

## Ranglai Mro

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Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD) and kept in the Coronary Care Unit (CCU).

He was handcuffed to a bed at NICVD and suffered for extra 19 days due to delays in reaching his bail order to the jail authorities from the HC.

Towhidul Islam, superintendent of Dhaka Central Jail, told The Daily Star, "Mro was set free at about 3:30pm after we received the bail order by post at 2:00pm."

"We are not responsible for the delay and extra sufferings to Mro. The court sent the bail order to Bandarban Judicial Magistrate's court which forwarded it to us and there the delay was made," he said.

Even though he was in such a critical condition, the jail authorities did not remove his fetters until human rights organisation, Ain O Salish Kendra and the National Human Rights Commission, intervened.

Meanwhile, Nagorik Uddyog had also asked the inspector general of prisons to remove his handcuffs.

Mro, also the chairman of Sulaok Union Parishad in Bandarban, was arrested in a case filed under the Arms Act. He was convicted in the arms case on June 13, 2007, and sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment.

Lawyers sought Mro's release on humanitarian grounds and for emergency medical attention. They also argued that Mro had been falsely implicated in the case.

In a press release issued yesterday, Zakir Hossain of Nagorik Uddyog said the use of such restraint was constitutionally banned as a form of cruel and degrading treatment.

He also asked the IG-

Prisons to clarify his officials about the ban on handcuffs.

## EC yet to act

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Aungmye San Shwe.

They also alleged that AL supporters attacked houses of the BNP-backed chairman candidate's supporters, leaving 12 to 14 people injured.

"We lodged several complaints with the returning officer and the local administration, but they were reluctant to take any action due to influence of the state minister," the complaint said.

The three chairman candidates also alleged that AL supporters had created a reign of terror at six polling stations in Betunia union and at two in Kamalpaty union affecting voting.

Moreover, a woman vice-chairman candidate in Porshuram upazila in Feni complained that Kamal Ahmed Majumder visited the upazila on January 18 and campaigned for his sister-in-law Fatema Rasheda, woman vice-chairman candidate, and for AL-backed chairman and vice-chairman candidates.

Majumder also asked the local administration to favour the three candidates in the election.

Sources in the EC Secretariat said the commission met for the second consecutive day yesterday and examined those complaints, but it was yet to decide how it would investigate the complaints and go for legal actions.

The complainants have also submitted supportive documents with their complaints, and EC officials are now listing those deserving probe, the sources mentioned.

## Cases against

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such cases. It will submit its recommendations soon, said home ministry sources.

Committee members include LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam, Home Minister Sahara Khatun, State Minister for Home Affairs Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj and State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam.

"The committee will examine the nature of the cases and identify those which had been filed with political motive," Sohel Taj told The Daily Star.

AL President Sheikh Hasina has been accused in 16 cases. Of those, 11 were filed during the tenure of BNP-led coalition government and the rest during the tenure of the immediate past caretaker government.

Many top leaders of AL and its front organisations have been implicated in about 50,000 cases, according to the committee members.

The BNP-led coalition government between 2001 and 2006 had withdrawn around 70,000 cases filed against their party leaders and activists during the tenure of AL government between 1996 and 2001.

Sources said the home and the law ministries have been asked to prepare a list of the 'false' cases filed during the tenure of the four-party coalition government.

The home ministry has already directed the police department to prepare the list immediately, the sources added.

"After reviewing the cases, the 'false' ones will be withdrawn following recommendations of the law ministry," said a senior official at the home ministry.

After a meeting on law and order Sohel Taj told journalists at the ministry that they would also review the 70,000 cases withdrawn during the tenure of the BNP-led coalition government.

Commenting on maintaining law and order in the country, the state minister said, "We have directed the law enforcement agencies to take stern actions against whoever breaks the laws."

The meeting also decided to tighten security measures in the capital's Baitul Mukarram Mosque that recently witnessed a series of untoward incidents.

High officials of the army, police and Rab were present at the meeting with Home Minister Sahara Khatun in the chair.

## Training

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assistant of MA Malek and seized fake certificates, admission forms, seals and other documents.

