

## Prof Saleh

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thrashed and his face was cracked due to the brutal torture at the residence of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury's father.

Saleh Uddin, the eighth prosecution witness, gave deposition to the tribunal on Monday.

In response to a question of defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena, the SUST VC said he was wearing a white shirt which got red by his own blood.

Ahsanul then made a suggestion saying it's not true that witness was wearing a white shirt rather he was taught to speak that way.

Saleh Uddin replied that it's not true.

On Monday, Saleh Uddin told the tribunal the collaborators after first phase of beating took him before Salahuddin Quader. Seeing no tears in his eyes, the BNP leader slapped hard on his left cheek, he added.

Ahsanul Huq yesterday asked the SUST VC whether he cried after getting hurt.

The tribunal led by Justice Md Nizamul Huq intervened and made a counter question to the defence about relevance of the question. The tribunal thought the question was irrelevant and was not inclined to record it.

But the defence urged the tribunal to record it saying it was relevant.

Saleh Uddin said tears usually come out from the eyes when one is hurt, adding, he initially cried but later stopped crying.

The defence counsel yesterday made at least 10 questions about the topography of Goods Hill.

Claiming that Salahuddin Quader was in Punjab of Pakistan during June-August in 1971 and was not present at Goods Hill, Ahsanul asked the witness whether he knew about it.

Prof Saleh Uddin said he did not know it and added the claim is not true that the BNP leader was not present at Goods Hill.

The tribunal yesterday allowed four and a half hours for the cross-examination, but the defence completed it with one hour in hand.

Salahuddin Quader, MP, who was present at the dock during the cross-examination, is facing 23 charges of crimes against humanity with the tribunal.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until today.

## HC disposes

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order, Deputy Attorney General Biswajit Roy told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon. He, however, could not specify when the observations would be made public.

Earlier in the day, the bench of Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain heard arguments from the petitioner's counsels and the deputy attorney general.

Supreme Court lawyer AKM Shafiuddin filed the petition on July 18.

In the petition, he prayed to the HC to direct the Speaker not to issue such rulings in future, saying that the Speaker could not rule against an SC judge as per parliament's rules of procedure.

Rokanuddin Mahmud, the petitioner's counsel, told the court that the Speaker should not have delivered the ruling on such a sensitive matter based merely on newspaper reports.

It was not wise to say that the judge, who took the oath of office, had violated the constitution, he said.

If any allegation was raised against a judge, only the president could refer it to the Supreme Judicial Council, Rokanuddin said.

Akhtar Imam, another counsel for the petitioner, in written submissions said the Speaker had clearly exceeded his jurisdiction by issuing the ruling, as "no provision in the constitution or in the rules of procedure of parliament empowers him to that effect".

The Speaker had no authority to ask or request the chief justice to take any action against a judge of the SC, the counsel said.

The deputy attorney general opposed the petition, saying it was not maintainable, since the petitioner had not been aggrieved by the Speaker's ruling.

If the HC issued any rule based on the petition, he contended, it might put the judiciary and the legislature on a collision course.

## Soybean oil prices

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market yesterday, this correspondent found a shortage in supply of some leading brands such as Rupchanda and Teer.

Retailers in both the cities blamed short supply from the oil refiners for the rising prices.

"The retailers are yet to get supply of Teer oil, although the distributors took orders from them last week," said Ratan Nandi, manager of PR Traders at Karnaphuli CDA Market in Chittagong.

Prices shot up despite the commerce ministry and millers' claims of adequate stocks to meet the increased demand during the Ramadan.

The ministry earlier had warned of taking stern action against any unscrupulous businessman for profiteering tendency and now it claims that it has been monitoring the market.

The government is monitoring the kitchen markets in the city and it will take punitive action against the wrongdoers, Commerce Secretary Ghulam Hussain told this

newspaper. "We will visit the Karwan Bazar retail market tomorrow [today] to check the prices."

A monitoring team of the commerce ministry visited one of the city's largest wholesale markets, Moulvibazar, he added.

Some millers cited unloading problems at Chittagong Port for the shortage in supply of bottled soybean oil.

Delays in unloading of vessels at the port had caused the supply shortage in the last two days, said Biswajit Saha, general manager of City Group of Industries. The company markets "Teer" cooking oil.

City Group has already started delivering oil. So there is no reason for hiking the prices of "Teer" soybean oil, he mentioned.

