

## 50,000 MT wheat import proposal gets govt nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday approved the proposal for importing 50,000 tonnes of wheat to meet the country's wheat deficit.

Amira Pure Foods Pvt Ltd, a New Delhi-based company, will supply the wheat at a rate of \$313.65 per tonne.

The committee approved the proposal for installation of 4.50 lakh more electronic meters to provide power connection in the rural areas at a cost of Tk 37 crore.

It also okayed the proposal for importing 30,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid for fertiliser production at a rate of \$463.93 per tonne.

Besides, the committee gave the nod for importing 4.50 tonnes of Muriate of Potash fertiliser from the state-owned Belarusian Potash Company under a government-to-government agreement.

Finance Minister AMA Muhiht presided over the meeting, held at the Cabinet Division.

## SC starts

FROM PAGE 20 apprehension of the SC dismissing his appeal seeking acquittal from charges of crimes against humanity committed during 1971.

"The fear is not unfounded as the Supreme Court started hearing the government's appeal first instead of the defence's appeal. Traditionally, appeals by the defence are heard before hearing appeals by the prosecution," he said.

Meantime, a group of pro-BNP-Jamaat lawyers staged demonstrations on the court premises during the hearing. They also staged a sit-in with black flags for a few minutes in front of the chief justice's courtroom around 10:30am, protesting the recent appointments of four new judges at the Appellate Division by "super-sedensingers".

The authorities locked the door of the chief justice's courtroom at the time in order to maintain "discipline".

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 handed down life imprisonment to Mollah on February 5 for crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

Mollah lodged his appeal with the SC on March 4, a day after the government filed its appeal.

## 4 held

FROM PAGE 1 Noakhali, and Kamal Hossain, 28, a security guard of Mutual Trust Bank, hailing from Barisal.

All four are members of a newly formed militant organisation Ansarullah Bengali Team that follows Yemen-based Al Qaeda leader Anwar Al-Awlaki, said Detective Branch of police.

DB earlier arrested another five of the same organisation for killing blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider on February 15 at Mirpur in Dhaka.

Rajib was an activist of the Shabbagh demonstration that has been calling for death penalty to all war criminals and a ban on Jamaat-Shibir.

The four arrestees had been involved in the attempt to kill Asif at Uttara on January 13, said Mashiur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner (west) of DB.

DB police arrested Nahin at DU campus, Kawsar and Kamal Uddin at Mirpur and Kamal Hossain at Jatrabari with several books on Jihad, martial arts clothing and fake BBA certificates.

Abdul Karim, an Arabic student of Dhaka University, and Rana masterminded the killing of Rajib and the attack on Asif, said Nazrul Islam Mollah, deputy commissioner of DB.

A group of 14 to 15 people were supposed to kill Asif but of them, only two -- Nahin and Nobin Hossain, who is on the run, swooped on Asif, he added.

## Defence says

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I get that. But they [the prosecution] have to specify how many people among these 30 lakh Ghulam Azam killed," said chief defence counsel Abdur Razzaq while placing closing arguments for the second day at the International Crimes Tribunal-1.

Razzaq also said Ghulam Azam did not lead any propaganda against Bangladesh, which was mentioned in the formal charges.

He then pointed out a section of the formal charges which said Ghulam Azam visited Saudi Arabia in March 1975 and met the Saudi king and campaigned against Bangladesh. He told the king that Hindus had captured East Pakistan, and the holy Quran had been burned, mosques had either been destroyed or converted into temples and many Muslims had been killed.

Ghulam Azam also collected funds from the Middle East for "re-establishing mosques and madrasas," the charges said.

"We deny it," Razzaq said.

The defence counsel said the prosecution had not brought any evidence to support that Ghulam Azam plotted to destroy the Hindu or Bangalee community.

Mentioning the deposition of the first prosecution witness, Muntassir Mamoon, Abdur Razzaq said the witness said Ghulam Azam held meetings with Tikka Khan but he

did not bring any allegation of crimes against humanity against Ghulam Azam.

