

Azad regrets cop

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Azad spoke to the reporters yesterday following a programme at BIAM auditorium in the capital jointly organised by the information ministry and Unicef Bangladesh.

"The home ministry should investigate into the incidents," he said.

When asked about the advice given to the journalists by State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku, the information minister said it was his (Tuku's) personal opinion.

Tuku on Tuesday advised journalists to keep a "safe distance" from police while collecting news.

Meanwhile, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) strongly condemned the attack on the office of bdnews24.com on Monday, terming Bangladesh as one of the world's worst nations in combating violence against press.

Asia Programme Coordinator of CPJ Bob Dietz, said "We are outraged that men with machetes could storm into the offices of a newsroom and attack journalists".

"We call on the authorities to launch a thorough investigation into the attack

and determine the master-minds of this crime," Dietz said in a statement on CPJ's website.

The website also mentioned, citing its research that at least 12 journalists have died in Bangladesh since 1992.

CPJ, an independent, non-profit organisation, was founded in 1981.

On May 28, miscreants stormed into the office of online news portal bdnews24.com at Mohakhali and stabbed two journalists and assaulted several others.

Police arrested three of the alleged perpetrators on the following day from the capital's Mohakhali area.

The arrestees are Jahidul Islam Surov, 19, Elias Master Sumon, 22, and Mir Hossain, 26.

A Dhaka court placed those three on a four-day remand yesterday in connection with a case filed for attacking journalists of bdnews24.com.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Erfan Ullah passed the order after Sub-Inspector Imdadul Islam Taib, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced them before the court with a ten-day remand prayer.

In the forwarding report, the IO said that the accused were directly involved with the incident and needed to be remanded to find out vital clues about the incident.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Jatiya Press Club, and Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU), yesterday condemned the police attack on the journalist while performing their duties on the very premises of Dhaka magistrate's court.

Earlier on Saturday, policemen assaulted three on-duty photojournalists of Prothom Alo while they were taking shots of a demonstration staged by students of Dhaka Women Polytechnic Institute at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka.

In a joint statement, they said the incident of torture and attack on the journalists is increasing day-by-day, and demanded investigation in those incidents and exemplary punishment to the policemen responsible.

They also protested against Tuku's "advice".

Progressive Art and Mass Media Workers' Forum demanded the state minister to withdraw his "irresponsible comment", a press release said.

Enforce house

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Control Act, 1991 does not allow the house owner to increase rent if the tenant did not live there for at least two years but the owners seldom follow it, he said at a press conference held at an auditorium of Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

The council urged the government to implement the house rent chart for each area prepared by the Dhaka City Corporation in 2006. It was revised in 2008.

Bahar announced that on June 6, the council would collect signatures in support of their cause, in front of the Jatiya Press Club from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

Though there is a house rent chart for the capital, it only remains on paper due to lack of execution, he said.

Hasina

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countries.

Recently, Qatar expressed its keen interest to invest in Bangladesh's major projects, including Padma bridge construction, airport upgradation, river dredging.

The Gulf state showed the interest when a Qatari delegation, led by its Assistant Minister for International Cooperation Affairs Sheikh Ahmed Bin Mohammed Bin Jabr Al Thani, met Bangladesh foreign minister in Dhaka.

Later, OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu met the Bangladesh premier at the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

During the meeting, they discussed issues relating to peace and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Ambassador-At-Large M Ziauddin, among others, were present during the meeting.

PM RETURNS HOME
Hasina returned home yesterday evening after wrapping her two-day official visit to Qatar.

A flight of Biman carrying the premier and her entourage landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 6:05pm.

The chief of protocol of the foreign ministry of Qatar and Bangladesh Ambassador to Qatar Md Shahdat Hossain saw her off at the Doha International Airport.

Prior to her departure, Hasina held a meeting with Crown Prince and Deputy Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani at Amiri Diwan.

Apologise

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distance" from police while collecting news.

