

Wasfia

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Namche Bazar and hope to reach there within half an hour. I will stay here for a couple of days until flight details from Lukla to Kathmandu are confirmed," Wasfia told The Daily Star over telephone around 9:00pm yesterday.

Namche Bazar is around 3,440 metres above sea level.

Wasfia said she was very tired and needed to rest to prepare herself for further trekking. "I will rest here for a few days," she said.

Wasfia, who scaled the Everest on Saturday, dedicated her feat to Bangladeshi Women. In a status update on facebook in the early hours of Tuesday, she wrote, "...This is to the countless women around the world who are breathing day & night to break our 'man-made' shackles..."

In July 2011, she launched her expedition to scale the seven highest peaks in seven continents under a campaign "Bangladesh on Seven Summits" to celebrate 40 years of the country's independence. She started her Everest expedition on March 26 this year.

On October 2 last year, she became the first Bangladeshi woman to reach the highest peak in Africa, the Uhuru peak of Mt Kilimanjaro at 5,895 metres in Tanzania. She scaled Mount Aconcagua in Argentina on December 16 last year.

Meanwhile, Nishat and Mohit reached Lukla—about 2,860 metres above sea level—on Sunday. They were scheduled to reach Kathmandu on Monday morning but flights to Kathmandu have remained suspended since Saturday due to bad weather.

"It's a journey of only 30 minutes by air. If we make our way on foot, it will take seven days," Mohit said over the telephone yesterday.

On reaching Kathmandu, it would take at least two days to complete all procedures including receiving certification from Nepal's Tourism Ministry on their climb, he added.

A reception to honour Nishat and Mohit organised by the Bangladesh embassy in Kathmandu yesterday was postponed, he said.

A statement from Plan Nepal yesterday said the organisation would host a reception today (Wednesday) to honour Nishat and Mohit if they could reach Kathmandu by then. The Bangladesh chapter of Plan International co-sponsored Nishat and Mohit's expedition under their campaign "Because I Am a Girl".

The Plan Nepal statement quoted Nishat telling them on Monday over the telephone, "I want to tell every girl: nothing is impossible for them to do. If they want to, they can achieve anything they like. If a woman like me can climb Everest, any girl can do anything they set their mind on doing."

Nishat made history as the first Bangladeshi woman to scale Mount Everest on May 19. Mohit is the first Bangladeshi to have scaled the mountain twice and from both sides.

Rab too going

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Runi, a senior reporter of ATN Bangla, were killed at their West Rajabazar residence in the capital in the early hours of February 11.

The bodies were exhumed from Azimpur Graveyard and taken to Dhaka Medical College morgue on April 26 following a High Court order.

The court on April 18 vented its frustration over the Detective Branch's failure to unearth the murder mystery and ordered a transfer of the case to the elite force.

Contacted on Monday night, Commander M Sohail, director of Rab Legal and Media Wing, said nobody from the medical college had contacted them. The force rather had come to know about the viscera report a few hours earlier from a private TV channel news.

Runi's brother Nawsher Alam Roman said the family was in the dark about the viscera report as well as the progress of the investigation.

Rail link

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railway manager, said the derailment occurred when the container train was entering Moynamati Railway Station.

A four-member probe body, headed by DTO Zakir Hossain, has been formed to investigate the cause of the accident, said Mizanur Rahman, public relation officer of railway.

Abu Taher, director general of railway, told The Daily Star that train communication would not have been suspended if there were two more rail tracks between Dhaka and Chittagong.

The authorities have cancelled the departure schedule of six trains including Mohanagar Probbhati Express, Paharika Express from Chittagong Railway Station due to the derailment, said A M Shamsul Alam, station manager of the railway station.

Due to sudden cancellation of the train schedules, people had to choose alternate transport services to reach their destinations.

Sadequr Rahman, who had to return his ticket for

Mohangar Probbhati Express, said he had an important job to do at Dhaka. Due to the suspension of train services, he would have to go to the capital by bus which made him feel uncomfortable.

