

# Repatriated

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The six arrestees were handed over to Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station yesterday.

Mohammad Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, said police sent 120 victims home in buses.

**24 MINORS AMONG VICTIMS**  
Police and representatives of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) and International Organisation for Migration identified 24 victims as minor.

Aged between 15 and 17, they were handed over to the BRCS after a Cox's Bazar court yesterday allowed the organisation to take the minors to home. The order came after the BRCS filed a petition to the court seeking its permission.

Volunteers of the BRCS would accompany each of the 24 minors to home, said Nurul Absar, acting chairman of the Cox's Bazar unit of BRCS.

# Lawmaker's son

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during remand.

Bakhtiar, however, claimed he was unaware about any death.

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested him at his Dhanmondi house on May 31, about one and a half months after the incident. He was put on four-day remand on Tuesday, nine days after his arrest.

The detectives also held the SUV driver Imran Fakir the same day and seized the pistol, 21 rounds of bullets and two cellphones.

Bakhtiar also told the detectives during remand that he was drunk at the time of shooting.

He drank liquor at a bar at Bangla Motor in the evening of April 13 and joined a DJ party at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel that night, a DB official quoted Bakhtiar as saying.

He went to New Eskaton area around 1:30am in his a SUV to drop one of his friends but caught in severe traffic jam at Dilu Road entrance near the daily Janakantha office.

On June 1, Bakhtiar was produced before a Dhaka court with a 10-day remand prayer. The court however granted four days for his remand.

Asked why he was taken on remand so late, a police official said: "Because he had fallen sick."

The shooting left at least three people injured that night. Of them, rickshaw puller Abdul Hakim, 30, died 16 hours later at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Yakub Shikdar, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver of the Janakantha, too died there on April 23.

Speaking anonymously, a DB official said they had identified Bakhtiar and his driver by examining the CCTV footage collected from the Janakantha office.

Driver Imran had already made a confessional statement before a magistrate's court, he said.

Rickshaw puller Hakim's mother Monwara Begum, who had filed a case with Ramna police on April 15 accusing unnamed persons, meanwhile was unaware that the arrests.

Sitting inside her shanty at the capital's Modhubagh, Monwara, 55, said she had only God to rely on for justice.

As this correspondent told her that the suspected killer was an influential person and had been arrested, she said: "There is no justice for the poor. I will seek justice to Allah."

Bakhtiar's mother Pinu Khan, also Mahila Awami League general secretary, said the allegation brought against her son was totally false.

"He was beside his ailing daughter at the Apollo Hospitals that night. His daughter died there on April 15," Pinu said over the phone last night.

It was impossible for a father to get drunk at a time when his daughter was fighting for life, she claimed.

# ISIS blows up

# Syria gas pipeline

AFP, Beirut

Jihadists from the Islamic State group blew up a pipeline feeding natural gas from eastern Syria to the suburbs of the capital Damascus early yesterday, a monitor said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said IS blew up the pipeline near the T-4 military airport in the east of central Homs province shortly after midnight.

"This pipeline was used to carry gas into the suburbs of Damascus and Homs to generate electricity and provide heating in individual homes," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman.

IS has seized a number of oil and gas fields in Homs province, most recently during its offensive on the ancient city of Palmyra.



A number of children who had been brought back from Myanmar are seen at a temporary camp set up at the Cox's Bazar Cultural Centre yesterday. Among the Bangladeshi illegal migrants, captured by the Myanmar authorities at sea and repatriated to Bangladesh, 24 are children.

PHOTO: STAR

# S Korea leader postpones US trip amid MERS scare

AFP, Seoul

South Korean President Park Geun-Hye has postponed a planned trip to the US, her spokesman said yesterday, amid growing public alarm over the MERS outbreak which has now claimed nine lives.

The decision to delay the June 14-18 visit came after Park's administration came under fire for what critics say has been an insufficient response to the crisis.

"President Park decided to postpone the US trip in order to help end the outbreak of MERS and take care of public safety," her senior press secretary Kim Sung-Woo told reporters.

# Politics changes

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In the wake of BNP's changed strategic position, the AL did not think it necessary to come up with any new programmes to encounter the opposition. Over the last two months, the AL has confined its activities mainly to observing some special days and occasions.

Contacted, Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin, a presidium member of the AL, said when the opposition announces agitation programmes the AL also announces programmes.

"What more can be done?" he asked.

He, however, said the party has been holding councils in the district and upazila level units and these are also activities of a political party.

Yet, the AL seems to have stepped into an unprecedented comfortable zone as it has got a free rein in the country's political landscape.

It is because outside parliament the AL and the AL-led government do not face any strong opposition which may challenge the party politically.

Inside parliament, the situation is more comfortable for the party. Almost the full House is with the AL-led government. The obsequious opposition, the Jatiya party, never says "no" to the government.

The JP itself suffers from identity crisis. Some of its MPs have joined the Sheikh Hasina-led cabinet of the new government. The party chief Ershad has been made the prime minister's special envoy with the status of a minister.

Therefore, it may never be possible for the JP and the leaders of the opposition to act like a genuine parliamentary opposition.

How can poor performance of an opposition leader benefit the government? Consider an example from the period of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who was known worldwide as the iron lady.

Thatcher was mired into deep controversy over Westland Company affairs. She was accused of violation of a constitutional convention. Two of her cabinet ministers had to resign. She too had to face the music in the House of Commons in January 1986.

The day the House of Commons debated the issue, Thatcher remarked to one of her close friends that she might cease to be the prime minister by six o'clock that evening if things went bad.

But an inept speech by the then leader of the opposition, Neil Kinnock, appeared as a blessing for Thatcher. Kinnock's poor performance enabled Thatcher to distance herself from the Westland controversy.

Raushan Ershad, leader of the opposition in our parliament, has never caused any pain for the prime minister or her government in the last one and a half years. All signs show she will remain loyal to the prime minister in the coming days as well.

The prevailing situation, however, does not bode well for our democracy and good governance as it is marked by a serious lack of checks and balances in the state power. There is no strong

"We asked for understanding from the US government and both nations agreed to reschedule the trip at the earliest convenience," he said.

Two new deaths and 13 new cases were confirmed on Wednesday, bringing the total number of deaths to nine and the number of infections to 108 in the outbreak, the health ministry said.

The first infected patient was diagnosed on May 20 after a trip to Saudi Arabia.

The 68-year-old man spread the germs, visiting four medical facilities and infecting other patients and health care workers.

force in and outside parliament to hold the government accountable in real terms. Such a political context increases the risks of giving rise to an authoritarian regime.

This situation is also unhealthy for the AL itself. The party now feels little need for carrying out political programmes to enhance its organisational capacity and drum up people's support for it.

As the ruling party, it is also unable to keep an eye on the government's efforts to implement the party's own policies and electoral pledges.

In an ideal democracy, the political party in power keeps an eye on the government's functions.

"Political parties facilitate accountability of government. Parties monitor the performance of the government. When they are in power, parties keep an eye on implementation of their own policies and electoral pledges," says eminent political scientist Rounaq Jahan in her latest book "Political Parties in Bangladesh: Challenges of Democratisation" about functions of the parties.

But exactly the opposite is happening in our country now, and this is happening as the party itself is not functioning as per its own charter. It also exposes the absence of intra-party democracy within the AL.

The AL's highest policymaking body, the party presidium, had its last meeting in November 2013. The advisory council, formed in early 2013 and considered the party's think-tank, held its second meeting in April this year. The national committee has not sat since October 13, 2012, though its meeting is mandatory every six months as per the party's charter.

All these forums provide scopes for their members to debate and discuss various political issues and thus decide the party's right course of actions.

The AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), however, sits almost regularly. But the meeting does not pave the way for holding debates and discussions on policy issues.

However, the ALCWC which emerges as the most powerful body in making decisions faces no scrutiny from its superior body due to ineffectiveness of the national committee.

The advisory council, which is empowered by the party charter to provide the party with necessary advices and directives on various issues, also does not have any say as it does not sit to review the situation, whether national or international.

The Dhaka city unit of the party is facing more abnormal situation. The city unit held its council in December 2012 but is yet to get any committee.

In the run up to the 2008 December parliamentary election, the AL in its electoral manifesto pledged to ensure internal democracy within the party. More than six years have since passed, but the situation has rather deteriorated.

Thus the demand for ensuring intra-party democracy for improving the state of the country's democracy has gone in vain.

# Medical Miracle

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The 27-year-old had an ovary removed at age 13, just before she began invasive treatment for sickle cell anaemia.

Her remaining ovary failed following the treatment, meaning she would have been unlikely to conceive without the transplant.

Experts hope that this procedure could eventually help other young patients.

The woman gave birth to a healthy boy in November 2014, and details of the case were published yesterday in the journal Human Reproduction.

**NEW HOPE**

The woman, who has asked to remain anonymous, was diagnosed with sickle cell anaemia at the age of five.

She emigrated from the Republic of Congo to Belgium where doctors decided her disease was so severe that she needed a bone marrow transplant using her brother's matching tissue.

But before they could begin the bone marrow transplant, they needed to give her chemotherapy to disable her immune system and stop it from rejecting the foreign tissue.

Chemotherapy can destroy the ovarian function, so they removed her right ovary and froze tissue fragments. At that time, she was showing signs of puberty, but had not yet started her periods. Her remaining ovary failed at 15.

Ten years later, she decided she wanted to have a baby, so doctors grafted four of her thawed ovarian fragments onto her remaining ovary and 11 fragments onto other sites in her body.

The patient started menstruating spontaneously five months later, and became pregnant naturally at the age of 27.

The gynaecologist who led the treatment to restore the patient's fertility, Dr Isabelle Demeestere, told the BBC the patient was very stressed during the procedure because it was her only option to have a child, but that now she "is of course very happy and is enjoying her new life".

# SQ Chy case

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seeking acquittal.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star on May 29 that the apex court may start holding the hearing on Salauddin's appeal on June 16. He hoped that most of the pending nine war crimes related appeals would be heard and disposed of within this year, if the SC's current pace of hearing and disposing of such appeals remains.

The Appellate Division of the SC on May 27 concluded hearing the appeal of war crimes convict Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, and fixed June 16 for delivering the verdict.

Appeals of Mojaheed and Salauddin were on the hearing list of the Appellate Division since April.

Apart from Mojaheed and Salauddin, other war crimes related appellants were Jamaat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami and its leaders Mir Quasem Ali, ATM Azharul Islam and Abdus Subhan, expelled Awami League leader of Brahmanbaria Mobarak Hossain and former state minister of HM Ershad's regime Syed Mohammad Qaisar.

The two international crimes tribunals convicted and sentenced them to death for their crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

Besides, the government has submitted an appeal to the SC seeking death penalty for Abdul Jabbar, former Jatiya Party lawmaker, now on the run. The Tribunal-1 on February 24 this year sentenced Jabbar to imprisonment until death for committing crimes against humanity in 1971.

The Tribunal-1 so far disposed off nine cases filed against eight war criminals, while the Tribunal-2 settled 10 cases of war crimes offences committed by 12 people.

# Zafrullah serves

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given the sentence "considering his age".

Zafrullah said he would appeal against the order with the Supreme Court.

Earlier, he faced contempt charges before Tribunal-1, but the court pardoned him with a warning.

But the Tribunal-2 found the statement Zafrullah and 49 others issued over Bergman's punishment "contemptuous" and punished him for repeating the offence.

The tribunal, however, acquitted 22 eminent citizens with a caution as they "were not well aware of the consequence of their action" and as they regretted their action, one they committed for the first time.

They are Masud Khan, Afsan Chowdhury, Ziaur Rahman, Hana Shams Ahmed, Anu Muhammad, Anusheh Anadil, Muktasree Chakma Sathi, Lubna Marium, Farida Akhter, Shireen Huq, Ali Ahmed Ziauddin, Rahnuma Ahmed, Shahidul Alam, CR Abrar, Bina D'Costa, Mahmud Rahman, Zarina Nahar Kabir, Leesa Gazi, Shabnam Nadiya, Nasrin Siraj Annie, Tibra Ali and Delwar Hussain.

The court earlier exonerated 26 signatories from the charge as they apologised unconditionally while another signatory -- Khushi Kabir -- withdrew her name from the statement.

On December 2 last year, the Tribunal-2 found Bergman, editor (special reports) of English daily New Age, guilty of contempt for writing two blog posts in January 2013 on the verdict of war crimes convict Abul Kalam Azad. He was sentenced to imprisonment "till rising of the court" that day and fined Tk 5,000.

On December 20, the daily Prothom Alo ran a report titled "50 people express concern over Bergman's punishment," which stated that the order would restrict freedom of expression.

"The sentencing of David Bergman is nothing but a continuation of curbing of all forms of freedom of expression and difference of opinion about the International Crimes Tribunal," read the statement.

**'DON'T TOUCH, DON'T TOUCH'**  
On April 1 this year, the tribunal initiated contempt proceedings against 23 signatories as it was not convinced with their replies. During the trial, they argued that their statement fell under the parameter of fair criticism and that they had no intention to hurt the court.

But in its order, the tribunal said, "Threadbare discussion made above, patently reveals that the opinion expressed in that respect [freedom of expression] was not based on facts. Their opinion was proved to be abso-

lutely omnibus."

The court said the "impugned statement" created a sense among the general people that grave injustice has been done to Bergman by punishing him for his writings.

"This is a classic example of scandalising a court of law even though not having any iota of truth in such statement which is enough to create mystification in the mind of public as to fairness, dignity and independence of the tribunal," the orders said.

When the tribunal completed reading the summary of the 37-page order, Zafrullah went before the court's podium and appealed for stay of the order.

The tribunal rejected his plea, and when the judges left the court at 11:25am, Zafrullah was heard saying: "You have misused your power."

As per the order, when police asked him to stand in the dock, he refused. Two cops then tried to take him to dock holding him by his hands. At this, Zafrullah and other accused present there shouted: "Hey! Don't touch, don't touch."

At one stage, police personnel and tribunal officials requested him to comply with the order, but to no avail.

This continued for several minutes and at one point tribunal officials asked all but Zafrullah to leave the courtroom.

Around 12:50pm, Zafrullah agreed to stand in the dock once the tribunal officials showed him the order, tribunal sources said. He came out of the courtroom around 1:50pm smiling while those outside the court clapped.

Zafrullah then told reporters that he would not pay the fine because he would challenge the order in seven days.

Under the tribunal law, contempt convicts cannot challenge its order, but the High Court has recently observed that they can.

Earlier, the tribunal sentenced two Jamaat leaders to three months in jail for contempt in June 2013.

**NEW YORK TIMES**

The tribunal yesterday asked the authorities of the New York Times to be careful in publishing any news concerning the tribunal's order.

The court gave the caution as it found that an editorial of the newspaper regarding Bergman's punishment "did not reflect the principles and ethics newspapers should follow".

In its editorial titled "Muzzling Speech in Bangladesh" published on December 23 last year, the NYT said: "If justice is truly what the International Crimes Tribunal seeks, it should immediately overturn Mr. Bergman's sentence and conviction."

# Indian troops strike

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that guerrillas were plotting more ambushes after last week's attack on a convoy. It said soldiers inflicted "significant casualties" but gave no details.

Myanmar yesterday denied the media reports that Indian forces had attacked insurgents inside its territory and said it would not tolerate rebel groups using its soil to attack neighbours.

The Indian press cited sources as saying soldiers had crossed into Myanmar and killed up to 100 militants who escaped across the border, after coordination between the two countries.

But, according to AFP, New Delhi yesterday insisted the operation took place on its side of the border only.

The Indian army said it was in communication with Myanmar regarding its operations against guerrillas, adding there was a history of cooperation. However, it too denied the cross border attack.

But on Tuesday, India's junior minister for information and broadcasting Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said the government had taken the bold step to strike at militant camps across the border.

Rathore told Times Now that the hot pursuit was ordered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also told NDTV it was a signal to neighbours that India will not tolerate militant attacks from across its borders.

"It is undoubtedly a message to all nations that harbour any intentions - be it the west or the specific country we went into right now. Even if there are groups within countries that harbour terror intentions, we will choose the time and the place of hitting them."

India's top security concern is Pakistan which it has long blamed for stoking a revolt in Muslim-majority Kashmir as well as giving

material support to Pakistan-based militants for attacks in other parts of India, including a bloody 2008 assault in the city of Mumbai.

Pakistan denies the accusation and says it is fighting militants.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party has long advocated a tough stance towards Pakistan including the option of hot pursuit of militants. Since coming to power Modi has sought to ease tension but ties remain fragile.

Times of India (TOI) gave details of the raid citing a ministry of home affairs source. It said the raid lasted for about 45 minutes and over 100 northeast militants were killed in the operation.

Army's strike against militants was so precise that latter had no chance to recover from first burst of fire. Indian Army forces faced no retaliation and not a single shot was fired by militants. Six injured rebels are admitted in a hospital.

Myanmar has since cordoned off the area where Indian Army undertook operations against northeast insurgents, reported TOI.

The Myanmar government was informed hours after the commandos in battle fatigues had mostly completed surgical strikes against the groups. The operation had begun at 3:00am but the Indian ambassador could pass on the information to Myanmar's foreign ministry only after their offices opened at regular hours on Tuesday morning, it added.

Indian Air Force choppers and drones assisted the SF (special forces) soldiers.

TOI reported the cross-border pursuit was in line with Modi government's decision to give disproportionate response to provocations, which had been visible in Jammu & Kashmir in recent months, where Indian troops have been aggressive in their response to ceasefire violations by Pakistan.