

Tarique asked to appear in court on Dec 10

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday summoned BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman to appear before it on December 10 in a case filed for calling Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman "Pakbandhu" (Friend of Pakistan).

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rezaul Karim passed the order hours after Monir Khan, assistant secretary of Awami League's central sub-committee, lodged the lawsuit against the son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

In his case statement, Monir alleged that Tarique called Sheikh Mujibur Rahman "Pakbandhu" at a discussion in London on September 29.

"Sheikh Mujibur Rahman cannot be the Father of the Nation. He returned to the country with a Pakistani passport. Someone who accepts Pakistani passport even after Bangladesh's independence is a citizen of that country in the eyes of the law," Tarique told the programme at York Hall in East London.

Condemning the case filing, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the lawsuit was "false and baseless" and demanded its immediate withdrawal, said a

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Officials of Indian National Investigation Agency at a meeting with the top officials of Bangladeshi security and intelligence agencies at the home ministry yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

JAN 5 POLLS

Fakhrul slates PM's comments on critics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday lambasted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for terming people who did not support the January 5 polls "childish".

"The whole world including the EU and the USA did not accept the January 5 polls. They still hold the same view. Around 90 percent people of the country have also rejected it. But according to her [Hasina] comment, everyone at home and abroad is childish," said Fakhrul at a discussion of the Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. Hasina on Sunday in parliament said people who had rejected the January 5 polls were childish.

On HT Imam's reported statement on Chhata League activists getting jobs, Fakhrul said the adviser to the premier had claimed that some media houses had distorted his statement.

"The adviser thought people were fools; they would not understand

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NIA hands over list of suspects

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the home ministry.

Monirul, who is spearheading investigation into militancy in Bangladesh, declined to disclose the number of suspects, saying they would first examine the list as militants usually take different names to evade arrest.

The NIA is also not sure about the identity of the suspects. "Some militants are absconding after being released on bail. We will verify the list with that of the absconding ones," he added.

Sources in the home ministry, however, said there are 25 to 30 names on the list.

The NIA last month released names of 12 Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) suspects involved in the blast and announced cash rewards for information leading to their arrest. Of them, four are believed to be Bangladeshi nationals and the rest from Assam and West Bengal.

Monirul said NIA officials shared with them the information regarding Burdwan blast and the activity of the JMB. "We will investigate based on the information [of the NIA] ... We told them that we will cooperate in their investigation too."

Bangladeshi investigators sought

information from NIA officials regarding the JMB fugitives who were snatched away in an ambush on a police van in Trishal last year.

A four-member team headed by Sharad Kumar, chief of the NIA, arrived in Dhaka yesterday to discuss the blast case, arrest of the culprits and share information about the JMB operatives in both the countries. The other members are NIA Inspector General Sanjeev Singh and deputy directors general Anurag Tankha and Sajid Farid Shapoo.

Asked whether there will be any joint drive to combat militancy, Monirul said the two sides will continue to share information and separately conduct counterterrorism operations.

Representatives of Detective Branch (DB) of police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and other intelligence agencies were present at the three-hour long meeting.

Meanwhile, the home ministry yesterday formed a six-member committee to work on militancy and extend cooperation to the NIA in the investigation. Additional Home Secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed heads the committee which will have representatives of intelligence agencies.

Upon arrival in Dhaka around noon, the NIA officials first sat with senior home officials and chief of police, Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB) and the intelligence agencies.

"The NIA believes that persons of both the countries are involved in the blast in Burdwan," Senior Home Secretary Mozammel Hoque Khan said after the meeting at the home ministry.

"We will provide lawful cooperation if any Bangladeshi is involved," he said, adding, "It was decided in principle that we will look into their problems while they will look into ours."

"But the NIA is yet to give us any proof of any Bangladesh citizen's involvement in Burdwan blast," said Mozammel.

The visit comes after the arrest of alleged JMB Burdwan module chief Sajid Rahmatullah.

Sajid, whose real name in police record is Md Masum Mia alias Solesman, was also arrested in Bangladesh in a bank robbery case in 2005. He is one of the hundreds of youths who joined the JMB during its emergence in 2004-05 and actively took part in various operations.

According to police, he and five other JMB members equipped with firearms and explosives stormed into the Brac Bank's Kotalipara branch, Gopalganj and looted Tk 6.5 lakh.

"The JMB group, including Abdur Noor, Shawkat and Selim, carried out the bank robbery to collect fund for arms and explosives," said a senior police official investigating into militancy.

He confirmed that Masum became more active in militant activities after his release.

Born in an impoverished family in Farajikanda of Narayanganj, Masum went to a madrasa in Jatrabari. Later, he worked as imam of a mosque in Tungipara. He joined the outfit with the help of condemned JMB leader Salahuddin, also from Narayanganj.

Salahuddin has been absconding since armed militants snatched him from Trishal last year.

The caretaker government in 2007 began a massive drive against militants, capturing dozens of them, mostly JMB leaders and activists. Against this backdrop, many JMB operatives, including Masum crossed the border for a safe haven.

