

Hefajat man

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his mother.

Stunned, his parents informed police who rescued him alive on Wednesday evening from a shrine in Chittagong.

Hefajat-e-Islam, after the crackdown, had claimed that law enforcers "killed" Faruk and "hid" his body along with "thousands of their activists".

However, upon primary interrogation, Faruk told police that he had fled the Shapla Chattar that day soon after police launched an attack on Hefajat activists and then he had come to Chittagong to hide in different shrines, fearing arrest.

Solaiman Bin Mobarak, Faruk's father, had sent his son to a madrasa named Ummul Kowra Islamic Academy in the capital's Badda where he was a class-five student. He had joined the Hefajat rally from there, police sources said.

Sub-Inspector Santosh Kumar Chakma of detective branch (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), who led the drive to rescue Faruk, told The Daily Star that Faruk's mother had come to the DB office on December 10.

"She told us that his son made her a phone call from Chittagong. Then she asked us to find him out," said the SI, adding that he had advised her to submit a written complaint first.

After receiving the complaint, police started probing the matter.

"At one stage of the investigation, we came to know that Faruk was residing in Miskin Shah Majar of Gani Bakery area in the city," Santosh said.

"Faruk thought police were searching for him. So he was absconding and did not even dare to contact his parents," said the SI quoting Faruk.

Faruk was handed over to his maternal uncle yesterday.

Faruk's father, however, denied his son's involvement in Hefajat's May rally. "My son did not take part in the Hefajat rally," Solaiman claimed.

Earlier Solaiman had admitted to police of his son's involvement in the rally, SI Santosh said.

Contacted, Azizul Haque Islamabadi, organising secretary of Hefajat-e-Islam, said they thought Faruk was dead as they could not find his whereabouts since the crackdown.

"At first we thought he was missing. But as he did not return to his family, nor to his madrasa, we began to believe that he was no more," said Islamabadi.

Hamid pays

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visiting Bangladesh president.

Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Vice-president Md Hamid Ansari and Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad will call on Hamid separately.

The most important part of Hamid's visit will be his meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi when they will discuss bilateral and international issues.

On Tuesday, he will go to Santiniketan to lay the foundation stone of Bangladesh Bhavan at the Visva Bharati University before returning to Kolkata and then to Dhaka on the same day.

Mamata meets Pranab

West Bengal Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee yesterday called on Indian President Pranab Mukherjee at a hospital where he is recuperating after a coronary angioplasty.

The meeting assumes significance as the President will be holding talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Md Abdul Hamid who has arrived here on a six-day visit.

Mamata is understood to have conveyed her stand on the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) with Bangladesh.

The decision to implement LBA was taken by the previous UPA government headed by Manmohan Singh and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina in September 2011.

Under the agreement, both countries will exchange land to strengthen the border.

During his visit to Assam last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said his government would go ahead with the land-swap deal with Bangladesh for a permanent solution to the infiltration problem.

Though Mamata initially had reservations against LBA, West Bengal stands benefited from the agreement by getting more land whereas Assam will be losing some land.

BSF shoots

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Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Lt Col Ariful Haque, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 18 Battalion in Panchaghat, said a battalion commander-level flag meeting was held near the border yesterday.

At the meeting, the BGB protested at the incident and asked its Indian counterpart to take action against the offenders, he said.

"The BSF said they will investigate the incident. If the BSF members are found guilty, action will be taken against the responsible BSF men," the BGB official added.

Maintain high standards

PM asks armed forces

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has been working to establish a professional and well-trained armed forces and expressed the optimism that the Armed Forces will keep intact its role in future for fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people.

"Our armed forces were established in the battlefield of the Liberation War," she said.

"I'm confident that the Armed Forces will continue to maintain its high standards in its efforts, efficiency and professionalism," the prime minister said while addressing the Graduation Ceremony of National Defence Course (NDC) and Armed Forces War (AFW) Course-2014 at Mirpur Cantonment.

