

Faridpur Road Crash Driver gets bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Faridpur court yesterday granted bail to the man whose reckless driving has been blamed for the death of 25 people in Bhanga upazila on Friday.

Judicial Magistrate Faisal Al Mamun of the Cognizance Court-2 passed the order after the driver, Zakir Hossain, was produced before the court, sources said.

Bhanga police arrested Zakir on Saturday from Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital where he was receiving treatment. After the accident, a case was filed with Bhanga Police Station.

Twenty-five people were killed and 23 others injured as a bus of Sonartari Paribahan crashed onto a roadside tree on Dhaka-Barisal highway early Friday.

The Barisal-bound bus from Dhaka was speeding and trying to overtake another when the accident occurred around 1:15pm at Koidubi Sadardi, some 35km from Faridpur town. After hitting the tree, the bus plunged into a ditch.

EKRAMUL MURDER CASE SC scraps bail of two accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday cancelled a High Court order that granted bail to Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury Minar, the prime accused in Fulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haque killing case.

The Appellate Division of the SC also scrapped another HC order that granted bail to Zahid Chowdhury, another accused in the case, and directed him to surrender before the lower court concerned in a week.

A four-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha gave the orders after hearing two petitions filed by the government against the HC orders.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said the HC granted permanent bail to Mahtab on March 2, and Zahid got bail from the HC long ago in the case though there are specific allegations of their involvement in the killing.

Ekramul Haque, 45, also the president of the upazila-unit Awami League, was shot and burnt to death in his car in Academy area of Feni town on May 20 last year.

Rezaul Haque Jasim, brother of the slain upazila chairman, filed a case with Feni Model Police Station the same day, accusing Mahtab and 30 to 35 unnamed people.

On May 27 last year, police arrested Mahtab the lone named accused in the case, from a house in Kachukhet area near Dhaka Cantonment.

Road crashes kill 9, injure 16

CITY DESK

Nine people were killed and 16 others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday.

In Tangail, five bus passengers were killed and eight others injured when the bus hit a truck on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Postkamuri Charpara area of Mirzapur upazila.

The deceased were Ashrafal Islam, 35, of Gaibandha, Anisur Rahman, 50, of Hazipara, Hasan Koddus, 28, of Naogaon, Jomir Ali, 35, of Savar and Atoar Rahman, 52, of Joypurhat.

In Rajbari Sadar, three people were killed and seven others injured when a bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Kushtia-Rajbari highway in Gandhimara area.

Of the deceased one was auto-rickshaw driver Saidul Islam, 35. The two other deceased, female children aged 3 and 10, could not be identified.

In Rangpur, Abdul Kader, 50, of Kazipara village died and his son was injured when a truck hit his motorcycle on Rangpur-Dinajpur highway at Chaupathi intersection in Taraganj upazila.

PM, Khaleda

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greeting cards to the offices of the opposition leader, Jatiya Party chairman and BNP chairperson, reports UNB.

On behalf of the BNP chairperson, her office executive M Jasim Uddin received the card at 5:15 pm.

Khaleda's private secretary ABM Abdus Sattar handed over the card to Khurshid Alam at the Gono Bhavan at 8:00pm, Samsuddin Didar, Khaleda's press wing staff, told The Daily Star.

On behalf of the opposition leader, her assistant private secretary Sujaul Islam received the card at 3:50 pm while HM Ershad's personal secretary Sayeedul Alam received the card at 3:55 pm, sources said.

BCL leader killed in Comilla infighting

Nine others wounded in Saturday's clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On June 28, 2011, the two Chhatra League groups clashed using firearms and sharp weapons over formation of a BCL committee, leaving at least 40 people injured.

Four years later on Saturday afternoon, the same factions fought each other over same grounds, this time killing the pro-Awami League student body's Comilla unit president Saiful Islam Pradhan.