The Gono Forum president was speaking at an award giving ceremony of Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC) and Unesco in the capital.

"I have freedom of speech, and of moving freely. Shall I move to and fro on seeing the police? Shall I sneak to the roadside to avert them? Such a statement cannot come from a minister. The minister should apologise to the people," the private television channel ATN Bangla quoted Dr Kamal as saying.

The advice for journalists to stay clear of policemen came from the state minister on Tuesday when newsmen asked him about the police assault on journalists, including three photojournalists of the Prothom Alo, recently.

"I will tell my journalist friends that they can avoid such unwanted incidents if they collect news or take photos by keeping a safe distance [from police]. I hope you [journalists] will consider it," Tuku told newsmen after attending a seminar.

On Monday night, miscreants stabbed two journalists of bdnews24.com and injured several others on the ground floor of its office at Mohakhali in the capital.

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



The lone survivor of the microbus crash, Kohinur Akhter, at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

12 killed

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Babul said, "We hard the big bang and saw the driver and helper flee the scene by a bus heading towards Dhaka."

"We then rescued the victims and rushed them to the hospital with the help of police and Rapid Action Battalion personnel."

Shakhwat Hossain, officer-in-charge of South Keraniganj Police Station, said all the bodies were handed over to their relatives without autopsies.

"We are preparing to file a case against the bus driver and trying to identify him and trace him," he added.

The deceased were: Shahnaz Pervin Baby, 45, wife of Zakir Hossain Sardar, chairman of Arshinagar Union Parishad in Vedarganj upazila of Shariatpur; their daughter Lumaisa Lubab, 12, a class VIII student of Botsli Home Orphanage in Tejaon; Zakir's elder sister Mina Begum, 47; Mina's son Sayem Hasan Babu, 22, a BBA final year student of North South University; Zakir's younger sister Rozina Begum, 35; Rozina's husband AFM Rezaul Amin Lenin, 37, an executive officer of South East Bank Motijheel branch; Rozina's seven-year-old son Eash; Rozina's nine-month-old daughter Ishra; Zakir's niece

Tazrian, 12; house helps Moni, 16, and Khushi, 20; and microbus driver Soheli Rana, 35.

Lone survivor of the microbus Kohinur Akhter, 15, was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Abdul Latif, Zakir's cousin, said Zakir's family lived on Indira Road in the capital while his two sisters Mina and Rozina lived in neighbouring flats in East Rajabazar.

Shafiqul Islam, younger brother of Shahnaz, said, "Every year family members get together at the village home during the summer. Family members of Mina and Rozina went to Shahnaz's in the morning. They set out early to avoid traffic."

Deceased bank employee Lenin's colleague Ashrafur Islam said, "Lenin had taken a two-day leave from the office to join his in-laws. He was supposed to return on Saturday."

"Lenin had told us that he had to take the leave as his seven-year-old son Eash wanted to enjoy summer vacation together at his grandfather's home," said Ashrafur.

Latif said the microbus had a Dhaka City Corporation sticker. Deceased Lenin's brother-

in-law worked for the DCC, headed.

US senator proposes suspending all Pak aid

AFP, Washington

A conservative senator called on Tuesday for the United States to suspend all aid to Pakistan and grant citizenship to a doctor who was jailed for helping hunt down Osama bin Laden.

American lawmakers have already sought to cut or freeze some assistance to Pakistan, the third largest recipient of US aid, after a tribal court last week sentenced CIA recruit Shakeel Afridi to 33 years in prison on treason charges.

Senator Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky and leader of the Tea Party movement, proposed going further by ending all aid to Pakistan until Afridi's sentence is overturned and also granting the doctor US citizenship.

"Pakistan must understand that they are choosing the wrong side," said Paul, who pledged to introduce the bill when the Senate returns to session next week.

Star, P Alo felicitate

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They said the achievement of Rahman for ethical business practices would help Bangladesh roll back its image as one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

Their comments came at a reception at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the city. The Prothom Alo and The Daily Star -- the country's two top selling newspapers owned by the group Rahman leads -- organised the ceremony to honour him.

