

BCL man stabbed to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has allegedly been stabbed to death by rivals in Jashore Sadar upazila.

Jony Rahman, 20, son of Sirajul Islam of the upazila, was an executive committee member of Narendrapur Union unit of Chhatra League.

Quoting locals, police said the deceased had disputes with other leaders including unit president GM Sabuj Hassan and general secretary Shahin Alam, over the purchase of sand from a pond in the area.

On Monday around 9:00pm, the activists of the rival BCL factions attacked him in Taropara Amtola area and stabbed him, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) Moniruzzaman of Kotwali Model Police Station.

Nahid died on the spot, the OC said, adding that the body was sent to Jashore General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

"Police are investigating the matter. Whoever involved in the killing will be arrested," he said.

Book of graft

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for constructing six buildings had been ignored. Possibly around Tk 29 crore was misappropriated through this violation.

The book also mentions that the VC violated the rules to give her husband PhD degree. "She was the chair of the committee which gave the degree and scholarship to her husband."

The protesters alleged that there had been irregularities while opening the Institute of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information's System.

They also announced a seven-point demand, including publishing all expenditures of development projects and running the university administration, and ensuring participation of all stakeholders in university's development work.

At the press briefing, speakers urged President Abdul Hamid, also the chancellor of the university, to form a committee immediately to look into the allegations.

Prof Rayhan Rhyme, convener of the platform, said although the VC's involvement in corruption had been detailed by the media in recent weeks, the government had not paid any heed.

"Nobody can remain in the VC post after their involvement in such crimes," he added.

"We will submit copies of this book to the education ministry and the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh."

The protesters announced a fresh protest programme in the evening. A photo exhibition of the November 5 attack on the demonstrators will be held today at Murad Chatter adjacent to the new arts building.

A procession will be brought out tomorrow, protesting the irregularities and corruption in the ongoing construction of three dormitories for female students.

Among others, Prof Abdul Jabbar Hawlader, Prof Jamal Uddin, Prof Khabir Uddin, Prof Mirza Taslima Sultana, and Prof Shamima Sultana were present at the briefing.

On this day

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The US mounts pressure on India and Pakistan to accept the ceasefire offer of the UN General Assembly. White House spokesperson Ronald Ziegler says that US president Richard Nixon was consulting his security adviser Henry Kissinger on the situation.

The allied force face fierce resistance at the Hili frontier. They launch a comb operation at Gobindaganj Pakistani base on Bogra-Rangpur highway. Pakistan troops surrender in the early morning.

Jamalpur garrison surrender to the allied force. In Haluaghat, a brigade of Pakistan troops starts to disband. They destroy numerous bridges while retreating towards Tangail. Another Pakistani brigade leaves Mymensingh and takes shelter in their base. The allied force take control of Jamalpur by the night without any resistance.

The allied air strikes remain temporarily halted following UN's request for evacuating foreign nationals from Dhaka. Pakistan Major General Rao Farman Ali urges emergency ceasefire to evacuate Pakistanis from Dhaka.

A spokesperson of Pakistan army says the situation of the eastern region is not good, however, Pakistan army will never surrender. A curfew is imposed in Dhaka from 3:00pm.

Bhairab and Ashuganj fights from December 8 to 11.

Source: Shafiqullah, KM Bir Uttam Major General. Muktiyuddhe Bangladesh, Dhaka: Agami Prokashon, 1995: 212.

Trump to face 2 formal charges

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Nadler, in a solemn and deeply serious moment for the nation, was joined by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the US Capitol to lay out the charges facing Trump.

Trump-- who will be only the third US president to be impeached if the full House of Representatives backs the charges--responded to the announcement of impeachment charges by calling the accusations "ridiculous."

He also renewed his familiar claim on Twitter that he is the victim of a "WITCH HUNT!"

The president is alleged to have wielded the power of the presidency for personal and political gain by pressuring Ukraine to interfere in the 2020 US election.

His accusers say he conditioned vital military aid and a much-sought White House meeting on Kiev announcing it

would investigate Democratic former vice president Joe Biden, who is the frontrunner to challenge Trump in the 2020 election.

He also pressed his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky to probe a debunked Kremlin conspiracy theory that it was Kiev, and not Moscow, that interfered in the 2016 US election.