Earlier, she handed over certificates among the graduating members of the two courses.

Commandant of National Defence College Lt General Mollah Fazle Akbar in his address of welcome congratulated the graduating members and thanked the faculty members and staff officers of the college.

Mentioning that the nation feels proud of its armed forces, Hasina said, "We've been working to establish a professional and well-trained armed forces. We've allocated

increased money for the armed forces in the national budgets."

She said her government has ensured that the armed forces have access to the latest technologies and equipment, and adequate training facilities have been established and made operational.

"The members of the armed forces have always worked with integrity, commitment and diligence to help the people in times of natural and other calamities and disasters. They've implemented strategic infrastructure projects and worked generally with very high standard at home and abroad."

"They've earned very good reputation at home and abroad. I hope this partnership between the people and the armed forces will be strength with the passage of time," the prime minister said.

She said the National Defence College is dedicated to train the operational and strategic leaders from home and abroad, from militaries to civil services and the policymakers. They are contributing to the promotion of a culture of peace, accountability and transparency.

She said even successful businessmen and professors of the country as well as members of parliament are showing interest in taking part in the NDC Capstone Course.

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In the meeting, the ministry decided to do an impact-assessment of the spill.

In another development, an advance team of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) arrived in Dhaka on Wednesday to support the government's cleanup efforts.

The team will help the government conduct an impact-assessment and advise on recovery and risk reduction measures, said a UNDP press release.

Other members of the team will arrive in the capital in a few days.

Led by the UNDP, this UN assistance will be supported, among others, by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Joint Environment Unit (JEU), and other partner countries including the US, the UK, France and the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism.

Meanwhile, locals continue to collect the oil from the Sundarbans area manually. So far, they sold 65,500 litres of furnace oil collected from the rivers and canals.

In a press release, the forest department said they handed 300 pairs of hand gloves to locals and requested them to use those while collecting oil.

Shipping ministry

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wrote to the shipping ministry several times seeking a permanent ban.

On December 13, Shahjahan said the oil spill would cause little harm to the Sundarbans, triggering criticisms by environmentalists.

"We've talked to foreign experts who said the oil spilled from the tanker won't harm the world's largest mangrove forest that much," said the minister, after visiting Chandpai Range of the Sundarbans.

"It won't affect dolphins and other animals as the oil has not spread that much. The oil couldn't enter the forest as fishing nets were set up on the mouths of canals to prevent its spread. Besides, local people are collecting the spilled oil," he added.

Only two days before his comment, UNDP Bangladesh Country Director Pauline Tamesis said global experience showed this kind of incident had long-term environmental consequences and it required coordinated efforts to restore the affected areas.

Meanwhile, forest officials yesterday briefed Anwar Hossain Manju, minister for environment and forest, on his return from Peru after attending the climate change conference.

They told the minister that though the impact of the oil spill was already

visible, it would have a long-term effect on the mangrove forest.

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Exonerated 70yrs

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someone who had been involved in the search. Most of the evidence from the original trial was gone and almost all the witnesses were dead.

It took Mullen nearly four times as long to return her decision on Stinney Jr's case than it had originally taken to arrest and have him executed in 1944, and said in her ruling that she could "think of no greater injustice" than the boy's case.

Judge Mullen found that Stinney Jr's confession was "highly likely" to have been coerced by authorities, while few or no witnesses were found to have testified in the trial.

The judge said she was overturning the boy's conviction because the South Carolina court had failed to grant a fair trial in 1944.

Land key

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Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council.

Observing that the hill women and girls are being treated as "war booty" like the Pakistan army did in 1971, Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushib Kabir, also member of the International CHT Commission, demanded stern punishment for the perpetrators.

In a keynote paper, Binota Moy Dhamai of Kapaeng Foundation said Dhaka affirmed in the second cycle of UPR of the United Nations Human Rights Council on

Bangladesh, held in Geneva in April last year, that it would take measures to end the culture of impunity and punish human rights violators in CHT.

