

Khaleda Zia sued for Khulna bus arson

UNB, Khulna

A case has been filed in connection with Thursday's bus arson in Fultala upazila, accusing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia of instigating the attack.

Over 100 BNP leaders and activists, including Khulna district BNP general secretary SM Shafiqul Alam Mona, have also been made accused in the case.

Sub-inspector Khairul Bashar of Fultala Police Station filed the case against 54 identified men and 60-70 unidentified men with the police station on Thursday night.

A bus driver sustained injuries while getting down from the bus hurriedly as miscreants torched the vehicle in Damador Primary School area of Fultala upazila.

Police arrested seven people from different areas for their alleged involvement in the arson attack.

Digital

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which little is known because there are few written records.

Cerf recommended that users make physical copies of important documents, so that they will last into the future.

"In our zeal to get excited about digitising we digitise photographs thinking it's going to make them last longer, and we might turn out to be wrong," he said. "I would say if there are photos you are really concerned about create a physical instance of them. Print them out."

But even that might not work, since historians often don't realise what the important documents of a time are until centuries after those that made them have died.

"Some people make the argument that the important stuff will be copied and put into new media and so why should we worry," Cerf said. "But historians will tell you that sometimes documents and transactions images and so on may turn out to have an importance which is not understood for hundreds of years. So failure to preserve them will cause us to lose our perspective."

Another way of solving the problem is "digital vellum", a concept that is still in development. That involves taking a snapshot of all the ways that a digital file can be opened, and storing it alongside the document itself — meaning that scientists will be able to use the instructions to reproduce the files by following the instructions.

Cerf illustrated his point with the example of Doris Kearns Goodwin's book 'Team Of Rivals: The Political Genius Of Abraham Lincoln', which was written by searching through libraries to find letters between Lincoln and his contemporaries.

Such a book might not be possible to write about the people living today, he said — the digital content such as emails that an author might well have "evaporated because nobody saved it, or it's around but it's not interpretable because it was created by software that's 100 years old".

Cerf, who is also the chief internet evangelist at Google, made the remarks at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in the Silicon Valley capital, San Jose, California.

Taliban storm

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when five or six men wearing military uniforms broke into the mosque and started shooting.

"We had no idea what was going on. One of the attackers then blew himself up and then there was huge smoke and dust all around," he said.

The attack came as Pakistan tries to adopt new measures to tackle militants following the school massacre, in which 134 children were among the dead.

The government has pledged to crack down on all militant groups, and has reintroduced the death penalty, set up military courts to speed convictions and widened its offensive in northwestern areas on the Afghan border where militants find refuge.

Yet Pakistan's religious minorities, among them Ahmadis, Christians and Hindus, say the government is doing little to alleviate their daily struggle against discrimination and violence.

Last month, dozens of people were killed in a similar attack on a Shia mosque in the southern town of Shikarpur.



Guardians waiting outside T&T High School in the capital's Motijheel while SSC examinees were taking the English 1st Paper exam yesterday. The exam had to be rescheduled on the weekend due to a nationwide hartal on the original date.

PHOTO: STAR

All-out hartal

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Besides, the BNP has threatened to launch "law-violation programmes and non-cooperation movement" to unseat the government.

The programmes to protest "the government's repressive acts" would be taken up very soon, the party said in a press release yesterday, as the country passed the 39th day of the indefinite blockade amid arson attacks, arrests and recovery of crude and petrol bombs and firearms.

Meanwhile, crude bombs were blazed at the venue of a rally attended by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam in Rajshahi. However, none was hurt.

THE THREATS

"The current illegal, unelected and usurper Awami [League] government has besieged Bangladesh through absolute misuse of the state power. We'll be forced to launch law-violation and non-cooperation movement against the illegal government very soon," reads the BNP statement signed by the party's Joint Secretary General Salahuddin Ahmed.

Criticising the ministers and the ruling party leaders for "announcing in public to kill protesters through crossfire and encounters", the party said, "The top officials of law enforcement agencies are also claiming credits in public for killings in crossfire."

Threatening the ruling party leaders, ministers and top law enforcement officials of "mass beating", the statement reads: "For such open and arrogant declarations of violating human rights, they will be brought under trial at national and international criminal courts."

Later at night, BNP's Dhaka City unit convener Mirza Abbas and member secretary Habibun Nabi Khan Sohel issued a statement, saying their movement has reached "the final stage". They called upon the party men to join the movement and get ready "to make the maximum sacrifice".

