

## Bangladesh

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On Friday, Momen reiterated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) will not send back 54,000 Rohingyas living there for decades.

“The Saudi government told us it’ll be helpful for them if we provide them with passports as Saudi Arabia doesn’t keep stateless people,” he said.

The foreign minister said they formed a three-member committee headed by Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen to look into the Saudi request.

There are many people to instigate because Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia maintain very good relations with 22 lakh workers in the KSA.

The foreign minister said many years ago -- around 39 to 40 years -- the then Saudi authorities took Rohingyas seeing their sufferings. They do not have any passport and they speak Arabic.

Bangladesh’s position is to scrutinise their identity first as it does not want to take additional burden.

Momen, however, said the Saudi government urged Bangladesh to take back 462 Rohingyas who are currently in Saudi jails for committing criminal activities.

Bangladesh Mission checked it and found only 70 to 80 having Bangladesh’s passports.

Momen said Bangladesh will bring back those 70 to 80 people having Bangladesh’s passports by issuing travel documents. “We don’t know about others.”

## Landmine

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organisation’s most successful “HeroRAT”.  
“The work of HeroRAT Magawa and APOPO is truly unique and outstanding,” said PDSA director-general Jan McLoughlin.

“HeroRAT Magawa’s work directly saves and changes the lives of men, women and children who are impacted by these landmines.”

Millions of landmines were laid in Cambodia between 1975 and 1998, causing tens of thousands of casualties.

Magawa, based in the northern city of Siem Reap, is the first rat to receive a PDSA medal in the 77 years of the awards, joining an illustrious band of brave canines and felines -- and even a pigeon.

The PDSA Gold Medal is the animal equivalent of Britain’s George Cross. The charity also awards the Dickin Medal, for military animals.

APOPO trained Magawa in his native Tanzania to detect the chemical compound within explosives by rewarding him with tasty treats -- his favourite being bananas and peanuts.

The rats alert de-miners by scratching the earth.

He can scurry across an area the size of a tennis court in just 30 minutes, something that would take four days using a conventional metal detector.

He is big enough to be attached to a leash as he goes about his business but light enough not to set off mines.

“The PDSA Gold Medal award brings the problem of landmines to global attention,” said Christophe Cox of APOPO.

Cox said its team of “HeroRATs” speeded up landmine detection because of their keen sense of smell and recall.

“Unlike metal detectors, the rats ignore scrap metal and only sniff out explosives making them fast and efficient landmine detectors,” Cox said.

APOPO currently has 45 rats finding landmines and 31 detecting tuberculosis in Africa and Asia, according to its website.

## Trump set

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Leaders of the Republican majority in the Senate, which is tasked with confirming Supreme Court nominees, said they have enough support to hold a vote on the nomination either before the election or at worst during the “lame duck” session between the election and the inauguration of the next president in January.

“We will certainly do that this year,” Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell said.

If Barrett is confirmed, the Supreme Court would have a 6-3 conservative majority.

Barrett was only appointed to the bench for the first time in 2017. A deeply conservative Catholic, she is considered hostile to abortion rights -- a key issue for many Republicans.

The left-leaning government watchdog group Accountable US was unimpressed with the reported choice. “Barrett has proven time and again that protecting businesses -- not people -- is her top priority,” said group president Kyle Herring.

In 2018, the mother of seven was on the shortlist presented by Trump for a seat vacated by the retirement of justice Anthony Kennedy, a position ultimately filled by Brett Kavanaugh after a ferocious confirmation battle.

For Trump, nominating a conservative judge to the Supreme Court is a way to fire up his base heading into November’s election.

Ginsburg’s last wish, reportedly relayed to her granddaughter, was for her seat to be decided by whoever wins the next election.

# Gonoforum faction ousts Gen Secy

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make it a stronger people-oriented party.

He said they formed a 201-member preparatory committee, led by party former general secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu, to hold the council.

Sayeed said their meeting decided to expel party general secretary Dr Reza Kibria, presidium members AOM Shafique Ullah, Advocate Mohsin Rashid and organising secretary Mostaque Ahmed for violating party discipline, and constitution and indulging in activities that go against the party’s interests and organisational unity.

They claimed that 283 leaders, including representatives from 52 districts, were present at the meeting.

Replying to a question on whether Dr Kamal will remain with them or not, Mostafa Mohsin Montu said it will be decided at the party’s council meeting.

Asked about the reason behind holding the meeting without the party president, he said they repeatedly tried to convince him to resolve the problems within the party and sit with the party leaders.