Sensing presence of Rab, MA Malek managed to flee the scene.

Magistrate Anwar Pasha told The Daily Star that MA Malek managed a registration (j-06381) for "Diploma and LMAF Doctors Association" from the Social Welfare Ministry in 2001. He then used the registration to collect students and claimed that the training academy was approved by the government.

Joly Begum, also the office assistant, said the certificates of MBBS, LMAE, medical diploma (DM), dental diploma (DD) and nursing courses were sold at the academy.

Students were not admitted in the academy for MBBS course but fake certificates of the course were sold, she said.

Joly added that each student had to pay around Tk 75,000 for a 4-year diploma course while around Tk 29,000 for a 3-year nursing course and around Tk 13,000 for one-year pathology diploma course.

Time is not a factor for getting certificates from the academy, she said, adding that students were given required certificates only after payment of the fixed amount.

She said on an average around 60-70 students got certificates of various courses in a year. But around 100 students took admission annually and got certificates from the academy just three years ago.

Joly said her husband prepared certificates by using his computer in the past but recently he gave the responsibility to Tri Star Computer in Mirpur-1.

Jamal Uddin, a night guard of Khalek City in the city's Gabtali area, also took admission in the academy in Dental Diploma Course in June last year and paid Tk 18,000.

MA Malek later demanded Tk 10,000 more for giving him a certificate, Jamal said.

On Sunday, Malek and his men severely beat Jamal up when he went to the academy. Injured Jamal later informed Rab-4 about the activities of the academy.

## President

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already announced that veteran Awami League Zillur Rahman will be her party's nominee for the presidency.

BNP, which had Iajuddin as president following AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury's resignation in June 2002, now seeks his removal from office out of sheer displeasure with the way he had acted, said party sources.

"We are planning to initiate impeachment proceedings against the president for his gross misconduct. We will discuss the issue with the ruling party," senior BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

The opposition however lacks the strength needed to bring off the bid alone as the treasury bench enjoys a three-fourth majority in parliament.

BNP and its allies Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party have only 31 seats in the 300-member legislature, far from the required majority of at least 151 legislators.

"They [BNP] want to impeach the president for his failure to hold parliamentary election on January 22, 2007. We might want the impeachment for his taking over as the chief adviser in breach of the constitution," AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta told The Daily Star yesterday.

Contacted via phone, Amir Hossain Amu, another member of AL presidium, said their party has not had any discussions in this regard.

"We might discuss the issue if we receive any such proposal," he added.

Earlier on Sunday the BNP-led opposition lawmakers boycotted Iajuddin's address to the inaugural session of ninth parliament. They accused him of dishonouring the presidential oath to defend the constitution.

Speaking at a discussion yesterday, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said the president should be impeached for violation of the constitution.

The same day BNP Vice-president and lawmaker MK Anwar said they would support any move to impeach the president.

Iajuddin took over as the chief adviser of the caretaker government on October 29, 2007, setting off a huge controversy. But he failed abjectly to discharge duties neutrally, leading to 1/11.

His bias towards BNP prompted the AL-led grand alliance to boycott the parliamentary election then

scheduled for January 22, 2007.

As things threatened to spiral out of control, Iajuddin was forced to step down as the chief adviser on January 11 that year.

He also had to declare a state of emergency and cancel the general election, which was set to be held with the participation of only BNP-led four-party alliance and some minor parties.

Fakhruddin Ahmed replaced Iajuddin as the caretaker administration chief, and had a new council of advisers. His two-year rule culminated in a free and fair parliamentary election on December 29 last year.

The BNP-led alliance took an unprecedented thumping in the polls that AL-led grand alliance won by a landslide.

Article 52 of the constitution says, "The President may be impeached on a charge of violating this Constitution or of grave misconduct, preferred by a notice of motion signed by a majority of the total number of members of the Parliament and delivered to the speaker, setting out the particulars of the charges."

## Navy chief

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of the defence ministry.

ZU Ahmed succeeds Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam who goes on normal retirement on January 28.

Born in Kaptai, Gazipur in 1957, ZU Ahmed, son of late social worker Shafiuddin Ahmed, joined the Navy in 1976. He was commissioned in Britannia Royal Naval College with distinction.

