

Minor operation

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Shakhawat Hossain, owner of Sebika Hospital and Diagnostic Centre, and produced him before a Dhaka court. The court granted him bail.

Victim Golam Arefin, 48, son of language movement veteran late Golam Mortuza, was an employee of a private firm and a resident of the capital's Rayerbazar area.

Last year, Arefin broke his left wrist and took treatment at this hospital where the doctors set metal plates in the wrist to help his recovery. On Monday, he got admitted to Sebika hospital to have the plates removed. The surgery began at 5:00pm.

Victim's brother Golam Mustoba filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station late on Monday stating that Arefin died due to the mistakes made by the doctors.

Mustoba accused the hospital owner and the doctors who performed the operation.

"When the doctors realised that my brother had died due to their fault during the surgery, they told us that the patient's condition was deteriorating and needed to be shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital immediately," Mustoba told The Daily Star.

But they found Arefin dead when they entered the operating theatre, he said, adding that the doctors who performed the surgery were nowhere to be found right after the incident. "We tried to reach them over mobile phone but their phones rang out," Mustoba said.

He also claimed that the owner of the hospital had pledged Tk 10 lakh to the bereaved family as compensation but did not keep the word.

Sub-Inspector Md Kamruzzaman of Mohammadpur Police Station, who is also the investigation officer of the case, told The Daily Star that he could not arrest any of the doctors accused since they had gone into hiding right after the incident. But police would keep the effort on, added the SI.

The body of the deceased was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue Monday night for an autopsy. Morgue sources said doctors kept the specimen of lung, liver, heart, kidneys and other organs for viscera test.

Arefin was laid to rest at Azimpur graveyard Tuesday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the staff of Sebika hospital yesterday said both the doctors accused remained absent from duties since Monday night.

The owner of the hospital was not found in the medical facility for his comment while the staff declined to provide his cell phone number when The Daily Star approached.

The Daily Star also repeatedly tried to reach doctor Hafizur, but his mobile phone was found switched off while none received the land phone at his home.

Saudi govt

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The convicts were identified as Najoum Md Amin Abdul Sharif and Abdul-Majid Abu Bakr Hamza.

The interior ministry issued the statement on Tuesday after the implementation of execution in Jazan region.

The statement said Najoum and Abdul-Majid killed Mohammed Shaheen Mohammad Kabir, another Bangladeshi national, and stole his money and mobile phones.

Najoum and Abdul-Majid were arrested, tried and executed for their crime in Jazan.

The General Court declared the sentence against them. It was approved by the Cassation Court and the Supreme Court. A royal order was issued to implement the sentence, the statement added.

On Oct 7 last year, despite Bangladesh's repeated appeals for clemency, Saudi Arabia executed eight Bangladeshi workers for their involvement in a robbery and subsequent murder of an Egyptian security guard in Riyadh in 2007.

Widow?

State minister writes off fate of Ilias Ali's wife

STAR REPORT

State Minister for Labour Mannujan Sufian caused a stir yesterday when she termed M Ilias Ali's wife a "widow", urging her to inform the prime minister about "the killers" of her husband.

The state minister also claimed that Tahsina Rushdir Luna, wife of the missing BNP leader, knows well "who has killed" her husband.

"Ilias Ali's wife, the widow, I want to say that you know in your heart who really killed your husband," Mannujan said, addressing a May Day programme at Osmani Memorial auditorium in the capital.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present on the occasion.

"I perceive your feelings that you cannot express what is in your heart when you appear on the television...and you know well who abducted your husband, where he is now, whether alive or dead, I don't know...Allah knows," the junior labour minister went on, now as if to contradict herself.

BNP organising secretary and former lawmaker Ilias Ali and his driver Ansar Ali went missing around midnight of April 17 from the capital's Banani area.

While the opposition chief Khaleda Zia claimed that government agencies had abducted the two men, Hasina claimed Ilias might be hiding on Khaleda Zia's instructions to create an issue.

Refuting the opposition allegation, Mannujan said, "Sheikh Hasina is Bangabandhu's daughter and she could never have done this."

Insisting that Luna prepares to express herself when she meets the prime minister, Mannujan said: "You [Luna] must provide the correct information to the prime minister so we can find your husband."

It may be mentioned that Luna met the premier at Gono Bhavan yesterday evening.

