

## Factional feud leaves AL man dead in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A clash between two factions of the ruling party in Chalitabari of Bogra left a local Awami League leader dead last night.

Deceased Moazzem Hossain, 55, was the vice-president of ward-7 of AL's Shakharia union unit.

He was the son of Afzal Hossain of the same village.

Police source said two groups of ruling party men led by upazila AL organising secretary Tarajul and former Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Ujjal locked in a clash over establishing supremacy in the area around 8:00pm.

Several shots were fired by both sides during the clash and Moazzem was caught in the crossfire, the sources claimed.

It was not clear who shot Moazzem.

Police reaching the spot arrested four people, including Ujjal.

The body was sent to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Tarajul blamed the men of Ujjal for Moazzem getting killed while relatives of Ujjal denied his involvement in the killing.

Police refused to disclose the names of the other three arrestees.



Police have left two barbed wire fence segments on the pavement near Tejgaon Police Station for over two weeks. The segments used for setting up roadblocks not only takes up space pedestrians need but causes their clothes to tear and rip.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## First phase

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capital. However, the traffic was lighter than the usual days.

Almost all the educational institutions remained closed yesterday considering safety of the students travelling on the roads.

The hartal also disrupted inter-district road communication across the country, causing sufferings to many.

BNP's key ally Jamaat-e-Islami is enforcing the 72-hour shutdown in two phases protesting the capital punishment of its chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, awarded by the war crimes tribunal.

The first phase of three-day hartal ended at 6:00am today. The 48-hour last bout of strike will start at 6:00am on Sunday and end at 6:00am on Tuesday.

During yesterday's hartal, police arrested at least 125 Jamaat-Shibir men across the country, report our correspondents.

A total of 70 crude bombs were recovered and over 50 people including five police personnel were injured in clashes between the law enforcers and strike supporters.

In the capital, hartal supporters set a bus on fire in broad daylight at Kadamtali area on Dhaka-Narayanganj road around 2:00pm. Fire fighters doused the flames later.

No one was injured in the incident, Mostafa Mohsin, station officer of Postogola Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

A mobile-team of magistrates sentenced four Jamaat-Shibir men to six months' imprisonment as they tried to bring out a procession in the capital's Dakkhin Khan area in the morning, local police station OC Shamim-Ur-Rahman said.

In Matuail around 8:30pm, locals captured one Mehedi Hasan when he was allegedly trying to light a parked bus after pouring petrol on it.

In Rajshahi, police arrested at least 13 leaders and activists of Jamaat-Shibir, including Jamaat's city unit chief Aatur Rahman during yesterday's hartal.

Aatur was arrested as he was involved in the September 18 attack on police at the city's Kajla area, Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Motihar Police Station, said.

The hartal supporters also clashed with police at Katakali area in Rajshahi after they were barred from blocking the Rajshahi-Natore highway yesterday. Police fired 20 rounds of gas-shells and rubber bullets to disperse them, reports our correspondent.

After the nine-day blockade and hartals from January 1 to 9, people had been almost free from such suffering. Apart from yesterday's hartal, Jamaat in last nine months enforced three-day hartal on two occasions. Besides, its associated student body Islami Chhatra Shibir, the BNP-led 20-party alliance and Sammilito Islami Dalsamuhio enforced daylong hartals on August 31, September 22 and 26 on different grounds.

## Quasem verdict Sunday

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and December 16, 1971. He was allegedly the chief of Chittagong Al-Badr.

Al-Badr was an auxiliary force of Pakistani army. Like other collaborator forces, it too directly opposed the liberation of Bangladesh, and helped the occupying army and directly took part in the torture and killing of Bangladeshis in 1971.

Motiur Rahman Nizami, the then chief of Al-Badr, on Wednesday was awarded death penalty by the tribunal for his crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

In another war crimes case, the Supreme Court may hand down its verdict in the appeal filed by condemned war criminal Muhammad Kamaruzzaman next week, a highly-placed SC source said yesterday.

