

Unprecedented

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an official present at the meeting told The Daily Star.

The AL delegation also submitted documents stating that Yunus was the general secretary of Mohsin Hall unit of the pro-BNP student body in Dhaka University.

"His past is very dark, he had been a cadre of a political party which is evident in his behaviour and activities," Imam was quoted as saying by the official, who requested anonymity.

The AL delegation, however, requested the EC not to replace the returning officer for the polls set to be held on May 15, fearing that such an action would give a negative message.

They rather told the EC to send a joint secretary level officer there to monitor the activities of Yunus.

AL leaders Rashidul Alam, Mahbulul Alam Hanif, Abdus Sobhan Golap and Abm Reazul Kabir Kawsar were also present at the meeting.

After the meeting, EC Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed told reporters that an official of joint secretary rank was sent to Khulna.

"Yunus Ali has become the returning officer for the first time. He may not manage all the things properly and he has some limitations. EC joint secretary will assist him as per law," Helal said.

He added that the AL delegation informed the EC that criminals were polluting the electoral environment in Khulna and demanded steps to be taken in this regard.

Five mayor candidates and 186 councillor candidates are competing in the KCC polls.

Imam alleged that a level-playing field was not established as ruling party leaders could not conduct election campaigns the way other party leaders did, meeting sources said.

He also demanded amendment to the law to resolve the matter.

The AL delegation suggested that the commission ensured the presiding and assistant presiding officers were impartial during the polls.

Two killed

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a crime. Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the gang opened fire on police, prompting them to retaliate.

Lelin got injured during the "gunfight", while his accomplices managed to escape. He was declared dead after police took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Detectives recovered a pistol and four bullets from the spot, Rahman said.

The police official also said Lelin was an accused in at least 12 cases including for murder and attack on a police team in Gendaria on April 19 that left three policemen injured. He was awarded the death penalty in 2002 in a murder case but has been on the run since.

Lelin had initially fled the country but returned after a few months.

The deceased in the Narayanganj incident was identified as Raju Prodhan, 25, a member of a mugging gang, Rab officials said.

Maj Manjur Mahede, a company commander of Rab-1, said a Rab team went to 300 feet road area in Ruppang area after receiving information that a gang of muggers had gathered there.

Sensing the presence of the Rab team, the muggers opened fire. The Rab team retaliated for self defence, the official said.

After the fire exchange stopped, Rab informed local police who took Raju to Rupnagar Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, he added.

At least 70 were killed in "shoot-outs", and "gunfights" with the law-enforcement agencies this year, according to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra. In the previous year 162 were killed in similar incidents.

Lightning strikes kill 22

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while harvesting paddy in haor areas across four upazilas, our Moulvibazar correspondent reports.

The victims are Joynal, 60, and Swapon Das, 35, of Baniachong; Narayan Paul, 35, and Abu Talib, 20, of Nabiganj; Sufi Miah, 30, of Lakhai; and Jaoharlal Sarker, 23, of Madhabpur.

In Rajshahi's Tanore upazila, three people were killed and two others injured when struck with lightning yesterday.

The deceased are Anisur Rahman, 30, of Bataspur, Elena Murmu, 35, of Chalkratiram and Sohag Ali, 16, of Duboil villages. The injured are receiving treatment at the local health complex.

In Nilphamari's Jaldhaka upazila, Asma Beowa, 50, was killed when struck by lightning at her house in Dhukdhuki Shalon village and Noor Amin, 45, was killed while working in a field.

In Sunamganj, two farmers -- Jewel Ahmed, 16, and Alamgir, 22 -- were killed in separate incidents of lightning while they were working in fields in Dharamapasha upazila and Sulla upazila yesterday noon.

In Gowainghat upazila in Sylhet, Nurul Haque, 30 of Kamargaon village, died when a thunderbolt struck him yesterday morning.

In Manikganj, 12-year old Saiful Islam Antor of Taluknagar High School died when struck by lightning while Yakub Ali Sheikh, 48, a farmer of Hasadia village in Daulatpur upazila, died while working in a paddy field.

In Kishoreganj, Md Shahjalal Mia,

25, a polytechnic student from Nikoli upazila, and Dipali Rani Barman, 35, of Pakundia upazila died in separate incidents of lightning strikes.

In Gaibandha, farmer Meher Ali, 35, was killed when lightning struck him in a field in Purbo Salua area of Fulchari upazila at noon.

Meanwhile, the ministry of disaster management has already set up lightning detecting sensors at met offices in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Panchagar, Naogaon, Khulna, Patuakhali and Chittagong on an experimental basis to get information of lightning 10 to 15 minutes before its strike.

