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SORRY, Khaleda

Death figures blown out of proportion

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

In her latest press conference, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia gave figures on the killing of BNP-led alliance leaders and activists between December 26 and January 27 this year, which are not supported by facts on the ground.

The Daily Star investigated the high death figures in nine districts presented by the BNP chief, and found them incorrect, exaggerated and false.

Khaleda on February 4 claimed that law enforcers and Awami League men had killed 242 BNP-led alliance men in 34 districts across the country during the period. She, however, gave the names of only five of the victims (two cases of killing and three of forced disappearance).

The nine districts with high death figures are shown in the infographic.

Upon cross-checking with local BNP leaders in the nine districts, The Daily Star found that there had been only 17 deaths during the period as against 152 claimed by Khaleda.

The Daily Star had earlier run reports on the 17 deaths in the nine districts.

Khaleda told the press conference that the death figures were based on information received by the BNP central office, and the "real picture was even worse."

According to BNP sources, a few staff of the central office collected the information on the deaths over the last one year by calling up party's district leaders.

Asked about this, some district BNP leaders said Khaleda had cited a year's death figure as a month's death toll. And most district BNP leaders don't accept her claim.

CROSS-CHECKING OF FACTS

According to Khaleda's claim, 27 people, including five activists of the BNP and Jubo Dal, were killed. And almost all of the remaining victims are local members of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir.

But according to journalists in Satkhira, seven people were killed in the district in the one-month period. Police have put the figure at six.

Rahmatullah Palash, president of Satkhira district BNP, said, "I am sure that 27 people were not killed in one month in my district."

Khaleda put the death figure at 23 in Chandpur. Of the victims, 21 belonged to the BNP, Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal and Sramik Dal.

But Chandpur district BNP President Mominul Haq said those 23 people were not killed in one month, they were killed in the last five or six months.

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| DISTRICT | KHALEDA | * FACT |
|-----------------|---------|--------|
| Satkhira | 27 | 7 |
| Chandpur | 23 | 1 |
| Laxmipur | 20 | 2 |
| Cox's Bazar | 17 | 0 |
| Chittagong | 15 | 4 |
| Sirajganj | 14 | 1 |
| Chapainawabganj | 13 | 0 |
| Joypurhat | 12 | 0 |
| Noakhali | 11 | 2 |
| 9 districts | 152 | 17 |

* Our cross-check sources are local BNP leaders, journalists and police

RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY

43 more victims identified thru' DNA tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory of Dhaka Medical College has identified 43 more bodies that had been buried at the Jurain graveyard after those were recovered from the Rana Plaza collapse site.

These bodies were among the around 290 bodies buried at the Jurain graveyard, as those could not be identified.

So far, 200 such bodies that were burned beyond recognition have been identified through DNA test, said Sharif Akhtaruzzaman, the national technical adviser of the lab, yesterday.

DNA samples of another 112 bodies are still to be identified while the lab is working on 10 other samples, he added.

"A list of the 43 identified workers has been sent

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AKM Yusuf dies

Primary autopsy info says death due to brain hemorrhage; war crimes tribunal to decide on fate of trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "founder of the Razakar force", AKM Yusuf, died yesterday with the war crimes case against him at the final stage.

The 88-year-old Jamaat-e-Islami nayebe-ameer died around 11:30am at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. He was taken there after he reportedly suffered a stroke and collapsed in Kashimpur Jail-1 earlier in the day.

Sources in the morgue said they believed Yusuf died of a hemorrhagic stroke but they would be able to confirm the cause of death after the results of the viscera tests were in. The body was handed over to the family yesterday evening after an autopsy.

Yusuf had been facing 13 war crimes charges and the closing argument of his case was scheduled to start on Wednesday.

AKM Nasiruddin Mahmud, registrar and spokesman for the international crimes tribunal, told The Daily Star last night that as per the Code of Criminal Procedure, an accused gets discharged after his or her death.

He said there was neither any specific provision in the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act nor in the rules of the tribunals about continuing or discontinuing proceedings against a deceased accused.

"Now the tribunal will decide," he said.

CONTROVERSY OVER DEATH

Abdul Wahab, Yusuf's son-in-law, said the jail authority called him around

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Armed forces must keep vigil

PM urges them to uphold democracy, constitution

UNB, Dhaka

The armed forces must remain vigilant and be ready to face any threat and uphold the democratic trend and the constitution, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told a conference of generals yesterday.

Hasina, who is also in-charge of the defence ministry, said the 10th general election was held on January 5 for constitutional obligation and to maintain the democratic process.

The Bangladesh Army alongside other law enforcement agencies had played a significant role in successfully holding the election, she said.

People comfortably exercised their voting rights due to the active presence of the army, she told the conference held at Army Headquarters officers' mess in Dhaka Cantonment.

Laying emphasis on maintaining chain of command in the army, the premier said, senior officers should present themselves as honest and dutiful before their junior colleagues.

She also directed the senior officials of the army to continue discharging their duties with responsibility, brotherhood and mutual trust by maintaining discipline and remaining loyal to the leadership.

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TAZREEN GARMENT TRAGEDY

Owners land in jail, finally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Tazreen Fashions owner Delwar Hossain and his wife to jail in a case over the country's worst factory fire that killed 112 workers.

Delwar, managing director, and Mahmuda Akter, chairman of Tazreen Fashions, are the first garment factory owners to be prosecuted for factory fire.

The couple turned themselves in to the court to seek bail yesterday, after being at large for more than a year following the November 2012 fire in their Ashulia factory. The surrender came six weeks after the same court took the charges into cognisance and issued arrest warrants for them.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Tajul Islam rejected their bail petitions and sent them to prison around 12:20pm. Hours after, the magistrate fixed today for hearing their bail petitions.

During yesterday's proceeding, some 500 workers of Tazreen Fashions demonstrated on the court premises, demanding the death penalty to the couple.

Before the fire incident, Tazreen was making clothes for various international brands, including Walmart of the US.

On December 22 last year, police pressed homicide charges against 13 people, including Delwar and Mahmuda. The accused also face charges of

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Delwar Hossain

LET'S HAVE SOME COMMONSENSE



Photojournalists, TV camera crew, ministry officials, school teachers and employees crowd an SSC exam hall at Motijheel Govt Boys High School yesterday as Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid visits it. Camera flashes, mobile phone chats, photographers elbowing one another and the overall commotion get on students' nerves when they need to keep calm. The grownups should have understood that every second is crucial for the children during such a vital exam. As part of the media, The Daily Star just cannot shrug off its responsibility. It has decided not to take photos of children in exam halls ever. The newspaper would like to humbly request Nahid, a high-performing minister and a revered personality, to visit the exam halls only before or after the tests.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN