

Bullet-hit RU

FROM PAGE 1
after a post-mortem at Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue.

His father Abdus Salam Sarkar is a madrasa teacher and also Kaunia upazila ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Sohel, a second year student of Sociology Department at RU, was the eldest among five brothers and sisters.

Meanwhile, the university authorities formed a committee to probe the incident.

The gunfight broke out at about 12:15am following an altercation between BCL RU unit organising secretary Tauhidi Al Tuhin and BCL vice-president Akhteruzzaman Takim.

Tuhin is a follower of BCL RU unit president Ahmed Ali while Takim is a supporter of its general secretary Abu Hossain Bipu. The two got into an altercation over verbal abuse of Ahmed by Bipu's supporters.

Following the clash, law enforcers along with university officials raided Suhrawardy and Madar Baksh halls till 5:00am but found nothing, reports our RU correspondent.

Ahmed said the clash stemmed from tension between his and Bipu's followers after some of Bipu's supporters joined his group a few days back.

Bipu said the incident happened because of a misunderstanding between BCL leaders and activists.

He said they had recommended that the central committee suspend its eight leaders and activists, who were allegedly involved in the gunfight.

There has been a rumour on the campus since morning that the two factions were locked into the clash over collection of fund for Padma bridge. However, The Daily Star could not verify its authenticity.

Later yesterday, Bangladesh Chhatra League expelled Tahir and Tuhin for violating organisational discipline and getting involved in activities against the student body, a BCL press release said.

In the evening, the university syndicate in an emergency meeting formed a five-member committee to probe the incident. The committee headed by Prof Golam Kabir

Rivals stab

FROM PAGE 1
Reaz Ahmed Raj, 21, a fifth semester student of anthropology department, and Rubel Hossain, 22, of mathematics of the same semester, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition. Raj suffered stab injuries in his abdomen and head while Rubel in his head.

Raj and Rubel who belong to the group led by Khandaker Arifuzzaman Arif, a joint convener of the ruling Awami League-backed students' front at JnU, came under attack by the activists loyal to another joint convener, Nizam Uddin.

Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, told The Daily Star that some 12 activists of Nizam group attacked the duo in front of the south gate of Jagannath Hall around 5:00pm.

"Raj and Rubel came under attack while returning to their Azimpur residence by a JnU bus from their university," the OC said. When the bus was crossing Jagannath Hall the attackers stopped it, pulled the duo out of the bus, and stabbed and beat them up, added the OC.

The attackers had left the place before the policemen reached the spot, Sirajul said, adding that they were preparing to file a case.

Eyewitnesses said when the attackers including Ryan, Nahid and Shiplu with sharp weapons and sticks stopped the bus, all other students onboard ran away in panic. Raj and Soheli were dragged down and tortured.

At that time, Prof Hasna Hena Begum of JnU botany department, Prof Nurul Momen, chairman of philosophy, and Prof Mosharraf Hossain, were passing by the spot on a microbus. Noticing the incident, they intervened and took the injured to the hospital.

Campus sources said Raj and Rubel were attacked since Ryan, a student of sociology department, on Friday was beaten up on JnU campus by the activists of Arif group. The two factions have resorted to clashes several times in the last few months.

Govt, owners

FROM PAGE 20
At the meeting, the three groups discussed a number of issues, including random fares charged by drivers, high daily deposits imposed by owners on drivers and police extortion and harassment, but no party could come up with ideas of a resolution of the problem.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Chairman Ayubur Rahman said the auto rickshaw owners and workers were not operating their vehicles in compliance with rules and regulations.

The owners and workers, however, put the blame on BRTA, saying it had not taken any step to implement a tripartite accord signed by the government, auto rickshaw owners and workers around one and a half years ago.

BRTA has not formed a monitoring team comprised of owners and workers to check irregularities, said Barkat Ullah Bhulu, president of Dhaka Metropolitan CNG Auto Rickshaw Business Owners' Association.

"Had that been done, many problems would have been solved by this time."

On the matter of drivers overcharging passengers, the auto-rickshaw workers and owners blamed one another and at one stage got into an

altercation, to the extent of trading insults against one another.

If owners take Tk 600 as fixed by the government as daily deposit for an auto-rickshaw, drivers will surely charge passengers by metre, said Zakir Hossain, general secretary of Dhaka Zila Auto Rickshaw Sramik Union.

