

Minor girl in coma after attempt to bury her alive

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An eight-year-old girl is fighting for her life in a hospital in Khulna after she was rescued from being buried alive on Friday evening by a relative. Rubina has been in a coma since admission to the Sadar hospital the same night with severe injuries. Sources said she had bruises all over her body, suggesting that she was beaten black and blue before the attempt to bury her. The minor girl is the daughter of Sheikh Abdur Rahman of Phultala village under Bagerhat Sadar thana. Mysteriously, Rahman has been missing for the last eight years. This hair-raising incident has created sensation among the locals, who along with civil rights groups in Bagerhat

have demanded immediate arrest of the girl's uncle Rahenuddin, and his exemplary punishment. Police said the attempt on Rubina's life appears to be the result of a long-standing family dispute. The girl's father Abdur and her uncle Rahenuddin had been arch-enemies. Since his disappearance, Rahenuddin kept up the ill-treatment on Abdur's wife Parvin Begum and her children -- Rana, Rozina and Rubina. He deprived them of their rightful share of the paternal land and other property. Police and locals said that during her recent interment, Parvin and her young family was well known in the locality. Several times Rahenuddin threatened to bring an end to Parvin and her children's lives.

On Friday evening, Parvin as well as her two elder children happened to be out of the house, when Rahenuddin attacked the lone girl. A neighbour Hena Begum first noticed Rahenuddin trying to bury the girl in the cover of the dark and raised a hue and cry. As locals rushed to the spot they found Rubina with her arms and legs tied up and mouth gagged with a scarf inside a newly dug grave. They rescued her and rushed her to the local hospital. The victim's elder sister Rozina lodged an FIR with Bagerhat Sadar thana in this connection, naming her uncle Rahenuddin as the only accused. The uncle has been absconding since the incident.

Temporary labour court

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2009" at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. He unveiled the wrap of a book titled "Bangladesh RMG Industry" Competitiveness and Productivity by Prof Abu Yusuf Md Abdullah of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Dhaka University. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CITI Bank NA in Bangladesh Mamun Rashid moderated the programme. The minister said the latest labour unrest in which dozens of garment factories were ransacked and burned down was a "pre-planned" act by some criminals. He blamed the mid-level management of the factories for becoming unruly by a section of workers. "The mid-level management should be very tolerable for running factories," he observed. He asked the RMG business leaders to select a suitable place in Manikganj for establishing a university for RMG, fashion and textiles sector. "We must train up the workers and management personnel as the share of the country in the global apparel market is widening rapidly," he said.

The minister added if necessary the government would enhance entrance of the private sector people to the management of the state-owned Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) to promote export volume. Speaking as special guest, Fazlul Hoque, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said the highest rate of productivity at the finest factories is now only 38 percent, whereas the country needs 70 percent to compete in the global market. "Productivity of the workers of Bangladesh is very low as they are not trained before joining jobs, although Bangladesh is called the tailor of the world," Hoque said. He said a big team of knitwear manufacturers is going to Japan to explore this ready market for the country. He expressed the hope Bangladesh is going to be the second largest RMG exporter followed by China within next two and a half years topping Turkey as the export volume is increasing rapidly. It is a big question now

whether the country would continue its investment in backward linkage industries or not, he added. At the ceremony, Vice-chancellor of North South University Hafiz Ga Siddiqi urged the government to step up state support to increase productivity at factory levels. "The government and factory owners should make a balance in backward and forward linkage industries. But establishing the backward linkage industries was essential for Bangladesh," Siddiqi said. He advised manufacturers for direct marketing, as a section of middlemen is taking away a good amount of money in the name of marketing of Bangladesh product. He also urged the government to strengthen economic diplomacy to increase trade volume globally. Meanwhile, in the book the author mentions four factors affecting the workers' productivity. The factors are wage satisfaction, working hour satisfaction, timely payment satisfaction and overtime satisfaction.

MPs need code of conduct

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House and opposition leader in parliament must be ensured with introduction of a provision for not giving a lawmaker remuneration if he or she remains absent entirely from a parliamentary session. It also asked for making public wealth statements of ministers and lawmakers after scrutiny to ensure transparency of the government. It suggested arranging offices for MPs in their constituencies and a question-answer session for them with people's participation after a certain period. Like the previous eighth parliament, the ninth parliament also faces quorum crisis on almost every working day. In its report, the TIB calculated that about Tk 5.41 crore got wasted due to the quorum crisis in the inaugural session of the new parliament. It said every sitting of the first session was delayed by 40 minutes on an average. "About 25 hours and 48 minutes had been wasted because of quorum crisis while around Tk 35,000 was spent for every minute," the TIB findings said. The House cannot begin its proceedings without a quorum of 60 lawmakers. Terminating quorum crisis unwarranted, Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali said, "Quorum crisis occurred as the lawmakers were not present in the House in time. We hope to overcome it." On the time of sittings, the TIB said the House should sit in the morning and extend both the duration and number of sittings in a year with a calendar for parliament. Commenting on the recommendation, the deputy speaker said he completely agrees with the TIB suggestions. The TIB revealed a few drawbacks of the inaugural session like the lawmakers' tendency to praise party's top leader, lack of tolerance for political opponents, discussion on irrelevant issues, absence of opposition lawmakers and limited flow of information on parliamentary proceedings. Formation of all parliamentary committees in the first session, making opposition lawmakers chiefs of some committees, neutral role of the speaker in giving floor to lawmakers are among the positive sides of the inaugural session, the TIB report said. It suggested increasing female lawmakers' participation in the committees and the number of reserved seats for women elected directly. CODE OF CONDUCT The TIB report said although the country does not have any code of conduct for lawmakers, no initiative was taken in the ninth parliament to formulate it. Even, there is no parliament-

ary ethics committee to monitor conduct of the MPs whereas many countries have both code of conduct for lawmakers and ethics committee, it said. Taking part in the discussion titled "Things to do to increase effectiveness of the Jatiya Sangsad", lawmakers said code of conduct for lawmakers is a must to improve the culture of the House in Bangladesh. "The House must take a tough stance on misconduct of a lawmaker," said Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) lawmaker Moinuddin Khan Badal, also a member of the all-party parliamentary probe body investigating corruption allegations against former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar and others. AL lawmaker and former deputy speaker Prof Ali Ashraf said the lawmakers must know parliamentary norms and procedure. STRENGTHENING OF COMMITTEE SYSTEM The TIB proposed making opposition lawmakers chiefs of some important parliamentary bodies for strengthening the committee system. It said each ministry must inform in writing about the status of implementation of the committees' recommendations every three months. The TIB opposed appointing ministers as committee members saying section 188(2) of the rules of procedure prohibits them from becoming members of the committees on ministries. On the recommendation, the deputy speaker said the section bars lawmakers from becoming a member of a committee if they have personal interests there. "But the ministers do not have such personal interests, rather they care about the interests of their ministries," Shawkat Ali said. Former chief election commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf said the committee system will not be able to play its due role if new measures are not taken. "If we want to make parliament effective, the committee system must be strengthened," he said, adding that committees do 96 percent parliamentary tasks in the UK. The lawmakers however opposed giving executive authority to parliamentary bodies. "The committees should not be given executive authority. They will make recommendations. The ministries concerned will implement those and inform the committees," said AL lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings. TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman moderated the discussion. TIB Trustee Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and Secretary General Prof Abdullahi Abu Sayeed were present.

