the diplomats that the tribal people most certainly did not reside or exist in the CHT before 16th century and were not considered "indigenous people" in any historical reference books, memoirs or legal documents.

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Arrest sand trader, probe role of OC

Demand families of 6 students beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Families of the six students killed in mob beating in Aminbazar on the outskirts of the city last week have demanded arrest of sand trader Abdul Malek and investigation into the role of the officer-in-charge of Savar Police Station.

The actual incident will come to light if the two are interrogated, they said in separate written statements to a high-powered police probe team yesterday.

The families also demanded withdrawal of the robbery case filed by the sand trader against the six and one injured.

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Good to all robber to cops

DU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University student, known as a modest youth to his classmates and teachers, is a robber in the eyes of law. Abdul Quader, a master's student of biochemistry and molecular biology, has been languishing in jail since July 16 after being arrested in two cases filed for robbery and possessing sharp weapons.

Police beat him so severely that he cannot walk, alleged his family members and classmates from a human chain held on the DU campus yesterday demanding his immediate release.

They also urged the government to take action against the police officers responsible for the incident. Around two hundred students, along with teachers, joined the protest programme.

"My son is not a criminal. He is innocent, and a meritorious student. Please save him," his mother Manowara told reporters at the human chain.

Helal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station, said they chased a group of people driving suspiciously in Khilgaon area around 3:30am on July 16. They tried to flee but police arrested two people including Quader from Segunbagicha.

The OC said the car the group used was hijacked from

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TARIQUE'S ARREST Cops asked to report by Aug 11

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday drew flak from the court for its failure to submit any progress report on arrest of Tarique Rahman and 11 others in August 21 grenade attack cases.

Also, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court directed heads of different police stations to submit by August 11 their reports on the execution of warrant against the 12, who are yet to be held.

An additional public prosecutor on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star police negligence in submitting reports on execution of warrants for their arrest would delay the start of trial.

Meantime, pro-BNP lawyers yesterday brought out a procession on the court premises, demanding

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While traffic on one side of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue is regulated for VIP movements, the other is heavily jammed with vehicles around 4:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Critics of microcredit chastised

Experts hail role of microcredit in poverty reduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts and politicians yesterday came down heavily on the critics of microcredit for being too ruthless about the economic concept.

Microfinance has both positives and negatives and the authorities should fix the anomalies, they said.

The call came at a dialogue--Microfinance for Poverty Alleviation: What's Right and What's Wrong--at the Cirdap auditorium in Dhaka.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a think-tank, organised the event with Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, in the chair.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman said microfinance has grown globally over the years as a major financial tool to combat poverty.

The relatively higher interest rates and charges or fees have attracted criticism, albeit more from populist political authorities than from the borrowers.

"Regulators and government authorities can however encourage and support MFIs in minimising supervision costs, to the extent possible, adopting remote loan delivery and recovery mechanisms in partnership with

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