

RMG worker

FROM PAGE 20 officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said the bus of Ananda Paribahan picked up 55 workers of CIPL from Mirpur Section-1 in the capital and was heading towards their workplace at Khejurbagan.

The sunken bus was salvaged from the river around 11.00am. Of the injured, at least 25 were admitted to different hospitals and clinics in Ashulia and Savar.

Witnesses said bus supervisor Babul Miah died on the spot as he fell from the bus and was crushed under it when the bus was sliding down the road, while many others managed to evacuate themselves sustaining injuries.

Soon after the accident, locals jumped into the river and rescued many workers trapped inside the sunken bus.

"On information, police and fire fighters rushed to the spot, recovered the body of Babul and salvaged the bus," said Sheikh Rafiqul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Dhaka district.

The accident spot was around half-a-kilometre away from the CIPL factory, the OC said adding that the driver and his helper managed to flee.

Many of the injured workers alleged that the bus was being driven by the helper instead of the driver. Meanwhile, the CIPL authorities announced their factory closed for the day.

Youth shot dead

FROM PAGE 20 BSF troops of Swashani camp under 125 BSF Battalion in Pashchimanga opened fire on Durul around 4:00am while he was returning home with smuggled goods, said Maj Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, acting commanding officer of 9 Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion in Chapainawabganj.

Locals rushed injured Durul to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 10:00am.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Earlier on April 4, BSF members shot dead Ruhul Amin, a cattle trader, at Shingnagar frontier in the same upazila.

Ruling obvious?

FROM PAGE 1 submission of the charge-sheet the court usually does not grant bail to them, which might have been the case with the opposition leaders, some legal experts told The Daily Star last night.

They also think the speedy trial law can be the other major reason behind sending the leaders into jail as the charges have been placed under this act.

"Granting bail is an absolute discretion of the court," barrister Tanjib-ul Alam told The Daily Star over telephone.

Tanjib said, "The fact that the charge sheet had already been submitted may have swayed discretion towards not granting bail."

The case was filed against the leaders on April 29. The police submitted the charge sheet against them on May 10.

The court order also came in that line. While rejecting the bail, the metropolitan magistrate of the trial court said the charges brought against the accused were non-bailable and the investigation officer (IO) had already pressed charges against them, adding that the charges brought against them were preliminarily proved.

But despite the legal explanations, the country's political culture of harassment of opponents has given enough reasons to cynics to cast doubts on court orders at times, a few legal bigwigs wishing not to be named said.

As per Speedy Trial Act, the trial has to be completed within 30 working days if all accused are in prison or on bail. But if any accused is absconding the trial has to be completed within 60 working days. The reason behind lingering the trial for fugitive accused is that some procedures take time in the case of fugitives, legal experts said.

If the detained BNP leaders now want to go to the higher court for bail, challenging yesterday's magistrate court's order of not granting bail, they have to go to Sessions' Judges' court; they cannot go to the High Court directly, they said.

The detained BNP leaders can go to the High Court for bail only after their bails are rejected by the Sessions Judges' court, the experts said.

Opposition

FROM PAGE 1 success," said BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan while addressing a press briefing around 5:00pm at the party's central office at Nayapaltan in Dhaka.

Police kept the office cordoned off since the morning and not even BNP activists were allowed near the premises.

On April 29, police filed a case under the Explosive Substances Act with Shahbagh Police Station and an arson case with Tejgaon Police Station against the opposition leaders after crackers went off inside the Bangladesh Secretariat and a bus was torched near the Prime Minister's Office during hartal hours.

The opposition leaders, including Fakhrul, went into hiding soon after the cases were filed. They, however, got bail in the case filed under the Explosive Substances Act from the High Court.

A total of 45 leaders and workers of opposition 18-party alliance, including BNP leaders Fakhrul, Mirza Abbas and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed; and Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmad, were accused in the arson case.

Four of the leaders, including Jamaat-e-Islami acting ameer Maqbul Ahmad, did not surrender before the court while police arrested BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi and six others earlier. BNP leader Mahub Uddin Khokan obtained bail until May 20.