Rahman, who is currently the vice-president of International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh, won the Business for Peace Award 2012 in the Norwegian capital Oslo on May 7.

The award is the highest distinction given to a businessperson for outstanding accomplishments in the area of ethical business.

An independent committee of Nobel Prize winners in peace and economics selects the recipients. They adhere to the criteria for "being businessworthy" stipulated by the Foundation.

This recognition has included Rahman in the group of exceptional business personalities like Ratan Tata, chairman of Tata Group in India, who got the award in 2010, and Jeffrey R Immelt, chief executive of General Electric in the US, who won it in 2009.

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus said the word "corruption" pops up first when it comes to the image of Bangladesh. "Many also suspect that the business is the starting point of corruption."

"Latifur Rahman came out of the community and has won the important award. No pride can be bigger than this," said the founder of Grameen Bank.

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, said Rahman had won the award as a qualified recipient. There was no doubt about it.

"It is more joyous because Bangladesh is named and shamed as a corrupt country. That image is slowly disappearing. He has set an example --- that it is possible to become a successful businessperson by maintaining honesty and ethics. We have seen such ethics in Samson H Chowdhury."

Siddiqui also said Latifur's winning of the award would show the country light amid the present circumstances of despair.

Anis Ud Dowla, chairman of ACI, said Rahman had become an example for the country's businesspeople and would encourage them to run

businesses honestly. "There are a few international recognitions for Bangladesh," he said, urging the government to pass a thanks-giving motion in parliament to congratulate him.

Former Secretary Faruk Chowdhury said Rahman had proved that one could be a winner even if he maintained honesty and ethics in his businesses.

Rupali Chowdhury, managing director of Berger Paints Bangladesh Ltd, said: "We always claim that multinational companies run businesses legally. Rahman, however, has proved that there are local companies in Bangladesh that are running businesses legally."

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said it was a rare achievement and an outstanding award. "It is an award for honesty and ethics."

He said nobody had imagined that someone from Bangladesh would win such an award for doing business honestly. "It is a global recognition of rising ethical business practices in Bangladesh."

He thanked Rahman and other directors of The Daily Star board for never interfering in the day-to-day running of the newspaper and for always standing firm for press freedom.

Matiur Rahman, editor of daily Prothom Alo, said the two newspapers -- The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo -- would continue to play a major role in helping Bangladesh move forward.

A humbled Latifur Rahman said he was surprised when he was nominated for the award. "It was incredible and I was thinking whether I qualify for the award."

"I cannot ask for more in my life," he said in his very short but moving speech.

Communications and Railways Minister Obaidul Quader, lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, columnist Syed Abul Moksud, General Secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh Mujahidul Islam Selim, former caretaker government advisers Geetiara Shafia Chowdhury, Sultana Kamal and Rasheda K Chowdhury, senior journalist ABM Musa, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Harun-ur-Rashid, Brac Executive Director Mahub Hossain, artiste Mustafa Monowar, academics Professor Emeritus Sakawat Ali Khan and Prof Asif Nazrul, noted folk singer Mustafa Zaman Abbasi, President of International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh Mahubur Rahman, Bangladesh Krishi Bank Chairman Ibrahim Khaled, Managing Director of

Transcom Foods Akku Chowdhury, directors of Transcom Group Shahnaz Rahman, Simeen Hossain, Saifur Rahman, Atiqur Rahman, Arshad Waliur Rahman and Shahzreh Huq, security analyst Maj Gen (ret'd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, social activist Khushi Kabir, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, cultural personalities Hasan Imam, Aly Zaker, Tarik Anam Khan and Neema Rahman, Chairman of Summit Group Muhammad Aziz Khan, former director general of Bangladesh Post Office Ataur Rahman, managing director of Pubali Bank Helal Ahmed Chowdhury, Citibank NA country officer Rashed Maqsood were also present in the reception.