His case has long been spoken of as an example of how a black person could be railroaded by a justice system during the era of Jim Crow segregation laws where the investigators, prosecutors and juries were all white.

The boy's family have insisted that he was innocent, and in January they asked a local judge to order a re-trial and clear Stinney Jr's name, claiming there was new evidence about the crime.

This time Stinney Jr's case was

given a two day hearing in which experts questioned his confession and the autopsy findings, while the judge heard accounts from the boy's surviving brothers and sisters, and

Myanmar border guards kill Rohingya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Myanmar Border Guard Police (BGP) shot dead a Rohingya fisherman when he was fishing in the Naf river in Teknaf upazila yesterday morning.

The dead is Kala Mia, 40, Kala, a Myanmar national, with his family had been living in Teknaf illegally for long, according to police.

Moktar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Model Police Station, said Kala along with two other fishermen went to Nila point of the river for catching fish in the morning.

When Kala was netting fish in the river around 6:00am, the BGP men asked Kala to come to them. But Kala did not respond to the BGP's call. The BGP men then opened fire on Kala, leaving him dead on the spot, he added.

At least 28 people were killed and dozens were injured in the latest clashes between armed groups in the Central African Republic, police said yesterday.

"Violent clashes broke out on Tuesday in the centre of Mbres," an official from the armed police told AFP, adding that the death toll had been given by the local Red Cross.

The clashes in the former French colony were the latest pitting the so-called "anti-balaka" militia formed by the Christian majority against mainly Muslim rebels who led a March 2013 coup, the official said.

Mbres, 300 kilometres (190 miles) from the capital Bangui, has been the scene of several clashes in recent weeks.

Central African Republic has suffered numerous coups and bouts of instability since independence in 1960, but the March 2013 toppling of Francois Bozize's regime by the Seleka rebel coalition triggered the worst emergency to date.

Relentless attacks by the mainly Muslim rebels on the majority Christian population spurred the formation of vigilante groups, who in turn began exacting revenge on Muslim civilians, driving them out of most parts of the country.

Several thousand people were killed in the tit-for-tat attacks, which plunged the population of 4.8 million into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

Abu Ahmed Jomadar, a district judge and joint secretary to the law ministry. A gazette notification was issued in this regard yesterday, according to a press release.

The two judges have been asked to join their new workplaces on December 22.

The transfers have been made as per Supreme Court's advice for ensuring transparency in the trial of the cases against Khaleda and others, said a law ministry high official, requesting anonymity.

She and her lawyers had been causing delay in the cases' proceedings for around one year, giving different excuses, he said.

She filed two writ petitions with the HC, challenging the legality of the appointment of Bashudev to the Special Judge Court-3 of Dhaka. The HC rejected her petitions and the Appellate Division upheld the HC orders.

Khaleda then sought transfer of the cases to another judge's court.

The transfer of Justice Bashudev will not hamper the cases' trial, the official said.

The attorney general said the no-confidence petitions became void following the transfer order. Judge Abu Ahmed will continue the trial proceedings from the point Judge Bashudev finished, he added.

On Wednesday, Judge Bashudev recorded depositions in the corruption cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, and fixed December 24 for further recording.

The anti-graft body filed the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case in 2009 against seven people in connection with embezzlement of over Tk 2.1 crore. The other case was filed in 2011 accusing Khaleda and three others of abusing power in setting up the charitable trust.

At around midnight of August 21, 1971, the victims were abandoned in front of their house. Afterwards, they, along with their family, were forced to leave for India.

According to an ACC source, Moosa told interrogators that he was

In the cold

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Wednesday but they did not accept those.

"We will accept the relief of the government if they give it to every victim," Ananda Chakma, member of Burigat union told The Daily Star.

He said the indigenous people had come forward with rice and clothes to help the victims that too were insufficient.

Several hundred Bangalee settlers on Tuesday attacked the indigenous village and torched houses on the pretext that the ethnic people had chopped down the settlers' pineapple plants and teak saplings.