The incident, which left several others wounded, happened at a time when central BCL President HM Badiuzzaman Sohag and General Secretary Siddique Nazmul Alam are visiting the district to hold workers' meeting of the student organisation.

Earlier in the morning, two factions of Comilla University BCL treaded gunshot shortly before Sohag and Nazmul held a meeting there. No one was injured in that incident.

The workers' meetings were aimed to announce new committees, sources said.

Sohag and Nazmul have been holding meetings with district unit BCL committees, as the Awami League high command asked them to prepare for the central BCL council.

BCL sources said followers of Rail Minister Mujibul Haque and lawmaker AKM Bahauddin Bahar were locked in clashes soon after the meeting ended at the district's Town Hall Auditorium in the afternoon.

BCL men loyal to the rail minister

opened fire and blasted handmade bombs at Pubali Chattar of Kandirpar to show their supremacy. Chhatra League men loyal to Bahauddin also fired bullets and clashed with intraparty rivals.

At one stage, Saiful was hit by a bullet in the eye and also stabbed in the chest and back. Critically injured, he was taken to a private hospital in the town where doctors operated on him.

Saiful, a leader of the Bahaiddined faction, succumbed to injuries around 9:00am yesterday. Tensions between rival groups escalated after the news of his death spread.

During the clash, the central BCL president's car was hit by bullets and the president himself took two wounded BCL leaders to a private hospital, added the sources.

Contacted, Khorshed Alam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Model Police Station, said: "Supporters of Rail Minister Mujibul Haque and MP AKM Bahauddin Ahmed were locked into a clash over holding a rally on Saturday."

The clash left 10 people injured -- six of them were bullet-hit, including Saiful Islam, police said.

Asked, Sohag described the clash as "totally a local affair" and that BCL was not involved in it. "The local Awami League has been facing factional problems for long and the clash is a result of that feud."

He denied that his car was hit by bullets but admitted taking two injured BCL men to a hospital.

ISIS attacks kill 12 in Egypt's Sinai

AFP, Cairo

Two bomb attacks targeting security forces in Egypt's restive Sinai Peninsula yesterday killed at least 12 people, including six soldiers and five policemen, officials said.

Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis, which has pledged allegiance to the extremist Islamic State group, claimed responsibility for both attacks.

The group has carried out a slew of attacks in Sinai since the army's ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013.

A roadside bomb attack on an army vehicle killed six soldiers and wounded two near the North Sinai town of Sheikh Zuweid, a jihadist stronghold.

"An armoured personnel carrier for the army of the apostates was destroyed... killing and wounding all aboard," Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis said on a Twitter account attributed to it.

The military confirmed that six soldiers were killed in the attack.

"Their vehicle was targeted by an explosive device placed by the extremist terrorist elements which left an officer, a sergeant, and four soldiers martyred, and two other soldiers wounded," it said on its Facebook page.

Hours later a suicide car bomb targeting a police station in North Sinai's provincial capital of El-Arish killed five policemen and a civilian, the interior ministry said in a statement.

Medics said the attack left another 44 people wounded, including at least 15 policemen.

The interior ministry said security forces fired at the vehicle before it was able to ram the police station.

"Security forces fired at the vehicle which exploded, killing five policemen and a civilian, and wounding several other policemen," it said.

A police officer said the truck was loaded with explosives but covered with straw, and blew up close to the police station.

"A den of the apostate police was targeted in El-Arish by a car bomb driven by a martyr," Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis said as it claimed the second attack.

Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis changed its name last year to the Sinai Province after pledging allegiance to ISIS.

It has claimed several sophisticated attacks in Sinai and the Nile valley and now wants to establish a province of the self-declared IS "caliphate".

Also yesterday, an army captain and two soldiers were wounded in an attack on a checkpoint near the town of Rafah that borders the Palestinian Gaza Strip.

Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis said one of its snipers shot at them.

The army has sent troops and armour to fight a dogged insurgency in the Sinai that has grown since then army chief and now President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi ousted his Islamist predecessor Morsi.

