



A group of Chhatra Dal activists vandalise a vehicle carrying high-priority export goods at Malibagh in the capital yesterday on the eve of opposition's 60-hour hartal.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Pran starts recalling turmeric powder

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"We will withdraw our entire supply of turmeric powder from the market within seven days," said Kamruzzaman Kamal, marketing director of Pran.

Pran took the decision after The Daily Star published a report on November 2 that said the turmeric powder sold in the local markets contains high levels of lead -- between 40 parts per million (ppm) and 55 ppm -- that far exceeds the permissible limit of 2.5 ppm set by Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) carried out tests and detected a presence of high levels of lead.

Last month, four stores in the US recalled Pran's turmeric powder after US Food and Drug Administration found excessive levels of lead, which could cause health problems if consumed.

Following the FDA disclosure and media reports, BSTI also collected samples of turmeric powder and other spices of several brands, including Pran, from the domestic market.

The BSTI results are yet to be made public.

When asked, BSTI Director (Certification Mark) Kamal Prashad Das said the agency has found the presence of lead in high amounts in Pran's turmeric powder.

"We are yet to get all the results. We will submit

a report to authorities after we receive all the results and will seek explanations from the company," he said.

Pran said some tests confirmed the presence of excessive lead in its turmeric powder and some tests did not.

"It seems from our primary assessment that the level of lead might be higher in turmeric produced in certain areas of Bangladesh, whereas such excess levels of lead cannot be found in turmeric produced in other parts," it said in the statement.

Pran said it would put its turmeric back in the market by detecting the sources behind lead contamination in the spice.

Verdict brings solace

MASUDA BANU FAROUK

Masuda Banu Farouk Ratna, first prosecution witness of the case, said, "The state must take steps to bring the duo back to Bangladesh."

Referring to the US, she said the country had opposed our independence even during the Liberation War.

She, however, added Bangladesh should not give up and should instead continue to push for its rightful demand.

TAWHEED REZA NOOR

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long-awaited and appropriate.

"They deserved this sentence," he said, adding that the future generation would learn from the verdict the heinous crime that was committed on the eve of liberation, to cripple the nation by killing its intellectuals.

"This is the first step towards justice, but it will be fully achieved once we can execute the verdict by bringing back Ashrafuzzaman from the US and Chowdhury Mueen Uddin from the UK," said Noor, also a prosecution witness.

He said he hoped the opposition parties would realise that the war crimes trial was a national issue and would stop being irresponsible by calling the trial into question.



HAMIDA BANU

Hamida Banu, younger sister of martyred Prof Giasuddin, said: "We wanted it. We've got justice after such a long time."



"Now we hope that they will be brought back home from abroad and that the verdict will be executed. It should be executed within the tenure of this government."

ENAMUL HUQ KHAN

Prof Enamul Huq Khan, son of martyred Prof Serajul Haque Khan, expressed his doubt about the execution of the verdict.

"The trial of war criminals was an election pledge of the present government but it took time to start it. I do not think it can be completed within this tenure."

SHYAMALI NASREEN

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the nation had paid its debt to its best sons through the verdict.

She expressed her gratitude to the court for bringing into its observation the sufferings of the families of the intellectuals and yet praising the widows of the martyrs who were able to bring up their children as good citizens.

She added that through the verdict the world would know what Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman had done. "The world now will also know that these two countries [the UK and the US] are giving shelter to war criminals," she said.

RASHIDUDDIN AHMAD

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of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College, is skeptical about the execution of the verdict as Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman are both abroad.

He feels that their extradition would have been easy if the International Court of Justice or the United Nations could be involved.

It was matricide

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their complicity in the killing of martyred journalist Selina Parveen.

Terming her killing a matricide, the court described the brutality of her death by bayonet charge even after she pleaded for life for the sake of her only child.

Selina Parveen, editor of Shilalipi, a pro-liberation weekly that published articles by prominent personalities including Prof Munier Chowdhury, journalist Shahidullah Kaiser, Zahir Raihan and ANM Golam Mostafa, became the target of Al-Badr as she used the weekly's earning to help freedom fighters.

Her son Shumon Zahid was eight when she was abducted on December 13, 1971.

In July this year, Shumon testified in the tribunal. He gave a vivid description of his mother's abduction, which he had witnessed.

Selina's last words that she would return in a few minutes are still fresh in his mind.

In 1996, Shumon came to know about his mother from another witness Delwar Hossain, the lone survivor of Rayerbazar massacre.

Delwar, who in 1971 had an argument with his non-Bangalee boss of a private company regarding Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was also detained at Al-Badr's Mohammadpur Physical Training Centre camp along with other freedom-



Shumon Zahid

loving Bengalees.

He testified that he had been there during Selina Parveen's killing along with other detainees on December 15 at Katusur in Mohammadpur, currently the site of Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial.

Blindfolded, he heard a woman screaming and pleading Al-Badr men not to

kill her.

The judgment quoted Delwar's testimony of what Selina had said, "Don't kill me. You have mothers and sisters. What if I were your mother or sister? I have a little kid; he will die, if you kill me."