The lightning detective sensors

DEATH IN LIGHTNING	
Year	Total
2010	123
2011	179
2012	301
2013	285
2014	210
2015	274
2016	351
2017	306

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

worth Tk 20 crore were brought from USA, ministry sources said.

According to them, many countries of Europe, USA and India have benefited from using these sensors.

Md Shah Kamal, secretary to disaster management and relief, said the government has also planted 31.39 lakh palm trees across the country to protect people from lightning.

Mahathir-led opposition

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But at a press conference, Mahathir vowed: "We are not seeking revenge. We want to restore the rule of law."

Mahathir's return to the political frontlines saw him throw in his lot with an opposition alliance filled with parties that he crushed while in power, and which includes jailed opposition icon Anwar Ibrahim -- his former nemesis.

As well as seizing control of the national government, several state legislatures across the country fell into opposition hands for the first time, including the highly symbolic bastion of Johor, the birthplace of Najib's party that was the lynchpin of the ruling coalition.

Official results from the Election Commission showed that Mahathir's opposition grouping Pakatan Harapan, along with an ally in the Borneo state of Sabah, had secured 115 parliamentary seats. 112 are needed to form a government. BN were on 79 seats with just a few left to count.

As it became clear that Mahathir had won, supporters took to the streets waving flags of the opposition alliance.

After polls closed earlier in the day, journalists had flocked to the headquarters of Najib's United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the lynchpin in the ruling coalition -- but he failed to turn up to give a victory speech and the media were told to leave.

Huge numbers of voters earlier flocked to the polls across the country, despite Najib having called the election on a weekday in what critics said was a bid to keep turnout down.

The BN wipeout is a disaster for Najib, who had been under pressure to score an emphatic win after the government lost the popular vote for the first time at the last elections in 2013.

The controversy surrounding IMDB has dogged Najib since the story exploded in 2015. Billions of dollars were allegedly stolen from the fund, which was set up and overseen by Najib. The leader and IMDB deny any wrongdoing.

But in rural areas, the rising cost of living, which has hit poor Malays hard, was the main concern at the election particularly after the introduction of an unpopular sales tax in 2015.

Trump decision

FROM PAGE 16

Obama said the Iran agreement significantly rolled back Tehran's nuclear program and was a model for a possible deal Trump hopes to negotiate with North Korea to eliminate Pyongyang's nuclear weapons.

"That is why today's announcement is so misguided," Obama said.

"Walking away from the JCPOA turns our back on America's closest allies, and an agreement that our country's leading diplomats, scientists, and intelligence professionals negotiated," he said.

European powers, Russia and key trading power China vowed to save the accord and protect companies operating in the country.

Trump's move risks overturning years of diplomacy, worsening instability in the Middle East and threatens foreign companies' business in Iran worth billions of dollars.

Iran reacted furiously to Trump's decision, with lawmakers burning a

US flag and chanting "Death to America" in the Iranian parliament. But its regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Israel applauded the US move.

Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday vowed that Germany, France and Britain would "do everything" to ensure that Iran remains in the landmark 2015 nuclear deal.

"We will remain committed to this agreement and will do everything to ensure that Iran complies with the deal," Merkel said, adding that Berlin had made the decision jointly with Paris and London.

The foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany will meet Iranian representatives next Monday "to consider the entire situation," French Foreign Minister Le Drian told RTL radio.

Trump's advisor John Bolton said earlier that European firms doing business in Iran now have a six month deadline to wind up investments or risk US sanctions.

Jubo League leader killed in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A ward councillor was hacked to death allegedly by his political rivals in Phulpur upazila of Mymensingh yesterday evening.

The victim, Sadequr Rahman, 40, was also the joint secretary of Phulpur municipality Jubo League, youth wing of the ruling Awami League, said Badsha Alamgir, secretary of Phulpur Jubo League.

Badsha blamed Sadequr's political rivals for the killing.

The attack was carried out around 7:00pm when Sadequr was going to his home in Charpara Gudaria area, AKM Mahbul Alam, officer-in-charge of Phulpur Police Station.

Suddenly, a group of some 20 men, armed with sharp weapons, swooped on the Jubo League leader and fled after hacking him indiscriminately, the OC said.

Critically injured Sadequr was rushed to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

The attackers were yet to be identified, the police official said.

2 cases filed for Shaktiman, Borma killings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Two cases were filed against 118 people yesterday in connection with the killing of six people, including Jana Sanghati Samity (JSS) MN Larma Group vice-president and Naniarchar upazila chairman Shaktiman Chakma and Democratic UPDF chief Tapan Jyoti Chakma alias Borma, a week ago.

Naniarchar police said Rupam Dewan, MN Larma Group's Naniarchar upazila organising secretary, filed a case against 46 named and some unidentified people.

Arjin Chakma, a witness, also filed a case against 72 named and some unidentified people in connection with the killing of Borma and five others.

