

An appeal

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basis of his case was reports of some newspapers (none of them mainstream), that tried to create sensation surrounding the loss of its most popular novelist and one who has been honoured by people from all walks of life, we have this despicable example of trying to malign the family of our revered writer. It is beyond our understanding how can somebody who has no personal knowledge of the events, who was in Chittagong while the tragic events occurred in far away New York, who has no way of knowing anything, and whose only source of information is a few sensation-mongering newspapers, could bring murder charge against the wife of the deceased.

Sadder still is the fact that one of our judges, who instead of dismissing the case because of its obvious lack of prima facie evidence, found, in his wisdom, enough reason to take cognizance of the case and refer it to the CID to carry out an investigation. But as a media person, I feel saddest about the fact that most national newspapers splashed this "news" in such a big way. What is the news here? Couldn't we use our news judgment and see that the lawyer who filed this case was doing it for personal notoriety? Couldn't we see that there cannot be any "credible" case filed by someone sitting in Chittagong about events unfolding in New York? Did the plaintiff travel to New York to gather any facts? Did he talk with anyone who had firsthand knowledge of it? As journalists, we had a duty to question the plaintiff as to the "evidence" he had to file such a case.

According to his own claim, he filed the case basing on some newspaper reports. In fact, most of these so-called reports were comments, many of which were based on unsubstantiated remarks and some observations without attribution. And even these reports did not accuse anyone of "killing" the writer.

We, as journalists must be extremely careful about people's reputation. By publishing this "news" and especially by giving it such coverage (which was journalistically totally unethical), we have greatly damaged the reputation of the two persons, especially his wife, whose feelings we did not care about. This lady has just lost her husband, and at that moment an unknown lawyer files a murder case against her. What can be sadder than this? Is this how we show respect to Humayun Ahmed?

We had no right to do this. Journalism is not just publishing reports of every occurrence. If it be so, then every charlatan would indulge in the most despicable of acts, hoping for a slot in our news hole. Every out-of-work lawyer would file "murder" or similar cases against every reputable person in the country, hoping to get published.

We have a great responsibility of protecting people's reputation, honour and dignity. In this case we have failed, and I bow my head in shame.

Mahfuz Anam
Editor and publisher,
The Daily Star

He owes

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He said the former Titas official in his wealth statement had mentioned that he owns a two-storey building in the capital's Ashkona area and a three-storey building in Khulna.

"But during the enquiry, we found that his building in Ashkona was actually three-storey and the one in Khulna five-storey," said the ACC DAD, adding that Abdul Halim also owned two three-katha plots in Dhaka's Uttara and in Khulna and had a three-katha plot in the capital's Badda area in his wife's name.

Moreover, he owns a Noah microbus, shares worth Tk 10 lakh, savings bond worth Tk 10 lakh, a building in his village home in Satkhira and various other properties, said the DAD.

JU shut after violence

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the violence and submit a report within 21 days.

The unrest also led to the suspension of academic activities and dean elections scheduled for yesterday.

The University Grants Commission yesterday expressed deep concern over instabilities at the country's public universities, including Jahangirnagar. The commission formed a three-member body to visit the institutions.

On Wednesday night, five students were shot injured while trying to obstruct police from arresting one of their fellows.

In protest, students put blockades on Dhaka-Aricha highway and vandalised 15 vehicles, creating about 12-km tailback.

A running battle took place between law enforcers and students around noon, leaving at least 25 people, including five journalists and three policemen, hurt.

However, the blockades were lifted around 3:45pm.

Students leaving the campus suffered a lot as authorities did not arrange transport for them.

All this began after some unruly youths attacked Tahmidul Islam Likhon, an activist of president-secretary faction of JU unit the lawyer who filed this case was doing it for personal notoriety? Couldn't we see that there cannot be any "credible" case filed by someone sitting in Chittagong about events unfolding in New York? Did the plaintiff travel to New York to gather any facts? Did he talk with anyone who had firsthand knowledge of it? As journalists, we had a duty to question the plaintiff as to the "evidence" he had to file such a case.

Talking to The Daily Star at the hospital yesterday, Likhon said he used to stay outside the campus during the movement against immediate past VC Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir. He returned to his dormitory on July 7.

A gang of 10-12 youths led by three students -- Riaz, Liton and Nahid -- stabbed him in the back. The trio was backed by Prof Sharif, he added.

Students said the killers of Zubair Ahmed, a fourth-year student and a BCL member beaten to death in January by rival faction activists, might have made the attack on Likhon.

Likhon had organised a human chain on the campus Wednesday noon demanding justice for Zubair murder.

His mother Kazi Johra Begum filed a case with Savar Police Station around 12:30pm yesterday against 10 named, including Riaz, Liton and Nahid, and 20 unnamed persons.

Protesting the attack on Likhon, students brought out a procession on the campus around 11:00pm Wednesday.

