

Tailbacks, thanks to PM's reception

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A number of ministers, lawmakers, and military and government officials, diplomats and top AL leaders were present at the airport to receive Hasina. The premier left the airport at 6:10pm and directly went to her official residence, Gono Bhavan, via Jahangir gate.

The Daily Star correspondents talked to commuters, who suffered due to long tailbacks in Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, Tejgaon, Nakhla Para, Bijoy Sarani, Mohakhali, Gulshan, Baridhara, Kuril, Uttara, Mirpur, Nakhla Para, Moghbazar, Paltan and Azimpur.

"As I reached Bijoy Sarani near parliament around 4:30 on my way to Farmgate, I saw people dancing in the middle of the street, and vehicles were struggling to make their way through. I had to wait there for more than 25 minutes," said Ziaul Haque, who works at a private organisation.

"Usually, it takes half-an-hour to reach my office at Farmgate by car from Asad Avenue. But today it took about 90 minutes," he said.

There had been tailbacks on busy roads from the airport to Gono Bhavan since 3:00pm.

But top traffic officials claimed that vehicular movement across the capital was normal.

Mir Rezaul Alam, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (traffic), said there was no traffic congestion in the capital due to the ruling party's reception for the prime minister.

"The traffic is as usual today," he said.

But in reality, traffic jams in many parts of the capital were so severe that many commuters got down from vehicles and walked to their destinations.

Farhana Islam, who had left Nikunja around 4:30pm for her Chankharpu residence, remained stuck at Banani till 6:40pm.

"I remained stuck there for more than an hour." She finally got down from the vehicle and started walking.

Many ambulances carrying patients had been stuck on several roads for hours.

Md Tareq, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, said he started for Mirpur from Uttara around 5:30 but could not cross Kuril till 7:40pm.

Fifty-year-old businessman Md Hanif Mia, who was on his way to Mouchak market from Uttara, said he had hardly seen such a severe traffic jam in the capital.

Vehicular movement on the road from Gono Bhavan to Jahangir Gate

came almost to a almost halt, as ruling party leaders and workers marched through the road shortly after 5:00pm.

"We remained stuck at Mohakhali intersection for two hours from 5:00pm," said Md Farhad, conductor of a bus that plies between Abdullahpur and Gulistan.

Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on the busy road for hours.

Seeing no sign of improvement in vehicular movement, hundreds of passengers, who were returning home from work, got down from the vehicles and started walking to their destinations.

"As my bus remained stuck in a traffic jam for 30 minutes at Mohakhali, I got down from the vehicle and started walking," said Rawshan Ara Rumana.

"It took me more than an hour to reach Farmgate," said the woman, who is in her forties.

Monowar Ahmed, who lives in Khilkhet, said he had to walk from Mohakhali up to Farmgate to catch a bus to Jatrabari.

"Though doctors asked me not to lift heavy objects, I had to carry my luggage weighing around 30kg all the way," he said.



Awami League leaders and dignitaries receive Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her arrival at Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Mir Quasem's trial

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of Jamaat's executive council, is now facing 14 charges, including those of murder, torture, abduction and confinement of people and complicity in crimes against humanity during the war in 1971.

Justice ATM Fazle Kabir, chairman of the three-member Tribunal-1, said a large number of cases were pending before the tribunal in comparison with those before the other tribunal.

"In the interests of speedy disposal of the case, let the case be transferred to Tribunal-2 as per section 11A (1) of the International Crimes Tribunal Act," he observed.

Seemingly perplexed, defence counsel Tajul Islam told the tribunal that nei-

ther the prosecution nor the defence had filed any petition to transfer the case.

The tribunal chairman said the transfer was a suo moto (its own) move.

Quasem was brought to the tribunal in the morning but he was not produced before the panel.

Tribunal-1 had indicted Quasem on September 5.

NIZAMI'S CASE

Mizanul Islam, defence counsel in the war crimes case against Motiur Rahman Nizami, yesterday cross-examined Abdur Razzak Khan, investigation officer of the case.

Mizanul asked the IO whether he had filed the case against Jamaat-e-Islami leaders including Nizami as a part of "a conspiracy of the government".

The witness replied in the negative.

