



# The Daily Star

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## UNIVERSE: FINITE OR INFINITE?

Its enormity may be beyond our grasp, but measuring its size is not

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## GOVT TO MEET BUYERS

Labour ministry hears their concerns tomorrow over Bangladesh's RMG

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## 'GREAT THREAT' TO ISRAEL

Netanyahu warns Hezbollah may get chemical arms if Damascus collapses

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# Abul resigns, at last

Letter submitted to PM; govt not confirming yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Communication Technology Minister Syed Abul Hossain has finally tendered his resignation to the prime minister, paving the way for the government to revive the financial arrangements with the World Bank for the Padma bridge project.

However, there was no official announcement about his resignation.

It could not be confirmed whether Abul resigned from the cabinet or the post only. Several sources close to him said he wished to remain in the cabinet as a minister without portfolio.

Abul's resignation came a day after the finance minister on Sunday said the government had been considering accepting the WB's fourth condition to persuade the global lender to review the cancellation of the Padma bridge loan.

The WB's fourth condition was that the



government send on leave the public officials and former communications minister Abul Hossain, who were allegedly involved in corruption in the project.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received Abul's resignation letter and kept it with her, said sources in the ruling Awami League.

Abul skipped yesterday's scheduled cabinet meeting. He did not even inform the cabinet that he would not attend the meeting. His absence drew the attention of many ministers.

Talking to journalists of several media houses over the phone yesterday, Abul said probe had been going on into corruption allegations over the Padma bridge project. And he was unwilling to continue his duties under the circumstances. His well-wishers also advised him not to remain in the post of a minister while the investigation was on.

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## Holy or less than an honest person? Belated, still welcome

SHARIEF KHAN and SHAKHAWAT LITON

React politicians, personalities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is a feeling of déjà vu for Syed Abul Hossain. Twice he had been a minister of the Awami League government, and twice he had to resign in the face of allegations of corruption or irregularities.

But unlike in the 1990s, this time he resigned after significantly damaging the Padma Bridge project funding and the image of the government.

Earning an image of "less than an honest person", Syed Abul Hossain has time and again claimed that he is a victim of conspiracy and even

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Welcoming the resignation of Syed Abul Hossain as a minister, a number of political leaders and eminent personalities have said though it is a belated decision, his departure would pave the way for reviving the Padma bridge funding talks with the World Bank.

Contacted for their views on Abul Hossain's resignation, they said it will put moral pressure on the WB to reconsider its cancellation of committed funding for the bridge project.

Most of them expressed the view that resignation of the minister proved the WB's allegation of corruption in the bridge project is correct.

Abul Hossain who was communications minister before he was made ICT minister, was at the centre of the WB's corruption allegation.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said Abul Hossain's resignation proved that the corruption allegation was correct, but his decision created a possibility that the WB would reconsider its decision cancelling committed funding for the Padma bridge project.

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Nuhash breaks down over his father Humayun Ahmed's coffin at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday morning. The yellow Punjabi he is wearing is a trademark of Himu, a popular character penned by the celebrated writer.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## GOODBYE Humayun

Sea of mourners pays tributes to writer of hearts; burial today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a sweltering day and traffic jam was no less troubling. But nothing could prevent thousands of people from flocking to the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Irrespective of caste and creed, religion and political parties, people with flowers, many of them in tears, gathered there well ahead of schedule in the morning.

A number of youths were in yellow punjabis or T-shirts, resembling the fictional character Himu.

But Humayun Ahmed, creator of Himu and also Misir Ali, Shuvro and Baker Bhai, was far away from all this, lying in a coffin on an Emirates flight.

After the aircraft landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 8:55am, the coffin was taken straight to the Shaheed Minar at 10:25am.

Thousands of fans, colleagues, relatives, political leaders, top government officials and well-wishers paid their last tributes to the legendary writer.

On behalf of President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, President's Military Secretary Major General Kazi Fakhruddin Ahmed and PM's Special Assistant (Media)

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

In silence, Ayesha Faiz mourns over the coffin of her writer-son Humayun Ahmed yesterday.

## Tears, tributes

PORIMOL PALMA and PANKAJ KARMAKAR

The first novel that Rouf Mohammad Muhith had read was Humayun Ahmed's "Himu". He was a student of class VI and thereafter he read all the books by this stand-apart writer.

"You were my role model. I will remember

you forever," Muhith, now a first-year student of Birshreshtha Munshi Abdur Rouf College, wrote in the condolence book yesterday, after paying the last tribute to his favourite writer at the Central Shaheed Minar.

He said he used to go to the Ekushey Book

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## Brutally tortured at Good's Hill

VC of Sylhet university testifies against SQ Chy at war crimes tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The vice-chancellor of a public university yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 how he was brutally tortured at the residence of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury's father in Chittagong by Pakistani army and their collaborators during the Liberation War.

Prof Dr Md Saleh Uddin, VC of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, said he was brutally tortured at the diktat of Fazlul Quader Chowdhury, father of war crimes accused Salahuddin Quader, at their Goods Hill residence.

Salahuddin Quader also beat him up during the torture, the vice-chancellor



added.

"At one stage of torture, my lips and some portions of my face cracked and I fell on the ground," said Prof Saleh Uddin, adding he fainted several times on the day of his captivity in the third week of July in 1971.

The VC said although he was seriously wounded,

Salahuddin Quader was not satisfied and slapped hard on his face as he did not cry.

Prof Saleh Uddin, 61, is the eighth prosecution witness in a case filed against the BNP lawmaker for his alleged involvement in war crimes committed during the Liberation War.

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