At least 37 accused leaders went to the High Court for bail in the arson case but the court asked them to surrender to the lower court within May 16, noting that the lower court would decide their fate.

The accused leaders surrendered before the court around 9:30am yesterday and filed 20 petitions for bail.

During the hearing, BNP lawyer barrister Moudud Ahmed told the court that the 18-party alliance leaders and activists had been implicated in the case with the intention to politically harass them.

He said the government was trying to prevent them from being involved in active politics. He said three of the accused, including LDP President Oli Ahmad, were not even in Dhaka during the arson incident.

Moudud said the leaders posed no risk of jumping bail and hence they should be given bail.

Opposing the bail petitions, Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu told the court that according to the law, the charges brought against Mirza Fakhrul Islam and others did not allow awarding bail.

The charges brought against them were in the preliminary stage proved as the investigation officer of the case on May 10 pressed charges against them, he said.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Erfanullah sent the accused to jail around 1:45pm yesterday. He fixed May 21 for passing an order on whether it would take into cognisance the charges against the accused.

The court in its order said the accused could not be given bail in view of the charges against them. It noted that the investigation officer had already pressed charges against them. It also said the charges had preliminarily been proved.

The pro-BNP lawyers and the BNP leaders and activists who gathered in and outside the court went berserk after the court passed the order. They chanted slogans demanding their unconditional release.

At one stage, police charged truncheons on the demonstrators that left the 10 people injured.

Of the injured, pro-BNP lawyer Hossain Ali Khan was moved to Dhaka Medical College Hospital from National Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Security was strengthened in and around the court premises prior to the surrender of the opposition leaders.

BNP BRIEFING

BNP leaders sat for a meeting at the party central office around 4:00pm yesterday and discussed their next course of action. They also

talked to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia over the telephone and decided to call the hartal.

"We had no wish to call a programme like hartal considering public sufferings but we had no option to protest against the government's undemocratic and fascist attitude," said Nazrul Islam Khan at a press briefing afterwards.

BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khan, Vice-Chairman Abdullah Al Noman and Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque were also present.

SENT TO JAIL

Those who landed in jail yesterday were BNP leaders Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, MK Anwar, Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Mirza Abbas, Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain, Aman Ullah Aman, Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu, Goyeshwar Haque Milon, Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anne, Lutfur Rahman and Nabi Solaiman; pro-BNP student body

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal President Sultan Salauddin Tuku; LDP President Col (retd) Oli Ahmed; BJP President Andalib Rahman Partha; Swechhchasebak Dal President Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel; Jagpa President Shafiu Alam Pradhan and National People's Party Chairman Sheikh Sharwat Hossain Nilu, BNP leader Nazimuddin Alam; Swechhchasebak Dal General Secretary Mir Sharafat Ali Safu; Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal General Secretary Amirul Islam Khan Alim; Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Organising Secretary Anisur Rahman Khokan; Dhaka South Juba Dal President SM Jahangir Hossain Sarder; its General Secretary Rafiqul Islam alias Monju; Swechhchasebak Dal Convenor Yeasin Ali; its general Secretary Saiful Islam Nirob; DU unit Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Convenor Abdul Matin; Dhaka South Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal general Secretary Habibur Rashid; Dhaka North Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal General Secretary Kamal Anwar Ahmed; former Dhaka City Corporation ward councillors Kazi Abul Bashar, Yunus Mridha and Anwaruzzaman alias Anwar.

BUS CONDUCTOR Mohammad Sohel alias Sohan Miah, bus helper Mohammad Jasim Uddin and Manik Ratan, BNP leaders Kamruzzaman Ratan, Titumir College unit Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal President Mohammad Ismail Khan Shahin, Mohammdpur thana Swechhchasebak Dal President Mohammad Mannan Hossain Shahin, and BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed were arrested earlier and sent to jail.