“He only bought time but didn’t take any step in this regard. That’s why we decided to hold the meeting... We hope he is with us and we urge him to abandon the controversial people... We also hope that our party will remain united and good sense will prevail upon him [Kamal] to take steps so that those of us started the

journey of Gonoforum 27 years back can work together,” Montu added.

Executive president Subrata Chowdhury urged party leaders and activists to get united and strengthen Gonoforum to free the country from “misrule, autocracy, corruption and criminalised politics”.

Kibria, however, said this meeting has no relation with Gonoforum since it was not convened by the party president and general secretary as per the party charter.

A close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Dr Kamal Hossain founded Gonoforum in 1993 leaving Awami League.

Conflicts within the party leaders began after its fifth council held on April 26 last year as many party leaders, including the then general secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu, were left out in the committee formed there.

Kibria was made party general secretary, but a group of leaders were not cooperating with him from the very beginning. Initially, Abu Sayeed and Subrata were on the side of Kibria, but later they engaged in conflicts with him over various decisions.

Party insiders said some Gonoforum leaders, including Montu, Subrata and Abu Sayeed, have strong reservations against Kibria, but not against Kamal. But they are unhappy with Kamal as he strongly supports Kibria and endorses his decisions.

Dr Kamal suffers from ‘memory problem’: Montu

Montu on Saturday said their party president is suffering from a little bit of memory problem as confuses many things these days.

Dr Kamal, however, said it is an “evil tactic” of a group of leaders who are trying to create chaos in the Gonoforum to mislead people.

Speaking to reporters after an extended meeting of a faction of Gonoforum leaders at the Jatiya Press Club, Montu said they frequently talked to Kamal Hossain and met him to hold a meeting of the party’s central committee and fixi a date for its national council.

“We also sent him a letter. We met him a few days back and he assured us of holding a meeting. Later, he denied saying anything like that...I think he is suffering from a little memory problem. Besides, he messes up many things due to the influence of an evil quarter,” he said.

Montu, however, hoped that their party will remain united. “We hope good sense will prevail upon him [Kamal] to take steps so that those of us started the journey of Gonoforum 27 years back can work together.”

Earlier, a faction of Gonoforum leaders, led by Montu, Dr Abu Sayeed and Subrata Chowdhury, had an extended meeting of the party’s central committee where they decided to hold a national council on December 26 next. They also decided to expel party general secretary Dr Reza Kibria and three other leaders

# 4th-time flood, incessant rain hurting the north

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The Dharla river water was flowing above 12 cm of danger level in Lalmonirhat’s Shimulbari point and 26 cm above of danger level in Kurigram’s Dharla Bridge point yesterday morning.

Aman paddy and vegetable fields went under floodwater in the region.

Many people have taken shelters on roads and embankments with their livestock and furniture. Incessant rain have added to their woes in the temporary tent wrapped by polythene.

“We have left our houses and taken shelter on road three days ago. But here we are facing trouble to stay due to incessant rains,” said Sharbat Ali, 65, a resident of Shiberkuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

“We are going through immense sufferings since June due to repeated flood. Our house have been damaged for multiple times by floodwater,” said Now Daybar Ali, 48, a resident of

Mogholbasa village in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

“Our croplands have been inundated. If the water does not recede quickly, our crops will be damaged,” said Azgar Ali, 62, a resident of Sardob village in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

In Bogura, the water of the Jamuna and the Bangali rivers were flowing 11 cm and 3 cm above the danger level yesterday morning.

“Water will slightly increase in these rivers and inundate some areas. But there is no possibility of long-term flood,” said Mahbubur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB in Gaibandha.

A total 829 hectares of croplands have so far been inundated in the last three days, said Dulal Hossain, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in the district.

In Gaibandha, water of the Teesta, the Brahmaputra and the Korotoa rivers has started receding yesterday

and the trend will continue, said Mokhlesur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB in the district.

A total 1,770 hectares croplands have so far been inundated since the last three days, said Masudur Rahman, DD of DAE in the district.

In Nilphamari, people of Dimla upazila are exhausted with repeated flood.

They returned home from shelter centres few days ago. They are now shifting to safe place leaving their submerged houses again.

“This year, we are going through extreme sufferings. I never faced such difficulties by flood in four phases in my life,” said Alekjon Bewa, 70, of Baishpukur shoal under Dimla upazila.

In Thakurgoan and Panchagrah, public lives have been paralysed in the last three days. Many areas have been inundated while many mud houses have been collapsed.

from the party.

“He [Dr Kamal] gave many dates, but unfortunately forgot those due to the invisible interferences by some individuals. That’s why we decided to hold the meeting.”

