

WB decision

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decision to approve 15 new banks, saying that these banks would become tools for the ruling-party men to loot money.

Fakhrul Islam was addressing a rally at Nayapaltan organised by pro-BNP student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) protesting the charge-framing against BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman in the August 21 grenade attack case. JCD president Sultan Salauddin Tuku presided over the meeting.

Fakhrul said the Bangladesh Bank had already approved three banks and 12 more are in the pipeline. "Everyone knows these banks belong to the ruling-party leaders, ministers and their relatives," he added.

He said the government was going to approve the new banks when the existing ones were failing to serve their customers properly.

On Padma bridge issue, he said, "The people of the country know that corruption took place from the very beginning of the project and top leaders of the ruling party wanted to hide it."

On Tuesday, the WB temporarily suspended a unit of the Canadian company SNC-Lavalin from participating in the biddings of WB-funded projects. The decision came following an ongoing investigation into a corruption allegation in the bidding process of the Padma bridge project.

Coup plot

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The Indian Express claimed the unnotified night-time deployments had sparked concern about a possible coup at a time when relations between the head of the 1.13-million-strong army and the government are strained.

The army and Defense Ministry said the units were engaged in routine exercises to test mobility in fog and did not need to warn the government in advance. Ministry spokesman Sitanshu Kar told Reuters it was not true the maneuvers had caused alarm.

"These are alarmist reports and should not be taken at face value," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told journalists at parliament.

The newspaper said the government had taken measures as a precaution on January 16-17, including asking lookouts to identify the soldiers involved and ordering police to slow traffic on the highways into the capital.

"Absolutely baseless," Defence Minister AK Antony told reporters in response to the claim the government had been worried, adding: "They (the army) will not do anything against Indian democracy. They are true patriots."

The military in India, the world's largest democracy, has traditionally stayed out of politics and is not known for conspiring against governments in a region plagued by instability.

The report highlights deep rifts and a tension in recent months between the world's second largest standing army and the government.

On January 16, the day the exercises took place, army chief Singh took a case against the government to the Supreme Court in a row about whether he could serve another year before retiring. He later lost the case.

Last week, Singh said he was offered a \$2.8 million bribe and accused the Defence minister of not acting on information about corruption in the forces. He also wrote a letter to the prime minister in March saying the army was not in proper shape to defend the country. The letter was leaked.

Reckless

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People there rushed Mahim to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead, he said.

Quoting locals, Jasim said a teenage boy was driving the auto-tempo. The driver fled the scene immediately after the accident, leaving the vehicle behind.

Ratan Kanti Dey, assistant sub-inspector of Panchlaish Police Station, said police seized the auto-tempo.

A case was filed in this connection.

Man sent to jail for bail forgery

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent a man to jail after cancelling his bail that he had obtained through a forged High Court order.

The court also served a show-cause notice on his lawyer, Abdus Salam, asking to explain within seven days why legal action would not be taken against him for submitting the fake HC order.

On February 28, Salam placed a bail petition along with an HC order, which he claimed had granted his client Saju Mia a three-week bail. Saju faces charges of torturing his wife for dowry.

After the hearing, Judge Arifur Rahman of the Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression accepted the bail petition.

In fact, the HC order Salam placed before the trial court involved one Md

Mofazzal who faces an assault case filed with Niamatpur Police Station in Naogaon in October 2010. The HC granted Mofazzal a six-month bail on December 5 last year.

Salam changed the serial number of the original HC order and replaced Mofazzal's name with Saju's.

However, Saju's wife, the complainant of the case, came to know of the forgery and her counsel Jahangir Morshed brought the matter to the court's notice during yesterday's hearing.

After the hearing, the court cancelled Saju's bail and ordered to send him to jail.

Saju's lawyer, Abdus Salam, was present during the hearing.

Jahangir Morshed also appealed to the court to take action against Saju. The case against him was filed with Mohammadpur Police Station on August 11 last year.

3 NRB banks

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Insiders say the central bank may allow more new banks against its will in the face of pressure from the government high-ups.

Speaking anonymously, an official said there is political pressure on BB to give nod to proposals for nine new banks, but the central bank is unwilling to give the go ahead to more than five.

