

11 killed in Chittagong

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husband Jasim joined them later and she brought in her brother Hasan to her home recently.

Jasim and Hasan were the ones mourning the death of almost all in the family yesterday.

Hasan yesterday said, "We were sleeping on the bed and on the floor last night. I woke up hearing a sound of something big falling and immediately found myself covered in mud and pinned down by the ceiling fan and the tin-roof. I could see nothing and had difficulty breathing."

"I struggled desperately, freed one of my hands, removed the debris and found a way out," said the 21-year-old. He then broke down in tears trying to say that he could do nothing for the others.

KULSUM BECOMES AN ORPHAN
Suru Mia and his wife Anwara worked together as chef's help at a community centre in Chittagong and died together under the mud yesterday.

Anwara's brother Mofiz was staying with her as he was having treatment for TB in the city.

"With the lower part of her body under the heap of mud Anwar [Anwara] was moaning in pain and asking for water when I came out of the mud and debris around 7:00am," said Mofiz.

"Locals helped me rescue my niece Kulsum... her leg was broken. It was all over before I could give Anwar water," said Mofiz with tears rolling down his cheeks.

Suru and Anwara's bodies were recovered another three hours later while their only child Kulsum was undergoing surgery in CMCH.

Fifteen-year-old Bilkis went to her relative Fatema's house to give her company yesterday as Fatema's husband and children were visiting their village home in Chandpur.

Bilkis's parents live only a few hundred yards away in the same slum. "I did not even know when my daughter went to Fatema's home," said her father Shahid Ali.

Bilkis's body was recovered around 2:20pm.

Rescuers recovered the body of seven-year-old Shahajadi around 12:30pm under the debris of her home.

The district administration and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) immediately moved around 40 families to a local school from the hillside slum.

CCC acting Mayor Manjur Alam, Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil, and Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Shamim visited the spot.

The CCC also formed a five-member probe body led by CCC Chief Revenue Officer Mohiuddin Ahmed Khan. The other members of the committee are CCC Chief Conservancy Officer Saifuddin Mahmud Khatib, Estate Officer Ahmedul Haque and local ward councillors Kabir Manik and Monwara Begum Moni. The committee was asked to submit its report within three days.

The 14 destroyed houses were among around 150 structures advocate Abdullah Hasan Piko erected in the slum which was named after his late father Md Hossain.

The CCC acting mayor said they would file a case against the owner of the houses for renting houses when the CCC was relocating the families living in the area.

The district administration opened a relief camp at Lalkhan Bazar Govt Primary School and the 14 families, whose houses were destroyed, were moved there, said Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil.

The district administration would provide food relief, financial assistance and compensation to the victims' families, he added.

Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Shamim said, "We have already sent one tonne of rice as immediate food relief for the affected people. We will provide Tk 5,000 for each victim's burial along with the compensation. The compensation would be provided from a fund the district administration raised for landslide victims," he said.

Ashraf said families would be provided Tk 50,000 in damages for losing one family member, Tk 70,000 for two, Tk 80,000 for three, Tk 90,000 for four and Tk 1 lakh for five or more.

Thousands of people still live on hillsides or in valleys which are vulnerable to mudslides and landslides.

On June 11 last year mudslides left 127 people dead in Chittagong. Relocating people to safer areas have often failed to achieve the expected results.

Yesterday's landslide happened during an ongoing relocation programme in the area.

A number of influential locals

RMG worker

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shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctors declared her dead.

DMCH sources said they found several marks of stab injuries in her throat, abdomen and hands.

Sumi said Morshed went to their house on Sunday night with a marriage proposal, which her father turned down asking him not to come again with such a proposal since Ruby does not like him.

Morshed left the house without saying anything, she added.

Sheikh Mohammad Abu Zahid, officer in-charge (OC) of Khilgaon Police Station said Morshed is known to the victim's family for the last four years and he's been pressing them to marry her off to him.

Ruby's father Kalam Matubbar filed a murder case with the Khilgaon police station accusing Morshed.

Police could not arrest Morshed until yesterday evening.

often build flimsy homes on risky hillsides and valleys and rent those to people of low-income group.

"Making the relocation drive twice a week we have so far demolished 230 shanties in Matijharna slums," said Monwara Begum Moni.

"The houses that were destroyed were put under lock and key and the residents were asked to move," said local CCC ward councillor Kabir Manik.

The members of the affected families alleged that they could not leave the shanties without clearing all the unpaid rent.

"Men collecting rents on behalf of Piko advised us to lock the shanties and leave during relocation drives," said Ayub Ali, a tenant of Piko.

Over 3,000 shanties sprung up at Matijharna on railway land over decades.

Like Matijharna a good number of slums also developed on government khas land around the hills at Jamtali, Lalkhan Bazar, South Pahartali and an area west of Foy's Lake.

These pieces of land mostly belong to Bangladesh Railway, Forest Department and Public Works Department.

Following the June 11 landslides last year, a committee led by the Chittagong divisional commissioner was formed to compensate and rehabilitate the people affected in landslides in Chittagong.

"A 27-acre khas hilly-land under Hathazari upazila was selected for rehabilitating landslide victims immediately after the incident. The site had to be cancelled as it fell under the firing range of Bangladesh Army," said Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

The site was also way off from the city centre and discouraged working people to move there, he said.

As an alternative, the committee later selected another 5.92 acres of land worth Tk 53 crore belonging to Bangladesh Railway at Jahan Ali Hat near Kalurghat Bridge.

"We have sent a proposal for developing rehabilitation centres at the newly selected sites and as far as I know the proposal is now under consideration of the ministries concerned," said the divisional commissioner.

He said around 2,400 families could be rehabilitated at Jahan Ali Hat site.

PRESIDENT'S CONDOLENCE
President Iajuddin Ahmed expressed profound shock at the loss of 11 lives in landslide in Chittagong yesterday, UNB reports.

Terming the incident shocking, the president in a message said local administration should be more active and people's awareness must be raised to avoid repetition of such incident in future.

He urged all concerned to expedite rescue operations and provide quick treatment to the injured. He also prayed for the salvation of the departed souls and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Jail killing case
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Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

A designated death-reference division bench of the High Court comprising Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice M Ataur Rahman Khan started delivering the judgment after 2:00pm.

On October 20, 2004, the trial court sentenced three-Risaldar (ret'd) Muslemuddin, Dafadar (dismissed) Marfat Ali Shah and Dafadar (dismissed) Abul Hashem Mridha--to death and awarded life imprisonment to 12 mid-level army officers for the killing.

It had acquitted four politicians and an army officer of the killings charges.

Those awarded life imprisonment are Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farook Rahman, Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj (ret'd) Bazul Huda, Lt Col (dismissed) Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Huq Dalim, Lt Col (ret'd) SHMB Noor Chowdhury, Maj (ret'd) AKM Moinuddin Ahmed, Lt Col (ret'd) AM Rashed Chowdhury, Major (relieved) Ahmed Sharif Hossain, Capt (ret'd) Abdul Mazed, Captain (relieved) Kismat Hashem, and Captain (relieved) Nazmul Hossain Ansar.

Kamran

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feeling sick, the authorities formed a three-member medical board led by Asst Prof Dr Akhtaruzzaman of Sylhet Osmani Medical College.

Kamran was admitted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital at around 9:30pm on the advice of the medical board.

His mother Nurunnesa Lalon's body was laid to rest at Hazrat Manik Pir Graveyard following the namaz-e-janaza at Naya Sarak Mosque. People from all walks of life attended the funeral.

Kamran's mother passed away on Sunday at Square Hospital in the capital. She actively campaigned for her son in his successful bid to the mayoral race held on Aug 4.

The Sylhet city mayor-elect was arrested on 29 May last year. Several allegations including amassing of illegal wealth have been brought against him.

Kamran is scheduled to be produced before the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Sylhet today (Tuesday) for the hearing of charge sheet submission in the illegal wealth case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, said sources.

Bangladeshi

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Bader Al-Duwaila as saying that he said he will never allow companies to violate laws and the ministry will definitely not permit companies to infringe on the rights of workers.

He said strict legal action would be initiated against all errant companies even if high-ranking officials own them.

The Kuwait Times report quoted one worker as saying that the company that hired them had agreed to pay each worker Kuwaiti Dinar (KD) 60 per month but in fact was paying only KD 50 per month.

The worker also said that the company refused to pay them airfares in accordance with their contract, which stipulates one air ticket home every two years. Also the company forced the workers to pay KD 70 each for renewal of residence and health insurance in violation of local laws.

The Kuwaiti National Assembly Secretary General Allam Al-Kandari however denied that there was any protest by its workers and that they had gathered to receive their IDs, according to the report.

Meanwhile, nearly 700 Bangladeshis gathered outside the Bangladesh embassy demanding that the embassy take appropriate actions to help the workers realise their dues.

Five labourers were chosen as representatives to discuss the issue with embassy officials.

The Arab Times, meanwhile, reported that the acting Speaker of the National Assembly Roudhan Al-Roudhan has promised to discuss the issue with the secretary general of the assembly and compel the concerned company to pay the workers' salaries.

Earlier in late July, thousands of Bangladeshi workers demonstrated in Kuwait in demand of better pays and working conditions, which led to deportation of 1129 workers. However Kuwait declared minimum wage of KD 40 for cleaners.

A number of workers deported by the Kuwaiti police, upon their arrival in Dhaka said that the Kuwaiti police had tortured them and deported them though they had not taken part in any demonstrations.

NBR
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(CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the EC will begin the process of registration once the Representation of People Order (RPO) is finalised.

"The RPO will be finalised in a day or two, and soon after that, we will start registration of the political parties," he told reporters at the EC Secretariat.

The same day Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain said the political parties would be asked to register with the EC in line with the final schedule for the ninth parliamentary election.

He was talking to a group of reporters at his office.

Asked if the EC has drawn up any time frame for the registration task, he replied in the negative.

According to the electoral roadmap, provisions geared for electoral and intra-party reforms were supposed to take effect by February this year, and after that, the political parties were to be given four months to register with the EC.

The long-stalled national election is tentatively slated for the third week in December.

Fair polls
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made in response to demand.

The civil servants demanded a legal regulatory framework for all postings and promotions.

Fakhruddin said the secretaries should continue to "make proper evaluation of the work of the officials. Apply right persons in the right places. Look carefully at their career planning."

He said the next democratically elected government would carry out the caretaker government's ongoing administrative reforms.

The civil servants also urged the chief adviser to sort out numerous state-owned enterprises that continue to incur heavy losses.

Demanding broader opportunities, the top bureaucrats asked Fakhruddin to direct the foreign ministry to work on opening up positions for them in the United Nations system and peacekeeping missions.

The chief adviser also asked the bureaucrats to monitor the prices of essentials and the service sectors during the month of Ramadan.

On the new 100-day employment generation programme due to start next month, he urged the civil servants to ensure that benefits reach all levels of livelihoods.

He said although "the country's economy is back on track" poverty alleviation remains the central target of the government.

He also lauded the publication of a citizen's charter by various ministries.

"Formulating and demonstrating the citizen charter is the first step, but its implementation is difficult," the chief adviser added.

Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Mazumder also spoke in the closed-door meeting.

Musharraf resigns

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political allies, with their advice I have decided to resign," Musharraf, wearing a sober suit and tie, said near the end of his one-hour address.

"I leave my future in the hands of the people."

Across the nation, his opponents rejoiced after the former general announced he was resigning.

Celebrations erupted at special areas set up in major cities and dozens of other towns for people to hear Musharraf's final address to the nation. Widescreen televisions were set up in some spots.

"The nation is so happy," university student Saba Gul said, as people embraced and handed out sweets.

The sound of banging drums and cheers of joy echoed throughout this ancient walled city. Elsewhere, people fired Kalashnikovs in the air to celebrate.

Coalition leaders Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of slain ex-premier Benazir Bhutto, and Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted by Musharraf in 1999, were shown shaking hands and smiling after his speech but gave no immediate reaction.

His decision to quit came after the coalition said it was ready to press ahead with impeachment as early as Tuesday. It was not known if Musharraf had concluded a deal that would save him from prosecution in the days ahead.

"If we continue with the politics of confrontation, we will not save the country," the 65-year-old Musharraf said. "People will never pardon this government if they fail to do so."

But several close aides said Musharraf was not set to go into exile as several of Pakistan's former leaders have done. "He is not going anywhere," one aide said.

The president said he would give his formal resignation to the speaker of parliament later Monday. Senate chairman Mohammed Mian Soomro will act as caretaker president until an election, which is expected in the next few weeks.

Musharraf later received a final guard of honour from troops at the presidency as a brass band played the national anthem.

World leaders urged stability and unity in Pakistan -- regarded by the West as a key partner in fighting terrorism -- as they reacted to news of Musharraf's resignation as president.

"We will continue to work with the Pakistani government and political leaders and urge them to redouble their focus on Pakistan's future and its most urgent needs, including stemming the growth of extremism," US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said.

In a statement, Rice called Musharraf "a friend to the United States and one of the world's most committed partners in the war against terrorism and extremism."

Britain said Musharraf's announcement ended a "critical period" in Pakistan's history, and called for political leaders in Islamabad to unite to keep their nation on course with economic and security cooperation.

Pakistan's regional rival India declined to comment on Musharraf's decision, with the foreign ministry in Delhi describing it as an "internal matter" for its neighbour.

His troubles began last year when he sacked senior judges who opposed him, clearing the way for his re-election while still holding a dual role as head of the country's powerful armed forces.

The move set off mass protests in the streets that built into a national crisis, which saw Musharraf declare a state of emergency in November.

But he was compelled to quit as army chief within weeks, and when his administration was seen to have bungled the handling of the December assassination of Benazir

Bhutto, his fate seemed to be sealed. Voters underscored his unpopularity at the ballot box in February, handing the parties of Benazir and Sharif a massive victory.

"After the martyrdom of my mother I said that democracy was the best revenge -- and today it was proved true," said Benazir's 19-year-old son, Bilawal.

The possible impeachment charges against Musharraf were expected to be related to his sacking of the judges, but in his speech he strongly defended every aspect of his time in power -- even the coup nine years ago.

He said he had improved a tottering economy, helped establish law and order, fostered democracy and burnished the country's international stature.

"On the map of the world Pakistan is now an important country, by the grace of Allah," Musharraf said.

The president was also backed into a corner by the resurgence of Islamic militants in the tribal areas along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, who launched a massive wave of attacks last year that left more than 1,000 dead.

Musharraf himself survived three assassination attempts while holding what some have called the most dangerous job in the world, and went from being a backer of the Taliban to a close US ally after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The United States gave no immediate reaction, but British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said Musharraf's resignation ended a "critical period in Pakistan's history."

Berlin called on the next president to help bring stability in neighbouring Afghanistan, while Kabul said it hoped the resignation would lead to a "strengthening of the civilian government and democracy in Pakistan."

White House foes John McCain and Barack Obama on Monday welcomed the resignation of Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, both expressing hopes the move would end that country's political crisis.

In separate statements, the candidates, who have been squabbling over foreign policy, noted the vital role Pakistan plays in the US battle against global terrorism, but stopped short of praising Musharraf.

Democratic candidate Obama said the United States must press the next Pakistani government to carry out a crackdown against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

"There can be no safe haven for terrorists who threaten the American people," said Obama, who once said he would be ready as president to strike against terror suspects in Pakistan if Islamabad did not act on US intelligence.

"A year ago, I advocated that the US move from a 'Musharraf policy' to a 'Pakistan policy,'" he said.

Republican McCain said the resignation of Musharraf was a step toward moving Pakistan onto a more stable political footing."

"Pakistan is a critical theater in countering the threat of Al-Qaeda and violent Islamic extremism, and I look forward to the government increasing its future cooperation," McCain said in a statement.

"The situation in Pakistan's frontier regions requires immediate and continued attention, and I hope that the elections for President Musharraf's successor will serve to reconcile the Pakistani people behind a leader who can solidify their government internally."

Kidnappers
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Police recovered Mahbub's decomposed body at an abandoned place at Jatrabari on Sunday night.

The law enforcers yesterday detained three persons, including rickshaw-puller Showkat Ali, the husband of Mahbub's aunt and the parents of suspected kidnapper Mohammad Parvez, who is now on the run.

Victim's family sources said Mahbub went missing at about 7:00pm on Thursday.

"Mahbub was studying in the evening. When the electricity went off, he went out of the house and had been missing since then," Mahbub's maternal uncle and trader Nasir Uddin told The Daily Star.

"An unidentified person called Mahbub's uncle Abdul Awal Khan on Friday evening and demanded a ransom of Tk 2 lakh. The caller said if Mahbub's family members want him alive, they have to pay them the money within two hours," Nasir said.

When the person called again on Saturday night, Mahbub's father expressed his inability to pay them Tk 2 lakh.

