

SC CHY'S APPEAL AGAINST DEATH PENALTY SC likely to fix date for verdict today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is expected to conclude hearing today on the appeal filed by war criminal Salauddin Quader Chowdhury challenging his death penalty, and to fix a date for delivering verdict on it, said Attorney General Mahubey Alam yesterday.

While hearing the appeal for the 12th day yesterday, the SC asked Salauddin's defence lawyer SM Shahjahan to complete his arguments in one hour today.

The apex court is set to resume the hearing at 9:00am today, as the matter has been enlisted as the first item on its hearing list of the day.

Mahubey Alam told The Daily Star that he will give reply today to some of the arguments placed by Salauddin's lawyer before the SC.

During the 12th day hearing, defence counsel Shahjahan told the apex court that most of the prosecution witnesses had given hear-say statements on the charges brought against Salauddin before the International Crimes Tribunal-1. The statements were not reliable since they didn't corroborate with each other, he claimed.

On July 1, the attorney general prayed before the SC to uphold the death penalty given by the ICT-1 to the BNP leader on October 1, 2013 for committing crimes against humanity and genocide during the Liberation War in 1971.

He appealed to the SC against the verdict on October 29, 2013.

Doping gangs in capital seize Ramadan again

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and AKRAM HOSEN

It was iftar time. Construction worker Azizul Hakim was coming to the capital by a bus when two bearded passengers offered him food. Thinking them to be good Samaritans, he accepted their food.

It was only when Hakim woke up at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) about 15 hours later, did he realise that he had been drugged and the two men had robbed him of his mobile phone and cash.

Hakim is one of the many victims of dope gangs, popularly known as "ogyan party". According to law enforcers, these gangs have become very active in the capital and its outskirts, targeting mainly passengers of public transport and pedestrians.

About 50 victims of these gangs were treated at DMCH alone since Ramadan started, said sources.

The duty doctor at DMCH said Hakim was lucky that the strong sedatives he had been given were flushed out of his body quickly.

"People with weaker kidneys often take days to

regain strength and consciousness," said the doctor.

As roads become increasingly crowded ahead of Eid, these gangs rob people after drugging them by mixing strong sedatives with their food at iftar or sehri, said an official of Detective Branch of police.

Since the beginning of Ramadan, law enforcers arrested at least 40 members of these gangs.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hakim said, "I was lucky that some of my co-workers were travelling with me on the bus." His co-workers had rushed him to the hospital.

However, Delwar Hossain, a private service holder, was not so lucky. He fell victim to one of these dope gangs last year. Delwar still finds it difficult to raise his right arm.

When he had regained consciousness at a hospital, doctors there told him that he tore a ligament in his right arm when he fell after being knocked unconscious by the sedatives.

Cautioning Dhaka residents, Joint Commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Monirul Islam said people should refrain from

eating or drinking anything offered by strangers.

He claimed around six people died last Ramadan after falling victim to these gangs.

Monirul Islam, however, said the number of dope gangs operating this Ramadan decreased to about six from 20 last Ramadan.

He said the number decreased due to frequent drives by mobile courts.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque instructed DMP authorities to increase vigilance to identify and arrest muggers, extortionists, dope gang members and other criminals, said a press release of the Police Headquarters.

Last week, five members of dope gangs were sentenced to different terms in jail after being arrested in Banglamotor.

The sentences range from three to six months in jail, said DB Deputy Commissioner (South) Mashruqur Rahman, who conducted the drive.

On the first day of Ramadan, 21 members of these gangs were sentenced to different terms in jail after being arrested in different places of the capital, said police.

ROOFTOP MOBILE TOWERS BCC asks for removal or tax

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal City Corporation has served notices on the city's building owners to remove 137 mobile phone towers from the rooftops or pay taxes for those.

Farid Hosen Sikdar, chief of the advertisement section of BCC, said they initiated the move as the LGRD ministry in a gazette notification dated March 15 asked them to impose taxes on rooftop towers.

According to the gazette, Tk 1.5 lakh has to be paid yearly for a tower within the height of five metres, Tk 2.5 lakh for a 6-10 metre tower, Tk 3.75 lakh for an 11-15 metre tower, and Tk 5 lakh for a tower above 15 metres.

BCC sent the notice to 137 building owners and six mobile phone operators on June 18. However, officials of the six companies and some building owners asked for two weeks' time after meeting with the mayor on Sunday.

The notice recipients said the mobile phone companies would talk to the ministry about the "excessive" rates of tax fixed in this regard.

