

## Samad Azad

**FROM PAGE 1**  
BIRDEM Hospital and then to the deceased's Kalabagan residence.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held after Ischa prayers in Dolphin Mosque in Kalabagan.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina led a long list of mourners who gave condolence messages at the death of Azad, country's first as well as the immediate-past foreign minister.

Earlier, Azad, who was thought to have died after doctors failed to feel his pulse for seven minutes yesterday morning, was put on a respirator. A large number of people gathered in front of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on the third floor of the BIRDEM Hospital at Shahbagh, as words spread fast that the veteran Awami League (AL) leader had died in the morning.

However, Azizus Samad, the eldest son of Azad, after discussion with Prof Omar Faruk of the ICU, decided that his father's treatment would continue in line with the doctor's advice.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury, Hasina's son Sajib Wazed Joy, AL senior leaders Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Amir Hossain, Amu, Abul Mal Abdul Muhih, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Chief Whip Khander Delwar Hossain, Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid and other leaders and supporters of the Awami League and its front organisations went to the hospital and his Kalabagan residence.

Azad left behind three sons -- Azizus Samad Don, Atikus Samad and Toufik Samad -- and daughter Nafiza Noor Shilpi to mourn him. His wife Noor Nahar Samad died in 1997.

Azad, a legend in Bangladesh politics, first suffered major ailment in August last year and was treated in Chennai, India. He was later admitted to Sikdar Medical in Dhaka for a month before he had a medical check-up again in Chennai in November last year. He fell ill upon placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the early hours of February 21 and since then had been under doctors' care at the BIRDEM Hospital.

Loved and admired by leaders and workers of all parties for his wit and good sense of humour, Azad served his party until the last days of his life. Even when he was in hospital, Azad discharged the responsibilities of acting party chief in absence of AL President Sheikh Hasina, who only recently was away in the US and the Philippines for a month.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil rang up Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury to ask for a helicopter for flying the mortal remains of Azad to his village home in Sunamganj, sources said. Later, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia ordered for a helicopter to carry the body today.

Party and family sources said the body would be taken to the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue at 9:00am today to facilitate people to pay their last respect to the leader. A namaz-e-janaza would be held at Paltan Maidan at 10:30am before the body is flown to Sunamganj with a stopover in Sylhet. Azad's body would be flown back to Dhaka for burial next to his wife's grave at Banani Graveyard.

**CONDOLENCES**  
President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed deep condolences at the death of the former foreign minister and veteran parliamentarian.

In a condolence message, the president respectfully recalled the contribution of the late leader to the country's democratic movement and to efforts to give parliamentary democracy an institutional shape.

In a separate condolence message, Prime Minister and Leader of the House Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her deep shock at the death. She recalled the contribution of Azad to the country's independence and democratic movement.

"The nation has lost an experienced leader and parliamentarian following his demise... This loss is irreparable to the nation," observed the prime minister.

Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina last night said the nation lost a glorious son of the soil, an experienced parliamentarian and a symbol of national conscience at his demise.

"And personally I lost my guardian and a far-sighted and trusted colleague," she said in a message of condolence.

"With his death an era came to an end... an irreparable vacuum has been created in the national politics."

The AL chief said the contribution of Azad as one of the pioneers of Bangalee's national struggle and movement for vote and food will be written in golden letters in history.

Azad had also played a glorious role in reconstruction of the country after independence and giving the foreign policy of a newborn country foundation under the guidelines of Bangabandhu, Hasina continued.

"After the killing of Bangabandhu, he played a leading role in reviving the stream of pro-liberation fight against the reactionary forces and establishing people's right to vote and food."

In a separate condolence message, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan termed Azad's death a loss of experienced parliamentarian and politician.

**LIFE SKETCH**  
Son of late Shariatullah, Azad was born on January 15 in 1926 at Burakhali village of Jagannathpur Upazila of Sunamganj district. After graduating from MC College in Sylhet, he studied law and history at Dhaka University.

In his chequered political life lasting six and a half decades, Azad played a significant role in the struggle for language, democracy and independence and in the Liberation War.

He spent most of his time doing opposition politics and went underground and to prison to establish people's rights. He won parliament elections in 1970 during the then East Pakistan and in 1973, 1991,

1996 and 2001 after independence.