The banks likely to be approved are all enjoying blessings of the government high-ups, the official added.

Though the Board took an important decision like setting up of new banks, two members did not attend the meeting chaired by Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman.

UK expatriate Iqbal Ahmed and US expatriates Nizam Chowdhury and Farashat Ali are the main sponsors of the three NRB banks.

A BB official said the names of the three banks will be finalised when those will be given licences later.

The Board at its meeting yesterday decided that the NRB banks will be required to have an initial capital of Tk 400 crore. However, the central bank had earlier set the amount at Tk 200 crore.

The initiators of the NRB banks will have to bring the initial capital to the country in foreign currency through the banking channel.

For the local private commercial banks the Board discussed in details proposals for 16 short-listed banks from among 37 applications.

Some Board members raised questions as to whether the ranking was done duly and whether political consideration was a major factor behind it.

The Board asked the central bank officials to make a detailed PowerPoint presentation next Sunday on the criteria of ranking the proposals, meeting sources

said.

The sources added the Board members wanted to know on what basis a certain proposed bank was given more points while another got fewer points.

The BB officials failed to give a satisfactory reply on the spot.

Among the eight directors, Finance Secretary Dr Mohammad Tareque and Prof Sanat Kumar Saha were absent from the meeting.

Businessman

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Md Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Narsingdi Sadar Police Station, said Maruf had also called police from the same cell phone number and said he had been robbed of Tk 40,000.

When police asked him to register a general diary, he didn't agree. Police were yet to trace him, said the OC.

Six alleged snatchers were killed and three others injured in a "shootout" with Rab as they tried to flee by a microbus after mugging the businessman on Narsingdi-Madanganj road, about 50 kilometres northeast of the capital, Rab said on Monday.

Meanwhile, National Human Rights Commission Chief Dr Mizanur Rahman told a workshop in the capital that if the members agree, the commission would probe the deaths of the six men.

He said any extrajudicial killing is unacceptable in a democratic and civilized society, and is a threat to justice and the rule of law.

"We thought that the incidents of extrajudicial killings had decreased. We are worried once again following two such incidents recently."

On Tuesday, family members of the deceased claimed that the six men shot dead in the "shootout" were not muggers.

Mayor hopefuls

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on their own. "If they fail, we may engage other agencies to do the job. In that case, the costs might go up and the people concerned will have to bear the expenses."

Officials of intelligence agencies told the meeting that maintaining law and order will get high priority if the leaders of the main opposition BNP join the polls. The officials believe the opposition leaders will contest the polls, said meeting sources.

Some leaders of the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance and several non-partisan hopefuls have already geared up their campaigns for the polls. They have been spending money on printing posters and digital banners and pasting and hanging those on the walls and streets.

The aspirants have launched the campaign taking advantage of the inadequacy in the electoral code of conduct which does not empower the EC to take

action against them right now.

But once the election schedule is announced, the EC will have sweeping authority to stop such campaigns. There will be a ban on scrawling graffiti and pasting posters on the walls of houses and establishments.

If anybody flouts the code of conduct, the election officials can take actions against them or can ask the law enforcement agencies to remove those.

Besides, an offender may be sentenced to up to six months jail term or fined Tk 50,000 or both.

The candidates however will be allowed to hang their posters with ropes for a certain period.

The election commissioners, home secretary, chiefs of police, Border Guard Bangladesh, Bangladesh Coast Guard, Rapid Action Battalion, Bangladesh Ansar and VDP and officials concerned were present at the meeting at the conference room of EC secretariat.

SECURITY CONCERN

Sheikh Jamal won't send football team to Pakistan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh professional football league champion Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club has refused to send its team to Pakistan for the AFC President's Cup citing security concern.

The team was supposed to take part in Group-A of the tournament, which is scheduled to be held from May 8 to 12, along with Erchim FC (Mongolia), KRL Football Club (Pakistan) and Taiwan Power Company (Chinese Taipei) at Punjab Stadium in Lahore.

"We have recently informed Bangladesh Football Federation through a letter of us not going to Pakistan as it is not a safe country," Manzoor Kader, president of the club, told reporters.

Abu Nayeem Shohag, BFF acting general secretary, said the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) conveyed the matter to its disciplinary committee for further action against Sheikh Jamal club. The club might be punished for the refusal, he added.

Meanwhile, BFF tried to convince the AFC by sending runner-up team Muktijoddha Sangsad instead but it rejected the proposal.

Protest over minority repression

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Dhaka University Jagannath Hall last night staged a demonstration in Shahbagh area protesting recent attack on minorities in Satkhira district over staging a play at a school in Chakdah village.

They demanded tougher actions against the people responsible for the incident. Over 100 students blocked the road from Elephant Road to Matsya Bhaban from around 12:00am.

Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said they had brought the situation under control around 1:30am.

Malaysia poll critics call for nationwide rally

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Critics of Malaysia's electoral system yesterday called for a nationwide protest this month to press for thorough reform before upcoming polls that they warned could be "the dirtiest yet".

Prime Minister Najib Razak is expected to seek a fresh mandate within months but reform activists Bersih 2.0 said the electoral system remains riven with fraud despite reform pledges and it called for a "peaceful sit-in" on April 28.

The group said the rally would be held at Independence Square in central Kuala Lumpur and urged other protests by supporters nationwide.

ACC starts

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P r a n a b K u m a r Bhattacharya, deputy director of ACC, told The Daily Star that a two-member team has started the probe.

Rafigul Amin, managing director of Destiny-2000, confirmed that an ACC team came to his office and asked for different files.

"I have given them all files and they are satisfied," Amin told The Daily Star over phone.

He said ACC's main enquiry was whether Destiny used any of its funds privately.

Earlier, Ghulam Hossain, chairman of ACC, told The Daily Star that they would only look into the issue of money laundering in the Destiny affairs.

Other issues are not its business, he added.

Recently, the media published series of news items on the irregularities of Destiny detected by the central bank in an investigation.

SQ Chy indicted

FROM PAGE 1
instructions from your father [Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, president of Pakistan (Convention) Muslim League] to kill him [Nutan] and after hearing that the army opened fire on him and he fell down receiving bullet injuries," Justice Nizamul said.

"While Mr Singh [Nutan] was trembling, you [Salauddin] shot him again to confirm his death and after that you along with the Pakistani army left the place of occurrence," the tribunal chairman said.

Nutan was only one of the 111 people who were killed that day by Salauddin, his accomplices and the Pakistani soldiers, according to the charges. Nutun was killed around 9:30am but the killings of the day actually began around 6:00am and it went on until 5:00pm in five places.

The 111 people, who were killed that day, were mostly of the Hindu communities of Raojan's Moddhaya Gohira Hindu Para, Jagot Mollo Para, Unsattar Para and Sultanpur village.

On that day many were left injured, their houses looted and torched, the charges read.

Liberation mongers including a large number of Hindus were also forced to leave the country due to the atrocities committed by the BNP leader and his accomplices, the charges said.

Yesterday was fixed for delivering the order on the charge framing hearing against the BNP standing committee member and lawmaker Salauddin.

The charge framing against Salauddin was the second done by Tribunal-1 since its formation on March 25, 2010. It was also the second case at the tribunal to go into trial. Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee was the first to go through charge framing and he was facing trial at the tribunal too.

After framing charges yesterday, the tribunal set

April 29 for commencement of the trial of the case through opening statements of the prosecution and examination of prosecution witnesses. "The proceedings will take place every workday until further order," the tribunal said.

Later on, Salauddin's defence counsel Fakhrul Islam claimed that the framing of charges was illegal since the court did not hear their petitions before issuing the charge-framing order.

Salauddin in court yesterday did not seem at all worried about the proceedings going on. He had a smile on most of the time when the tribunal chairman was reading out the charges against him.

Apart from his lawyers, Salauddin's wife, son and daughter were also present in the courtroom during yesterday's charge framing proceedings and some of them too went on smiling.

According to parliament records, Salauddin was born on March 13, 1949, at Gahira of Rawzan upazila in Chittagong to Fazlul Quader Chowdhury.

Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta told The Daily Star later on, Salauddin's father Fazlul, president of Pakistan Convention Muslim League, was captured by freedom fighters when he was trying to flee to Myanmar through using the Karnaphuli river at the end of the war.

