

# Fakhrul given bail in 1 case, denied in another

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in a murder case, but denied his bail plea in another murder case.

Judge Md Jahurul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the orders after Fakhrul's lawyer submitted two separate bail petitions against the bail rejection orders of a lower court.

Fakhrul got bail in the case filed with Shahbagh Police Station for throwing a petrol bomb on a passenger bus near Shishu Park in the capital during BNP's blockade on November 28 last year.

At least 19 people were injured in the incident and four of them succumbed to their injuries. The case was then turned into a murder case.

The court rejected the bail plea of Fakhrul in a murder case filed with Ramna Police Station on November 29 last year.

The case was filed after a person was killed in the capital's Malibagh during a demonstration centring the BNP's March for Democracy Programme the previous day.

On March 27, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka granted bail to Fakhrul in a case filed for killing Ferdous Khalil, a traffic constable, in the capital's Bangla Motor on December 24 last year.

The court rejected bail petitions in two other murder cases filed against Fakhrul and sent him to jail.

On March 16, Fakhrul was sent to jail after he along with two other BNP leaders surrendered before a Dhaka court and sought bail in three murder cases.

The two other BNP leaders are its standing committee member Mirza Abbas and Dhaka city unit member secretary Abdus Salam.

# Upazila

FROM PAGE 1 also the international community that the upazila elections would be free and fair and the BNP would be accommodated at the local level. He said that would have been good for political stability.

Massive election rigging and interference during the last three phases of the elections frustrated the foreign friends and partners, Duncan claimed.

The British minister told Hasina that she had repeatedly declared that all elections held under her would be free and fair and the international community trusted her.

Duncan said the prime minister and her Awami League now enjoy absolute authority and that they could have easily made the local body elections as per the expectation of the people and the international community to give space for political opponents.

Hasina in response claimed that the elections were held perfectly as per the constitution, sources present in the meeting told The Daily Star.

She, however, admitted that there were irregularities but those were negligible.

Hasina then asked the British minister and the British High Commissioner to Dhaka Robert Gibson, who was also there, if they knew who had urged the BNP not to take part in the January 5 national elections.

She claimed that the BNP was somehow convinced that foreign powers would put BNP chief Khaleda Zia in power and that was why the party had boycotted the elections.

Gibson then told Hasina that he had no role in it and that he had not made any suggestions to the then opposition to this end.

Speaking in Bangla, the prime minister then named an ambassador who could have convinced the BNP not to take part in the January 5 national elections.

# Shop owner

FROM PAGE 20 inspector of Dhaka Medical College Hospital police camp.

Motive behind the killing could not be known. Police are yet to open an investigation as no case was filed in this connection as of last night.

Sujan, a neighbour of Rahman, claimed he heard a lot of noise and went downstairs to find bullet-hit Rahman lying on the road.

"I drove him to Dhaka Medical where doctors declared him dead around 8:00am," he said.



Farmers lay siege to a power office in Tanore, Rajshahi, yesterday demanding uninterrupted electricity supply for irrigation.

# EU-AFRICA SUMMIT France, Germany unveil new partnership

AFP, Brussels

African and European leaders held crisis talks Wednesday on the "terrifying" violence in the Central African Republic, where peacekeepers have been unable to stop a deadly spiral of Christian-Muslim strife.

As some 80 leaders from the two continents kicked off a mammoth summit that locked down parts of Brussels, France and Germany announced a new partnership for Africa aimed at promoting peace and development as well as combatting the effects of climate change.

"We want to deploy our friendship on the ground," said French President Francois Hollande, adding that it was thanks to Germany that the European Union finally had been able to announce the launch of a delayed military mission to send 800 troops to CAR.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Berlin and Paris "are seeking to be a motor" in Africa's development as well as its security.

Germany, long reticent to take part in military missions, was on "a new path", Merkel said.

Delayed due to insufficient troop and aircraft commitments from member states, the launch of the EU operation in CAR was announced on the eve of the EU-Africa summit, which winds up Thursday.

Germany has contributed air transport, with Georgia, Spain, France, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Portugal providing troops and Britain, Luxembourg and Sweden logistical support.

As chaos worsens in CAR, a score of leaders from the 54-member African Union and 28-nation EU gathered with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to discuss the crisis.

"We are deeply concerned of the desperate plight of the people of the CAR," said Ban, who is seeking Security Council endorsement for a 12,000-strong peacekeeping force to take over from the 8,000 African and

# Culprits threaten

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His third child among five, Shuva Akter, 17, took her life after she was assaulted in public on Tuesday night.

Shaolin, Mithun, Al Amin, Masud alias Masum and some others often used to stalk Shuva on her way to work, said her brother-in-law Liton Mia. On Tuesday around 9:00pm, Shaolin along with some others stopped Shuva when she was going to a neighbour's house and asked her to spend some time alone with him.

As she refused, the youths hurled abuse at her and Shaolin beat her up in public with a broom. The public harassment made her commit suicide, Liton said.

Sohrab filed the case with Kadamtali Police Station accusing six -- Shaolin, Mithun, Al Amin, Masud alias

Masum, Titu and Babu -- and two to three unidentified people.

