

# Felani's father

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murder of my unarmed daughter, Mosamat Felani Khatun, as well as provide the right compensations for her untimely death," read the letter.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the letter.

A special court in the Indian state of West Bengal on September 6 ruled that BSG constable Amiya Ghosh was not guilty of shooting Felani. He was the lone accused in the murder case.

The 15-year-old girl was shot dead by BSG soldiers while she along with her father was scaling over the barbed wire fences at Anantapur border point in Phulbari upazila of Kurigram to return home from India, where she studied in a madrasa.

Copies of the letter were sent to rights organisations Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) in Bangladesh and

Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) in India.

Md Nur Khan, director of investigation and documentation unit of Ask, confirmed that they have received an electronic copy of the letter over email.

"We'll provide all sorts of legal assistance to the victim's family in this regard and cooperate with Masum in its efforts to provide legal aid to Felani's family for seeking justice," he added.

The legal help may include, among other things, finding eye witnesses to the murder or providing documents, if any, of receiving the body of Felani.

"If needed, we'll also contact other rights bodies in India to ensure that justice is served," mentioned Khan.

(Our Kurigram correspondent contributed to this report.)

# Work together

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decide; however, non-violence is essential to any solution."

Meanwhile, UN chief Ban Ki-moon's efforts to bring the two major parties to a discussion table took a new turn yesterday, following a BNP leader's claim that the government has refused to send its representatives to New York for talks with the opposition this month.

According to BNP Vice-chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, the dialogue was to be mediated by the UN secretary general as part of his efforts to resolve the political crisis.

Contacted, two ministers and several ruling Awami League leaders, including party presidium members Kazi Zafarullah and Nooh-ul-Alam Lenin, said they had no knowledge of any invitation by the UN chief to send government representatives to

New York for talks.

Reaz Rahman and Osman Faruk, both advisers to the BNP chairperson, also told The Daily Star that they were unaware of the matter.

The Daily Star also contacted two officials of the UN office in Dhaka to verify Shamsher Mobin's claim. Both the officials said they knew nothing about any such invitation.

Two weeks after the UN chief's phone calls urging Hasina and Khaleda to resolve the crisis through talks, Kerry on Sunday sent letters to the two top leaders with a same call.

BNP leaders welcomed the UN and the US moves for talks, while AL leaders maintained that domestic issues need not be resolved through "foreign interference".

On "talks" in New York, Shamsher Mobin said: "A top official of the United Nations recently informed

us that the ruling party would not send any delegation to New York as requested by the UN secretary general."

He, however, would not give the name of the UN official who he said "phoned" him.

Asked if his party would send a delegation, he said it would not mean anything if the BNP sent a delegation when the AL did not.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, however, questioned the authenticity of Shamsher Mobin's claim.

"This might be a conspiracy on the part of the BNP. We doubt the BNP leader's claim," Hanif said. "If the UN chief wants to discuss the present political situation of Bangladesh, he can do so when the prime minister will be visiting New York this month [for the UNGA meeting]."

# Syria crisis sees silver lining

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Meanwhile, diplomats yesterday said envoys from Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- the permanent veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council -- will meet later yesterday to discuss the situation in Syria.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said earlier that the failure to halt atrocities in the war-torn country had become a new stain on the reputation of the world body and the Security Council powers.

In a televised speech from the White House, President Obama said the Russian plan and the regime's admission that it held chemical weapons were "encouraging signs".

"It's too early to tell whether [the Russian plan] will succeed, and any agreement must verify that the Assad regime keeps its commitments," he said.

Speaking at the Pentagon

amid ceremonies to mark the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks, Obama said: "Let us have the wisdom to know that while force is at times necessary, force alone cannot build the world we seek."

US Secretary of State John Kerry is to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Geneva today for talks on the disarmament process that is expected to run until tomorrow at least.

"We handed over to the Americans a plan to place chemical weapons in Syria under international control. We expect to discuss it in Geneva," Russian news agencies quoted a source in the Russian delegation to the talks as saying.

Russian officials provided no details of the plan which has effectively pushed military action off the table for the time being, although both the US and France stressed it remains an option if Syria is seen to be

stalling.