He received training in USA, China, Pakistan, Korea and the Netherlands.

As a successful navigator, he commanded Frigate BNS Khalid Bin Walid, BNS Umar Farooq and BNS Abu Bakr, and was commodore commanding of BNS Flotilla, commodore commanding Chittagong, deputy director general of Coastguard and commandant of Marine Academy.

He is happily married to Shabana Ahmed and blessed with a son and a daughter.

## Telegraph

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Investigators said the allocated money for electricity cannot be used in any other purposes like purchasing materials, repairing or maintaining equipment.

The ACC discovered the matter going through records collected from the Central Telegraph Office and International Telegraph Office in Ramna, Dhaka, the telegraph office in Khulna and the chief superintendent's office in Chittagong.

## Travesty of probe

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it up suggests some of its influential leaders had been involved in the killing," she added.

She said instead of finding the real perpetrators, "BNP tried to misguide the investigation and save the masterminds."

"Even if I should believe the Hujji men were involved, I'd say they might have played a mere assassin's role. What's most important is finding out who ordered the assassination," she said, citing the recent findings.

Asma said she has heard many people in Sylhet speaking of Harris Chowdhury's involvement in the murder. So he should be hunted down and interrogated.

She also wants investigators to look into the then Habiganj deputy commissioner Emdadul Haq's "dubious" role on the day of assassination on January 27, 2005.

But the aggrieved widow of Kibria and complainant of the case, Abdul Majid Khan, the newly elected Awami League (AL) MP from Habiganj, are hopeful the new AL-led government will properly probe the case and bring the real masterminds to justice.

"I hope the new government will find out the masterminds behind the killing, and we would get justice as the party he [Kibria] belonged to is in power now," said Asma.

Kibria was killed in a grenade attack at a rally in Baidder Bazar in Habiganj. He was the serving MP from that constituency then.

Asma said she would approach Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding the case, while Majid said he would try to meet Home Minister Sahara Khatun.

Meanwhile, former

## Latif denies

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after a while...I worked at my office in Dhaka," Latif claimed.

He said, "I did not breach any code of conduct set by the Election Commission and its version of the story is baseless."

"The real truth will be revealed one day," he added.

The minister said he had talked to the prime minister explaining his side of the story after a number of newspaper reports were published.

The Election Commission alleged that Biswas interfered with polling at a polling centre at Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj on January 22. It said polling at the centre had to be suspended for his interference.

The Election Commission and the Awami League has launched separate probes against Biswas and AL lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi in connection with influencing upazila elections.

## Hasina

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"We shall have the privilege to work together for a new dynamism to our continuing endeavours aimed at consolidating further the close relations between our two countries," said Hasina, praying for Singh's good health and return to active service of his nation.

In a similar message channelled through her Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni also prayed for Manmohan Singh's early recovery.

## RU proctor

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When contacted, RU acting VC Prof Mammunul Keramat said if anyone resigns willingly, the university authorities cannot do anything about it.

Earlier, BCL, Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), JSD-backed Chhatra League and Progressive Students' Alliance launched movements separately on the campus demanding resignation of the proctor.

Prof Enamul Haque, who was made RU proctor during the tenure of the BNP-led coalition government, imposed restriction on holding cultural programmes on the university campus.

## Zillur

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Zillur Rahman is AL's presidential nominee.

The book was edited by Md Shahjahan Shaheen and published by Md Ekramullah Dulal from Azizia Book Depot, Bangla Bazar, Dhaka.

Golam Mostafa, headmaster of Green View High School, also approved the book but when he came to know about the matter last week, he immediately had the book replaced with another.

He also requested local booksellers to withdraw the book from the market and write to the publisher and distributors about the matter.

However, teachers in several kindergartens are still continuing with the book, which is on sale at many bookstores in the town.

Nafisa Begum, district primary education officer, said they could do nothing because the matter is not under their jurisdiction.

