

NEWS IN brief

Feni OC to face court May 14 over assault on AC land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned the officer-in-charge and three sub-inspectors of Feni Sadar Police Station on May 14 to explain their roles over the assault on an assistant commissioner (AC) (land) of Feni.

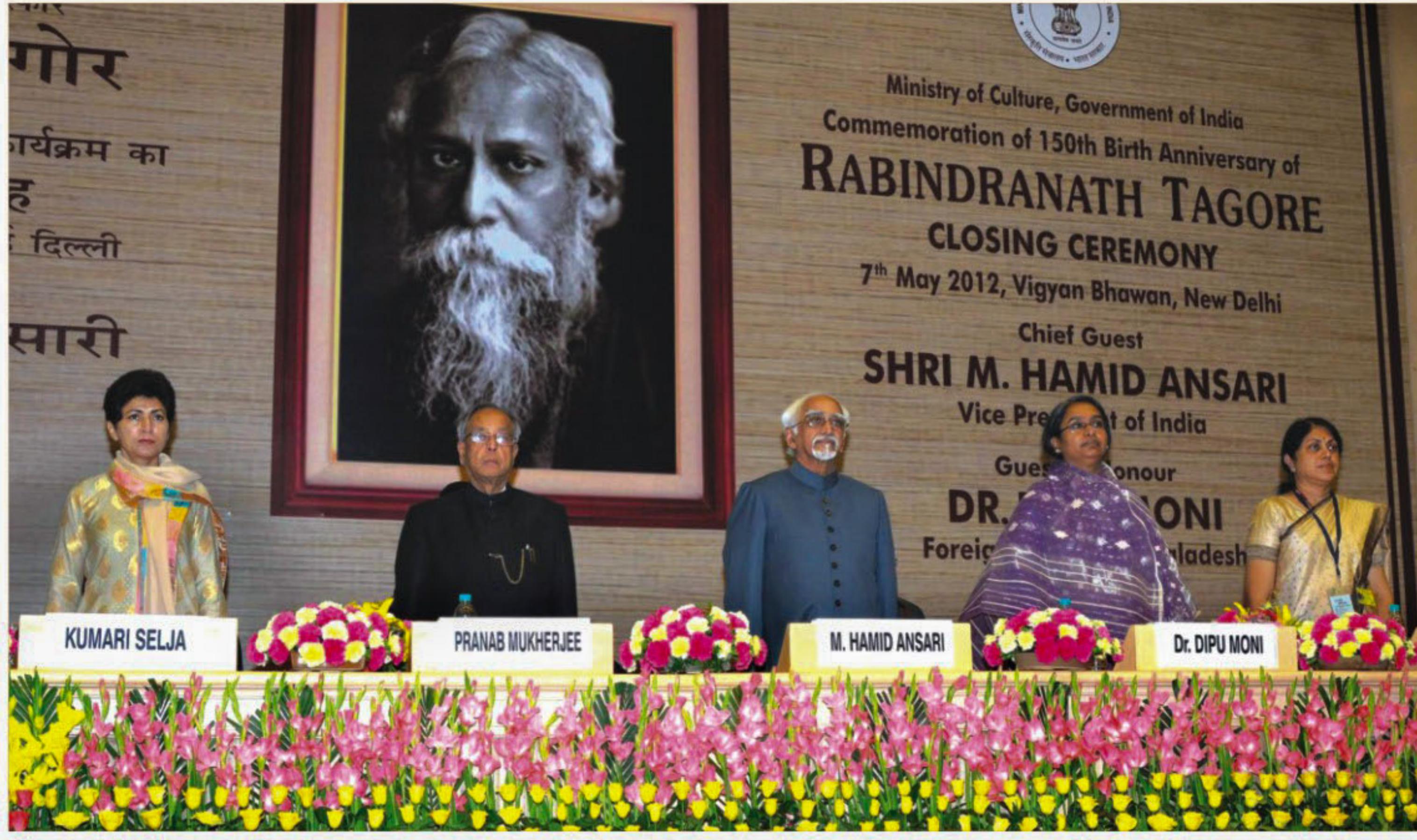
Some plainclothes police led by the OC, Nazim Uddin, reportedly assaulted the AC, Nazrul Islam, and surveyor Khademul Islam, who were evicting illegal structures before the police station on May 3.

In response to a writ petition, the court also issued a rule upon the government to explain in three weeks why it should not be directed to prosecute the police men for the assault.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim came up with the order and rule after hearing the petition, filed by Manzill Mursid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Home Affairs formed a three-member body, headed by its Joint Secretary Shawkat Mostafa, to investigate the incident and submit a report in three working days.

The committee was formed when a large group of officers met Home Minister Shahara Khatun at her Secretariat office yesterday morning and demanded that the OC be fired and awarded exemplary punishment after trial.



(From left) Indian Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and Culture Minister Kumari Selja, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Vice President Hamid Ansari, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Indian Ministry of Culture Secretary Sangita Gairola at the closing ceremony of the commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: PIB, INDIA

Discharge plea filed for Alim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP lawmaker Abdul Alim's lawyers yesterday sought discharge of their client from charges of crimes against humanity at the International Crimes Tribunal-2 claiming that the charges were brought on "insufficient legal and factual basis".