As a special envoy of Bangladesh government, Azad travelled across the globe mobilising world opinion for the War of Independence in 1971. He was also a political advisor to the Mujibnagar Government in exile in 1971.

He became the first Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and later Agriculture Minister of the Bangabandhu government. After the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu and most of his family members on August 15, 1975, Azad was arrested and jailed along with four national leaders. On his release in 1978, he returned to active politics.

In 1953, Azad became acting President of East Pakistan Juba League and was AL's Labour Affairs Secretary between 1955 and 1957. The then Pakistani Government attached his property and issued an arrest warrant in 1954. He was also arrested in 1956, 1958 and 1964.

In 1940, he was the President of Sunamganj Mahakuma Muslim Chhatra Federation. He was arrested during that time for his involvement in the anti-British movement. He was elected Sylhet District Muslim Chhatra Federation President for 1944-48 tenure.

In 1954, he was first elected Member of Legislative Assembly on Jukta Front ticket. Azad was never defeated in election except in the 1986 polls under the martial law regime.

He played an important role in the movement for neutral caretaker government in 1991 as Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Azad was appointed Foreign Minister of the Sheikh Hasina government in 1996.

## Kuwaiti minister

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money from the concerned companies' bank deposits and pay salaries within 15 days of receiving a complaint, he said.

Hajji's comments came after 1,000 Bangladeshi workers, angry over unpaid wages, stormed their embassy in Kuwait on Sunday, causing extensive damage and slightly injuring two people.

The employees of a Kuwaiti cleaning company protested they had not received their pay for the past five months.

But assistant undersecretary for labour affairs Hamad al-Medhadhi said in statements yesterday that the company had only failed to pay the salaries for two months and pledged to pay all due wages within three days.

Another 450 Asian cleaners at the Gulf state's largest medical complex began an open strike on Sunday over non-payment by a private company on contract with the health ministry.

Parliament's human rights panel has summoned Hajji and the acting health minister, Sheikh Ahmed Fahd al-Sabah, for a meeting next week to discuss the situation of foreign workers.

## 200 students

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in the FIR that on April 21, science teacher Ruhul Amin told her daughter to go to an empty room of the college at 9:15am when she lost her science exercise book.

"When my daughter told him that she was not finding her exercise book, the teacher asked her to look for it in room No. 47. When she went there, the teacher started touching different parts of her body," said Mahmuda, a resident of Lalmohan Shah Street in Narinda.

Alarmed at his indecent advances, the girl ran away to her class.

She informed her class teacher of the matter, who discussed it with her colleagues including the headmistress the same day. The headmistress called the girl to her office and asked her to submit a written complaint, which she did.

The headmistress assured her of steps against the teacher. She also asked her not to disclose the incident to others, according to the FIR.

"As the teachers took no step, she disclosed the incident to me on Sunday and the incident became an open secret later," Mahmuda said in the first information report.

She alleged that several other such complaints were lodged earlier against Ruhul Amin, but the authorities never took any steps against him.

## Four govt

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Tata's proposal for a 15-year Tax Holiday facility and duty exemption for machinery import as fiscal measures, and decided that the government may not offer any special package facility to Tata sidelining the state policy on investment, the sources said.

Member Secretary of the committee and Bol Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman said the government is working out a roadmap for speedy implementation of the Tata investment proposal.

He said the committee is happy over Tata's intention to set the projects in remote areas of the country, where any virtual industrialisation is yet to take place. "We are interested to decentralise industrial as well as infrastructure development projects in the country. The Tata investment may change the industrial shape of the agrarian Bangladesh," Rahman added.

The government may also extend a gas pipeline from Iswardi to Khulna if the gas is supplied for Tata, he said.

Tata intends to set up a 1,000 MW power station, a steel mill with an annual capacity of 420,000 tonnes and a one million-tonne fertiliser unit in Bangladesh.

## Satellite

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Killing of our colleagues," COAB President Anwar Parvez told reporters at a sit-in demonstration in the city. "I hope that the customers would support our protest programme," he said.

The COAB will also hold a grand rally in the city on May 2 and announce its next protest programme.

Meanwhile, law enforcement officials said they believe that internal conflicts among cable operators was the reason behind the killing as many want to establish supremacy over a designated area.

