

## Enforce building code strictly: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underscored the need for strictly following the building code in constructing buildings to avoid high casualties in case of any powerful earthquake.

The prime minister came up with the instruction while presiding over this year's first meeting of the National Disaster Management Council at her office.

Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad briefed the reporters.

During the meeting, the committee members held detailed discussions on its preparation to tackle any natural disasters, especially earthquakes.

Hasina gave necessary guidelines on creating mass awareness about earthquakes and making people familiar with the building construction rules.

She also emphasised making the media people aware about their role before and after the earthquakes and other natural calamities.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam, Home Minister Advocate Shahara Khatun, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Food and Disaster Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, Water Resources Minister Romesh Chandra Sen, State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan attended the meeting.

The cabinet secretary, the chiefs of the three services and secretaries concerned were present.



Participants at a roundtable meeting on Victory at sea: Potentials and responsibilities organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo at its office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

## WAR CRIMES TRIAL

# Kamaruzzaman ordered killing Golam Mostafa

Prosecution tells tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shahid Golam Mostafa Talukder, a freedom fighter from Sherpur, was abducted, tortured and killed on orders of the Jamaat-e-Islami leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, the prosecution told the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday.

Mostafa, who had returned from India with freedom fighter's training, was picked up while he was visiting a store at Sherpur College Intersection on August 23, 1971, said prosecutor Saiful Islam while reading out formal charges against Kamaruzzaman.

He was taken to the house of Surendra Mohon Saha which was turned into an Al-Badr camp during the war. There he was brutally tortured and shot to death, said Saiful Islam.

The prosecution yesterday finished reading 84 pages' formal charges out of 110 against the Jamaat's senior assistant secretary general.

Chief Prosecutor Ghulam Arief Tipoo and prosecutors Saiful Islam, Noorjahan Begum Mukta and Sultan Mahmud read out the charges before the three-judge tribunal.

Kamaruzzaman, 60, was produced before the court yesterday. He is facing nine charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

According to the charges, the Jamaat leader was the key organiser of Al-Badr in Mymensingh district.

The Al-Badr was one of the auxiliary groups that were set up to collaborate with the Pakistani occupation army and actively oppose the liberation forces in 1971.

Pieces of evidence point out that Kamaruzzaman was involved in most of the atrocities committed by the Al-Badr in Jamalpur, Sherpur and other areas, said Saiful Islam.

The offences during the war include abducting and torturing pro-liberation youths from different parts

of Sherpur; stripping off clothes of Syed Abdul Hannan, a Sherpur college teacher, and walking him around the city while whipping him; and locking up and torturing Ziaul Huq inside a dark room for two days before releasing him on condition that he would leave Sherpur.

Kamaruzzaman was also involved with the killing of freedom fighters in Sherpur's Surjadi and Nakla areas, the prosecution said.

They will continue to read out the formal charges today.

### PROSECUTION'S PLAN ABOUT SAYEDEE'S TRIAL

The three-member tribunal led by its Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq yesterday directed the prosecution to

***The prosecution yesterday finished reading 84 pages' formal charges out of 110***

submit an application on March 20 explaining its plans regarding witness testimony against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delawar Hossain Sayeedee.

The directive came after the prosecution yesterday presented investigation officer Helal Uddin, who probed the war crimes charges against Sayeedee, as a witness.

The prosecution also wanted to keep the option open to bring more witnesses afterwards.

The tribunal however thought that the suggestion was not fully acceptable. It pointed out that it had reservations about allowing further witnesses after deposition of the investigation officer.

Sayedee's defence also raised objections in this regard.

Tribunal Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq then passed the order saying the prosecution could present the investigation officer as a witness only after it passes an order in response to the application detailing the prosecution's future course of action in Sayeedee's trial.

As the prosecution did not have any other witnesses except the investigation officer, the proceedings against the Jamaat leader were adjourned till March 20.

### PROBE PREJUDICIAL TO DEFENCE

Jamaat's chief defence counsel Abdur Razzaq yesterday told the tribunal that Thursday's court inquiries regarding formal charges against Abdul Quader Mollah were prejudicial to the defence.

On Thursday, the court had made some remarks on the formal charges against the Jamaat leader and on the investigation that was used to form the charges.

It also raised questions on the quality of the investigation, and made queries on the charges.

Tribunal Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq yesterday dismissed the counsel's apprehension.

He said the court is trying to find the truth and it needs the assistance of both the defence and prosecution in reaching that goal.

"So, are we not allowed to point out our mistakes?"

He assured the defence that the tribunal is well aware of its responsibilities and no questions or queries from the court "shall prejudice any party".

Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, Delawar Hossain Sayeedee and Abdul Quader Mollah are among six Jamaat and two BNP leaders who are facing charges of crimes against humanity at the tribunal.

## Worker shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A construction worker sustained bullet injuries in his chest when extortionists opened fire on him at an under-construction building in Ibrahimpur of the city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Nurul Islam, 35, of Chapainawabganj.

His co-worker Tofazzal said Nurul received bullet wounds when three miscreants opened fire at the building at around 8:00am. At the time, they were about to start their work there.

Nurul was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police suspect that the miscreants are extortionists.

## Railway online ticketing soon

BSS, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Railway is set to introduce credit and debit cards option for its huge number of passengers buying tickets through Internet to ease the sufferings of passengers.

"Using Internet from every corner across the world, rail passengers will be able to book or purchase railway tickets with credit and debit cards," Railways Minister Suranjit Sengupta told the news agency.

The minister said the new option for passengers will be launched soon to ensure hassle free service and curb the malpractice for purchasing train tickets.

"After incorporating the new option all passengers will access to see the seat plan, their seat position and purchase seat easily by using their credit and debit cards three days prior to their travel," Suranjit said.

There are four types of credit cards, including Visa, Master, Maestro and Nexus, will be allowed to use and purchase rail e-tickets while visa debit cards will be also offered to the customer for e-ticketing.

The existing mobile ticketing system through SMS will also be continued for its huge numbers of passengers.

## Tremor jolts country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 4.6 magnitude earthquake jolted the city and other parts of the country yesterday morning but there were no reports of casualties or property damage.

City dwellers at 8:56am experienced the tremor that lasted for about 30 seconds. According to the web portal of the United States earthquake information centre, the epicentre of the earthquake was 23.61 km west-southwest of the capital at a depth of 15.7km.

Prof Syed Humayun Akhter of the geology department, Dhaka University, said the earthquake had originated in Madhupur fault line stretching over 100 km from near Sherpur through Mymensingh, Tangail, Manikganj to Keraniganj.

"Madhupur fault is very active. In 1885, a seven magnitude earthquake occurred at Madhupur fault," he said.

Madhupur fault line is very close to Dhaka, posing threats to people living in this unplanned city. Proper precautionary measures have not been taken in the constructions of high-rise buildings in Dhaka, which makes it the riskiest among all the cities in the world, Humayun said.

The web portal also shows that there were 12 earthquakes across the globe yesterday ranging from 2.7 to 4.9 magnitude, of which Bangladesh suffered the fifth strongest.



Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pankaj Saran calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

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