ABSCONDING Those who did not surrender were Dhaka University unit JCD Joint Convenor Obaidul Haque Nasir and Jamaat-e-Islami acting

Ameer Maqbul Ahmad, Chhatra Shibir leaders Nurul Islam Bulbul and Delwar Hossain Sayedee. **NO ACTING SG** Khaleda Zia last night held a meeting with party leaders but did not ask anyone to take over as acting secretary general of BNP.

She, however, asked all to work together so that the party could overcome this "crisis", meeting sources said.

"Activities of the party will continue under the leadership of Khaleda Zia," party Vice-Chairman Abdullah Al Noman said after the meeting at Khaleda's Gulshan office.

He said fresh agitation programmes would be declared today [Thursday] but did not give any details.

Standing committee members Moudud Ahmed, Jamiruddin Sircar, Rafiqul Islam Mia and Lt Gen (retd) Mahubur Rahman, Vice-Chairmen Hafizuddin Ahmed and Morshed Khan, chairperson's adviser Khandaker Mahub Hossain, Supreme Court Bar Association President Zainul Abedin and Dhaka Bar Association President Sanaullah Mia were present in the meeting.

Noab agrees

FROM PAGE 20 final decision to this end would be made after discussion with all stakeholders.

He said the Noab leaders discussed in details with the premier various issues related to the newspaper industry. She gave a patient hearing to their problems.

The Noab leaders also congratulated Hasina, as according to a Gallup Poll, for 77 per cent approval rating by the countrymen and Bangladesh's recent maritime victory over Myanmar.

Washington-based Gallup, renowned for predicting US election results and conducting the US presidents' approval ratings, also ranked Hasina seventh in its survey conducted in 21 countries of Asia and the Pacific Rim in 2011.

Noab President and The Independent Editor Mahubul Alam, Samokal Editor Golam Sarwar, News Today Editor Reazuddin Ahmed, Ittefaq Editor Anwar Hossain Monju, Prothom Alo Editor Matir Rahman, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfaz Anam, Financial Express Editor Moazzem Hossain, Sangbad Editor Altamas Kabir, Janakantha Editor Atiqullah Khan Masud, Manabjamin Editor Matir Rahman Chowdhury and Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta were present in the meeting with the PM.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad and Awami League Presidium Member Kazi Jafarullah were also present there.

On Tuesday, the prime minister in a meeting with the newly-elected executive committee of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) said the 8th wage board for the newspaper industry would be announced very soon.

Drama over

FROM PAGE 20 public expense had to wait idle in the middle of the river until evening only to get the pull-back order from the secretary.

However, BIWTA Chairman Shamsuddoha Khondkar was stuck to the decision for eviction and asked the team to remain prepared.

Shah Cement Industries Ltd, a concern of Abul Khair Group, has built the large-size jetties almost in the middle of the river for landing and shipment of their products, said Khondkar, adding that landing stations must be set up within the river foreshores.

He said they arranged the eviction drive in line with a 2009 High Court verdict that ordered to free rivers from encroachments.

"We will not retract until our goal of freeing the river is achieved," said the BIWTA chairman.

However, as the chairman insisted, the eviction team finally stayed back with the ship in the river somewhere away from the jetty site.

The secretary said, "The drive was suspended following a negotiation between the minister and the company representatives."

Differing with the BIWTA chairman, he said it was an unresolved issue of Landing and Shipment Charge (LSC) for using the river foreshores and that was why the eviction drive was arranged.

The company assured that they would pay it soon, he said.

Khondkar said, "The owner earlier held several meetings with the minister in this regard and made commitments; but did not keep the pledges."

According to competent sources, the company had dues worth Tk 11 crores as LSC since 2004.

As served with a notice five years back, the company filed a writ petition with the High Court that stayed effect of the notice and asked the company to pay Tk 10 lakh every year.

Despite several attempts, no official of Shah Cement at Dhaka sales office and Chittagong head office could be contacted for comments. The employees who received the calls said the officials were not available at office.

BNP reels

FROM PAGE 1 the opposition may put democracy in jeopardy.

