

Reckless

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from the bus, which was overtaking another bus near Malibagh Super Market around 10:00am.

The dead is SM Jewel, 28, of Bakerganj upazila of Barisal. He died on the spot.

Before reaching Malibagh, drivers of Salsabil Paribahan and Onabil Paribahan, both bound for Sayedabad, had been in a competition for sometime to reach the next bus stop and pick up passengers, said police quoting passengers.

The Salsabil Paribahan bus, however, reached the Malibagh bus stop first and was picking up passengers. Soon after, the Onabil Paribahan bus coming from behind attempted to overtake the Salsabil Paribahan bus and stop in front of it to pick up passengers.

And as it slowed down a little, Jewel got down from it and was standing between the two buses. But suddenly, the bus picked up speed to overtake the other bus. In the process, Jewel was squashed between the two buses, said Imrul Fahad, sub-inspector of Rampura Police Station.

Locals and police caught the Onabil Paribahan bus along with its driver by chasing it for about half a kilometre.

Locals then vandalised the bus, set it on fire and beat up the driver. In protest, they blocked the road, halting traffic for about an hour.

Driver Javed Islam, 32, was handed over to the police.

Driver of the Salsabil Paribahan bus, however, escaped from the scene, said sub-inspector of Rampura Police Station.

In the Cantonment incident, an elderly pedestrian was killed on the spot when a truck drove over to the footpath and ran him over around 6:00am.

The dead is Tahabul Miah, 55, of Nilphamari.

Two other people were injured in the accident. They are Khodeza Begum, 60, and Seema, 30, when the truck hit them.

Leaving the truck behind, the driver fled the spot. The vehicle was later taken to Cantonment Police Station.

Destiny

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Anti-Money Laundering Act. The banks were also directed to inform the BB of their actions by Monday.

To investigate possible money laundering by Destiny, the central bank had earlier asked all banks to provide it with information about the accounts of Destiny Group's 14 directors, including its president and chairman, and all sister concerns of the group.

Destiny Group has 37 sister organisations.

The central bank has recently conducted a preliminary investigation into the activities of Destiny Group and sent a report to the finance ministry.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said the government would soon form a commission to investigate the activities of the group.

The commission would be formed after receiving a detailed report on Destiny Group from the commerce ministry, he told reporters at his secretariat office.

Asked about several Destiny Group directors withdrawing money from their bank accounts, the finance minister expressed surprise and said, "Does the Bangladesh Bank know about it?"

"There is no problem. Records will be there, so they could be apprehended," Muhith added.

Earlier, commerce ministry wrote to the finance ministry recommending formation of a commission to look into the activities of Destiny Group and investigate if there were any irregularities.

The Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Board of Revenue are currently probing the Destiny affairs.

US slates killings

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constrained access to justice for members of opposition parties," said the US Human Rights Reports 2011, released by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington.

The report said impunity continued to be a serious problem in several areas. Most members of the security forces acted with impunity, the Rapid Action Battalion in particular.

On extrajudicial killings, it said members of the security forces committed numerous such killings. Police, Border Guard Bangladesh forces and the Rab at times used unwarranted lethal force. Allegations about the Rab's arbitrary actions were numerous.

"The government did not take comprehensive measures to investigate cases of security force killings," said the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in its Bangladesh section.

The report, however, mentioned that politically motivated violence has decreased from the previous year.

On disappearances and kidnappings, the report said such incidents, many allegedly by the security services,

Sonali Bank to punish

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special meeting last night decided to take the action to comply with a Bangladesh Bank order.

The BB had asked the bank to take punitive steps against the three. They include AKM Azizur Rahman, deputy general manager of the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch, and Saiful Hasan, assistant general manager of the same branch.

The board also came down heavily on the bank's management for failing to act in advance to stop such embezzlement, said an official who was present at the meeting.

The Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch lent Hallmark Group around Tk 2,000 crore through a plot.

Hallmark Group recently opened local letters of credit worth around Tk 500 crore in favour of Anwara Spinning Mills, Max Spinning Mills and Star Spinning Mills to buy yarn. The three companies are also the clients of the same branch. The group also gave guarantees to repay the LCs.

Following the guarantee, the bank put in the money with the accounts of the three companies through the purchase of acceptance bill. A few days later, the companies urged the branch to transfer the money to the account of Hallmark Group and the branch duly obliged.

In a 17-point letter to Sonali Bank, the central bank on May 21 said Anwara Spinning Mills, Max Spinning Mills and Star Spinning Mills are owned by

the key person of Hallmark Group, Md Tanvir Mahmud. He is also the main beneficiary of the loans.

The letter said the Ruposhi Bangla branch had demonstrated utter negligence to banking regulations.

The branch manager has breached credibility by discharging responsibilities by lending beyond jurisdiction and without taking permission from the central bank, it read.