The charges also focus on Trump's efforts to block Congress from fully investigating his actions -- which Democrats see as a violation of its constitutional right to conduct oversight of the executive branch.

"The evidence of the president's misconduct is overwhelming and uncontested," said House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff, who oversaw weeks of public hearings in which witnesses including Trump administration officials and US diplomats testified about the pressure on Ukraine.

Killer whale grandmas help

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It has been suggested that the trait evolved because it allowed post reproductive females to help their wider kin -- referred to as the "grandmother effect" in people, but the theory had not been tested in whales until now.

"This is the first non-human

example of the grandmother effect in a menopausal species," senior author Daniel Franks from the University of York told AFP.

"It has also been shown in elephants, but they are able to reproduce until the end of their lives. We currently know of only five species that go through menopause: the

"To do nothing would make ourselves complicit in the president's abuse of his high office," Schiff said, adding that Trump's "misconduct goes to the heart of whether we can conduct a free and fair election in 2020."

Trump, who has long assailed the Democrats for pursuing impeachment, maintained his fighting posture early yesterday, tweeting that the effort to oust him as "sheer Political Madness!" Democrats on Monday laid out their case for ouster with a nearly 10-hour public hearing in which they declared Trump a "clear and present danger" to national security.

It is widely understood that Democrats were debating whether to unveil a third article of impeachment -- obstruction of justice -- against Trump, but concluded it would be better to keep the charges narrowly focused on Trump's Ukraine pressure effort.

Cut down on foreign trips

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reproached at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, according to meeting sources.

"One House, One Farm' is a poverty alleviation project through family farming. There was no need to take foreign tours as part of its implementation and yet, it was included in the proposal," she said in the meeting held at the Planning Commission premises.

When the proposal file came to Hasina, she had crossed out the foreign tour component. "The file never came back to me after that," a meeting source quoted the prime minister as saying.

"The prime minister expressed discontentment and annoyance over excessive foreign trips," Planning Minister MA Mannan told reporters after the meeting.

She gave a strong instruction -- one group will go abroad once and complete all tasks, the planning minister said.

The topic came up in discussion when the revised proposal for a chancery complex in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad was placed.

The project was taken up in 2007 after the Pakistan government gifted a plot to Bangladesh in Islamabad's diplomatic zone in 2003.

In 2006, a five-member team went to Islamabad to survey the land. Then

others are short-finned pilot whales, narwhals and beluga."

Writing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Franks and colleagues examined more than 40 years of census data on two killer whale groups off the coasts of the US state of Washington as well as Canada's British Columbia.

Ecneec okays revised

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chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the NEC Conference Room in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area.

On November 6, the Cabinet Committee on Public Purchase approved the project under the condition that the ministry concerned take Ecneec's approval by submitting the details of the additional cost in a revised proposal.

Planning Minister MA Mannan, briefing reporters after the meeting, said seven projects were approved involving Tk 9,241.25 crore.

Of the seven, five are new and two are revised.

He said the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) under the Civil Aviation ministry had been implementing the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) project, which is now expected to be completed by June 2025.

The main project operations include extension of the existing airport to meet the future demand

of air traffic and ensuring security of international standard.

According to the Planning Commission, the passenger handling capacity of the airport is now eight million a year and the number of passengers is expected to reach 14 million by 2025 and 24.8 million by 2035.

The revised proposal also includes construction of a third passenger terminal with a floor space of 2,30,000 square meters, 115 check-in counters, 64 departure and 64 arrival immigration desks, 27 baggage scanning machines, 40 scanning machines, 12 boarding bridges, 16 carousels and 11 body scanners.

There will also be new car parking facility for 1,230 vehicles, a new 63,000 square meter import and export cargo complex, a 5,42,000 square meter apron for 37 aircrafts, among others.

The design for the airport has been slightly changed under this project as the VVIP terminal would now

be attached to the main terminal building.

MA Mannan said the HSIA was under pressure due to increasing air traffic.

Around 130 domestic and international flights carrying 25,000-30,000 passengers use the HSIA every day. There are 26 foreign airlines operating there, officials said.

The airport handles around 1.6 crore luggage every year, but there are only eight carousels in the two international terminals.