Expressing a contrary view, Bhulu, a leader of the owners' association, said, "They (workers) are greedy and will never follow the metre, even if we give them auto rickshaws free of cost."

In the midst of such a chaotic situation, the communications minister suspended the meeting and called another meeting tomorrow.

He also instructed the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner (traffic) to be present at the next meeting since the owners and workers of CNG-run three-wheelers alleged that they often faced harassment and extortion at the hands of the police.

Around two dozen leaders of owners' and workers' associations attended the meeting.

For the last couple of weeks, the owners have been bargaining with the government about a fulfilment of their 10 demands, including the withdrawal of the newly imposed income tax.

Govt is ready

FROM PAGE 1
The move will also prevent possible "extortion" in the name of collecting money for the construction work.

The decisions were made at the cabinet meeting where ministers said they would each give their one month's salaries to the fund.

In addition, each of the 38 ministries would make separate contributions to the fund, which would be larger than the individual contributions of the 52 ministers, state ministers and advisers to the prime minister.

Earlier, lawmakers of the Awami League and its alliance partners in parliament said they too would give their one month's salaries. The AL and its allies have 309 lawmakers.

Meanwhile, all the 73 members of the AL Central Working Committee at a meeting at Gono Bhaban last night promised to give at least Tk 1 lakh each for the project. AL will also donate Tk 10 lakh from its own fund, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

Yesterday's cabinet decision came a week after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in parliament that the government would build the 6.2km bridge with its own money and construction would begin in the current fiscal year.

Her comment followed the World Bank decision to cancel its \$1.2 billion loan that it had pledged for the biggest infrastructure project in Bangladesh. The WB pulled out of the project citing "corruption conspiracy" in the \$2.9 billion project.

The cabinet meeting yesterday also formed the "Padma Bridge Fund" where all the money collected from different sources, including budgetary allocation, will be deposited.

Personally, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will receive donations from well-off people and business communities once a week.

At the cabinet meeting, a number of ministers informed Hasina that government officials and employees also wanted to give a month's salary to the fund.

Responding to the proposal, the prime minister said it would be a big burden for the families of the officials and employees. If they still wanted to contribute, they could give their one day's salary every month for 30 months.

According to the decisions reached at the meeting, the finance secretary would formulate guidelines for the management of the fund, including the mode of operations of the accounts and in which banks those

would be opened, sources said.

The government will brief the media on the matter after the prime minister's approval of the guidelines.

Talking to journalists after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said the government had decided to open the accounts after having seen a huge response from the public to voluntarily contribute to the Padma bridge fund.

MUHITH'S BRIEFING
On constructing the Padma bridge with government funds, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said the government was originally to finance \$600 million in the project but the project's cost would go up due to the delay.

He said the government was going to formulate a new financial structure for implementing the bridge project.

Letters have been sent to the development partners to this end, the minister told reporters at his secretariat office after a meeting with Kanayo F Nwanze, president of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

"Let us see what they can do afresh and what we can do now," he said.

Earlier at the cabinet meeting, he said a large number of projects worth \$16 billion of donor's money were being implemented under various ministries. Forty-one of the projects are WB-funded.

The minister added the WB was still a major development partner of Bangladesh, and requested his cabinet colleagues not to make any comment that might harm the project.

Power-cut

FROM PAGE 20
With top officials of the country's power generation, transmission and distribution companies at Bidyut Bhaban in the capital.

The government will try to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the holy month to help Muslims fast and perform prayers, Tawfiq said.

At present, power cuts occur area-wise for an hour on average at a time.

The government took the same decision in Ramadan last year, said an official of Power Development Board (PDB).

The energy adviser said the government had a plan to increase power production to meet the demand during the holy month, adding that around 6,300 megawatt of electricity would be sufficient if the consumers used it wisely.

The power generation on Sunday was 6,055 MW against the demand of 6,100 MW, according to PDB.

Noab seeks

FROM PAGE 1
The industry had been going through tough times, said Noab, as there were various duties and taxes imposed on imported newsprint.

The government had held out the assurance that it would increase the rate and quota of its advertisements in newspapers, if the seventh wage board was implemented. But the assurance had not yet been implemented, mentioned the statement.

It added that importers now paid 18 percent duties to import newsprint. A tonne of newsprint has been costing about \$700 for the last two years. The printing cost is also rising due to use of generators owing to power shortage.