PM, please rein in your babbling colleagues

FROM PAGE 1 of the BDR investigation, went berserk with his nearly daily comments on militant involvement, foreign conspiracy, politicisation of BDR etc. most of which turned out to be figments of his imagination if we are to believe the probe report so far made public. No sooner had that subsided than a new controversy arose with the summoning of the ACC chairman and some of its staff to the parliamentary committee on public undertakings which has brought the parliament and a statutory body face-to-face, leaving it now upon the Speaker to decide on its future course. While the babbling ministers put the government under ever newer controversies, (was it necessary for the LGRD minister and AL spokesperson to publicly contradict the foreign minister, even if he disagreed with her? Couldn't it have been discussed in the next cabinet meeting?) the

one we are now about to discuss has peaked in its inept handling. We are of course referring to the issue of 'poisoning' Sheikh Hasina's food during her recent interment. The controversy was started by the deputy leader of the House, Sajeda Chowdhury, not the epitome of authenticity and circumspection. She said that an attempt was made to harm Sheikh Hasina by poisoning her food while in jail. Later, she amended her statement and claimed that what she meant was that the AL leader was suffering from food poisoning. On Friday last, the PM's health adviser, Prof. Mudasser Ali, added his voice to the controversy by saying that Hasina was served with food laced with poison to kill her to implement the so-called 'minus-two' formula. While Sajeda Chowdhury did not specifically mention about any attempt to murder the AL chief, Prof. Mudasser

left no doubt and even identified two advisers responsible for it. We have two issues to raise here. Is this claim authentic? If yes, then is this the manner to raise it? We start by accepting, for the sake of argument, that the claim is true. If that is the case then we as a people, as a nation and as millions of voters who have elected her to power have the right to know, see and hear the proof of this vile, heinous and despicable plot. As Sheikh Hasina's physician, Prof. Mudasser's statement lends authenticity to this claim. Prof. Mudasser has the legal, moral and historic obligation to bare before us all the relevant evidence supporting his claim. The ball is now squarely in his court to present before the nation credible proof of what he claimed. Again, if we accept the claim to be true, we have to ask if this is the way to bring such a

serious matter such as that of attempt on Sheikh Hasina's life before the public. Take for instance the two occasions when Sajeda Chowdhury and Mudasser Ali decided to tell the people of this vile plot. The former was addressing the 84th birth anniversary of the slain veteran AL leader, Syed Kumruzzaman. The venerable health adviser chose the occasion of national birth registration day to make his sensational revelation. Are birth anniversary and birth registration day occasions to talk about such a serious matter as the alleged attempt on the life of Bangabandhu's daughter and our elected Prime Minister? The gravity of the revelation demanded a far more serious handling of the matter. We think, before being made public, a thorough investigation should have been conducted and all relevant facts brought together and then the

public should have been properly informed through a special press conference. We know how Bangabandhu and his entire family, save Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana, were brutally murdered. We also know repeated attempts on Sheikh Hasina's life were made. The August 21 event remains a vivid, tragic and frightening memory in the nation's mind, along with the fact that the Khaleda Zia's government made no attempt to bring out the facts and even tried to divert the investigation and thereby give shelter to real killers. When such is the background, any remote evidence of attempt on Sheikh Hasina's life must be dealt with in the most seriousness and circumspection. Regrettably we consider the actions of the aforementioned two leaders as making light of a very grave matter. We think revealing an attempt on

PM's life in such a casual and cavalier manner amounted to trivialisation of something very serious. Birth anniversary of a former leader and national birth registration day are not occasions when attempts on our Prime Minister's life should be discussed if it is to be taken seriously. If credible evidence cannot be produced to substantiate the present claim then a great harm will have been done to the PM's prestige and something which is most sensitive and tragic will have been made light of. It will be a case of the proverbial crying wolf and thereby laying the door open to the real wolf coming. The Prime Minister must rein in her babbling colleagues to prevent further damage to her government, party and to what she is so desperately trying to achieve.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Navy recruitment. Title: বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী. Subtitle: সরাসরি কমিশন্ড অফিসার (সাব লেফটেন্যান্ট) পদে নিয়োগ ২০১০-এ ব্যাচ. Includes a table for physical standards and a list of 10 application conditions. Contact info: www.bangladeshnavy.org