Abdul Malek, who boarded Subarna Express, said, "I had planned to return to Chittagong today after completing my work in Dhaka. But due to the delay in train schedule, it may not be possible for me to return to Chittagong today."

Subarna Express left Chittagong at 12:33pm though it was scheduled to leave for Dhaka at 7:00am, he added.

Mohammad Tafazzol Hossain, general manager (operation-East) of railway, told The Daily Star around 800-feet of rail tracks and a signal post were damaged at the spot due to the derailment.

Sukumar Bhoumik, divisional railway manager, however, said Turna Nishita Express from both Dhaka and Chittagong exchanged their passengers at the accident spot at 10:30pm and went back to their place of origin.

Girl abused

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family, journalists and lawyers present there. Six journalists, including Prothom Alo correspondent Prashanta Kumar Karmaker, KA Kantha correspondent MA Jalil Ujjal and Bangladesh Pratidin correspondent Tuhin Howlader, were injured along with four lawyers.

Police then picked up the girl, her father, mother and two lawyers and took them to Kotwali Police Station for no apparent reason.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) in the evening took the family into its custody. It sent the father to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Sub-Inspector Zaman was closed to Rajarbagh Police Lines in connection with taking part in the assault on the girl, said Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Lalbagh division Harun-ur-Rashid.

Sources said the girl and her parents went to the magistrate's court yesterday on her father's motorbike around noon to file a case against her husband in connection with torturing her for dowry.

As they were entering the court premises, two sub-inspectors of Kotwali Police Station—SI Zaman and SI Jahangir—stopped them at the gate. The officers claimed that the bike was a stolen one and there was a case against the father.

They seized the keys of the bike. The father refuted to the police claim and protested their action.

As the girl's father protested, the two policemen beat him up and took him inside the Police Club near the gate of the court.

When the girl protested the police action against her father, police took the girl and her mother inside the club as well.

After she was let go from the club, the girl went in front of the court around 3:30pm and told lawyers and journalists what had happened and sought their help.

She said the policemen took her to a different room where they hugged her from behind, kissed her on the neck and touched her inappropriately despite her vigorous protests and attempts to get away from them.

She said a senior officer discovered what was going on, rescued her and her parents and ensured safe passage for them out of the club.

Court correspondents of media houses were listening to what she had to say about the incident when the law enforcers swooped on the newsmen and lawyers. They charged truncheons on them allegedly on the directives of Salauddin Khan, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, and Assistant Commissioner Rajib Al Masud, sources claimed.

The police assault left six newsmen and four lawyers injured.

Police also picked up lawyers Shakhawat Hossain Taslim and Rajib alias Raju along with the family.

Sultana Kamal told The Daily Star over telephone that the girl and her parents had been taken into the custody of Ain-O-Salish Kendra from the police station.

She said the family might file a case in this connection and if it chooses to, ASK would provide it with legal assistance.

The girl's father was given first aid at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

POLICE PROBE BODY Deputy Commissioner Harun-ur-Rashid said he had formed a committee with Additional Deputy Commissioner Maruf Hossain and Assistant Commissioner Rajib Al Masud to probe the incident. The committee was asked to submit a report in 24 hours.

Interestingly, Assistant Commissioner Rajib Al Masud reportedly led the truncheon charge on the family, newsmen and lawyers in front of the court yesterday.

The four-hour-long harassment of the family, especially of the teenaged girl, and the attack on lawyers and journalists sparked anger among those present at the court.

It may be recalled that on March 10, 1998, four-year-old Tania was raped inside the police control room adjacent to the courtroom of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka.

Stay clear

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collecting news.

He preferred the advice when newsmen asked him about the recent assault on journalists, including three photojournalists of the Prothom Alo by police.

"I will tell my journalist friends that they can avoid such unwanted incidents if they collect news or take photos through keeping a safe distance [from police]. I hope you [journalists] will consider it," Channel i quoted Tuku as saying.