The import cost of newsprint has also gone up in the last one year due to depreciation in the local currency by Tk 12 against the US dollar, said Mahbulul Alam, president of Noab.

He said the association had met the prime minister, finance minister, information minister and information secretary on various occasions and raised the problems the industry was faced with.

"Showing a positive attitude, everyone said they would take necessary measures. But with great sorrow, we have noticed that the budget of the current fiscal year did not reflect those assurances. Rather, everything has remained the same, which will harm everyone involved with the industry," he noted.

Mahbulul Alam urged all, including the prime minister, to take immediate steps to increase the rate and quota of government advertisements in the press and cut import duties on newsprint to help the industry overcome its current crises.

About the recently constituted eighth wage board, he said Noab had always shown a positive attitude to the legitimate demands of journalists, employees and workers of the industry.

Population

FROM PAGE 20
1.58 percent annual growth rate.

President Mohammad Zillur Rahman yesterday released the census report on the website of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, which had prepared the data.

According to the report, Bangladesh has around 7.63 crore males and 7.61 crore females. Its population density is 1015 people per square kilometre, which was 834 people in 2001.

The country's literacy rate is 51.8 percent (seven-year-olds and above).

The number of ethnic population in the country is 15.86 lakh. Of them, 7.97 lakh are male and 7.88 lakh female. The census also included the count of mentally and physically challenged, which stands at 20.16 lakh.

As per the report, the average household size is currently 4.4 persons compared to 4.8 in 2001 and 5.5 in 1991. The striking find of the census is that Barisal division has negative growth rate, -0.13 percent, which was 0.65 percent in 2001.

The fifth population census in 2011 was conducted over a period of five days, from March 15, 2011 to March 19, 2011. For the first time, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies was assigned with the task of post-enumeration scrutiny to determine errors in the coverage and the content of the census.

The preliminary results of the census was released on July 16 last year which showed the country's population to be 14.23 crore with an annual growth rate of 1.34 percent.

Bangladesh is the third most populated country in the South-East Asia, after India and Pakistan which have 121.45 crore and 18.48 crore people respectively, according to United Nations Population Fund.

The country's population is now more than the combined population of Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Singapore.

PM was advised

FROM PAGE 1
Vice Admiral Zahir Uddin Ahmed, chief of staff of the Bangladesh Navy, made this deposition yesterday before the special court dealing with the BDR mutiny case.

The Navy chief was the first high-profile witness to depose before the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set up temporarily at Bakshibazar in the capital.

He said he had come to know about the mutiny through the intelligence director at around 10:00am on February 25, 2009. He went to the premier's official residence Jamuna at 1:00pm on the day in response to a call from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The army and air force chiefs were also there.

At a meeting with the defence chiefs at 2:30pm, the PM said she had two options in hand, negotiations and military action. Since the situation inside Pilkhana, the BDR (later renamed as Border Guard Bangladesh) headquarters, was not clear, military action was not

possible.

"We opined that negotiations were the right choice. At the same time, we suggested military action to quell the mutiny with an iron fist," Zahir Uddin told the court.

But the premier came back a little after the meeting had ended. She had been informed that a team of 12 to 14 rebel BDR members were coming to Jamuna for negotiations, said the Navy chief, adding that they then waited at Jamuna for the rebel BDR delegation to arrive.

Zahir Uddin said, "...We, the three defence chiefs, joined the meeting [between the PM and the rebel BDR members] around half an hour later. Pointing at us the PM told them [rebels] that if they did not surrender the forces would go for action. Later, assured of PM's pledge of general amnesty, the rebel border guards agreed to surrender and went back to Pilkhana."

He also said the prime minister had pledged general amnesty to the mutineers without knowing that many officers had been killed in

Beware TV kids

FROM PAGE 20
8.8 hours a week.

This increased on average by six hours over the next two years to reach 14.8 hours a week by the age of four-and-a-half.

Fifteen per cent of the children in the study were watching more than 18 hours per week by that age, according to their parents.

The study said the effect of 18 hours of television at 4.5 years of age would by the age of 10 result in an extra 7.6mm of waist because of the child's TV habit.

'Bottomline'

As well as measuring waist circumference, the researchers also carried out a standing long jump test to measure each child's muscular fitness and athletic ability.

An extra weekly hour of TV can decrease the distance a child is able to jump from standing by 0.36cm, the study said.

The researchers said that further research was needed to work out whether television watching is directly responsible for the health issues they observed.

