

## Attorney general

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(AG) AJ Mohammad Ali refused to authorise the meeting.

The rift developed in the council that represents 28,000 lawyers across the country, against the backdrop of the lawyers' continuous agitation for removal of controversial Additional High Court Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee.

The agitation has already faced opposition from the government law officers and pro-government lawyers. Even the speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad and the law minister have taken stance against the agitating lawyers.

Bar Council Vice-chairman Rakanuddin Mahmud on May 25 sent a notice to the government-appointed AG stating that they wanted to hold as emergency meeting to discuss "rule of law and freedom of legal profession."

The AG, as the chairman of the council, was expected to sign the notice as per the council's tradition. However, the speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad and the law minister wanted to discuss the meeting's agenda with Rakan. On May 26, he had discussion with Rakan.

On May 28, the council sent a fresh notice, changing the meeting agenda to "rights of lawyers, privileges and interests." But the AG again declined to sign it.

Then seven elected members of the council in a joint letter to the AG requested him to immediately convene a requisition meeting, as he (AG) had expressed willingness to discuss the issues in an emergency meeting.

"Otherwise we shall be forced to convene the requisition meeting to discuss rule of law and freedom of legal profession, and rights, privileges and interest of lawyers," said the letter signed by Rakanuddin, Yusuf Hossain Humayun, Sahara Khatri, ZI Khan Panna, Parimal Chandan Guha, Sardar Md Suruzzaman and Mahubey Alam.

The AG the next day replied through a note. The discussion on rule of law and freedom of legal profession [agenda no 1] does not come within the scope of article 10 of the Bar Council Order, 1972. The agenda no 2 [rights, privileges and interest of lawyers] is a mere camouflage to discuss agenda no 1.

"(The) Requisition notice having neither spelt out the emergency nor

the necessity for convening such a meeting. I don't think that the notice for calling a requisition meeting is within the purview of Bar Council Order, 1972," he added.

Receiving the note, the council members started preparing for the requisition meeting. "We expect to hold this meeting within 15th of this month," said ZI Khan Panna, the council's human rights and legal aid committee chairman.

Asked, Attorney General Mohammad Ali last night told The Daily Star, "The subject which the members wanted to discuss does not fall under the purview of Bar Council's functions. So there is no question to endorse the meeting."

Council members said the government often creates pressure on the council using the position of AG. However, it is a tradition that if the AG disagrees with any meeting agenda, he refrains from attending the meeting or keeps silence at the meeting.

For instance, the immediately past AG Hassan Arif had refrained from attending the Bar Council meeting in April in which the council had cancelled the certificate of enrollment of Judge Faizee on charge of furnishing false information.

Ariff's silence, however, angered the government. He finally resigned in late April and was replaced by AJ Mohammad Ali on May 1.

But the newly appointed AG engaged in loggerheads with the Bar Council members by opposing a pre-scheduled extended meeting of all presidents and secretaries of district bar associations which discussed the issue of Faizee among other issues.

He refrained from joining the May 13 [meeting after giving a note: "...This notice [of the extended meeting] issued under the signature of the vice chairman is not backed by any provisions of the Bar Council Order, 1972."

The pro-government lawyers who were informed about the AG's note created chaos in the meeting which was adjourned halfway.

The 14-member Bar Council body was elected last year for a three-year term. Twelve of the members were elected from the opposition-backed panel and only two from the ruling BNP panel.

## 1.5km human chain decries deaths of Sumon, Ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands formed a human chain yesterday afternoon at Khilgaon and Sabujbagh in the city protesting the deaths of Awami Jubo League leader Abul Kalam Azad Sumon in Rab custody and three-wheeler driver Ameer Hossain during the May 21 hartal.

Locals from all walks of life and leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations took to the streets at around 5:30pm and stood hand in hand for an hour in a 1.5 kilometre line stretching from the south end of Khilgaon flyover to the Mugga stadium.