He was talking to reporters after attending a seminar titled "Milantacy and Hartal: Obstacle to Building a Prosperous Country" at Dhaka Reporters' Unity organised by Digital Bangladesh Forum.

Expressing shock over the criminal attack on the journalists of bdnews24.com, the junior minister said investigation was on and the attackers would certainly be captured.

Miscreants stabbed two journalists of the online news portal and injured several others on the ground floor of its office in the capital's Mohakhali on Monday night.

Earlier on May 26, policemen assaulted three on-duty photojournalists of Prothom Alo, hurled expletives at them and took away their cameras at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

Spelling Bee

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for the grand finale.

The top 24 participants are Fardeen Azwaad (Sunnydale, Dhaka), Pavana Khan (Sunbeams, Dhaka), Syed Tahsin Islam (St. Joseph Higher Secondary School, Dhaka), Ehsan Rezwana (Cantonment English School & College, Chittagong), Ahmed Syed Rakin (The Aga Khan School, Dhaka), Fahmeed Khan Sheehan (Scholastica, Dhaka), Ahmed Anjum Aziz (Rangpur Cadet College, Rangpur), Syed Enan Munzar (Sunbeams, Dhaka), Warish Zaman (Mastermind, Dhaka), Tansih Tahreen Tanisha (The Millennium Stars School, Rangpur), Argho Roy (Anandaniketon School, Sylhet), Ryan Farhab (Scholastica, Dhaka), Md Masroor Mashuk (Comilla Cadet College, Chittagong), Sohaime Jabeen (SFX Greenhearead International School, Dhaka), Shafeen Mahmood (Little Jewels School, Chittagong), Ishita Bardhan (Viqarunnisa Noon School & College, Dhaka), Mursalin Habib (SOS Hermann Gmeiner College, Dhaka), Tasmia Khan (Sunnydale School, Dhaka), Sanin Azhan Chowdhury (Scholars Home, Sylhet), Md Adeebul Haque (Cantonment English School & College, Chittagong), Namira Shameem (Sunbeams school, Dhaka), Atiqul Hoque (Anandaniketon School, Sylhet), Sanah Enamul Haque (Scholastica, Dhaka) and Mueez Abdur Rahman (Sunnydale, Dhaka).

5 robbers

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members of the gang who fled as police conducted a five-hour operation on the forest-clad uninhabited island at the confluence of the Meghna river. Two of the dead were identified by police as Jabbar, 26, and Kabir, 25. The two injured are Khaleq, 24, and Rashed, 25, both from Subarna Char in Hatiya.

The season for catching hilsha as begins now with the expiry of a seven-month ban on jatka (hilsh fry) catching. Local sources said the fishermen are now busy preparing their boats, fishing nets and other things for the hisha season, the gang of robbers known as 'Karim bahini' from Hatiya was setting up their dens in the mangrove forest at Bhasan Char.

Some people who take care of buffaloes grazing on the island saw the robbers unloading arms from their boats yesterday morning. They informed the matter to their employers in Dhalchar union. On information from them, police launched a raid at around 8:00am.

Chairman of Dhalchar union Abul Kalam Patwari and some other locals said about 700 fishermen joined the police raid. They surrounded the mangrove forest at Bhasan Char.

Sensing the presence of police and fishermen, the robbers opened fire. Police retaliated. After a two-hour exchange of fire, several hundred fishermen carrying sticks attacked the robbers, who then started fleeing. The fishermen caught five robbers and beat them dead. They also injured two other robbers. Police took the two injured in their custody.

Jasimuddin, a fisherman, said they participated in the police raid to get rid of the robbers for their survival.

Asked, Bholia Superintendent of Police Bashir Ahmed and Officer-in-Charge of Char Fashion police station Reaz Hossain confirmed the incident.

The SP said the robbers fired about 50 rounds of bullets. And police fired 12 rounds during a five-hour operation.

