

6 hurt

FROM PAGE 20

Mishul Chandra Das.
Quoting the salon staff Khokan, Sub-inspector Abul Hassan Bhuiyan of Babubazar Police Camp said the blast had taken place as soon as Khokan had lit a match stick to smoke.

Such explosion may occur only if accumulated gas comes into contact with fire, said bomb expert of the Detective Branch of police Senior Assistant Commissioner Mohammad Sanwar Hossain yesterday.

Gas was accumulated in the shop due to the use of an air conditioner. In such case, smoking is prohibited.

The two salon staff suffered burns while the pedestrians were hurt by splinters of glass and brick.

The air-conditioned salon on the ground floor of a six-storey building was shut in the evening and the incident occurred after the two employees entered the shop around 11:15pm to sleep, Sub-inspector SM Raquibul Haque said.

The blast with a loud bang caused the shop's wall to collapse, and glass and furniture strewn all over the road. The explosion also caused fire, the SI added.

On information, fire fighters went to the spot, rescued the salon employees and admitted them to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Four other injured were given first aid at the Mirford Hospital.

Sanwar Hossain visited the spot following the incident when a team of the Criminal Investigation Department and members of other law enforcement agencies were also present.

The bomb expert told The Daily Star that they had collected samples of the blast from the spot but had not found any proof of explosives.

Pay more

FROM PAGE 1

Last week, the power ministry decided that consumers who want uninterrupted power supply at their establishments will have to pay higher rates.

As per the proposal, the residential consumers may purchase electricity at a rate of Tk 13 per unit instead of the existing highest rate of Tk 7.89 per unit, while the industrial consumers at a rate of Tk 16-19 per unit for a 132 KV line.

The proposal was placed in compliance with the recent decision of the power ministry.

Last month, Berc raised the electricity tariffs for both bulk and retail consumers with retrospective effect from March 1.

But within less than a month, the state-owned PDB again moved for raising power tariff on the pretext of providing uninterrupted power supply to its consumers.

US assist secy

FROM PAGE 20

scheduled to be held on Thursday.

The dialogue to broaden and strengthen bilateral defence cooperation will be on a wide range of political-military issues, including continuing efforts to enhance partnerships in peacekeeping, joint military exercises and exchanges, counterterrorism, and security cooperation, according to an announcement of the US Embassy yesterday.

Shapiro will lead the US delegation in the dialogue with senior civil and military officials.

Foreign ministry officials told The Daily Star that representatives from the ministries of foreign, home, disaster management and armed forces division will take part in the day-long seminar.

The US official as part of his two-nation tour arrived in India yesterday and will stay there until Wednesday.

In New Delhi, he will hold talks with senior civilian officials on defence trade, counter-piracy and regional political-military issues as well as the recovery and repatriation of US service members lost during the Second World War.

Andrew J Shapiro was sworn in as assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs on June 22, 2009. He previously served as senior adviser to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Prior to joining the State Department, he served from 2001 to 2009 as Senator Clinton's senior defence and foreign policy adviser.

War crimes

FROM PAGE 20

Mueen-Uddin, now a successful community activist and Muslim leader in Britain, was allegedly the "operation-in-charge" of the killings of intellectuals during the Liberation War.

He led the Dhaka unit of Al Badr, one of the forces created to help the Pakistani occupation army and oppose the pro-liberation forces during the war. Ashrafuzzaman Khan co-led the Al Badr unit, said chief investigator Hannan.

Once the charges against them are moved to the International Crimes Tribunal, the two will be tried for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War of 1971.

According to Hannan, Ashrafuzzaman was one of the masterminds behind the intellectual killings and he directly took part in the killings of many celebrities, scholars, journalists and other intellectuals during the war. A Bangla daily Purbadesh report titled "Nab the butcher of intellectuals" published on January 13, 1972, had a photograph of Ashrafuzzaman Khan.

Mueen-Uddin used to work for Purbadesh during the war and Bangladesh Observer on its December 19, 1971, issue described him as the "operation in charge" of Al Badr, Dhaka. The New York Times in its January 3, 1972, issue also elaborated how the journalist was linked to the "murder of Bengalis".

The Telegraph, a UK-based newspaper, yesterday ran a report on Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin titled "Leading British Muslim Leader faces war crimes charges in Bangladesh".

"Mueen-Uddin, then a journalist of Purbadesh newspaper in Dhaka was a member of a fundamentalist party Jamaat-e-Islami which supported Pakistan in the war," the report said.