Police around 11:00am yesterday picked up JSS Santu Larma led faction's Bagaichhari upazila President Provat Kumar Chakma Kakoli Babu at Bagaichhari and former Sajek UP chairman Nelson Chakma at Chowmuhoni in Rangamati.

Soldier arrested in Rakhine with \$3.6m meth cache

AFP, Yangon

A Myanmar soldier and two others in northern Rakhine state have been arrested over a cache of methamphetamine pills worth \$3.6 million, authorities said, as a lucrative drug trade courses through a region reeling from the army's brutal expulsion of Rohingya Muslims.

Army Private Aung Kyaw Naing and villager Aung Than Htay were arrested at a checkpoint in Rakhine's Rathedaung township on May 7 with nearly 200,000 meth tablets, according to a Facebook post from the government's Information Committee.

Jubo League

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Hospital where he died at 10:00pm.

The suspects tried to flee on their bike but it crashed near the scene. Locals then chased them. Being chased by a mob, the trio took refuge in a room of a nearby building.

Ashrafur Islam, assistant commissioner of Badda zone police, said the three took shelter in the Bepari Shopping Complex area and they detained them from there and also recovered a small firearm from their possession.

Tougher demo

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1,200 students under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad took part from the TSC area to the VC's residence around 11:30am.

Nurul Huq, a joint convener of the Parishad, made the announcement at a gathering at the foot of Raju Memorial Sculpture on Dhaka University campus.

The protesters alleged that the government was "staging a drama" with them regarding publication of the gazette.

Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafuil Alam at a press briefing on Monday said there was no progress regarding the gazette abolishing the quota system as officials received no directive from the prime minister.

The next day, Mozammel Haque Khan, senior secretary of the public administration ministry, said the gazette would be issued when they got instructions from the Prime Minister's Office. "We have yet to get any instruction over abolition of the quota system," he added.

The leaders of the platform said although 28 days have passed since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced abolishing the quota system in parliament, there was no headway to that end.

Joint convener of the platform Muhammad Rashed Khan said they had kept faith in the government for many days and given them time to publish the gazette.

"But no gazette was published even after 28 days. The government is staging a drama with us and hatching conspiracy centring the gazette notification," Rashed said.

He also said they would launch tougher movement from Sunday if the gazette was not published by today.

"We have been observing peaceful and non-violent programmes to meet our demand. The prime minister also announced that the quota system would be abolished. But still, no gazette has been published," said Rashed while briefing journalists at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture.

Before the human chain, more than 1,000 demonstrators brought out a procession starting in front of the DU Central Library. The procession

ended at Raju Memorial Sculpture after parading around the Institute of Fine Arts.

As part of the Parishad's declaration to form human chains at all universities and colleges demanding quick publication of the gazette, around 1,000 students at Rajshahi University, more than 200 students at Jahangirnagar University and around 200 students at Chittagong University formed human chains yesterday.

They threatened to wage tougher movement on their respective campuses again if their demand was not met by the deadline.

Earlier on April 26, the leaders of the quota reform movement threatened to launch fresh demonstration in May for the gazette notification.

Awami League Joint General Secretary Jahangir Kabir Nanak met the leaders the next day and assured them that the government would publish the gazette once the prime minister, who was in Australia at the time, returned.

Following the assurance, the leaders of the quota reform movement postponed their agitation till May 7.

As the gazette was not published by the deadline, the protesters on Tuesday declared to resume demonstration, demanding immediate publication of the gazette.

Under the banner of Parishad, students and jobseekers across the country launched the movement on February 17 to press home their five-point demand including reduction of the quota privilege to 10 percent from existing 56 percent.

Students of public and private universities across the country took to the street in support of the demand. Police on April 8 charged batons and lobbed tear gas shells on the demonstrators on DU campus, injuring at least 163.

The protesters blocked key points in the capital and roads and highways elsewhere.

In the wake of mass protests by the students, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament on April 11 declared that the quota system would be scrapped.

Quota system was introduced through an executive order in 1972 and has been amended several times since then.

Utility tariffs set to rise

FROM PAGE 2

The price of each unit of Wasa water was only Tk 6 in 2009, when the Awami League came to power.

According to section 22 of Wasa Act 1996, the authorities can increase water tariff by 5 percent every year, said a Wasa official.

The latest decision has drawn the ire of many residents, who termed it illogical.

"We have been living with stinky tap water for a long time. Now we have to pay more for this?" Anowar Hossain, a resident of Chamelibagh, told The Daily Star.

He said Wasa must ensure safe water before prices are hiked.

Residents of Mirpur-11, Mohammadpur, Basabo, Kadomtola, Madartek, Mugda, Manda, Gopibagh, Obhoy Das Lane and KM Das Lane have been getting stinky tap water for a long time.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister AMA Muhith has hinted at rising electricity prices.