Mannujan advised that Luna tell Hasina unhesitatingly if Ilias Ali's disappearance had any link with intra-party disputes.

The BNP and its 18-party alliance enforced in two spells five back-to-back countrywide dawn-to-dusk shutdowns in protest at Ilias Ali's disappearance.

JU stays

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Zafir and Atia Ferdousee Chaity -- under the banner of Jahangirnagar Sangskritik Jote started the fast-unto-death programme Tuesday in front of the residence of VC Prof Shariff Enamul Kabir.

Of them, Rana was sent to Enam Medical College Hospital at Savar yesterday upon suggestion of the duty doctor Shyamol Kumar Shil at the university's medical centre.

Shikhhak Samaj is demanding the resignation of VC Prof Shariff Enamul Kabir since the murder of Zubair Ahmed, an English department student, on January 9. In December, they launched demonstration against the VC protesting recruitment of teachers and different irregularities.

Yesterday, a number of noted personalities including eminent educationist Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, ruling-party lawmaker from Narayanganj Sarah Kabori, Hamida Sultana, president of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), lawyer Sara Hossain, rights activist Khushi Kabir, prominent lawyer Shahdeen Malik, Prof Gitiara Nasrin, chairman of mass communication and journalism department of Dhaka University, and columnist Rahnuma Ahmed expressed their solidarity with the agitators.

Conveying their grave concern over the situation, they said the highest authority of the government should come forward to overcome the deadlock at JU. Kabori said the VC should resign for the greater interest of the university. She also told the demonstrators that she would talk to the prime minister on the issue.

On Tuesday, journalist Nurul Kabir, editor of daily New Age, media personalities Mamunur Rashid, Shampa Reza and Banya Mirza, singer Quazi Krishnakali Islam and Prof Anu Muhammad of JU economics department joined the demonstration and expressed solidarity with the students.

Ruling party MP Tarana Halim, also a JU senate member, the same day went to the university and talked to the agitating and anti-agitation groups of teachers. She urged them to come to a mutual understanding to end the deadlock.

Prof Anu Muhammad said appointment of the VC to a public university under political consideration was the main reason behind such unexpected situation. "I see no way but the resignation of the incumbent

vice-chancellor to ease the crisis," he said.

The students decided to go for the fast-unto-death programme after Bangladesh Chhatra League men had beaten up at least 15 cultural activists on April 28 for protesting the pro-government student body's vandalism at a demonstration by the teachers the day before.

Shakila Sharmin, general secretary of Sangskritik Jote, told The Daily Star that they filed a case against 16 BCL activists on April 29 mentioning their profile but the law enforcers were yet to arrest any of the accused until yesterday.

Badrul Alam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Ashulia Police Station, said they had already taken necessary measures to nab the culprits.

Prof Nasim Akhtar Hossain, convener of Shikhhak Samaj, said the VC had to vacate his position for his alleged involvement in teachers' recruitment business, irregularities, leasing university property, and beating up and killing student using BCL activists on the campus.

Meanwhile, 273 teachers under the banner General Teachers of Jahangirnagar University yesterday urged the university's Chancellor Zillur Rahman, the president of the country, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the education minister and law enforcement agencies to pay attention to the matter, said a press release.

The teachers, marked as loyal to the VC, also claimed that the agitating teachers had been creating chaos around the VC's residence by hurling abusive words. They alleged that the demonstrations were nothing but to fulfil the political motive of BNP-Jamaat alliance and personal interests of some teachers.

The education minister told The Daily Star, "We will soon take effective measures to dispel the impasse in Jahangirnagar University." He, however, did not elaborate on the steps his ministry may take.

"We have discussed the issue with the vice-chancellor of the university today [Wednesday] morning. We hope to make a solution soon," Nahid said.

A top official of the ministry, wishing anonymity, said the minister met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Monday night at her office where they discussed about the ongoing stalemate at JU and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

Humanity

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accompanied their mother.

Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League, told Ilias' family members that she had directed law enforcement agencies to find Ilias, and they have been trying their best to do so, said Shakil.

Talking to reporters later, Ilias' wife said, "The honourable prime minister attentively listened to me. She [Hasina] said she will try her best [to find out Ilias]."

Asked whether she is hopeful about getting her husband back after meeting the prime minister, Luna said, "I am hopeful...Pray for us."