The central bank said of the Tk 2,638 crore, Tk 1,735 crore is funded loans and Tk 902.99 crore is non-funded loans. Altogether, Tk 2,638.21 crore has come under additional risks at the branch.

Officials said the Sonali Bank head office had instructed all its branches to lend less compared to the previous year, as the bank was facing liquidity crisis. The Ruposhi Bangla branch did not follow the instructions.

According to the instructions of the Sonali Bank headquarters, a DGM can buy a maximum of Tk 30 crore as acceptance bill from a group or organisation, but DGM AKM Azizur Rahman bought acceptance bill worth Tk 500 crore given to Hallmark Group on a single day.

The central bank asked Sonali Bank to classify its loans through its own auditors in the next one month. The bank has to report to the central bank within the following 10 days about the steps it has taken.

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Babar

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prosecution witness in two cases in connection with the seizure of 10 truckloads of arms and explosives in the wee hours of April 2, 2004.

While visiting the spot at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) and talking to its officials and law enforcers two days later, the committee came to know about the involvement of NSI officials, said Omar.

Though he had informed Babar about the matter, the minister did not allow him to name the NSI officials in the probe report.

The Chittagong Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 adjourned the trial proceedings till June 12.

Earlier, the attorneys of accused Babar, Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rahim, Maj (ret'd) Liakat and Akbar Hossain cross-examined SM Sabir Ali, the then commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

The cross-examination of Sabir concluded yesterday.

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Asif kept standing in court

FROM PAGE 1

standing before it for more than one hour.

The HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, however, exonerated the DU teacher from personal appearance till further order following an exemption petition submitted by him.

At the beginning of the proceedings at around 11:30am, Justice Manik enquired about Asif Nazrul, saying "Where is the respondent?"

Kamal Hossain, chief counsel of Asif, told the court his client will not appear before the court, since he is not a contemner, but a respondent to a writ petition.

The counsel said he represented the respondent and there is no precedent in the 150 years' history of the sub-continent's judiciary that a court has kept any respondent to a writ petition standing in the courtroom.

This court cannot introduce a new practice in 2012 ignoring the century-old history of the judiciary, Kamal Hossain said, as the bench earlier kept Asif Nazrul standing before it.

Justice Manik said the respondent has to appear before the court as they [judges of the bench] have summoned him on a specific allegation against him.

The justice said their summons order might either be right or wrong, and they will issue a contempt of court rule against Asif, if he does not appear before them.

"Issue the contempt of court rule against me, as I represent him [Asif]," was the answer from Kamal Hossain.

At this stage, Barrister Tanim Hussain Shawon, a junior lawyer of Kamal Hossain, called Asif Nazrul, who was outside the courtroom, to appear before the bench.

The bench kept Asif standing beside the dock in the courtroom.

Kamal Hossain said they will move a petition before it for transferring the case since this bench has already formed a view about his client, and the judges of this bench are not above the constitution.

Justice Manik, presiding judge of the bench, said this bench had earlier kept a ruling party lawmaker [Aslamul Haque], two former state ministers [Ziaul Haque Zia and Kamrul Islam] and a politically influential person [Shafiq Rehman] standing

before it since there were allegations against them of grabbing land.

"If the allegation brought against the respondent [Asif] is not proved after hearing on the petition, we will exempt him from the charge," the justice said, adding that they would not make any discrimination by allowing him [Asif] to sit in the courtroom.

The senior judge said they have not formed any view about Asif Nazrul and this court will hear opinions from several senior lawyers, who were earlier requested to place opinions as amicus curiae [friend of court] on this issue.

Justice Manik said nobody is above the law and the constitution, adding, they [judges] have profound respect and honour towards him [Kamal Hossain].

The justice said Kamal Hossain is a nationally and internationally respected lawyer and they are proud that he has appeared before them to move this case.

In response, Dr Kamal said: "You have delivered many good judgements and we also have much respect upon you."

Kamal Hossain then read out a portion of a book written by Lord Woolf, a former chief justice of England, and a portion of the High Court rules before the bench and said the petitioners and the respondents to any writ petition are at equal footing and no court can keep any respondent standing.

The senior lawyer sought an example from the bench of any court's decision to keep any respondent standing in the subcontinent.

Justice Manik instantly recalled a decision of a London court of keeping a police official standing in a case.

Kamal Hossain requested Justice Manik to give reference of the case of the London court and said he would personally investigate the event of that court's proceedings.

The justice told Kamal Hossain the jurist had once supported their decision to keep some police officials including a deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police standing in the dock for torturing a grandson of the country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed.

Kamal Hossain said he did not do that and the lawyers for the police officials should have opposed that decision of the court.