Linda Pagani, study co-author from the University of Montreal, said it was a warning about the factors which could lead to childhood obesity.

"The bottom line is that watching too much television - beyond the recommended amounts - is not good," Pagani said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children aged over two should not watch more than two

Pilkhana. The BDR delegation did not say anything about the killings despite repeated queries by the premier, said the Navy chief.

"They demanded that the PM declare a general amnesty and have it passed by parliament. The honourable PM asked about the officers at BDR headquarters. They said the officers were all right. The honourable prime minister then asked them to surrender, release the officers and their families, and call Pilkhana to ask the rebels to surrender arms," said Zahir Uddin.

"But later we came to know that 74 people, including 57 army officers, had been killed in Pilkhana," added Zahir Uddin.

During cross-examination, defence lawyers asked the Navy chief whether the BDR team had been brought to the PMO by Awami League leader Fazle Noor Taposh, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak and lawmaker Mirza Azam, the navy chief said he had seen them there.

hours of television per day.

Pagani added: "Across the occidental world, there have been dramatic increases in unhealthy weight for both children and adults in recent decades.

"Our standard of living has also changed in favour of more easily prepared, calorie-dense foods and sedentary practices.

"Watching more television not only displaces other forms of educational and active leisure pursuits but also places them at risk of learning inaccurate information about proper eating."

The study said habits and behaviours became entrenched during childhood and these habits might affect attitudes to sporting activities in adulthood.

BNP to stay

FROM PAGE 1
The Gazipur-4 parliamentary constituency fell vacant owing to the resignation of ruling party lawmaker Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj.

Sohel first resigned on April 23 but the Speaker did not accept his resignation. However, it was accepted on July 8 when he in person tendered it to the latter's office.

Earlier on May 12, Khaleda Zia, addressing a rally at Gazipur, declared BNP Standing Committee Member Brig Gen (ret) ASM Hannan Shah as the party candidate at the by-election.

Hannan Shah on Sunday told The Daily Star that he would contest the election and win the seat as the ruling party lawmaker had not implemented any development projects in the last three years.

The party's participation in the Rangpur City Corporation election to be held in December also becomes uncertain due to the standing committee decision.

Meeting sources said the party would issue a statement regarding the government's decision about the Padma bridge construction.

The standing committee members at the meeting, with Khaleda Zia in the chair, also discussed the reorganisation of the party's front and associate bodies.

Oil tanker

FROM PAGE 20
from Chittagong, reports our correspondent.

Railway communication from Chandpur to Laksham, Chittagong and Sylhet which was severed for 24 hours, resumed at 4:40pm yesterday after the engine was salvaged.

Rescue trains began salvaging the derailed train around 7:00pm on Sunday, said Tapan Kumar Mitra, stationmaster of Chitotshi Railway Station.

Meanwhile, locals were seen on the spot collecting oil in bottles and buckets, since yesterday.

Around 17,500 litres of octane, 16,800 litres of kerosene and 46,500 litres of diesel were spilled from the four tankers, Badrul Alam, deputy manager of Jamuna Oil Company Ltd, told The Daily Star.

The company will investigate the matter, he added.

Liyakat Ali, assistant engineer of Bangladesh Railways (Comilla), told The Daily Star, that a 4-member committee has been formed to investigate the incident.

4 sent to jail

FROM PAGE 20
are suspended students of JU and had been absconding to evade arrest.

They are among the 13 accused in Zubair murder case filed with Ashulia Police Station.

Judicial Magistrate Washim Shiekh of the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court passed the order after rejecting their bail prayers.

An activist of a BCL faction, Zubair was an honours final year student at English department of the university. On January 8, members of a fellow BCL faction brutally tortured and stabbed him on the campus over previous enmity.

He succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in the capital the following day.

On January 30, the university authorities suspended the accused from the institution. All of them are members of BCL -- the pro-Awami League student wing.

Four other accused -- Khandaker Ashikul Islam, Zahid Hasan, Mahabub Akram, and Najmus Sakib Topu -- were arrested earlier and are now in jail.

Khan Mohammad Rais, Rashidul Islam, Ishtiaq Mehbub, Shafiul Alam Setu and Abhinandan Kundu, the remaining accused, have been on the run.

Zubair's friends said he was loyal to Shafin-Sammo group of BCL. The group was ousted from the campus in August 2010 following a fierce clash with its rival faction.

The victim came under attack when he went to the campus to take an examination.