The counsel placed closing arguments for about two and half hours yesterday.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until today.

**NIZAMI'S CASE** Defence counsel Mizanul Islam for war crimes accused Jamaat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami yesterday completed cross-examining third prosecution witness Rustom Ali Mollah.

In reply to a question, Rustom said he came to the tribunal knowing full well that he would testify against Nizami.

Rustom said he was on the Mohammadpur Physical Training College campus when allied force conducted air strikes on Dhaka during the Liberation War.

"Ten days before the independence, about 200-250 people were brought to the college. But I did not know them," he said replying a question of the defence.

The witness said he gave interviews before television channels.

Mizanul made suggestions that the witness had not mentioned Nizami as a war crimes accused in those interviews.

"It's not true," the witness said.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until April 15.

## Hefajat sounds

FROM PAGE 1

(Shan-e-Risalat) at the city's Laldighi Maidan.

About 4,000 people took part in the rally. Shah Ahmad Shafi, ameer of Hefajat-e-Islam, administered the oath of martyrdom to the gathering.

Ahmad Shafi said their protest was not against the government. "We are fighting against them who are defaming Islam and also its Prophet [pbuh]."

He urged people to join the long march peacefully.

Junaidd Babunagari, secretary general of the party, said the government will prove itself to be atheist if it resists the long march.

"Common Muslims of the country will fight for Islam. If necessary, they will sacrifice their lives, but they won't allow the dominance and presence of atheist bloggers in the sacred soil of the country," he mentioned.

The government, he said, will have to amend the constitution to restore the phrase "Absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah" in it.

The party's senior nayeb-e-ameer Mahibullah Babunagari, nayeb-e-ameer

Abdul Malek and joint secretary general Mainuddin Ruhi were present, among others.

## Kuwait executes 3 men convicted of murder

REUTERS, Kuwait

Kuwait executed three men yesterday who had been convicted of murder, the first executions in the Gulf Arab state since 2007, state news agency KUNA reported.

Kuwaiti media said on Sunday that the three were a Pakistani, a Saudi and a stateless man and they would be hanged.

They were executed at the Central Prison, KUNA said, without giving details. Authorities had invited journalists from Kuwaiti publications to witness the executions.

The last recorded case of the death penalty being carried out in Kuwait was six years ago when a Pakistani man was executed for drug trafficking, according to Amnesty International.

## Pak army killed

FROM PAGE 20

Salauddin Quader Chowdhury killed 52 people who hid inside a paddy field and a jungle near Shakpura Primary School."

"Majority of the people of my village were Hindus. Besides, during the Liberation War people from Chittagong's Mohora and Kalurghat areas and Comilla and Noakhali took shelter in our village," he said.

Apart from his father, Babul mentioned the name of 11 people of his village who had been killed on that day. They were: Arobindo Roy, Dibesh Chowdhury, Doctor Modushudon Chowdhury, head master of primary school Shukhendra Bikash Nag, Gournago Chowdhury, Manmohan Chakraborti, Derandra Lal Chowdhury, Bishu Chowdhury, Nikunja Chowdhury.

He said the villagers buried the dead in mass graves at different places in the village as they could not cremate them following their religion.

He said mass killings were conducted by Muslim League followers and Pakistani army from April to December 14, 1971, in their village and 300-350 people were killed.

He said a mausoleum was built near Shakpura Primary School in which the

names of 76 people were inscribed.

Defence counsel Ahsanul Haque Hena yesterday completed cross-examining the witness.

Ahsanul asked the witness whether he had mentioned the name of SQ Chowdhury or his father in his testimony before the investigation officer.

"I don't know," replied Babul.

Ahsanul then asked whether he had filed a case with Boalkhali Police Station in 1972 accusing six people in this regard.

The witness replied that he could not remember.

SQ Chowdhury is facing 23 war crimes charges and Bulbul yesterday gave deposition regarding charge-11.

