West zone railway stations on alert

ANWAR ALI, *Rajshahi*

Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday issued security alerts at all railway stations under West Zone following Saturday night's arson attack on three coaches of Silk City intercity train at Rajshahi Railway Station.

BR West Zonal General Manager Ferdous Alam told The Daily Star that they also sought assistance from the civil administration and law enforcers at divisional headquarters and districts to maintain security at railway stations and tracks. In this regard he said to have talked to the Rajshahi divisional commissioner, deputy inspector general (DIG) of Rajshahi Range Police and sent letters to deputy commissioners and superintendents of police at different districts.

"We need the support as Government Railway Police (GRP) is understaffed," he said.

A five-member committee headed by the BR West Zone chief electrical engineer was formed to assess the exact loss, currently estimated to be around Tk 4.5 crore, he added.

"We sought police assistance in identifying the attackers," said GRP DIG M Sohrab Hossain, adding that Jamaat-Shibir men, posing as train passengers, used flammable substances to ignite the fire.

"We had information of possible sabotage at Pabna on Saturday and provided forces at Ullapara and Pakshey," said DIG of Rajshahi Range Police Mir Shahidul Islam, adding that they did not have any information about the Rajshahi attack.

A case was recorded with Rajshahi GRP Station under Special Powers Act over the attack.

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner SM Moniruzzaman said they have little capacity to help GRP after coping with street violence and general crime.

Gonojagoron Mancha organises a rally at Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka yesterday demanding death penalty for all war criminals and ban on Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamaat backed Islami Chhatra Shibir.

PHOTO: STAR

ZIA TRUST GRAFT CASE

Hearing deferred again till Apr 9

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday for the second time deferred until April 9 the hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and three others in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case.

The court passed the order after Khaleda's lawyer submitted a petition seeking adjournment on the hearing. It also extended bail period of two others accused in the case till April 9.

Earlier on January 15, the court accepted the charge sheet submitted against Khaleda and three others. They are Harris Chowdhury, Khaleda's former political secretary; Ziaul Islam Munna, Harris's assistant private secretary; and Monirul Islam Khan, assistant private secretary of former Dhaka city mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

On August 8, 2011, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station, accusing the four of abusing power to raise funds in the trust's name.

ZIA ORPHANAGE TRUST CASE

Another Dhaka court fixed April 2 for hearing on charge framing against Khaleda Zia, her elder son Tarique Rahman and four others in connection with the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

The curt passed the order after her lawyer submitted a petition seeking an adjournment of the hearing.

Dhaka university's 47th convocation today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University's 47th convocation, the biggest programme to confer degrees, will be held today at the university's central playground at 11:30am.

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, during his three-day visit to Bangladesh, will speak as the convocation speaker at the event.

The university will also award him an honorary doctorate of law degree for his noteworthy contributions to Bangladesh's Liberation War, and modernising the Indian economy, defence and democracy, while President and Chancellor of the university Zillur Rahman will grace the occasion in his protocol.

Sayed Rejaur Rahman, Dhaka University registrar, said they decorated a large stage for the event and made arrangements to confer degrees on around 8,000 graduates. The graduates have been asked to enter the arena between 9:00am and 10:00am.

This year, 37 students will be awarded gold medals and around 40 students will receive PhD degree in the ceremony.

DU proctorial team along with the law enforcers will maintain law and order during the ceremony.

Badruddoza calls for talks among political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former president Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday called upon the prime minister to sit with all political parties to save the country from a possible civil war and any unconstitutional government.

In a statement, Badruddoza, also the president of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, said irresponsible behavior of politicians had divided the country's people, an ominous sign for a civil war.

He warned the government that if violence against the minority and innocent people and in religious institutions continued, it would destroy the country's peace.

In another statement, Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan), an organisation working for good governance, protested the recent countrywide violence of Jamaat-Shibir.

Jamaat-Shibir wants to ignite a communal riot for personal gains. If a court verdict goes against any party, legal procedures should be followed. Instead the "ill-force" resorted to terrorism, it said.

The organisation criticised the main opposition BNP for supporting Jamaat-e-Islami, an act which went totally against the masses and which might push the country towards a deep crisis.

The organisation also urged the government to ensure security of citizens, including the minority communities.

Meanwhile, pro-Awami League teachers of Dhaka University from the Blue Panel, in a statement, expressed satisfaction over the death penalty verdict against Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee.

They said Jamaat crossed the limit by attacking law enforcers and innocent people, including the minority community.

They also criticised Khaleda, stating that she supported the violence through her speech.

3 sustain burns at Shahbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Shahbagh demonstrators on Saturday sustained burn injuries as hot oil from a makeshift snack shop splashed over them during a melee occurred in the capital's Shahbagh area.

Of them, MN Tanveer, 25, assistant publicity secretary of Swarup Sangskritik Sangsad, sustained 40 percent burn injuries and was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) Burn Unit. He is a BBA graduate from a private university and resides at Rayerbazar.

His two freinds, Jasimuddin Joy and Md Salahuddin sustained five percent and minor burn injuries respectively. They only needed first aid. Joy is a student of Government Titumir College and Salahuddin is his classmate. The three used to join the demonstration everyday.

The melee began as a rumour spread there that Chhatra Shibir was arriving to attack Projonmo Chhattar.

Tanveer along with the others were sipping tea at Chhobir Haat in front of the Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University when the oil from a cauldron of a shop splashed over them around 8:00pm.

Dr Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank; Md Nurun Newaz Salim, chairman of NCC bank and NCC Bank Foundation; Khairul Alam Chaklader, vice chairman of the bank; and ASM Mainuddin Monem and Sohela Hossain, directors of the bank, are seen with some NCC Bank scholarship recipients at the scholarship giving programme on Saturday. NCC Bank gave scholarships to 250 poor and meritorious students of the country as part of its corporate social responsibility. PHOTO: COURTESY

BLOGGER RAJIB MURDER

2 arrestees Tahrir men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two among five North South University students arrested over the murder of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haidar admitted to being directly involved with banned Islamist outfit Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Bangladesh, said Detective Branch (DB) sources yesterday.

They are Maksudul Hassan Anik and Ehsan Reza Rumman. Meanwhile, Naim Sikder Irad, Nafis Imtiaz and Faisal bin Nayeem alias Dwip were motivated to take part in the killing by a leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir, said the sources.

Nazrul Islam Mollah, deputy commissioner (DC) of DB (North), said the arrestees disclosed their plans to kill seven more bloggers, including two females, who are prominently active in the Shahbagh movement demanding capital punishment for war criminals.

Blogger Rajib was hacked to death on February 15 near his Palashnagar residence in the capital's Pallabi. Detectives showed the five arrested on Saturday.

Yesterday, on the first day of a seven-day remand, the arrestees claimed that Shibir activists were encouraging Hizb-ut-Tahrir youths in the capital's private universities to work against the government, said the sources.

The Shibir leader, who orchestrated the killing, had urged the five to work under the Shibir banner since Hizb-ut-Tahrir was banned. The five agreed to kill blogger Rajib when the Shibir leader provided them with Rajib's blogposts, added the sources.

Another DB source said the Shibir leader had enrolled on and off at NSU and, in the pretext of studying, tried to motivate youths against the government.

As part of his technique, he often influenced youths to join Shibir and Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

DB DC Nazrul said the arrestees' parents had come to the DB office claiming their innocence but left on seeing evidences and documents regarding the arrestees' activities.