Three cable traders were killed in last one year.

There are some 560 cable operators providing satellite television connection to around two lakh people in the city.

## Murder charge

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All the accused pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court after the charges were read out to them.

The case filed with Kotwali Police Station says a group led by Selim went to the Juba Dal office at Mitford Balughat on March 30 last year.

Selim rebuked Hannan, who was talking to his party fellows, and shot him in the abdomen, while his men also opened indiscriminate fire, the case says.

Locals rushed the victim to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), where doctors pronounced him dead.

A mob caught one from the group, Buddha, and lynched him on the spot.

Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, president of Juba Dal Lalbagh thana unit, filed a murder case against Selim and seven others the next day.

The investigation officer pressed charges against Selim and others on June 19.

## Funding terrorism

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regional group comprising Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan that cover a population of nearly 1.3 billion.

The sub-group will discuss the issue of financing terrorism in view of the alarming rise of the malady in the region.

There are allegations that external sources fund insurgents in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

The member countries will discuss the current situation, and plan out ways and means on how to cut financing the terrorists, sources said.

Bangladesh has already approved 11 of the 12 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) conventions complying with a UNSC resolution passed after the September 11 attack on the United States.

The government will soon approve the 12th one relating to the financing of terrorists.

## Charges pressed

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On December 25, 2004, activists of Jamaat-ul Mujaheddin hurled four bombs at an open stage drama conducted by the Sakhina Opera party at Takier bazar under Palashbari upazila. One of the three exploded in the crowd, leaving seven people critically injured.

Badsha Mia, officer-in-charge of the Palashbari police station and the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Gaibandha Magistrate court.

Police arrested 22 persons in connection with the blast, but the other 17 were exempted from the charge sheet after the investigation found they were not involved in the bomb blast.

Gaib is also shown as the main accused in another bomb blast case involving an attack on the Mohiganj offices of Brac. The case is still under trial.

## Scholarship

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disaster management reviewed the implementation of the current budget and the plan for the next.

Earlier in another meeting with a faction of NGOs, the minister agreed to consider NGOs' involvement in the service-delivery system to deliver government support to the poor in remote villages.

"They're interested to help reach services like fertiliser distribution and ensure optimum utilisation of land," he told the journalists after the meeting.

Like others in the series, the minister said, the NGOs also stressed the need for enhanced allocation for agriculture, particularly on agriculture research. The minister invited them to come up with specific areas of agriculture research.

Leaders of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) requested the minister also to involve them in the foreign-aided projects to strengthen supervision in the remote areas using their vast networks, meeting sources said.

They said the NGOs requested an increase in budgetary allocation for fund raising for NGO Foundation, for local government bodies, union parishads, social safety-net programmes, and a special provision for munga-hit areas.

They also sought budgetary measures for containing prices of essentials at a tolerable limit.

Representatives of the foreign and local NGOs present at the meeting included BRAC, Asa, ActionAid, Save the Children, Muslim Aid, Caritas and Dhaka Ahsania Mission.

## Govt fails to bring

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government yesterday, during a meeting organised by the Sramik Nirapatta Forum, a forum for workers' security, at Bally Road in the city.

They apprised that they have so far received no response from the government regarding their demands on behalf of those affected by the building collapse, which occurred allegedly because of poor construction and left 74 workers dead and more than 200 injured.

"We have not received any response from the Prime Minister's office about our demands, including arresting the persons responsible for the garment collapse," Shirin Akhter, president of Karmojibi Nar, a women's organisation, said.

Compensation was a key topic of the discussion, with speakers blaming the inaction of the concerned bodies for delaying the payment of due compensation to the families of the dead and injured.

Soma Islam, of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and services Trust (BLAST), recommended in her keynote paper that the maximum compensation for the injured workers must continue until they have fully recovered from their injuries and secured other jobs.

"In the case of dead workers,

compensation should be determined according to their working capability-age," she said.

Dr. Hamida Hossain, founder and member of the Ain o Salish Kendra, called upon the country's electronic and print media to play a vital role by pressuring the government to bring to justice those responsible for the Savar tragedy.

Representatives from different Sramik Nirapatta Forum member organisations, including the Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Manabdhikar Bastabayan Sangsta, Nejera Kori and Bangladesh Jatya Mahila Ainjibi Samiti also attended the meeting.