Masud was arrested on Wednesday while the other youths went into hiding.

Police visited Sohrab's house yesterday and talked to him. But he said he still felt insecure.

"The police came and went. Who will protect us from the youths?" Sohrab asked.

Jahangir Hossain Khan, sub-inspector at the police station, is investigating the case. He said he had heard about the proposal for negotiations but had not received any complaint of death threats.

Meanwhile, Masud was produced in court yesterday with a seven-day remand prayer. The court rejected the appeal and sent him to jail.

# Lanka thru' on D/L

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yesterday in a game that was cut short due to the traditional Kalboishaki hail-storm in the second innings. Sri Lanka will play the final on April 6 against the winner of today's second semifinal between India and South Africa.

Batting first, Sri Lanka rode on two forty plus scores from Lahiru Thirimanne and Angelo Mathews to post a par-score of 160. In reply, a struggling West Indies innings were interrupted at 13.5 overs with the team score on 80 for four.

The Sri Lankan bowlers took the pace off from their deliveries and used all their experience in these conditions to peg back the men from the Caribbean.

Captain Lasith Malinga struck first when Chris Gayle played a slower delivery onto the stumps in the fifth over. Four balls later he deceived Dwayne Smith with another slower; this time bowling him through the gate.

West Indies fell into deeper waters when Seekuge Prasanna trapped Lendl Simmons in front with a straighter one in his first delivery. After 10 overs the West Indies were struggling at 53 for 3.

A 42-run stand for the fourth wicket between Marlon Samuels and Dwayne Bravo looked to be building a recovery, but Bravo was caught at square-leg off Nuwan Kulasekera.

Darren Sammy, who was his side's

saviour in the last two games, came to the crease next, but did not face any deliveries as the hail storm had hit Mirpur by then.

Earlier, crucial run-outs dented Sri Lanka's batting and it was only a late burst from Mathews, who scored 40 off 23 balls, that helped the Lions post a defendable total.

While the explosive start from Kusal Perera and Tillakaratne Dilshan, that realised 41 off the first four, built a good platform.

Perera took a liking to Krishnar Santokie's medium pacers very early in the innings and played his favourite shot - the pick-up -- twice to dismiss Santokie for two boundaries in the third.

Perera's overtly aggressive technique however, got the better of him as he got bowled by Santokie in the fourth over.

The wicket caused a ruckus for Sri Lanka, as they lost two wickets in quick time after that. Mahela Jayawardene was run out without facing a ball in the fifth over, while the out-of-touch Kumar Sangakkara was caught and bowled.

Lahiru Thirimanne, who replaced captain Dinesh Chandimal in the side, came in next and scored a 35-ball 44 to help Sri Lanka recover.

With three overs remaining Mathews hammered two sixes and three fours to take Sri Lanka to 160.

# HC asks govt Cat, station master

FROM PAGE 20

neighbour of the victim. The girl had to move to her aunt's house at Telihara village of Sadar upazila. She got only Tk 5,000 in compensation from the accused, according to the report.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain also issued a rule upon the government officials concerned to explain why the incident of rape of the child and the holding of the village arbitration to settle the issue should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, it also asked the officials why appropriate legal action should not be taken against the persons responsible for the incident, Deputy Attorney General Biswojit Roy told The Daily Star.

The Home secretary, IGP, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Bogra and officer-in-charge of Nandigram Police Station have been made respondents to the rule, he said.

# Al-Qaeda claims deadly attack on Yemen army HQ

AFP, Aden

Al-Qaeda has claimed an attack on a Yemeni army headquarters in a tightly secured district of Aden in which 20 people died, most of them militants, a monitoring group said yesterday.

A has claimed an attack on a Yemeni army headquarters in a tightly secured district of Aden in which 20 people died, most of them militants, a monitoring group said yesterday.

The building targeted in Wednesday's attack is located in the heavily patrolled coastal district of Tawahi that hosts intelligence and political police headquarters, a naval base and a presidential residence.

The al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) affiliate of the global jihadist network claimed the attack in an online message, said the US-based SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors extremist organisations.

AQAP, which the United States views as al-Qaeda's most dangerous branch, said the attack killed "nearly 50 soldiers" and was part of its campaign "to target the joint operation rooms that manage the US drones in the country".

Washington has stepped up drone strikes in Yemen against the group in recent months.

Militants launched Wednesday's attack on the northern side of the army headquarters, with some climbing a wall into the building as a suicide car bomber rammed his vehicle into a western entrance, Yemen army officials said.

Reinforcements from the 31st Armoured Brigade stationed in Aden were dispatched to support the troops in Tawahi, according to one official, who added that the fighting went on for several hours.

Six soldiers were killed and 14 wounded, while three civilians including a seven-year-old child also died, the official added. Ten of the assailants plus the suicide bomber died.

FROM PAGE 20 in Kinokawa City, Wakayama, Western Japan.

Of course, 'works' isn't exactly the right word for what she does there. Her job mostly involves sitting around, posing for pictures and looking rather stern.

