

Apu murder

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On May 23, 2008, seven to eight goons shot dead Ashikur Rahman Khan Apu and injured his two brothers Arifur Rahman Khan Setu and Atikur Rahman Khan Bappy in front of their house in the city's Wari locality. The victims' sister Atia Khan Keya in the case statement said Iftekhar Beg alias Jhalak had hired the criminals to kill her brothers to occupy the ground floor of their Wari residence. Monjurul Abedin Russell and Nawshad Hossain Mollah alias Robin were condemned to death while Mohammad Ali alias Munna, Mahbub Alam, Jhalak and Biplob Chandra Das were given life sentences. Judge Shahed Nuruddin of Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 also slapped a 10-year imprisonment on the six for injuring Apu's two brothers. The judge acquitted the

other accused in the case, Atiq Ahmed Shiplu, as the allegations against him were not proved. The government had made several moves to withdraw the case against the seven charge-sheeted accused, citing the fact that the case was politically motivated. In the face of widespread criticism following newspaper reports on the issue, the government changed its course of action. Of the convicts, Biblop and Mahbub are on the run. Their punishment will be effective from the day of their arrests or surrender, the court said. Munna is said to be a cousin of Home Minister Shahara Khatun. Advocate Shahina Begum, also a cousin of Munna, told The Daily Star that his family would file an appeal with the higher court, challenging the

verdict. The case was filed with Sutrapur Police Station the day after the incident. According to the case statement, Jhalak had rented the ground floor of the house but had not paid the rent for sometime. When the victims' mother Tofatun Nahar asked him to vacate the house, Jhalak conceived the plan to kill her three sons. Tofatun Nahar, who was present in court yesterday, expressed dissatisfaction over the verdict as Munna, Mahbub and Jhalak got life term imprisonment, not death sentences. She said her two sons, who survived the attack in 2008, had identified the three as among the shooters. Public Prosecutor Abu Abdullah Bhuiyan appeared for the state while advocates Kazi Najibullah Hiru and TM Akbar defended the accused.

Myanmar Karen leader 'jailed for 20 years'

AFP, Yangon

A court in Myanmar yesterday sentenced a leader of the Karen ethnic minority group to two decades in prison for treason, his legal adviser said, in a case that has soured peace efforts. Nyein Maung, a member of the Karen National Union (KNU) central committee, was arrested last year in China and deported to Myanmar, where he was taken into custody. A special court in Yangon's Insein prison gave him life imprisonment -- which is equivalent to 20 years in Myanmar -- for high treason, said his adviser Aung Thein. Nyein Maung was handed an additional three years under the illegal organisation act but will serve the two sentences concurrently, he said.

Power price

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proposal is logical, we will increase the price," he said. The power board has requested that the new rates take effect from March 1, Salim added. The proposal came less than one and a half months after electricity tariff for bulk consumers increased by 14.37 percent to Tk 3.74 per kilowatt-hour on February 1. In November last year, BERC hiked electricity tariff for bulk users by 33.57 percent on an average to reduce mounting losses incurred by the PDB. As a result, the bulk tariff went up by 16.79 percent or Tk 0.47 per unit on an average from December 1, 2011, in the first phase. The raise in the second phase came into effect two months later. Salim said the subsidies to run petroleum-based power plants had gone up following the latest rise in oil prices in the international market. "Our laws say we can adjust the tariff if fuel costs go up." State-run distribution entities Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd, Dhaka Electric Supply Company, Rural Electrification Board and West Zone Power Distribution Company are the PDB's bulk buyers. The BERC official also said the retail tariff adjustment would, as usual, follow the hike in bulk tariffs. "We will analyse the impact of bulk tariff hike. Then we will come up with a decision on retail tariff hike," he said. The retail tariff of electricity went up by Tk 0.31 per unit from February 1, taking the per unit price to Tk 5.02. It came two months after the price per unit soared by 13.24 percent to Tk 4.71 from Tk 4.16 on December 1 last year for retail users. The tariff hikes are part of the government move to slash the subsidies for electricity generation. In the current fiscal year, the government is set to allocate Tk 20,000 crore in subsidies for the power sector, according to official estimates.