Appearing in a live TV talk-show, he said on Tuesday night that electricity prices would rise in line with the production costs.

The government has started importing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). The first consignment reached Bangladesh at the end of last month. The imported gas will be supplied to the national grid by this month.

Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the prime minister, last month said gas price would also go up.

Gas suppliers have requested Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission for gas price hike. They

are seeking a 75-percent increase, from Tk 7.39 per cubic metre to Tk 12.95.

LNG might cost the country about Tk 30 a cubic metre.

The suppliers, however, are asking for increased gas prices only for industries, power stations, filling stations, fertiliser factories, and tea estates.

The commission last raised gas prices by about 22 percent in 2017.

The cost of gas production, without the supplementary duties and other charges, stands at Tk 4.3 per cubic metre. It becomes Tk 9.55 if all charges are included.

Citing energy ministry calculations, an official said the price would be Tk 14.64 a unit when LNG and local gas are blended.

The average retail price of gas supplied by Petrobangla from domestic sources is Tk 7.39 per cubic metre.

9 zebras

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No one was arrested over the incident. Asked, the police officer said the cattle shed had no boundaries. So, anyone could bring the zebras there.

Salauddin Shikder, additional superintendent of police in Jessore, said the zebras were kept at the police lines. Those would be handed over to the forest department soon.

On November 13 last year, police recovered two lions and two tiger cubs from a SUV (sport utility vehicle) in Chansra intersection area on the outskirts of Jessore town. Two traffickers were arrested in connection with the matter.

raise this question for nothing? I have stopped it much earlier. Now a permanent system prevails where there is a scope for regularising some money by paying a fine."

He said the talks on money laundering were exaggerated compared to the actual laundered amount.

On the local sugar industries, Muhith said their production cost was very high as they are dependent on sugarcane. Sugar is produced from bitumen abroad which is cheaper, he added.

Talking about his retirement plan, he said, "I am ready to go on retirement with full satisfaction. Most of my desires have been fulfilled in the last several years."

State Minister for Finance and Planning Abdul Mannan, Finance Secretary Muslim Chowdhury, NBR Chairman Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and ERD Secretary Kazi Shofiqul Azam also spoke.

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Price Sensitive Information

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company in its 100th meeting held on Wednesday, 09 May 2018, commencing from 3:30 p.m., has taken the following decision, which may be considered as price sensitive information :

"The Board of Directors of the Bank has accorded its approval for issuance of Mudaraba Subordinated Bond for Tk.600,00,00,000.00 (Taka six hundred crore only) as a process of inclusion in Tier-II capital for a period of 7 (seven) years through private placement subject to the approval of the Regulatory Authorities and compliance of all formalities in this respect."

By order of the Board
Sd/-
Md. Golam Mahbub
Company Secretary

Dated, Dhaka
09 May 2018.

Muhith makes MPO pledge

FROM PAGE 2

to be given under MPO system would have to be spent as per the finance ministry's guidelines.

Several thousand teachers of non-government institutions under the banner of different teachers' organisations took to the street in December and January. They observed programmes like hunger strike in front of the National Press Club demanding inclusion in the MPO.

They however called off their programmes following the prime minister's assurance of meeting their demand.

The MPO is the government's share in the payroll of teachers of non-government education institutions. Under the scheme, the government provides 100 percent of their basic salary. The system also gives them a monthly small amount as allowances.

After suspension of around six

years initiated by the then BNP-led alliance government, the MPO facility was revived by the government in 2010 as it was one of the electoral pledges of the Awami League-led alliance. As many as 1,624 secondary and higher secondary private institutions were also given the MPO facility.

According to the leaders of Non-MPO Shikhya Pratishthan Shikhyak Karmachari Federation, there are 5,242 non-MPO institutions where around 80,000 teachers are working without any pay, some for more than a decade.

'AL TO RETURN TO POWER'

At yesterday's pre-budget discussion, ERF president Saif Islam Dilal and his colleagues made some recommendations for the next budget. Those include introduction of afternoon shift in different private hospitals, yellow bus for education institutions and introduction of district

budget in full scale.

Muhith said the primary schools were "almost nationalised" and all secondary schools in bad shape would also be nationalised.

The minister said if ruling AL assumed office again through the next general election, a large portion of power would be transferred to the districts and they would formulate their own budget.

He added, "I believe 100 percent that Awami League will return to power. Next time there will be substantial changes in governance and enormous empowerment opportunities would be created in the local government bodies."

The finance minister said he would take the initiative next year to introduce some yellow buses for schools to transport the children to and from their institutions.

Replying to a question on black money, Muhith said, "Why do you