

ILLEGAL INTRUSION

BSF picks up Rab informer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday picked up a member of Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) from an Indian village near Brahmanpara upazila of Comilla, an Indian newspaper reported yesterday.

A court in Sonamura of Seepahijala district, West Tripura charged the arrestee, Mohammad Milon Hussain, with violating the Indian Passport Act and sent him to judicial custody for two weeks.

Contacted, Rab chief Mohammad Mukhlesur Rahman denied Milon being a member of the elite force. He claimed the arrestee to be an informer of Rab.

According to The Hindu report, Milon intruded into the village of Rahimpur in India with a mission to search for a consignment of Phensedyl, a contraband drug smuggled into Bangladesh in large quantities.

Timir Das, additional superintendent of police in Seepahijala, India, told The Hindu, "The villagers caught one Rab man while the rest fled across the border."

He said caught with his official identity card, Milon had informed the BSF and police that his team had been headed by a senior Rab officer, Mohammad Kamruzzaman.

Timir Das also claimed to The Hindu that Milon like his fellow soldiers had been armed, but he threw the weapon towards his fleeing colleagues when he was caught.

Against this backdrop, Border Guard Bangladesh and BSF had held a flag meeting where BGB refused to confirm the identity of Milon and did not offer to bring him back, said The Hindu report.

A BGB official seeking anonymity said although Milon was not a Rab member, BGB personnel had still held the flag meeting. However, the meeting could not have Milon released.

Crows are not black

FROM PAGE 16

though they were of different colour," said resident Mohammed Abu Naim.

Imran Hossain Rocky, Naim's nephew, brought down the unique chicks from the tree, after they started cawing, and handed them over to Chittagong zoo on Saturday night around 9:00pm.

"One of the three died that night, as it was too young," said Dr Shahadat Hossain Shuvo, an official of the zoo.

Shahadat also said that the chicks were at best 45 days old and could learn to fly within a fortnight. "They could live for 20 years, if they survive

the initial dangers," he added.

Shahadat also cleared any confusion and said that there were no species of white crows, and their colour was due to a rare genetic mutation which made them albinos.

Wildlife photographer Sirajul Hossain told The Daily Star that albinos in nature always had difficulty surviving on their own as they come under attack not only from predators, but their own species as well because of their difference in colour.

The zoo authority planned to keep the rare birds for visitors to see.



Signboards showing the site office and army camp set to implement the country's biggest graveyard project at Rayerbazar, Dhaka. FILE PHOTO

Dhaka's biggest graveyard by Dec

HELEMIUL ALAM

Dhaka is going to have its biggest graveyard at Rayerbazar ready by December this year to meet growing demand for burial plots in the capital.

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) took up the project in 2011 to accommodate around 80,500 burial plots, said a DNCC official.

Bangladesh Army's 14 Independent Engineering Brigade has been implementing the Tk 505.60 crore scheme covering over 96.23 acres.

The Dhaka deputy commissioner's office has already acquired 77.39 acres and handed over to the DNCC last year, said an official at the DC's office.

The city currently has six official graveyards. Of them,

Jurain and Azimpur graveyards fall under the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

The four under the DNCC are Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals graveyard, Banani graveyard and one each at sectors 4 and 12 in Uttara. But these burial grounds cannot meet rising demand for burial plots in the city.

On an average, around 100 bodies are buried in Azimpur graveyard each day, some 35 to 40 in Jurain, around 30 in Mirpur and two to three in Banani, said city corporation officials.

About 20 bodies are buried in two graveyards at Uttara in a month.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said graveyards totalling around 30 to 40

EXISTING GRAVEYARDS

GRAVEYARD	AREA	CAPACITY (plot)
Jurain	17.26 acres	2,694 permanent 41,000 temporary
Azimpur	27 acres	6,500 permanent 30,000 temporary
Mirpur Martyred Intellectual	65 acres	30,000 permanent 61,000 temporary
Banani	10 acres	7,514 permanent 4,500 temporary
Uttara Sector-4	1.1 acres	84 permanent 5,80 temporary
Uttara Sector-12	6 acres	2,500 temporary

acres are needed for a population of one lakh.

The population of Dhaka city stands at around 1.35 crore, for which around 4,050 to 5,400 acres of

burial land is necessary, he added.

LAND OWNERS FRUSTRATED

Without giving sufficient time to shift the structures

from the land acquired for graveyards, authorities evicted people from around 50 houses and structures of the site at Rayerbazar, locals claimed.

Mohammad Delowar Hossain, owner of a 24-katha land, recently told The Daily Star that the authorities had been putting pressure on them to vacate the land.

Refuting the allegations, Sharif Uddin, project director of the graveyard, said they did not evict anyone.

Nazrul Islam, additional land acquisition officer of Dhaka Deputy Commissioner Office, said there were 14 writ petitions filed against the acquisition of land.

The victims had been demanding rehabilitation, he added.

TURKISH PROTEST

PM blames social media, opposition

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Thousands of protesters have controlled Istanbul's main square once more after two days of violent clashes with rampaging riot police, as Turkey's prime minister vowed to press on with the controversial redevelopment that provoked the clashes.

Calling the protesters an "extremist fringe", Recep Tayyip Erdogan blamed the opposition Republican People's party for provoking the protests.

"We think that the main opposition party, which is making resistance calls on every street, is provoking these protests," Erdogan said on Turkish television, as an estimated 10,000 demonstrators streamed into the area waving flags and calling on the government to resign.

"There is now a menace which is called Twitter," Erdogan said. "The best examples of lies can be found there. To me, social media is the worst menace to society."

Protesters again clashed with riot police into the early hours of Monday, Reuters reported.

In the western port of Izmir, protesters threw fire bombs at the offices of the ruling AK party and television footage showed part of the building ablaze.

Bus shelters, paving stones and street signs were ripped up by protesters to make barricades that littered a major avenue in Istanbul where some of the heaviest clashes took place on Sunday night, Reuters said.



Household gas line in Rajshahi from Thursday

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Finally, Paschimanchal Gas Company Limited (PGCL) is going to start distributing gas connections in Rajshahi city on Thursday.

The authorities will install gas supply to thirty-three households on the first day and 4,000 others later in phases.

PGCL General Manager Rezaul Islam Khan said gas connections were given to local industries in July last year. Bout the installation of household supplies could not be started due to a High Court embargo. The court lifted the embargo last month.

No proposal

FROM PAGE 1

Veteran AL lawmaker Tofail Ahmed blasted the BNP decision.

He said the Business Advisory Committee (Bac) at a meeting decided that discussions could be held in parliament on the caretaker government issue if the BNP submitted a notice.

Tofail, a member of the Bac, said the Speaker informed the meeting that a BNP MP had submitted a notice for holding talks on the issue.

In response, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave her consent to holding talks on the matter, Tofail said.

"The BNP had thought that the Speaker would not allow any discussion on it. But when the Speaker agreed to do so, the BNP decided to withdraw the notice," Tofail told the House after the BNP-led opposition walked out.

"Through the walkout, they proved that they returned to parliament just to retain their membership

and ensure their salaries and allowances."

He also criticised the BNP for supporting Hefajat-e Islam's May 5 demonstration at Shapla Chattar in the capital.

A number of opposition MPs told this correspondent that they had decided to take part in the House proceedings and talk about issues of public importance. They submitted around 50 notices to the parliament secretariat, demanding discussions on different issues.

Earlier, newly elected Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury welcomed the opposition MPs belonging to the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party and hoped they would continue to take part in the sittings.

"It is our constitutional duty to make the House effective. I believe it is possible to find acceptable solutions to differences over any political and national issue through discussion," said

the Speaker in her inaugural speech of the budget session.

As Shirin Sharmin, who was elected Speaker in April, took the chair for the first time, some senior MPs of the ruling Awami League-led alliance congratulated her in a brief discussion.

The opposition MPs did not take part in the discussion, but some BNP MPs, who participated in the question-answer session, congratulated Shirin on her being the country's first female Speaker.

At the press briefing before joining the House, the opposition chief whip thanked the Speaker for her role in having two BNP MPs -- MK Anwar and Barkatullah Bulu -- freed from prison on bail on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Business Advisory Committee decided the budget session would continue till July 3.

The budget for fiscal year 2013-14 is due to be

placed in the House on June 6, and is to be passed on June 30.

MOUDUD BLASTS HOME MINISTER

On a point of order, Moudud Ahmed launched a blistering attack on the home minister. He demanded that the minister offered an apology in the House and withdrew the "verbal announcement banning meetings and rallies".

"If you [the minister] do that, we will play a role in making parliament effective. It's not a shame to offer apology. It will rather improve the government's image."

Moudud also said only a state of emergency could curtail people's fundamental right to hold meetings and rallies. "Has the government unofficially declared a state of emergency?"

At the end of his speech, he said, "We are walking out of this sitting to protest the home minister's announcement."

MP 'on the run'

FROM PAGE 16

On February 7, the tribunal asked Azad and Jamaat acting secretary general Rafiqul Islam Khan and the party's Dhaka city unit assistant secretary general Selim Uddin to appear before it and explain as to why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against them for their comments about the ongoing trials and the tribunal at a rally on February 4.

They never explained nor appeared before the court, which led the tribunal to issue arrest warrants.

Police arrested and produced Selim, but twice on April 10 and again on April 21, told the court that the other two were on the run.

However, on May 4, Azad addressed a rally of the 18-party opposition alliance in the capital in the presence of hundreds of law enforcers and yesterday he showed up in parliament.

When asked about police not being able to find Azad despite his being in the public domain, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandker on May 4 told The Daily Star, "I'll have to tell you after checking it out."

Officer-in-Charge Habibur Rahman of Moheshkhali Police Station in Cox's Bazar said police were unable to find Azad in Moheshkhali, the place he was elected lawmaker from.

He expressed surprised at the fact that Azad was in parliament. He said since Azad did not return to Moheshkhali they could not arrest him.

The tribunal is likely to deliver the verdict in the contempt of court proceedings against the three Jamaat leaders on June 9. If Azad and the other two are found guilty, they could be imprisoned for up to one year and fined Tk 5,000 each.