Bangladesh

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Bangladesh tops this list, followed by India (2nd), Nepal (4th), the Philippines (6th), Afghanistan (8th) and Myanmar (10th)," the report said. The report titled 'Addressing Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific' notes that more than 42 million people in the region were displaced by environmental disasters over the past two years alone. An undetermined number of those displaced became migrants, unable to return home or choosing to relocate to safer ground. By 2020, 13 of the world's 25 mega cities, most of them situated in low-lying coastal areas, will be in Asia and the Pacific. In many mega cities, more than half the population is crowded into densely populated slums that lack basic protective infrastructure. Climate change will worsen existing vulnerabilities, exposing millions to flooding and the threat of displacement. About a third of Southeast Asia's total population lives in areas at-risk from coastal flooding, and increasingly severe storms in recent years have taken a severe toll in many countries, the ADB report said. Hundreds of millions of people in South Asia live in environmental hot spots, including exposed low-lying coastal cities and deltas. Increasingly severe storms, droughts and rising sea levels

linked to climate change are likely to cause rice and wheat output slump, and undermine scarce water resources. "This is likely to accelerate already substantial levels of migration in the region, especially in Bangladesh," the report said. The ADB report is among the first to identify policy responses to the impacts of environmental events on migration in Asia and the Pacific. It points out that while most migration will continue to take place within countries, greater cross-border movement is also foreseen and governments will need to cooperate more closely on migration matters. The report identifies existing international agreements, guidelines, principles, and dialogue forums that can be more effectively used to improve migration management. Climate adaptation costs for Asia-Pacific nations are estimated at a staggering \$40 billion through 2050, and while there are environmental funds, none are currently dedicated to addressing climate-induced migration issues. The report recommends governments work with the private sector to introduce sea level index-based insurance, catastrophe bonds and weather derivatives to draw investors into financing and managing the risks posed by climate change.

At least 36 dead

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The river, said Mahfuzul Haque, additional district magistrate of Munshiganj. Thirty-one bodies were handed over to their families, said Deputy Commissioner Azizul Alam. Dulal Dewan, a survivor, said the double-decker launch left Naria in Shariatpur with more than 250 passengers for Dhaka around 9:30pm on Monday. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Shamsuddoha Khandker also put the number between 250 and 300. The 32-metre launch was built in 1991 and had permission to carry 225 passengers at night, said BIWTA Secretary M Mahbubul Alam. Divers traced the sunken launch some 70 feet under water, but till last night they were yet to salvage it. Rescue vessel MV Rustam reached the spot at 8:30am yesterday and the salvage was due to start after the arrival of Hamza, a tug vessel. BIWTA officials said Hamza was scheduled to arrive at 12:00 midnight today, some 22 hours after the accident. "Hamza was anchored in Barisal. It is taking time to reach the spot as it is running against the current," said the BIWTA secretary. The BIWTA chairman said it would take time to lift the 200-tonne launch, as the lifting capacity of MV Rustam and Hamza combined is 120 tonnes. Meanwhile, the shipping ministry, shipping department and BIWTA formed three committees to probe the accident.

BNP asks

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of the Opposition Zainul Abidin Farroque yesterday said they would discuss the issue with the party chairperson and act as per her instructions. Meanwhile, the party policymakers, who are apparently very happy following the successful grand rally, said they would organise another huge rally on June 11 as announced by the chairperson. Talking to The Daily Star, they said they believe the Awami League-led the government will not concede to their demands so easily. "We have to do more work to mount pressure on the government," said a member of standing committee. Moudud Ahmed said they would go to people in the next two months to drum up public support in favour of their demand for restoring the caretaker government system. "People will then force the government to meet their demand for ensuring free and fair elections," he added. Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, another member of the standing committee, said he did not think good sense would prevail on the government. "So, we will go for tougher programmes in future with the help of people," he added. His last work

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yesterday evening assessed his day's work. Jamil indeed took some great shots, particularly the one that captures smoke billowing out of the ground floor of a five-storey building near the Beta signal intersection. Joyeeta Roy, a photojournalist of the daily Bangladesh Protidin, coincidentally took the photograph of Jamil at work for the last time. Jamil left the scene of fire with a nagging pain in his chest. Ridding his motorcycle, he went to the Jatiya Press Club first and then home as the pain grew intense. Rushed to the Birdem Hospital, Jamil was pronounced dead by doctors around 1:00pm. He was 56. The Daily Star mourns his passing and reaches out to his bereaved family in sympathy and support. --The Daily Star

Cops impose

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The gathering, set to commence at 3:00pm, is also meant to protest the BNP's conspiracy to foil the trial, according to the AL. Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina is expected to be present as the chief guest. Deputy Commissioner Habibur Rahman of DMP headquarters said the party could hold the programme at 3:00pm, but under 11 conditions. His statement came in response to an application submitted by Mahbubul Alam Hanif, joint secretary of the AL, on March 11. Below is the translated version of the conditions: 1. Area for using loudspeakers: Paltan crossing to Golapsha shrine and south gate of the national mosque to Nababpur crossing. 2. No loudspeaker can be used beyond those areas. 3. No projection can be set up beyond the areas mentioned in number 1. 4. If necessary, permission should be taken from the authorities concerned for use of the rally venue. 5. No stage can be set up on the main road. 6. Except for a political speech, the stage cannot be used for any other purpose. 7. People can gather at the rally venue two hours before the scheduled time (2:00pm). 8. The rally must end by 6:00pm. 9. No gathering can be held before or after the approved time, and traffic and public movement cannot be obstructed beyond the approved area. 10. During the rally, no activity should be undertaken that goes against the law and public interest. 11. The authorities, without having to show any reason, reserve the right to cancel the permission in the public interest.