Salauddin had fled the country in September, 1971.

Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, six criminal cases were filed against Fazlul, including one for killing Nutan Chandra Singh. Salauddin was also an accused, said Rana.

He said Salauddin's father was in prison after the emergence of Bangladesh as he was facing charges. In 1974, he died of a cardiac arrest in jail. After the death of his father, Salauddin returned to Bangladesh.

According to the charges, Salauddin was directly involved in abduction, con-

finement and torturing of unarmed civilians. He controlled a torture centre named "Goods Hill" where many people were taken for persecution.

He perpetrated the offences in Chittagong between April 4 and September 2, 1971. He often led teams of Pakistani occupation army and Razakars (collaborators). After the war began, peace committee (collaborators) and the Razakar force were formed to help the Pakistan occupation forces.

The 23 charges against Salauddin cover crimes against humanity; genocide; attempt, abetment or conspiracy to commit such crimes; complicity in or failure to prevent commissioning of such crimes, according to different subsections of Section-3(2) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

If convicted he could get the death penalty. The International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, allows a convicted person only to appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against his conviction and sentence.

On December 16, 2010, law enforcers arrested Salauddin in another case and on December 19 he was accused of war crimes during 1971. He was produced before the tribunal on December 30, 2010.

The prosecution pressed 24 specific charges against Salauddin on November 14 last year. On November 17 last year, the tribunal took the charges into cognisance.

Last month, the tribunal heard arguments from the prosecution and the defence on charge framing.

Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq along with two judges--Justice Anwarul Huq and AKM Zaheer Ahmed--passing the order on charge framing yesterday gave an introduction to the case.

They also introduced themselves and explained the

context of the crimes the tribunal was dealing with. In its order, the court mentioned the submissions of the prosecution and defence.

The tribunal also narrated a brief history of the partition of India in 1947, Bangladesh's liberation in 1971, formulation of International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, and formation of the tribunal in 2010.

After reading out the charges in English, the presiding judge asked Salauddin, "Mr Chowdhury, you have heard and understood the aforesaid charges?"

Salauddin replied that he neither heard nor understood the charges.

Justice Nizamul Huq then said as the charges were read out before Salauddin, it would be presumed that he has understood the charges.

"Your presumption is completely wrong," Salauddin told the tribunal chairman.

The judge then asked Salauddin whether he pleaded guilty or not guilty.

"To what?" was the response of Salauddin.

"The charges," said the tribunal chairman.

"What charges?" said Salauddin.

The tribunal chairman then asked the court clerks to record: "He [Salauddin] said that he was not guilty."

"I certainly did not understand your charges," said Salauddin.

Under the tribunal's rules of procedure, the accused will get three weeks for preparing his defence if he pleaded not guilty.

According to the historical record, three million people were killed and a quarter million women were raped in the nine-month-long genocide and war crimes committed by the Pakistani occupational forces and their local collaborators.

Ten million Bangalees had to flee to India and become refugees. Millions of others were displaced inside the country during the Liberation War in 1971.

Film festival

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War martyr, as the chief guest inaugurated the festival chaired by Shamsul Hossain, former curator of Chittagong University. Raisul Huq Bahar, Chittagong bureau chief of The Daily Star, and Shaibal Chowdhury, president of Chittagong Film Centre (CFC), were also present at the ceremony, among others.

In her speech, Mushtari Shafi said she had not noticed so many young talents interested in film until she came to the festival.

Shamsul Hossain said the port city had been difficult for filmmaking after the Liberation War. He hoped that this festival would encourage the new talents of Chittagong.

The Daily Star through this festival wants to highlight all the creative activities of the port city, said Raisul Huq Bahar.

CFC president Shaibal Chowdhury, also the organiser of the festival, said they had collected a total of 40 films made by students and youths of Chittagong. Of those films, six films would be selected for awards, he added.

On the opening day of the festival, four documentaries and two feature films were screened. The documentaries were: Shamsul Hossain's "Sufiar Kahini", Rupam Chakrabarty's "Purna Ek Surer Shyam", Yasmin Kabir's "The last rites" and Anjan Sarkar Jimi's "Epitaph". The feature films were: "Sareng Bou" directed by Abdullah Al Mamun and "Moner Majhe Tumi" directed by Matiur Rahman.