Minutes later, police entered Mir Mosharrif Hossain Hall and tried to arrest Nahid, a third year student of anthropology department.

Police fired blank shots when other students resisted them from arresting Nahid. At one stage, they shot rubber bullets and shotgun shells injuring at least five.

The wounded -- Rakib of pharmacy department, Bashir of statistics, Maruf of information technology, Robin of mathematics and Nahid of finance and banking department -- were taken to Enam Medical College and Hospital.

Rakib, Robin and Maruf were at the hospital last night while the rest were already released.

Students took to the streets soon after Wednesday midnight and put barricades on the highway, demanding resignation of the JU proctor, his assistants and Mir Mosharrif Hossain Hall provost, and the punitive action against the cops responsible for the shooting.

As the VC rushed to the spot and tried in vain to calm the agitators, the angry students vandalised his car and another carrying the proctorial body.

Around 6:00am yesterday, Proctor Tapan Kumar Saha, Pro-VC Farhad and Treasurer Nasiruddin talked to students. But the students refused to withdraw the blockades and questioned the police bid to arrest Nahid without the filing of a case.

VC Prof Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star that police were present during the stab incident and they could identify the attackers. Also, Likhon mentioned names of the attackers, he said.

"I told police to take punitive action against whoever the culprits are, but I could not imagine they will open

fire on students."

He said a judicial committee should be formed to find why the university is becoming unstable frequently and at whose instigation.

Pro-VC Farhad told The Daily Star that they did not call the police and there was no question of directing them to fire.

M o h a m m a d Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Savar Police Station, said they went to arrest Nahid following the directive of university authorities and that "We had to open fire in self defence."

Fitra fixed

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minimum fitra as per the present market price of 1.650 kg of wheat or flour.

Fitra can be given either in cash or kind.

Baitul Muqarram National Mosque Khatib Mohammad Salahuddin presided over the meeting, said a release of the Islamic Foundation.

Former district and sessions Judge M Ismail Miah, Islamic Foundation Director M Sirajul Haque, among others, were present.

BNP rejects

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The main opposition party has been demanding restoration of caretaker government system in the constitution to ensure free and fair polls. The provision was scrapped from the constitution through adopting the 15th amendment last year.

In a recent interview with BBC Bangla Service, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina suggested forming a small cabinet including representation from the BNP ahead of the next national polls.

HALEDA WARS OF TOUGHER MOVEMENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday once again threatened to wage a tougher movement after the Eid-ul-Fitr to compel the government to restore non-party caretaker government system.

"The BNP won't accept any plan other than restoration of the caretaker government system. We want free and fair election," she told an iftar party at the LD Hall at parliament complex.

The main opposition party hosted the programme in honour of the elected local government representatives including former and incumbent mayors of different city corporations, chairmen and vice-chairmen of upazilas and municipalities.

Addressing the event, Khaleda demanded the government take steps to amend the constitution to restore the caretaker government system.

The former premier complained that the elected representatives of local government bodies could not discharge their duties properly due to non-cooperation from the incumbent government. Even the BNP lawmakers were not allowed to speak in parliament.

There is no alternative to wage a movement to oust the government, she noted, urging all to forge a united movement.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, former deputy minister Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, Chittagong city Mayor M Manjur Alam, upazila parishad chairman association president Ataur Rahman Ata, Union Parishad forum general secretary Morshed Alam, spoke, among others.

6.3-magnitude quake hits PNG

AFP, Sydney

A 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck off Papua New Guinea (PNG) yesterday, the US Geological Survey said.

The quake hit the remote New Ireland region at 7:56pm local time at a depth of 70 kilometres, 128 kilometres from Rabaul, New Britain, and 850 kilometres from the capital Port Moresby.

Strong earthquakes are common in impoverished PNG, which sits on the so-called "Pacific Ring of Fire", a hotspot for seismic activity due to friction between tectonic plates.

Face atrocities

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Maj Ayub [of Pakistan army] saying to the people over loudspeakers that those who would dare to help freedom fighters, their houses will be burned and women would be violated," said Jahurul Haque Munshi, Bir Pratik (Bar), the third prosecution witness in the case against Kamaruzzaman, during his cross-examination.

Jahurul, who was assigned to collect information about the Al-Badr camps in the frontier during the War, said the public meeting was held at Akbaria Pilot High School ground in Shreebardi, a frontier upazila of Sherpur, in July or August in 1971.

In his testimony on August 1, Jahurul said Kamaruzzaman, a leader of Islamic Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, was the founder of Al-Badr and Al-Shams [auxiliary forces of Pakistani occupation army] in greater Mymensingh and used to visit different Al-Badr training camps with Maj Ayub during the War.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir with members Justice Obaidul Hassan and Judge Md Shahinur Islam completed recording the cross-examination of the witness before adjourning the case proceeding until August 5 when fourth prosecution witness in the case is expected to testify.