6 petitions of SQ Chy

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February and this month. The three-member tribunal also fixed March 20 to pass an order whether it will frame charges against the MP from Chittagong. The detained BNP leader, who faces 25 charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War in 1971, was not produced before the court yesterday as per the tribunal's earlier decision. Two other petitions wanted his transfer from Gazipur's Kashimpur Jail-2 to any other prison and tribunal proceedings in line with "international covenants" signed by Bangladesh. He also filed another petition for a directive on the investigation team to provide him with a report on the status of six cases filed against him from January 29 to April 18, 1972 under the Penal Code and the Collaborators Act, 1972. The defence had argued that the six cases would make way for "double jeopardy", meaning double trial for the same offence, which is forbidden by the constitution. The sixth petition sought exculpatory evidence -- evidence that is favourable to the defendant in a criminal trial -- and investigation report with prosecution materials that were not provided to the defence. The tribunal chairman, Justice Md Nizamul Huq, rejected all the petitions in a 45-min-long order addressing both the defence and the prosecution. It said no room is there for "double jeopardy" as the six cases filed earlier against Salauddin have not yet been disposed of. According to the constitution, no person can be "prosecuted and punished" for the same offence twice, the tribunal said, adding that the word "and" in the clause is inclusive, which means an offender

has to be both prosecuted and convicted. The tribunal also said the case against Salauddin centres around serious crimes and the charges have already been taken into cognisance, leaving little ground to grant him bail. Regarding jail transfer, the tribunal observed that it was to be decided by the prison authorities. And the defence should communicate with them in this regard. Salauddin Quader Chowdhury is among two BNP and five Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, who are facing charges of crimes against humanity. **AJUDGE DIFFERS** AKM Zaheer Ahmed, one of the three judges at the tribunal, yesterday said the order on the petition for discharging Salauddin, should have been passed in the presence of the accused. Justice Md Nizamul Huq rejected the petition in the absence of Salauddin because the court on March 5 decided that the accused was not required to be produced before the court yesterday. "The application should be disposed of in the presence of the accused," said Zaheer Ahmed. "It is the right of the accused to hear why his application was turned down." The discharge petition should be passed in the presence of the accused on the day of the passing of the order on charge framing, he said. Following yesterday's proceedings, Fakhru Islam, a defence counsel, claimed before journalists that the tribunal was supposed to pass orders on all the applications except for the one seeking an order discharging his client. "But [the Tribunal chairman] said he would pass order on all the applications including the discharge petition." In fact, the tribunal on March 5 had said that it would pass order on all the applications yesterday except for the

order on charge framing. **'MEANT TO DELAY'** While passing the order on a petition filed by Salauddin for using international covenants in court proceedings, Justice Nizamul Huq observed that a similar application was rejected earlier in the case against Delawar Hossain Sayedee, a Jamaat-e-Islami leader detained on war crimes charges. The tribunal chairman said the order in the case against Sayedee was quite complete, with little of ambiguity in it. Salauddin earlier submitted a similar petition before the tribunal, which had rejected the application on December 19 last year, saying the matter rested with the government, not with the tribunal. The BNP leader's moving a same application as a review petition gave the impression that it was "absolutely motivated" and "meant to delay" the trial process, the judge said. After the court proceedings, Fakhru Islam told journalists that the defence differed with the tribunal chairman's views. "With all due respect to the tribunal, we are rejecting the comments," said Fakhru Islam. "We are boldly saying that this view [of the tribunal chairman] should not have been expressed in the court." It was the second time Salauddin Quader filed a petition to the effect that the tribunal should be guided by the international covenants signed by Bangladesh. Another petition from the BNP lawyer seeking an investigation report was also submitted by three other accused in other cases. The tribunal rejected the applications as it did yesterday. Salauddin Quader's bail petition filed yesterday was also his second application on the same issue.