According to charge-11, with directives from the accused and his father, the Pakistani army and the Razakars, a collaborator force, jointly made an attack on Shakpura on April 20, 1971, as it was a Hindu-populated area and indiscriminately fired and used bayonets to kill people who had political and religious difference with SQ Chowdhury and his father.

The remaining people ran away and many of them went to India as refugees.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until April 4.

COP ASSAULT CASE

## 34 opposition men denied bail again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-four opposition leaders and activists were denied bail for the second time in two cases filed for assaulting police and blasting cocktails near BNP's Nayapaltan office on March 11.

The accused include Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque, BNP leaders Amanullah Aman, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi and Dr AZM Zahid Hossain and Jatiya Gonotantik Party chief Shafiul Alam Pradhan.

The cases were filed with Paltan Police Station.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge (in-charge) Md Anisur Rahman rejected the bail petitions.

On March 20, two metropolitan magistrates rejected bail petitions of 148 opposition leaders and activists, including the 34, and placed each of them on eight days' remand.

The 148 and nine other leaders and activists of the BNP-led alliance were detained during a raid on the BNP office on March 11 after cocktails went off at a rally in front of the office.

Lawyers of the 34 accused submitted the bail petitions on March 25 against the rejection order of the two magistrates.

A Dhaka court on Sunday took cognizance of the charges against the 148 leaders and activists in one of the two cases.

## Shibir chief on 14-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Islami Chhtrata Shibir President Delwar Hossain on 14 days' remand for his alleged involvement in assaulting police and blasting cocktails on Mirpur Road in the capital on February 28.

Metropolitan Magistrate Harun-or-Rashid passed the order when police produced Delwar, 31, with a 20-day remand prayer in two cases filed with Mohammadpur Police Station.

The court also placed two other accused, Mahmud Hassan alias Sumon, 23, and Shoib Sarkar, 23, on a 14-day remand in the same cases.

Police in remand prayers said, Delwar was directly involved in assaulting police and blasting cocktails around 11:30am in front of Care Hospital during a hartal enforced by Jamaat-e-Islami on the day. Therefore, they need to be remanded to find out important information.

Earlier on Sunday, detectives arrested Delwar at his sister's house at Shyamoli in the capital around 4:15pm.

Police sources said Delwar was a charge-sheeted accused in a dozen criminal cases.

## Humanity

FROM PAGE 1

in-charge of Upashahar police camp, lying on the road, bleeding copiously.

Without shuddering much at the scene, she first tried to stop the bleeding from his head.

She covered with her scarf the wounds of the policeman who had savagely been beaten up by Shibir activists at Shalbagan in the city.

The situation was more frightening as she found no one around who could come forward with a helping hand.

She took care of Jahangir as much as she could, and later, as two youths joined her, she managed to take him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Jharna, the 25-year-old mother of a son and a daughter, told The Daily Star it was all too natural that humans would stand by humans in times of danger. "I did it for the sake of humanity," she said, adding that she had earlier as well stood by people in danger.

Mentioning the grievous injuries Jahangir had suffered, she said, "Only those with a ruthless lack of conscience can do such heinous acts."

She asked, "How can they [the attackers] claim to be Muslims after hurting people so brutally? Is it their religion?"

Jharna waited at the hospital until Jahangir's relatives went there to take care of him.

## Savage attack by Shibir

FROM PAGE 1

As the policemen tried to recover from the shock and confusion, the mob showered them with brickbats, pinning down one of their colleagues, Sub-inspector (SI) Jahangir Alam, in-charge of Upashahar police camp and the team leader, on the main road.

The Shibir assailants took off Jahangir's helmet and wrestled him down on the road. A Shibir man kept hitting him on the head with his helmet, said the police and witnesses.

As Jahangir collapsed on the ground, some Shibir men held him down, while others brought in a supply of bricks and hit Jahangir ruthlessly on the head.

When the brutal assault was seemingly over, the attackers pelted the helpless policeman with more brickbats. Profusely bleeding from his head injuries, Jahangir lay unconscious on the road.