Asked whether Dr Kamal was with them, he said, “We surely think he’s with us, and we urge him to abandon controversial people.”

Replying to a question whether Kamal will remain their president if he does not accept their meeting’s decision, Montu said it will be decided at the party’s council.

Contacted, Kamal told UNB that the meeting in the name of Gonoforum is illegal as party president and convener is not aware of it.

“They’ve no organisational power and constitutional authority to hold a meeting in the name of Gonoforum. Our party has no relation with that meeting,” he said.  
Kamal said he is unwilling to talk about the decisions of the meeting since those are only opinions of some individuals.

As his attention was drawn to Montu’s remark that he now suffers from memory problems, the Gonoforum president said, “It’s their strategy to confuse people. I’m not interested in reacting to such a comment. In fact, I’ve no relation with them now.”

Replying to another question, he said those who illegally held a meeting in Gonoforum’s name are the troublemakers.

## 36 more die

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rate was 10.27 percent while the overall positivity rate stood at 18.85 percent.

Bangladesh is currently ranked 15th in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of the number of confirmed cases.

The position is one step ahead of Iraq and one step behind United Kingdom, according to worldometer.info.

At least 1,753 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours which took the total number of recoveries to 2,68,777, while the overall recovery rate stood at 75.10 percent.

Among the 36 deceased, 25 were male and 11 were females.

Seven of them were aged between 41 and 50 years, eight between 51 and 60, and the highest 21 were above 60 years, according to the press release.

One each of the deceased was from Mymensingh, Barisal and Khulna divisions, two were from Sylhet, eight from Chattogram and the highest 23 were from Dhaka division.

## First labour

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equal number of representatives from workers and management to deal with the day-to-day problems including disciplinary action against the workers, would soon be set up in each industrial concern.

The problems which could not be resolved by the council would be referred to the proposed management board, he adds. It may be mentioned here that 85 percent of the investment in industries of the country are in the nationalised sector. He, however, makes it clear that the absence of collective bargaining by workers in nationalised or taken over industries would not mean cessation of trade union activities. The government, he says, is aimed at giving encouragement to the growth of democratic trade movement in the country.  
DECLARATION OF THREE WEEKLIES CANCELLED

The government has cancelled the declaration of two Bangla weeklies Haq Katha and Mukhapatra and an English weekly Spokesman for publishing prejudicial materials. The presses from where these weeklies were being published have also been ordered not to publish books or newspapers until further orders.  
SOURCES: September 28, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefa.

## AL nominee

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centres during polling hours, this correspondent saw a poor turnout of voters. No polling agent of the BNP nominee was present at those centres. However, there were agents of the AL candidate at all polling stations.

Three candidates, including the two from the AL and the BNP, contested the by-polls for this parliamentary seat which fell vacant following the death of AL lawmaker Shamsur Rahman Sherif Dilu on April 2.

Monojit Kormokar, presiding officer of Kalikapur school polling centre in the Ishwardi upazila, said no polling agent of the BNP candidate turned up at his centre until 10:30am. Only 30 voters out of the total 2,457 casted their votes at the centre until 10:00am, he told The Daily Star.

At Ishwardi’s Shahpur Shahid Abul Kashem School, the BNP candidate’s polling centre, there was no agent for him either.

Mohammed Ali, presiding officer at the centre, said he did not see any polling agent of BNP nominee Habib at his centre. Only 432 votes out of the total 3,488 were casted at the centre till noon, he added.

Meanwhile, BNP nominee Habib at a press conference at his Shahpur village home alleged that there was no election environment at the constituency.

“My polling agents could not go to any polling centre due to threats from ruling party men and harassment by police. Voters did not go to the polling centres either. This is not an election,” he told reporters.

He demanded the Election Commission declare the schedule for a fresh by-election to this constituency.

Refuting the allegations, AL Organising Secretary SM Kamal Hossain said the BNP joins an election only for “nomination trade”.

Speaking at a press conference at Pabna Press Club in the afternoon, he said the BNP has no target to win an election or make it competitive and that’s why it is making false allegations against the AL and the administration.

“The BNP did not take the polls seriously. Their leaders claim that they participate in an election as part of their movement and also to follow the rule of contesting it. They were nowhere in the electoral field. They are just making false and baseless allegations,” Kamal told reporters.

The district election office sources said 381,112 voters in 12 unions and two municipalities of Ishwardi and Athgoria upazilas were eligible to exercise their franchise.

Voting was held at 129 polling centres from 9:00am to 5:00pm, said Abdul Latif, district election officer and also the returning officer of the by-polls.