KISHOREGANJ BY-POLLS

AL picks Toufiq

BSS, Dhaka

Ruling Awami League has nominated Rejwan Ahmed Toufiq, eldest son of President Abdul Hamid, as its candidate for Kishoreganj-4 by-polls slated for July 3.

The nomination was finalised at an Awami League Parliamentary Board (ALPB) meeting held at prime minister's official residence Gono Bhaban last night.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam told reporters that the 10-member ALPB had unanimously picked Toufiq.

The Kishoreganj-4 parliamentary seat fell vacant, as the MP from the constituency, Speaker Abdul Hamid, was elected as the President of the country on April 22.

Elderly man

FROM PAGE 16

including Sohrab Uddin gathered at the spot and informed law enforcers that Khokon has been on bail.

At one stage, Sohrab got involved in an altercation with police. Incensed at this, SI Monohar used his baton to beat Sohrab to the ground, leaving him injured.

After sometime, the elderly man died there. Police, however, could not arrest Khokon.

Contacted, SI Monohar denied beating up Sohrab. He claimed that the man died after he had left the spot.

Md Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Pagla Police Station, said Sohrab had been suffering from respiratory problems. He fell sick during an altercation with police and later died of heart attack, added the OC.

Saifus Saleheen, chairman of Panchbagh Union Parishad, could not confirm whether Sohrab died of heart attack or not.

The dead was yet to be buried at 9:00pm yesterday.

India's political parties

FROM PAGE 1

The Bench also directed them to comply with the provisions of mandatory proactive disclosures clauses given under the RTI Act and put those details on their websites.

The case relates to RTI queries from activist Subhash Agrawal and Anil Bairwal of Association of Democratic Reforms who had sought to know about the voluntary financial contributions received by these six parties.

During the hearing, Bairwal raised three principal points justifying his arguments that parties were under the RTI Act.

The points were: indirect substantial financing by the government, performance of public duty and Constitutional and legal provisions vesting them with rights and liabilities.

tracts of land in prime areas of Delhi have been placed at the disposal of the political parties in question at exceptionally low rates.

"Besides, huge government accommodations have been placed at the disposal of political parties at hugely cheap rates thereby bestowing financial benefits on them."

It held the income tax exemptions granted to the political parties and free air time given by All India Radio and Doordarshan at the time of elections also substantially contribute to indirect financing from the government.

"We have no hesitation in concluding that Indian National Congress, BJP, CPI-M, CPI, NCP and BSP have been substantially financed by the central government.

to be public authorities under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act," the Bench ordered.

The Central Information Commission (CIC), a quasi-judicial body, cited a Supreme Court order where it held that people of India must know the source of expenditure incurred by political parties during elections.

It also said these judicial pronouncements unmistakably command progressively higher level of transparency in the functioning of political parties in general and their funding altogether.

"In view of the nature of public functions performed by political parties...we conclude that political parties in question are public authorities under section 2(h) of the RTI Act," the Bench held.

FROM PAGE 1

growth in the outgoing fiscal year, said CPD.

Hartal and political turmoil impacted on economic activities in the last quarter. Instability in politics will affect job creation, economic growth, trade and investments, Mustafiz said.

CPD Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya said, "Political reality and economic needs have given rise to a conflict."

But economic performance has slowed in some areas. Private investments fell to a six-year low, while domestic savings slipped to 10-year low, indicating erosion of purchasing power and real income, he said.

The percentage of bad loans hit the highest in five years, he said.

"There was a lot of encouragement in the economy in the first three years

of the present government's tenure. But that inspiration faded afterwards," said Debapriya.

Looking back, the CPD distinguished fellow said economy grew 6 percent on an average in the last four and a half years, and agricultural input distribution was better. Revenue collection also increased and ADP implementation performance improved.

But the time would be remembered for the row between the government and Grameen Bank, the collapse of capital market, corruption and loan scams involving Hallmark and Bismillah Group in the banking sector.

He said no transparency and accountability could be established in the activities of multilevel marketing companies like Destiny.

"We have also lost funds over allegations of corrup-

tion in the Padma bridge project during the period."

At the same time, licences for new banks were issued despite a debate over it, and subsidy burden for quick rental power plants got heavier. The government also got into disputes with telecom companies on different issues, he said.

"So, we have both seen success and failure."

On construction of Padma bridge, CPD suggested the government should keep all options open to raise funds for the project, instead of depending only on domestic resources. Domestic financing may increase the government's interest burden, as it may have to borrow from banks.

Domestic mobilisation of funds to construct the bridge will create pressure on other sectors that also need investments, said

Debapriya.

"Any person with common sense can easily understand the bridge cannot be constructed by allocating funds year after year. It is also understandable that the bridge cannot be built without foreign currency."

He suggested the government go back to the drawing board to find the best option for raising funds for the project.

"Above all, good governance is necessary whatever the source of financing may be," he said.

On the refinancing scheme of Tk 900 crore for stock market, Debapriya said the government makes up for the losses of individual investors from state exchequer to mask its failure to punish the manipulators and ensure good governance in the capital market.