Fishermen

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police station.

According to Abul Kalam Patwari, chairman of Dhalchar union, and the fishermen of the area, fishermen raided the woods of Bhasan Char yesterday around 11:00am in search of the robbers who fled on Tuesday. They caught four people from the western side of the char suspecting them as robbers and beat them up and damaged their eyes.

Police later recovered the injured.

OC Mizanur Rahman of Monpura Police Station told The Daily Star that the fishermen caught five people from the jungle of Char Kalkini yesterday around 8:00am. Suspecting that the five might be among the robbers who escaped from Char Bhasan on Tuesday, the fishermen beat them up and damaged the eyes of four.

The victims who lost their eyes in this incident were identified as Kabir, Russell, Shahjahan and Belal. Their company Mohiuddin proved to be lucky as by the time the agitated fishermen could damage his eyes police appeared on the spot.

Nayek Mahubur Rahman of Dhalchar police outpost in Char Fashion upazila said when the robbers took shelter in the jungle of Bhasan Char on Tuesday they had a two-hour exchange of bullets with law enforcers. After the gunfight, mob had beat up five robbers to death while police arrested three.

Rab 'shootout'

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back, Osman said.

After the robbers fled the scene, Rab officials recovered the three bullet-riddled bodies, he added.

The elite force also recovered nine firearms, 94 bullets and a trawler from the spot.

The minister, police & we

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That is certainly interesting, given that the junior minister's advice patently suggests that the police are a danger to the media and by extension society as a whole. You get the feeling that the police in Bangladesh are a clear and present danger. And yet it is a good deal more than a feeling.

Going by recent incidents involving the police, the fear arises in citizens that it is risky business trying to arouse their ire through language or action which may otherwise be of a peaceful sort but which the police may regard as provocative. And hence all those images of police officers trying to strangle, literally, citizens whose offence was to have taken part in a political demonstration by the opposition.

Or take the small matter of the police being unable to stomach the presence of journalists from Prothom Alo or for that matter from any other media organization as a demonstration by some young women goes on. The policemen on duty think nothing of pouncing on the journalists and clearly relish the sadistic pleasure they --- four policemen to one journalist, the standard ratio --- happen to be taking as those hapless media people are busy trying to ward off the blows from the men in uniform.

In a larger sense, indeed from the perspective of history, Bangladesh's policemen have by and large made it clear that a demonstration of physical prowess rather than a show of polite persuasiveness is what matters in their dealings with people. Over these past two decades, all manner of citizens --- and among them have been politicians who would someday become ministers or have already served as ministers --- have at some point of time felt the thwack of a policeman's baton on their backs.

Now, going by minister Tuku's advice, every citizen and not just journalists

should stay well away from the police. As a matter of fact, that is certainly what very large numbers of people do and have done, even if they have felt a powerful need to acquaint the law enforcers with problems they would like or would have liked the police to solve for them.

There are not many people in this country who would like to file cases or have general diaries recorded because of the very legitimate fear that the tables could end up turning on them. The innocent have always suffered. The guilty ones have generally got away, at all levels of society. The impunity with which the law has been turned on its head by those whose job should have been to defend it at all costs has been a dismal story for the country.

But, yes, one just might need to heed Tuku's advice. You only need to recall the scandalous situation a teenage girl and her parents found themselves in at the police club adjacent to a Dhaka magistrate's court on Tuesday to comprehend the soundness of the ministerial advice. Every year when the authorities are busy observing police week, clariion calls are sounded about the beauty inherent in friendly relations between the police and the people.

Well, if the young woman's allegations are anything to go by, a couple of policemen certainly tried being a little too friendly with her, for our liking. And when the woman let the media people present at the court premises in on how the two policemen had groped her, other policemen, truncheons at the ready, swooped on the journalists.

