

NEWS IN

brief

Selima, 2 others granted bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Vice-Chairman Selima Rahman and two others was granted bail yesterday in a criminal case filed against them for making an attempt to halt movement of vehicles and torching vehicles.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdul Kader passed the order after Sub-inspector Mahbub Alam of Gulshan Police Station produced them before the court with a three-day remand prayer.

The court, however, denied bail to seven others and sent them to jail in the same case filed against them for the same charges under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

The court also rejected a three-day remand prayer to interrogate them.

Police picked up 10 female activists of BNP, including Selima, in Gulshan area when they brought out a procession during their second day's hartal on Monday.

Two others who got bail are Advocate Sheuli and Advocate Diba Khan.

The pro-BNP lawyers raised hue and cry and created a chaotic situation in the courtroom protesting the rejection of bail to seven other woman activists.

MI Cement fined for polluting air

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) has fined MI Cement Ltd, located at Muktarpur, Munshiganj, Tk 15 lakh for polluting air.

The DoE yesterday fined the managing director of the company and directed him to take proper measures to stop air pollution within seven days.

Installing dust collectors and other pollution control devices is a must in cement factory. But this company did not take such measures.

The department tested the quality of air on January 2 and April 15 at the factory site and found 2727 microgram (mcg) floating dusts in per cubic metre (cm) and 1113 mcg in per cm respectively against the standard of 500 mcg per cm.

Such dust generated from cement factory is harmful for human health, says a DoE official.

Schoolboy dies in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A schoolboy was killed when a three-wheeler hit him at Roypur Bazar in Bagharpara upazila of Jessore district yesterday morning.

The deceased Mim, 7, son of Anower Mollah of Kaialkhali village in the district, was a class-II student of Kaialkhali Primary School.

Police said, the accident occurred as the vehicle ran over him while he was crossing the road, killing him instantly.

3 houses, thread mill gutted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Fire gutted three houses and a thread mill in Chandgaon area of the port city yesterday morning.

The fire had originated from the stove in the rented house of Naserullah, owner of the thread mill, and soon engulfed the adjacent two houses and the thread mill, said sources at Agrabad Fire Control Room.

Four fire fighting units rushed to the spot and doused the flame.

The fire gutted valuables worth about Tk 15 lakh.

Wealth info: Oli gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed was granted bail yesterday in a case filed against him for non-submission of his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Oli along with his lawyer appeared before the court and sought bail in the case.

The court also fixed May 15 for hearing on charge framing against the accused.

The ACC pressed charge against Oli on March 19 this year as the charge brought against him was primarily proved.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Mild to moderate heat wave is sweeping over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna divisions and region of Madaripur and Faridpur and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. The highest temperature is likely to be 39-40 degrees Celsius and lowest temperature may be 22-23 degrees Celsius.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:24pm today and rises at 5:28am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 40.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and Ishwardi and lowest 20.9 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town | Temperature in Celsius | Humidity in percentage |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | Max: | Min: Morning Evening |
| Dhaka | 35.5 | 27.4 63 |
| Chittagong | 32.0 | 26.0 80 |
| Rajshahi | 39.7 | 25.8 69 |
| Rangpur | 34.8 | 24.5 74 |
| Khulna | 38.2 | 26.0 70 |
| Barisal | 35.0 | 26.7 75 |
| Sylhet | 31.0 | 20.9 83 |
| Cox's Bazar | 33.8 | 27.4 72 |



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was received by her cabinet and party colleagues on her arrival from Qatar at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Last PW testifies against Sayedee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday finished recording the testimony of the 28th and last prosecution witness against Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee over his alleged involvement in the crimes against humanity during the Liberation War of 1971.

Mohammad Helal Uddin, the witness and also the investigation officer who probed the allegations against the Jamaat leader, yesterday gave a record of witnesses who gave statements against Sayedee, and some documents he had collected during the investigation.

Sayedee's defence is scheduled to cross-examine the prosecution witness today.

The investigation officer, who took the dock for the ninth day yesterday, faced frequent interruptions from Sayedee's defence team, which kept insisting that the proceedings

be adjourned, as all key defence counsels were absent because of hartal.

After the two-member tribunal refused to adjourn the session, the Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer sought permission to say something and then proceeded to read out a written statement before the court.