Ansar Beit al-Maqqdis says attacks on the security forces are in retaliation for a government crackdown on Morsi's supporters that has left hundreds dead.

Thousands more have been imprisoned and dozens sentenced to death.

The attacks came a day after a Cairo court confirmed death sentences against Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Badie and 13 others for protest violence.

Buet teacher assaulted over

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engineering department, around 1:00pm yesterday and asked him to explain his remarks on a Facebook page on the execution of Kamaruzzaman.

The teacher reportedly had criticised the execution.

The alleged BCL men then pulled him by his attire and forced him to go to the office of the vice-chancellor with them. There, they demanded before the VC that the teacher be expelled.

The VC later sent him home on an ambulance, added campus sources.

Buet BCL in a press release yesterday afternoon accused the teacher of using "expletives" in the Facebook post and beating up a student when they went to his office.

Jahangir could not be reached for comments.

Without elaborating, Buet VC Khaleda Ekram last night told The Daily Star that a committee was formed to probe the incident.

Iran must end 'aggression' for sanctions relief: Netanyahu

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday Iran should have to end its "aggression in the region" to win relief from sanctions, taking another swipe at a framework nuclear agreement.

World powers agreed with Iran last week on the framework of a deal to be signed by the end of June to rein in its nuclear programme in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday called for the sanctions to

be totally lifted on the same day that the deal is implemented.

But Netanyahu, whose government has repeatedly denounced the framework agreement as an "historic mistake", said any such move should be linked to other issues.

"Instead of lifting the restrictions on Iran's nuclear facilities and programme at a fixed date, a better deal would link the lifting of these restrictions to an end of Iran's aggression in the region, its worldwide terrorism and its threats to annihilate Israel," he said in a statement.

Nahid gets death threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid received a death threat through a text message from an unknown number on Wednesday.

The ministry officials informed journalists about the incident yesterday.

The sender also threatened to attack the minister's wife and children, Shubodh Chandra Dhali, deputy chief public relations officer of the ministry, told The Daily Star.

"We shall kill you wherever we find you. We shall attack your sons, wife and daughter, and relatives. Life will be very difficult for you," reads the SMS.

The message written both in English and Bangla continued: "You are a corrupt and unkind person. You have destroyed our young generation's merit, power and intelligence by publishing questions and raising number of exam paper illegally [sic]."

Manomanth Ranjan Barai, assistant personal secretary to the minister, filed a general diary with the Ramna Police Station on Thursday, said police.

Shiblee Noman, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Ramna Zone), said they were looking into the matter.

In 2010, the minister had received another death threat through a letter asking him to step back from formulating the national education policy.

Authorities plan

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Security has been stepped up following recent activities of different militant outfits and religious bigots, and the execution of war criminal Kamaruzzaman on Saturday, said a top DB official.

In recent months, activists of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and a few other militant organisations have been reorganising themselves, taking advantage of the political unrest, investigators said.

Besides, barely a month after the brutal murder of Avijit Roy, another blogger and online activist Oyasiqur Rahman was hacked to death allegedly by religious bigots following a conflict over ideological difference.

During the traditional celebrations of the Bangla New Year at the Ramna Batamul in 2001, several blasts near the stage of Chhayanaut killed 10 people and injured around 50 others.

In June last year, a Dhaka court awarded death penalty to eight operatives of Harkatul-Jihad-Al-Islami (Huji), including its top leader Mufti Abdul Hannan, and life sentence to six other members of the outfit for the carnage.

Alongside regular police, Rab and BGB members, plainclothes police personnel, bomb-disposal units, dog squads and the SWAT team will be deployed, the DMP chief told the briefing.

Key gathering places like Ramna Batamul, Dhaka University campus and Rabindra Sarobar will be under full coverage of closed circuit television cameras, he said.

Security check posts would be set up at the entrances to gathering places.