Contacted, Shueb Md Asaduzzaman, head of sales and marketing of Bangladesh Edible Oil Ltd, said his company will resolve the supply crisis by today.

"The company started full-scale delivery of edible oil [Rupchanda] from tomorrow [today]," he noted.

## Yeafesh

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ministry got separated from his present ministry last year on December 4.

On December 5, Abul Hossain was given the charge of the ICT ministry through a reshuffle in the cabinet after the World Bank had brought corruption allegation against him in the Padma bridge project.

The World Bank suspended its credit of \$1.2 billion for the Padma Bridge project last month, claiming that it had "credible evidence" of a high-level corruption conspiracy among Bangladeshi government officials.

Yeafesh said running two ministries would not be difficult for him, as he had worked with the then unified science and information and communication technology ministry, which later was divided into two -- ICT and Science and Technology -- ministries.

## Egypt president

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has Islamist sympathies. He has denied being affiliated to any Islamist group, but told Al Jazeera in an interview last year he had grown his beard out of a sense of religious duty.

Kandil did not feature among the long list of potential candidates for premier circulated by Egyptian media in the three weeks since Morsi took office.

That speculation had focused on a group of economists including past and present central bank officials, reports Reuters.

"This is quite a surprise as most of the names put around had been from the financial sector. The market is definitely reacting negatively," said Mohamed Radwan at Pharos Securities.

Morsi was due to meet Kandil later yesterday. Kandil recently accompanied Morsi to an African Union summit in Addis Ababa.

### POWER STRUGGLE

Since Morsi was elected in June, Egypt has been embroiled in a complex power struggle between Morsi, a former senior Muslim Brotherhood official, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which ruled the country since Mubarak stepped down in February 2011.

Just days before Morsi was elected, the SCAF disbanded parliament in response to a constitutional court ruling that it had been invalidly elected, reports AFP.

The origins of the battle for parliament lay in the constitutional declaration issued by the SCAF before the president was sworn in.

The declaration, which acts as a temporary constitution, granted the military sweeping powers, including legislative control, and rendered the presidential post little more than symbolic.

## 6,000 passports

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link in the system. The passports might have been stolen from the storehouse or from the desk of any personnel involved with issuing MRPs.

Once the committee detected the personnel, the outsiders would be tracked down easily, he said, adding, "Each of our MRP book has 38 security features. So, it would be tough to use forged MRP."

High official of the home ministry said the total process in the passport office was overseen by army personnel and no other officers had access to certain jobs unless the army personnel deployed allowed them to.

Another official of the ministry said as the government had prioritised police verification before issuing passports to Rohingya refugees, criminals were trying to sell MRPs to the refugees in exchange for handsome amount of money.

State Minister Tuku said they had decided to file a case in connection with the stealing accusing unidentified criminals. Meanwhile, since the committee could not complete its task by July 20, the earlier deadline, the time had been extended until August 10, 2012, he added.

## Govt upbeat

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

With Abul's resignation as ICT minister, the government believes the stumbling block to reviving the loan agreement is gone. He was removed from the communications ministry and given the charge of ICT ministry on December 5 last year after the WB brought corruption allegations against him and suspended its loan.

Another key official, former Bridges Division secretary Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, who also faces corruption allegations over the project, went on leave yesterday.

Mosharraf was made executive chairman of Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority after the WB brought corruption allegations over the project in September last year.

"I will remain on leave until the Anti-Corruption Commission completes its investigation," Mosharraf told The Daily Star, adding that he had decided to go on leave for the sake of a fair probe into the corruption allegations.

Jica and the Asian Development Bank are the two partners of the financial arrangement that was led by the WB. The effectuation deadline of the loans from these two co-financiers will expire on July 30. This is why the government, earlier slow in settling issues with the WB, is now rushing things.

If the Jica chief can convince the WB chief to review the Bank's cancellation of the loan, Jica and ADB may get a scope for extending the deadline, said sources.

If the WB does not change its decision, the deadline will expire and the government will have to negotiate once again with these agencies for a new loan agreement. But that will take time.

The finance minister

yesterday said he hoped the Bank's fund would still be available for the \$2.97 billion project.

"A few government officials have already been asked to go on leave. Gazette notifications on this will be published in a day or two," Muhith told reporters at his secretariat office yesterday.