The defence made the plea in response to the prosecution's prayer to indict the former minister who is facing 74 charges of crimes against humanity in 28 incidents committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

Tajul Islam, one of Alim's counsels, yesterday read out the 25-page petition seeking discharge from the accusations brought by the prosecution in the formal charges against the three-time elected parliamentarian.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir with members Justice Obaidul Hasan and Judge M Shahinur Islam adjourned the proceeding till tomorrow following the time petition of the defence, as they could not complete their preparation.

The defence are scheduled to place their argument that day supporting the discharge petition.

Alim, who was arrested on March 27 last year and has been on conditional bail after three days of his arrest was present at the courtroom.

As yesterday's proceeding started at 10:35am, Tajul said the prosecution has failed to specify which acts were committed by his client as crimes against humanity.

The prosecution have failed to provide names of the alleged victims in several counts, said Tajul, adding that they have also failed in several times to include the specific dates or a relatively small time period as to when the offences took place.

He added the prosecution charge the accused of his speeches but they have failed to establish that crimes against humanity actually occurred within the charge.

Earlier on April 26, the prosecution completed their argument supporting the formal charges and pleaded that the tribunal frames charge against Alim.

Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta told the tribunal Alim, an influential leader of East Pakistan Conventional Muslim League, formed Peace Committee and Razakar Bahini (two collaborator forces) in Joypurhat in 1971 and committed killings, genocide, rape, looting, arson and other crimes against humanity in association with the auxiliary forces and the Pakistan army.

Meanwhile, the tribunal allowed a prosecution petition seeking addition of some words and some corresponding dates in the formal charges and directed the prosecution to supply the correct copy to the tribunal and the defence.

CASE OF ABDUL QUADER MOLLAH

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday heard two prosecution petitions seeking permission to submit six additional witnesses in the case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah in connection with crimes against humanity.

Placing his argument Prosecutor Mohammad Ali said the tribunal act gives them an opportunity to place new witnesses in the case and appealed to the tribunal for permission to that end.

Opposing the petition, Farid Uddin Khan, one of the defence counsels, argued that Tribunal-1 had passed an order in response to a similar petition.

He said in response to a prosecution petition seeking permission to bring an additional charge and a witness against Quader Mollah, Tribunal-1 ordered to keep the matter in record and said it would be considered during charge framing.

The court may pass an order after holding hearing another prosecution petition today, Farid Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the prosecution yesterday filed a petition seeking some correction in the formal charge and Mohammad Ali placed his argument supporting the petition.

The tribunal also fixed today for recording the defence's argument in this regard.

Quader Mollah, assistant secretary general of Jamaat, was produced in the dock during the court proceeding.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL
First witness testifies against SQ Chy May 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 will record on May 14 the testimony of the first prosecution witness against BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury regarding the crimes against humanity that he allegedly committed during the Liberation War of 1971.

The tribunal fixed the date yesterday after hearing the prosecution's opening statement, which officially began the trial against Salauddin Quader on May 3.

According to Zead Al Malum, the conducting prosecutor of the case, the prosecution has submitted a list of nine witnesses who will testify against the Chittagong MP in the "first phase" of witness testimonies.

Other witnesses will be produced before the court as the trial continues, he told the media after the proceedings.

The BNP leader was produced before the court yesterday. He is facing 23 specific charges of crimes against

humanity that he allegedly committed during the 1971 war.

Prosecutors Zead Al Malum, Nurjahan Begum Mukta, Saiful Islam, Hrishikesh Saha, Sultan Mahmud and Mir Iqbal Hossain read out the 105-page opening statement in two days.

The prosecutors went through historic details that led to the birth of Pakistan, and the events that paved the way for the Liberation War in 1971.

They also read out the charges brought against Salauddin Quader.

At one point during yesterday's proceedings, AKM Zaheer Ahmed, a judge at the three-member tribunal, remarked that in the name of the opening statement, the prosecution was rereading the formal charges against the BNP leader.

In response to a prosecution prayer for a short adjournment for producing witnesses, the tribunal chairman, Justice Md Nizamul Huq, adjourned the proceedings against Salauddin Quader until May 14.

Justice Anwarul Huq and AKM Zaheer Ahmed are the two others

judges at the three-member tribunal-1.

Meanwhile, the tribunal yesterday recorded the cross-examination of the 28th and last prosecution witness against Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayeede, who is also facing war crimes charges at the tribunal.

Mohammad Helal Uddin, the witness and investigation officer who probed the charges against Sayeede, yesterday faced questions about some cases filed against the Jamaat leader and about some websites he used during the investigation, among other things.

Mizanul Islam, a defence counsel for Sayeede, conducted the cross-examination for the third day yesterday. It will resume today.

Delawar Hossain Sayeede was produced before the court yesterday. He is facing 20 charges of crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Sayeede and Salauddin Quader are two among six Jamaat-e-Islami and two BNP leaders who are facing such charges at two tribunals set up to deal with the 1971 crimes.