At one stage, the court

against humanity allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

Earlier, Tribunal-1 headed by Justice Md Nizamul Huq finished recording the cross-examination of Mohammad Salimullah, the second prosecution witness against Salauddin Quader.

Facing cross-examination for the fourth day, the 68-year-old witness said that he did not know who the secretary of Cox's Bazar Peace Committee was.

Answering questions from defence counsel Ahsanul Haq Hena, the witness also said he did not have any documents that say advocate Zohurul Huq, father of defence counsel Ahsanul Haq Hena, was the convenor of Cox's Bazar Peace Committee, an anti-liberation collaborator force.

The witness on Wednesday said he had heard that Zohurul Huq was the convenor of Peace Committee of Cox's Bazar during the war.

During his testimony given on Monday, he had told the court how he was abducted on September 2, 1971, taken to Salauddin Quader's Goods Hill family home, tortured and kept hostage in a garage where he almost died.

Hena also told Salimullah that the incident he spoke of was not mentioned in any of the books written on the Liberation War in Chittagong.

The witness replied that the incident was mentioned in one or two books, and he could produce those books before the court if he were given some time.

Hena told Salimullah that he had given a false deposition before the court with the advice of his nephew Anisul Islam Mahmud.

To this, the witness said, "As far as I know Saka Chowdhury is on good terms with Anisul Islam Mahmud."

Apparently offended at

Wasfia close

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Summits' campaign, which arranged the trekking, told The Daily Star around 9:30pm yesterday.

"She phoned me around 9:00pm from her satellite phone. Due to extreme winds, she had to postpone the summit by a day. Right now, Wasfia is on the South Col [7,900 metres above the sea level]," Rakshand added.

Wasfia was expected to reach the summit early this morning. She left the base camp on Monday.

If she reaches the top, she will be the second Bangladeshi woman to achieve the feat after Nishat Majumder, who scaled the mountain peak on May 19.

Nishat and her companion MA Muhit, waiting at the base camp, are set to begin descending today.

Nishat told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have taken all necessary preparations for our descent, and hope to start at 8:00am tomorrow [today]. We may reach Kathmandu next Monday via Namche Bazaar and Lukla."

Muhit said they were completely fit for the journey down.

Both expressed their eagerness to return home soon to share their joy with the nation.

Muhit is the first Bangladeshi to scale the mountain twice and from both sides. He first scaled the mountain peak on May 21 last year.

Musa Ibrahim was the first Bangladeshi to conquer the Everest on May 23, 2010.

Solar-powered

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Switzerland at around 8:30am (0630 GMT), bound for Rabat via Madrid, after a two-hour delay due to foggy conditions.

If successful the 2,500-kilometre (1,550-mile) journey would be the longest to date for the craft after an inaugural flight to Paris and Brussels last year.

The high-tech aircraft, which has the wingspan of a large airliner but weighs no more than a saloon car, is fitted with 12,000 solar cells feeding four electric engines.

Borschberg was expected to land at Madrid's Barajas airport at about 1:00 am on Friday for a three-day technical stopover, organisers said.

Checks would be carried out and depending on the weather conditions second pilot Bertrand Piccard would depart for Rabat on Monday.

The trip is intended as a rehearsal in the run-up to the plane's round-the-world flight planned for 2014.

The aircraft made history in July 2010 as the first manned plane to fly around the clock on the sun's energy.

It holds the record for the longest flight by a manned solar-powered aeroplane after staying aloft for 26 hours, 10 minutes and 19 seconds above Switzerland, also setting a record for altitude by flying at 9,235 metres (30,298 feet).

Testimony of 3rd witness

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being called "Saka Chowdhury", which he is popularly known as, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yelled out "beadab" (somebody who knows no etiquette) at the witness.

Salimullah then corrected himself and repeated the sentence but used "Salauddin Quader Chowdhury" instead of "Saka Chowdhury".

Hena concluded the cross-examination by saying that the witness had given a false statement against Salauddin Quader under the "influence" of the BNP lawmaker's political opponents.

JOURNALISTS ASKED TO BE CAREFUL

Tribunal-1 yesterday asked journalists to be more careful about the words being used while reporting on court procedures.

"Be careful about the words you use, and make sure that nobody gets hurt," said Justice Md Nizamul Huq, chairman of the three-member tribunal.

"Write in soothing language and we believe that it will be better if nobody gets hurt."

The tribunal chairman made these remarks after Hena drew the court's attention to a bdnews24.com report on Wednesday's proceedings of the case.

The report titled "Good's Hill was Al-Shams headquarters" says that Ahsanul Huq made some "unprofessional remarks" during Wednesday's proceedings.

The defence counsel prayed to the court to take action against the reporter.

Agreeing that what was written in the report was "not right", the tribunal decided to keep the matter on record. It said it would make a decision on the issue later.

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