"I've joined the demonstration spontaneously to protest the killing of Sumon, an innocent man, in Rab custody," said Rafiqul Islam, who has come from Mymensingh to visit his brother at Sabujbagh.

He was standing beside some demonstrators holding a banner, which read "We want justice for Sumon's killing -- locals".

Sumon was gunned down early Tuesday during what Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) claimed was an encounter between one of its crime-busting team and a gang at the Banasree Project in Rampura. But witnesses and sources said the crack police force arrested him in Goran at 9:00pm on Monday and killed him later in custody.

Sumon, whom the Rab branded as a notorious criminal, was the acting joint convener of Dhaka City ward 25 unit of Jubo League, the youth front of the main opposition AL.

But no crime link of the slain youth has been found. Sources said Jubo League leader Sumon is not the 'Goliya Sumon' the Rab was hunting. Three criminal cases are pending against 'Goliya Sumon with Sabujbagh Police Station.

The demonstrators yesterday also decried the killing of Ameer Hossain, a CNG-run autorickshaw driver, in a fiendish arson at Khilgaon during the hartal hours on May 21 last. He succumbed to his severe burns four days later at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital on May 25.

"I think Ameer was the victim of a macabre plot of the ruling BNP, as no incident of torching vehicles has ever been carried out by AL activists at Khilgaon," said Abdul Kader Sarder, an AL adherent from the area, standing in the human chain.

After the incident on the same day, a leader of pro-BNP Jatiyatobadi Jubo Dal filed a case with the local police station, accusing eight local Jubo League workers. But a number of discrepancies surfaced later between the plaintiffs' statement and that of the victim, Ameer Hossain.

The demonstrators yesterday also condemned the government and the police for barring AL Organising Secretary and former lawmaker of the area Saber Hossain Chowdhury from taking part in the Namaj-e-Janaza of the cabdriver.

## Series

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The nine-member probe committee, which has seen three members quit, has yet to get down to its mandated tasks even four days into its formation.

Hours later, two parked motorcycles rigged with explosives detonated near a coffee shop frequented by policemen, killing five Iraqis, wounding 13 and destroying several shops in Mosul, police and hospital officials said.

Gunmen firing randomly from three speeding cars also killed nine Iraqis in a crowded market area in Baghdad, a Defence Ministry official said.

"Our 12-member board of directors represents the 63 ADB member countries. As a result, some directors represent several countries," said Hovland, explaining the bank's organisational structure.

He said, "Each director also appoints an alternate director. But the arrangement for such an appointment is an entirely internal affair of the constituency members. The ADB does not get involved in these matters."

Besides the privilege to choose, the ED also enjoys the power to sack the AED at will, ADB sources said.

It was the same ED Saikia who appointed Saiful Islam as his alternate after the BNP-led coalition had come to office in 2001.

FROM CONFLICT TO EVICTION  
Sources said the replacement is the end result of a conflict between India and Bangladesh inside the bank that emerged during the tenure of the last caretaker government. The discord took a serious turn two months ago, but Dhaka failed to resolve it.

In late 2001, during the fag end of the last caretaker government, Saikia, who already had an Indian adviser in the ADB, created the position of a second adviser, according to ERD sources. He wanted to appoint another Indian at that post. This prompted Dhaka to write a letter to Saikia, objecting the move and asking him to take an adviser from Bangladesh instead.

"The language of that letter offended the executive director, especially since the matter is entirely at his personal discretion," said an ERD source.

The difference of opinion, which was apparently buried after the 2001 elections, with a new government stepping in, resurfaced soon after Islam's appointment as the AED, sources said, with Saikia raising a range of objections against him.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

About two months back, Saikia wrote a letter to Finance Minister Saifur Rahman, who represents Bangladesh in the ADB as one of its governors, stating that he can no longer keep Bangladesh in the

## Village potters go global

FROM PAGE 1

have lived to see their village blossom into an unlikely success story.

