

Nur Hossain now gets life term in arms case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sentenced Nur Hossain, condemned in the sensational seven-murder case, to life imprisonment in an arms case.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Sabina Yesmin delivered the verdict in presence of the convict.

Four witnesses testified against him, said Salah Uddin Sweet, additional public prosecutor of the district court.

A foreign pistol and six bullets were recovered from Nur's house in Siddhiganj on May 14, 2014.

Police filed the case against him the next day, said Asaduzzaman, inspector of Narayanganj Court Police.

Seven people, including Narayanganj City Corporation panel mayor Nazrul Islam and senior lawyer Chandan Sarker, were abducted from the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road on April 27, 2014.

Later, their bodies were found floating on the Shitalakkhya.

Nur Hossain, sacked vice-president of Siddhiganj Awami League, Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, sacked commanding officer of Rab-11, and 24 others were awarded death penalty in the seven-murder case on Jan 16, 2017.

Nine other accused were sentenced to seven to 17 years of imprisonment.

Australia backs law to speed carbon emission cuts

AFP, SYDNEY

Australia enshrined deeper cuts to carbon emissions in new legislation yesterday, aiming to shed its decade-long reputation as a fossil-fuel-addicted climate laggard.

Lawmakers in the lower house of parliament voted 89-55 in favour of a 43 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 from 2005 levels, on the path to reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

It is expected to go to the Senate for final approval in September.

Heavily reliant on coal for its electricity and one of the world's top exporters of fossil fuels, Australia's centre-left Labor Party government came to power in May promising swifter action to curb global warming.

Australians hit by increasingly ferocious bushfires and floods voted in large numbers for climate-aware candidates at the last election, helping to oust the previous conservative coalition government.

A chilling tale of a highway robbery

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"Then they took the mobile phones, cash, jewellery and other valuables. Five or six of them raped a female passenger," said Kaiser.

Helal Miah, a guard in Raktibazar area of Madhupur, said he saw a bus slowing down on the highway and men jumping off of it around 3:00am.

The bus then went off the road and became stationary with its right wheels in the air after hitting an electric pole.

"Then I walked towards the bus and heard someone screaming 'robbers'. The robbers [men who jumped off the vehicle] started running away. I saw a white microbus and I think they got on it and fled. Then I went near the bus and screamed for the locals to come and help," he told reporters.

"A woman in torn clothes was among the passengers. The other women passengers' dupattas were given to her so that she could cover herself. The travellers said there was a robbery in the bus."

"But the passengers could not



The Science Laboratory area on the capital's Mirpur Road saw higher than usual traffic yesterday, the last working day of the week, as the BNP held a namaz-e-janaza of a student leader near its Nayapaltan office. The photo was taken around 2:00pm.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Russia must not win in Ukraine

Says Nato chief as Moscow intensifies offensive in the east; Amnesty says Ukraine forces endangering civilians

AGENCIES

The war in Ukraine is the most dangerous moment for Europe since World War Two, and Russia must not be allowed to win, Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday, as Kyiv had been forced to cede some territory in the east in the face of a Russian offensive.

To prevent Moscow from succeeding, Nato and its member countries may have to support Ukraine with arms and other assistance for a long time to come, Stoltenberg said in a speech in his native Norway.

"It's in our interest that this type of aggressive policy does not succeed," he said.

Amid fears among some politicians in the West that Russia's ambitions may extend beyond Ukraine, Stoltenberg warned Putin that the response to such a move from the Western military alliance would be overwhelming.

"If President Putin even thinks of doing something similar to a Nato country as he has done to Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, then all of Nato will be involved immediately," he said.

On the battleground, Russian forces were engaged in considerable military activity, firing from tanks, barrel and

rocket artillery in several parts of Ukraine, the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said yesterday.

President Volodymyr Zelensky this week described the pressure his armed forces were under in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine as "Hell". He spoke of fierce fighting around the town of Avdiivka and the fortified village of Pisky, where Kyiv has acknowledged its Russian foe's "partial success" in recent days.

The Ukrainian military said yesterday Russian forces had mounted at least two assaults on Pisky but that its troops had managed to repel them.