The defence counsel also asked questions on different documents showed as evidence by the prosecution.

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Tribunal-1 yesterday deferred passing further order on a show-cause notice served on Human Rights Watch (HRW) until October 4.

The deferral came after counsel Asaduzzaman, who appeared for the HRW, prayed for an adjournment, saying he was yet to get the power of attorney.

On September 2, the tribunal issued the show-cause notice asking the HRW to explain why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated

Honour for 60 more

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Of the awardees 44 are from India, four each from Pakistan and USA, two each from UK and Japan, one each from Egypt, Sri Lanka and Turkey, and an international organisation.

This will be the seventh phase of honouring foreign friends since the government began giving awards on July 25, 2011. So far 278 people have been honoured.

Former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi was the first among foreign friends to be given the highest state honour -- Bangladesh Freedom Honour -- in recognition of her contribution to the War.

Her daughter-in-law Sonia Gandhi, now president of India's ruling Congress party, received the award on her behalf from late president Zillur

Rahman.

Officials said family members and relatives of the awardees have been invited to receive the awards on their behalf. If any recipient cannot travel to Dhaka, the award will be sent through the Bangladesh missions abroad.

The government is bearing all the expenses, including air travel and accommodation.

The prominent Indian awardees include former minister late VK Krishna Menon, Air Chief Marshal (ret'd) Suroop Krishna, former chief of the army staff of Indian Army Lt General Tapishwar Narain Raina, Commander 20 Indian Mountain Division Major General (ret'd) Lachman Singh Lehl, late ambassador Samar Sen,

noted singer late Suchitra Mitra and film actress Waheeda Rahman.

The Pakistani recipients are noted politicians late Abdul Wali Khan, late Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and late Master Khan Gul, and Prof Tariq Rahman.

Earlier on March 24, Bangladesh honoured 13 Pakistani friends for their contributions to the 1971 war.

Meanwhile, addressing a press briefing State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Capt (ret'd) AB Tajul Islam said yesterday the nation would honour its foreign friends for their contribution to the War.

On a question about awarding Pakistani nationals, he said they would be awarded as individuals, not as representatives of Pakistan.

Kenyan MPs inspect mall massacre wreckage

AFP, Nairobi

Kenyan lawmakers investigating alleged security failings during the deadly assault on Nairobi's Westgate mall by Islamist gunmen inspected yesterday the charred wreckage, where searches continue for 39 people still missing.

The four-day bloodbath at the upmarket shopping mall, which Kenyan forces brought to an end today, left at least 67 people dead.

Politicians from both the parliament's national security and the defence and the foreign relations committee, visited the mall yesterday afternoon, entering the main hall, its floor littered with shattered glass and smeared in blood.

Shop owners reported their stores were looted during the siege, and photographs they posted on social media -- including from a luxury jewelry shop -- show shelves cleaned of goods.


The visit of the MPs launched the start of investigations, which will involve their quizzing of Kenyan security chiefs over the handling of the deadly raid.

"We have taken this matter extremely seriously," said Asman Kamama, head of the defence and the foreign relations committee.

"We want to promise you that as parliament we will investigate, establish and see whether the people who were directly in charge of our security slept on their jobs."

The Red Cross yesterday said the number of people still unaccounted for stood at 39, dropping from the previous figure of 61, after bodies were either identified, or those believed to have been missing were found to have not been at the mall.

SQ Chy verdict today



SALAUDDIN QUADER CHY

Present Status:
member of BNP's Standing Committee

Status in 1971:
Eldest son of of Pakistan Convention Muslim League president Fazlul Quader Chowdhury

Arrested:
December 16, 2010

Indicted: April 4, 2012

Charges:
23 charges including genocide, killing, abduction, torture, confinement, looting, setting fire to homes and shops

Magnitude of crimes:
Involved in the killings of 200 people including 111 Hindus on April 13, 1971

Prosecution Witness: 41

Defence Witness: four

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judgment delivery.

On August 14, the tribunal kept the case waiting for verdict.

After the pronouncement of the date, the prosecution said they had been able to prove 17 of the charges beyond reasonable doubt.

"We hope he [Salaudhin] will get the capital punishment," said prosecutor Zead Al Malum.