Rafeli, an Italian national, may not have realised he would help launch a cultural revolution here. In fact, initially it seemed like his coming was a regrettable mistake. Rafeli set up a tile factory in Narayanganj in 2002, dreaming of producing exportable tiles for Italy. But he soon closed the factory down and returned home, sad to discover the quality of clay was not what he hoped.

The real story, however, began after Rafeli left. His dream remained alive, pursued by Ruhul Amin, the Bangladesh manager of the short-lived Narayanganj factory. Undaunted and untiring, Amin kept in constant contact with his Italian friend, visiting various parts of the country in search of quality clay for exportable tiles. He finally struck gold in Murarikati in 2003, finding standard clay for high quality tile.

Soon he was back on the phone with Rafeli, convincing him to return to set up a factory at Kumar Para of Murarikati village.

Their new tile venture, "Karra Export-Import Private Company Limited" first exported tiles to Italy in 2003. Demand has grown exponentially since then and continues to rise. As of March this year, at least 70 containers of tiles were shipped to Italy. The boom has spawned an ever-growing cottage industry of traditional pottery and tiles.

Some 3,000 potters, encouraged by the renaissance, have set up approximately 50 factories here. The colourful tiles they produce are exhibited at showrooms in Italy, and eventually find their way to floors, roofs and walls in homes throughout Europe. Rafeli, meanwhile, manages to visit almost every year.

Many of the potters work collectively in families, including husbands and wives, sons and daughters. After receiving orders from the Italian buyers, the Italian company sends orders to the Karra company. The potters then set to work making the tiles, painting them with waterproof colours as per demands. The finished tiles are then taken by truck to the Mongla port, where they are packed in cartons and sent to Italy by ship.

On a recent visit to Murarikati Kumar Para, Jagabandhu Pal and his wife Debala Pal were busy making tiles in their own factory. They explained that tile making is a complicated process that involves lifting the clay and then kneading it with water to make paste. The tiles are then fixed in a casting matrix, before being dried in the sun and baked.

Jagabandhu described that the tile product boom has helped revive a once dying way of life. "Some families have migrated to India. Some changed their profession. Ten years ago, I also thought of becoming a rickshaw puller. But eventually I could not leave my ancestral occupation like many of my community. We are artisans. Art is in my

blood. It's not easy to leave it." Along with the tiles, the potters also produce smaller numbers of traditional products like pots, pitchers and other utensils.

The potters say they owe their rebirth to Rafeli and Ruhul Amin of village Rahmatpur in Babuganj upazila of Barisal district, who worked relentlessly to facilitate the export of tiles to European countries. "Thanks to a rise in the making of exportable tiles and exporting to European countries by an Italian national and a Bangladeshi who inspired us, the making of tiles here has reinvigorated our occupation..." said Dulal Pal.

The newfound prosperity has erased frustration and stagnancy for many of the potters, particularly the middle-aged ones best able to note the difference. "Good days are back again," said a giggling Jagabandhu Pal, standing in front of his tile factory in Murarikati Kumar Para.

As the demand for pottery and tiles has flourished in Europe, so too has the livelihood of the potters. "By making exportable tiles, they are now able to maintain their families and are dreaming the dream of living," said Swapan Pal of the area. Debala Pal, Jagabandhu's wife, agreed. "Our second daughter is now going to school," she said, recalling they could not send their first son to school due to poverty in the past. "Children from other families also go to school now," she added.

Today, potters in the village see their success as a tale of inspiration, the culmination of perseverance and dedication to their craft. "We have done it with our own merit and labour. We required government patronisation and soft loans so that we can run our factory to make exportable tiles as it bringing foreign currency. Tile making with clay and their export abroad employs thousands of potters who were about to give up their traditional profession," said Radha Rani Pal.

## 870 acres

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"The situation is very complex and we are yet to take decision on how to recover those lands. We will discuss it again," Committee Chairman Mahbubur Rahman told reporters after the meeting.