In the statement, Sayedee said he did not expect the tribunal to continue its proceedings yesterday with the countrywide strike.

He said "state power" and "falsehood" had combined against him, and what was happening in the name of his trial had made him "dumbfounded, stunned and astounded".

The Jamaat leader said he had lost interest in the court proceedings and now spent his time in court reading from the holy Quran.

Sayedee said he was a victim of "reckless abuse of state power" and "aggressive falsehood", and he

wanted to have faith in the tribunal's accountability to hold a fair trial.

A copy of the written statement was handed over to the two-member tribunal.

Justice Md Nizamul Huq, the tribunal chairman, then passed an order rejecting the prayer for adjournment. The tribunal then proceeded to record the witness' deposition for the ninth day.

However, the defence, which consisted of five junior colleagues of the key lawyers, kept insisting that the proceedings be adjourned.

The tribunal chairman assured the junior lawyers that if any legal points came up in the deposition, it would be kept pending for the senior counsels.

Abu Bakr Siddique, a junior colleague of a defence counsel, told the court that the witness statement was with the senior lawyers and they did not have any copies, and therefore those who were present in court

made little difference.

After much insistence, the tribunal decided to adjourn the proceedings against Sayedee until today after the witness finished his deposition.

The tribunal also adjourned three other agendas scheduled for the day till today. The cases included the defence's arguments against indictment of Jamaat chief Matiur Rahman Nizami and the party's secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujaheed.

It also fixed today to deliver an order in response to two petitions filed by BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

Four Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and BNP's SQ Chowdhury are facing charges of crimes against humanity at the tribunal-1, which is the first of two courts formed to deal with such crimes of 1971.

World Malaria Day

UNB, Dhaka

The World Malaria Day will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere across the globe today with the theme 'Sustain Gains, Save Lives: Invest in Malaria'.

World Malaria Day - which was instituted by the World Health Assembly at its 60th session in May 2007 - is a day for recognising the global efforts to control malaria.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), in 2010, about 3.3 billion people - almost half of the world's population - were at risk of malaria. Every year, about 216 million people become affected with malaria and 6,55, 000 die of the disease. People living in the poorest countries are the most vulnerable.

In Bangladesh, different organisations have chalked out various programmes to mark the day. The programmes include seminar, rally and health camps.

As part of the programmes, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in association with Brac and WHO arranged a press conference at New DOHS in the capital on Tuesday.

Addressing the press conference, health experts called for taking effective measures to reduce deaths caused by malaria.

Though malaria elimination project had been taken up, the disease was yet to be eliminated in the country, they said.

About 6,15,059 people were affected this year with the disease in the country, they added.

The experts said 36 people died of the disease in 2011 while the toll was 228 in 2007.

No US-Indo-Bangla axis against China: Mozena

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan Mozena yesterday ruled out floating of any US-India-Bangladesh axis in the region against China.

"There is no axis with anybody, against anybody," he said, while replying to a question whether the US is going to float any sort of the three-nation axis following increased presence of China in the region.

He made it clear that China is not the enemy of the United States.

Mozena was talking to a select group of journalists on the recently concluded first-ever US-Bangladesh dialogue on security issues.

The US envoy appreciated Chinese engagement with Bangladesh and said Bangladesh

can be a link between South Asia and South East Asia. Bangladesh can also link India's engagement with Burma, he added.

Replying to another question about setting up of nuclear power plant in Bangladesh with Russian assistance, Mozena said many countries, including the USA, are using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and that is fully legitimate.

He mentioned that there are certain rules like safety measures before use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

On the security dialogue, he said Bangladesh is important to US as it's a moderate, tolerant and democratic country and it has made very impressive progress in countering terrorism.

He said both the sides at the dialogue had extensive discussion on bilateral, regional and global security cooperation as well as humanitarian assistance during natural disasters.

They also discussed military to military cooperation regarding training, joint exercises, military equipment and capacity building of Bangladesh's military.

"We have on going cooperation with the navy and the coast guard so that they can more efficiently protect the huge maritime and sea resources of Bangladesh," said Mozena.

US Embassy Political Officer Enrique Rodrigo Gallego and Press and Information Officer Patricia A Hill were present on the occasion.