Police recovered three 224 rifles, two shot guns, six guns 18 cartridges and 34 sharp weapons, and seized a trawler, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Police put on display arms, ammunition and sharp weapons at Charfashion Police Station after recovering those in a raid at Bhasan Char in Bhola yesterday afternoon.

Marketers of greed

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managing director of FALGUNI INT, adopted a new strategy to cheat people. He formed a food and beverage company and also set up a factory. He sold financial packages with promises of a double return on investments in 10 months.

He also sold his food company's dealerships for Tk 4-5 lakh each and pocketed nearly Tk 10 crore from around 200 people.

Masud rented an 8,000 square-foot office at DH Tower at Panthapath and created a website branding FALGUNI INT as a leading industrial conglomerate in Bangladesh.

Posted on the website was the message that FALGUNI INT had assumed a leadership role in food and beverages, cosmetics and toiletries, infrastructure development, power, high-tech agro products, automobiles and IT sectors.

"He [Masud] has cheated a lot of people. Most projects mentioned on the website are false and meant to deceive people," said Atiqur Rahman, who was director (production) of Falguni Food and Beverage.

He along with the company's deputy managing director resigned when they came to know that Masud had been cheating people.

The workers of the factory did not even get their salaries, said Atiq.

When The Daily Star managed to contact Masud over the phone after several days' attempt, Masud said he had shut the office as there was no government policy on MLM business. The developments relating to Destiny had also led him to make the decision.

He admitted that 20,000 people were made members of FALGUNI INT and he had sold a financial package of Tk 21,000 to each member.

"I did not take money from all members. My rivals are saying this," Masud claimed that he had paid back many of the members.

Interestingly, Masud claimed that he had been cheated by another MLM company, Revnexx, last year. He had invested more than Tk 50 lakh in that company

that vanished in less than one year of operation, he said.

In a tone of regret, Masud said, "MLM is here only to cheat people. Influential people are often hired to show off the business to people."

"It is not possible to give a double return on a deposit within the time frame mentioned by MLM companies," he said.

Revnexx took a more aggressive approach than other MLM companies. It held out the assurance that if anyone made an investment in the company, the amount would double in just six months.

Thousands of poor and low-income people fell in the trap of Revnexx, which had rented an office at Banani in the capital.

Harisra Parveen, a kindergarten teacher in Joydevpur, said, "I deposited Tk 73,000, most of which I had borrowed, in October last year with the MLM company that promised me a double return on deposits in six months. I received only one instalment of Tk 21,000 from the company."

She found the Revnexx office closed after a few months.

Like her, Rowshan Ara, Abdul Halim Khan, Taslima Begum, Shafiqul Islam Khan, Ziaur Rahman, and Lutfar Rahman lost money to the MLM company that existed for less than a year.

The main culprits -- Pintu Biswas and Rony of Revnexx -- have been on the run after swindling people out of Tk 150-200 crore, according to aggrieved investors.

Global Guardian Network (GGN) introduced MLM business in Bangladesh in 1998. Later, some GGN high-ups, including Rafiqul Amin, left the organisation and formed Destiny in 2000. Destiny's exponential growth encouraged many vested quarters to get involved in MLM business.

According to the office of Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 70 MLM companies have been registered with it, but no new companies were given permission to run MLM business in the last one year.

Wishing anonymity, a

high-up of the office said the absence of law and policies gave vested quarters the opportunity to cheat people in the name of MLM business.

Bid to save

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relatives said.

Milon went to his sister's house in early hours yesterday on information over the phone that Hafizur had assaulted his sister.

On rushing there from his Rajarbagh residence, Milon engaged in an altercation with Hafizur.

At one stage, Hafizur shot him in the throat with a shot gun, killing him instantly around 12:15am, police said.

Police recovered a shot gun and a revolver from the spot, said Anisul Haque, officer-in-charge of Shahjahanpur Police Station.

Family sources said both the firearms were licensed.

Hafizur went into hiding after the killing, said Anisul Haque.

Police, however, detained the caretaker of the house, Mofizur Rahman, an aide to Hafizur, in this connection.

