

GONOJAGORON MANCHA

Cops foil sit-in on Jamaat trial issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday foiled a sit-in called by the Imran H Sarker-led faction of Gonojagoron Mancha to protest the law minister's recent comment that the Jamaat-e-Islami's trial is not possible under the International Crimes Tribunal Act.

Activists first gathered at Shahbagh in the capital and then started marching in procession to the law ministry at the secretariat around 12:30pm, chanting slogans, "At what price the decision to ban Jamaat was sold", "Stop dilly-dallying over banning Jamaat", "If the Nazi party could be banned why not Jamaat" etc.

They were supposed to hold a three-hour-long sit-in in front of the law ministry. But when the procession reached Doyel Chatter at the Dhaka University campus, police obstructed it.

At one point of their argument with law enforcers, some activists tried to break through the barricade and ended up engaging in a scuffle with the

police.

The activists then sat around Doyel Chatter, chanted slogans and voiced concern over the recent developments involving the war crimes tribunal and the comments of government high-ups about it.

"People are thinking that the government has retreated from its previous stance (relating to the Jamaat)," said Imran, spokesperson of the Gonojagoron Mancha.

The Jamaat has turned into almost a dead organisation now because people have started to reject it, but the government through a negotiation is resuscitating the party, he added.

Imran also said the Mancha would hold protest rallies across the country on Friday demanding that the government clear its position as to whether it wants to ban Jamaat or not.

The Mancha held a torch procession at 6:00pm yesterday at Shahbagh protesting against the police action.

On May 29, Law Minister Anisul SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



Police prevent Gonojagoron Mancha activists from proceeding towards the Secretariat yesterday to protest against the law minister's comment on trying Jamaat-e-Islami under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act. The photo was taken near Doyel Chatter.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sangsad sits today

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which 153 MPs were elected uncontested without a single vote being cast.

The House that began its journey on January 29 this year has an unprecedented main opposition, Jatiya Party, whose members are also in the cabinet led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Awami League-led government is now all set to place in the House on Thursday a budget of more than Tk 2.5 lakh crore for the next financial year for parliamentary discussion and authorisation.

Parliamentary affairs experts said the major responsibilities to thoroughly examine the budgetary proposals and policies lie on the main opposition MPs as lawmakers belonging to the treasury bench face many limitations in criticising the proposals.

But in the current parliament, the main opposition party has created a peculiar situation by allowing some of its members to join the cabinet.

So it will be very interesting to observe how the opposition will play its role in the budget session, the experts observed

while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

"The main opposition's performance in the first session of the current parliament to ensure the government's accountability to the House was not much visible.

"Now it has been a matter of observation on their performance in the budget session," said Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, who teaches in the government and politics department of Jahangirnagar University.

Hasanuzzaman, who conducts research on parliamentary processes and good governance issues, said the discussion on the proposed budget gave the MPs opportunities to scrutinise even the activities of the ministries.

"Will the main opposition MPs use the opportunities? We will have to wait to see that," he added.

Echoing the views of Hasanuzzaman, Prof Nizam Ahmed, a teacher of the public administration department of Chittagong University, said the public perception had already strongly been that the main opposition was loyal to

the government.

"So it will be difficult for the members of the main opposition party to oppose and vote against any budgetary proposals in parliament as the budget has been approved by the cabinet in which the Jatiya Party is a part," he said.

Prof Nizam, who researches on the parliamentary process, said the opposition MPs always move cut motions opposing the budgetary allocations against the ministries and discuss the performance of the ministries concerned.

"But this time, the situation may be different," he predicted.

Jatiya Party MP Ziauddin Bablu, however, claimed that the JP had been playing the role of the main opposition party.

"We will protest against any proposal if it goes against people's interests. We will walk out of the House and stage demonstrations outside parliament, if need be," Bablu, who is secretary general of the party, said.

Prior to the beginning of the session this afternoon, the Business Advisory

Abed wins Leo Tolstoy

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on the occasion of International Children's Day on June 1, said a Brac press release yesterday.

He received the award at Moscow's historic Bolshoi Theatre after a gala concert for orphaned, disabled and disadvantaged children, where he was present as the guest of honour. About 11,000 children from all around the country gathered in Moscow to participate in the event.

The award has been given by the organisation's leader and famous writer, Albert A Likhmanov. Every year, the Russian Children's Foundation awards this medal to an outstanding humanist who has made a significant contribution to the education and care of children.

Previous awardees include Mother Teresa, Albert Sabin (inventor of the oral polio vaccine), and Swedish children's writer Astrid Lindgren.

Upon receiving the award, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed said, "I thank the Russian Children's Foundation for the honour they have shown me and Brac. Brac

has been focusing on empowering people, particularly vulnerable women and children, and creating opportunities through education for the last three decades. I have great appreciation towards the work of RDF by which they are protecting countless underprivileged children in Russia."

The Russian Children's Foundation, the country's first public organisation for the protection of children, was formed in September 1991. It currently has 74 regional offices actively working to provide social assistance to needy children in Russia in cooperation with public authorities, businesses and other community organisations.