The prime minister's special assistant said Tahsina told the PM that they had come to meet her as she could feel the pain of losing loved ones. Hasina told her that she did and that is why her government is making all possible efforts to locate Ilias.

Tahsina with her two sons, daughter and two relatives went to the Gono Bhavan around 5:00pm, an hour before the scheduled time.

When the PM entered the meeting room around 6:30pm, Tahsina and her children touched Hasina's feet. She hugged Ilias' daughter and let her sit beside her.

Later around 9:00pm, Luna met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office. She stayed there for about an hour.

Details, however, could not be known.

Earlier on Monday, Luna told journalists at her Banani residence in the capital, "I earnestly request the prime minister to give us an opportunity to meet her." She also urged the PM to rescue Ilias at any cost.

BNP Organising Secretary Ilias Ali and his driver Ansar Ali went missing from Banani area around midnight on April 17.

Relation

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which the two countries will hold regular dialogue on a full range of bilateral issues like political, economic and security issues," a high official of the foreign ministry said.

Hillary Clinton arrives in Dhaka at around 4:30pm on May 5 and will first hold bilateral talks with her Bangladesh counterpart Dipu Moni at the Prime Minister's Office. The two sides are expected to discuss a host of issues.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Bangladesh Ambassador to the US Akramul Qader said the US Secretary of State's visit is a clear manifestation of excellent relations between the two countries.

"This visit carries special significance as it will also manifest US recognition to Bangladesh as a role model moderate Muslim majority country and of Bangladesh's continued economic growth," he said.

Asked about the agenda for discussion, the ambassador said the agenda is still being prepared. However he added that Dhaka will request for duty-free and quota free access of readymade garments, Bangladesh's inclusion in the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and reiterate an old demand by Bangladesh for the deportation of Bangabandhu's condemned killer Rashed Chowdhury from USA.

On signing of the proposed 'US-Bangladesh Partnership Dialogue', Akramul Qader said this may be signed as a guiding document or may come in as a joint declaration after bilateral talks between Hillary and Dipu Moni.

A senior official at the foreign ministry told The Daily Star that the text of the document is yet to be finalised, but both the sides are working to place it at the bilateral talks.

Meanwhile, US Ambassador in Dhaka Dan Mozena, met Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday afternoon. Afterwards he told reporters about some of the things he was hoping would be accomplished during the visit of the US Secretary of State.

He said that both the foreign minister and he agreed that this visit was very important and would further boost bilateral relations between the two nations.

Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy in Dhaka Nicholas Dean, meanwhile, met with Chief of Protocol of the Foreign Ministry Khondker M Talha. They discussed security measures and the Hillary Clinton's programme schedule.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Security on the High Court premises was beefed up yesterday at the news that the top BNP leaders accused in the Secretariat blast case might appear to obtain bail.

HC judge feels

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mention any reason for his embarrassment.

Another HC bench refused to hear the bail petitions of some opposition leaders, who have remained on the run since Monday fearing arrests, while yet another bench passed dissenting orders on a bail appeal.

Amid raids and arrests, several senior BNP leaders have gone into hiding, as the government's sudden tough stance against the opposition's continuous agitation on Monday sent waves of panic through the BNP-led 18-party alliance.

Over the last few days, police have arrested about a dozen top BNP leaders, including Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, and filed several cases against the opposition men in connection with Sunday's explosion in the secretariat compound and arson and vandalism during the hartal hours.

Party insiders told The Daily Star they did not go for fresh hartal programmes in view of the visits to Dhaka by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee on May 5 and the Japanese deputy prime minister's visit today.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia assured the US ambassador in Dhaka at a recent meeting of all-out cooperation during Hillary's Bangladesh visit, they added.

Later in the day, Khaleda held a meeting with some pro-BNP lawyers at her Gulshan office to find out a way to secure bails in the cases filed on Sunday night against top leaders of the 18-party alliance.

The accused include Mirza Fakhrul, party standing committee members Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and Hannan Shah, party joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, party lawmaker Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee, and Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed.

In another development, police on Tuesday produced Rizvi before a Dhaka court, seeking 15 days' remand. The court will hear the petition in Rizvi's presence today.

Accused in two cases in connection with hartal hour

violence, Rizvi was arrested on Monday evening from the capital's Kakrail area.

