

# 1,025 kg sulphur seized in Ctg

Stockpiled to make bombs, suspects Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 1,025 kilograms of sulphur packed in 21 sacks from a godown at Panwalapara in Chittagong city early yesterday.

Commander Shahed Karim, commanding officer of Rab-7, said the chemical agent might have been stockpiled to make crude bombs.

Three workers of the storehouse – Suman Basak, 21, Md Monir Hossain, 23, and Lipon Chandra Nath, 26 – were arrested from the spot.

They could not show any document in support of the stocks, said Karim.

Sagir Hossain, 25, owner of the tin-shed godown, however, managed to flee during the eight-hour-long drive that ended around 1:30 am.

"He [Sagir] is an active follower of Jamaat-e-Islami," the Rab official said quoting the versions of local people.

It is mandatory for anyone to obtain two written approvals from the ministry concerned and the explosives department before stashing such a large amount of sulphur, he said.

Rab officials said a crude bomb could be made from only five grams of sulphur.

A case was filed with Double Mooring



Rab seizes bomb-making materials at a warehouse in Panwalapara in Chittagong yesterday. The law enforcers also arrested three people in this connection.

PHOTO: STAR

# JS election schedule by next week

Says election commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz has said the Election Commission (EC) plans to announce the schedule for the upcoming parliamentary election by next week.

He was talking to reporters at his office in the EC Secretariat yesterday.

Regarding the EC's meeting with President Abdul Hamid on Tuesday, Shah Nawaz said they had met the president to inform him that the commission had completed its preparation for holding the election in a free and fair manner.

The president had assured them of all-out cooperation in holding a fair and credible election, he said, adding that they had requested the president to take necessary steps for the deployment of army in the election.

During the meeting, the EC delegates wanted to know whether the posts of MPs would be considered to be enjoying office of profit or not.

"In response to this, the president asked us not to think about this issue," an EC official told The Daily Star.

# Dismal end of JS session

FROM PAGE 1

Records show that whoever had been in opposition bench preferred to boycott parliamentary proceedings and opted for street agitation to ensure win in the next polls.

"It is unprecedented. Such a record can't be found anywhere in the world," Prof Nizam Uddin Ahmed of Chittagong University told The Daily Star.

Also a parliamentary affairs expert, he hoped that the situation would improve in next parliament.

About the political crisis over the general election, Nizam said if the polls are not held in a free, fair and credible manner, the next parliament will fall short of people's expectations.

By not joining parliament proceedings, lawmakers cause massive damage to the House's legislative functions, he pointed out.

The current Jatiya Sangsad in the last 19 sessions ratified 271 bills, mostly in absence

of opposition MPs.

If there is no urgency, the present parliament will not be convened any more as its tenure is set to expire on January 24 next year. The next general election will be held by this time to form the new parliament.

BNP-led opposition lawmakers were present at the beginning of the current parliament on January 25, 2009. But they were absent yesterday as they opted for boycotting parliament as part of their strategy.

On several occasions, they had to return to parliament to save their membership as constitutional provisions stipulates that a member of parliament shall vacate his seat if he is absent from House, without leave of parliament, for 90 consecutive sittings.

Though the opposition MPs boycotted 342 sittings of the House, they enjoyed all the benefits as lawmakers. Sitting in opposition bench in the past, the AL legislators also enjoyed the benefits.

# Abandoned bomb

FROM PAGE 1

Increasing use of crude bombs was noticed in the recent hartals enforced by the opposition to protest against the government.

Many times Children found themselves amid agitations or violence during hartal hours and got hurt in explosions and arson attacks. Sometimes unexploded bombs left here and there fell in the hands of children only to be blasted there injuring them.

Concerned, the United Nations Children's Fund has recently urged all the political parties in Bangladesh to keep children from any kind of violence.

Yesterday, immediately after the explosion, Tofazzal and Lokman were taken to DMCH. Visiting the hospital, The Daily Star correspondent saw them screaming in pain at the emergency unit.

Tofazzal, a class three student of Civil Aviation High School, found a ball-like object wrapped in red scotch tape in a bush at the staff quarters around 1:30pm when he was playing with Lokman.

"I thought it was a toy and peeled off the tape and found a small container inside. As soon as I jerked

the container, it exploded in my hands with a big bang," Tofazzal said.

Lokman was standing beside him at that time. Splinters pierced his left wrist.

"Soon after the blast, I saw blood spewing from my wound and Tofazzal lying on the ground," Lokman said.

Tofazzal may lose the remaining two fingers of his right hand, said Abed-ar-Rahman, doctor at the emergency unit at DMCH.

Though the tendon of Lokman's left wrist has been severed by splinters, the fingers can be saved, he added.

After primary treatment, they were shifted to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation.

Tofazzal is the only son of Jamal Uddin, a garment vendor, and Farida Begum and Lokman, who had lost his father, has been living in the quarters with his cousin Asgor Ali.

"The blast blew away my dear son's hand. How will he earn his livelihood when he grows up?" Tofazzal's mother Farida said with tears in her eyes.

# 1.6 lakh kids absent

FROM PAGE 1

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid visited different exam centres in the capital and talked to invigilators, officials and students.

A total of 26,35,406 students from schools and 3,14,787 from madrasas registered for the exams this year.

Of yesterday's absentees, 1,13,507 from ebtadai madrasas, according to the data of the Directorate of Primary Education's control room. A total of 39 students among those who are taking the exams from overseas centres were also absent.

The highest number of absentees in the general discipline was from Dhaka division. Some 37,590 students did not take the exam from this division.

Dhaka division also saw the highest number of absentees in the madrasa discipline with 12,110 students refraining from sitting for the exams, the data show.

Guardians waiting outside the examination centres expressed their con-

cern over the persisting political turmoil which, they fear, might affect the academic lives of their wards. They requested the political parties not to call programmes like hartal or blockade during the exams.

"Our children suffered a lot during the JSC exams. We don't want a repetition of that," said Arifa Islam, mother of an examinee in Mirpur.

Teachers said they were finding it difficult to deal with two public examinations being held simultaneously- one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The JSC and JDC examinations which were postponed due to a few spells of hartals in the past few weeks are being held in the afternoon.

"A primary terminal exam ends at 1:30pm and a JSC exam begins at 2:00pm. We have to take all the preparations within 30 minutes. It's causing immense pressure on us," said a teacher on condition of anonymity.

The primary terminal examinations are scheduled to end on November 28.

# Public playground grabbed

FROM PAGE 16

Farzana Shahnaz Majid, who has been living in Dhanmondi for over four decades, said she and her three siblings used to play in the field designated in the master plan as a facility for the locals.

"The playground is off limits to us now," she said.

In 2004, following a public interest petition filed jointly by environmentalist group Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon and Institute of Architects Bangladesh, the HC directed the city corporation to free the playground from illegal occupancy.

In March 2011, the court again ordered Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), the public works ministry, and the club authorities to remove all illegal structures and ensure that the field remains open to public.

None has complied with the order. Instead, the city corporation built an expensive boundary wall and a majestic entrance with public money serving the club's purpose of making the playground an exclusive zone.

Jahangir Alam, chief engineer of DSCC, said they had spent Tk 1 crore to build the boundary wall with ceramic bricks and metal frames and revamp the field.

"I do not know why the wall was so necessary. As for us, we just carried out orders from the higher authorities," he said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Benazir Ahmed chairs the club's governing body and frequents

the illegally-built club office in the playground, said Mubasshar, who lives near by.

The Daily Star since July made several attempts to contact the police commissioner and left messages with his staff officer for his comments on the issue, but to no avail.

Contacted over the mobile phone, club president Manzur Kader said, "I will not talk over the phone." He hung up.

The Daily Star then made several calls to get an appointment with him. But when he finally picked up the phone, Manzur said, "I do not want to talk about the issue at all."

Ansar Ali, chief executive officer of DSCC, said they had asked the club authorities to remove the illegal structures and free the playground.

Asked why they did not do it themselves, Ansar Ali said, "We will explain that to the court. You [The Daily Star correspondent] write whatever you wish."

In July 2008, the public works ministry decided to free the ground of illegal structures, but it is evident nothing has been achieved.

Secretary of the ministry Khondaker Shawkat Hossain said, "The playground has been saved and maintained. I see nothing to fear about."

In 1984, the public works department handed over the 13.5-bigha playground to the then Dhaka City Corporation for conservation and maintenance.

# Vandalism, once again

FROM PAGE 16

Jamaat-Shibir supporters barricaded the highway at Barabkunda, Kumira and Ponthichila. Police rushed in and drove away the attackers around 3:20pm, said locals.

Police stopped vehicles from moving in to a 20-kilometre stretch of the highway, between Kumira and Borodaragarhat, to protect them from more attacks, said Sub-Inspector Mohammad Alamgir of the police station.

Jamaat leader Aminul Islam, general secretary of the party's Barabkunda union unit, had gone missing on Sunday. His body was recovered from a roadside in Ponthichila area of the upazila around 1:30pm yesterday. His head bore marks of bullet injuries, said police.

Aminul and his wife were returning home from Dhaka by bus on Sunday afternoon, Shafiqul Mawla, chief of Sitakunda upazila unit Jamaat-e-Islami, told The Daily Star.

"As the bus stopped by a restaurant in Comilla, a group of men who introduced themselves as members of the Detective Branch of police put Aminul in a minibus and left," he quoted Aminul's wife as saying.

"We had given the administration an ultimatum to release Aminul by Tuesday. But we haven't got him alive," Shafiqul said, holding the police responsible for Aminul's murder.

Contacted, Mohammad Shahidullah, additional superintendent of police, Ctg north, said, "We know nothing about it. Jamaat men try to mislead people with that sort of misinformation."

Meanwhile yesterday, the home of Sadakat Ullah Miazi, an Awami League leader and chairman of Barabkunda Union Parishad, was set on fire.

A Shibir activist was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion around 3:45pm in connection with the arson attack.

Around 8:00pm Sunday night, three trucks and a covered van were set on fire at Barabkunda in the upazila, causing traffic congestion on the highway for two hours, said Md Shahin, sub-inspector of highway police at Baro Aulia outpost.

Two trucks were set on fire on Sitakunda bypass at around 8:00am the following day, which caused a 50-kilometre tailback, said Officer-in-Charge Zakir Hossain of Baro Aulia Highway Police Station.

Vehicular movement between Darogarhat of Mirsarai upazila and City Gate was restored two hours later, when police removed the charred vehicles from the highway.

More than 150 buses were vandalised on the highway and 30 of them were set ablaze in the upazila in the last four months, said Kafil Uddin Ahmed, general secretary of Inter-district Bus Owners' Association.

A transport leader said on condition of anonymity that Jamaat-Shibir men had been carrying out attacks on vehicles on a regular basis since March, following a string of war crimes verdicts against the top leaders of the party for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

# SQ Chy's lawyer Fakhrul held

FROM PAGE 16

Police, told The Daily Star that Fakhrul was arrested from his office in the capital's Kakrail by Detective Branch (DB) of police around 3:30pm yesterday.

The draft verdict in SQ Chowdhury's war crimes case was leaked a day before the verdict was handed down by the International Crimes Tribunal -1 on October 1. SQ Chowdhury was sentenced to death for committing crimes against humanity and genocide during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

On October 4, police arrested two tribunal employees --- cleaner Nayon Ali and office assistant Faruk Hossain.

Both of the arrestees confessed to police that Fakhrul had bribed them to smuggle out the draft verdict.

In his confessional statement on October 10, Nayon said he started delivering the copy of the draft verdict using a pen drive to Fakhrul Islam's office from September 15 and earned between Tk 500-1000 a day for this.

