

Don't take

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Reporters Without Borders, also known as Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), is a France-based international non-profit, non-governmental organisation that promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina violated the media's right to inform when she accused the English-language The Daily Star newspaper of supporting the banned radical Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir by publishing a report about its recent poster campaign," read the statement.

"We condemn these disproportionate reactions to The Daily Star article and we request that no judicial action be taken against this newspaper," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"Covering the activities of a radical Islamist group, even one that has been outlawed, is not the same as supporting it. You just have to look at the international media coverage of Islamic State to understand that. The prime minister's statement was surprising, to say the least, and represented a denial of the right to information."

The Daily Star on February 11 published a snapshot of the poster under the headline "Fanatics raise their ugly heads again".

The caption of the photo said, "Taking advantage of the current political crisis in the country accompanied by wanton violence, banned extremist Islamist organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir published and pasted posters in the capital in an attempt to foment unrest within the armed forces. This poster was found pasted on a wall in an alleyway near the Bangla Motor intersection yesterday."

Speaking in the House on February 18, the PM said "[legal] action will be taken against those who tried to patronise Hizb ut-Tahrir by publishing its poster."

Her announcement came three days after a lawyer filed a complaint in a Dhaka magistrate's court against the editor and publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Chief News Editor Syed Ashfaqul Haque and Chief Photographer SK Enamul Haq.

Tension has been growing between the media and certain political parties whose supporters have been using violence against journalists, the organisation said, adding that the authorities are also taking a tougher line with news outlets they regard as overly critical.

Gayle sets

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Zimbabwe had their run-chase trimmed to 363 from 48 overs under the Duckworth-Lewis method after rain briefly interrupted the contest and they initially made a good fist of it.

Brendan Taylor was unfortunate to be dismissed for 37 after a controversial third umpire referral and middle order batsmen Sean Williams (76) and Craig Ervine (52) also put in good shifts.

When Gayle (2-35) returned with the ball to dismiss Ervine and Stuart Matsikenyeri (19) with his off-spin, however, the writing was on the wall for Zimbabwe and they were all out for 289 in the 45th over.

After starting their campaign with an embarrassing upset at the hands of Ireland, West Indies look on course for a place in the quarterfinals after impressive wins over Pakistan and now Zimbabwe.

The match had started well for the Africans with Tinashe Panyangara bowling Dwayne Smith for a duck on the second ball and coming within a whisker of dismissing Gayle lbw in the same over.

Gayle, under fire after a poor run of form, made the most of the reprieve even if the stifling of his aggressive instincts meant his 22nd one-day century was by no means the most fluent of his career.

Once he reached the milestone with the first ball of the battling powerplay, however, he punished the Zimbabwean bowlers as only he can, smashing the ball around the ground almost at will.

He had brought up his 50 and century with singles but it was with a four that he reached the historic double century in the 46th over, the first non-Indian to achieve the feat.

Samuels, meanwhile, was caution personified for most of his 156-ball innings until finally cutting loose as he and Gayle hammered 152 runs off the last 10 overs.

Gayle's innings sparked a stream of plaudits on Twitter.

"Finally he's got a double hundred in one day cricket! That doesn't surprise me who else than @henrygayle what a stage to get it tho," tweeted India's Yuvraj Singh.

His boss at Indian Premier League outfit Royal Challengers, Vijay Mallya said the innings was a perfect response to those who wanted him dropped.

"@henrygayle silences his critics and gives a fitting answer to all the recent comments on Twitter. Our big man creates even more records," wrote Mallya, who also owns the Force India F1 team.

February wasted in shutdown

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alliance, are aimed at putting pressure on the Awami League-led government to call for an early national election under a non-partisan administration.

But the mindless violence during the hartals and blockade has ruined the lives of common people. The economy has been hit hard and education has been messed up by the programmes. People cannot move freely as the agitation has so far claimed at least 75 lives and injured around 1,236.

Yet, there is no sign of an end to the political crisis. None of the rival political parties are ready to budge on their stance.

BNP Joint Secretary General Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday issued a press release announcing the extension of the 72-hour hartal that began on Sunday morning.

This means, the BNP-led alliance has now called hartals for all the 20 working days in this month. It did not enforce shutdown on the weekends.

As regards the blockade, even the weekends including February 21 (Saturday) were not free from the purview of the programme. The nation on that day observed International Mother Language Day.

Interestingly, the alliance has been staging agitations without its leaders taking to the streets.

PEOPLE SUFFER MOST

Already pushed into a tight corner, people are coming out of their houses to earn their livelihood. Their normal movement within and outside the cities have been hampered gravely by the agitation programmes.

A retired college teacher in Bogra, 62-year-old Nasimuddin Pramanik said:

"I saw non-cooperation movements against Pakistan in the 60's. People had given their full support to the political programmes. If the grave political situation lingers on, they would die a pauper, feared Talukder."

His wife came to Dhaka on January 2 to see their newborn grandson, but now she cannot return home for fear of arson attacks.

Shikha Teresa, an NGO employee in the capital's Malibagh, said her school-going daughter's classes remain suspended on weekdays. Shikha was worried about her exam results.

Kallol Biswas, executive of a private firm in Habiganj, said he did not visit his parents in last three months as fear of arson attacks looms large.

Sohel Talukder, president of

Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, said the number of passengers on the inter-district bus networks have declined by over 50 percent since the blockade started last month.

Besides, no public transport plies the highways after 9:00pm as per a government directive.

"Most of the transport owners are small businessmen. Already counting losses, many of them cannot repay bank loans," he added.

Transport workers, who work for daily wages, have been left helpless by the political programmes. If the grave political situation lingers on, they would die a pauper, feared Talukder."

Zinnur Ahmed Chowdhury, secretary general of Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh, said more passengers are now opting for air trips to avoid risky highways.

Hossain Khaled, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI), said though the situation in the capital seems to be normal, it is not indicative of the state of affairs outside Dhaka.

"I have a jute business. But for the last two months, I couldn't transport a single truckload of jute to Comilla," he mentioned.

Farmers also cannot sell their pro-

duce while supplies of farm inputs are getting hampered. All these will have a long-term impact on the economy.

If the businesses fail to arrange shipments of export products in time, buyers will move to other countries even paying at around 10 percent higher prices than in Bangladesh, said the DCCI president.

Kazi Akramuddin Ahmed, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said the businesses have already incurred a loss of Tk 100,000 crore due to the agitation programmes.

The education ministry will decide today on the SSC and equivalent exams slated for tomorrow, said ministry sources.

Meanwhile, alleged blockaders on Monday night torched a vegetable-laden truck on Bogra-Rangpur highway in Bogra Sadar upazila.

In Dinajpur, miscreants burnt a Dhaka-bound bus of Shyamoli Enterprise and torched a banana-laden truck on Jaipur-Bogra highway in Khetlal upazila.

The Rab-3 said it recovered eight abandoned patrol bombs in the capital's Khilgaon yesterday afternoon.

ISIS kidnaps

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The 90 Assyrians were kidnapped after IS fighters overran the villages of Tal Shamiram and Tal Hermuz, which had been under the control of Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG) fighters.

Fierce clashes broke out on Monday between IS and YPG forces for control of the two villages as well as the nearby town of Tal Tamr, which remains under Kurdish control.

After the clashes, ISIS forces set fire to part of a church near Tal Tamr, before installing some of their fighters in the remains of the building, the Syrian Revolution General Commission activists reported.

The US-led coalition fighting IS, which has backed Kurdish forces battling the group, then bombed the building on Monday, destroying it and killing IS forces inside, the SRGC said.

Control of Hassakeh province is largely divided between Kurdish forces, who in some places patrol with regime troops, and IS fighters.

YPG fighters have since last week been advancing in the province, expanding on their gains further west in Raqa and Aleppo provinces.

Since recapturing the strategic border town of Kobane in Aleppo from IS fighters on January 26, YPG forces have taken dozens of nearby villages.

Who killed them

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Prof Mizanur Rahman, chairman of the National Human Rights Committee, questioned the police version.

"If it were an incident of mob beating, why would I have to shoot them to death? ... so, your [police] version doesn't really add up. By saying all these, you [police] are making your role even more questionable," he told a TV channel yesterday.

The bodies of the three teens bore 57 bullet wounds, morgue sources said.

They were identified yesterday as Robin, 15, Sumon, 17, and Jewel, 15. They used to live at Mirpur's Adarshagar.

Robin and Sumon were identified by their families at Dhaka Medical College morgue. Jewel, who had no relatives in the city, was identified by locals.

The three worked as part-time helpers of human hauliers but would sometimes attend programmes of various political parties, including the Awami League, according to their friends.

How they were caught also remains unclear. Locals have seen them being held by six to seven people, but it was not a mob.

And even if it were a mob, how they got firearms is also a big question.

The three along with their friend Rony would sometimes spend five to six hours a day at a video games shop at Adarshagar, said locals.

Locals at Mirpur's Baishbari, where they were killed around 10:00 on Sunday night, said they heard only gunshots coming from an alley but did not see or hear any chases at the time. They saw pools of blood, bullet cases and bloody ropes in the alley the next morning.

According to the police inquest reports, the body of Robin bore 22 bullet wounds, the body of Sumon 19, and the body of Jewel 16.

Meantime, police have changed the location from where the three were caught.

Nisharul Arif, deputy commissioner (Mirpur division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told this paper yesterday that locals caught them from Manipur High School and College on Rokeya Sarani at Shewrapara on Sunday night.

The CNG-run auto-rickshaw was going to Chaudhogram from Miabazar in Comilla, locals said.

His version contradicts the inquest report prepared by Sub-inspector Masud Parvez of Mirpur Police Station.

In the report, Masud, also investigating officer of the case, claimed locals caught the three near the Krishibid Bhaban on Rokeya Sarani at Kazipara.

The Manipur school is about 200 yards from the Krishibid Bhaban.

Police claimed they had recovered two litres of petrol, two firebombs and three crude bombs from the spot.

DC Nisharul said police were investigating the incident and that they already collected the names of those who had sent the three with petrol bombs.

Halima Begum, grandmother of Robin, said, "So many bullet holes in the bodies. Who could do such a heinous crime?"

She said Robin had gone out of home on Sunday morning without having any food. Usually he would return home for lunch, but he did not do so that day, she added.

Later in the evening, his friend Rony told her that Robin went to Sylhet with some friends.

Sumon's mother Jotsna, who works as a domestic help in the area, said she went out of home in the morning when she last saw her son. Later, she saw the news of three youths being killed on TV.

Jotsna said her son was innocent.

"He was not in politics. I raised him amid hardship. Why did he have to die in this way?" she asked.

7 killed

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The dead are Rosina Akhter, 45 and her daughter Sumaiya Akhter, 7, Kulsum Akhter, 35, Jasmine Akhter, 35, and her daughter Dolly Akhter, 5, auto-rickshaw driver Feroze Miah, 35, and an unidentified man.

The injured were taken to Chaudhogram Upazila Health Complex and were later released after primary treatment.

The CNG-run auto-rickshaw was going to Chaudhogram from Miabazar in Comilla, locals said.

Fix the error, not the mirror

FROM PAGE 1

telling the truth. It's rather a one-sided friendship that helps us do things right. We need a reflection in the mirror to find out the problems in our looks, dress, makeup and the way we carry ourselves. It indicates what errors need to be fixed and how. Even if there is no flaw, we need our mirror to tell: 'Go ahead and feel good'. We just cannot think of a public appearance without a mirror vetting.

How do we react after finding faults in the reflection? We don't reject the reflection. We zero in on the wrong and get it right. We work on it till the mirror agrees with the fixing. No one wants to look funny, after all.

Who does not trust a mirror? Mirror is not devised to produce a deceiving image. It reflects as it is. Even the ugliest person on the planet keeps a mirror and doesn't say: Oh no, it cannot be me or the mirror must be giving a wrong reflection to tarnish my image! There may be a few faulty mirrors that give way reflections. But, no buys those for use, as everybody wants to see a true reflection.

Do we ask a mirror to reflect us as we wish for? Mirror is unable to make up things. If not mad, no one will say: Mirror, mirror make an error -- show me beautiful. One can create a mirror maze, but it's only a temporary visual distortion.

Though the media plays a far bigger role but it, in many ways, does the same job as a mirror, reflecting the good, the bad and the ugly in a society. An independent media strives to be perfect like a mirror, quickly helping

people with the right information. It exposes devils, discloses evils and digs out the truth from a heap of lies in the society. News aside, it also provides views to shape any important opinion or help policymakers take right decision. And like a mirror, the lone motive of a free media is to help.

But some influential people -- crooked politicians, the corrupt and criminals -- do not like to see their reflections in the media mirror. They doubt, publicly at least, their reflections, and angrily say: Oh no, it cannot be me, and then they go on to claim that it is a visual trick to taint their image. Instead of fixing the error, they try to fix the mirror. That's the case with all the governments that have ruled Bangladesh. And that's how crimes and problems are harboured for long till those turn grave enough to get the governments out of power in the end. Sadly though, it's the people who suffer for the denial of their reflections in a free media.

Unscrupulous leaders, ominous elements within government machinery and the top-flight corrupt fancy having the media to reflect the image they would like. But like a mirror, a free media just cannot be fixed. At worst, one can break it and live a life without a mirror.

So, they try differently by covertly owning or manipulating a section of the media. But reflections in the controlled media are just like visual distortions to people, who always turn to free media for authentic information. A free media is after all the mirror they need.

Applications are invited to fill up following vacancies:

SL	Post & Scale of pay	Qualifications & Experience
01	Vice Principal (Male) Salary: Negotiable	Masters (preferably in English) with 20 years teaching experience in reputed Schools of the country. Candidate having experience of working as Vice Principal for minimum 3 years in reputed English Medium School