The DMP boss requested that the organisers end their programmes or other events by 5:30pm tomorrow.

Asaduzzaman also said streets linking the venues would be made off-limits to traffic and there would be specific parking areas around the gathering areas.

He also requested all, particularly the VIPs, to obey the traffic rules.

Malta votes to keep spring bird hunt

AFP, Valletta

Malta has voted in a referendum to continue the controversial tradition of spring hunting in which birds migrating across the Mediterranean are killed before they can breed, preliminary results showed Sunday.

The issue has stirred passions for years in the island nation, with supporters defending it as a longstanding custom and opponents attacking what they see as a cruel practice that often flouts the law.

Preliminary results from Saturday's referendum suggested the pro-hunting camp had got 51 percent of the vote to win by around 5,000 votes. Official results are expected to be announced late Sunday.

"We did not win anything, we just did not lose," said hunters' federation president, Joe Percici Calascione, although raucous cheering from hunters at the polling station suggested many saw it as a victory.

"We were fighting for our right to retain the possibility of hunting in spring and people have understood our campaign," he added, appealing to hunters to remain calm amid reports of celebratory gunfire in the countryside.

HC stays NBR bid to tax

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rules, and that those were paid out of taxed incomes.

The microcredit pioneer receives high fees for speaking at international conferences, and in many places, audiences purchase tickets to hear his speech, Yunus Centre said in a statement earlier.

The statement was issued after a field office of the tax authorities, Tax Zone-6, issued a letter to Yunus asking him or his representatives to meet Tax Commissioner Md Meftha Uddin Khan at his office on March 29.

The meeting was rescheduled for today, as Mahbubur Rahman, tax adviser to Yunus, sought more time.

The tax office issued the letter to realise its claimed taxes against the money that Yunus gifted to his family members in fiscal 2011-2014.

A copy of the stay order has already been sent to the tax office concerned, he said.

MUHITH PRAISES YUNUS
Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday lauded Prof Muhammad Yunus for his contribution to the society and

women's empowerment in Bangladesh.

He expressed his admiration for the microcredit pioneer while discussing Grameen Bank with US Ambassador in Dhaka Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat at his Secretariat office.

"I told her that he [Prof Yunus] has brought about a social change in the country by giving microcredit to poor rural woman ... This is his unique achievement," Muhith told reporters in the afternoon.

"There is only one problem with him ... He will never leave the organisation [Grameen Bank] he has built," said the minister.

Muhith said Bernicat had asked him how the Grameen Bank of Prof Yunus was doing.

In response, the minister told her that the Grameen Bank was doing very fine, and whatever problem it was facing was because of Prof Yunus.

"I told her that we cannot appoint chairman and managing director to the organisation all because of Mr Yunus. His friends are filing one case after another," he added.

337 Bangladeshis

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Indian high commission in Bangladesh yesterday tweeted: "336 evacuated Bangladeshis from Yemen have set sail for Cochin on board Indian ships MV Corals and Kavaratti. [They are] Likely to reach on Apr 17/18."

Mahbubul said the two ships were being escorted by an Indian Naval ship to ensure security during the voyage.

"Currently, there is no Bangladeshi in Djibouti," he said.

The counsellor could not mention the exact number of Bangladeshis still trapped in Yemen. However, he said the expatriates in the troubled Middle Eastern country were contacting them every day to go home.

"We are not considering withdrawing our monitoring cell from Djibouti. We will continue our rescue mission as

long as it's needed," he said.

Mahbubul is currently in the African country with a foreign ministry team to supervise the evacuation.

On Saturday, Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque said 360 Bangladeshis had been evacuated to Djibouti. Of them, 21 have already returned home.

Shahidul also said they had a list of 500 Bangladeshis who had contacted them and expressed their willingness to return home from Yemen.

are 1,500 to 3,000 Bangladeshis in the Middle Eastern country, according to foreign ministry officials.