Patuakhali war crimes suspect faces 8 charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday pressed eight charges against war crimes suspect Forkan Mallik of Patuakhali for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity and genocide committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

Prosecutor Mukhlesur Rahman Badal pressed the charges that include mass killing, murder, rape, arson and forced religious conversion allegedly committed by the alleged Razakar commander, who is now 63 and hails from Chailabunia village in Mirzaganj upazila of Patuakhali.

After hearing, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 fixed November 30 to decide about taking the charges into cognisance. The tribunal would hear arguments from both the prosecution and the defence to decide about indicting Forkan if the charges are taken into cognisance.

Earlier on June 25, the Detective Branch of police arrested Forkan at Rupatali Bus Stand in Barisal. He was later shown arrested in the war crimes case. An investigation agency of the international crimes tribunals completed investigation into the allegations against him on October 27.

Forkan, who was involved in anti-liberation Muslim League in 1971, was

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21 Bangladeshis

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The Bangladeshis had first flown to Singapore from Dhaka and then entered Pekanbaru in Indonesia before attempting to enter Malaysia by sea, according to the daily.

"This is the first time Bangladeshi nationals, in a big group, have tried to illegally enter the country," The Star report said, quoting Maritime Commander Romli Mustafa, operations director of the MMEA in Klang area.

"Some of them [Bangladeshis] told us that they are here on vacation, while the Afghan said he fled his country due to unrest in his hometown. The Indonesians are believed to be the skipper of the tugboat and his helper," he said.

The Malaysian official added that none of the foreigners had proper documents.

When contacted, Sayedul Islam, counsellor (labour wing) at Bangladesh high commission in Kuala Lumpur, said they didn't have any information about the Bangladeshis.

"It is really unbelievable that the Bangladeshis tried to enter Malaysia from Indonesia. We will look into the matter," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

It couldn't be known immediately whether the Bangladeshis went to Singapore legally or not.

Accident turns 'murder'

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way to take over the business.

In December last year Jannati and Mostamsir launched Eco Sparks, a gaming zone and music cafe. It was Mostamsir's car she was driving that day.

The plaintiff in the murder case didn't say exactly how Mostamsir was "murdered". According to the post mortem report, he died in an accident and police say his seat belt was not fastened.

However, Jannati has been denied bail and taken on remand for 15 days in three phases.

With 15 persons named as witnesses, including a deputy secretary, the DG of ACC and the chief judicial magistrate of Dhaka, this is now a high-profile case.

"Mostamsir's family is influential. They are trying to be unjust to my daughter using their influences," alleged Jannati's mother Shakila Hossain, adding that they have been trying to go to the High Court for Jannati's bail.

Mostamsir's father Khan Mohammad Abdul Mannan is a former district court judge and now serving as the inspector general of registration (IGR).

"There is nothing to influence here. I filed the murder case as we thought there might be some loopholes in the police case. We want a proper investigation and will accept whatever comes out after the investigation," said Mostamsir's uncle Hannan Khan.

Hannan lodged the murder case with a Dhaka court on July 21. Accepting it, the court the next day ordered a CID investigation and merger of the murder case with the one filed for reckless driving.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hannan said Mostamsir's family didn't support the friendship between Mostamsir and Jannati.

In the last three years, Jannati along with her husband founded Velocity, a car modification com-

pany, and became managing editor of automobile magazine Torque. The couple launched two other business ventures.

THE ACCIDENT

Around 11:30pm on July 10, Jannati, her brother Junaid and Mostamsir left Eco Sparks in Uttara, according to statements of the two families.

Jannati took the wheel as Mostamsir's driver was on leave.

CID Inspector Uttam Kumar Biswas, the investigation officer of the murder case, quoted Jannati as saying she often drove Mostamsir's car and Mostamsir would seldom fasten his seat belt.

Jannati was supposed to go to Dhanmondi that night, said her mother. On their way, they dropped Junaid at their Khilkhet house. Mostamsir was supposed to go back to Uttara after dropping Jannati at Dhanmondi.

After descending the Mohakhali flyover, the car suddenly crashed against a police van parked on the street near Shaheenbagh. The front-left side of the car badly hit the back-right side of the police van, said Sub-Inspector Sardar Nizamul Haque, who was inside the van at that time.

"After patrolling Mohakhali area, we stopped near Shaheenbagh ramp of the flyover. It was around 1:00am. I was sitting next to the driver's seat," said the officer, who was then posted to Tejgaon Police Station.

"Suddenly, I heard a bang and the van then shook heavily and ran onto the footpath. My left hand was hurt," he said, adding that two Ansar members and a cop were also injured.

"As I got down off the van, I saw a car and a woman inside it screaming for help," said Nizamul.

A police team from a nearby outpost came to the spot, and with their help, "we together rescued an unconscious man from the car and took him to the nearby hospital", said

the sub-inspector, who is now with Labagh Police Station.

"As far as I can recall, he was alive at the time we rescued him."