But Tama has been rewarded handsomely for her efforts - she has a large window office, a hat with a gold lining, a badge, and her annual compensation is one year's worth of cat food.

Station Master Tama is special because she attracts tens of thousands of tourists each year.

Her presence at Kishi station has helped revitalise tourism in a rural area that was struggling to stay afloat.

At one point, the train line that

# Sonia, Modi

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communalism. "What she said yesterday... I appeal to the Election Commission... Asking for votes on the basis of communalism is against the rules of Election Commission as the polls have been announced," he said.

Modi was addressing a public meeting in support of BJP candidates from Indrapuram in UP's Ghaziabad district on the outskirts of the national capital.

"Twenty-four hours have passed and the news has already appeared in the media. Why is EC not taking suo moto action in this regard?" he asked.

From the same platform, he also sought votes for the candidate from neighbouring Gautam Budh Nagar avoiding the jinxed town of Noida, where there is a popular belief that leaders who visit the town lose their positions.

Earlier on Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi rejected the BJP charge that his mother, Sonia Gandhi, was playing politics of communalism, saying they were not in the habit and game of polarising elections.

But Modi yesterday said: "Sonia has made the mistake of trying to mislead and divide the nation. People will never forgive this kind of politics. For Congress, secularism is religion first but for us it is India first."

He added for his party, secularism is to unite and develop while the Congress tradition was to divide and rule.

"For Congress secularism is an election slogan. For us every community is ours. For Congress secularism is vote bank politics, for BJP, development is national agenda. For Congress, it is a political weapon, for us it is an article of faith," he said.

**TRUE FRIENDS DON'T CHANGE FACES: SONIA** Congress President Sonia Gandhi yesterday took a jibe at the BJP and Nitish Kumar for "changing face from time to time" and said that they could not be true friends of the people.

"The country is passing through an

# BNP cares about

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upazila polls was the fairest and most peaceful, he said the claim was right as the polls were fairer than January 5 national elections.

The BNP leader said the Election Working Group and other election observer groups had commented that massive irregularities took place since the third phase of upazila polls.

Through holding a controversial upazila election, the Election Commission has completed "the funeral of country's democratic pro-

# Russians view West as places of opportunities: Obama

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama said Wednesday that Russians are looking to the West as places with opportunities to succeed, a trend that worries the Kremlin.

Russia, he said, "feels surrounded, in part because people look at the West and they look at Europe and they look at America and they say this is a place where, if we put in effort, without connections, without being born to the right place, without having to pay a bribe, we might be able to succeed."

In comparison, Russia is a country that is unattractive to foreign investors and has a population that is shrinking, said Obama at a Democratic National Committee dinner.

Moscow's move to annex Crimea from Ukraine therefore stemmed from weakness rather than strength, the president said, reiterating a point that he had already made in March.

The United States has slapped visa and other limited sanctions on selected Russian figures in reprisal for Moscow's absorption of Crimea after the ouster of Kiev's pro-Kremlin president.

passed through Kishi station saw a 15 percent annual decline in ridership. But when Tama stepped into the role of station master, in 2007, there was a sudden 10 percent jump in the first year.

Just like several other rural rail operations in Japan, Wakayama Railway does not employ any staff at the majority of its stations. Which is why people adore 15-year-old Tama for what she does - watch over the station all by herself.

Well, only four days a week, that is. The rest of the days are filled in by junior station master Nitama, a three-year-old calico. But no one seems to mind the substitution; they stop to take pictures with whichever cat is on duty for the day.

examination and those changing face from time to time cannot be your true friends," Gandhi said while campaigning for Congress candidate and Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar.

"People change face from time to time and to shield their failures, blame Congress," she said during her 15 minute address.

"They are throwing dust in eyes of people only for sake of the chair."

"They want to seize democracy in their fist," she said in her maiden poll campaign in Bihar, adding that Congress was needed for development and communal harmony in the country.

Gandhi also attacked Chief Minister Nitish Kumar without naming him.

"Some people in a bid to shield their failure blame the Congress," she said.

Attacking the BJP, she said the party was acting as if only they had done all the development work in the country and others did not do anything.

Referring to enactment of MNREGA, Right to Education, Food Security Law and Land Acquisition law, the UPA chairperson praised the performance of the Manmohan Singh government in the last 10 years and said the ruling coalition had "almost" fulfilled all the promises it made in 2004 as well in 2009.

Voting for the 2014 general election will begin on April 7.

More than 814 million people - a number larger than the population of Europe - will be eligible to vote in the world's biggest democratic exercise.

Voting will be held in nine stages, which will be staggered until May 12, and results are due to be announced on May 16. Elections to state assemblies in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim will be held simultaneously.

About 23 million eligible voters have been enrolled in the 18 to 19 age group, nearly 3 percent of India's voters.

"The EC has become worthless and subservient to the government," he added.

He called upon BNP leaders and activists to embrace death and wage a movement against "the oppressive and illegal government" and to dislodge the Hasina administration.

The history of Awami League is of the history of vote dacoity, he said, adding: "The government is moving towards a one-party rule as it does not care criticism from anyone."