Defence counsel Kafil Uddin Chowdhury yesterday cross-examined the 62-year-old witness for three and a quarter hours and asked him more than hundred questions.

Replying to a question, Jahurul said he had heard Kamaruzzaman was a student of Sherpur Collage during the War. He later enrolled at a college in Jamalpur and used to supply paper and pen to different offices in his leisure time.

Replying to another question, the witness said he does not know which post of Islamic Chhatra Sangha Kamaruzzaman held in greater Mymensingh during the War but "he was a commander of Al-Badr and Al-Shams then [in greater Mymensingh]."

"Did you utter 'Joy Bangla' after completing your testimony on Wednesday?" asked Kafil.

"Yes, it [Joy Bangla] was our slogan during the Liberation War," replied Jahurul.

"Joy Bangla" is now a slogan of ruling Awami League,

commented Kafil.

"No, it is a slogan of the entire Bangalee nation," said Jahurul.

In reply to another question, Jahurul said he does not know whether Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed formed Jatiyatabadi Muktiyoddha Dal on August 25, 1991.

"As a pro-Awami League freedom fighter, you [witness] have given the testimony against Kamaruzzaman for political purposes," observed Kafil.

Jahurul rejected the defence's claim by just saying, "It is not true."

During cross-examination on Wednesday, Jahurul, however, said, "I do not belong to any political party, I am a freedom fighter and freedom fighters themselves are a party. We are neutral."

Kafil yesterday claimed all the allegations of anti-liberation activities against Kamaruzzaman brought by the witness were "false and fabricated".

"It is not true," said Jahurul.

"Kamaruzzaman has become the target of Awami League because he criticised Awami League through his writings as a journalist and speeches and statements as a leader of Jamaat-e-Islami," said the defence counsel, adding, "you have given the testimony for political purpose after being favoured economically."

Jahurul also rejected the claim saying, "It is not true." Kamaruzzaman, who was indicted on seven charges on June 4, for his alleged involvement in murder and torture of unarmed civilians during the Liberation War, was in the dock yesterday.

Sayedee's Case
The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday ordered the defence of Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee to complete cross-examining the investigation officer of a war crimes case against their client by August 8.

Tribunal Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq said, "The defence have been cross-examining the investigation officer for more than 40 days. We find that cross-examination could not be completed yet."

Nizamul Huq earlier mentioned that the tribunal asked defence counsel Mizanul Islam to complete the cross-examination by yesterday.

Though Mizanul Islam barely asked irrelevant questions and the cross-examination got pace after

he was given deadline, he failed to follow it, the tribunal observed.

Earlier, the defence counsel urged the tribunal not to make any order regarding the matter saying he required three to four more days to complete the cross-examination.

The defence began cross-examining Mizanul made a suggestion to the IO that during his visit to Pirojpur on August 19, 2010, Helal did not find any information of crimes committed by army and its auxiliary forces during the Liberation War at Karmakar Potti of Parer Haat.

"It's not true," said the IO and in reply to another question he said he learned it from Ruhul Amin Nobin and Mahbub Alam Hawladar, who gave depositions against Sayedee earlier at the tribunal.

In response to the defence's question, the IO further said he did not record anyone's deposition rather quizzed some locals including Kala Karmakar and Horipad Saha.

The tribunal accepted statements of 15 witnesses given to the investigation officer as evidence against the Jamaat leader following the prosecution's petition in which the witnesses were shown physically unfit for journey or missing.

Mizanul yesterday asked questions about some of these witnesses.

The defence counsel said Shahidul Islam Selim, one of the 15 witnesses, was produced before the prosecution office on January 11-12 for deposition.

Helal Uddin denied the statement.

Another witness, Usha Rani Malakar, was not produced before the tribunal due to illness.

Mizanul made a suggestion that Usha Rani could talk at that time [when she was supposed to give deposition at the tribunal] and even now.

Helal said, "When I went to bring her for deposition at the tribunal she could not even walk."

The proceeding of the tribunal was adjourned until August 5.

Sayedee is facing 20 specific charges of crimes against humanity committed during the War.

Construction worker shot dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists shot a construction worker dead at Kalshi of city's Pallabi yesterday, as they failed to realise toll from his contractor.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Liton, 22, son of Mujibur Rahman, of Naogaon. He was working at the construction site of Vision Design Housing Ltd.

Palash Mondol, co-worker, said Liton, another worker and he were working outside the construction site around 2.30pm, when two local youths appeared and ordered them to stop working. One of them shot Liton.

The criminals left the place when people present there raised a hue and cry.

Seriously injured Liton was first taken to a local hospital and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Labour contractor Mohammad Zakir said three local extortionists demanded toll from him about 10 days back. He refused to pay and had an altercation with them.