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER Duja demands fair investigation

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University Journalists Association (Duja) yesterday demanded fair investigation and trial of all journalist killings in the country, including that of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

The demand was made when a 10-member Duja delegation, led by Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, met President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban.

Duja President Hasan Nitol and General Secretary Asaduzzaman Sagar were among the delegation members.

During the meeting, the president called upon the journalist community to build the country with conscious citizens by properly discharging their noble responsibility.

Zillur said journalists have been carrying out an important responsibility based on truth. "They can help build a conscious country and people."

The Duja emphasised increasing training facilities for university teachers for the development of education.

They appraised the president that a new department, "Television and Film Studies", was opened at the Dhaka University to keep pace with the present-day demand.

Zillur appreciated Duja activities.

Secretaries to the president's office were present.

Increase surface water use

Suggests JS watchdog

UNB, Dhaka

A parliamentary watchdog yesterday suggested increasing the use of surface water by preserving rainwater to reduce pressure on the underground water.

The parliamentary standing committee on public estimate also suggested raising budget for canal digging sector to make water reservoir by digging canal along with increasing the use of rainwater through long time conservation of rainwater.

At its 31st meeting at Sangsad Bhaban, the committee recommended finalising the agriculture policy immediately and not to change the category of agricultural land indiscriminately.

It called for further involvement of women in agriculture.

It asked the agriculture ministry to strengthen research activities for inventing new agricultural products for coastal and salinity-prone areas, to devise environment-friendly variety of crop, determine suitable agriculture production areas and invent agriculture variety in the wake of climate change.

Chaired by committee chairman Dhirendra Chandra Denath, the meeting was attended by committee members, Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Mohammad Sirajul Akbar, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, SK Abu Baker, Mohammad Rafiqul Islam and Begum Faridunnahar Lailey.

Yet another acquittal for Azam

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday discharged Jubo League General Secretary Mirza Azam from a case filed against him for amassing wealth worth over Tk 53 lakh illegally and giving false wealth information to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Judge (in charge) Borhan Uddin Ahmed of the Special Judge Court-8 passed the acquittal order in presence of Mirza Azam after finding no evidence to frame charge against the AL leader.

In his order, the judge said the notice that was served to Azam asking him to submit his wealth statement was not legally issued. Moreover, the charges brought against Azam were baseless and concocted.

Following the order, charges against Azam's wife Aleya Azam were also dropped. Aleya Azam was accused of abetting her husband.

On July 7 of 2008, ACC Deputy Director SM Mofizul Islam, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet against Azam to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court showing 34 people as prosecution witnesses.

On January 10 of the same year, ACC Deputy Director Mobarra Khanam filed the case against the couple with Ramna Police Station.

GD against Buet teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The president of a titular organisation filed a general diary (GD) against a Buet teacher on Monday accusing that he issued a death threat to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The complainant, AB Siddique, claimed himself to be the president of Janonetri Parishad, a pro-Awami League organisation in the capital.

According to the GD, Abidur Rahman Rana, a teacher of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), threatened the PM on the Facebook that he would shoot her dead, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, yesterday.

The OC said they filed a petition to a Dhaka Court yesterday seeking its permission for carrying out investigation into the incident. In response, the court granted the permission and directed to submit the progress report of the investigation to the court every 48 hours.

"Today [yesterday], I also informed the DMP (Dhaka Metropolitan Police) commissioner of the incident" he said.

The complainant, Siddique, handed over the copies he had printed from Rana's Facebook account to the police station, the OC said, adding they would verify the copies.

Death threat to Shamokal editor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Golam Sarwar, editor of Bengali daily Shamokal, filed a general diary (GD) with Tejgaon Industrial Police Station on Monday, seeking security of his life after unknown callers threatened to kill him.

The threats were issued over some reports published in the newspaper on the "disappearance" of BNP leader Ilias Ali, said Omar Faruq, officer-in-charge of the police station, quoting the GD.

"The callers made several calls over land phone at different times on Monday saying that if the Shamokal continues such reporting on Ilias Ali, the editor will also be disappeared and will not get time for filing any GD or case with police", the GD said.

The home ministry, inspector general of police (IGP), Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioners, and other law enforcement officials concerned were informed of the incident.