"There is no example of sending so many opposition leaders to jail in any democratic country in the world," Khandaker Mahub Hossain, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Khandaker Mahub, also a former president of Supreme Court Bar Association, said he had witnessed the rule of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan and also the last 40 years of independent Bangladesh, but never before did he see such mass detentions. "It did not happen even in any military rule."

In February 2007, during the period of the military-backed caretaker government, 21 political leaders were sent to jail in a single day following an anti-corruption crackdown.

The BNP's top and mid-level leaders said they could not believe that an opposition party's acting secretary general could be sent to jail in a case over hartal violence.

They said the government had taken such action to hinder the country's democracy.

Forty-five top leaders of the 18-party alliance are accused in a case filed for setting a bus ablaze near the Prime Minister's Office during the April 29 hartal.

"The acting secretary general was at the [Nayapaltan] party office, which was cordoned off by police on April 29. So how can he be sent to jail in that case?"

Better care

FROM PAGE 20 "And yet pregnant mothers die everyday," Erken said.

He recommended that women do not have their first child until the age of 20 and this be strictly regulated by law in the country.

Statistics show 20 mothers die each day in the country while giving birth.

The youth population structure in Bangladesh is as follows: 34 per cent of the population are under the age of 15; 60 under 30 years and 80 per cent under the age of 45, Dr Ahmed Al-Kabir from Training and Management (RTM) International said.

Around half of the youth are female and so if they can be kept healthy, they will be healthy mothers, he added.

SM Ashrafur Islam, additional secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said, "The government's strategy is to strengthen the healthcare system. At present, we have 8,000 facilities where mothers can receive antenatal and neonatal care."

"Our main challenge is the lack of resources, particularly human resources; for instance, there are 400 vacant posts for anaesthetists in rural areas now," he pointed out.

Islam said there were only 133 anaesthetists working in the public sector.

Doctors are not willing to work in the rural areas because they find it downgrading, he said.

Mothers-in-law in rural areas also prevent young mothers from availing existing facilities, preferring babies to be delivered at home, he added.

Other speakers said transportation issues must be addressed at the same time as there are many hard-to-reach areas in the country where women simply cannot access the facilities.

"Poor people are almost never treated well at the medical facilities," said Dr Kausar Afsana, director (health) of Brac.

"A warmer attitude towards them will encourage them to avail the facilities," she suggested.

Dr Morsheda Chowdhury, senior programme manager at Brac, said increasing community participation remains a key point as people need to know where and how to reach facilities.

"Campaigns for family planning, use of contraceptives and changing social norms for harmful practices must be continued to control the fertility rate," Prof AKM Nurul Nabi from the Department of Population Sciences at Dhaka University said.

Dr AKM Mahubur Rahman of Clinical Contraception Services Delivery Program under the Directorate General of Family Planning said, "Our target is to reduce the total fertility rate by a further 25 percent by next year."

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Order on Mollah's indictment on May 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed May 28 to decide whether it would indict Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah for crimes against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir fixed the date after hearing arguments of the prosecution and the defence about the charge contents.

When the proceedings began yesterday, Prosecutor Mohammad Ali began his 100-minute submission around 10:50am by replying to the defence's claim that the trial was being held after 40 years with political intentions and because Quader Mollah was from the political opposition.

Mohammad Ali said the trial of war criminals was started after the Liberation War but it was halted after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. The governments which assumed power after the incident were "supporters of war criminals".

"We cannot expect trial of war criminals by these governments," said the prosecutor, adding that there was no bar to holding trials after 40 years.

The previous Awami League government (1996-2001) could not hold the trial as it was too busy holding two other significant trials, the Bangabandhu killing case and the jail killing case.

He made references to the war crimes trial held in Cambodia 25 years after the crimes had been committed.

Mohammad Ali said the accused was the president of Islami Chhatra Sangha (now Islami Chhatra Shibir) of Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University and later of Islami Chhatra Sangha Dhaka University during the Liberation War.

Referring to the statements of two prosecution witnesses, the prosecutor said all the members of Islami Chhatra Sangha were members of Al Badr, a co-laborator force.