Brac, established in 1972, is a development organisation dedicated to alleviating poverty by empowering the poor and helping to bring about positive changes in their lives by creating opportunities for them. So far its work has touched the lives of an estimated 13.5 crore people all over the world.

Ship-breaking worker killed

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After the fall, he was rushed to a private hospital in the port city. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to another private hospital, Surgiscope Hospital Ltd, where he succumbed to his injuries around 10:45pm on the day.

Kamal Uddin, owner and director of SH enterprise, claimed that Mohiuddin had slipped while get-

ting down the stairs from the ship.

Asked if the victim had safety gears on, he said Mohiuddin had returned his safety gears after finishing work atop the ship, and that he fell while descending.

All 200-250 employees of his ship-breaking yard wear safety gears during work, he added.

Contradicting Kamal, Abdur Rahim, secretary of Bangladesh Ship

Breaking Workers Association, said Mohiuddin had fallen on the deck losing control while removing a big piece of iron sheet from the scrap ship.

The body was sent to Chittagong Medical College morgue for autopsy yesterday noon.

It has marks of deep injuries in the back of the head, morgue sources said.

SH Enterprise is located in Kadam

Rasul area and close to another yard called Aafin Enterprise where four workers died on April 3 inhaling toxic gas after the explosion of a carbon dioxide cylinder. Both the yards belong to Kamal Uddin and his brother.

The Supreme Court in 2010 directed the government to ensure workers' safety at ship-breaking yards, which has largely gone

2-hr rain gets parts

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areas in the city were inundated.

Commuters, especially students and office goers, suffered a lot as vehicles and rickshaws were stranded in roads.

"I couldn't go to office on time as there was knee-deep water in front of my house. Later, I crossed the water-logged road by a rickshaw to go to my office," said Suman Miah, a resident of Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur.

Once the road is submerged, it takes the drainage system at least an hour to clear the water, he added.

Over 100 vehicles were stranded in the knee-deep water on the Rokeya Sarani between Kazipara and Mirpur-

10. The scenes in many other parts of the city were not different.

Asked about the water logging situation in the city, engineer A K M Shahid Uddin of Dhaka Wasa said, "I myself was stuck at my Jigatala home for a couple of hours due to water logging in the area."

It is normal that the city's drainage system would take at least one to two hours to drain away the rainwater, he mentioned.

On the capacity of the city's drainage system, Shahid Uddin said they have just completed the project -- "Removal of Water Logging in Dhaka City (phase-II)" -- under which the

Wasa installed pipes to drain out rain-water.

Initiated in July 2010, the Tk 198.31 crore project was scheduled to be completed by June this year. But it ended ahead of schedule.

"The drainage system has improved under the project but the city has expanded by this time," he mentioned.

Currently, the Wasa has piped drainage system in the 140 square kilometre area of the city out of its total coverage area of 360 sq km, according to the 2012-2013 annual report of Dhaka Wasa.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka Met office said rainfall might continue today and

tomorrow.

Many districts experienced rainfall yesterday due to an impact of a low formed in the western Bay of Bengal, said Shah Alam, director at Dhaka Met office.

There was 24 ml of rain in the capital from 6:00 am Sunday to 6:00 am Monday, while it rained 40 ml in the next five hours, said Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The highest 41 ml rain was recorded in Patuakhali yesterday morning.

The districts which were drenched with rain include Sylhet, Chittagong, Chandpur, Mymensingh, Rangamati, Pabna, Dinajpur and Patuakhali.

EKRAM KILLING

AL activist Belal makes confession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Belal Hossain Patwari, another Awami League man, admitted his involvement in the gruesome killing of Phulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haq at a Feni court yesterday.

Belal, general secretary of AL Anandapur union of Phulgazi, confessed before Senior Judicial Magistrate Khairul Amin under section 164 of the penal code, reports our Feni correspondent.

Khagrachhari police arrested Belal from the district's Matiranga on May 28. He went into hiding following the murder.

Meanwhile, Phulgazi AL observed dawn-to-dusk hartal in the upazila yesterday, demanding speedy trial of the perpetrators.

Locals said the AL activists created barricades on the streets putting logs and burning tyres. Vehicular movements went down to near zero in the area.

Ekram, who was also president of Phulgazi upazila AL, was shot and

burned alive in his car in broad daylight in Feni town on May 20.

Earlier, at least four more men from the ruling party admitted their direct involvement in the killing. Thus, a total of 11 of the 22 arrestees have so far confessed their crimes to the court.

Investigators also took three more arrested AL leaders -- Jihad Chowdhury, the widely suspected mastermind, Feni municipality councillor Abdullahil Mahmud Shiblu, and Jahidul Islam Bhuiyan -- on fresh remand yesterday and Sunday.

After the end of an eight-day remand, investigators produced Jihad Chowdhury, joint general secretary of Phulgazi AL, before the court of Khairul Amin, said Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Feni Model Police Station.

The magistrate placed him on a three-day remand for further quizzing, said the OC, also investigation officer of the case.