With the risk of an attack having receded considerably for now, Assad -- who turned 48 yesterday -- was free to pursue his battle with a rebel coalition that has been left dismayed by the West's retreat from intervention.

The switch to diplomacy was welcomed yesterday by China, which also praised Syria's offer to sign an international treaty banning chemical weapons.

"We hope all relevant sides can grasp this opportunity to solve the Syria problem through diplomatic and political means," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

Obama, however, said US cruise missile destroyers would remain in place within striking distance of Syria, warning that "the US military doesn't do pin-pricks."

Syria was threatened with strikes in response to the use of sarin gas in an August 21

attack on rebel-held suburbs of Damascus. The US says the attack killed more than 1,400 people and was carried out by Assad's forces, a claim the regime denies.

Syria announced on Tuesday that it would join an international convention banning chemical weapons and hand over control of current stocks -- effectively admitting for the first time that it has them.

Signatories are supposed to destroy any chemical weapons under their control and to allow UN inspectors access to their sites. Russia has offered to oversee this process and has said talks with the Syrians on how to go about it are already under way.

The path to a peaceful resolution of the crisis remains littered with obstacles however with the US, France and Britain still at odds with the Russians over the next steps.

France and Britain are

pushing for a UN Security Council resolution authorising military action in the event of Syria failing to act on its disarmament promises. Russia has made it clear it will veto any ultimatum of that kind and is likely to be able to count on backing from China, a fellow permanent member of the Security Council.

Syrian opponents of the Assad regime have warned that the chemical weapons negotiations will do nothing to end a conflict in which over 110,000 people have died in more than two years of fighting.

UN human rights investigators on Wednesday reported that the conflict had been characterised by widespread war crimes committed by both sides. The team was unable to reach any conclusions on the use of chemical weapons, which is being investigated by a different group of experts.

# NBR claim baseless

## Say 7 organisations about tax exemption 'anomalies'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven legally independent companies bearing Grameen name yesterday protested the government claim that they had illegally availed tax exemption facilities using the name of the microcredit bank.

In a joint statement, the companies termed the allegation completely baseless and said they had paid income taxes and submitted tax returns regularly.

The companies are Grameen Fisheries and Livestock Foundation, Grameen Capital Management Ltd, Grameen Communications, Grameen Shakti, Grameen Udyog, Grameen Trust and Grameen Kalyan.

The protest came a day after the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in a report said the companies had enjoyed income tax exemption facilities unlawfully.

The tax authorities submitted the report to a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

During the year-long investigation, the NBR has checked income tax documents of 13 organisation of Grameen Bank.

Of them, eight -- Grameen Fisheries and Livestock Foundation,

Grameen Danone Foods, Grameen Capital Management Ltd, Grameen Communications, Grameen Shakti, Grameen Udyog, Grameen Trust and Grameen Kalyan -- had availed various income tax facilities illegally, said the NBR report.

After the cabinet meeting, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said companies owned by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, not by Grameen Bank, had obtained tax benefits in the name of Grameen and did not pay income tax.

He said the NBR would ask them for the income tax because they were not entitled to any such exemption.

In a separate protest statement, Grameen Capital Management claimed that the organisation had been submitting income tax return regularly since its inception in 1999-2000.

Its Managing Director Md Anwar Hossain said all the income tax disputes of the company had been settled.

Nazneen Sultana, managing director of Grameen Communications, also claimed the same about submitting income tax return regularly. She said all but one tax related cases of the company had been solved.

Grameen Kalyan had been paying taxes regularly since its journey began in 1997, said its MD Imamus Sultan, adding, "The company has already paid Tk 70.80 crore as advance income tax for fiscal year 2013-14."

"So the allegation against Grameen Kalyan is imaginary and totally baseless," he said.

Grameen Shakti, which has won international acclaim for its work to spread solar energy in the off-grid areas across Bangladesh, said the company was not even an associated organisation of Grameen Bank.

Its MD Absar Kamal said the company had been paying taxes fixed by the NBR since its inception. Over the last 17 years, the company had paid Tk 16.63 crore as taxes, he said.

In a separate statement, Grameen Udyog claimed that it had never availed illegal income tax exemption facility and that it too had been paying income tax regularly.