"He is accused of being a part of a collaborationist Bangla militia, the Al-Badr brigade, which rounded up, tortured and killed prominent citizens to deprive the new state of its intellectual and cultural elite," the report said.

His victims include Mufazzal Haider Chaudhury, a prominent scholar of Bengali literature, journalist Sirajuddin Hussain and Ghulam Mostafa, who was a colleague of Mueen-Uddin in Purbadesh newspaper, the report said.

Dolly Chaudhury, the widow of Mufazzal Haider Chaudhury, claims to have identified Mueen-Uddin as one of three men who abducted her husband on the night of December 14, 1971, the report added.

"I was able to identify one [of the abductors], Mueen-Uddin," she said in a video testimony, reportedly seen by The Sunday Telegraph.

"He was wearing a scarf but my husband pulled it down as he was taken away. When he was a student, he often used to go to my brother-in-law's house. My husband, my sister-in-law, my brother-in-law, we all recognised that man."

The widow of another victim also claims that Mueen-Uddin was in the group that abducted her husband, Sirajuddin Hussain, another journalist, from their home on the night of December 10, 1971, the report read.

"There was no doubt that he was the person involved in my husband's abduction and killing," said Noorjahan Seraji.

A member the group was caught later on and he allegedly gave Mueen-Uddin's name in his confession.

Ghulam Mostafa, a colleague of Mueen-Uddin at Purbadesh, also had disappeared.

According to the report, "Mueen-Uddin's then editor at Purbadesh Atiqur Rahman" in his statement said Mueen-Uddin had been the first journalist in the country to reveal the existence of the Al-Badr brigade and had demonstrated intimate knowledge of its activities.

He said after his colleagues had disappeared, Mueen-Uddin asked for his home address. Fearing that he too would be abducted, the editor gave a fake address.

Atiqur's name, complete with the fake address, appeared on an Al-Badr death list found just after the end of the war, he said in the statement, The Telegraph reported.

"I'm sure I gave the address to no-one else."

Atiqur Rahman then published a front-page story and picture of Mueen-Uddin, who had by that stage left Dhaka, identifying him as one of those involved in the disappearances.

Moving to the UK in the early 70's, Mueen-Uddin took British citizenship and built a successful career as a community activist and Muslim leader, the report said.

He was the vice-chairman of the controversial East London Mosque controlled by the IFE. In this capacity, he greeted Prince Charles when he heir to the British throne opened an extension to the mosque, it said, adding that Mueen-Uddin was also closely involved with the Muslim Council of Britain.

A former chairman of the charity organisation called Muslim Aid, Mueen-Uddin is now a trustee at the organisation, which has a budget of £20 million.

Mueen-Uddin, the director of Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the UK's National Health Service (NHS), "fiercely denies any involvement in a number of abductions and disappearances" during the Liberation War, the report said.

He has claimed the accusations were "politically-motivated" and false, added the report.

Toby Cadman, Mueen-Uddin's lawyer, has told The Telegraph that no formal allegations have been put to Mueen-Uddin and therefore it is not appropriate to issue any formal response.

"Any and all allegations that Mueen-Uddin committed or participated in any criminal conduct during the Liberation War of 1971 that have been put in the past will continue to be strongly denied in their entirety."

He told the newspaper that for the chief investigator to be making such public comments raises serious questions as to the integrity of the investigation.

"Therefore, the comments by the chief investigator are highly improper and serve as a further basis for raising the question as to whether a fair trial may be guaranteed before the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh."

Free Gulshan

FROM PAGE 20

Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) have to jointly take steps to demolish these structures and the deputy commissioner of Dhaka is to provide them with necessary magisterial support, the court said.

An HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim also said that if the Rajuk chairman and the BTCL managing director would claim to have executed the order in the compliance report without actually doing it, they would be sent to jail and prosecuted.

Following a court order in January, Rajuk has removed slums from the Gulshan Lake area but did not do anything about the buildings standing there, the HC bench said, adding that the court had ordered to remove all structures from the lake.

The court said it had been widely reported in the media that the buildings constructed on the lake remained untouched.

The bench also refused to accept a compliance report from BTCL, saying that it had not properly executed the court's previous order.

After a report was published in the daily Prothom Alo, the same bench in January issued a rule upon the authorities concerned, including Rajuk's chairman and BTCL's managing director, to explain why they should not be directed to protect the lake. The court also asked the government to demarcate Gulshan Lake and remove illegal structures on it within two months.

Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday that the government had neither demarcated the lake, nor did it demolish the buildings.

The BTCL authorities earlier told the HC that they control only 80 acres of the lake.

According to the Prothom Alo report, a dam was created across Gulshan Lake over a piece of five bigha of land, dividing it in the middle. Several tin-shed houses have been erected along the dam by claiming land ownership.

15 killed in two China mine floods

AFP, Beijing

At least 15 miners were killed in two mine floods in China over the weekend, as rescuers frantically pumped mining shafts in search of seven still missing in the accidents, state press said yesterday.

The death toll in a flood that occurred early yesterday at the illegally operating Shanfu coal mine in north China's Shanxi province rose to 10, Xinhua news agency said. One miner remains missing and rescue operations continue.

The mine owner, manager and 19 others have been taken into police custody as part of the investigation.

HC stays DCC

FROM PAGE 1

and the government of not taking any step for holding the elections until the hearing is over.

The HC's order came during the hearing of a writ petition filed by Asaduzzaman Siddiqui, general secretary of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), yesterday.

Asaduzzaman in the petition sought a stay on holding the DCC elections until completion of the legal procedures.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim yesterday adjourned the hearing after Shahdeen Malik, counsel for the EC, told the court that he will place arguments against the petition today.

During yesterday's hearing, petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid told the court that as per sections 27 and 28 of the Local Government (City Corporations) Act 2009, the government has to determine the number of wards of any new city corporation, demarcate the areas of its wards and publish their names and number through a gazette notification before holding election to it.

According to the law, officials have to be appointed from the public servants through a gazette notification for demarcating the areas of the wards of a new city corporation, he said.

He also said the government had not executed the rules of the act, and therefore the EC now cannot hold elections to the new DCC (North and South).

Earlier on Thursday, the counsel served a legal notice on the chief election commissioner to stop the process of holding elections to divided DCC until completion of the legal procedures.

7 fake doctors

FROM PAGE 20

from Rab, health directorate and Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council conducted the daylong raids in different clinics, nursing homes and pharmacies.

Of the seven convicts, Hasina Begum, 26, of Hasina Medical Centre at Dakkhinkhan was jailed for nine months; her associate SM Mahiuddin, 22, for one year and three months; Fatema Shakhawat, 30, of Arman Clinic and Nursing Home at Dakkhinkhan Bazar, for two years and three months.

Al Amin alias Shah Alam, 42, of City Dental Clinic at Dakkhinkhan Bazar, was jailed for one year and three months while M Kawsar Ahmed, 31, of Seba Dental Care at Dakkhinkhan Bazar, for one year and three months.

Anwar Hossain Dulal, 40, of AP Medicine Diagnostic Centre at Darussalam Road in Mirpur, was jailed for two years and three months while Atiar Rahman, 33, of Ifty Pharmacy at Uttar Khan, for one year and nine months.

Hasina, Atiar, Mahiuddin, Anwar Hossain and Fatema had been treating patients identifying themselves as MBBS doctors while Al Amin and Kawsar as dental specialists, the magistrate said.

They were given the punishment for cheating people, he said.

"The clinics, diagnostic centres and pharmacies have also been closed down so they cannot resume their illegal businesses," he added.

Souls reunite

FROM PAGE 1

Saturday said as residents of one country before 1947 and creation of India and Pakistan, people of the region were related in various ways.

One of them is Dharmakanta Roy. Resident of a village in Panchagarh, the 75-year-old saw his daughter Shurymukhi Roy, 55, who lives in Bhimvita village of Jalpaiguri, India, after around 14 years.

Aisha Begum, 56, of Domer upazila in Nilphamari came to meet her brothers and sisters, all living in the neighbouring country. "I talked with them face to face. Though it was for a while, I'm happy... very happy," she said.

Nurul Haque Proddhan, 60, of Jhotiakhali village at Shiliguri sub-division in India saw his nephew Golam Rabbani, 45, who

lives in Notun Bosti village, Panchagarh. "I was waiting for the day all through the year," he said.

Ananta Roy, 35, of Shiliguri in India came to meet his father while Ananta Bala, 32, of Farabari village in Thakurgaon to see her siblings living in Jalpaiguri.

Some were frustrated, failing to find their relatives.

Keshab Kumar Roy, 38, of Shakoya village in Panchagarh came to see his elder sister Koruna Rani, 52, of Holdibari village in Jalpaiguri. But she was not found.

Showing some gifts, including saree, and some food items, he told The Daily Star, "If I could give these, she would've become very happy".

Mithu Roy is president of Rajraj Thana committee of Congress party, Jalpaiguri. "Following the

1947 partition, relatives of many became residents of a different country. I'm one of them," he said.

He urged both Border Guard Bangladesh and Indian Border Security Force to allow the reunion on Pahela Baishakh every year.

Major Ahmed, deputy commanding officer for 18 BGB Battalion, said, "We made the arrangement through discussion with the BSF and local administration of the both countries."

Preferring not to be named, two members of Khalpara BSF Battalion said the arrangement was made unofficially, considering public sentiment.

On Saturday, similar reunion was held in Dabri-Betna border area under Haripur upazila, Thakurgaon from 8:30am to 2:30pm, BGB and local sources said.

Aide axed

FROM PAGE 1

the ministry has also been suspended, Railway Minister Suranjit Sengupta told a press conference at the Railway Bhaban yesterday.

"We've also decided to file judicial cases against the trio under the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules 1985," Suranjit said.

His announcement came five days after the seizure of Tk 70 lakh from the microbus of his APS by BGB members around 11:30pm on April 9. The vehicle was on its way to Suranjit's Jigatola residence in the capital with Faruq, Mridha and Enamul on board, and the amount was reportedly part of the bribe money collected from the prospective job seekers.

Sources had earlier told The Daily Star that the driver, Ali Azam Khan, drove the vehicle into the BGB Pilkhana headquarters having been refused Tk 5 lakh as share of the amount.

Faruq, Mridha, Enamul and the driver were kept in Pilkhana in BGB custody that night. All but the driver was freed around 1:00pm the next day. Enamul told The Daily Star at his Kamalapur Railway Station office on Wednesday. The driver remains traceless since.

The minister's press conference also came hours after Mridha told a two-member probe body in a written statement that he along with Faruq and Enamul was going to Suranjit's house that night.

"The APS [Faruq] picked me up on the way. We had some official business to do with the minister," Mridha told reporters, emerging from the office of Railway Director General Abu Taher who is heading the probe committee.

Asked about the minister's claim that 10:00pm was his bedtime and that there was no question of meeting them late that night, the GM said: "The minister remains busy in various activities. There is nothing wrong going to his house at night for official purpose."

Faruq, who was summoned by a one-member committee probing his involvement in the scam, did not show up yesterday. Instead, he sent a statement by an aide. The content of the statement could not be known.

On April 11, Faruq deposited Tk 70 lakh in his account with Mercantile Bank's Dhanmondi branch. The central bank has already opened an investigation into the abnormal deposit.

Enamul, the security commandant, will be asked today to appear before the two-member probe body with his written statement tomorrow.

Yesterday's press conference was the third by Suranjit since the scam came to light. He left the press meet after sketchily answering a few questions.

Replying to a query, Suranjit said the action was taken against the trio based on the statement Mridha and Faruq gave to the body as well as the allegations raised against them in the media.

"An APS is a privileged post. I myself decided to dismiss him. I am not a judge

that I will try him. The law will take its own course," said Suranjit, looking upset.

He also avoided making direct replies on why Mridha and Enamul were suspended, and not fired.

Suranjit, a senior Awami League leader, had earlier defended the trio. After the scandal surfaced, he said the microbus driver tried to blackmail his APS. He also declined to suspend Mridha and Enamul, saying action could not be taken until they were proven guilty.

Related documents and the statement of the APS will be handed over to the Anti-Corruption Commission and that the ministry will extend all-out help to the ACC, he told the press conference.

The ACC has already opened an investigation into the railwaygate scam and also the alleged recruitment business in the ministry.

The minister, however, came down heavily on the media. "Even a summary trial takes some time to try someone, but the media trial happens in no time," he said, referring to the media coverage on the scandal.

About Mridha's claim that they were going to his house, he said "Now many people will say many things."

Ruling out BNP's demand that he resign in 48 hours, Suranjit said: "They [BNP] did not make me minister. I'll think of it only if instructions come from the relevant person."

Suranjit, who became minister of the newly-formed railway ministry in December last year, has been facing serious criticism over the scam.

Expressing concern, political leaders, civil society members, and eminent citizens demanded independent and neutral investigation to unearth what had actually happened.

The minister, however, has all along been claiming his innocence.

The committees formed to probe the incident also came under fire as they are staffed by officials of the railway ministry and the railway.

UNFLAPPABLE MRIDHA Mridha went to the Railway Bhaban around 8:30am after a two-day leave and two holidays, two and a half hours ahead of the schedule.

He visited offices of some officials, including that of the Railway Joint Secretary Shashi Kumar Singha, a member of the two-member probe body which is probing the allegation against him and security commandant Enamul.

He then went to the room of the private secretary of the DG and wrote his statement there, and appeared before the committee at about 11:10am.

"I don't have a vast property. All of my property is legal," Mridha told The Daily Star.

The probe body has asked him to stay in Dhaka for the sake of investigation. His postings is in Chittagong.

Asked about his involvement in the money recovery scandal and the alleged corruption in recruitment, he said investigation would determine everything. He added the APS already claimed the ownership of the

money and also deposited it in his bank account.

Looking relaxed, Mridha said he would appoint a lawyer soon to defend himself. "I have no fear at all. Ten lawyers have already contacted me," he said.

BB FOR FREEZING FARUQ'S ACCOUNTS

Meanwhile the central bank yesterday ordered all commercial banks to immediately freeze the accounts of Faruq and his wife, Marzia Farhana.

"As we are inquiring the matter, we've asked all banks to freeze his and his wife's accounts," said a senior official of Money Laundering Prevention Department of BB.

The BB will report its findings to the ACC.

PM hears

FROM PAGE 1

40-minute meeting. It indicates that the railway minister may have to step down, said the source.

Suranjit entered Gono Bhaban at around 9:00pm after Hasina summoned him to her official residence to get the details of the seizure of Tk 70 lakh from the microbus of Suranjit's assistant personal secretary.

Earlier, the Tk 70 lakh scandal came up for discussion at a meeting between Hasina and President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the evening, said the source.

Sources in the government and Awami League said, Suranjit would be removed from office if found involved in the scandal.

The prime minister has discussed the matter with some of her close aides and decided to show zero tolerance for anybody involved in the corruption.

"The government will take stern action against the persons involved in the corruption. If the minister concerned is found guilty, the government will not shy away from taking action against the minister," Mahubul Alam Hanif, special assistant to the prime minister, told The Daily Star.

Hanif, also joint general secretary of Awami League, said the government was probing the incident and would show no sympathy to the persons involved in the corruption.

Many ministers think Suranjit should quit as railway minister following the Tk 70 lakh scandal that has put the government in an uneasy situation.

Asking not to be named, a senior minister told The Daily Star, "If asked for opinion, I will say he should step down. Faced with such an allegation, I would have resigned immediately."

Suranjit came under fire following the seizure of Tk 70 lakh from the microbus of his APS Omar Faruq Talukder by BGB members in the capital on April 9 night. The microbus driver, Ali Azam Khan, drove the vehicle into the Pilkhana BGB headquarters having been refused Tk 5 lakh as share of the amount reportedly collected from job seekers.

Faruq, Railway General Manager (East) Yusuf Ali Mridha and Railway's Dhaka Divisional Security Commandant Enamul Huq were in the vehicle.

Nearly 400

FROM PAGE 1

The jail is located in Bannu, a town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which borders Pakistan's volatile tribal areas.

Pakistan's Taliban said they carried out the attack, but the claim has not been verified.

"We attacked the Bannu prison and got our special members freed," Ehsanullah Ehsan, a Taliban spokesman, told AFP.

"In a couple of days when all of them have reached their designated places we will issue details about them. At the moment I cannot give you exact numbers."

A spokesman quoted by the Reuters news agency said hundreds of inmates had been freed.

Officials described how militants in cars and pick-up trucks entered the complex shooting and throwing grenades.

A total of 384 prisoners were freed in the attack, the information minister of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Mian Iftikhar Hussain, said.

He described at least 20 of the prisoners as very dangerous, and that Adnan Rashid, a former member of the air force sentenced to death for an attack on Musharraf, was among those who escaped.

Senior Bannu police official Iftikhar Khan told AFP that three police officers were wounded in the two-hour attack.

The BBC's Aleem Maqbool in Islamabad says the attack is clearly a setback for Pakistan's security forces, who over the last year have gained considerable ground against militants in the north-west of the country.

The Taliban carried out an audacious jail raid near Kandahar in Afghanistan in April last year, freeing at least 470 prisoners, including Taliban commanders and fighters.

BNP still silent

FROM