The hearing of arguments in the appeal was completed last month.

The senior assistant secretary general of Jamaat was sentenced to death by the Tribunal-2 in May last year for his wartime offences committed during the Liberation War.

### QUASEM'S TRIAL

The prosecution sought capital punishment for Mir Quasem, a member of Jamaat's central executive council,

claiming that they had been able to prove 12 out of 14 charges. Like always, the defence sought his acquittal saying the prosecution couldn't prove any charges.

If convicted, the 62-year-old may face the capital punishment. Six top Jamaat leaders have already been sentenced for their 1971 crimes and two other top notches -- Abdus Subhan and ATM Azharul Islam -- are being tried in the war crimes tribunals.

On May 4, the Tribunal-2 concluded hearing the closing arguments in Quasem's case and kept the case awaiting verdict.

Fixing the verdict date yesterday, Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah asked the tribunal registrar to issue a warrant so that the jail authority produces Quasem before the court by 10:00am on Sunday.

Another member of the tribunal Justice Md Shahinur Islam was present during the announcement. Tribunal Chairman Justice Obaidul Hassan was on leave.

According to the prosecution, Quasem, president of Jamaat's then student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha's (ICS's) Chittagong town unit, colluded with the Pakistan army, Jamaat, and other anti-liberation

forces and formed Al-Badr force there in 1971.

Several Al-Badr camps were set up in Chittagong under Quasem's leadership for torturing and killing pro-liberation people. Quasem also had links with the Pak army and was directly involved in crimes like abduction, torture and murder in 1971, the prosecution said.

The prosecution produced 24 witnesses, mostly victims, and documents to prove the charges. It, however, could not produce any witness in support of two charges.

Quasem's counsels said their client was indeed involved in the ICS in 1971 but he had nothing to do with Al-Badr or any torture camp. The defence produced three witnesses to prove their claim.

Mir Quasem was born to Mir Tayeb Ali and Rabeya Begum in Munsidangi Satalori of Manikganj on December 31, 1952. He joined the ICS in 1967 when he was studying at Chittagong Collegiate School. Later, he became the president of Chittagong town unit ICS and on November 6, 1971, he became the general secretary of East Pakistan unit of the student body, according to prosecution documents.

When the ICS re-emerged as Islami Chhatra Shibir in 1977, he became its president and joined Jamaat as an activist in 1980. He now is a member of Jamaat's central executive council, the highest policy-making body of the Islamist party.

According to a defence petition filed on July 19, 2013, Quasem is the chairman of real estate company Keari Ltd and director of Diganta Media Corporation Ltd. He used to be a member secretary of Islami Bank Foundation and holds management positions in many other business ventures and organisations.

Quasem was arrested on June 17, 2012. The Tribunal-1 on May 26 took into cognisance the charges pressed by the prosecution and indicted him on 14 charges on September 5, 2013. On September 30, the case was transferred to the Tribunal-2.

The 14 charges framed against him were in connection with the killing of three named and several unnamed people and abduction, confinement and torture of at least 27 people in different incidents in Chittagong.

### KAMARUZZAMAN'S APPEAL

The ICT-2 on May 9 last year sen-

tenced Kamaruzzaman, one of the key organisers of the infamous Al-Badr force, to death after it found him guilty of mass killing, murder, abduction, torture, rape, persecution and abetment of torture in the greater Mymensingh district during the country's Liberation War.

Kamaruzzaman submitted his appeal to the apex court on June 6 last year challenging the tribunal judgment and seeking acquittal on the charges brought against him.

On September 17 this year, a four-member Appellate Division bench led by Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha concluded hearing on the appeal and kept it waiting for verdict.

Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik are the other members of the bench.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and Shishir Monir, Kamaruzzaman's lawyer, however told The Daily Star that they were not entitled to know when the court would deliver the verdict on the appeal.

The SC will register the appeal in its cause-list before the day of announcing the judgment, they said.

## Top leader's certificate found fake

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A high official in the liberation war affairs ministry, on condition of anonymity, said if Wahidur's certificate is found to be fake, the ministry will revoke it.

"According to the Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad charter, there is no scope for any person to be a leader of the organisation without having a freedom fighter certificate. If the ministry revokes Wahidur's certificate, his post will be vacated automatically," he added.

The LGED chief had managed the certificate in 2004 when the BNP-Jamaat alliance was in power.

He was to retire on December 9, 2010. But he continued in service till December 9 last year and subse-

quently got a one-year contract which will end on December 8 this year.

This newspaper on June 16 ran an investigative report titled "Bought out! Fake freedom fighters, war crimes suspect to 'ensure welfare' of war heroes". The report stated that Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, a welfare organisation for war heroes, now has fake freedom fighters and even a war crimes suspect in its central command council.

The names of Wahidur Rahman, SM Mortuja Hossain, vice-chairman; and Mahbulul Haque Chisty, secretary; appeared in the report. The trio contested the election from the panel led by Maj Gen (ret'd) GH Morshed Khan. The panel secured

all the 41 posts of the central command council.

Following the publication of the report, the ACC tasked its Deputy Director Farid Ahmed Patwari with the investigation.

The graft watchdog earlier this month summoned the three to appear before it with evidence in favour of their freedom fighter status.

Wahidur's name did not appear in the freedom fighters' list prepared by the 1996-2001 Awami League-led government and published in "Muktibarta", popularly known as Muktibarta Red Book.

The Daily Star could not know the outcome of the investigation of the certificates of Mortuja Hossain and Mahbulul Haque Chisty.

## Building a better future

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his hidden dream remained.

"I had to do something for drawing and creativity," he says. While working for a non-government organisation with the extreme poor of the North Bengali river lands, Rana dedicated his spare time to teaching rural children to draw. He organised well-received workshops at rural primary schools.

In May 2012 he decided to do more. He opened his Dinajpur town residence as a drawing school. Commencing with twelve students, his Dinajpur Drawing School has grown to 138 enrolled -- 90% of them girls.

Believing in quality tuition, Rana's school is staffed by eleven volunteers who dedicate time as mentors. "The idea is to have a mentor at hand for every ten

students," Rana says.

The school, where students work in pencil, crayon and water colours, is popular. "When can we go to drawing school?" is the first thing some students ask on a Friday morning in anticipation of class, according to parental feedback. "Every Friday is like Eid," the children say.

Classes also run on Thursdays and Saturdays, morning and afternoon. With the help of donations, fees are kept to a minimum.

Rana believes sowing the seeds of art and culture in a child's mind can bring a new dimension to just about every aspect of their lives. From planning their future homes to their professional careers, art education helps decision-making. "It also teaches better communication," he says.

From May 2013 Rana embarked on a

new venture: to bring drawing to disadvantaged children. After a process of visiting homes and interviewing parents to ensure genuinely needy children could participate, a new class was formed of students who study for free and are provided drawing materials courtesy of Rana and the school.

"I would like to develop the school into a fully fledged art institute," Rana says. To do so, he may need to change the style of tuition which currently focuses on learning to copy two dimensional examples rather than using imagination and three dimensional objects as models. However, with Rana's enthusiasm and dedication there can be no limit to what he and his students could eventually achieve. SM Sultan surely would have appreciated his efforts.

## Ebola now at 'turning point'

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several bleak months ahead, "it is finally becoming possible to see some light. In the past 10 days, the international community has belatedly begun to take the actions necessary to start turning Ebola's tide.

"The progress made is preliminary and uncertain; even if ultimately successful it will not reduce mortality or stop transmission for some time. We are not close to seeing the beginning of the end of the epidemic but [several] developments offer hope that we may have reached the end of the beginning."

Farrar's comments come as the World Health Organisation confirmed that the number of Ebola cases in Liberia has started to decline, with fewer burials and some empty hospital beds. But the WHO warned against any assumption that the outbreak there was ending.