Political tensions have been running high since the disappearance of Ilias Ali, an organising secretary of the BNP and a former lawmaker, and his driver Ansar Ali around midnight of April 17 from the capital's Banani area.

In protest, the BNP enforced three consecutive countrywide shutdowns from April 22-24 and the BNP-led 18-party alliance enforced two similar lockdowns on April 29-30.

The hartal violence left five people dead and scores of vehicles damaged across the country.

MOVEMENT TO CONTINUE
Senior BNP leaders yesterday warned the government of ceaseless movement until Ilias Ali was rescued and the caretaker government system was restored.

Demanding the withdrawal of cases against party leaders, they said such cases would not be able to weaken their agitation.

"The ongoing agitation will turn into an oust-government movement if the government fails to give back Ilias Ali," said Moudud, addressing the Nayapaltn rally.

The battle will continue on the streets as well as in court, he said.

Standing committee members Rafiqul Islam Mia, Abdul Moyeen Khan, Nazrul Islam Khan, Bangladesh Jatiya Party Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun and Islami Oikya Jote Secretary General Abdul Latif Nezami, among others, spoke at the rally.

Several thousand leaders, workers and supporters of the 18-party alliance, which include the Jamaat-e-Islami, attended the rally.

BAIL TROUBLE AT HC
An HC judge felt embarrassed to hear the bail petitions of BNP men, including Mirza Fakhrul, in two cases filed over violence during the hartal hours.

AKM Shahidul Huq, the junior judge of a division bench of the HC led by Justice M Siddiqur Rahman Mia, did not, however, explain why he was feeling embarrassed.

Two judges of another HC bench issued dissenting orders on a bail petition by

BNP lawmaker Mahbub Uddin Khokon, an accused in one of the two cases.

Justice Anwarul Haque granted anticipatory bail to Khokon for a week and directed him to surrender before the trial court within that time, while the junior judge of the bench, Mojibur Rahman Miah, rejected the bail petition.

Khokon's chief counsel Rafique-ul Huq told reporters that in his 50-year career in law he had never seen two judges pass dissenting orders on an anticipatory bail plea.

Early on the day, a group of pro-BNP lawyers led by Moudud Ahmed submitted four bail petitions before the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain.

The bench refused to accept the petitions for hearing, saying it did not have the jurisdiction to do so at the time.

The lawyers then moved the petitions before the HC bench of Justice Siddiqur Rahman Miah and Justice AKM Shahidul Huq, which also refused to hear the petitions since those were not on yesterday's cause list.

Justice Siddiqur asked the defence lawyers to resubmit the petitions on May 6.

When the lawyers pressed further for hearing, Justice Shahidul Huq felt embarrassed.

RIZVI HEARING; RATAN SHOWN ARRESTED
Two Dhaka courts on Tuesday fixed today for hearing a 15-day remand prayer for Ruhul Kabir Rizvi in two cases.

One case was filed for exploding "bombs" in the secretariat compound and the other for torching a bus near the Prime Minister's Office on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Kamruzzaman Ratan, an executive committee member of the BNP, was shown arrested yesterday in the case for arson. The investigation officer submitted a petition seeking a five-day remand.

Ratan, also a former student leader and close associate of Ilias Ali, is among the 11 BNP leaders arrested on Sunday and Monday.

Fire of hell

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clinics for the injuries on their left legs.

Teacher Jesmin Akhter went into hiding after father of a victim had filed a case, said Sub-inspector Shaker Mohammad Jubair of Kadamtali police.

Abdul Jalil, father of victim Jannatul Ferdous, 8, told The Daily Star that after a 10-day holiday the madrasa reopened on Tuesday and his daughter attended the class at 8:00am.

Informed by another guardian, he rushed to the institution around 1:30pm and met a gathering of protesting locals.

Jalil quoting his daughter said Jesmin inflicted burns on the 14 students at around 8:30am for not being "regular" in offering their prayers during the vacation.

During her act of "punishment" Jesmin was quoted as asking the victims if they knew the severity of the fire in hell. If they didn't say their prayers regularly, they would experience such torment in hell, she added.

Jalil said the teacher kept her spatula on a burning gas oven adjacent to the classroom and each time burned the legs of three students.

The madrasa is housed on the first floor of a two storey building. Of the four rooms in the flat, the teacher lives in one room with her family while one room is used as the office and the rest for classes. Students attend their classes here sitting on the floor.

Jesmin also forced the wounded students to continue with the classes until 1:15pm when mother of a student went to the madrasa with meal for her daughter, police said.

Agitating locals immediately besieged the madrasa, but police intervened and brought the situation under control, said SI Jubair.

Neither guardians nor the police could confirm immediately whether the madrasa is approved by the government.

HC questions

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refrain from doing so.

The HC came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by Md Younus Ali Akond, a lawyer of the Supreme Court, challenging the legality of enforcing hartal during public examinations.

The HC bench comprising Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim also requested 15 eminent lawyers to give their opinions as amicus curiae (friend of court) during the hearing of the rule.

The amici curiae include Mahmudul Islam, Rafiqueul Huq, M Amir-Ul Islam, M Zahir, Moudud Ahmed, AF Hasan Ariff, Mahbubey Alam, Akter Imam, Rafiqueul Islam Miah and Abdul Matin Khairu.

Younus Ali Akond filed the writ petition as public interest litigation on April 26 saying that it was the fundamental rights of the students to sit for their scheduled examinations, and nobody can curtail their rights.

He said although enforcing hartal is the legal right of political parties, they cannot hamper academic activities of the students. The schedules of public examinations are being disrupted due to the hartals called by some political parties.

BNP enforced five days of hartal in two spells in the last nine days of April.

The education secretary, home secretary and Jatiya Sangsad secretary and inspector general of police have been made the four other respondents to the rule.

Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain represented the government.

Mali foils counter-coup plot

AFP, Bamako

The soldiers who staged a coup in Mali in March said Tuesday they had defeated a counter-coup by foreign-backed forces loyal to the ousted president in fighting that left 14 people dead.

They called the attack by paratroopers an attempt at a targeted killing of coup leader Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, but insisted that the turmoil would not affect the rule by an interim civilian government.

crore by this year, the BB probe revealed.

The probe also found a link between the current liquidity crisis in the banking sector and the booming MLM business.

DESTINY GROUP CHAIRMAN MEETS NBR MEMBER

A team of Destiny officials led by its Chairman Mohammad Rafiqul Amin met National Board of Revenue (NBR) Member Md Alauddin yesterday.

The delegation appealed the tax authority to unfreeze the bank accounts of Destiny's top brass. NBR, however, denied the plea, said an NBR official.

Instead, the NBR informed Destiny top officials about the tax-related irregularities of the MLM company.

The tax authority earlier froze bank accounts of Destiny Group's five directors, including its chairman.

It also collected information on bank accounts of all directors of the group and its concerns in a bid to examine whether the MLM firm has evaded tax.

Harun quits

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media accusing him of using the forum for the business of Destiny-2000 Ltd.

"I do not want to make any trouble for the Sector Commanders Forum. That is why, I resigned," Gen Harun, also the president of Destiny-2000 Ltd, told The Daily Star over the phone.

He said he sent his resignation letter through a messenger to the forum's Chief Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandker, who is also the planning minister of the present government.

Established in 2007, the Sector Commanders Forum (SCF) launched a vigorous movement demanding trial of war criminals of 1971.

Asked whether his resignation will weaken the movement, Gen Harun, also a former army chief, said he had resigned since the allegation was raised against him.

When asked to comment on Gen Harun's resignation, Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Safiullah, one of the surviving sector commanders and a member of the SCF, said Gen Harun was doing very important task being a part of the forum.

"There may have an ill-motive to malign the image of Harun by making fabricated news reports on him. Whatever decision Harun has taken, it is praiseworthy," said Gen Safiullah, also a former army chief.

Harun's resignation came following a number of reports published in different newspapers recently, bringing allegation against him that he has been using the forum in his personal interests, particularly to serve the business of Destiny-2000 Ltd, a multi-level marketing (MLM) company, which is accused of illegal banking and other irregularities.

A Bangladesh Bank (BB) inquiry recently found proof of illegal banking by Destiny Multipurpose Co-operative Society, a sister concern of Destiny.

According to the BB probe report, illegal banking by the company is creating disorder in the country's financial sector.

The company is involved in banking activities -- from deposit collection to lending -- illegally. It has around 70 lakh members and set a target to take the number to 1