The Sramik Nirapatta Forum served a legal notice on three factory owners and government organisations on April 24 on behalf of the dead and injured workers.

## 7 killed

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injuries soon after admission at the CMCH. Their identities could not be known.

Those who died on the spot are Shipon Barua, 36, Lucky Akhtar, 24, M. Abdul Kader, 40, Akhtar Hossain, 22, and Kabir Hossain, 22.

## Rajuk reform must

**FROM PAGE 16**  
roundtable on necessity of enforcing building and zoning codes, he said real estate business has become more important to Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) than monitoring implementation of construction plans.

Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Dhamondi Paribesh Unnyan Jote (DPUJ) jointly organised the discussion at the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (Bilia).

Though designated, it is impracticable for the capital development agency to examine building designs efficiently as well as ensure implementation of the approved plans, Maniurazzaman said.

Some agency other than Rajuk has to be tasked with monitoring building construction as per the approved plan and building codes, said Abdul Malek Shikder, a civil engineer.

Seconding the view, lab President Mubassar Hussain said, "No where in the world an approving agency also implements the plans."

Hussain emphasised strict implementation of the existing building codes and laws to avoid any more disaster like that of the factory building collapse in Savar.

"It's a mindless practice that a building constructed for a certain purpose is being frequently used for other purposes," remarked Muhammed Mohius Sunnah, a lawyer. "We must consider how safe and proper it is to use a residential building suddenly as a factory or a university," he added.

Former justice Kazi Ebadul Haque, Architect Zarina Hossain, Salma Shafi of DUPJ and a number of NGO representatives also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Prof Nazrul Islam of Dhaka University.

## EC still sits idle

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early 2007, the sources said.

According to the 2001 census, 67 constituencies have less than two lakh voters each, 191 constituencies have over two lakh voters and the rest 42 constituencies have more than three lakh to over six lakh voters.

The discrepancies have made a mockery of the ceiling of election expenditure as the ceiling of election expenses is equal for all candidates contesting from small and big constituencies, sources said. They cited the example of India where the ceiling of election expenditure is not fixed for all.

Election Commissioner Munsif Ali however said it is not possible to make equal distribution of voters in all the constituencies.

In accordance with the Delimitation of Constituencies Ordinance, the EC has to delimit the territorial constituencies and publish the list of the demarcated constituencies.

In 1995, the EC demarcated the areas of some constituencies and published a list of the 300 constituencies on May 30, 1995 that still stands valid.

When asked, EC officials said they have not taken any initiative for demarcation as they did not receive the census report. "When we will have any report on last census, we will consider demarcation of the parliamentary constituencies," said an official.

The officials said demarcation of all the constituencies is a huge task and it may need at least two years. Moreover, EC has to face political pressures and objections while demarcating any constituency.

The EC spent over one year in 1995 to complete minor demarca-

tions in the parliamentary constituencies against a large number of appeals and objections.

The parliamentary constituencies have wide differences in the number of voters. For example, Dhaka 1 and 2 has less than 2 lakh voters each while Dhaka 4 has about 5 lakh and Dhaka 5 has over 6 lakh voters.

Similarly, Mymensingh 1 and 3 has less than two lakh voters while Mymensingh 4 has about 4 lakh voters. Gazipur 3 has 1.5 lakh voters while Gazipur 2 has 5.5 lakh voters.

## SCBA to boycott

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of the Supreme Court."

Former SCBA presidents Abdul Basit Majumder and Ozair Feroq, SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, SACP Member Secretary Subrata Chowdhury, Shahabuddin Ahmed, Shah M Jahurul Huq, Sirajul Huq, Fazle Rabbi, Nurul Islam Sujan, Mamtajuddin Mehedi and BA Rashid spoke at the meeting.

They alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has tarnished the image of the Supreme Court by appointing their activists as High Court judges.

The SCBA has been boycotting Justice Faizee's bench from October 30 last year.

Bangladesh Bar Council on April 24 cancelled the enrolment certificate of Faizee for taking his certificate by providing false information to the council.

The SCBA observed a half-an-hour sit-in yesterday morning in front of Supreme Court Annex Building as part of their protest against Faizee's performing of judicial tasks.

## 50 die as train rams

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hospital in the region.

