

# Ex-Rab official Rana

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yesterday by Mamunur Rashid Mandal, investigating officer of the murder case.

Court Sub-inspector Ashraf read out the report to the court on behalf of Mandal, also officer-in-charge of the district Detective Branch of police, reports our Narayanganj correspondent.

The IO in his report said he had gleaned the information from the ex-Rab official during primary interrogation.

Police produced Masud Rana in court yesterday upon completion of this eight-day remand. The court placed the arrestee on a fresh remand for five days.

The report also claimed that Rana had been on very good terms with Nur Hossain, the prime accused in the case.

When two other accused, ex-Rab officials Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad and Maj Arif Hossain, were produced before another Narayanganj court on May 30, the IO claimed in a report that the two were involved in the seven-murder.

The three Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) officials were fired and later arrested for their alleged involvement in the abduction and killing of the seven people in Narayanganj late in April. The killers punctured their stomachs, stuffed the bodies in sacks, tied them up to bricks and dumped the sacks in the Shitalakkhya.

## RAB GRILLING

A Rab investigation team interrogated six people, including two policemen, at Shiddhirganj Power Station from 10:00am to 6:00pm yesterday.

An eyewitness to the incident, Shahidul Islam, was grilled by the team. Talking to The Daily Star, he said he had seen Rab officials abduct Narayanganj panel mayor Nazrul Islam and six others.

"I had picked up my daughter from college and was on my way home in Bandar around 1:00pm in the afternoon on the day of the incident. As I crossed the Fatullah stadium, I saw one microbus, two Rab pick up vans and two private cars parked by the road. Some people in Rab uniform looked

on while a plainclothes man was making several get off the private cars at gunpoint," he mentioned.

"Intrigued by the scene, I went ahead and asked the Rab about the criminals they caught. A Rab official came up and told me to get lost. I obliged. Later on, as allegations of abduction against the Rab unfolded, I started wondering about what I had seen," added the witness.

He earlier had given a confessional statement to a court under Section 164.

Rab officials also quizzed Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam. Talking to this newspaper, Shahidul, locally known as Shahid Chairman, said the Rab men asked him about his claim that the elite force had received a bribe of Tk 6 crore from Nur Hossain for killing the seven.

"I told them that when Nazrul's life was in danger, I employed a spy on Nur Hossain's men. The spy informed me that Tk 6 crore had changed hands," mentioned Shahidul.

He was further questioned about why he had claimed that the Rab helped Nur Hossain flee. He responded to interrogators saying: "According to some leaked telephone conversations, the Rab had been tracking Nur before and after the murder. Then why didn't the Rab nab him?"

## PROBE PROGRESS REPORTS

The government has sent to the attorney general's office three progress reports on the probes into the seven-murder incident for placement in the High Court tomorrow.

The seven-member probe body, inspector general of police and director general of Rab have sent the reports to the AG's office through their representatives in the last two days.

Deputy Attorney General ASM Nazmul Haque told this newspaper that the attorney general will place the reports to the HC tomorrow. But he refused to disclose the contents of the reports.

The HC on May 15 had directed the authorities concerned to submit the probe progress reports before it on June 4.

# Scolari unhappy

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Everything was wrong," stormed the man who took the Selecao to the 2002 title.

He told Globo television the players appeared too loose for his liking just 11 days before their first World Cup pool match against Croatia in Sao Paulo.

"When I don't like things, I have to find a solution and field it on the pitch until I am satisfied," said Scolari.

The training session saw the first-choice eleven beat the reserves 3-2 with Neymar on target for the former in front of watching actress girlfriend Bruna Marquezine.

Marquezine attracted much attention despite wearing a large hat and sunglasses as she happily signed autographs.

On his decision to leave Silva, Fernandinho and Paulinho out of the Panama test, Scolari had earlier explained Paris Saint-Germain's Silva is "undergoing recovery work on his legs" as he gets over a niggling injury.

"We have two friendlies and it is preferable to field him in either better or perfect conditions for the second match," Scolari told Fox Sports.

Paulinho of Tottenham lacks match fitness so Hernanes took his place in Sunday training.

Fernandinho is meanwhile coming off a heavy season at Premier League title winners Manchester City.

## 28 structures

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remaining illegal structures.

The eviction drive, led by Executive Magistrate Kazi Mahubul Ur Rahman, was carried out with the help an excavator, two workboats, one tugboat and around 70 labourers.

A 45-member team of Dhaka district police backed up law and order during the drive.

## Google satellites

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hopes of boosting revenues.