Meanwhile, an organisation claiming itself "The Real BNP" yesterday called hartal for three hours and 17 minutes from 12:00pm tomorrow, demanding resignation of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and its Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman.

BLOCKADE DAY-39

At least 57 activists of the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir were detained in different places, including the capital, in connection with "subversive activities" yesterday.

Law enforcers recovered some crude and petrol bombs, two shutter guns and one machete from Jhenidah and Satkhira.

Meanwhile, blockaders burnt down a pick-up at the capital's Shantinagar last night and a truck at Aminbazar earlier in the day. Another truck was torched in Feni's Dagonbhuian early yesterday. No casualty in these incidents was reported.

A train derailed in Rajshahi's Godagari last night after alleged blockaders removed some fishplates of the railways track.

Three compartments of the Ishwardi-bound local train fell off the track around 11:00pm as miscreants had removed some fishplates, said duty officer Riadul Islam at Railway Control Room of Saidpur.

In Gazipur, two Shibir activists were shot and caught while trying to "hurl petrol bombs at vehicles" at Shibbari intersection around 2:30pm yesterday.

Ruman, 30, of Tankirpar area and Nasir Uddin, 24, of Munshipara area of the city were shot on the legs and were out of danger, according to

police.

Two petrol bombs, a knife and a matchbox were recovered from them, said Officer-in-Charge Khandaker Reazul Hasan of Joydebpur Police Station.

At least 15 BNP-Jamaat men were arrested from different areas of the district yesterday in connection with subversive activities during the ongoing blockade.

Police arrested 15 BNP and three Jamaat-Shibir men from different areas of Dhaka city yesterday.

In Rangpur, 20 activists of the BNP, Jamaat and Shibir were detained from the city, Pirogacha and Piroganj upazilas since Thursday night.

In Mymensingh, law enforcers arrested three Shibir activists from a mess at Digharkanda area of the town early yesterday. Jihadi books and leaflets were recovered from their possession, according to local police.

A local Jamaat leader was arrested at Roshonpur Station Bazar of Chapainawabganj's Gomostapur on Thursday night.

The detainee — Tariqul Islam Bakul — was the former secretary of Gomostapur upazila unit of Jamaat. Police said he was accused in three cases.

In Jenidah, the Rapid Action Battalion-6 recovered 10 cocktails, two shutter guns and one machete from a fish market at Tribeni bazaar under Shailakupa upazila early Friday.

On information of a secret meeting of miscreants, a team of the elite force raided the area around 4:30am. But sensing their presence, the miscreants fled leaving behind the arms and bombs, Jhenidah Rab-06 camp commander Squadron Leader Neaz Mohammad Foyad told the Daily Star.

Another drive, the Rab recovered five petrol bombs from a house at Balyadihola in Tala upazila of Satkhira, said Assistant Superintendent of Rab-6 Mizanur Rahman.

Sixteen more firebombs and seven crude bombs were recovered in separate drives by law enforcers in Chittagong and Bhola.

BLAST IN RAJSHAHI

Miscreants blasted some five crude bombs during a programme attended by State Minister Shahriar Alam in Bagha upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

None was hurt in the explosions, said Aminur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Bagha Police Station.

Unidentified criminals exploded the bombs around 6:00pm at Mirganj High School ground where Monigram union Awami League was holding a programme on anti-terrorism with the junior minister in the chair, the OC said.

"The explosions occurred near the dais immediately after the state minister concluded his speech," the OC told The Daily Star.

[Our correspondents from the districts concerned contributed to the report]

Obama

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The footage, which received 1,00,000 views within an hour of being posted online, is titled "Things Everybody Does But Doesn't Talk About".

It starts with the US president, 53, making faces in a mirror, wearing sunglasses and shaping his fingers like a gun.

Then he strikes a series of poses with a "selfie stick" winking into the lens before running through his healthcare patter and struggling to pronounce "February".

He finishes by saying, "YOLO, man" -- you only live once -- although it may take him a lifetime to live this down.

Civilians ready to take over Ebola fight: US

AFP, Dakar

The head of the United States army in Africa expressed confidence Thursday that civilians could take over the battle to eradicate Ebola as Washington prepared to scale down its military force fighting the epidemic.

The US force reached 2,800 troops as the epidemic peaked but is due to withdraw over the coming weeks, leaving no more than 100 soldiers in the region by the end of April.

