

Jatiya Party: a year without Ershad

First death anniv of party founder today

RASHIDUL HASAN

The biggest achievement of Jatiya Party in last one year since the demise of party founder HM Ershad is that it has managed to stay united. Although the party did not split formally, there were clear indications of division in it, sources at JP said.

For example, a number of JP leaders said there are divisions between JP chief patron Raushan Ershad, her son Jatiya Party MP Shad Ershad and JP chairman GM Quader.

HM Ershad, the longest serving autocrat, managed to remain a formidable political force, especially in the politics of vote, even after his downfall in 1990.

He passed away on this day last year, at the age of 90.

Ershad, also a military general, usurped state power by removing an elected government in 1982 through a bloodless coup.

He was ousted from power through mass uprising in the late 1990.

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

A serious accident is just a matter of time on the run-down Kalurghat Bridge in Chattogram, constructed in the British era. Hundreds of vehicles, plying the bridge, are facing difficulties every day, as the deck and iron fencing on both sides of the bridge have become worn-out and numerous potholes developed on it, giving way to mishaps. Under the circumstances, the railway authorities have decided to suspend vehicular movement on the bridge from 10pm to 8am til July 23 for the much-needed repair work. This photo was taken yesterday.

FORCED INTO PROSTITUTION IN DUBAI

CID to seek Interpol help to nab traffickers

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The syndicate that has been trafficking thousands of Bangladeshi girls for last eight years and forcing them into sex work is also involved in trafficking girls from India and Pakistan. It's Indian and Pakistani members trafficked the girls to Dubai.

The syndicate is operating brothels in Dubai under the guise of hotel business where girls, aged 18-20, from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are forced into prostitution.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, several high officials of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), investigating the syndicate, disclosed the development.

CID recently arrested ringleader Md Azam Khan and two other members -- Anwar Hossain Moyna and Alamin Hossain alias Diamond.

"We came to know about the racket's activities after interrogating the arrestees, talking with victims and analysing data," said a CID officer, requesting anonymity.

The officer further said they came to know that some local members in Dubai are also linked with the group.

Contacted, Imtiaz Ahmed, deputy inspector general of CID, told this correspondent yesterday that they have already got some names of the syndicate members, which include Indian and Pakistani nationals. All of them are now staying in Dubai.

"We are now preparing documents to seek Interpol's assistance through the National Central Bureau (NCB) in Police Headquarters (PHQ). It's a lengthy process and may take some time," he added.

TRAFFICKED INTO PROSTITUTION

The CID official said ringleader Azam has around 50 brokers in different

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ACC to probe allegations against Shahed, Sabrina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will enquire into allegations against JKG Healthcare Chairperson Dr Sabrina Arif Chowdhury and owner of Regent Hospital and Chairman of Regent Group Md Shahed over misappropriation of public money.

The commission has already formed a three-member committee led by its Deputy Director Abu Bakar Siddiqui in this regard, ACC's Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya told the media.

There are allegations against Shahed that he amassed several crore taka through microcredit and multi-level marketing business, forgery, dodging tax and bank loans with forged documents, said Pranab.

After scrutiny, ACC decided to launch an enquiry against Shahed, he added.

On July 7, Rab filed a case against Shahed and 16 other staff of Regent Group and Regent hospitals after a mobile court found proof that hospital authorities issued fake Covid-19 certificates and charged patients for tests and treatment, violating

an agreement with the government.

Shahed went into hiding after the drive began on that day.

Two days later, Bangladesh Bank asked all banks to freeze his accounts alongside his business establishments for 30 days. Financial Intelligence Unit of BB also sought information on Shahed's accounts and of persons or organisations linked to him.

On Sunday, National Board of Revenue (NBR) directed banks to freeze all accounts of Regent Group chairman and his farms.

Meanwhile, the ACC will also investigate allegation against Dr Sabrina for amassing Tk 8 crore through forgery. ACC's special investigation cell will lead the enquiry, confirmed Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya.

With the help of her husband Arif Chowdhury, Sabrina allegedly prepared 15,460 fake Covid-19 certificates.

She was recently suspended from the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases for "violating rules".

There are also allegations against her of amassing wealth beyond disclosed income.

No place for the greedy in AL: Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Issuing a note of warning, Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said those who are spoiling the image of the party by accumulating wealth illegally will not be spared.

Obaidul, also the Road, Transport and Bridges Minister, made the remark while speaking at a regular online briefing from his residence.

Describing Awami League as the organisation of the people of the country and its soil, he said, "No one will be allowed to make their fortune resorting to irregularities, abusing the name of the party. There's no place for greedy people and conspirators in Awami League."

The government has taken a tough stance against irregularities and corruption in every sector, including illegal casino business, relief activities and health sector as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is taking action after unearthing corruption, said Quader.

Talking about BNP, the minister said, "Instead of standing beside the helpless people of the country, BNP is now observing their political isolation and criticising the government as they can't see people's miseries. BNP is resorting to spreading falsehood as its political strategy."

Now the people of the country no longer like the politics of blaming others, he said, adding "Now the politics should be for saving people and preventing the spread of coronavirus."

'Virtual courts need to be taken forward'

Says chief justice as full Appellate Division bench of SC begins judicial functions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A full bench of Supreme Court's Appellate Division started judicial functions virtually from yesterday to hear and dispose of urgent cases after four months.

The six-member bench of the apex court, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, began proceedings at 10am and continued till 1:15pm.

At the beginning, the chief justice said the virtual court system needs to be taken forward. The bench of the Appellate Division will operate judicial functions on Monday and Thursday in a week.

If the virtual proceedings get successful, the apex court bench will operate for five working days every week, he said.

Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain appreciated and thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Law Minister Anisul Huq for taking necessary measures to

convert the Usage of Information and Communication Technology in Court 2020 Ordinance into a permanent law allowing the country's courts to run judicial functions virtually, Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan, a Supreme Court lawyer, who attended the virtual court proceedings, told The Daily Star.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and Supreme Court Bar Association President Advocate AM Amin Uddin also welcomed the apex court for beginning the virtual court proceedings.

Yesterday, the Appellate Division heard and disposed of two cases although 20 cases were included in the cause list, Khurshid said.

Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan, also the editor of Dhaka Law Reports, said the regular activities of courts need to reopen

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Workers set up a cattle market in Muradpur Bibir Haat area in Chattogram city yesterday, despite recommendation from the national technical advisory committee on Covid-19 to not have any such cattle markets in the port city (as well as Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur cities) to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Archbishop of Chattogram Moses Costa passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CIG

Moses M Costa, CSC, archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chattogram, passed away yesterday morning. He died at 9:20am due to a massive stroke while being treated at Square Hospitals Ltd in the capital, said Fr Leonard Rebeiro, vicar general of Chattogram.

He was 69 years old. He was admitted to the hospital on June 13 with severe pneumonia, Rebeiro also said. Costa, who has been the archbishop of Chattogram since 2011, hailed from Tumulia of Gazipur.

His body is being kept in Tejaon for people to pay tributes, then it will be taken to his village in Gazipur, Rebeiro said. The archbishop will be taken to Chattogram and kept in Patharghata Catholic Church from 7am to 2pm today for people to pay their final respects.

The burial will be held on the church premises around 3:30pm, added the vicar general of Chattogram.

'Blatant abuse of power' Malaysian rights group on revoking work permit of migrant Rayhan Kabir

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Revoking the work permit of Bangladeshi migrant Rayhan Kabir, who appeared in the Al-Jazeera documentary "Locked Up in Malaysia's Lockdown", has been described as "blatant abuse of power".

Zaid Malek, coordinator for Malaysia-based human rights lawyers' group Lawyers for Liberty (LFL), said through no fault of his own, the 25-year old migrant worker has now been rendered undocumented by the authorities.

The remarks came from a statement published on the group's web site. In the documentary, Al Jazeera was critical of Malaysian government's treatment of migrants during the coronavirus pandemic. Pakistani, Indonesian, Bangladeshi and Malaysians were interviewed in the documentary.

However, Malaysian authorities issued a public notice last week seeking information on Rayhan Kabir. They also said Al Jazeera reporters will be interrogated for investigation.

On Sunday, Malaysia's Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador revealed that the Immigration Department had revoked the Bangladeshi's work permit and that Rayhan is now an undocumented migrant and would be deported if found.

Zaid Malek said, "The extent that the authorities are willing to go in order to hunt down one man for merely speaking up his experience of injustice to the media is alarming."

"The revocation of the Bangladeshi's permit is a blatant abuse of power and amounts to flouting of the law by the Immigration Department."

"It has been clearly stated on the Section 9(1)(c) of the Immigration Act

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BOAT CAPSIZE IN BURIGANGA

Mayur-2 launch master arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested the master of Mayur-2 launch that hit and sank another vessel in Buriganga river on June 29, killing at least 34 persons.

Abul Bashar Molla (65) was arrested from a house in South Keraniganj area around 1am, Sujoy Sarker, assistant director of Rab's Legal and Media wing, told The Daily Star.

Bashar was one of the seven persons charged with negligence -- causing the deaths -- in a case filed by River Police with South Keraniganj Police Station following the launch capsizing.

According to River Police, Bashar was in the launch but sukani (launch staff) Nasir Mridha was steering the vessel when it hit another launch -- Morning Bird.

Most of the 34 victims were from Munshiganj district.

Earlier on July 9, River Police arrested Mayur-2 owner and prime accused Mosaddek Hanif Swad from Dhaka.

Five other accused -- master Jakir Hossain, 54; engine driver Shipon Hawlader, 45; driver Shakil Hasan, 28; launch staff Nasir Mridha, 40; and Rido, 24 -- are still on the run.

DEATHS DUE TO DROWNING

Bangladesh's fatality rate 5th in Commonwealth

Says study based on 2017 data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh had the fifth highest fatality rate due to drowning among all 54 Commonwealth countries in 2017, finds a study.

About 37 percent of global drowning deaths occurred in these countries, where 1,10,594 people died in that year, the study revealed.

Half of the deceased were aged below 19 years, and 26 percent were under five years old, it said.

Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) released the study titled "Fatal Drowning in Commonwealth Countries" yesterday.

RLSS Commonwealth President Prince Michael of Kent, GCVO, said, "Understandably, people's attention is very much focused on the terrible worldwide effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly, this does not mean that other avoidable deaths are not occurring throughout the world."

He called upon the countries' governments to take steps to prevent unnecessary loss of lives through simple drowning prevention interventions.

In terms of total casualties, Bangladesh stood second with 14,029 drowning cases. The highest number of people -- 60,199 -- drowned in India in 2017.

Approximately 14 percent of the country remains underwater throughout the year, where frequent flooding turns disastrous.

The combined number of fatal drownings in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan makes up approximately 78 percent of such cases across the 54 countries, the study finds.

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Not a drop of water remains in this canal beside the capital's Demra Staff Quarter Road. Instead, the area is filled to the brim with mountains of plastic waste. Such blatant disregard for the environment does not only pollute waterways, but impacts the lives of residents nearby as well, as they are deprived of a clean liveable city. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN