

# Speedy tribunal to try Bishwajit murder case

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to shift the Bishwajit killing case to the Speedy Trial Tribunal for quick disposal.

Additional Public Prosecutor Shah Alam Talukder said this while filing a time petition with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday.

"The home ministry will soon issue a gazette notification to this effect," he added.

Also yesterday, June 27 was set for starting the trial of 21 activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the student body associated with the ruling Awami League, on charges of killing Bishwajit.

Bishwajit, a youth who was a tailor by profession, was hacked to death in the capital during an opposi-

tion road blockade programme on December 9 last year.

Eight of the accused, now in custody, were produced before the court yesterday. Besides, Sub-inspector Jalal Uddin of Sutrapur Police Station, also the plaintiff of the case, appeared before the court to give deposition.

Earlier on June 2, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court framed charges against the Jagannath University unit BCL men in the case.

The case was shifted to the Sessions Judge Court on April 29 after Metropolitan Magistrate Court took cognisance of charges against them on April 2.

Inspector Mohammad Tajul Islam of Detective Branch (DB) of police submitted the charge sheet on March 5.

# MPs, ex-MPs flout rules

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has backed Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran and the BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance has lent its support to Ariful Haque Chowdhury for the mayoral post of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC).

Both the camps launched a last-minute campaign ahead of the SCC polls tomorrow, with incumbent and former lawmakers joining street rallies.

Saiful Alam, office secretary of district Awami League, said Kamran addressed 10 street rallies yesterday to woo votes.

Lawmakers Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury of Biswanath and Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury of Fenchuganj, Balaganj Upazila Chairman Mostak Ahmed Mofur and Jagannathpur Upazila Chairman Akmol Hossain joined several of the rallies.

Contacted, Shafiqur said, "The electoral campaign will officially end tonight [last night]. So we are taking part in the last-minute campaign."

Abul Kaher Shamim, chief election agent of Arif, said they had held 18 street rallies throughout the day.

Former lawmakers Kolim Uddin Milon of Sunamganj and Dildar Selim of Jaintapur and Bhairab municipality mayor Mohammad Shaheen addressed the rallies, he added.

## RESULT-AFFECTING FACTORS

Heavy traffic snarls and waterlogging on city roads might adversely affect former city mayor Kamran's reelection bid.

The problems have built up over the years although Kamran has completed his second straight term in office, with the AL in state power during the second stint.

Voters complained that Kamran had allowed a good number of multi-storeyed shopping malls to be built on busy roads, adding to city traffic woes.

He also ignored the plea from locals for freeing footpaths and roads from hawkers. Rather, the former

mayor's men used to collect tolls from hawkers, alleged local residents.

These issues might just be blessings for BNP favourite Arif. A total of 2.91 lakh voters will exercise their franchise tomorrow to elect the next SCC mayor and 27 councillors.

Kamran at different electoral rallies claimed that he had implemented development projects worth Tk500 crore. But the drainage in the city has remained very poor as many streets in Bharthokhola, Chhararpar, Bilopar and Upashahar areas go under water even after a moderate rainfall.

"We had voted for Kamran to get rid of waterlogging. But our fate remains the same as he took no effective measures to end our plight," said Abdul Hai Saleh, a resident of Bharthokhola.

On being elected mayor in 2003 and 2008, Kamran built good relations with cross sections of people. He is involved with different cultural and sports organisa-

tions, whose members are campaigning for his reelection.

Some senior voters said Kamran on two previous occasions had enjoyed the vote bank of Greater Mymensingh Samity, Greater Rangpur Samity, Khulna Samity and Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikeya Parisad in Sylhet. But this time around, the votes will be split between Kamran and Arif.

Greater Mymensingh Samity has around 60,000 votes while Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikeya Parisad has around 45,000, claimed the organisations.

Many supporters of Hefajat-e Islam, a Qawmi madrasa based organisation, might side with Arif as fallout of police action on Hefajat men in the capital's Motijheel on May 5.

BNP insiders said many followers of its missing leader M Iliasi Ali have been inactive in the electioneering as Arif is known as a follower of late BNP leader Saifur Rahman.

# India says goodbye to telegram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian authorities have decided to discontinue its telegram services from July 15.

The age of smart phones, emails and SMS seems to have pushed the humble telegram service to a quiet corner of museum with the state-owned BSNL deciding to shut down the service that had functioned for 160 years.

Once the main source of quick and urgent communication, good or bad, the service found itself struggling with the advent of technology and newer means of communication.

As per a circular issued by Shameem Akhtar, senior general manager (Telegraph Services) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL), the telegraph service is to be discontinued with effect from July 15, 2013.

The circular also denotes all telegraph offices under

the management of BSNL will have to stop booking telegrams from July 15.

Faced with declining revenues, the government had in May 2011, revised the telegram charges after a gap of 60 years, in a last-ditch attempt to make the legacy commercially viable.

But the increase could not keep the service afloat. The charge for a 50-word telegram for services within India was hiked to Rs 27/50 from Rs 3/50, 4/50 earlier.

The history of Indian telegram began in 1850 with first experimental telegraphic line between Kolkata and Diamond Harbour in West Bengal state.

A year later, the British East India Company began using it and in next four years telegraphic lines were laid across the country and the service was thrown open to the people in the year 1854.

# Politics may dent

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It said risks in the post-election period include the possibility that past reforms are reversed or implementation delayed.

However, the global lender forecasts that the Bangladesh economy might pick up modestly to 6.1 percent in fiscal 2013-14 and 6.3 percent in fiscal 2014-15, as external demand strengthens gradually, and agricultural output returns to more normal levels.

The report said Bangladesh's export volume growth accelerated as a result of strengthening demand for its garment exports although recent factory accidents could moderate the growth pace.

The bank said Bangladesh has several domestic weaknesses, including infrastruc-

ture gaps and social unrest that are expected to hold back a stronger recovery in the coming year.

By the first quarter of 2013, industrial production was rising at different paces in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, while in Sri Lanka, it stabilised in the fourth quarter of 2012 after a steep decline in the previous two quarters.

The WB report said regional growth will be driven mainly by a projected pickup in India, whose GDP grew by 5.7 percent in fiscal 2013 that ended in March. The WB projected India's GDP growth at 6.5 percent for fiscal 2014.

The CEP report cut the global economic growth outlook for 2013, citing slower-than-expected expansion in China, India and

Brazil, and a contraction in Europe, but said the world economy will be less volatile.

The world economy is set to grow at 2.2 percent, less than the 2.3 percent growth registered last year. The WB, in its January forecast, had expected the global economy to grow by 2.4 percent.

The report said the world's economy is slowly getting back on its feet. However, recovery remains hesitant and uneven and predicted that the global economy will grow by 3 percent in 2014 and 3.3 percent in 2015.

"The financial conditions in high-income countries have improved and risks are down, but growth remains subdued, especially in Europe," the Washington-based lender said in its report.

## US bill seeks

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Schakowsky said a number of garments and documents with Marine insignias were found in the rubble of the November 2012 Bangladesh Tazreen Fashions fire that killed 112 workers.

Survivors have stated that the building's exits were locked, forcing many to jump from the 3rd or 4th floor windows. Public data indicates that the Army-Air Force Exchange imported 1,24,000 pounds of garments last year from several garment factories in Bangladesh, the statement said.

"It is not only unjust but inhumane that garment workers barely make ends meet and are subjected to working in unsafe buildings, many of which don't have fire escapes or potable water. As a huge purchaser of garments, the US military should not be complicit in putting the lives of Bangladesh's workers in grave danger," said Schakowsky.

Miller, who visited Bangladesh last month, in his statement said: "Workers that manufacture clothing embossed with our nation's military slogans and insignias shouldn't have to face blocked fire exits and threats of being fired for refusing to work in unsafe conditions."

Garment workers' safety in Bangladesh came to international attention after the April collapse of Rana Plaza, killing more than 1,100 people and injuring over 2,500.

## No money

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rival Khairuzzaman Liton in spending money.

Bulbul has already exceeded the Tk 15 lakh limit since the campaign began on May 27. He got a donation of Tk 78 lakh from businessmen and contactors loyal to the BNP and the Jamaat-e-Islami at a meeting in the house of a top BNP leader in Rajshahi on the night of May 26, said a local BNP leader who is Bulbul's close aide.

But Bulbul dismissed the allegation.

Liton, too, has exceeded the limit, said one of his close aides who is involved in his campaign.

Having failed to get donation from party leaders, Liton borrowed Tk 30 lakh from a contractor to meet the election cost, he added.

But Liton claimed: "So far, I have spent Tk 13 lakh. So there is no question of crossing the limit."

Sources said those working for Bulbul's campaign were getting Tk 5,000-7,000 a day and those for Liton's campaign Tk 500-1,500.

Female campaigners on Bulbul's camp are getting Tk 300-500 per day while those on Liton's camp Tk 200, added the sources.

Contacted, Returning Officer Subhas Chandra Sarker said it was difficult to find out the exact amount spent on the campaign and take action accordingly.

"Our magistrates are working in this regard," he added.

# BNP, allies count on Hefajat clout

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alliance or any other party. But, of course, we will continue to ask the people not to vote for atheists and the supporters of atheists," Harun said.

"We are even asking people to boycott our enemies socially," the Hefajat leader said, adding, "Anti-Islamic atheists are our enemies."

Harun said, "It is not our concern as to who will be benefited and who will be the loser in the elections because of our campaign. We will just continue our movement for Islam."

Another leader of the Hefajat, wishing anonymity, said a decision on its next course of action was pending because of Qawmi madrasa exams scheduled to end by the Ramadan.

Meantime, the 18-party alliance source said an informal effort was going on to ensure Hefajat's support at the next parliament elections for the BNP-led alliance.

The source observed that many of the Hefajat followers did not turn up to cast their ballots in the last elections as they do not believe in elections or democracy and many did not vote for the BNP and Jamaat.

So the BNP-Jamaat alliance wants to capture this vote bank at the next parliamentary elections, likely to be held at the end of this year or the beginning of 2014.

Contacted yesterday, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, member of the

BNP standing committee, said his party supported some of the demands of the Hefajat. "We in principle supported Hefajat in its movement."

So, he added, it is quite natural that Hefajat will lend its moral support to the 18-party alliance in the next parliamentary elections.

Hefajat, launched on January 10, 2010 to oppose the education policy and amendments which were in the spirit of the original 1972 constitution, was not on the scene when the Shahabbagh movement started on February 5.

The Islamist group then took centre stage in recent days as an opposite force to the Shahabbagh Gonojagoron Mancha pressing for the maximum punishment for war criminals.

Its presence was felt with the February 15 killing of Rajib, a blogger who was branded an atheist.

Hefajat was known as anti-Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component of the 18-party alliance. Still, it has enjoyed open support from the opposition in making its anti-Shahabbagh programmes a success.

The top-brass of the Jamaat, historically known as an anti-liberation force and patron of communal politics, is behind bars on war crimes charges. The Shahabbagh activists, including online activists and bloggers, all along have demanded banning the Jamaat.

On April 6, Hefajat's long march to Dhaka and rally at

Motijheel's Shapla Chattar not only got direct backing from the alliance, two top BNP leaders, including Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, went on the stage along with Hefajat leaders.

Hefajat from that rally announced the 13-point demands, including the introduction of an anti-blasphemy law, execution of "atheist bloggers" and a stop to the free mingling of men and women.

Again, BNP Chairperson and 18-party chief Khaleda Zia asked her party men on the evening of May 5 to stand beside the Hefajat men at Shapla Chattar's rally, which was organised as part of the Dhaka-siege programme to force the government to meet the 13-point demand.

Khaleda's call came after a daylong mayhem around the rally spread panic among the people across the country as they witnessed the violence on private television channels.

All this and many other political developments have made it clear that Hefajat has unannounced ties with the BNP and Jamaat, though the Islamist group claims to be apolitical, anti-Jamaat and a force only fighting for Islamisation of the country.

Later, Hefajat Secretary General Junaid Babunagari's confessional statement to the magistrate revealed that the BNP-Jamaat led 18-party alliance had patronised the Hefajat's May 5 rally at Shapla Chattar with the aim of toppling the government.

# Email with a real kiss

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'sealed with a loving kiss', today an 'x' or two at the end of an email or text can be as romantic as it gets.

But now Burberry, in association with Google, are aiming to bring some love back into our correspondence.

They have invented 'Burberry Kisses' as a way of 'humanising technology through emotive digital experiences'.

What this means is users can log onto to

Kisses.Burberry.com where they can send a personal kiss to a loved one.

They can do this by either capturing a picture of their lips on a desktop camera or by kissing their touch screen mobile.

If you're not able to provide a kiss of your own lips via a camera or touch screen, Burberry also have their own 'quick kisses' that can be sent.

Before sending their kiss, users can then chose

what lip colour they want from Burberry's range of shades including pinks, purples, nudes and reds.

They can then add a personal message before sending their kiss off digitally to their nearest and dearest.

But the fun doesn't end there.

The journey of each kiss is then brought to life through a personalised animation showing three-dimensional city skylines such as London and New

York, charting the delivery progress from the sender's location to the recipient's.

For those who still don't understand how to send a kiss, Burberry have created a how to video, which you can view below, explaining how it works.

The Burberry website has a real time 'World of Kisses' map so people can see where kisses are being sent around the globe and discover which city is the most romantic.

# BNP sceptic about fair elections

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speaking to journalists after an around-one-and-a-half-hour meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed yesterday afternoon at the EC Secretariat.

Headed by Moin, the delegation includes BNP leader Sujadullah, Abdul Halim and Jabidullah.

At the meeting, the opposition leaders made several allegations against the ruling party-backed candidates and ministers who visited the electoral areas.

"The attack on a candi-

date in Barisal by the local administration has raised confusion about free and fair elections," said Moin Khan.

He described the city corporation elections as very significant prior to the upcoming parliamentary polls. "The nation is eagerly waiting to see the outcome of the elections.

"If necessary, the Election Commission has to take all necessary measures including deploying army for holding fair elections," the BNP leaders said.

Meanwhile, Communication Minister

Obaidul Quader said on Thursday the EC might deploy army in city corporation elections if need be.

He said the government would not interfere or make any obstacles to holding the elections in a free manner, reported A correspondent of The Daily Star.

Quader was talking to journalists after visiting construction of four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Chandina in Comilla.

Two senior BNP MP yesterday in parliament demanded army deployment during the elections to

the city corporation polls so that "voters could cast their votes without fear."

Standing on point of order, Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee and Jafrul Islam Chowdhury said government-backed cadres, ministers and MPs were trying to influence the city corporation polls for manipulating the results in their favour.

In protest, treasury bench senior member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim said BNP was coming up with lame excuses sensing their sure defeat in the polls.