Shiblu, AL president of ward-5 of Feni municipality, was also produced

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Mobarak's war crimes trial ends

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year. But the then tribunal chairman Justice ATM Fazle Kabir went on retirement. The new chairman of the tribunal, appointed on February 23, decided to re-hear the closing arguments.

Yesterday, the three-member Tribunal-1 led by its Chairman Justice M Enayetur Rahim kept Mobarak's case on CAV [Curia Advisari Vult, a Latin legal term meaning verdict could be delivered anytime] after hearing two petitions submitted by the prosecution.

One of the petitions was forwarded to revise a 'clerical' mistake in the indictment order.

On November 11, 1971, Mobarak and his armed associates abducted Abdul Khaleque of Satian village at about 9:00 pm and took him to the Razakar camp of Suhilpur Union Parishad.

Khaleque, a pro-liberation Ansar member, faced torture and was eventually killed, according to the charges pressed against Mobarak.

The prosecution told the tribunal

that it would be 9:00 am instead of 9:00 pm and prayed to the court to revise it.

In the other petition, the prosecution submitted an explanation sought by the tribunal on the authenticity of a list of Brahmanbaria's Razakar members and also prayed to the court to keep it on record.

Opposing the petition, defence counsel Tajul Islam argued that they had cross-examined the witnesses and placed their arguments according to the time frame.

He said the prosecution would be highly prejudiced if it was revised. After hearing both the sides, the tribunal allowed the two petitions.

Mobarak, the 64-year-old accused, also served as the organising secretary of a union parishad unit of Awami League for 16 years till 2012.

While serving as a Jamaat member during the Liberation War, he was involved in murder, abduction, confinement, torture and loot, according to the charges.

Mobarak, as a commander of Razakar force, substantially "partici-

pated in", "contributed to" and "facilitated" the commission of crimes in different parts of Brahmanbaria in 1971.

In the closing arguments, the prosecution appealed to the tribunal to award him capital punishment for his crimes against humanity during the war.

The defence sought his acquittal claiming that the prosecutors had failed to prove the charges brought against their client.

If found guilty, Mobarak, now behind the bars, may walk the gallows.

Eleven witnesses testified against the war crimes accused while the two -- Mobarak and his son -- testified in defence.

On April 23 last year, the tribunal indicted Mobarak, who was organising secretary of Muga union unit of AL in Akhaura upazila of Brahmanbaria, for his war crimes.

Khodeja Begum, daughter of Abdul Khalek, filed a case with a Brahmanbaria court in 2009. The case was later transferred to the Tribunal-1.

An investigation agency, designated

to probe war crimes, on January 23 last year completed the probe into Mobarak's alleged involvement in crimes against humanity.

The prosecution submitted formal charges against him on February 25, 2013 and the court took the charges into cognisance on March 12 the same year.

So far, the two tribunals delivered judgments in nine war crimes cases while three cases are pending with the courts.

CHARGES

On August 22, 1971, Mobarak and his accomplices had called a meeting at the house of Noor Box at Tanmandayl and around 130 people assembled there.

As part of their plan they raided some houses, abducted villagers and took them to a Pakistani army camp near Ganga Sagar Dighi.

Later, Mobarak and his associates selected 33 people and confined them to Terohuri Hazat Khana. The following day Pakistani army and Razakars took them to the west bank of Ganga Sagar Dighi, compelled them to dig a

ditch, gunned them down and buried them there.

During the war, Mobarak and other anti-liberation people captured Anandamoyee Kalibari, a Hindu temple, which was renamed as Razakar Manzil, looted valuables and damaged its idols.

On October 24, 1971, Mobarak abducted college student Ashu Ranjan of Shimrayl village and shot him dead four days later.

On November 11, 1971, Mobarak and his armed associates abducted Abdul Khaleque of Satian village, took him to the Razakar camp of Suhilpur Union Parishad and tortured him.

The accused shot him and also charged bayonet to confirm his death.

On November 24/25, 1971, a Razakar team led by Mobarak abducted Khadem Hossain Khan of Kharampur and brutally tortured him.

On November 28/29, 1971, Mobarak along with the Pakistani army abducted Abdul Malek of Kharampur and Mohammad Siraj of Amirpara and killed them by gunshots on December 6, 1971.

Love beyond

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Sadequ was introduced to Putul.

Soon off into a relationship, Sadequ would frequently visit India, ostensibly to bring cattle. At other times, the lovebirds would communicate by mobile phone.

Asked by Sadequ to visit him in Bangladesh, Putul stepped out of her home on Saturday night and crossed the border near pillar No.443, defying all fears.

Delighted, Sadequ took Putul to his house.

Sensing what had happened, Putul's family sought help from India's Border Security Force (BSF). On a request from BSF, BGB members later searched for the couple and found them under a tree in adjacent Ranchondi village around 1:00pm Sunday.

The same afternoon, BGB men handed over Putul to BSF through a company commander-level flag meeting where Putul's parents and local elites were present, Lt Colonel Ariful Haque, commanding officer of 18 Pancharing BGB Battalion, told The Daily Star over phone.