The broken pieces of a sculpture on marine life, built opposite to the Navy Headquarters in Banani as part of beautification during World Cup Cricket 2011, lies unattended for the last 25 days after unidentified miscreants carried out this senseless vandalism under the cover of night. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Faridpur, Madaripur, Rangamati and Chandpur and it may continue.

Day and night temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sunsets in the capital today at 6:31pm and rises tomorrow at 5:19am.

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			35.8	24.2	48	42
Chittagong			32.8	25.0	59	73
Rajshahi			37.1	23.0	55	44
Rangpur			35.5	22.6	57	50
Khulna			36.5	25.0	63	66
Barisal			36.6	24.8	69	77
Sylhet			35.7	23.9	64	49
Cox's Bazar			33.6	25.4	68	73

Obituary

METRO DESK

Alhaj Md Serajul Huq Khan, retired director of Directorate of Jute and Jute Goods Inspection, Ministry of Jute, died of cardiac arrest at Ibrahim Cardiac centre in the capital on April 27. He was 82.

He left behind his wife, two sons, and two daughters, said a press release.

He was buried in Shahjahanpur graveyard on the same day.

Qukhwani

UNB, Dhaka

The qukhwani of Prof. Razia Matin Chowdhury, former principal of Dhaka University Laboratory School and College, was held at Lake Shore hotel after Magrib prayers on Sunday.

Razia Matin was wife of former Dhaka University VC late Prof Abdul Matin Chowdhury and president member of Bangabandhu Parishad.

Wonderland's boundary wall knocked down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk demolished frontal boundary wall of Wonderland amusement park in the capital to free around 4-acre area of Gulshan central playground yesterday following a verdict of the Supreme Court.

The entire central playground is shown as an open public ground in the layout plan of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk).

The amusement park had been making business occupying a portion of the playground illegally for many years with a legal battle in the High Court, said Md Nurul Huda, chairman of the Rajuk.

"Final verdict of the Appellate Division on May 3 cleared any bar to eviction of commercial setting up of Wonderland and free the public space," he said.

The then Dhaka City Corporation mayor in 1990, though officially entrusted to take care of the playground, leased out the said portion of the Gulshan central playground to M/s Via

Media to develop the commercial amusement park.

The DCC action then sparked public protest.

Wonderland authorities subsequently indulged in all kinds of commercial gains with restaurants, shops and by holding various commercial events like fair and concerts to churn out money out of every inch of the playground making residential life miserable in the neighbourhood, said official sources.

They turned the adjoining footpath into car park ground sometimes occupying a portion of the Gulshan Avenue with the police playing silent spectators year after year.

Though the lease was renewable every three years, DCC stopped renewal in 2005, as one Nasir Uddin, a Gulshan resident and member of Central Masjid and Eidgah Society (Azad Mosque), filed a petition with the High Court.

But the court said DCC's lease was without legal authority and on May 24,

2007 ordered the authorities of Wonderland to remove all its establishments within six months. It also directed DCC and Rajuk to provide the lease holder with an alternative site before eviction.

GM Mostafizur Rahman, managing director of Via Media, said Rajuk demolished the establishment though Appellate Division did not mention eviction drive.

"Rajuk did not provide us with an alternative site either," he said, "We have assets worth Tk 100 crore in the park."

Rajuk chairman said that there is no available land at their disposal to provide an alternative site.

"We allowed Wonderland authorities two days time to remove expensive rides and machineries inside the park," said Rokon Ud Doula, executive magistrate of Rajuk, who led the drive.

Nurul Islam, executive engineer of Rajuk, said they engaged two bulldozers and 30 labourers backed up by around 100 riot police to carry out the drive.

Ravishankar gets first Tagore Award

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Sitar maestro Pandit Ravishankar has been nominated for the first Tagore Award, instituted by the Indian government to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of the Nobel Laureate for promoting values of universal brotherhood.

Indian Finance Minister P. R. N. Mukherjee announced the award at the concluding ceremony of the year-long 150th birth anniversary of Tagore at Vigyan Bhavan here last night.

The award comprises Rs one crore, a citation in a scroll, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft or handloom item.

The Indian minister also announced Rs 150 crore grant for development of Visva Bharati University founded by Tagore in Santiniketan in West Bengal.

Participating as the guest of honour, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni described Rabindranath Tagore as the "reference point" for every Bangladeshi and as "the principle source of inspiration in the quest for freedom."

She said her country will celebrate the 100th year of Tagore getting the Nobel Prize for Gitanjali next year.

Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari was the chief guest at the event.



New French ambassador assumes office

DIPLomatic CORRESPONDENT
Newly appointed French Ambassador to Bangladesh Michel Trinquier has assumed office after presenting his credentials to President Zillur Rahman on April 19.

Arriving in Dhaka on March 11, Trinquier succeeds Ambassador Charley Charley.

This assignment brings him to Bangladesh for the second time after nearly 32 years since his first overseas assignment at the French embassy in Dhaka as a junior officer during 1978-1980.

Trinquier last served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Barbados and to Trinidad and Tobago (June 2008 to February 2012).

Born in 1950, Trinquier completed his Post Graduate Diploma in International Law and Bachelor of Arts (Japanese).

After Dhaka, he