

One shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force shot dead a Bangladeshi national on the Baladangi upazila frontier early yesterday.

The victim, Hazrul Islam, 27, hailed from Dakshin Duari Samirnar village, said local officials of Border Guard Bangladesh.

BSF members of West Bengal's Tingao camp shot Hazrul when he neared the border around 3:00am, leaving him dead on the spot, BGB sources said.

Two or three bottles of Phensedyl, a cough syrup banned in Bangladesh for its widespread abuse, were found near his body, said Lt Col Touhidul Islam, commanding officer of BGB 30 Battalion.

BSF members then took the body to their territory immediately, said Touhidul, adding that BGB protested the killing in a letter to BSF. Afterwards, a meeting was held between the two forces in a bordering area where Bangladeshi border troops asked BSF to return the body, said Subedar Barkat Ali, company commander of BGB's Nagarvita outpost.

Later at 6:30pm, BSF returned the body to BGB at a company commander level meeting. The body has been handed over to his family.

DU suspends 2 for harassing female students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University yesterday suspended two students for two years each on charges of harassing four female students on the campus.

The two, both master's students, are Md Habibullah Belali of Institute of Education and Research and Imdadul Islam of management department.

The university authorities took the punitive action after the duo were found guilty of harassing their fellows, DU Proctor (in-charge) Prof MA Ali told The Daily Star.

On Friday afternoon, Belali and Imdadul teased the females while taking tea in front of TSC.

Facing protests, the two poured hot tea on the girls' clothes.

Shortly afterwards, a proctorial team caught them red-handed.

Woman found

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Six years into her marriage, Khadiza came to know about her husband's extramarital affair three months ago. They have had heated arguments occasionally ever since, said Joyal.

Moyezuddin and his four-year-old son Ripon are yet to be located. He might have killed her before making his getaway, said the OC.

As for the youth's body, Badda police recovered it when it was floating on a pond behind Molla hotel at Madhya Badda around 7:00am.

Heis Emdadul Hossain, 28, according to a driving licence police found in his pocket, said Mahubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station.

The body, which bore marks of injury, has been sent to DMCH morgue for an autopsy.

Meghna Bridge

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"We are going for temporary renovation to keep the bridges fit for traffic until we start main repair work at the end of this year," said Col Rafique Ullah, project director of Meghna and Meghna-Gumti bridges' rehabilitation project.

Quader slaps

FROM PAGE 1
which operates between K h u l n a and Chapainawabganj via Rajshahi, finding its compartments in an unhygienic state.

Quader slapped Boloram Das after a passenger had complained that the attendant demanded extra fare from him although he got on the train with a ticket.

The minister visited the railway station around 10:15am on receiving complaints of poor service, Sujit Kumar, divisional traffic officer of the railway west zone, told The Daily Star.

Quader also transferred two railway staffs and suspended one on complaints from passengers of anomalies and poor service, said Md Ferdous Alam, general manager of Bangladesh Railway western zone.

The staffs transferred are Gazi Ferdous Hassan, station master of Chatmohar train station, and Nasima Khanam, ticket master of Ishwardi station, for selling tickets to scalpers. Md Amirul Islam, an estate official of Pakshey Divisional office, received the suspension order for not checking illegal occupation of the railway lands.

The minister said, "A few corrupt officials are destroying the railway sector. Ticket scalping, misappropriation of fuel, stealing of rail sleepers and such other misdeeds

are ruining the sector."

"I will take actions against the corrupt and the Anti-Corruption Commission will investigate them," he added.

Later, the minister visited Pakshey divisional rail zone and asked its officials to recover illegally occupied lands within a month, said Kiron Chandra Roy, divisional estate officer (DEO) of the zone.

"Around 140 acre of 1,800 acres of land in Pakshey and Ishwardi zones have been illegally occupied," said the DEO.

Obaidul Quader then visited the Lalon Shah Bridge in Pakshey and asked its officials to submit an enquiry report to his ministry within 15 days on irregularities of the toll plaza.