Mostamsir was taken to Ayesha Memorial Hospital where doctors declared him dead, according to police.

Nizamul filed an accident case with Tejgaon Police Station and arrested Jannati.

"The post-mortem report states Mostamsir died in a road accident. He did not fasten the seat belt," said Mazharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station.

THE MURDER CASE

It was a pre-planned murder, Hannan Khan said in the case statement.

Hannan claimed he came to know that Mostamsir, Jannati and Junaid left Eco Sparks around 11:30pm on July 10. The siblings then took Mostamsir to an unknown place where Raymen, Jubair and Delwar joined them.

"The accused killed Mostamsir in a planned way amid rows over business and also to grab his property," he alleged.

Hannan also said that around 2:30am Mostamsir's driver Aziz informed him over the phone that Mostamsir died in an accident and his body was at Tejgaon Police Station.

Hannan along with other relatives then rushed to the police station and saw the body, read the case statement.

Shortly afterwards, Mostamsir's parents along with Law Secretary Abu Saleh Sk Mohammad Zahirul Haque, ACC Director General Kamrul Hossain Mollah, Islamic Foundation DG Shamim Mohammad Afzal and Mahbubar Rahman, then additional district judge of Narsingdi, arrived there.

Police then showed them the smashed police van, the statement added.

"But after analysing the vehicle,

we found both the front wheels of the van were punctured, the front bumper touched the ground and the engine battery was turned upside down... there was dust all over the van, even on its seats," the complainant alleged.

"All this suggested that the crash happened two-three months ago."

The directors general of ACC and Islamic Foundation and former additional district judge of Narsingdi were named as witnesses in the case statement.

The list of witnesses also includes Mizanur Rahman, deputy secretary (admin) of Law and Justice Division, and Emdadul Haque Dulu, public prosecutor of the ACC.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hannan said the persons named as witnesses are known to the family and they went to the police station hearing about the death over the phone.

But Mahbubar Rahman, now chief Judicial Magistrate of Dhaka, said he didn't know that he was made a witness in the murder case. "I came to know about it when my colleagues called me after seeing it in newspapers."

Contacted, the directors general of the ACC and Islamic Foundation said they first saw Mostamsir's body at Tejgaon Police Station on that night. They said they would tell the court whatever they knew about the incident.

CID Inspector Uttam Kumar Biswas said they found truth about the trio's leaving from the cafe, Jannati's driving Mostamsir's car and that Mostamsir sitting next to her.

They also found evidence that the car ran into the parked police van, he told The Daily Star over the phone.

He said the other accused were

Cabinet okays

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power only to Malaysian Peninsula (mainland) under government-to-government basis.

The approval was given in the regular meeting of the cabinet at the secretariat, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said the cabinet also gave the nod to the draft of an agreement for waiving visa requirements for visit of diplomats, their immediate family members and government officials of Bangladesh and Malaysia to each other's countries. Immediate family members will mean the spouses of the diplomats and their unmarried children below 21 years.

The cabinet, added Musharraf, rejected the proposal of the water resources ministry for making "Bangladesh Haor and Water Bodies Development Board" into a statutory body rather giving it the status of a department attached to the ministry.

The meeting approved the draft of the "Motor Vehicles Agreement for the Regulation and Cargo Vehicular Traffic amongst SAARC Member States" which will be placed in the ministerial meeting ahead of the ensuing Saarc

Summit.

Cargo vehicles and regular and non-regular passenger transport would come under regulation under the agreement which would enhance connectivity among the Saarc countries, said Hossain said adding that the draft proposed for multiple visa regime for the operators of the vehicles.

The cabinet endorsed a proposal for renewal of the "Agreement on Trade between the Royal Government of Bhutan and Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh" for boosting bilateral trade between the two countries. The draft proposed including the goods and services under the agreement and forming a joint working group on trade between the two countries.

The meeting adopted a resolution congratulating the Bangladesh Cricket team for its recent victory against Zimbabwe in a three-match test series at home. It also adopted an obituary reference at the deaths of two eminent citizens -- Swadhinata Padak laureate Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui and Ekushey Padak laureate Syed Moinul Hossain.

Ministers, state ministers, PM's advisers and secretaries of the ministries concerned attended the meeting.

Naogaon AL man

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Police arrested eight people from the village for their alleged involvement in the killing.

Kayemuzzaman Khan, superintendent of Naogaon police, said some unidentified criminals stabbed Ohidur and Shahinul indiscriminately in Durgapur around 12:30am. They were returning home from the AL's Naogaon district office in Chakdevpara area. The duo died on the spot.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies to Naogaon Sadar Hospital morgue for

autopsies.

Zakirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sadar Model Police Station, said rival group of Ohidul and Shahinul might have killed the duo over previous enmity.

The duo had a longstanding conflict with their rival group in Chakprachi, he said.

Victims' brother Shahidul Islam filed a murder case with the police station accusing 20 people, including the eight arrestees, the police official added.

Of the accused, the eight were named.