It also said Prof Yunus had not set up the companies that obtained tax exemption in the name of Grameen Bank.

Grameen Trust and Grameen Fisheries and Livestock Foundation also refuted the claims made by the finance minister and NBR.

# Treat Yunus

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Washington DC on Tuesday.

In reply to a taken question, it said the US supported the continued independence, effectiveness and integrity of Grameen Bank as an institution that promoted the welfare and development of Bangladesh's most vulnerable people, particularly women.

"We also support the continuation of the Bank's unique governance structure. We look forward to

the selection of a highly qualified and acceptable managing director and a new chairman who are committed to sustaining the bank's success," said the spokesperson.

An astonishing 96 percent of its 8.3 million borrowers are women. Grameen Bank had played a pioneering role not only in developing microfinance as an economic model but in empowering ordinary people to lift themselves

out of poverty and into a better life, said the reply.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's adviser HT Imam yesterday said the measures to be taken against Prof Yunus was cent percent transparent, reports BBC.

"There is nothing to be worried about. The process will follow the due course of law. There is no question of trial here; at best he [Yunus] will have to pay some fine with the tax he had evaded, nothing more than that," said Imam.

# Prosecution prays for death penalty

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After the defence arguments, the prosecution may place their counter arguments, if they feel it necessary. The court will then either shelve the case for verdict or fix a date to deliver the judgment.

A former BNP lawmaker and a member of late president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, Alim is facing 17 charges including genocide, murder and burying people alive during the war.

The prosecution has produced 35 witnesses to prove the charges while the defence produced three, including Alim's son, to prove that the accused was in hiding in 1971.

The prosecution completed their arguments on factual aspects on Tuesday. They did not place any argument on the fourth and fifth charges, both related to mass killing and looting, as they could not produce any witnesses in support of

those allegations.

During her one and a half hours' argument on legal aspects yesterday, Tureen said Alim had to take liabilities individually and as a member of the group which committed crimes in 1971. Alim was also liable for his alleged leading position in Joypurhat Peace Committee and the Razakar force.

And for these reasons, she continued, Alim must bear three types of liabilities -- individual, joint and superior responsibilities -- for the crimes committed in Joypurhat in 1971.

Citing prosecution evidence, Tureen claimed that as an individual, Alim bore liabilities for all the charges brought against him.

Referring to evidence, she said evidence showed that Alim had "direct involvement" with a number of torture camps where crimes had been committed systematically. The crimes committed by Alim and his

subordinates had a common design and all these prove his joint responsibility.

Tureen argued that as the leader of Peace Committee and the Razakar force, Alim had to shoulder the superior responsibilities of the crimes the auxiliary forces to then Pakistani occupation army had committed.

Citing testimonies of several witnesses, she said Alim, being a civilian, led the Pakistani army in Joypurhat as "de facto leader".

He had the authority to decide who to kill and where the army would set up their camp, said Tureen, adding, "So, he [Alim] has to take responsibilities of all these crimes."

**TRIAL OF MOBARAK**  
War crimes accused Mobarak Hossain had vandalised the Anandamayi Kalibari temple in Brahmanbaria during the Liberation War in 1971, a

prosecution witness told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday.

Abdul Hamid, the 10th prosecution witness in the case against Mobarak, said he heard from his brother Abdur Rouf that "Razakar commander" Mobarak had also renamed the Hindu temple to Razakar Monzil.

The witness testified that about 30-35 people of Tanmandyl village were killed by the Pakistani occupation army with the help of Mobarak.

Mobarak and his associates had abducted freedom fighter Abdul Khaleque and took him to Suhilpur razakar camp of Brahmanbaria. Later, Khaleque was killed by razakars, said Hamid.

Following the deposition, defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena cross-examined the witness. The court adjourned the case proceedings until September 22.

**NIZAMI'S TRIAL**

In the same court yesterday, defence counsel Mizanul Islam completed cross-examination of Yusuf Ali Biswas, the 21st prosecution witness in the case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Motiur Rahman Nizami.

During the cross-examination, Yusuf said he knew Nizami even before June 10, 1971.

In his deposition on Tuesday, Yusuf told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 that he had seen Nizami with Pakistani soldiers on a pickup carrying the headmaster of a Pabna school and two others shortly before the three were killed on June 10, 1971.