Yeafoesh Osman, state minister for science, information and communication technology, Shamsur Rahman Sharif Dilu, lawmaker from Pabna-4 constituency, and high officials of railway and the communications ministry accompanied the minister during the visit.

Quader's trip ended with a public meeting on the Pabna circuit house premises around noon. In the meeting, the minister said, "Three and a half years of this government has gone. It is time we acted rather than talking."

BNP steps into 35

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Cultural Organisation, a pro-BNP body, held a voluntary blood donation programme there.

The national and party flags were hoisted at all the party offices across the country, including at the party's Naya Paltan headquarters.

The pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Publication Association threw open a three-day book fair in the party office in the afternoon.

Earlier in the morning, the party's acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir briefed newsmen.

Replying to a query, the BNP leader said restoration of the caretaker government system and democracy are the key challenges facing his party. He hoped that they would be successful with public support.

"We are in a movement. Now it's our challenge to intensify the movement to restore the non-party caretaker government in the Constitution," he added.

Fakhrul remembered the party founder with due

respect and lauded Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia for her outstanding leadership of the party as well as the country.

Zia, the country's first military ruler, founded the party in 1978. He was assassinated in an abortive coup in May 1981. He was succeeded as president by Justice Abdus Sattar, who was ousted in March 1982 by army chief General Ershad.

Subsequently, the BNP dumped Sattar from the leadership of the party and placed Khaleda at its helm. Under her leadership it returned to power in 1991.

The party lost the 1996 elections, but came back to power in 2001 with a landslide victory. However, it went down to a humiliating defeat at the 2008 elections.

The caretaker government system was scrapped from the Constitution in June last year.

Khaleda on Thursday reiterated her demand that the next national election, which is due for January in 2014, must be held under a neutral administration.

Minister hopeful

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At a meeting chaired by the minister last month, the health ministry decided not to hold admission tests for enrolling students at medical and dental colleges from the 2012-13 academic sessions. Instead, it opted to admit students on the basis of their GPAs achieved in the SSC and HSC examinations.

The decision sparked protests among a group of admission seekers. They demanded the government restore the previous admission system.

A guardian of an admission seeker filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the government's decision to introduce the new system.

Meanwhile, agitating students yesterday warned of waging a tougher movement if their demand is not met within the next 24 hours.

They gave the ultimatum at a rally in front of the Raju monument at Dhaka University. Around 200 admission seekers and their guardians joined the rally.

Addressing the meeting, protesters said they would welcome any move by the health minister to hold a discussion on the issue, but vowed not to retreat from their stance.

Expressing solidarity with the agitating students, eminent columnist Syed Abul Moksud and media personality Rokeya Prachy urged the government to change its decision.

In another development, a group of admission seekers at a press conference at the

DRU yesterday welcomed the government's decision and demanded its implementation.

At the Meet the Press event, the health minister said he has consulted legal experts, who have opined that the government has nothing to do with the matter at the moment as a case in this connection has been pending with the HC.

Asked about why the government suddenly decided to change the admission system, Ruhul said every year the health ministry officials sit for discussions ahead of the admission test. The officials this time around recommended scrapping the test.

Regarding the recent hike in prices of medicines, he said they have already discussed with the stakeholders to check the price hike.

D R U P R E S I D E N T Shakhawat Hossain Badsha and its general secretary Sajjad Alam Khan Topu were present, among others.

2 workers die

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gave way and the workers fell to the ground around 9:30am. The two died on impact, said Sub-Inspector Shafiqullah of Mirpur Police Station, quoting witnesses.

The owners of the building did not take any safety measures to prevent such accidents, added the SI.

The bodies have been sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsies.

30pc hike

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yesterday. The electricity tariff, both at bulk and retail levels, could go up by 30 percent, according to another BERC official.

This would be the sixth-time increase in power tariffs since the government came to power and the fourth in the last six months, as the government has been struggling to cut its spending on subsidies on energy.

BERC has already received proposals from all state-run power distribution companies for at least 50 percent increase in retail electricity tariffs.

The Power Development Board (PDB) has sent a proposal to the energy watchdog to increase retail electricity prices by an average of 57 percent.

Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC) suggested increasing retail electricity prices by 53.73 percent on an average while Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco) by 50 percent and the West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDC) by 56.86 percent.

The commission has already held a hearing to increase bulk tariff.

State-run distribution entities DPDC, Desco, Rural Electrification Board (REB), and WZPDC are PDB's bulk buyers.

PDB, who itself is a distributor, sought a 50 percent rise in bulk tariff.

The energy regulator has decided to expand its power tariff slabs to seven from the existing three to help households keep their electricity bills at a tolerable level.

The range of the proposed slabs are 0 to 75 units (kilowatt-hour), 76 to 200 units, 201 to 300 units, 301 to 400 units, 401 to 500 units, 501 to 700 units and 701 units and above.

These slabs would be introduced when the commission announces the new power tariff structure. The commission, however, has not fixed the tariff for each slab.

Now a consumer pays Tk 3.05 for a unit (one kilowatt) of power if the total monthly usage is below 100 units. In the second slab ranging from 100 to 399 units, a consumer pays Tk 4.29 per unit and for consumption of 400 units and above a customer pays Tk 7.89 per unit.

Dr Nitai killing

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Claiming that he was a professional thief, he said his associates Syed and Bakul had taken him from Kamrangirchar, where he lived, to rob with them Nitai's house at NIDCH compound at dead of night.

Asked why they had thought of robbing Nitai's residence, Mintu said Nitai's driver had told them that there were around Tk 20 lakh in cash from the sale of a piece of land and about 100 tolas of gold in the house.

The driver had also assured them that they could easily get those things as only two people were staying at the house at that time, he added.

When they had broken into the first floor of the physician's duplex quarters by cutting some window rods, he had awoken and started screaming, Mintu said.

"We became afraid of being caught by locals."

Mintu, who has another identity as a worker at a clothes shop in Chandni Chawk Market in Dhaka, said he had stabbed Nitai first, and then did Bakul.

DB Deputy Commissioner (North) Mollah Nazrul Islam said, "We will unearth the truth once we arrest the driver, who has been hiding."

The main killers had already been arrested, he added.

Earlier, DB men on August 25 arrested four suspected killers-- Masud alias Peda, 28, Saidul, 38, Kamal, 35, and Faisal, 32, at Mohakhali and Kamrangirchar in Dhaka.

Mintu, who hails from Goyeshpur village of Mymensingh, said he had been caught by police a number of times before for thefts.

Meanwhile, Nitai's family has been claiming that the murder was preplanned and had something to do with the recent recruitment in the hospital.

Law enforcers, however, say Nitai was stabbed when he attempted to foil the burglary attempt that night.

Mashiur all set to go?

FROM PAGE 1

ADB and Jica, was informed of steps the government had already taken and its next move for resolving the stalemate over Padma bridge funding.

The WB also told the meeting about its latest position.

Held at a Gulshan hotel, the discussion was attended by Juan Miranda, among others, the officials added.

They also said government letters requesting the ADB and Jica for extending the loan deadline had mentioned Mashiur's possible departure from the position. The deadline was due to expire on Friday.

After this commitment on the part of the government, at the last moment the ADB extended the deadline by a month and Jica by three weeks.

The ADB had pledged a \$615-million loan and Jica \$400 million for the construction of the 6.15km bridge that would connect the capital with the country's 16 south-western districts.

The WB recently came up with three conditions, including the removal of Mashiur, for withdrawal of its loan cancellation.

The two other conditions are issuance of gazette notification about the resignation of Syed Abul Hossain, and terms of reference (TOR) to ensure a WB panel's access to the ACC probe into the graft

allegations.

About a month after Abul resigned as ICT minister, the Cabinet Division issued a circular on August 23 declaring the post vacant.

Sources said the ACC might sign the TOR getting the go-ahead from government high-ups.

Recently, talks on the reversal of the WB loan cancellation started afresh, following massive diplomatic efforts involving the US, India and Japan, but uncertainty prevailed over Mashiur's resignation.

Juan Miranda's positive response to the press after a meeting with the finance minister on Thursday was also based on the promise that Mashiur would go, said one of the officials.