"We discussed a proposition to open negotiations with the current dwellers who have built houses on the lands," the committee chairman added.

A meeting source quoting a senior army official said that the army headquarters once took steps to build shopping complexes on the lands on condition that 40 percent of those would be allocated among the grabbers. "But we could not press ahead with the plan as the government land cannot be bartered," he added.

Committee member and ruling BNP lawmaker Qamrul Islam told the meeting that over 40 thousand registered voters live on the grabbed land of Dhaka cantonment.

"The local lawmaker does not dare to oust those people for fear of losing votes," the meeting source said quoting the former army official.

Besides, several cases are still pending over the ownership of the lands.

Due to shortage of time, the parliamentary body yesterday could not discuss the other military lands that have been appropriated by the encroachers in northern and eastern circles.

The parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry at yesterday's meeting expressed deep shock at the deaths of Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of the joint forces during the Liberation War of 1971, and Nur Mohammad, a member of Bangladesh Armed Forces, killed in Congo.

It offered its sympathy for the bereaved family members of the both.

ERD sources said this prompted Saifur to write to the Indian finance minister, his Indian counterpart in the ADB, requesting him to stop such a move, which he termed unthinkable, as Bangladesh has been holding the office for over 30 years.

But there was no response from New Delhi to Saifur's request and Saikia went ahead with moving Bangladesh out of the office.

"If India did not like Saiful Islam, all it had to do was to ask Bangladesh to send a replacement. What it has done instead is unthinkable. Although he has the power, the ADB executive director does not hire and fire people like this as a norm," quipped a source close to ADB.

Established in 1966, the Manila-based ADB has 23 offices around the world with more than 2,000 employees drawn from over 50 countries.

Among the 45 ADB members from the Asia and the Pacific, India is the third largest shareholder, Bangladesh the 13th, Tajikistan 22nd, Lao 30th and Bhutan 33rd.

REACTION OF ISLAM  
In a written farewell speech on Wednesday, Islam told the ADB board, "It is a universally honoured general principle that the constituencies which run on democratic norms which in essence means that important decisions would be taken on the basis of adequate mutual consultation among the constituent member countries. Usually this is how things are run but what if a major shareholder ignores the established norm and imposes its unilateral decision? And that too on a vital matter like changing a 30-year arrangement of representation on the Board of Directors? Apparently, there is nothing in the rules that can prevent recurrence of such incidents. It is high time that the Board of Directors and the Management gave a hard look to these matters."

He censured the bank's organisational framework and its 'apparent' abuse by the Indian ED, saying, "Harmonisation should not be viewed only in the context of legal provisions and procedural similarity with our comparators. It also needs to be internalised. It is rather difficult to rationalise the present formation of constituencies represented in the Board of Directors. There is wide divergence in the number of constituent countries in a group and inter-constituency voting power and a lack of geographical contiguity. An analysis reveals that among the multi-country constituencies voting power variation is as high as nearly 50%. This has resulted in some distortion in the matter of representation."

Charges pressed  
FROM PAGE 20  
January 16 and recovered a huge cache of explosive materials.

Police arrested Shafigullah and Joynta's wife but Joynta managed to escape.

In a confidential statement to a magistrate, Shafigullah admitted his involvement in the bomb attack at a programme in Lakshmikola village under Shahjahanpur upazila.

Shafigullah also named Galib and Abdur Rahman as his leaders.

Earlier, police submitted a charge-sheet in the court accusing Galib and Abdur Rahman for their involvement in the bomb attack at Lakshmikola village. The case is now under the special tribunal.

As soon as the magistrate accepts yesterday's charge-sheet, this case will also be sent to the special tribunal.

## Spectrum coltapse victims' families get compensation

UNB, Dhaka

The families of 16 more garment workers, who were killed in the nine-story Spectrum Sweater Factory collapse in Savar, received Tk 79,000 each as compensation yesterday.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Aman Ullah Aman distributed the cheques at a function at the BGMEA conference room in the morning.