The defence counsel on the other hand claimed that the prosecution had failed to prove the charges and hoped Salaudhin would be acquitted.

If convicted, Salaudhin might have to walk the gallows.

Although BNP's ally Jamaat-e-Islami had observed halt on previous verdict days, the main opposition BNP could not

decide whether to go for similar programme for Salaudhin till the last evening.

Wising anonymity, several BNP leaders said the party members were not comfortable on the issue and no meeting had been held in the last two or three months in this regard.

However, the party's standing committee member Moudud Ahmed said BNP would give its reaction after the verdict.

The two tribunals dealing with the crimes against humanity cases have so far delivered verdicts in six cases since the establishment of the first tribunal in March 2010 and the second in March 2012.

The Tribunal-1 awarded the former Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam 90 years' imprisonment and its Nayebe-Ameer Delawar Hossain Sayedee the capital punishment.

The Tribunal-2 sentenced expelled Jamaat member Abul Kalam Azad

and its General Secretary Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Assistant Secretary General M u h a m m a d Kamaruzzaman to death penalty, while its another Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Mollah life term.

The Appellate Division of Supreme Court last month extended Quader Mollah's punishment and awarded him capital punishment.

Law enforcers arrested Salaudhin on December 16, 2010 at Banani in the capital in connection with torching a car in Moghbazar area on June 26. On December 19, he was shown arrested following a warrant issued by the tribunal.

The prosecution pressed 24 specific charges against Salaudhin on November 14, 2011. On November 17, 2011 the tribunal took the charges into cognisance.

Salaudhin was finally indicted on 23 charges on April 4, 2012.

According to the formal charges, as a member and leader of Convention Muslim League, a pro-Pakistan political party, and also as an individual, and member of a group of individuals, Salaudhin had committed crimes against humanity, genocide and other crimes in different places of Chittagong district during the Liberation War.

The prosecution produced 41 witnesses, including an "eyewitness" who claimed to have seen Salaudhin shoot and kill Nutan Chandra Sinha, founder of herbal medicine brand Kundeshwari Oushadhalaya, in 1971.

The defence was able to bring four witnesses, including Salaudhin and his cousin, to prove their client innocent and that he was not in the country during the war.

Both the sides placed closing arguments between July 28 and August 14 of this year.

The charges against Salaudhin say he was involved in killing more than 200 people, including Nutan Chandra Sinha.

Nutan was one of among 111 people killed on April 13, 1971 by Salaudhin, his accomplices and the Pakistani soldiers. Nutan was killed around 9:30am but the killing that day actually started around 6:00am and went on until 5:00pm in five places.

The people killed that day were mostly Hindus of Raojan's Moddhya Gohira Hindu Para, Jogot Mollo Para, Unsattur Para and Sultanpur village.

Many were also injured that day and their houses were looted and torched, read the charges.

Pro-liberation people including a large number of Hindus were also forced to leave the country due to the atrocities committed by Salaudhin and his accomplices, the charges say.

Cap on Grameen's

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Talking to journalists at the secretariat, Muhith said: "Tax holiday facility is given for a certain period. The same will happen with Grameen Bank."

Under the Grameen Bank Ordinance, the bank is now enjoying tax exemption, not tax holiday.

The minister added the government would pass only one more law, the Grameen Bank Act 2013, during its tenure.

He said the law would be passed in the ongoing parliamentary session.

However, there might not be any major changes in the structure of the microcredit bank once the new law takes effect, but Muhith said the law would bring Grameen Bank under Bangladesh Bank's authority.

The bank is being brought under the central bank's control in line with the recommendations of the G r a m e e n B a n k Commission.

Sources at Bangladesh Bank, however, said they were reluctant to take control of Grameen Bank in their hands.

The central bank has said the Microcredit Regulatory Authority, which regulates microfinance institutions, should get the job.

But the minister said: "It is better to keep Grameen Bank under the control of Bangladesh Bank, as it is a big and reputed institution. It will also enhance the prestige of Bangladesh Bank."

He added the government would perhaps issue an executive order regarding rules for the election of directors of the microcredit bank.