Ranjit Kumar Das, chief executive officer of BCC, said if the tax could be collected, it would add Tk 5 crore to the annual income of BCC.

BCC sources said there were 162 rooftop towers in Barisal Metropolitan area including 62 of Grameen Phone, 42 of Banglalink, 24 of Airtel, 16 of Warid, eight of Teletalk, five of Citycell, and five of Jubok and National Phone.

Out of those 137 are located in the city corporation area.

The towers were set up through bilateral contracts between the house owners and telecom operators.

Sukumar Das, director of the Department of Environment in Barisal, said the DoE already stopped giving no-objection certificate in this regard. The DoE will assist BCC if the later starts mobile court drives against rooftop towers, he added.

Earlier, the city residents and health and environment activists demanded removal of those towers citing the risks during natural calamities like earthquake and storm and health hazards caused by their electro-magnetic radiations.

Friend of Bangladesh Golok Bihari Majumder passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Golok Bihari Majumder, a friend of the Liberation War in 1971, who ensured security of Bangladesh's top leaders in India during the war, died yesterday.

After the March 26, 1971 crackdown, when Prime Minister of Bangladesh Government in exile

Tajuddin Ahmed and his associate barrister M Amir-ul Islam crossed the border to India, Golok, the then chief of Border Security Force, eastern region welcomed them.

He also provided training facilities to freedom fighters.

In 2013, Bangladesh awarded him with the Friends of Bangladesh Liberation War Award for his contribution.

Ekattorer Ghatak Dal Nirmul Committee in a press release expressed deep sadness over his death.



PHOTO: STAR

Restaurant staff and small traders take to the street in front of Government Titumir College in the capital yesterday armed with cricket bats and sticks, after the students vandalised at least 16 restaurants and eight vehicles on the Mohakhali-Gulshan road. The violence allegedly ensued from a brawl that took place in a restaurant when two "activists" of Bangladesh Chhatra League "refused to pay the bill". However, the college unit BCL president, Kazi Mirajul Islam Dollar, said locals had mugged a student. "When students protested it, locals chased them and so did they," he said. Police rushed in and brought the situation under control, but said the reason behind the incident was "not known" immediately.

KIBRIA MURDER CASE Charge framing deferred again

UNB, Sylhet

A Speedy Trial Tribunal of Sylhet yesterday again deferred till July 14 the charge framing of former finance minister SAMS Kibria murder case.

Five people, including Kibria, were killed and 70 others injured in a grenade attack on a public meeting of local Awami League at Baiddar Bazar in Sadar upazila on January 27, 2005.

Our Moulvibazar correspondent reports: the date was deferred as two of the accused--former state minister for home

Lutfuzzaman Babor and suspended mayor of Sylhet City Corporation Ariful Haque Chowdhury--were not present before the court yesterday.

Under-construction building falls on shanties in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A four-story under-construction building tilted and fell on three shanties at Suvaddha jheel in South Keraniganj last night.

Residents of the shanties managed to escape beforehand around 9:30pm, said Jamal Uddin Mir, officer-in-charge of South Keraniganj Police Station. "The shanties sank in the water body," he added.

Police suspected that the building's owner, Shahidul Islam, had not conducted proper piling.

BSF man's acquittal worries

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the mockery of justice.

The killing of Felani is a part of dozens of such atrocities and violation of human rights including torture and extrajudicial killings by the BSF, which continues to remain unpunished.

On January 7, 2011, Felani, 15, was shot dead while crossing into Bangladesh illegally as her clothes got stuck in the barbed-wire fence in Phulbari upazila, Kurigram.

Constable Amiya Ghosh of BSF's 181 Battalion was charged with culpable homicide for the killing.

In 2013, a BSF trial court acquitted the constable, and a revision trial by the same court returned the same verdict on July 2 this year.

Police, customs lock horns over custody

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Additional Director General of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate in Chittagong Hossain Ahmed said they had full respect to the court order but police could not seize the consignment as per the customs act.

Section 169 of the customs act says any things seized on the ground that they are liable to confiscation under the act need to be deposited in the nearby customs godown, he said.

Police, however, can collect samples, he said.

The customs officials yesterday filed an appeal with Chittagong Additional Metropolitan Magistrate's court against "seizure" of the consignment by police.

The court is set to hear it today.

Meanwhile, Investigation Officer Kamruzzaman sent a letter to the Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday, saying police could not seize the consignment due to non-cooperation from a "party".

Cabinet approves Cox's Bazar dev

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the law. Punitive provisions for violators include a Tk 5 lakh fine or one year's imprisonment.