Tannery relocation

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had been done. Around 195 tanneries in Hazaribagh in the capital have been discharging their untreated toxic waste directly into the Buriganga. The park, however, will be able to house 155 tanneries. While testing the water of the Buriganga a decade ago during the dry season, the Department of Environment rather shockingly found zero-level dissolved oxygen, which meant no aquatic life form could survive there. In 2003, the government prepared for the leather park project which would cost Tk 545 crore. It floated a tender to build the effluent treatment plant but failed to attract qualified bidders. It floated another tender later on and picked the Chinese joint venture for the job. However, in 2008 the Indian company Indian VA Tech WABAG filed a petition with the High Court against the government's choice of bidder. The court ordered a re-tender. In the re-tender the Chinese joint venture was picked again as the lowest bidder and on December 5 last year the cabinet committee on purchase approved the ministry's proposal to award the job to the company. However, late last year the Indian firm filed another petition with the High Court saying that JLEPCL-DCL submitted a flawed bank guarantee. It said the winning bidder had sent the bank guarantee through SWIFT (an electronic money transfer code) which is not allowed under the rules of the government's Central Procurement Technical Unit. On March 4, the court rejected the petition, thus clearing the path for the Chinese company to get the job. A 200-acre area of land has already been developed for the leather park at Hamyetpur in Savar. Experts said a centralised effluent treatment was necessary not only to meet the demands of the export-oriented leather industry but also to comply with the rules of European Union countries.

Wait and see

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The next general election is due in early 2014. Following a Supreme Court verdict, the government in June last year scrapped the constitutional provision that mandated a non-elected neutral government to oversee the national polls. The BNP-led opposition at its Monday rally at Nayapaltn in the capital issued a 90-day ultimatum for the government to restore the system or face the consequences. Shafique said the SC had declared illegal the system of an unelected caretaker government. So the idea of such a government is one that conflicts with the spirit of the constitution. Asked about Monday's attack on opposition men by ruling party supporters, especially those of the Chhatra League, he said the matter would be looked into for "nobody is above the law". On granting clemency to convicted killer AHM Biblop, son of AL leader Abu Taher, the law minister said the president had reduced his punishment but did not say he was not guilty. The president, having used his knowledge and discretion, can pardon any convict, he added. Last month, President Zillur Rahman granted mercy to Biblop, reducing his life sentence in each of two murder cases to a 10-year imprisonment. Earlier in July last year, the president acquitted Biblop of his death sentence in advocate Nurul Islam murder case. Replying to a query, the law minister said a separate secretariat for the judiciary would be set up at Shahbagh where Sarak Bhaban was earlier located. Courts across the country will be digitised in phases, and when that is done, case-related information would be available on display boards on the court premises, he said. The present government has appointed 55 judges to the Supreme Court and 215 to the lower courts. So far the government has provided free legal aid to 33,000 persons, Shafique added.

Man killed

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Shovon, a cousin of the victim, said that family members tried a lot to restrain Kushal from buying drugs. He was even admitted to rehabilitation centres several times. As family members stopped giving him any money, Kushal began to borrow from relatives and friends to buy drugs, he said adding that lenders also raised complaints to his brother Kabir as he did not pay them back in time. Kabir even rebuked his brother several times over the matter and this might have triggered the killing, he alleged. Kabir's body was kept at DMCH morgue for an autopsy. No case was filed till filing of this report last night. Fire ravages

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Zia Uddin, a fire service official, told The Daily Star. Fireman Shahinur Alam suffered burns and was given first aid, officials said. The shop might have incurred a loss of curtains worth over Tk 1 crore, they said. Pvt universities

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approval, we've considered the expansion of higher education outside Dhaka," said education secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury. Those approved in Dhaka are European University of Bangladesh and BGCMEA University of Fashion and Technology. The other universities are Borendra University in Rajshahi, North East University in Sylhet, Hamdard University in Narayanganj, ZH Sikder University of Science and Technology in Shariatpur, First Capital University in Chuadanga and Esha Kha University in Kishoreganj. Awami League lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir is the main initiator of European University of Bangladesh, sources in the education ministry said. They added that Afzal Mia is the prime initiator of North East University and freedom fighter Solaiman Haque Joarder of First Capital University. After the passage of the Private University Act in the Jatiya Sangsad in July 2010, the government decided to allow some new universities. Soon after, some political leaders and businessmen submitted applications to the education ministry. The ministry received some 92 applications, 21 of them for setting up universities in Dhaka.

Bhutto

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Moreover, the Awami League leadership in Dhaka made it clear that what they were interested in was a dialogue with the regime. Bhutto did not figure in their calculations. Meanwhile, the Baluch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti stressed on the day that for Pakistan to stay united, it was important that power be transferred to Mujib immediately. Referring to his talks with the Awami League chief and other politicians in Dhaka, he said no one except Moulana Bhashani wished to see East Pakistan break away from the rest of the country. He told newsmen that Mujib wanted to keep Pakistan united but at the same time wished to see all the federating provinces of the country enjoy equal rights in every sphere. Begum Tahira Masood, a leading figure of the Bahawalpur United Front, called upon the regime to lift martial law immediately and transfer power to the elected representatives of the people. She assured Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the support of the 32,00,000 people of Bahawalpur in the latter's quest for a constitutional settlement of the crisis.