EXPLOSIVES SEIZURE

17 LDP men sued in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A case was lodged yesterday against 17 leaders and activists of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in connection with the seizure of bomb-making materials from the party's Chittagong office the day before.

The leaders against whom the Detective Branch (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) filed the case are Gias Uddin, city unit vice-president of the LDP; Yakub Ali, district (south) unit general secretary; Nurul Alam, district (north) president; SM Nazim Uddin, district (north) unit general secretary; Dost Mohammad, city unit organising secretary; Akhter Hossain, Chandanaish unit general secretary; and Akhter Hossain, Bayezid unit president.

The other accused are Yakub, Suman, Hasan, Ali Mottazza, Mamun, Mozammel Haq, Harun, Abdus Sukkur, Abdul Zabbar, and Idris Ali who is the caretaker of the LDP office.

Of the accused, Yakub Ali is nephew of LDP President Col (retd) Oli Ahmed.

"We filed a case accusing seventeen people in connection with the incident of seizing bomb-making materials from the LDP office," said DB Assistant Commissioner (AC) Tanvir Arafat.

Officer-in-Charge of Kotwali Police Station Rafiqul Islam confirmed filing of the case around 4:00pm.

DB police Tuesday night arrested Idris Ali from his house at Kazir Dewry.

ADB team seized 30 small containers of Zarda (chewing tobacco), two packets of gunpowder and scotch-tape from the LDP office in Nandan Kanan area in the city Tuesday night.

Quoting a line from a book titled "Sunset at Midnight" by Mahiuddin Chowdhury, the prosecution said, "The workers belonging to Islami Chhatra Sangha were called Al Badr."

Earlier, the defence had claimed that the prosecution had failed to produce any documents that proved Quader Mollah was an Al Badr commander during the war.

The prosecution on December 18 last year submitted formal charges against the Jamaat leader before Tribunal-1. The charges included killing, looting and arson in the city's Mirpur and Mohammapur and Keraniganj areas during the war. Tribunal-1 took the charges into cognisance on December 28.

The prosecution read out the formal charges again before Tribunal-2 on May 02 as the case was transferred from Tribunal-1 on April 16. Defence counsels placed their arguments on May 8, 9 and 14.

KAMARUZZAMAN AND MOJAHID

Abdur Razzak, chief defence counsel for the detained Jamaat leaders, yesterday completed his arguments before the tribunal on a petition seeking Kamaruzzaman's discharge from the crimes against humanity charges.

Termining most of the allegations "vague" and "unspecific", he said there was "no sufficient ground" for framing charges against the Jamaat leader.

Prosecutor AKM Saiful Islam began replying to the defence arguments yesterday but the court adjourned the proceedings until today.

The tribunal also adjourned the hearing on charge framing against Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid until May 21, following a time petition from the defence.

Commission

FROM PAGE 1

The terms of reference (TOR) specified five areas for the commission to look into the purposes, legal status and operations of the bank's associated institutions.

The TOR include the organisations' legal and financial relations to Grameen Bank; their contribution to Grameen Bank's objectives and targets; their organisational, management and financial structures; and the succession rules for the ownership and management of these institutions.

Grameen Bank has 54 associated organisations.

The commission will also review the regulatory institutions and mechanism of Grameen Bank and recommend ways to bring it under the purview of state regulatory agencies.

Muhith

FROM PAGE 20

Valiant freedom fighter and district Awami League president Iftekhar Shamim died on May 11 in a road accident at Osmaninagar on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at the age of 65.

Addressing the rally as the chief guest, Muhith, also a lawmaker from Sylhet, said the existing highways would be widened to reduce the chances of accidents. The existing single carriageways would be made dual carriageways and the dual carriageways into motorways, he said.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said Iftekhar Shamim had always played a positive role in local politics.

Charing the rally, Sylhet City Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, also the city Awami League chief, said the city's court area would be named "Shamim Point" as a mark of respect to the late politician.

Speakers at the rally said Shamim was sincere and devoted to all his activities, be it in politics or social activities.