Later, the ransom was settled at Tk 25,000. Of the amount, Tk 15,000 had to be paid in advance while Tk 10,000 after Mahbub's release.

Mahbub's father Shafiqul, along with his brother Awal and Showkat went to Dholapuri Bazar to pay Parvez, one of the kidnappers, Tk 15,000.

Parvez took the money and fled the scene without handing over Mahbub to them.

Later, Mahbub's decomposed body was found near Jatrabari Police Station.

Police detained Showkat Ali and the parents of Parvez.

The boy had been killed at least three days before his body was recovered, said Sri Salmullah Medical College morgue sources.

A general diary was filed with Jatrabari Police Station.

Criminalisation

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about the candidates in due time by the Election Commission (EC), which said it would be 'immoral' to make information about the candidates public before withdrawal of nomination.

"Moreover, many candidates gave false or incomplete information in their affidavits. But the EC has not taken any punitive measures against them," said Badiul Alam.

The EC, which was far too lenient with selection of nomination papers, did not take any step to cancel the nominations that had inconsistencies in information, he said.

All expected that honest and competent candidates would be elected in the future polls following the January 11 'changeover'.

But, the political parties did not hesitate to nominate candidates accused of crime and corruption, Badiul Alam said.

"But, we must not be frustrated. For the first time, it has been made mandatory that the candidates will provide their personal information in affidavits," he added.

The EC must crosscheck the information provided by the candidates and make those public in due time to give people the chance to make the right decision during the polls, said Shujan Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad.

He said it is positive that a few new faces have been elected in the recent local body polls.

ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said the recent polls have proved that reform is not a matter of imposition, rather it should come from political parties themselves.

"Although many candidates provided false information, the EC did not cancel their candidature," he said.

Jatiya Party (JP) leader GM Quader said the political parties are yet to identify their faults.

The present government seems to be flexible about release of political leaders.

"But such actions will lead to criminalisation of politics again," he added.

Another JP leader Sheikh Shahidul Islam said no positive change is visible in political parties as the present government has confined political activities to indoors for a long time.

He also said the compromising attitude of the caretaker government will not help sustain reforms in future.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Hafizuddin Khan, Prof Dilara Chowdhury of Jahangirnagar University and columnist Syed Abdul Maksud also spoke.

Shamim Iskander

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Shamim, a former flight engineer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, was earlier arrested in connection with the case and later released on bail following a High Court (HC) order.

Shamim's wife Fatema got bail from the HC after she surrendered before it and sought an anticipatory bail. The HC also stayed the proceedings of the case for four months.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Shamim Iskander amassed wealth worth about Tk 1.34 crore through illegal means and concealed information regarding wealth worth Tk 81.81 lakh from ACC.

CASE AGAINST KHALEDA
Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Khaleda's lawyers submitted a bail petition against a rejection order of the lower court.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani rejected Khaleda's bail petition on July 30.

Khaleda's elder son detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman is also an accused in the case.

The five others accused are former BNP lawmaker Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal, Syed Ahmed alias Sayeed Ahmed, Gias Uddin Ahmed, Sharfuddin Ahmed and Mominur Rahman, son of Khaleda's sister. Of them, Sharfuddin is in jail custody and the others absconding.

According to the case filed by ACC Deputy Assistant Director Harunur Rashid, the then prime minister Khaleda Zia and the other accused embezzled over Tk 2.10 crore establishing the named organisation that exists only on paper.

Hasina
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withdrawal of the state of emergency, release of party leaders and withdrawal of all 'false cases' filed against them, according to reports of US-based news agencies America News Agency (ANA) and News World.

The former prime minister said it is now proved that people's welfare cannot be achieved without a democratic order and a representative government.

She pledged that if her party is voted to power in the next election, they would bring down prices of essentials within the reach of general people, create employment opportunities, eradicate illiteracy and solve problems of agriculture sector.

"My prime target is to implement the 2020 vision to make Bangladesh a developed nation and, for this I've made extensive plans in line with Awami League's economic planning," she said.

Hasina thanked the government for observing at state level August 15 as National Mourning Day and a public holiday. She demanded immediate execution of court verdict in the case for the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina will fly for Canada today to meet her daughter and stay there for about two weeks. She would return to US in the second week of next month for follow-up medical treatment, ANA said.