Relatives said Hafizur had fled the house with some gold ornaments, cash and his passport.

The victim's nephew Saidur Rahman said Hafizur Rahman was managing director of KRC Top Shirt, an export oriented garment factory. Milon was a supervisor there.

The factory was closed down three years ago as it had been incurring losses. Since then Hafizur had started coming home late and beating up his wife, family sources alleged.

Bill passed

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However, provisions allowing all legislators to import duty-free cars remain. The benefits for all lawmakers, including the prime minister, the speaker, and ministers, were introduced during HM Ershad's regime on May 24, 1987.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, in-charge of the cabinet division on parliamentary business, had proposed passage of the two bills to amend the Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) Act, 1975 and Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Minister (Remuneration and Privileges) Act, 1973 to this effect.

Zia's

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assassinated in 1981 by a group of disgruntled army officers at the Chittagong Circuit House.

BNP yesterday asked all its units to observe the day with due respect and solemnity.

The party flag will be hoisted at half-mast at the party's central office at Naya Paltan and all the party offices across the country.

Leaders and activists of the party including its Chairperson Khaleda Zia will offer Fateha and place wreaths at Zia's grave at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital early in the morning.

Later, around 10:00am, Khaleda Zia will attend a milad mahfil and inaugurate a blood donation programme. She is also scheduled to distribute food among the destitute across the capital as part of a programme which begins today and continues till Sunday.

Pro-BNP doctors will provide free medicines and medical treatment at 11:00am in front of the party's central office.

Show humility

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government should not think it can do anything it wishes. Also, it's not proper if the honourable court thinks it is supreme," the speaker said.

All should consider their authority as responsibilities bestowed upon them by the people. "And all of us should improve our mindset and work for the welfare of the country."

He said if people are aggrieved at court verdict, the day will come when they will stand against the courts. Likewise, if the government becomes autocratic, people will resist it and there are numerous instances of such. "So, the government should work keeping that fact in mind."

Hamid made the observations in response to three lawmakers' statements on the High Court's functions, attacks on journalists and "distorted reports" by a section of the media.

Taking the floor on a point of order, Awami League lawmaker Shahriar Alam cited a High Court order for the relocation of the Roads and Highways Department office within a short time. He said the activities of the department had stalled following the court order.

In response to the AL lawmaker, the speaker said it was a sensitive matter. People need a long time to get justice, but the courts settle their own issues promptly, which looks odd, he added.

On July 28 last year, following a writ petition, the HC passed an order asking the RHD to hand over its 7.9 acre land in 15 days.

Established 30 years ago, the RHD built several structures on the premises, also called Sarak Bhaban, including its offices, a library and a 323-seat auditorium. The communications ministry runs its activities through the RHD, which is in charge of 21,000 kilometres of roads and highways and several hundred bridges.

"If the court thinks its order to shift the office in a short time won't affect the activities of the department, we have nothing to say," the speaker said, adding, "The judges too use those roads and highways across the country."

He, however, noted that the court should have taken into consideration how such a huge establishment would be relocated within such a short time. "I request the judges to consider the issue."

"It's not right if one thinks only about one's own interests. We hope the judges will think about it. We will cooperate with each other with out any malice," he said.

Independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim spoke about the recent assaults on journalists by police and criminals. He blasted the home minister for her failure to take action against those responsible for the attacks. He demanded that the home minister make a statement in the House on the incidents.

In response, the speaker suggested that the government be more cautious about averting such incidents in future.

At the same time, he criticised a section of the media for what he said their running distorted and fabricated reports.

For instance, he said that speaking in parliament on May 27 he had never offered to mediate talks between the ruling and opposition parties to end the current political standoff. Yet some newspapers reported that he wanted to be the mediator in the talks.

Hamid said he had only said if the opposition came up with proposals in the House, he could ask the government to respond. He could even organise a discussion on the proposals here.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal MP Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal criticised the media for "victimising people through media trial".