"Abul Hossain has stood down. This is an unusual step."

Muhith said the government had accepted all conditions of the global lender though there was "no evidence of corruption" in the project.

"We will still try to accommodate the World Bank's proposals so that the lending agency releases the funds for the bridge."

Meanwhile, Abul's name has been dropped from the list of ministers on the website of the Prime Minister's Office.

The 6.15km bridge over the Padma river will connect the capital with 19 southwestern districts.

## Hilsa may go for good

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University.

If the salinity increases in the river water due to low flow of water from the upper stream and a rise in sea level, hilsa will not spawn in the Padma. Hilsa eggs and small fries cannot survive in salty water because their chloride cell does not develop during that time, mentioned Ahsan, a member of the Bangladesh-India joint study committee on "Migratory and Spawning Patterns for the Conservation of Hilsa in Bangladesh and India."

Hilsa at present contributes one percent to Bangladesh's GDP and meets 10 percent of its total fish demands, said the study. It stressed "the importance of migratory and spawning patterns for the conservation of hilsa in Bangladesh and India."

The hilsa spawn at Kalirchar of Sandwip, Dhalerchar and Moulavichar of Hatia, Monpura and Charfashion in Bhola of Bangladesh. Besides, there are five nursery grounds where jatka grows before going back to the sea, it was noted in the research.

The study was released at a policy dialogue jointly organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, India (CIFRI) at a local hotel. The dialogue is a part of IUCN's project, "Ecosystems for Life: Bangladesh-India Initiative."

The meeting emphasized the need to maintain the flow of fresh water in estuaries and associated mangrove ecosystems for sustainable hilsa fisheries.

Presenting the Indian part of the joint study, Dr Utpal Bhowmik, head of riverine ecology at CIFRI, said hilsa used to migrate upto Allahabad around 2,000 kilometres from the sea estuary.

But the Hoogly-Bhagirathi migratory route of the hilsa has been completely interrupted, mentioned the expert, due to construction of the Farakka barrage.

Besides, less rainfall and temperature variations have also been preventing the hilsa species from migrating to Indian rivers for the last few years, he added.

Addressing the event as a guest of honour, Subrata Saha, minister of state, department of fisheries, warned that if no changes were made to current fishing practices, the hilsa stocks would be on the brink of collapse.

He explained that increased protection was now urgently needed to conserve Hilsa.

The study also revealed that most of the hilsa caught in Bangladesh weigh around 750 grams to one kilogram, while the Indian variety weighs around 300 grams as the jatkas are not conserved here.

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## Humayun laid to rest in rain

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their time.

On the way, thousands lined up along the roadside to bid him farewell.

Before the namaz-e-janaza started at 1:35pm, people had paid tribute to Humayun Ahmed under a shade at the Palli that the writer had built on a 40-bigha stretch of land.

Kulsum, an octogenarian lady, said she had heard a lot about the man, watched his TV plays, but never saw him in person. "I am here to see the famous man for the last time."

After the janaza, Humayun Ahmed went on his last journey on the shoulders of relatives and his son Nuhash.

Around 2:00pm, the coffin of the writer, who influenced millions for decades through more than 300 books, dozens of dramas and films, was lowered into the grave.

Humayun's second wife Meher Afroza Shaon broke down in tears as she took part in the burial, throwing a handful of earth into the grave.

Nuhash, along with the writer's daughters Nova and Sheela, brothers Ahsan Habib and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Zafar's wife Yasmeen Haque and sisters Sufia Haider and Mamtaz Shaheed held each other tight and wept.

Drenched in tears and rains, fans and well-wishers joined filling up the grave with earth.

"Nuhash Palli had always been a place of happiness. Events like shooting dramas or cinemas were usual here.

But the place is totally different today; it's a mourning ground today," Khaleque Mia, a villager of Pirujali, told The Daily Star.

Ejazul Islam, a staff of the Palli, said, "Sir [Humayun] was so good a man that he never misbehaved with us. We can never forget our memories with him."

Ahsan Habib, himself a famous cartoonist and editor of the satire magazine Unmad, said, "My brother has achieved fame far more than I had imagined."

Earlier, the convoy of about 25 vehicles started its journey from the mortuary of the city's Birdem Hospital around 9:10am. Many passers-by stopped and waved goodbye. The motorcade got longer as nearly a hundred other cars joined it on the way.