Three days ago, the three beat Zakir at the site and threatened to kill him.

Zakir earlier filed a GD (general diary) with the Pallabi Police Station in this regard.

Abdul Latif Sheikh, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station, said they have been raiding different places to arrest the local criminals involved in the killing.

Mosharraf

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showing Kashem as fugitive.

The IO appealed to the court to issue an arrest warrant against Kashem.

The anti-graft watchdog had filed the case on February 12 with Shahbagh Police Station accusing the two.

The High Court granted bail to Mosharraf till the submission of the police report.

According to the case statement, Mosharraf received a Land Cruiser jeep worth about Tk 95.58 lakh as a gift, and 5,000 Canadian dollars as bribe from Niko in 2005 to ink a contract between the government and Niko with the provision of selling gas to government at an inflated price.

Last year the Niko authorities confessed to a Canadian court that they were compelled to give the gift and bribe to sign the deal.

A joint venture of Niko and Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex) redeveloped the Feni Gas Field in 2004. The company has been operating in Bangladesh since 2003.

The ACC during the tenure of the last caretaker government had filed another graft case against former premier Khaleda Zia, Mosharraf and nine others on charges of corruption and abuse of power in awarding a gas exploration deal to Niko.

The case statement said the contract caused a loss of Tk 13,777 crore to the state exchequer during the tenure (2001-2006) of the BNP-led four-party alliance government.

Save the bank

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of the bank they run and of the power to exercise their ownership."

"I am so dejected that I have become unable to express my feelings. I am requesting the people of Bangladesh who are feeling dejected like me to tell the government that a big mistake is being done and the government should abstain itself from doing it."

"This government decision will destroy the bank of the poor and the country's bank of pride. I request the countrymen to come forward to protect the property of the poor and the country. I also request the poor owners of Grameen Bank to urge the government and their fellow countrymen so that they do not curb their rights to exercise ownership."

Grameen fettered

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ownership of the bank they run and of the power to exercise their ownership."

President Zillur Rahman will soon issue an ordinance with the latest changes as parliament is now in recess, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told reporters coming out of a cabinet meeting at the Secretariat.

The cabinet directed the finance ministry to inform it immediately about the salaries and benefits that Prof Yunus received during his tenure as the bank's managing director past the retirement age of 60 and whether those facilities were in line with the bank's rules.

Banking and financial institutions division of the ministry will do the analysis with the help of the central bank, said the cabinet secretary.

The cabinet also asked the finance ministry to find out whether Prof Yunus fetched any foreign currencies from abroad under the wage earner scheme facility "as a government official," said the cabinet secretary.

If so, it will be known how much foreign currency he brought as a wage earner and how much was exempted from tax, he said.

The three changes that will be brought to the ordinance will allow the bank's chairman to form a selection committee in consultation with the board. The committee will recommend a panel of three candidates for the job of managing director, said Bhuiyan.

The candidates must have expertise in the field of rural

economy or finance or microfinance to qualify for the job.

"The [proposed] amendment will help get the right candidate for the job of the bank's managing director, and this will speed up the appointment process," said the cabinet secretary.

Under the existing rules, the board constitutes a selection committee with three to five members, which selects a candidate for the post of managing director.

The Grameen Bank Ordinance 1983 gives preference to persons having knowledge and experience in rural economy or in Grameen Bank business.

The post of the bank's managing director fell vacant after its founder Prof Yunus resigned in May last year following his removal from the bank he set up three decades ago to take financial services to the poor.

The changes in the ordinance will only deepen suspicions among the bank's supporters at home and abroad that the government wants to take control of the bank.

Three members, including the chairman, represent the government on the 12-member board. The remaining nine are the bank's borrower-members, who are elected at the grassroots level representing the bank's 83 lakh members.

The government owns only three percent of the shares of the bank, while the remaining 97 percent is owned by the bank's members, mostly women.

In yesterday's cabinet meeting, the prime minister

and five ministers came down hard on Prof Yunus.

The ministers, who took part in the discussion on the Nobel laureate, are Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddique and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, cabinet sources told The Daily Star.

The prime minister alleged that Prof Yunus had been constantly lobbying against the government both at home and abroad though her previous government helped him launch Grameenphone and gave many facilities.

"Now it seems that he has become our enemy," a minister, who attended the meeting, quoted Hasina as saying.

The prime minister said her government would take steps to run the Grameen Bank smoothly, according to cabinet sources.

One of the ministers suggested including more tough provisions in the Grameen Bank Ordinance to take absolute control of the bank.

In response, the finance minister said Bangladesh is not an "isolated island". He suggested that the cabinet take into consideration the global opinion on the bank. He said the bank's performance was better in the fiscal year 2011-12.

The prime minister then said the government had no role in removing Prof Yunus from the post of the bank's managing director. Rather, it was him who went to the court and had to quit the job after losing the legal battle.