Earlier, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was apparently unwilling to put pressure on the adviser to quit while the WB was firm on not withdrawing the loan cancellation if he stayed.

After Hasina went to Tehran to attend the Non-Aligned Movement summit, a senior minister held an exclusive meeting with the PM's adviser, government sources said.

The minister tried to convince Mashiur, who is also intimacy adviser of the project, to resign for the sake of the country.

The adviser would get a clean chit if he resigned and

the allegation against him was proved unfounded through the Anti-Corruption Commission probe under WB supervision, the minister said. The people would also consider him innocent.

At this point, Mashiur agreed to step down, the source claimed.

Mashiur was not available when The Daily Star phoned his residence for his comments yesterday.

As the PM returned from the Nam Summit yesterday, a decision about his resignation is likely to be taken in a couple of days.

However, a top finance ministry official said nothing could be said for sure until the adviser resigned. The government had also informed the co-financiers that no final decision could be taken as the PM was abroad.

At a meeting with the PM's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi in Washington last month, WB officials gave a clear signal of withdrawing the loan cancellation if all conditions were met, sources said.

According to many officials, the government had informed the ADB and Jica about the WB indication. Also, Muhith himself had conveyed this information to the ADB director general.

The finance ministry official said WB Managing Director Mulyani Indrawati played an important role in

Resign by morning today

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of the VC's residence around 3:00pm yesterday, when the students called off their agitation for the day.

Meanwhile, VC Prof SM Nazrul Islam yesterday said he would take step in this regard after talking to the minister concerned, while Pro-VC Prof M Habibur Rahman said he would talk with the appointment authorities.

On April 7, Buet teachers launched an agitation, including work abstention, bringing 16 allegations against the VC and Pro-VC. Students and university officials joined the agitation in mid-July.

Yesterday's four-hour student agitation began around 11:15am with a human chain in front of civil engineering building on the campus. Later, around 1,000 students brought out a procession and marched on the campus chanting slogans demanding removal of the VC and Pro-VC.

Many teachers of the university also joined the procession. They were seen wearing black T-shirts that read "Save Buet, remove the VC and Pro-VC".

The teachers joined the agitation on their own, not under the banner of Buet Teachers' Association, as the

High Court had on July 31 directed the association not to stage any demonstration for the sake of smooth academic activities, Prof Ashraful Islam, general secretary of the teachers' body, told The Daily Star.

When the procession ended around noon the students staged an hour-long demonstration in front of the administrative building, where the offices of the VC and the Pro-VC are located.

Meanwhile, the demonstrating teachers yesterday held separate meetings with the VC and Pro-VC at their offices and requested them to resign within the shortest possible time "to save the university and for the sake of students' welfare".

In the hour-long meeting, the VC told the teachers that he would take the next step consulting the minister concerned.

"I will not comment on anything right now," said the VC when journalists asked him about his next course of action.

During the meeting with the Pro-VC, the teachers became furious when two activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League entered the room interrupting the discussion. The teachers alleged that the Pro-VC had

called the activists for his protection.

The Chhatra League activists soon left the room in the face of strong protest. They, however, threatened newsmen not to publish any photos showing their presence in the meeting.

"One of the activists warned my photographer and me that they will not let any journalist enter the campus if their photos are published in the newspaper," said a reporter of Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

Since the teachers, students and staff of the university started agitation demanding resignations of the VC and his deputy, academic activities totally came to a halt and the university faced an unexpected closure. After 44 days of break the university opened on August 25 but no classes have been held since.

Meanwhile, the university authorities issued a notice asking the deans, heads of departments, teachers and officials concerned to resume classes and start the first-year admission process immediately.

Since last week, the government has not either taken any visible initiative for settling the crisis at the university.

A new formula

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In a keynote paper, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar proposed formation of a committee comprising all retired judges of [Appellate Division] the Supreme Court with the chief justice who retired first among them heading the committee.

This committee will select the chief adviser and a panel of 15 other advisers, and the chief adviser will select 10 advisers from among the 15, the proposal said.

The proposal came in the context of the latest constitutional amendment providing for general election within 90 days before expiry of parliament's tenure.

Speakers at the discussion urged the government to take steps to resolve the growing political crisis centring the now defunct caretaker government system for holding general election.

Former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan said, "If parliament is not dissolved (before polls), lawmakers will certainly influence the local administrations and members of law enforcement agencies. Therefore, free and fair polls will be

absolutely impossible."

Former election commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain said, "Holding a free and fair election is impossible under a partisan government, and allowing MPs to remain in office during the polls."

He mentioned that around seven lakh people-- most of them government servants-- and around six lakh members of law enforcement agencies are needed for holding parliamentary polls.

"If a partisan government and MPs remain in office, the lawmakers contesting the next polls will certainly influence the election officials," said Sakhawat.

In the context of the prevailing situation, the former election commissioner said the 300 MPs have been running the same number of "mini-governments" in their respective constituencies.

Former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumdar said successive political governments have destroyed every public institution by politicising them.

"Now it is very important to bring a major reshuffle in the administration to depoliticise it before the next election," said the

former top bureaucrat.

Justice Kazi Ebadul Haque, former SC Appellate Division judge, suggested introducing a 30-member interim government in view of the abolition caretaker government system.

The interim government can comprise 27 lawmakers from the two major political parties, who will not contest the next election. And the three other members can be taken from outside the political arena, he added.

Senior journalists ABM Musa and Syed Abul Maksud and Dhaka University Professor Mahbubullah alleged that it was now clear from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent speeches that her government was moving to hold a stage-managed election to retain power.

Justifying their allegation, they cited cancellation of the caretaker government system, allowing MPs to remain in office during polls and politicisation of the administration.

On Sujan's formula, Media personality Muhammad Jahangir proposed inclusion of a leader from each of the political parties represented in the present parliament.

the process of the loan revival.

After Mashiur's resignation, the government would send a formal letter to the WB this week requesting withdrawal of the loan cancellation, the official added.

Mexico's president-elect urges unity

AFP, Mexico City

Mexico's Enrique Pena Nieto called for national unity Friday as he was officially named president-elect after a two-month legal feud, but his leftist rival refused to concede defeat.

The federal electoral tribunal declared Pena Nieto the winner of the July 1 election after dismissing a bid by leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to scrap the result over vote-buying claims.

The ruling clears the way for Pena Nieto to begin his six-year term on December 1, marking the return of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to the nation's highest office after a 12-year absence.

Honda

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On Wednesday, after vetting from the law ministry, I sent the summary of the deal for forming the joint venture company to the Prime Minister's Office for approval," said Alam.

After the go-ahead from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the initial Tk 70-crore joint venture company will soon start operation at a rented abandoned garment factory at Maona in Gazipur. The company will increase investment after two years of operation.

Alam said the chief of Honda Motor would visit Bangladesh within 15 days of the approval for finalising the JV plant.

"We are trying to purchase a suitable piece of land for setting up the permanent plant," he headed.

Of the total investment, BSEC will own 30 percent stake, while Honda will own 70 percent in the project, he informed.

The Japanese company was looking for a local partner over the last few years, but they were not convinced with the private sector. In 2009, they had proposed to the government for setting up a JV, he said.

He said the company was coming to Bangladesh as the demand for motorcycles in the country was increasing.

Generally, Honda sets up a plant in a country where 50,000 motorcycles are sold annually. But, in Bangladesh the annual sale of motorcycle is more than two lakh, he added.

The local light engineering sector would be immensely benefited if the company is set up. Some other motorcycle companies were also contacting the industries ministry for setting up their plants, the official added.

"I know Honda is negotiating with a state-owned company for setting up a joint venture plant," said a senior official of the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) in Dhaka asking not to be named.

Rashed Ahmad Ali, president of Japan-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JBCCI), said Honda was coming to Bangladesh for the government's "China + one policy" (a policy adopted by the Japanese government to reduce dependency on China).

"The cost of production in China has gone high. That is one of the major reasons for shifting the production base to other countries," he added.