At the time, families of 40 victims have so far received compensation. Family members of 24 other victims received compensation in the first phase on May 3.

BGMEA President Annisul Haque chaired the function where President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Kutub Uddin Ahmed was present as special guest.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister assured the BGMEA leaders to actively consider their proposal for developing a 'garment village' outside the city corporation area.

The function was also addressed, among others, by Chairman of the BGMEA Standing Committee on Safety Measures Al Azim Khan, Vice-President Md Shakhirul Islam, directors SM Mannan, Jalal Uddin Ahmed, Mesbah Uddin Ali and Golam Sarwar Milon.

## Sathkira bigots

FROM PAGE 20

"I asked him to change the note but he refused. He said he could have changed it if I had returned it immediately after withdrawing the cash," Howlader went on, exclaiming, "But how could I know if the note was forged or not? It seemed okay to me. The thread and the watermark were there, and the design also looked genuine. No ordinary man but an expert could recognise it as a fake bill."

On May 26 last, Abul Hossain, a director of the same USAID project, found another counterfeit note of Tk 100 when he withdrew some cash from the same ATM.

He then took the bill back to the American Express Bank branch and handed it over to a senior officer named Mizan. "Checking the bill, he admitted its forgery but said they have nothing to do about it, since they draw money from the Bangladesh Bank," said the aggrieved client.

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## Ansar commander

FROM PAGE 20  
residence when a gang of around five youths sprayed him with bullets at 8:00am, said his family members.

Witnesses said the killers fled from the spot after confirming Insaf's death.

Locals rushed Insaf to the Sikder Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Police sent the body to the Mitford Hospital for autopsy. Hospital sources said Insaf received at least 10 bullets in the body.

Anisur Rahman, an ansar member of Ali's regiment, told reporters Insaf was also a police informant and president of the local Baitul Aman Jam-e-Masjid.

Insaf's family members were clueless about the reason behind the killing. But Anis said unknown men, calling his cell phone, had been threatening to kill him.

Locals staged a demonstration in protest against the killing, and tense situation was prevailing in the area. Additional police forces were deployed in the area.

The Hazaribagh police could not arrest anyone in this connection and no case was filed as of 7:00pm last evening.

Meanwhile, Siraj Miah, 28, a shop-owner at Tekpara in Badda and a resident of the Middle-Badda area, was returning home with his wife, Kalpana, and son, Aziz, from the Wonderland Amusement Park in Gulshan by rickshaw when two muggers on a motorbike barred his way at 3:30pm.

As the muggers tried to snatch

gold ornaments from his wife, Siraj captured one of them and cried out for help. Another mugger shot him and fled the scene, snatching the ornaments.

Siraj was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors stated his condition to be critical.

Meanwhile, the Dhanmondi police recovered the body of a person aged around 30 from the Dhanmondi Lake near the Tagwa Mosque at 7:00am.

Police said the body was badly deformed as killers had dumped it several days ago.

## Fake Tk 500

FROM PAGE 20  
Six days ago another fake note of Tk 100 denomination was found at the same ATM booth.

Bank officials at the branch admitted that the 500-taka bill, with serial number Ba-7943153, was counterfeit but refused to change it when the unhappy client, Abdul Mannan Howlader, went to return it.

A supervisor of the Agro-based Technology Development Project of the USAID, Howlader withdrew the cash from the ATM at 12:30pm and went to the British consulate in the same city area to pay visa processing fees.

"As I deposited the money to the Brac Bank branch adjacent to the consulate, an official separated a note from the bunch and said it was forged," Howlader told The Daily Star last night.

He then took the bill back to the American Express Bank branch and handed it over to a senior officer named Mizan. "Checking the bill, he admitted its forgery but said they have nothing to do about it, since they draw money from the Bangladesh Bank," said the aggrieved client.

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