Ukraine has spent the last eight years fortifying defensive positions in Pisky, viewing it as a buffer zone against Russian-backed forces who control the city of Donetsk about 10 km to the southeast, reports Reuters.

General Oleksiy Gromov told a news conference that Ukrainian forces had recaptured two villages around the eastern city of Sloviansk, but had been pushed back to the town of Avdiivka's outskirts after being forced to abandon a coal mine regarded as a key defensive position.

Pavlo Kyrylenko, the Ukrainian governor of Donetsk, said on Telegram that three civilians had been killed by Russian shelling in Bakhmut, Maryinka and Shevchenko and five wounded in the past 24 hours.

Eight people had been killed and four wounded by Russian artillery shelling in the town of Toretsk in Donetsk, he said.

Amnesty International, meanwhile, said Ukrainian forces are violating international law and endangering civilians by establishing bases in residential areas, including in schools and hospitals.

The defenders' tactics "in no way justify Russia's indiscriminate attacks", the rights group said in a new report, and some Russian "war crimes" including in the city of Kharkiv were not linked to the tactics.

Ukraine's Presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolnyuk accused Amnesty of "participating in (Russia's) disinformation and propaganda campaign".

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he was "outraged" by the report, and urged Amnesty to "stop creating a false reality."



Jens Stoltenberg

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situation. The information in the audit report is not true. Meanwhile, I am yet to be paid a huge amount of the bill."

Yesterday, he claimed he was paid only 30 percent of his Tk 31,90 crore bill.

During the audit, officials involved in the project dismissed any financial anomalies.

The audit report, however, recommended actions against the people responsible and realising the money spent without due process.

Contacted, project officials said there had been a few "official document gaps" when the audit was done.

Asked, the current Project Director Shah Golam Nabi told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "We have taken the report seriously. We will sit with the officials concerned at the health ministry, audit office and the World Bank soon and I will execute the decisions."

China stages

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Taiwan officials said the drills violated United Nations rules, invaded its space and threatened free air and sea navigation. Beijing, which considers Taiwan a part of its territory to one day be reclaimed, by force if necessary, has defended the drills as "necessary and just", pinning the blame for the escalation on the United States and its allies.

Taiwan said that websites of its defence ministry, foreign ministry and the presidential office were attacked by hackers, and warned of coming "psychological warfare".

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called Pelosi's visit to Taiwan a "manic, irresponsible and highly irrational" act, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Wang, speaking at a meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers in Cambodia, said China had tried to avert crisis by diplomatic means but

two mobile phones, and my wife and mother-in-law's jewelries.

"I could hear that they were torturing a woman behind us, but there was nothing I could do about it. I also heard screams of another woman from the front, but I couldn't see anything in the dark," he said.

"Hearing everything from us, police asked us to file a case. I just wanted to be a witness of the case. But they asked me to be the complainant, so I agreed."

"The police put us on a BRTC bus at 9:00am [on Wednesday] to go home," Hekmat added.

Contacted, Solaiman Hossain, owner of the bus, said the driver and the two crew members have worked for him "for a long time".

Asked whether the robbers got on the bus from the highway, he said, "When a bus is on the road, the drivers, helpers, conductors control the bus," Solaiman said.

"I want the punishment of the culprits," Solaiman added.

would never let its core interests be hurt.

In the meeting, ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) warned against "provocative action". The situation "could lead to miscalculation, serious confrontation, open conflicts and unpredictable consequences among major powers", the ministers said in a joint statement published yesterday.

Wang Yi is attending the talks along with his US counterpart Antony Blinken, though they are not expected to hold a one-on-one meeting.

Blinken said the United States had contacted China "at every level of government" in recent days to call for calm and stability.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, also in Phnom Penh, condemned the Chinese response saying a visit can't be a pretext for aggressive military activity".

6 pellets were lodged in head

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both sides fired shotgun shells.

Meanwhile, 36 police personnel of Bhaba Sadar Police Station and 25 unarmed others were accused in a case filed yesterday over the death of Swecchhasebab Dal member secretary Abdur Rahim, 32, during the clash.

The police station's Inspector (investigation) Arman Hossain was made the prime accused in the murder case filed by Rahim's wife Khadija Begum with the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Ali Haider, said the plaintiff's lawyer Amirul Islam Baset.