She also told the men her name, Delwar had told the court.

Even after that the Al-Badr men showed no mercy; rather they charged her with bayonet to death.

The judgment continued saying, "Selina Parveen was a mother. The appalling attack was done not only to Selina Parveen but to the mother's line. The killing was rather a matricide. This indescribable brutality shocks the human conscience indeed."

Talking to The Daily Star, Shumon Zahid said, "I have received a verdict after 42 years but justice is yet to be served. I will receive justice once the criminals [Ashraf and Mueen] are brought back to Bangladesh and executed."

Arrest culprits in 24 hours

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submit the probe report before the court in next 30 days, according to the order.

The HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain came up with the order following reports published in different newspapers, including The Daily Star, yesterday.

The bench also issued a rule upon the government to explain within four weeks why it should not be directed to take appropriate legal action against the people responsible for the attacks on the minorities.

Deputy Attorney General Bishwojit Roy said he informed officials concerned of the government, including the IGP, of the HC

directives.

On Saturday, a violent mob, allegedly led by BNP-Jamaat men, attacked the Hindus and vandalised at least 26 houses at Bonogram Bazaar, alleging that a local Hindu boy, Rajib Saha, maligned Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) on a Facebook page.

However, The Daily Star has found that the Facebook page, photocopies of which were used to incite the attacks, has no links with Rajib.

Supreme Court lawyers Subrata Chowdhury and AM Aminuddin placed the newspaper reports on the incident of attacks before the judges of the HC bench for passing necessary orders.

Terrific Tigers

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2010 when the Tigers completed a scarcely imaginable 4-0 whitewash in the ODI series. That marked Bangladesh's ascent into a competitive ODI unit, and yesterday's achievement -- the Tigers chased down a 300-plus total, 309 for 6 in 49.2 overs in reply to 307 for 5 from 50 overs to be precise, for the second time in their history -- only confirmed their deserved place at cricket's top table, regardless of what rankings say.

Bangladesh's rise is evident from the list of performers who made the whitewash possible. Inspirational all-rounder and the best cricketer in the land Shakib Al Hasan sat out the series having contracted dengue fever, but Bangladesh hardly missed a step. In the first match in Mirpur Rubel Hossain burst out of the background with a hat-trick and six wickets after Mushfiqur Rahim and Naeem Islam rescued the side with near-

hundred innings; in the second it was Tamim Iqbal, Shohag Gazi, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Mominul Haque and in the third newcomer Shamsur Rahman nervously scored 96 and went about the business of chasing down a big total before Naeem, Nasir Hossain, Mahmudullah Riyad and Gazi completed the job.

That it is beginning to sound like an Oscar-winner's speech is all the more reason to celebrate a consummate ensemble act.

The most refreshing thing about this Bangladesh team is that they are not willing to rest on laurels -- an attitude that made the whitewash possible. After yesterday's victory, skipper Mushfiqur said that they wanted to make it 4-0 by winning the lone Twenty20 International at Mirpur on Wednesday. That would cap off a fantastic series for the Tigers, and it would be foolish to bet against them.

Rally makes commuters suffer a lot

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road for one hour from 2:00pm.

Thousands of people were forced to take the roads and footpaths due to lack of public transport or traffic congestion on the roads leading to Suhrawardy Udyan.

Further nuisance was caused by flouting of traffic rules by vehicles carrying party supporters. Three BRTC buses carrying AL supporters to the rally were seen on the wrong lane on Bijoy Sarani around 3:30pm. Vehicular movement had to stop on that lane because of the violation of rules.

The same violation was observed in other areas including Kakrail-Matsya Bhaban intersection.

Bus operators said different thana units had earlier reserved hundreds of buses leading to a shortage of public transport.

Abul Kalam, acting president of Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity, told The Daily Star that around 200 buses had been rented from Mirpur bus terminal alone.

"The ruling party leaders were competing with each other in their bid to take more supporters to the rally. So, they rented as many buses as possible," he added.

Another bus owner said many buses were taken by force. "We did not dare to ask for fare. We only want our vehicles back in one piece," said a owners' association leader asking not to be named.

Raihan Bin Shafiq, a banker who works at Motijheel, said he walked from the Jatiya Press Club to Karwan Bazar intersection to avail a transport to reach Shyamoli in the evening.

"It took me three hours to get back home

after work," he added.

"Although the road from Bangla Motor intersection to Farmgate was comparatively free in the evening, no public vehicle was available on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue," said Sanjida Afrin, a college teacher.

The Farmgate bus stop in front of Ananda cinema was thronged by weary passengers waiting for buses.

Tinni, a student standing at the bus stop, told this correspondent that she had been waiting for a bus to Abdullahpur for more than half an hour but saw none.

"It would normally cost around Tk 40 to go there by bus. I have to take a CNG-run auto-rickshaw now that would cost me around Tk 300-400," said Tinni.

US, UK, Canada issue travel alert

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Worried over hartals and frequent acts street violence, the US, UK, Canada and Australian missions in Dhaka issued travel warnings to their citizens travelling to or residing in Bangladesh, advising them to be very cautious.