"I'm terrified that the information will be misinterpreted," said Dr Bruce Aylward, assistant director-general in charge of the Ebola operational response.

"This is like saying your pet tiger is under control. This is a very, very dangerous disease. Any transmission change could result in many, many more deaths."

Data appears to show that the number of burials and lab tests requested for the virus are down and the numbers of empty beds in treatment centres are up there have been reports of as many as a hundred. Aylward said huge efforts to educate and inform the community on the risks of Ebola and how to avoid infection and bringing in safe burial practices may have made the difference.

But infections could shoot up again, as they did in Guinea. "The danger is that instead of a trend that takes us down to zero, we end up with an oscillating pattern," he said. Getting to zero will involve grindingly hard work, identifying every Ebola case and tracing all the contacts. Without that effort, Ebola will remain at a lower but still dangerous level.

There have now been 13,703 cases,

said Aylward, and he expected there would have been over 5,000 officially recorded deaths, although that number is not yet confirmed. Many cases and deaths are unrecorded. The death rate is 70%, although slightly better in treatment centres.

President Barack Obama on Wednesday hailed "heroic" US health workers battling Ebola, seeking to reassure the public amid controversy over quarantine measures imposed by some authorities including the Pentagon.

Speaking at the White House after meeting with returned health workers including Kent Brantly, an American doctor infected with the often-deadly disease in Liberia, Obama said those who volunteer on the front lines should be applauded for their service.

"We need to call them what they are, which is American heroes," Obama said.

"They deserve our gratitude, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and with respect," he said, adding that it was in America's interests to stop Ebola at its source.

## Bangladesh tops

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output relying on farm-related revenue, and 65 percent of the working population employed in the sector, according to Mapplecroft. The climate risk combined with food insecurity act as "threat multipliers" escalating the danger of civil conflict, it said.

"Global business and the military now view climate change as an important risk management imperative," James Allan, head of environment at Mapplecroft, said in the statement. "Identifying future flashpoints will help proactive organizations and governments make strategic decisions."

Other nations deemed at extreme climate risk included India, Pakistan and Guatemala.

Eleven countries -- South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Chad, Ethiopia, Haiti, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Burundi and Afghanistan -- faced extreme risk from both climate change and food insecurity, according to Mapplecroft.

## Khoka indicted

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Mohosin Mia, a counsel for the BNP leader, had filed the petition in which he also pleaded to the court to halt the trial proceedings against Khoka, saying the BNP vice-chairman was currently in the USA for treatment.

On October 21, the same court issued an arrest warrant for the former Dhaka City Corporation mayor in a bomb blast case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission had filed the corruption case on April 2, 2008 against Khoka, his wife Ishmat Ara, son Ishrak Hossain and daughter Sarika Sadeque for allegedly accumulating wealth worth over Tk 17.57 crore, which does not match his actual income, and concealing the information about his wealth.

Khoka's wife, son and daughter were accused of assisting him in committing the offence.

The anti-graft body pressed charges against Khoka on July 2, 2008. But the IO dropped the names of Khoka's son and daughter from the charge sheet as

their involvement was not proven in the investigation.

The ACC could not press the charge against Khoka's wife Ishmat Ara either as the High Court stayed the investigation against her after she filed a writ petition with it.

In the charge sheet, ACC Assistant Director Shamsul Alam, also the case's IO, mentioned that Khoka submitted his wealth statement showing wealth worth Tk 9.97 crore on December 6, 2007 but the ACC found wealth worth Tk 9.76 crore illegal under his ownership, which is beyond his known sources of income.

The ACC also found wealth worth Tk 9,65,03,609 that had been concealed in his wealth information submitted earlier to the commission.

Following the charge sheet, Khoka challenged its legality with the HC. The HC then stayed the trial proceedings for a long time. But on May 20 of 2012, the HC vacated the stay order and ordered the lower court to continue the trial.