So what happens when people try to stay away from the police and yet the police find a way of getting close to them? The answer to that question comes from Hizla upazila in Barisal, where a woman aspiring to obtain a passport allegedly came under sexual assault by a police officer who had ear-

lier promised to help her. He called her to his dak bungalow and tried committing the misdeed.

A question for the minister: Is he really telling us that we should save ourselves from the police? Or was that a flippant remark? Are we to suppose, then, that lawlessness has now assumed such monstrous dimensions that even ministers are not quite sure how to get on top of the situation?

We rest our case, for now.

Shahara

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anytime in the past.

"It cannot be said that everyone in the force is well-behaved. But they [police] are far better now than before. You [journalists] have to give the certificate," she told newsmen at her secretariat office after emerging from an inter-ministerial meeting on the problems of transport sector, reports private TV channel ATN Bangla.

"Police have caused many accidents. My right leg was broken," she mentioned adding, "It has 1.41 lakh members and I cannot certify all of them as well-behaved. But the government is working to make them more people-friendly."

The minister asserted that the present government had taken actions against policemen for wrongdoings and this would continue in future.

On Saturday, policemen assaulted three on-duty photojournalists of Bangla daily Prothom Alo, hurled expletives at them and took away their cameras in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Loan scam

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had found that the branch gave loans of Tk 2,638.21 crore to three little-known companies, including Hallmark Group, and that there was uncertainty as to whether the bank could recover the money.

BB on May 21 gave Sonali Bank Chairman Kazi Baharul Islam a 17-point directive along with the inspection report for necessary steps against the people behind the irregularities.

Three days later, Sonali Bank held a special board meeting and issued directives to attach AKM Azizur Rahman, deputy general manager of the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch, and Saiful Hasan, assistant general manager of the same branch, to Sonali Bank's head office.

The board observed that the branch in an inventive way had given the loans and the bank's top management at the head office had been engaged in the process.

The board in its observation also quoted the central bank report as saying the responsibility of the GM office and senior management at the bank's head office for the irregularities had to be determined.

An external special auditor has to be appointed to identify the people whose carelessness caused the irregularities, it said.

According to the central bank's inspection, the loans were sanctioned against fake export documents and vouchers.

Malaysia

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the international airport.

"If Char Janaza or Char Bilashpur in the vicinity of the Padma is selected, it will be better. But there is no doubt that the proposed airport will be built in and around the Padma bridge," Faruk told the delegation.

He said the government will embark on the project work as soon as the fund is available for its implementation.

The Malaysian team also expressed its interest to invest in the tourism sector of Bangladesh, especially in Kuakata, Cox's Bazar and the Sundarbans, the minister said.

The delegation also expressed their willingness to invest for the development of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, under Public Private Partnership (PPP) or government-to-government agreement, if necessary.

About manpower import, the delegation told the minister that around 40,000 Bangladeshi workers will be taken to Malaysia.

Bad weather

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while Namche Bazar is a around 3,440 metres.

The sponsors of Nishat and Mohit and Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu arranged a special helicopter for their transportation from Lukla to Kathmandu.

But due to poor visibility, the helicopter had to return to Kathmandu at around 5:00pm after a few minutes of hovering in the sky, Nishat told The Daily Star over the phone last evening.

"I am simply feeling restless and extremely bored being stranded here for three days. I am very much eager to leave Lukla," she added.

"If we can reach Kathmandu tomorrow (today), we hope to reach Dhaka on Saturday after completing all formalities," said Mohit.

Meanwhile, Wasfia, who scaled up the Everest on Saturday, said she would leave for Kathmandu after getting confirmation of flight schedule in Lukla.

"Lukla has already become crowded with climbers as flight operations remain suspended there for the last five days," Wasfia told The Daily Star.

She also expressed her eagerness to return home within the shortest possible time.

Mohit is the first Bangladeshi to have scaled the mountain twice and from both sides. He first scaled the mountain peak on May 21 last year.

Musa Ibrahim was the first Bangladeshi to conquer the Everest on May 23, 2010.