## Govt leans

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them may resign from his or her office by submitting a written resignation to the prime minister, and the prime minister may also at any time terminate the appointments.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a senior official of the cabinet division said the new provisions were incorporated in the rules of business to avoid legal complexities regarding appointments of prime minister's advisers and special assistants.

The immediate past BNP government appointed four advisers with the status of state ministers to different ministries without amending the rules of business, resulting in legal complexities, said the cabinet division officials.

To meet the demand of 2009 calendar year, the purchase committee also approved import of 13 lakh tonnes of crude oil worth Tk 452.76 crore or about \$651.41 million from Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

The advance price of per barrel oil has been fixed at \$64 for January-June period and \$69.41 for July-December period.

## Global food crisis

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While cereal production increased in 2008, the rise was mostly in developed nations and the food price crisis had left another 40 million people hungry, bringing the global number of undernourished people close to one billion, he added.

A combination of factors including poor harvests, changing diets in emerging economies like China and India, and growing demand for food crops for biofuel production have collided in recent years triggering sharp, sudden rises in prices for food staples.

However, prices started falling in the second half of 2008 due to better crops. That could lead to lower investment in agriculture along with greater difficulty in accessing credit with the global financial crisis, Diouf warned.

Representatives from 95 countries are taking part in the two-day gathering, a follow-up to another UN-sponsored summit held last year in Rome to tackle the food crisis, which has already caused protests in around 30 nations.

That meeting ended with pledges of billions of dollars in aid but without agreement on some of the key policy decisions confronting governments regarding issues such as farm subsidies and trade barriers.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero will close the meeting on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the United States is "committed" to working with other nations to meet the goal of halving the number of people worldwide living in poverty and hunger by 2015, US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Monday.

"Food insecurity and high food prices pose a threat to the prosperity and security of many developing countries," she said in a video message broadcast at a UN-sponsored meeting on food security in Madrid.

"Millions of people are at risk of being pushed back into poverty, jeopardising the achievements of the Millennium Development Goal to cut poverty and hunger by half by 2015," she said, adding that "governments and nations are more likely to become unstable when their populations are hungry and underfed."

"We are committed to building a new partnership among donor states, developing nations, UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector and others to better coordinate policies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals," she said.

Nearly one billion of the world's 6.5 billion people suffer from malnutrition, the vast majority of them in devel-

oping nations, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), which is hosting the event together with Spain.

## Iceland govt

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economic crisis.

"I'm here to announce that I and the leader of the Social Democrats have decided that we will not continue with the coalition," Haarde told reporters, adding that he would seek a broad coalition with all parliamentary parties.

The announcement came just days after Haarde called for snap elections on May 9 in which he would not run due to health reasons, after months of protests calling for the government's resignation.

Iceland's President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson accepted the resignation.

Many Icelanders blame the government for the collapse of the country's financial sector in October, which led the state to take control of three major banks as the economy and currency faltered badly.

The coalition, made up of Haarde's Independence Party and the Social Democrats since May 2007, had been in negotiations since the weekend, with the junior coalition partner demanding the post of prime minister.

"We couldn't accept the Social Democratic demand that they would lead the government. That is not something we agreed on in 2007," Haarde said.

In the 2007 elections, the Independence Party won 36.6 percent of votes and the Social Democrats garnered 26.8 percent. The next elections had initially been scheduled for 2011.

The head of the Social Democrats, Foreign Minister Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir, said a more powerful leadership was needed.

"The government's actions in the last weeks and months were not swift enough," she said.

Haarde said last week he would not seek re-election and would resign as head of the Independence Party at a party congress at the end of March because he was suffering from a malignant tumour of the oesophagus.

But that did little to quell protests in the country of just 320,000.

Some 5,000 people turned out Saturday for another demonstration in Reykjavik calling for the government's immediate resignation.

Commerce Minister Bjorgvin Gudni Sigurdsson, a Social Democrat, announced his resignation on Sunday, apologetic for the stunning financial collapse but refusing to take all blame for the dramatic events that ensued.

## Congo warlord

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Lubanga, 48, is accused of recruiting children under the age of 15 to fight in the armed wing of his Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo between September 2002 and August 2003.