Earlier, the minister had said the Grameen Bank Commission would submit its final report on the bank and its associate organisations by September 30, but the report had not been turned in.

"The report might or might not be submitted today [yesterday]," he said.

Demo stopped after govt assurance

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Khondoker Mainur Rahman, member secretary of the Diploma Engineers' Parishad, said the meeting decided to increase diploma engineers' quota to 50 percent from the existing 33 percent for promotion to the post of assistant engineer from sub-assistant engineer.

Besides, the meeting agreed to drop the post of "supervisor", the entry-level position held by diploma engineers. From now on, the position will be "sub-assistant engineer", he added.

Regarding the postponement of demonstrations for 15 days, Mainur said, "We gave the authorities 15 days to meet the assurances made by them in the meeting."

Talking to The Daily Star, Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser said the meeting discussed the demands of the students and diploma engineers.

"Actually, there is no post of supervisor for diploma engineers, but there is some confusion about it," he mentioned.

STUDENTS GO BERSERK

During yesterday's demonstrations by polytechnic students, an OC of Detective Branch (DB) of police suffered bullet wounds in Rajshahi.

The aggrieved students, who have been demonstrating since September 22, also blocked different roads and highways across the country yesterday.

At least 35 crude bombs went off across the country. Law enforcers rounded up at least 35 people in this connection.

RAJSHAH

Witnesses said violence ensued around 11:30am when students tried to block the Rajshahi-Naogaon highway. The protesters torched a police motorbike in front of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute in the

city.

Facing resistance from police, the students returned to their campus and started hurling crude bombs and brickbats at the law enforcers.

At least 30 homemade bombs went off during the one-hour clash, leaving six policemen, including the OC of DB, injured, said Ziaur Rahman, OC of Boalia Police Station.

Later, police and Rapid Action Battalion personnel entered the campus and charged batons, leaving at least 45 people injured.

The law enforcers fired over 100 rubber bullets and lobbed at least 40 teargas canisters to bring the situation under control around 12:30pm.

BOGRA

Police fired three rubber bullets to disperse the agitating students as they blocked the Sherpur road in front of Barga Polytechnic Institute and vandalised several

vehicles around 9:30am.

SYLHET

Students of Sylhet Polytechnic Institute vandalised seven vehicles at in the city's Khojarkhola.

Later, police reached the spot and got the situation under control.

Protesting the vandalism, transport workers in Sylhet blocked the Dhaka-Sylhet highway by parking buses and trucks on the road around 2:00pm.

Police later removed the barricade around 4:45pm.

KHULNA

At least 10 people, including two primary school students, were injured when the students of several polytechnic institutes vandalised at least 10 vehicles on Dhaka-Khulna highway near Khulna city around 11:00am.

FENI

At least 15 people, including four policemen and two journalists, were injured as the students of Feni Polytechnic Institute clashed with law enforcers in the town.

The agitating students also vandalised several vehicles and blasted at least five crude bombs during the clash that continued for more than one hour from 10:30am, said Abul Kalam Azad, inspector (investigation) of Sadar Model Police Station.

The injured policemen and newsmen were admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital.

BHOLA

The agitating students of Bhola Polytechnic Institute blocked the Bhola-Charfasson highway in Borhanuddin upazila around 10:00am. Police removed the barricade around 1:00pm.

Students also staged protests in Kurigram, Patuakhali and Tangail.

(Our correspondents in Rajshahi, Bogra, Sylhet, Khulna, Feni and Bhola contributed to this report)

Tax return

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Successive governments have extended the deadline for filing tax returns almost every year in recent past.

Earlier, the tax authority launched a portal to provide TIN online, a major step towards the electronic tax payment system.

Under the new initiative, a taxpayer has to log on to the NBR's website incometax.gov.bd and provide details, including the national identity card number, mobile phone number and e-mail address, to get a TIN.

The existing TIN holders, too, will have to re-register by December 31, 2013 for the new 12-digit number, which would replace the current 10-digit number on January 1, 2014.

Companies will have to re-register as well by submitting their registration numbers obtained from the Registrar of Joint Stock of Companies and Firms.

The new TIN will have to be used for tax returns for the 2013-14 fiscal.