The other projects approved at the meeting are construction of a chancery complex in Islamabad, upgrading the Ramu-Fatehkarkul-Morichhya National highway, Keraniganj to Hasara of Munshiganj highway, Kushtia portion of the Jhenidah-Kushtia-Pakshi-Dashuria highway, Nageshwari-Kashipur-Fulbari-Kulaghat-Lalmonirhat district highway and infrastructure development of three colleges at Dhaka, Madaripur, and Rangpur.

Work on dual carriageway

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expected to be completed within January, Fazlul, also the project director, told this correspondent yesterday.

This would be the first project in Bangladesh's transport sector that is funded by AIB. Earlier, it had financed projects of the energy sector.

Apart from inter-city connectivity, the upgradation of 56.16-kilometer highway would improve cross-border connectivity between Bangladesh and India and would reduce travel time, officials said.

Tamabil, a hilly area in Sylhet across the border of the Indian state of Meghalaya, about 5km from Jaflong, is a popular tourist destination.

As per the Development Project Proposal (DPP), the project cost would be Tk 3729.53 crore, of which Tk 3100.50 crore would come as project aid while the rest would be given by the government.

"We have already submitted a DPP to the planning ministry and gotten the approval at the Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) and hope the project would be placed before Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) soon for approval," Ashrafal Alam, additional chief engineer (planning and maintenance wing) of the RHD, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Once the Ecneec passes the project, the RHD will float an international tender to pick a contractor and hopes to start the project's physical work within October next year, he said.

DHAKA-SYLHET-TAMABIL is part of Asian Highways 1 and 2 and the government has long been working to upgrade the two-lane highway.

AH-1 is the longest route of the Asian Highway Network and runs 20,557km from Tokyo, Japan via Korea, China, Southeast Asia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran to the border between Turkey and Bulgaria, west of Istanbul, where it joins the European route.

AH-2 of the Asian Highway Network runs 13,107 km from Denpasar, Indonesia to Merak and Singapore to Khosravi, Iran via Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan.

The impasse over financing the expansion of the 214-kilometre Dhaka-Sylhet Highway into four lanes has come near the end as Asian Development Bank has given consent to fund the project.

And now, AIB agreed to finance the Sylhet-Tamabil part.

The overall objective of the "Improvement of the Sylhet-Tamabil Road to Four-lane Highway" project is to generate economic benefits by the facilitation the faster, safer and more economic links between Sylhet and Tamabil, reads the project documents.

Besides, the border crossing at Tamabil -- between Bangladesh and India -- has the potential to generate significantly increased traffic which would have a positive economic affect for the people.

Further economic benefits could be expected from the increased use of the road corridor by commercial traffic travelling to and from other parts of the country and cross-border traffic travelling from eastern India to Dhaka, it added.

TWO MORE PROJECTS AIB is expected to finance two more projects in transport sector.

12 acres of Meghna leased out illegally

Says NRCC

TAWFIQUE ALI

The district administration in Munshiganj violated law by leasing out a 12-acre foreshore and floodplains of the Meghna in Char Betagi, said National River Conservation Commission Chairman Muzibur Rahman Howlader.

"The way Munshiganj district administration leased out vast expanse of the river foreshore and floodplains is unlawful and it has gone against the tenet of saving this arterial river," he told this correspondent yesterday.

Mentioning that the district administration resorted to irregularities while leasing out the Khas land, he said, "They [district administration] first leased out the Khas land to landless people and then retracted it to give it to a wealthy company."

This very method is illegal because the character of an area recorded as river in the Cadastral Survey records cannot be altered and handed over to private parties, he added.

Members of National River Conservation Commission (NRCC), including its chairman, visited Char Betagi to inspect the fresh earth filling into the river on Monday.

A day before their visit, The Daily Star published a report on how this piece of unregistered land was leased out to privately owned Anlima Petroleum Limited.

The report also mentioned how the company started filling up the foreshore and floodplains to reclaim highland for establishing its petroleum refinery.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, NRCC Chairman Muzibur also said his commission instructed the deputy commissioner of Munshiganj to immediately stop the ongoing work, cancel the lease and resolve the issue within a week.

The commission has also ordered the authorities to restore the original character of the river area by excavating the already filled up site, he added.

The deputy commissioner of Munshiganj will have to immediately

revoke the lease in accordance with section 149/4 of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, he said.

According to the NRCC official, they examined other incidents of such river grabbing in Gazaria upazila of Munshiganj and Sonargaon upazila of Narayanganj during their latest visit.