Seven sub-inspectors, five assistant sub-inspectors and 23 constables were also accused in the case, he added.

According to the case statement, police opened fire on the procession of BNP activists in Bhaba town, and Rahim was shot. As he laid on the ground, police beat him to death with the butt of the gun, said the case statement.

The court took the case into cognisance and instructed officer-in-charge of Bhaba Sadar Police Station to present all relevant documents

over Abdur Rahim's murder before the court by August 8, said the plaintiff's lawyer.

Bhaba BNP General Secretary Harun-ur-Rashid said the case was filed against those police personnel who fired shots and were identified after examining footage and photos of the clash.

The victim's wife appealed to the court that Rapid Action Battalion investigate the case.

Apart from yesterday's case, police earlier filed two cases against over 400 opposition leaders and activists including the Bhaba unit BNP president and secretary.

Police have so far arrested 10 activists over the cases, said Bhaba Sadar Police Station OC Enayet Hossain.

As part of BNP's countrywide demonstrations against the ongoing load shedding and "mismanagement" in the power sector, local leaders and activists of the party gathered in front of the district BNP office in Bhaba on Sunday.

At one stage, police intercepted their procession, triggering a clash that left Abdur Rahim dead and scores injured.

Deceased JCD leader Noor-e-

Bangladesh adheres

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China has strongly condemned the visit, the first in 25 years by a top US politician that China perceives has symbolic significance and akin to recognising Taiwan.

Yesterday, China fired multiple missiles around Taiwan, launching unprecedented military drills.

The exercises, China's largest ever in the Taiwan Strait, began as scheduled at midday and included live firing in the waters to the north, south and east of Taiwan, bringing tensions in the area to their highest in a quarter century, reports Reuters.

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Wang, speaking at a meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers in Cambodia, said China had tried to avert crisis by diplomatic means but

the one-China principle, understand and support China's legitimate and justified position on Taiwan, and work together with China to defend regional peace, stability and prosperity.

In a statement, he said China and Bangladesh are good neighbours, trustworthy friends and reliable partners. The two countries have always understood and supported each other on issues of core interests concerning respective sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

"China highly appreciates Bangladesh's longstanding commitment to the one-China principle and resolute opposition to 'Taiwan Independence,'" it said.

Jiming said Pelosi's visit is a serious violation of the one-China principle and the provisions of the three China-US joint communiqués. It infringes upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, sends a wrong signal to the separatist forces for "Taiwan independence", and has a severe impact on the political foundation of China-US relations.

He said the one-China principle is a universal consensus of the international community and a basic norm in international relations.

"Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to China's Taiwan region not only gravely undermines peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, but also creates tension and conflicts in the region, bringing more uncertainties to the already troubled world."

6 Jubo Dal activists injured in 'attack by BCL men'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least six Jubo Dal activists in Barishal's Pathorghata upazila were injured when their procession was attacked allegedly by local Chhatra League men yesterday.

The injured have been admitted to Pathorghata Upazila Health Complex, said Saiful Islam Jamal, joint convener of Pathorghata Upazila Jubo Dal.

He alleged that the procession, brought out to protest the killings of two party men in Bholia, was attacked by Chhatra League activists around 10:30am.

Pathorghata Police Station Sub-inspector Shahidul Islam said police dispersed the two sides and the situation was under control.

Mohammad Walid, president of Pathorghata Upazila Chhatra League, said they were not involved in any attack, but just went in front of Jubo Dal office and asked to stop the procession.

Two Covid patients die, positivity rate down to 5.14%

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate reported that two Covid-19 patients died in the country in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The two deaths brought the total number of Covid fatalities in the country to 29,300, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

In the same period, at least 278 people tested positive for the highly transmissible virus against 5,404 samples tested countrywide.

The positivity rate was 5.14 percent, down from 6.53 percent the previous day.

Of the two deceased, one was a female aged between 61 and 70 and the other was a male between 51 and 60.

Both were from Sylhet division, according to the press release.

Taliban say they were not aware of slain al-Qaeda leader's presence in Kabul

REUTERS, Islamabad/Kabul