

SOUTH DISTRICT CONFERENCE 15 hurt in Ctg BNP infighting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least fifteen activists and leaders, including BNP Chittagong South District unit Vice-president Enamul Haque, were injured as two rival groups engaged in a clash at the conference of the unit at Patiya yesterday.

The clash ensued ahead of the meeting about 2:30pm when the followers of the unit General Secretary Gazi Shajahan Jewel obstructed a procession led by Enamul Haque Enam entering into the conference venue in a community centre in Indrapur area, said witnesses.

Later, both the groups started throwing chairs and locked in the clash after Enam's supporters entered the venue. In the meantime, the chief guest of the event, BNP standing committee member Khandakar Mosharrif, was about to enter the venue, but he restrained himself from doing that sensing the chaos inside, according to the witnesses.

Later, the party activists loyal to Enam also barricaded the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway and vandalised around 10 vehicles, said police.

Contacted, BNP central committee Organising Secretary Mahbubur Rahman Shamim termed the incident "unacceptable." "We will investigate the incident", he added.

Earlier, on Tuesday, the conference of Chittagong North District unit was foiled in the city due to such infighting.



BEATING THE HEAT: With the mercury reaching 35.1 degrees Celsius in Dhaka yesterday, people in the capital find it difficult to deal with the unbearable heat. Unable to find any other alternative, these children bathe in Gulshan Lake to cool themselves off during the hot summer day. Hot and dry weather has been prevailing in many parts of the country over the last few days.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HC releases full text of Rakib murder verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday released the full text of its verdict on the death references and appeals in the sensational case of 13-year-old Rakib murder, observing that "the victim [Rakib] was completely an innocent teenager who had no fault of such dire consequences at the hands of the accused persons".

In the 69 page-judgement, the court has explained the reasons for commuting the death sentences of two convicts -- Mohammad Sharif and Mintu Khan -- to life imprisonment for killing Rakib by blowing air through his rectum in 2015.

The HC bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Md Jahangir Hossain announced the short verdict in the case on April 4 this year.

Acting Attorney General Murad Reza yesterday told The Daily Star that the government will decide after going through the HC judgment on

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TANGAIL ROAD ACCIDENT

Reckless driving took 7 lives Says injured passenger

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Reckless driving had led to the accident in Gunogram area of Ghatail upazila in Tangail on Tuesday night, said an injured person yesterday.

The bus driver was overtaking vehicles one after another at a high speed, said Farid Ahmed who was undergoing treatment at Ghatail Upazila Health Complex.

Farid, from Makulla village in Gopalpur upazila, lost his wife Asma Begum in the incident.

As a pickup truck was delaying to make room for the speeding bus, at one point, the bus attempted to overtake the pickup while a truck was coming from the opposite direction, Farid said.

The bus driver then tried to move towards left to avoid a head-on collision with the truck and lost control over the steering, he added.

"The bus then fell into an eight-foot deep

ditch by the road and turned turtle," said Mohammad Monir Hossain, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Tangail.

When contacted, devastated Abdul Based from Asgara village in Gopalpur upazila could not talk to this correspondent as his son Arif Hossain, helper of the bus, died.

A case was filed with Ghatail Police Station yesterday, accusing the unidentified bus driver, who was not found on the spot, said Amir Hossain, officer-in-charge (investigation).

Seven passengers of the bus were killed and 22 others injured as the vehicle plunged into the ditch beside Tangail-Mymensingh highway in the area.

Ghatail Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abul Kashem Mohammad Shahin said the families of each of the deceased got Tk 5,000 from the District Administration as assistance.



The wreckage of the bus.

PHOTO: STAR

Comilla mayor seeks HC order to scrap graft trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly-elected Comilla City Corporation Mayor Monirul Hoque Shakoo yesterday filed a petition with the High Court seeking stay on the trial of a corruption case against him.

In the petition, he prayed to the HC to grant him bail and to scrap the lower court order that accepted charges of the case and issued an arrest warrant against him.

The Comilla mayor in his petition urged the HC to issue a rule asking the Anti-Corruption

Commission to explain why the trial proceedings of the case against him should not be quashed.

Shakoo submitted the petition though his lawyer Barrister AM Mahub Uddin Khokon saying that he was in bail in the case, but the trial court has issued the arrest warrant against him without issuing any notice to him.

ACC lawyer Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that the HC may hold hearing on the petition today.

The ACC filed the case

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Free speech increasingly getting stifled

Says ARTICLE 19 reviewing incidents in 2016

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With notable increase in the number of violations against journalists and online activists compared to the previous years, the country saw another violent and repressive year for freedom of expression and press freedom in 2016, rights organisation ARTICLE 19 said yesterday.

Last year, a total of 320 violations took place in 147 incidents, including three killings, against 141 journalists, three online activists and three officials of a publishing house, said the UK-based rights body, which focuses on defence and promotion of freedom of expression and freedom of information.

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, ARTICLE 19 yesterday released its 2016 country report titled "Bangladesh: Violations against Journalists and Online Activists in 2016".

"Brutal attacks on journalists and online activists, and the use of unfair laws and criminal defamation provisions which clearly

violate international standards, continued to stifle free speech," said ARTICLE 19.

They said harassment through unwarranted application of laws, including criminal defamation cases, vexatious cases under different laws including the Penal Code, ICT Act, and the Special Powers Act "constituted 39.1% of the total violations posing the most significant threat to freedom of expression."

"The use of criminal defamation has increased seven-fold and amounted to 78 cases, compared to only 10 in 2014," it said.

"This year different laws have been used in conjunction to harass targeted individuals, such as The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam faced 66 criminal defamation cases, and 17 cases filed with vexatious intent for alleged sedition by leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League and its affiliated bodies across the country, after his admission regarding a lapse in editorial judgement while publishing a report containing unverified information," it said.

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Proposed digital security act will remove ambiguity in section 57

Anisul tells press briefing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the Digital Security Act will be formulated removing the confusion and ambiguities of Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act, as the section is said to be causing hindrances to freedom of expression.

"The Digital Security Act is now in the vetting stage and in this law, all confusion and vagueness of Section 57 of the ICT Act will be removed," he said.

He said this at a press briefing at the law ministry following a meeting with US Ambassador to Dhaka Marcia Bernicat at his office.

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MD of SHARP Inaugurates 10 New Showrooms of Esquire Electronics Ltd.

Last Wednesday, 3 May 2017, Mr. Tadashi Ohyama - Managing Director of SHARP-ROXY SALES & SERVICE COMPANY (M) SDN. BHD. inaugurated 10 new showrooms (Lalbagh Dhaka, Agrabad & Lalkhan Bazar Chittagong, Bhairab, Narshingdi, Sirajgonj, Chuadanga, Shatkhira, Khulna & Munshigonj) of Esquire Electronics as a part of the company's showroom expansion plan. Mr. Arifur Rahman - The Managing Director of Esquire Electronics Ltd. was present during the ceremony. During the event Esquire Electronics Ltd. announced about their plans to increase their showrooms from 60 to 200 very soon as a part of their business expansion strategy. It is to be noted that Esquire Electronics Ltd. is the sole authorized distributor of all SHARP appliances in Bangladesh and they have successfully represented this globally renowned Japanese brand for over 30 years.