Talking to The Daily Star, Fakhrul's nephew

Riaz Khan said, "A group of eight to ten members of DB police came to Fakhrul's office around 3:30pm and asked him to go with them to the DB headquarters on Minto Road."

"They did not show any arrest warrant and when he (Fakhrul) asked them if there was any complaint or case against him, they said-- 'no', he added.

Though Fakhrul's family members claimed that he was not hiding and was attending his office regularly, the lawyer did not appear before the tribunal on November 11 in response to a show cause notice issued against him earlier. Instead, he sent a junior lawyer named Mizanur Rahman who told the court that Fakhrul could not appear due to his preoccupations elsewhere.

Three days after the verdict was given against SQ Chowdhury, a case was filed with Shahbagh Police Station on October 4 against Nayon, Faruk, Fakhrul, his assistant Mehedi Hasan and several other unnamed people under the Information Communication Technology Act 2006.

# Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 16

gave the Razakars the responsibility to maintain law and order.

To ask such a force to carry out their responsibilities sincerely cannot be an offence. The person who committed an offence would be held responsible, Tajul said.

OUR REPLY

The rejoinder could not say how The Daily Star had incorrectly reported Tajul's argument. It did not contradict with any part of the report which mentioned him saying that the Razakar force was only formed to ensure law and order during the war.

We stand by our report.

# Not enough

FROM PAGE 1

With this statement, the BNP spokesperson apparently acknowledged that opposition leaders and activists were engaged in vandalising vehicles and street violence during the BNP-led alliance's anti-government agitation.

Earlier, Fakhrul claimed several times that no opposition leaders or activists were involved in vandalism or any criminal activities during the opposition's programmes.

He pinned the blame on the government, and said its agents were committing the crimes to taint the 18-party combine's image.

At least 20 people were killed in street violence during the opposition's shutdowns between October 27 and November 13, according to reports of The Daily Star.

On November 4, 14-year-old Monir was burnt inside his father's covered van after pro-hartal pickets set alight the vehicle on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

The boy lost his battle for life three days later at Dhaka Medial College Hospital.

The BNP-led alliance has been staging agitation for the formation of a non-party government to oversee the next parliamentary polls.

Hartal has been enforced for 48 days so far this year and almost all the shutdowns were called under the banner of the 18-party combine or BNP's key ally Jamaat-e-Islami over different demands.

Commenting on the present cabinet, Fakhrul yesterday said it's not a polls-time government, rather a "restructuring of the cabinet of the Awami League-led grand alliance".

"In the current cabinet, there are no representatives of any parties other than the components of the grand alliance. It cannot be an all-party government," said Fakhrul.

# Hartal may spoil

FROM PAGE 1

the opposition for a free, fair and participatory election under a non-party government.

In reply, the president told her that his power was limited, but he would do everything possible within his powers.

"We, therefore, have primarily decided to enforce four to five days' hartal next week if the President does not do anything," said a top leader of the opposition.

Since October 28, the opposition alliance has enforced 204 hours of hartal. This week it refrained from going for any more due to US official Nisha Desai Biswal's visit to Dhaka.

Meanwhile, in the hour-long meeting on Tuesday night, Khaleda asked her alliance leaders about the government's offer to join the polls-time cabinet.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at that time requested all to speak frankly, a top leader present in the meeting said.

Liberal Democratic Party President Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed told the meeting, "It has already been made public that a minister had proposed me to join the cabinet, but I rejected outright."

Shafiqul Mawla, chief of Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, and Mustafizur Rahman Iran, chief of Bangladesh Labour Party, also alleged that the government had asked them to leave the alliance for benefits.

Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partho on Tuesday night told The Daily Star that he too assured the meeting of not leaving the alliance although the government had contacted him.

Khaleda, also the chairperson of main opposition BNP, asked all alliance leaders to remain alert so that the government and its agents cannot lure them into double-crossing the combine, said meeting sources.

She also advised them to remain careful of "pro-government" media houses that were allegedly engaged in creating divisions among the alliance leaders.