Yemen has been in turmoil for months since the rebels took over the capital, Sana'a, after bursting out of their northern stronghold, according to international media.

Saviours of burn victims

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contracture of her neck, she said, "See I can move my head now."

The nine-member team of doctors, anaesthetists and nurses, who operated on Shampa, arrived in Bangladesh on April 4 to provide treatment to burn victims and exchange knowledge with doctors of the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery at the DMCH. They left yesterday.

The visit was arranged by FOR Bangladesh Association, a charitable organisation based in Germany, along with Interplast Hungary, Hungary and the Netherlands.

Interplast is an international non-profit association of plastic surgeons who provide free plastic and reconstructive surgery worldwide, for people who do not have access to the otherwise costly treatment.

Established in 2010, FOR Bangladesh brought foreign doctors six times in the last five years to perform orthopaedic and reconstructive surgery, helping 621 patients so far, said Hasnat Mia, president and founder member of FOR Bangladesh.

"This year we wanted to do something for the arson victims of the recent political violence," said Hasnat. However, after consultation with the DMCH doctors, it was decided that other burn victims and patients with congenital deformity such as cleft lip are to be included, he added.

Forty patients, mainly from poor families living outside Dhaka, were primarily selected by DMCH doctors for treatment by the foreign doctors.

Lack of post-burn care of burn scars in hands, legs and neck often leads to deformity in burn patients outside Dhaka, said Samanta Lal Sen, national coordinator of the burn institute.

MORE DOCTORS NEEDED
Besides treatment, the foreign team

is providing hands-on training to doctors of the institute, Sen said.

Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, who worked with the team during surgery, said, "We saw application of some modern instruments which we had previously read about only in books and journals."

"We also learnt some advanced techniques," he said.

Outside the OT area on the first floor of the institute, senior plastic surgeon Greg Pataki along with two other members of his team was seen discussing the cases of a few outdoor patients.

"We are providing training by giving presentations about our cases," said Pataki, who represent Interplast Hungary.

"The doctors and residents are very well trained and perform a wide spectrum of plastic surgeries. But the number of burn cases and patients, who need special plastic surgery, is very high while the number of plastic surgeons in Bangladesh is very few," said Pataki, who visited Bangladesh four times.

According to Sen, more than 6,000 burn patients seek treatment a year for which at least 1,200 plastic surgeons are required. "At present there are around 50 doctors in the country," he said.

The leading surgeon of the team Heinz Herbert Homann representing Interplast Germany said, "Never before I saw such a big institution like the Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery. It is the biggest in Asia where doctors face many special and challenging burn cases."

He, however, said the operating rooms lack certain instruments, and suggested that investments be made for increasing staff and equipment.

"It would be helpful if 3-4 teams of doctors could visit Germany from Bangladesh every year and vice versa to share experience and knowledge," he added.

Hillary Clinton

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Clinton, 67, becomes the third major figure to announce her US presidential aspirations. Republican Senators Ted Cruz and Rand Paul rolled out their campaigns in recent weeks.

Senator Marco Rubio is widely expected to announce his campaign tomorrow, and ex-Florida governor Jeb Bush is actively considering a run.

With little serious competition on the Democratic side, she immediately becomes the frontrunner for her party's nomination.

A series of polls this year have consistently placed Hillary ahead of every one of her potential Republican challengers, although the gap has narrowed in recent weeks.

Clinton, who lost a bruising Democratic nominating battle to

Barack Obama in 2008, was expected to travel soon to Iowa, the state that holds the kickoff nominating contest in early 2016.

Clinton's campaign will emphasize her plans to address economic inequality and will tout the historic nature of her effort to become the first woman US president, aides said.

On Saturday, she earned high praise from Obama himself.

"She was a formidable candidate in 2008. She was a great supporter of mine in the general election. She was an outstanding secretary of state. She is my friend," Obama said at a regional summit in Panama.

"I think she would be an excellent president."