The district commissioners of the two districts were also directed to prepare a list of river grabbers and take legal actions against them, he added.

Muzibur also held the inaction of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Department of Environment and the two district administrations responsible for such condition of the Meghna and its tributaries.

Meanwhile, Moniruzzaman Talukdar, deputy commissioner of Munshiganj district, said they halted the earth filling work on the day The Daily Star published its report.

They were now looking into the process of revoking the lease and retracting the river area, he further said.

"My predecessor leased out the river foreshore and floodplains. It is a constraint to me. I will seek opinion of the land ministry in this case," he added.

Asked why the district administration initiated leasing out the yet-to-be identified land, he said, "It is embarrassing for me to either defend or contradict with this. I was not directly involved in this process."

Charges

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The ACC in October last year said it found evidence of fraud involving transactions of Tk 4 crore borrowed with fake documents by two businessmen, Shahjahan and Niranjan, from the bank. It said the money was deposited in Justice Sinha's account.

Justice Sinha resigned on November 11, 2017, from abroad. He is now in the US.

MTB employee

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Both the accounts were maintained under the bank's "privilege banking" scheme, which was under the supervision of Jahid.

On the same day, Ferdousi applied for issuing a cheque book against the new account. The cheque book was issued and shown given to the client on October 25, 2016. However, the client never received the book, reads the First Information Report (FIR) of the case.

Later, another cheque book was issued in April 2017. The ACC found that the book was issued upon a fake request from the client.

However, this time Ferdousi received the cheque book. She authorised one Ishiaq Hossain Talukdar, who collected the book on her behalf, according to the case statement.

On August 23 that year, another application was filed with the MTB branch, seeking another cheque book. It was issued two days later. Signatures of the client in both the requisition slip and collection register were found to be fake.

On March 28 last year, another request was made for issuing a cheque book. This time, Jahid, also then assistant vice president of the bank, prepared a fake authorisation letter which said Ferdousi authorised him to collect the cheque on her behalf.

The client's signature in the authorisation letter was fake, the graft watchdog found.

Each cheque book contains 25 pages. Ferdousi used only 14 pages of a cheque book to withdraw about Tk 1.46 crore.

"After verification by experts, it was found that the signatures in the 14 cheques were hers," said the case statement.

However, Ferdousi's signature was forged in the rest of the 60

cheques which were used by Jahid for withdrawing about Tk 4.97 crore.

Of the amount, Jahid deposited Tk 2.24 crore in his wife's account in another private bank.

As transaction information is sent to clients through SMS, Jahid changed Ferdousi's mobile phone number in the bank's client database with his own number within 25 days of opening of the account.

To do so, the banker prepared a fake request form for changing the client's mobile phone number.

The ACC verified the changed number with a mobile phone operator and found that the NID number used for its registration belonged to Jahid.

Contacted, MTB Managing Director and CEO Syed Mahbubur Rahman yesterday said they were conducting an investigation into the incident and action would be taken if anyone was found involved in irregularities.

Russia, Ukraine leaders agree to exchange prisoners

REUTERS, Paris

The leaders of Russia and Ukraine yesterday agreed to exchange all remaining prisoners from the conflict in east Ukraine by the end of the year, but left thorny questions about the region's status for future talks.

Russia's Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in their first face-to-face meeting, took part in nine hours of talks in Paris, brokered by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Rule of law

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She said the government has enacted various human rights-related laws and amended many others while strengthening the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

The commission organised the programme on the theme "Youth standing up for human rights".

The premier said after the assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, the killers and anti-liberation forces were awarded and patronised to get them established in the country politically.

"It is very natural that human rights will be violated repeatedly if the government tolerates any injustice and crime."

She said the Awami League government was trying to do a very tough job to put the country on the track of prosperity. "We are very much active whenever there is any violation

of human rights."

The government was giving special attention to those who were lagging behind in the society, said the PM.

She said the people need to be properly aware of human rights and their duties.

Hasina said creating awareness regarding rights and responsibilities was very much necessary. "To enjoy rights, we have to discharge our responsibilities to others..."

About the Rohingya crisis, the premier said Bangladesh did not get into a conflict with Myanmar. It was rather in a dialogue with the neighbouring country so that their nationals could be repatriated.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, NHRC Chairman Nasima Begum, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Bangladesh Mia Seppo and NHRC member Kamal Uddin Ahmed also spoke at the event.