**BUS DRIVER BLAMED**  
Hospital director Ananda Gunasekera, said 33 bodies were brought to the hospital and two of those injured died later. More bodies were lying at other hospitals, he added.

At the hospital morgue, relatives waited over bodies of their loved ones as others lined up to check pictures of the dead stuck on a wall by police.

The driver and conductor of the bus were among the survivors, and were lying on opposite beds in the hospital. The driver had apparently broken an ankle and refused to speak.

Police said the two men had been arrested and were being guarded from angry survivors and relatives.

"I saw body parts strewn along the track and more bodies were stuck in the bus and people were screaming for help. The driver of the

## HC quashes graft case against Saber

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday quashed a graft case against Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to the Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina.

After hearing from both sides, a division bench comprising justices Syed Mohammad Dastagir Hossain and Mamnun Rahman delivered the verdict.

The now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed the case in December 2001, accusing former deputy minister for LGRD Saber Hossain Chowdhury of misappropriating 1,18,400 tons of wheat and 30,000 tons of rice allocated for rural infrastructure development projects during 1999-2000.

Advocate Mahbubey Alam appeared for Chowdhury while Deputy Attorney General Altafur Rahman stood for the government.

## Khulna journos

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outlaws tactfully saving their godfathers.

"We demand fresh reinvestigation into both the murder cases to identify the killers as well as the master minds. The motive behind the killing must also be correctly mentioned in the chargesheets after reinvestigation," said the statement.

Humayun's son Asit Kabir has also demanded a fresh probe into the killing of his father.

Editor the local daily Dainik Janmabumi Humayun was killed in a bomb attack on June 27 last year in front of his residence -cum-office at Hajji Ismail road in the city.

Belaududdin, local bureau chief of the Dainik Sangram, was fatally injured in a bomb attack at Khulna Press Club on February 5 and died on February 11 while under treatment at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka.

## BSF kills

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44, when a BSF patrol team killed him, locals said.

As Rahsan did not respond, the BSF troops entered the no-man's land, held and shot him to death, they said.

The Indian border guards then went away leaving the body behind lying on the spot, locals said, adding, after about an hour, at 7:00am, the BSF men returned to the spot and took away the body into India.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) battalion commander Lt Col Munim confirmed the killing, terming it brutal.

He said the local BDR company commander has lodged a strong protest with his Indian counterpart against the killing and asked for a flag meeting. But BSF did not respond or returned the body of the hapless farmer until 5:45pm yesterday.

He said soon after the incident BDR troops in Sathkira were put on high alert.

Villagers in the border areas said they are in the grip of fright and tension, as BSF has deployed additional troops at some points including Shoja Danga, Kaijuri, Amudia and Hakimpur.

**CARCASS RETURNED**  
BSS reports from Lalmonirhat: BSF at a company commander level flag meeting near Kaliganj border in the northwestern district returned the body of a Bangladesh youth to the police yesterday morning.

Uttau Kumar, 25, was abducted and shot dead by BSF troops on Monday noon.

The commanders of the BDR company at Doikhawa and the BSF company at Kaitar Bari started the flag meeting at 11:00am, sources at BDR and police and locals said.

BSF handed over Kumar's body to Sub-Inspector Solaiman Ali of Kaliganj Police Station in presence of BDR personnel at the meeting that ended at 11:20am.

Later in the afternoon, elder brother of the victim Dilip Kumar received the body from police.

Earlier on Tuesday, BSF returned another body, that of Ashrafur, 25, a Bangladeshi farmer, at a similar flag meeting near Haripur border in Shakurgaon district. BSF troops he was working in his Boro field, sources said.

## Ahmadiyya

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spoke at the function chaired by Maulana Ehsanur Rahman.

The IKNMB Sathkira unit also declared a month-long agitation as part of their campaign against Ahmadiyya sect. It held a rally and brought out a procession in the district town yesterday morning.

The IKNMB leaders at the rally criticised a section of national dailies for running a series of "false" reports on IKNMB. They also threatened journalists of dire consequences for the anti-IKNMB reports.

Meanwhile, a new organisation formed by the members of civil society "Sampradayik Sampritee Rakkha Committee" [Committee to maintain communal harmony] held a rally and brought out a procession in the town yesterday.

Speakers at the rally criticised the attack