Alerting its citizens, the US said violence could also occur in the evening/night before a hartal.

The UK reminded its citizens and travellers that acts of violence in public places could occur without notice.

Canada advised its citizens to exercise high degree of caution due to the fragile political situation and that the security situation could deteriorate quickly.

Australia said with the election ahead, the tempo of political activities in Bangladesh will increase.

Day he waited so long for

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closer to becoming the nation his father and other martyred intellectuals once dreamt.

"I didn't get my father and so he remains in my personal feelings which I don't want to disclose," he told The Daily Star.

"But the most important thing is that the verdict will help fulfil the dreams of a non-communal Bangladesh my father and other martyrs dreamt of. We are happy with the verdict," said the 42-year-old professor of Khulna University.

Anirban brought along his son, Bishonko Broto, so he can hear the verdict.

"I came here to hear the verdict against those who killed my grandfather and others during the Liberation War," said Bishonko, a class-IV student.

"At the dawn of December 11, 1971, when my grandfather was walking in the veranda with my father in his arms, a group of Pakistani occupa-

tional forces along with Mueen Uddin came and forcibly took my grandfather away, saying he will be released soon," he added.

He said they killed and tortured those who dreamt of a non-communal country. "Some fought in the battle fields, others with pen; and my grandfather belonged to the latter group."

Asked from whom Bishonko learned his grandfather's story, Afroza Parvin said he grew up in such a family environment. "He understands these issues deeply though he is too young to realise it."

In his testimony in the case against Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan, Anirban said: "I did not get a chance to call out my father as 'baba'. But I have always cherished the name of Bangladesh in my heart."

Anirban said the government should now bring the two convicts back home and execute the verdict.

Rich Hindu? So extort

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Babul, who is now under Ataikula police custody for safety, said he did not understand what his son had actually done.

According to locals, Khokon is a supporter of BNP and Manik belongs to Jamaat. Selim Khan, leader of Ataikula union BNP and defeated chairman candidate of union parishad election in 2011, was backing the extortionists.

Sources also said a few Awami League men had links with the youths.

The group chose Saturday as it was the weekly market day at Bonogram in Santhia upazila. It was also the occasion of Kali Puja.

Around 10:00am, some unidentified people started distributing photocopies of what they said was a "Facebook page", claiming Rajib had defamed Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) in a post.

Jamaat-Shibir supporters began agitating around 11:00am. An announcement from the loudspeaker of the bazaar mosque did the rest. Hundreds of people came out clamouring for Rajib's "execution".

The youths were waiting for this. They and their men attacked Sahapara and Ghoshpara simultaneously, vandalising and looting around 100 houses from around 12:30pm to 3:00pm.

Locals alleged when a mob started to wreck the houses in the two Hindu villages, law enforcers were busy trying to confront agitating mobs blockading the Dhaka-Pabna highway.

Anil Kumar Sarker of Sahapara said a gang of 10 to 12 youths, armed with sticks, stormed his house around 12:30pm. They left hurriedly after vandalism.

"As soon as they left, I phoned Pabna Superintendent of Police Sirajuddin Ahmed and told him what was happening," he said. The SP told him, "Police have been mobilised to tackle the situation."

Anil then rang Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Uddin.

"The DC asked me if I have contacted the SP and when I said yes, he assured me that the SP would take care of the problem."

Around 1:30pm, over 50 unruly people attacked Anil's house again.

"At that time I took refuge in the attic with my family and watched through a crack the men ravaging my already-damaged house. Then they set ablaze the idols inside the family temple," he added.

"It was the day of our Kali Puja and the village was in a festive mood. Suddenly all hell broke loose leaving us shaken to the core."

There was no trace of police until 2:30pm when a team of four cops arrived leisurely at Sahapara. "The policemen went around the village and left in about 10 minutes, since then none of the law enforcers have come to see us," said Anil.

Sukumar Biswas of Ghoshpara said ten to twelve marauding groups, mostly youths, created panic by screaming as they rampaged through the village. "They stole gold ornaments

and cash and destroyed our refrigerator, TV, computer, beds, tables, utensils and what not."

A trail of destruction can be seen throughout the villages.

The areas have maintained communal harmony since the independence despite being dominated by Jamaat-e-Islami, a party historically known for practising communal politics.

Eighty-year-old Bishnu Priya Saha said she was born at Sahapara and lived all her life there but never imagined she would see this day. "Here we, the Hindus and Muslims, are living like brothers and sisters for generations."

Meanwhile, local administration organised a solidarity meeting on the bazaar mosque premises to quell tension and distributed cash, rice and corrugated tin sheets to the victims.

Asked why police failed to protect the Hindu houses, DC Ashraf Uddin claimed forces reached the scene when mob blockaded the road and tried to quell the situation.

OC Rezaul Karim of Ataikula Police Station said they were not informed of the attacks and looting immediately. "My limited force was busy controlling the mob on the highway."

Police arrested Rezaul Karim of Gaurigram after filing a case in the evening against twenty named and more than a hundred unnamed people.

Contacted, BNP leader Selim said his political rivals were bringing false allegation against him.