One of the attackers, wearing a red shirt, slipped his hand into the holster of the unconscious policeman and made away with the pistol. Another, wearing a blue T-shirt, left the scene with Jahangir's helmet and walkie-talkie.

As Jahangir lay unconscious on the road, residents, shopkeepers and pedestrians deserted the area in panic. Suddenly, a young man and a woman rushed to the injured policeman, screaming for help.

The young man stopped

a battery-operated three-wheeler, while the woman aided by a third person lifted the injured man on to the vehicle and took him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with the crushed head of the police officer on her lap.

At least four other policemen were also injured in the 30-minute-long Shibir mayhem, said SM Moniruzzaman, commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP).

RMCH neurosurgeon Dr Ekramullah said Jahangir needed several stitches for his head injuries. "He is still under observation, although he regained consciousness after treatment," he added.

Of the other injured policemen, Shafikul Islam was admitted to RMCH, while Latifur Haider and Zakir Hossain were admitted to Police Lines Hospital after primary treatment at RMCH.

"We fired several shots from shotguns, but the attackers started blasting bombs one after another, forcing us to look for shelter," said Latifur, who received splinters in the right hand.

"As we advanced to save Sir [Jahangir], they blasted bombs targeting us," said Shafikul, who received several splinters also in the right hand.

Police arrested five Shibir men, including one with a machete, said Ziaur Rahman, officer-in-charge

of Boalia police. He said Shibir men had launched the attack in a planned way.

Attacks on the police by Jamaat-Shibir across the country have been well planned and deliberate since war crimes convict Delwar Hossain Sayedee was handed down capital punishment on February 28.

Since then, eight policemen have been killed and 267 injured, 37 critically, in clashes with Jamaat-Shibir men across the country.

On Sunday, Shibir men in a hit-and-run attack hurled several bombs at the police in the city, severing the right wrist of an SI.

## 3 killed in Alaska rescue helicopter crash

REUTERS, Alaska

An Alaska State Troopers helicopter crashed during a rescue mission, killing all three people on board, officials said on Sunday.

Emergency workers reached the wreckage early on Sunday and found the bodies of the pilot, a state trooper and a snowmobiler who had been rescued after becoming stranded near the small town of Talkeetna.

The helicopter had failed to arrive at a rendezvous site to meet medics late on Saturday, Alaska State Troopers said in a statement.

## ACC draws flak for 'leniency'

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"Good political will can play a key role in eradicating corruption" was the theme of the seminar held on the occasion of anti-corruption week at the ACC office.

"You [ACC] cannot evade your responsibility," said education minister Osman Faruque at the seminar.

People have no confidence in the ACC investigations into the Padma bridge graft, Hall-Mark scam and Destiny's misappropriation of money, he added.

The people behind such corruption and irregularities would have been tried by now had there been good political will, said Rasheda K Choudhury, executive direc-

tor of Campaign for Popular Education.

Bangladesh Bank could give the ACC information about black money holders any time on request but the commission would not ask for it due to political pressure, said AK Azad, ex-president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman, however, said they were looking into these matters.

"Investigations are on. None if found guilty will be spared."

Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue, who was the chief guest, spoke of the financing

of elections.

Candidates spend crores of taka for parliamentary elections, he said, adding even a person who stands in Union Parishad elections needs Tk 10 to 20 lakh.

The election candidates consider the expenditure as investment and that is the cause of corruption, Sobhan said, suggesting that public financing of elections will put an end to such political practices.

Ghulam Rahman echoed Sobhan, saying the money required for elections and maintenance of political parties should come from the government exchequer to discourage what he said was profit motive politics.

## Find ways to recover money

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at today's [yesterday] board meeting. We held preliminary discussions on how to recoup the money," Pradip Kumar Dutta, managing director of Sonali Bank, told The Daily Star.

Dutta added that the board had instructed the management to come up with a proposal on how to retrieve the embezzled money from Hall-Mark, based on asset-liability evaluation and the letter sent by the finance ministry last week.

The proposal will be weighed upon at the next

board meeting to be held in the next month.

"Everyone was opposed to the idea of rescheduling. Those were not loans, but swindled funds," said a meeting source.

"Whether the Hall-Mark Group is put into administration or its business activities recommended, is no business of Sonali Bank," the source said, adding that everyone involved in the scam would be brought to trial.

Another meeting source said, "The board heavily criticised the stealing of public money."

## Govt to amend

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The minister disclosed the plans when the Grameen Bank Commission met him at his office in Dhaka to deliver an interim report on Grameen Bank.

The Grameen Bank review report and the commission's interim report concluded that the nine women borrower directors, who are elected from grassroots, were not qualified and educated enough to be in the board.

Muhit also said the government plans to raise the paid-up capital of the

micro-lender by incorporating all of its 84 lakh members.

The authorised capital and paid-up capital of Grameen Bank were Tk 350 crore and 54.77 crore, according to the Grameen Bank Review Committee Report.

"The paid-up capital of Grameen Bank is very low and has not been increased. To raise the paid-up capital we will offload shares among its 84 lakh members," said the minister.

The commission would

submit the final report to the government in June.

Mamunur Rashid, president of the commission, said the commission was regularly holding talks with people who were associated with Grameen Bank in the past.

On May 15, 2012, the government formed the four-member body to review the activities of Grameen Bank and 54 other organisations that bear the Grameen name and make recommendations on how to run the organisations.

## Find solutions on your own

### Mozena says on Bangladesh's political crisis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena yesterday said Bangladesh should resolve its problems on its own.

Talking to newsmen after a meeting with Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque at the foreign ministry, he hoped that Bangladesh will find a way forward to hold a free, fair and credible election.

"You should not be asking an outsider, you should be asking yourselves.... Nobody outside has a magic wand," Mozena responded to a query about a political dialogue in Bangladesh.

About the violence unleashed by Jamaat-Shibir, he said "Violence is not acceptable. I believe all citizens have right to express their views in a peaceful manner. I really believe that. But they don't have right to kill people and create violence."

Regarding his meeting with the foreign secretary, Mozena said they talked about the upcoming security dialogue in Washington DC on April 9 and a range of security related issues.

Also came in for discussion was the US-Bangladesh Partnership Dialogue to be held in Dhaka on May 27-28.

Bangladesh floated an idea to set up a National Academy for Security Training to train security personnel from police, coast guard, BGB and Ansar, added the envoy.

About the hearing on GSP facilities last week in Washington DC, he said, "We discussed the fact that there were over 150 questions and some of those might need more comprehensive answers."

"I want Bangladesh to make a strong clear case. It has a good story to tell. The situation will get better and better because I know over the next months Bangladesh will be able to do even more to address the concerns raised in the GSP petition."

The transcript of the hearing will come out probably by the end of this week, he noted.

## Tanzania building collapse toll hits 34

REUTERS, Dar Es Salaam

The death toll from the collapse of a multi-storey building in Tanzania has risen to 34 after more bodies were pulled from the rubble, a senior government official said yesterday.

Rescue workers at the site in a district in the commercial capital Dar es Salaam have now cleared most of the debris and reached the basement of the building that caved in on Friday morning. It is likely more bodies could be found.

Tanzania's buoyant economy has fuelled a building boom, especially in Kariakoo and the city center. But the speed of construction has raised concerns about safety standards.

"A total of 34 people have so far been confirmed dead. We expect to conclude the search operation early today and officially announce the final death toll," Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner Said Meck Sadick told Reuters.

"The bodies being recovered now have started to decompose...so we want to conclude this exercise as soon as possible to allow funeral arrangements to take place."

The building of more than 12 storeys had been under construction near a mosque in the Kariakoo district near the city center. Several cars were crushed and boys playing football nearby were among the dead.

Police said four people had been arrested over the incident.

"This is the worst building collapse in our country's history," Dar es Salaam regional police commander Suleiman Kova told Reuters.