A separate project by Google, dubbed Project Loon, is designing high-altitude balloons to provide broadband service to remote parts of the world.

The helium-filled balloons inflate to 49ft in diameter and carry transmitters that could beam 3G-speed internet to remote regions.

Project Loon was developed in the company's X Lab by the same team behind Google Glasses and the driverless car.

It is hoped that it could save developing countries the high cost of laying fibre cables to get online and lead to a dramatic increase in internet access for the likes of Africa and south-east Asia.

## AL activist Belal

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before the same court on Sunday, while the court extended his remand by five more days.

Earlier, he was on an eight-day remand.

Jahidul was given three days' fresh remand as well.

Police are also looking for local AL leader Jahangir Adel and Ziaul Alam Mister, a bodyguard of Feni-2 AL lawmaker Nizam Hazari, according to sources.

After interrogating some of the arrestees and scrutinising a video footage of the incident, police have found the duo's links with the murder, sources said.

Sources at the Immigration said Feni police have sent a letter to the immigration authority mentioning 26 names following the murder.

In the letter, the police requested immigration authority not to allow those 26 people to leave the country, said a Special Branch (SB) official working with the immigration.

Local BNP leader Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury Minar is the lone named accused in the case filed by Ekram's brother Rezaul Haq.

Minar was arrested by the Detective Branch of police in the capital's cantonment area on May 27 and later placed on an eight-day remand.

## 7 troops among several dead as Yemen army, Shiites clash

AFP, Sanaa

Seven soldiers and several other people were killed yesterday in clashes between the Yemeni army and Shiite Huthi rebels close to the capital, tribal and medical sources said.

The clashes erupted after troops tried to expel rebels from a strategic position near Amran controlling the road to Sanaa, local officials said.

The air force intervened to back the army and its allies from the Sunni Islam party, they said.

The rebels, known also as Ansarullah and backed by local tribes, retaliated by attacking telecom installations and blocked traffic on the main Amran-Sanaa road, the officials said.

# Activism, not anarchy

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the seven-murder in Narayanganj.

Talking about the HC order, the PM on Saturday told reporters at the Gono Bhaban, "When we were still investigating the matter... and before that investigation was complete... you tell us how come a High Court bench orders arrest of the three [Rab officers]?"

Asked if he was cautioning the judiciary because it had ordered the arrest of three Rab officials, the law minister said he had made the remark considering the overall aspects of the judiciary.

An HC bench on May 11 ordered the government to immediately arrest the three Rab-11 officials, who were forced to retire for their alleged complicity in the abduction and killing of seven people in Narayanganj. In compliance with the order, law enforcers arrested them a week later.

'NO OR VERY WEAK RULE OF LAW'

Earlier, speaking at the seminar, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman sought the president's intervention in amending the NHRC Act 2009 to make the rights body more effective against "the weak rule of law" in the country.

"When there is no rule of law or very weak rule of law, human rights become the casualty. And that's the case right now in Bangladesh. We can't hide it from anyone. That's the reality," the NHRC boss said.

"The NHRC is a weak institution because of its weak law and we thus made recommendations for a change of the founding NHRC Act 2009. We sent the recommendations to the president seeking his intervention to help the rights body play a far more effective role than it is playing," he observed.

Mizanur made the comments

against the backdrop of numerous complaints regarding human rights violations, such as extra-judicial killings and abductions in the country.

He said some 90 percent of such complaints were against the law enforcers, but the commission was barred from investigating or inquiring into such human rights violations.

Describing the limitations of the NHRC and its poor resources, he said, "We have only 28 positions; eight are capable of making intellectual contributions. Tell me how can it function effectively?"

India has 600-plus staff, Afghanistan 300-plus, Nepal 300-plus and the Maldives 200-plus staff.

However, despite the limitations, people trust the NHRC, he added.

I see that whenever there is a violation of human rights in any corner of the country, people ring me at midnight or even very early in the morning, and ask me to send someone from the NHRC."

Mizanur claimed they had had bad days, problems, and hindrances but still people were welcoming the NHRC these days.

He said a special desk was set up at the home ministry to deal with queries from the NHRC. "Things are improving."

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain in his speech said the NHRC should be empowered further and should be provided with required resources so that it could act effectively.

Later at the seminar, the law minister said human rights issue is "most important" to the government.

He said, "The National Human Rights Commission has been set up, it is independent and it is allowed to probe wherever it finds that there is a deficiency in meeting the standards.

"I would also like to emphasise that the government does not interfere with the work of National Human Rights Commission and it has no intention to do so. We expect that the National Human Rights Commission will be given as such suggestions so that we can at least eradicate the problems in this sector.

"We would also like to emphasise that we are determined to at least ensure the protection that has been given in our constitution so far this subject is concerned."

Australian High Commissioner in Dhaka Greg Wilcock, Supreme Court lawyer Tania Amir and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust Director Sar Hossain also spoke on the occasion.

## Cops foil

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Huq said, "There is no provision in the International Crimes [Tribunals] Act 1973, which was amended later, to try and punish a political party" since no punishment was stipulated in the law for committing crimes against humanity as a party during the Liberation War in 1971.

Gonojagoran Mancha and other progressive groups, which have been demanding trial of war criminals as well as the Jamaat, have expressed disapproval of the statement.

The Mancha announced the sit-in programme demanding withdrawal of the statement.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a press briefing seconded the law minister's argument, and said she saw no reason behind the hullabaloo over the war crimes trial as things were going on at the right pace.

# Wrongdoers in AL

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problems, sources said.

The AL chief came up with her admonition at a joint meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee, AL advisory council, and Awami League Parliamentary Party, which she chaired at Gono Bhaban last night.

Her warning comes at a time when infighting in the party has taken a turn for worse. Several lawmakers have been accused of fanning and taking sides in the feuds in several Awami League units and its associate bodies.

She asked the lawmakers not to create their own groups within the party's units but stay in touch with the grassroots and resolve all conflicts through dialogue to make the Awami League stronger.

Hasina asked the lawmakers to visit their constituencies frequently and monitor development activities. She asked them to be prepared for any anti-government agitation the BNP-Jamaat coalition might launch in future, sources said.

Hasina directed her colleagues to be alert about the kind of people they were letting into the party.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry President Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, who is on the AL advisory council, urged Hasina to ensure political stability for investment.

He also briefed the meeting on the PM's recent visit to Japan.

Sources at the meeting said Kamal Ahmed Majumder, MP from Dhaka-15, demanded the formation of a committee for Dhaka City unit AL immediately. The last council of

Dhaka City AL was held on December 27, 2012.

## HASINA'S SPEECH

Hasina yesterday said if former president Ziaur Rahman had not died, he would have been an accused in the Bangabandhu murder case.

"Killer Mostaque murdered Bangabandhu and after Bangabandhu's assassination, he made Ziaur Rahman the army chief and that means Ziaur Rahman was linked to the conspiracy of the Bangabandhu killing," she said.

Hasina further said Ziaur Rahman was relieved due to his death. "If he were still alive, he would have been implicated in the murder case."

At the meeting she asked party lawmakers to highlight her government's achievements before the media since the media was not taking note of the achievements. "... Our media has no time and mindset to disseminate news of development activities as it is habituated to criticism," sources quoted her as saying.

She said, "If nobody talks about our development activities, then we ourselves should highlight them."

Hinting at Dr Kamal Hossain's mentioning before the High Court on May 29 that declaring 153 people elected unopposed in the January 5 election was alarming, the PM, without taking his name, said, "This person was with our party and elected MP unopposed in 1970 and 1973 from the seats vacated by Bangabandhu.

"Now this person is raising his voice against unopposed MPs and advocating against their election," she added.

# MPs, SC judges

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But in case of any criminal offence like financing or patronising terrorism and militancy, human trafficking and drug smuggling, criminal procedures will be followed, he noted.

There are now some 2,303 NGOs, including 270 foreign ones in the country, registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau.

The cabinet also approved the draft of the National Insurance Policy, 2014.

## RETRACTABLE SPIKE STRIPS

The PM yesterday turned down a few ministers' pleas for removing the recently installed retractable spike

strips on Hare Road in the capital.

The retractable spike strips were installed by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police aimed at preventing from vehicles running on the wrong side of the road.

Ministers during an informal discussion after the weekly cabinet meeting told the PM that their movements were being hampered due to the device on the road, said meeting sources.

In response, the premier questioned as to why they went to the wrong side. She said setting the device is a good initiative.

# France major worry as EU hands out policy advice

AFP, Brussels

The EU hands down its recommendations on how member countries manage their economies yesterday, a week after anti-EU populists, riding a wave of anger against Brussels and austerity, scored a stunning election breakthrough.

The harshest spotlight will be on beleaguered France, with the EU's second-biggest economy, which is struggling to reduce its public deficit while teetering on the edge of recession when recovery seems on a solid footing in much of the 28-member bloc.