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UP POLLS BNP likely to stay in race

Say party insiders; final decision may come today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The BNP is most likely to stay in the Union Parishad polls, as senior party leaders are against quitting the race.

The leaders expressed their opinion at a meeting chaired by party Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office last night.

However, the BNP will announce its final decision after holding a meeting of the 20-party alliance today, meeting sources said.

"Though the party realise that there is no environment for free and fair polls in the country, senior leaders of the party advised Khaleda Zia not to quit the election at this stage," an organising secretary told The Daily Star.

Some leaders spoke in favour of boycotting the polls, but most leaders spoke in favour of staying in the race.

Another BNP leader said they told Khaleda that the party would benefit from staying in the race as people would get a message that the BNP tried its best to restore democracy in the country.

The three-hour closed-door meeting started around 9:00pm where senior leaders from Standing Committee to organising secretaries attended. No one was allowed to take their cell phones in the meeting.

The BNP chief already spoke with the party's grassroots who told her that "it is better to quit the polls" as the ruling Awami League men were "capturing" most polling centres, stuffing ballots in front of law enforcers, insiders said.

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An examinee busy taking her last-moment preparations while on her way to a test centre, minutes before the Higher School Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent exams began across the country yesterday. The photo was taken in front of Notre Dame College at Arambagh in the capital.

PHOTO: SIK ENAMUL HAQ

No mask on Pahela Baishakh

Govt imposes restrictions on celebrations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The celebration of Pahela Baishakh this year will see a major change as the government has slapped a ban on wearing masks in "Mongol Shovajatra" on Dhaka University campus.

The ban has been imposed on security grounds. The government has imposed restrictions on carrying matches, lighters and hand bags at the Bangla new year celebration over similar concern.

It has also banned Vuvuzela as it creates a high-pitched unpleasant sound.

Different social and cultural organisations, including Udichi, have been demanding a ban on Vuvuzela at public gatherings, especially during the celebration.

The Faculty of Fine Arts of DU arranges Mongol Shovajatra to mark the first

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HAZARIBAGH Tanners get 7 more days to take hides

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tanners can bring in rawhides and skins to their factories of Hazaribagh until April 10, as a government wing yesterday relaxed a directive banning rawhides to the tanneries there.

"We have talked to the industries minister and he has agreed to allow the entry of rawhides in Hazaribagh for seven more days," said Md Hazrat Ali, chairman of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), a wing of the industries ministry that is implementing the tannery relocation project.

Rawhides would not be allowed into Hazaribagh from March 11, he warned addressing a press briefing at the BSCIC headquarters in Motijheel.

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Drik official found dead in N'ganj

Death shrouded in mystery

STAR REPORT

A Drik official was found dead in the bushes beside Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road in Jalkuri area of Narayanganj on Saturday evening, hours after he had gone missing from Dhanmondi in the capital.

Mohammad Irfanul Islam, 48, was an accounts and admin officer at Drik Picture Library Limited, said Khondokar Muhit Uddin, superintendent of police in Narayanganj.

Irfan's brother Imdadul Islam said they identified the body at Narayanganj General Hospital morgue yesterday after knowing about its recovery through newspapers.

A general diary (GD) was filed with Kalabagan Police Station after the victim had gone missing on Saturday, said Mohammad Iqbal, officer-in-charge of the station. A murder case would be filed, he said.

After conducting the autopsy on the body, Asaduzzaman, resident medical officer at the hospital in Narayanganj, said there were marks of injury in the head and the neck, adds our correspondent there.

The man was hit in the head and could have been strangled to death, he said.

General Manager of Drik Gallery ASM Rezaur Rahman said Irfan went missing around 11:45am on Saturday after the victim along with one of their drivers, Nasir, went to a branch of Dutch Bangla Bank on Dhanmondi-8 in a car. They had just come out of their office.

Parking the vehicle a little away from the branch, the driver waited for Irfan who went inside to withdraw money. But Irfan did not return.



Irfanul Islam

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STALKING OF GIRLS Man killed for raising voice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Shuchi Modok's life fell apart just 27 days into her marriage as a few rowdy youths stabbed her husband to death on Saturday night for protesting stalking of girls at a temple in Bogra.

The victim, Sonaton Chandra Modok, 26, was the only son of Surath Chandra Modok of South Gandagram under Shajahanpur upazila. An expatriate in Singapore, he had come home to get married, relatives said.

The killing sparked protests in the Hindu community at South Gandagram yesterday. People marched in procession carrying the body and submitted a memorandum to the offices of the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police in the afternoon, local people said.

Demonstrators demanded exemplary punishment to the killers and safety of the Hindus living in the area, they said.

Surath filed a case with Shajahanpur Police Station, accusing four identified and 8-10 unidentified youths. Police arrested two of the identified accused. A drive is on to arrest the other accused, police sources said.

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Wig-maker weaves a happy story

BBC ONLINE

Marishetty Kumar, a wig-maker based in the southern Indian city of Bangalore, is helping cancer patients to live a life of dignity.

"No job is big or small. Some may think what they do is insignificant, but I have found my destiny. It is to make wigs," says Kumar.

"It's my very small contribution towards giving people, who are facing a grave illness, some hope and dignity," he adds.

Born in a farming family, Kumar ran away from home at a young age to work with a film crew which assisted studios making Kannada-language films.

Working long hours as an apprentice, he learnt the craft of making natural hair wigs - a painstaking job where every strand is hand woven.

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Two killed in bomb blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Two people were killed in a bomb explosion at Sherpur upazila in Bogra last night.

The bomb went off inside a one-storey building beside Dhaka-Bogra highway in Mohipur village around 8:30pm, said police and locals.

One of the two men inside died on the spot. The other died at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in the district later.

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PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 4
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

NIZAMI VERDICT SC to hear review plea next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is set to hear next week a petition filed by war criminal Motiur Rahman Nizami seeking review of the judgement that upheld his death penalty.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha informed this while hearing Nizami's adjournment petition yesterday.

Defence counsel SM Shahjahan told reporters that they sought six-week adjournment on hearing the review petition on the ground of personal difficulties of Nizami's principal lawyer Khandker Mahbub Hossain.

But the apex court said it would hold hearing on the petition next week, Shahjahan said.

On March 29, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Nizami filed the review petition through his lawyers, praying to the apex court to acquit him of all the charges on which he was found guilty.

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Students demonstrating near Doyel Chattar on the Dhaka University campus at noon yesterday, as part of a daylong student strike demanding the immediate arrest and punishment of the killer(s) of Sohagi Jahan Tonu. Inset, a poster, with the strike announcement, lying on a bench of an empty arts faculty classroom around the same time.

PHOTO: STAR

'LINK WITH CTG MILITANT GROUP' SC lawyer, 32 others charged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday pressed charges against Supreme Court lawyer barrister Shakila Farzana and 32 others in a case filed for their links with Shaheed Hamja Brigade, a Chittagong-based militant group.

Shakila is the daughter of BNP leader and former whip Syed Wahidul Alam. She is also joint general secretary of pro-BNP Nationalist Lawyers Forum.

Investigation officer of the case Ruhul Amin, who is assistant superintendent of police and working in Rab-7, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, said court inspector AHM Moshir Rahman.

The names of another SC lawyer Hasanuzzaman Liton and Dhaka judge court lawyer Mahfuz Chowdhury Bapon, who were arrested along with Shakila in the capital for allegedly funding the militant organisation, and militant outfit Shaheed Hamja Brigade's Commander Moniruzzam Don were in the charge sheet, said Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmed, commanding officer of Rab-7.

In the charge sheet, 83 people were made witnesses, the Rab official said.

On February 19 last year, in a drive, members of Rab-7 arrested 12 militants from Al Madrasatul Abu Bakar in Hathazari upazila and recovered laptops, memory cards, and other audio-video materials used in militant training classes.

Rab claimed that the madrasa was used as the theoretical training camp of the new militant outfit.

On February 23, a case was filed with Hathazari Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

On February 22, the elite force busted a training centre of

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