The cabinet also gave approval to the draft of the "National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy 2015" to ensure effective use of the ICT to achieve middle-income status by 2021 and turn the country into a developed one by 2041.

Musharraf said the policy would ensure transparency and accountability of the government.

The policy has 10 specific objectives and 54 strategic themes with an action plan of 245 programmes which will be implemented under short, medium and long term work plans by 2016, 2018 and 2021.

The 10 objectives are ensuring social equity, integrity, universal access, education and research, employment generation, strengthening exports, and support for ICT, healthcare, environment, climate and disaster management and productivity.

According to the policy's updated data, there are 12.03 crore cellphone users and 4.74 crore internet users in the country.

Students demonstrate against VAT on private higher education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of different private universities and medical colleges yesterday wearing black badges staged a rally in the capital's Dhanmondi, demanding cancellation of the recently imposed VAT (value added tax) of 7.5 per cent on private education.

No VAT on Education, a platform supporting the cause, arranged the rally before the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said a press note. They will organise a silent rally today at 4:00pm at Dhanmondi 7/A, it added.

Launch cabin tickets elusive for common man

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vessels during the Eid rush.

Talking to The Daily Star, Badiuzzaman Badal, senior vice chairman of Bangladesh Inland Waterways Association, said the owners have the capacity to carry around 3,000 passengers in cabins daily. But over 10,000 people were intending to travel.

"Around 60 percent of the tickets are given to the privileged section of society. Around 20 percent more are given to those who regularly travel on that particular launch and the rest 20 percent are distributed among

common people," Badal added.

Seeking anonymity, a launch owner admitted that the overcharging allegation was true and that such incidents are occurring due to a lack of government monitoring.

However, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman Mozammel Haque told The Daily Star, "We have a plan to set up counters for selling launch tickets at Sadarghat launch terminal. If it is implemented, no owner can overcharge. We hope to implement it from the next Eid-ul-Azha."

Currently, there is no counter for selling launch tickets. Passengers have to buy cabin tickets in advance by visiting the launch or office of that shipping company. Besides, passengers who travel on the deck buy tickets after boarding the launch.

SPECIAL SERVICE Launch owners will start running special services from July 14 from the Sadarghat terminal on condition of passengers' rush.

"We are ready to operate additional trips of launches. We will start the special operation from July 14 if

an excess of passengers throng the terminal," said Badal.

Usually, 60 to 65 launches are operated daily from Sadarghat to different destinations. The number rises to around 100 during Eid rush.

Officials of BIWTA, the launch owners' association and law enforcers yesterday visited the Sadarghat terminal to monitor the Eid management preparations.

Around 8 to 10 lakh people leave the capital using water transports in the week ahead of Eid, claim transport operators.

HC seeks list of grabbers of Rayer Khalin Barisal

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generals of environment directorate and water development board, chief engineer of local government engineering department, deputy commissioner of Barisal, director of environment directorate, Barisal,

upazila nirbahi officer of Barisal Sadar, and assistant commissioner (land) of upazila land office, Barisal, have been made the respondents.

Citing from the petitioner's statement, our Barisal correspondent reports that the six kilometre-long

Rayer Khal was excavated in Lakutia Zamindar Bari in mid-British period and it joined with Jail Khal in Natun Bazar area of Barisal city, connecting the Kirtankhola river with Sugandha and Taltali rivers.

Locals and environment activists

have long been conducting movements to save the canal from grabbers, encroachers and waste-dumpers who in the name of different public and private "development works" have turned the Rayer Khal into a narrow sewerage drain, Bela official said.

Court issues arrest warrants

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profile BNP leaders are on bail.


The court asked the officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station to submit by August 6 a report on execution of the arrest warrants. The case was filed with the police station against the 21 others after a vehicle was set on fire at Pallabi in the capital on January 26 this year. On April 30, police pressed charges against them. Earlier the same court issued arrest warrants against Rafiq and 27 others in connection with two other arson cases filed with Mirpur Police Station.

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15th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



Today is the 15th Death Anniversary of our beloved father Mr. Musharraf Hussain Chowdhury. He was a Vanguard soldier of language movement of 1952 and in recognition for this contribution he was awarded Ekushe Padok. He was also the former Managing Director of Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Co. Ltd.

The family members of late Musharraf Hussain Chowdhury have requested all his relatives, friends, former colleagues and well-wisher to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Rumee, Jamee, Sadee Shapna, Mitu, Neetu 07-07-2015