"The Lubanga militia was an army of children," chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo told a panel of three judges of the ICC, which came into operation in July 2002 as the world's first permanent tribunal to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

"Around 30 percent of the soldiers in the Lubanga militia were child soldiers."

"He stole the childhood of the victims by forcing them to kill and rape."

Humanitarian groups say inter-ethnic fighting and violence involving militia groups in Congo's eastern Ituri region has claimed some 60,000 lives since 1999 and created hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The prosecution alleges that Lubanga's role in the conflict in Ituri was driven by a desire to maintain and expand his political control over the region, one of the world's most lucrative gold-mining territories.

His armed group is accused of massacres of ethnic Lendu civilians in 2002 and 2003, including in his stronghold Bunia, the Ituri capital.

In his opening statement to the court, Moreno-Ocampo accused Lubanga's militia of having "recruited, trained and used hundreds of young children to kill, pillage and rape."

"The children still suffer the consequences of Lubanga's crimes. They cannot forget what they suffered, what they saw, what they did. They were nine, 11, 13 years old," the prosecutor said.

"They cannot forget the beatings they suffered... the terror they felt and the terror they inflicted. They cannot forget that they raped and were

raped."

The court was shown video footage of Lubanga surrounded by boys and girls wearing uniforms and carrying guns, and told of a boy under the age of 10 who was shot by his militia bosses for losing his gun.

"His [Lubanga's] political and military career is built on the use of child soldiers," said deputy prosecutor Fatou Bensouda.

The fate of girl soldiers was particularly horrific, Moreno-Ocampo told the court.

"Some aged 12 years, they were used in the training camps as cooks and fighters, cleaners and spies, scouts and sexual slaves."

"One moment they would carry a gun, the next, they would serve a meal to a commander, the next, the commander would rape them. They were killed if they refused to be raped."

Some of Lubanga's alleged victims have since turned to drugs and prostitution, said the prosecutor, adding he would seek a "very severe" sentence for Lubanga -- "close to the maximum" of 30 years.

"Lubanga affected... an entire generation and this must be reflected as a powerful aggravating factor in his sentence, if convicted."

The prosecution has listed 34 witnesses, including nine former child soldiers, ex-members of militia groups involved in the Ituri fighting, and experts in such speciality areas as determining the age of a child from tooth and bone x-rays.

The trial is expected to last between six and nine months.

The first witness, a former child soldier, is to take the stand on Wednesday, followed by his father.

Lubanga is being held at the United Nations detention centre in the seaside suburb Scheveningen of The Hague, to where he was transferred by the DR Congo government in 2006.

## War criminals

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Moni also talked to the foreign diplomats over the long-disputed issue of trying war criminals and sought their cooperation in this regard.

The government is also mulling over a plan to discuss the matter with the neighboring countries so that no obstacles are created in the way to bring war criminal to justice.

Talking to reporters the law minister said, "War criminals are those who worked as auxiliary forces of the then Pakistani occupation forces and committed crimes against humanity including killing, lootings, rapes, arson and forced people to leave the country."

He said the International Crime Tribunal Act, 1973 is still in force, which has rules and procedures to try them. The law minister said a special tribunal would have to be formed if the war criminals were to be brought to book under the 1973 law.

"The government assumed its office only three to four weeks back; give us a little more time. The government, off course, will implement its electoral pledges," said the law minister in response to a query about the time of the trial.

Sources at the meeting said the government would go for a fresh investigation to identify the war criminals with adequate proofs and documents.

The law minister said the

home ministry would play the role of prosecutor in trying the war criminals. "Law ministry is ready to assist the home ministry to provide legal assistance," said Shafiqul Ahmed.

Talking to The Daily Star State Minister for Home Affairs Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj said, "The new generation has become aware of war criminals and our liberation war, which is why, people voted the Awami League to power."

"And we will obviously take steps to try the war criminals," said the home ministry spokesperson.

Meanwhile, appointment of two judges in the appellate division of the Supreme Court is in the pipeline to hear the appeal against the verdict of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman killing case.

"As per the people's expectations we also want a quick trial of Bangabandhu killing case," said State Minister for Law Adv Qamrul Islam.