"We went into the process trying to work ourselves out of a job," USARAF commander Major General Darryl Williams told reporters at the end of a four-day conference of African army chiefs in the Senegalese capital Dakar.

"We were always looking at handing it over to civilian authorities."

The forces, most of whom were stationed in Liberia, constructed Ebola treatment units, trained health workers, provided logistical support for aid agencies and set up labs to test blood samples.

President Barack Obama said on Wednesday the mission would give way to a civilian-led drive to "extinguish" the deadly virus, as he ordered home American troops.

Guinea and its neighbours Sierra Leone and Liberia have registered around 9,000 deaths since the epidemic flared up in December 2013.

After months of decline, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday the number of new cases had risen for the second week running, including a "sharp increase" in Guinea.

The United Nations has played down the impact of the US troop withdrawal, saying 10,000 American civilians are engaged in the three hardest-hit nations.

- Rapid reaction force -

Williams, who led a task force in Monrovia to set up the mission in September, said conditions on the ground were now "right to transition to civilian control".

He said the welcome received by US troops in Liberia had been "absolutely overwhelming -- very warm. The people of Liberia are very strong and I ultimately feel like that is what is making the difference."

Williams was addressing the media at the end of a conference bringing together top American military brass and the heads of 36 African armies or their representatives which opened in Senegal on Monday.

The event was co-hosted by the Senegalese military and USARAF, which has been promoting security across the continent since 1955, as well as providing crisis response, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

Later, a team of Bangladesh Coast Guard joined the rescue operation and pulled out the bodies from water. The trawler was also salvaged, he said.

Meanwhile, both Barguna and Patuakhali district administrations announced that they would provide financial assistance to the families of the deceased. Barguna administration would give Tk 5,000 and Patuakhali Tk 20,000 to each of the families.

Barguna

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Dulal Farazee, chairman of Nishabaria Union Parishad in Taltali, said locals rushed to the spot hearing their screams and started rescuing them.

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The meeting asked all concerned for taking special measures in this connection, according to a source at the ministry.

The source also said the government supplied 6,766MW against the maximum demand of 7,356MW electricity during the boro season and the rest 590MW was managed through load-shedding management.

According to the ministry's statistics, currently power generation capacity reached to 11,265MW, which is covering 68 percent of demand across the country.

Every year farmers demand adequate power supply for boro farming as the grain formation is completely dependent on irrigation.



US commander proposes slower Afghan withdrawal

AFP, Washington

"Yes, absolutely."

McCain has been a fierce critic of Obama's plan to pull out troops, saying that the decision has been driven by politics instead of security conditions on the ground.

"A group of us met with President Ghani over the weekend, and he was very strong and adamant that this current plan will put the nation in danger," McCain said.

Obama and his fellow Democrats in Congress are anxious to wrap up the US military role in Afghanistan after a 13-year-old war that has left more than 2,000 American troops dead and some 20,000 wounded.

But amid concerns over a resurgent Taliban, the Obama administration has already adjusted its drawdown plan. In December, officials announced that an additional 1,000 US troops would remain in Afghanistan in 2015 to meet a shortfall of NATO forces.

There are 10,600 American troops in the 13,000-strong coalition force currently on the ground.

- IS in Afghanistan? -

Lawmakers at the hearing also raised concerns about Islamic State jihadists possibly gaining a foothold in Afghanistan.

Campbell said the IS group, or Daesh, had a "nascent" presence that appeared to be "more of a rebranding of a few marginalized Taliban."

Medical misery

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treatment by the end of January. But he changed his mind due to the ongoing violence and arson attacks that have claimed at least 69 lives.

"I am in a state of indecision.... It is risky to travel at this time," he said.

Mihir Saha, a trader in Faridpur, waits for normalcy to return. He has to consult a doctor at a Kolkata hospital where he had undergone heart surgery in July last year.

The 59-year-old was asked to see the doctor after six months of the operation. But he is scared to travel in this situation.

"I cannot afford to travel by air. But it will be very risky to go by bus now," he said.

He usually takes a bus from his hometown in Faridpur to Benapole, the country's biggest land port bordering India, and then to India. But the bus service between Faridpur and Benapole has remained suspended since the unrest began.

It is now easy to get a bus ticket whereas in the past one had to book it at least two weeks before the travel date, he said.

"Nowadays, we see a good number of travellers only on Fridays and Saturdays."</p