Today's first session of the festival will begin with Azizur Rahman's "Sampantwala" (140 minutes) followed by Sazzad Hossain Upal's documentary "Shuttle Train" (24 minutes).

Documentaries "Dipta akashe urbe" (19 minutes) and "Metho pather gaan" (39 minutes) directed by Jamil Asraf Khan Nayan and Shaibal Chowdhury respectively and feature film "Chhutiir Ghonta" directed by Azizur Rahman will be shown in the second session.

Same old antics

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podium with eight petitions. Six of them were reviews of previous applications that have been rejected by the tribunal.

While the counsel kept insisting that the petitions be heard before the tribunal passed its order about indicting the BNP leader, tribunal Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq did not agree with him and asked him to take his seat.

The counsel, however, "respectfully" declined to comply with the order and continued with his submission that the petition needed to be heard.

The tribunal chairman said the petitions would be heard once the order was passed.

Salauddin Quader, however, interrupted Justice Huq and said the court should listen to the petition. He complained that he had been in custody for 400 days and the tribunal needed to hear the petitions, one of which dealt with his "arbitrary" detention.

"Mr Chowdhury, please take your seat. We will later hear you at length," said Justice Nizamul Huq. "Please allow us to continue with the tribunal's duty."

After the tribunal chairman passed the indictment order, Salauddin Quader later insisted that he had placed the arguments for the petitions himself.

In the face of the BNP lawmaker's ceaseless insistence, the tribunal decided to hear his argument on why he should be allowed to place his petitions instead of his defence.

Salauddin argued that there was a legal provision that gave the accused the right to either present himself in court or take assistance from the defence.

"It is an option given to the accused, not to the prosecutors or to the tribunal," he said.

In response, Justice Huq passed an order stating that the provision says the accused can either present

himself or take assistance from the defence.

As Salauddin Quader has already engaged lawyers, it means he cannot conduct his own case in court, the order added.

The BNP lawmaker's antics continued in the afternoon when the prosecution appealed to the tribunal to initiate contempt proceedings against BNP leader MK Anwar for his statements.

Anwar, a former minister and present BNP policymaker, has been quoted as saying the tribunal had demonstrated an example of "jungle laws" by accepting statements of 15 witnesses given to the investigation officer as evidence.

Prosecutor Zead-Al-Malum told the tribunal the BNP leader had made the comments to impede the course of the trial and so it warranted a contempt of court procedure.

Salauddin Quader said he fully supported "Mr Malum" on the issue, and later expressed disappointment when the court did not take any action against Anwar.

"It is very unfortunate if well-educated people like him make such comments," said Justice Huq.

"What should we do?" the tribunal chairman deliberated on the situation at hand.

The BNP leader stood up inside the dock and remarked that MK Anwar should be put behind bars as well, as it was getting lonely in there.

Justice Huq continued to say that people can criticise the law but cannot question the integrity of the tribunal.

"Absolutely right. I agree with that. Just because it is a jungle law, it doesn't mean it has resulted into a jungle tribunal," remarked Salauddin Quader.

Justice Huq then passed an order saying people should be more cautious about making comments on the tribunal.

The tribunal observed that MK Anwar was a former minister, a former cabinet secretary, a former deputy com-

missioner and a magistrate and therefore must have had an understanding of laws.

He must have been swayed by his sentiments when he made the statements, stated the order, which added that the tribunal believed Anwar had not read the law.

"But if he has read the law, we can only say sorry."

The order also stated that the tribunal expects Anwar and people like him to cooperate so that there may be a fair trial.

Although it is an unexpected comment, the tribunal did not find anything that calls for action under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

As soon as Justice Huq concluded the order, Salauddin Quader said: "This is far too less! This hampers the tribunal's tradition. I was completely with Mr Malum on this count."

The theatrics continued later in the afternoon from both the Chittagong MP and his counsel Fakhrul Islam, who at one point threatened to walk out of the court.

While placing arguments on a petition, the defence counsel claimed the court order did not accurately reflect the defence's submissions and the tribunal is not giving required consideration to the applications.

"I'll walk out!" said Fakhrul as he walked away from the podium with his documents.