He also said it was not true that he gave deposition against Nizami just because he was a supporter of Awami League.

The court adjourned the proceedings of the case until today.

# Man 'murders' daughter, then kills himself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A man has allegedly committed suicide after killing his 2-year old daughter at a residential hotel in Darga Gate area of the city, police said yesterday after recovering the bodies.

Hotel Al-Aksa's manager Sushendra Das told The Daily Star that Alimullah, 42, of Gazipur with his wife Fatema Begum, 26, and their child had rented a room around 6:00am.

Fatema came down around 9:00am and informed the hotel staff that her husband hacked

their daughter to death with a blade and was about to commit suicide.

The staff went to the room and found the man had slit his own throat. Alimullah succumbed to his wounds soon afterwards.

"The man also tried to jump to his death from the room, said his wife," added the manager.

Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-charge Ahmed Nasir Uddin said the bodies were sent to the Osmani Medical College for autopsies, while Fatema was being interrogated about the incident.

## Govt moves

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which is not permitted now.

The meeting at law minister's Indira Road residence discussed several more issues, including polls-time government, the election period, and US Secretary of State John Kerry's letter to the prime minister.

AL stalwarts Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, prime minister's advisers HT Imam and Mashur Rahman, and the law secretary were present in the meeting.

The draft of the proposed amendment will be vetted by the law ministry today or tomorrow and then be placed at the next cabinet meeting, said sources in the meeting, adding that after the cabinet approval it might be placed in parliament.

The meeting also supported unanimously the idea that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina be the chief of the interim government.

# Back whoever AL nominates

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thana, municipality and city AL units of Sylhet, Khulna, Mymensingh, Narayanganj, Patuakhali and Noakhali attended the meeting to pick three prospective candidates of each constituency for the next polls.

Hasina, also president of the Awami League, asked the grassroots leaders to suggest three names, saying nominations would be finalised on the basis of their evaluation and party's survey reports and assessment.

She also warned that any leader's assessment would be considered void if she or he gave one name.

"One will be given nomination and one alternative candidate will be kept prepared. This time around, we will give nominations much earlier

than in the previous elections."

Highlighting successes and development activities of her government, the premier said the AL-led grand alliance should come to power again to ensure the continuation of the country's development, advancement and growth.

"If the BNP-Jamaat alliance comes to power, it will surely resort to killing, looting and corruption and put the country into darkness."

The BNP does not believe in the country's independence and has allied with the anti-liberation force, Jamaat-e-Islami, Hasina added.

Referring to February 25-

26, 2009 mutiny in the Pilkhana headquarters of the then para-military Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh), Hasina said the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia had been "involved in the plot" that killed 74 people, including 57 brilliant officers of the Bangladesh Army.

"She [Khaleda] knew about the mutiny or else why did she flee from her cantonment residence in the very early morning [on February 25] without taking any protocol as the leader of the opposition and why was she hiding for three days in an unspecified place," the AL chief posed the question.

Hasina also asked about the political backgrounds of those who had been providing legal assistance as lawyers to the

"killers" of the mutiny.

"Many have employed two to three lawyers. Where are they getting money from?"

Her government has to fight regularly against the propaganda and falsehood spread by the BNP, its ally Jamaat and Hefajat-e-Islam, which is unfortunate, the PM said.

She asked the grassroots leaders to work to dispel confusion among people over the opposition's false allegations.

**MINISTERS, MPs BLASTED**  
At the meeting, grassroots leaders blasted state ministers for health and family welfare, religion affairs and cultural affairs as well as most of the lawmakers from the districts, said meeting sources.

They alleged that those ministers and lawmakers had no contact with the party for

the last four and a half years and have become isolated from people.

The meeting witnessed a debate for and against controversial Awami League leader Shamim Osman by the leaders of Narayanganj district unit AL.

Sylhet grassroots leaders urged the party chief not to nominate the ministers who have grown old.

Patuakhali AL leaders urged Hasina not to nominate controversial lawmaker Golam Maula Rony and requested her to contest the election from Rony's constituency.

Hasina told them that they could pick AL presidium member Kazi Zafarullah as the candidate as his maternal grandfather's home district is Patuakhali.

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