The decision that Humayun Ahmed would be buried at Nuhash Palli came in the wee hours of yesterday as Shaon refused to budge from insisting that her husband's grave had to be at the Palli, saying it was his last wish.

However, Humayun's three children from his first wife -- Nova, Sheela and Nuhash -- wanted their father to be buried somewhere in Dhaka so that everyone could visit his grave easily.

On the prime minister's instruction, LGRD State Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak got involved in the process of mediation. Finally, Sheela, Nova and Nuhash compromised on the dispute.

The dialogue made a set of recommendations to conserve hilsa fishes.

In Bangladesh, there is a restriction (during March-May) on the use of scoop nets for catching hilsa below 230mm. The experts suggested the Indian government adopt a similar policy to allow migration of jatkas to the sea.

They also recommended dredging the rivers at appropriate points along the Padma-Meghna and Hooghly-Bhagirathi river systems to maintain a proper flow of water to ensure hilsa migration.

Mokbul Hossain and Zafar Iqbal Siddique, members of the parliamentary standing committee on the fisheries and livestock ministry of Bangladesh, spoke as guests of honour.

Representatives from fishing communities and private sectors in Bangladesh and India also joined the dialogue.

## Cops' status

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increase the salaries and perks of those in these positions.

Home Secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed told journalists that an office order would be issued in a day or two in this regard.

He said the pace of work in the police force would be accelerated and the chain of command strengthened with the upgrade.

PADMA 'GRAFT'

## ACC quizzes agents of 2 foreign firms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday quizzed high-ups of three local sub-agents of two international consultancy firms over graft allegations in the Padma bridge project.

The firms in question had participated in the prequalification bidding for consultancy work in the project.

The officials interrogated are Mohammad Fazlul Majid, managing director of Engineering Science Ltd, a Bangladeshi sub-agent of UK-based Halcrow Group Ltd; Abdul Majid Fakir, managing director of KS Consultants; and Anisur Rahman, managing director of Dev Consultants. KS Consultants and Dev Consultants are sub-agents of Japan-based Oriental Consultant Company Ltd.

ACC directors Mir Md Zainul Abedin and Mirza Zahidul Alam quizzed the three at the commission's headquarters from 10:00am to 1:30pm, ACC Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya told The Daily Star.

Earlier on Monday, ACC investigators quizzed three top officials of three Bangladeshi sub-agents of New Zealand-based consulting firm Maunsell AECOM Ltd.

On Sunday, the anti-graft body interrogated three officials of three local sub-agents of Canadian firm SNC-Lavalin, and on July 2, it interrogated a top official of another sub-agent of the Canadian firm.

Sources said the sub-agent officials were interrogated about whether they knew anything about the alleged corruption in appointing a consultant for the bridge project or whether they had any links with the matter.

Five international consultancy firms had contested in the prequalification bidding for the Padma bridge project.

Of them, SNC-Lavalin was selected as the consulting firm for the project.

On June 29, the World Bank scrapped the Padma bridge loan agreement, citing a corruption conspiracy involving some public officials, SNC-Lavalin executives and others.

## BCL activists stab lawyer in Jessore

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A BNP leader and general secretary of Jessore Ainjibi Samity was injured allegedly by some Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists in Monirampur upazila around noon yesterday.

The victim Abdul Gafur, also the chairman of Masimnagar union parishad, was being transported to the capital for treatment around 5:30pm.

He suffered "serious injuries to the head and arms," said Dr Ohiduzzaman of Jessore Medical College Hospital, where he was taken initially.

AZM Azmol Huda, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Monirampur Police Station, said BCL activists met at Monirampur College to form a sub-committee of the college union yesterday.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists dropped three bombs near the meeting venue around 12 noon, said witnesses.

This, said the OC, prompted the BCL activists to attack the municipal building and vandalise two motor bikes as well as a jeep belonging to Mayor Shoheed Iqbal, also the president of Monirampur upazila BNP.

They diverted their attack to Abdul Gafur and hit him with sharp weapons when they saw him in front of the union parishad, said witnesses.

BNP leader Shaheed Iqbal said the BCL activists also beat Harun, an employee of Monirampur municipality.

However, Moniruzzaman Milton, president of BCL Monirampur upazila unit, said JCD activists were responsible for the untoward events.