

Mojaheed's family

FROM PAGE 5
husband told them that all the allegations brought against them were false and fabricated and he is fully innocent.

Mojaheed's youngest son Ali Ahmed Mabru, who was among the five family members to visit the Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general at the jail, told The Daily Star that they meet his father for 26 to 27 minutes when they discussed some family issues.

On October 3, Mojaheed told his lawyers that he will file a petition with the SC seeking review of its judgement.

The International Crimes Tribunal, which held the trial of the Jamaat leader for his crimes against humanity in 1971, issued execution warrant on October 1, a day after the apex court released the full verdict.

Dhaka

FROM PAGE 16
like American-Bangladeshi Avijit Roy, who was pulled from a rickshaw by machete-wielding assailants outside a book fair in Dhaka, have been followed by a handful of arrests, but in only one case since 2005, Gautam Das, have the perpetrators been tried and convicted.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the nominally secular ruling Awami League party have done little to speak out for justice in these crimes, allowing political interests to trump rule of law," it said.

One colleague told CPJ, "Authorities seem more concerned with what bloggers are writing than going after their killers." In the wake of this unchecked terror, several bloggers have fled into exile.

CPJ's 2015 Global Impunity Index spotlights 14 countries, including Bangladesh, where journalists are slain and the killers go free.

It further said that in the 14 countries at least five journalists have been murdered without a single perpetrator being convicted. The index covers murders that took place between September 1, 2005, and August 31, 2015.

The countries are Somalia, Iraq, Syria, The Philippines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Brazil, Bangladesh, Nigeria and India.

Hajj agencies

FROM PAGE 16
"The hajj agent did not give us minimum services except sending us to Saudi Arabia. It could neither arrange better accommodation nor provide us with better food," he alleged.

Nizam Ahmed, another pilgrim of the same agency, alleged that the agency had failed to send an efficient guide with them to give them proper directions.

"The guide did not know the locations properly. He had rather added to our sufferings for more than two hours on way to Jamarat from Muzdalifa that takes only half an hour," he said.

Some other pilgrims of the same agency also alleged that they had faced severe hurdles in their return journey to Dhaka from Jeddah as the flights were not arranged timely.

"They [agency people] have increased our sufferings even in the return flight. We had to spend a whole night," Fazlur Rahman, another pilgrim, said.

His wife Arifa Sultana echoed the same. "We got a lot of pain for the worst services provided by the agency. They did not look after us at all," she told The Daily Star on September 29.

The couple paid Tk 6 lakh to the Bangladeshi agency for the pilgrimage.

Pilgrim Solaiman Ahmed, 65, from Comilla paid Tk 3 lakh to a private agency with the promise of special services.

"In the beginning they were good. But their services, especially food and transport in hajj area, gradually deteriorated," he alleged.

Many other pilgrims shared almost the same experiences and urged the government to look into these matters.

The Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab), the government-approved body for the private hajj agents, has fixed the minimum cost for this year's hajj at Tk 2.96 lakh per head but did not set the maximum limit.

The costs include airfare, Muallem fee, transport fee and some other services in Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

But they did not limit the costs for the pilgrims' accommodation and food. It gave an option for the agents and the pilgrims for negotiations to reach an agreement for those services.

According to the agreements, the pilgrims paid the money to the hajj agents, but many of them did not provide the services as agreed upon by both sides.

Haab President Mohammad Ibrahim Bahar also admitted that they had received complaints of bad services against some agencies.

"The agents always try to provide better services to the pilgrims. Sometimes some agents cannot do it for some reasons. Despite that, we want the religious affairs ministry to investigate the allegations," he told The Daily Star.

Kejriwal sacks minister

FROM PAGE 16
allegations that he received kickbacks from a builder for carrying out unauthorised construction.

"We received a complaint that the minister took a bribe of 600,000 rupees (\$9,255) from a builder," Kejriwal said.

The firebrand activist-turned-politician played audio clips allegedly of Khan talking to a middleman, before turning the tapes over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Kejriwal said the decision to sack the minister should serve as a stern message to his party members that they are closely watched.

"We can tolerate anything but corruption. We won't spare the corrupt, be it anyone," he said.

Two more detained

FROM PAGE 1
officer, according to sources at the bank.

They are colleagues of Jahangir Alam Bulbul, brother-in-law of Humayun Kabir Hira, who is one of the two suspects remanded by police in connection with Kunio's murder.

Rangpur police detained Bulbul's father-in-law, sister-in-law and her husband on Thursday. Bulbul has gone into hiding.

Police sources, requesting anonymity, said cops are looking for Bulbul to question him over Kunio's visit to India several months ago. They said Hira had referred Hoshi to Bulbul to help the Japanese man get an Indian visa. Shahriar and Nahid thus got involved in the process to help Kunio out.

Contacted, Zara Jabeen Mahbub, head of communications at Brac Bank, said, "The Brac Bank employees have been detained for questioning not in connection with the killing, but in connection with someone who perhaps is associated with the killing."

Hira's wife Sultana Khatun said Rangpur police yesterday detained her cousin Sweet from Pabna for questioning over the murder.

Alamgir Kabir, superintendent of police (SP) in Pabna, said he's aware that Rangpur police were conducting an operation in his area but he's not aware of the reasons behind it.

Rangpur's SP Abdur Razzaq, however, declined to meet journalists.

Meanwhile, families have alleged that police detained three others from Rangpur on Thursday for quizzing over the murder.

They are Abdur Rashid, 40; Abed, 35; Abdullah, 21. Their families are still in the dark about their whereabouts.

Rashid and Abed are poor farmers who used to work at Hoshi's farm in Alutari village.

Mallika, Rashid's wife, alleged that five to six men posing as detectives

Caught in camera

FROM PAGE 1
The ministry's monthly coordination committee saw the videos at a meeting last month.

The senior secretary and other high-ups -- from assistant to additional secretaries -- watched the video clips with surprise, added the sources.

A committee headed by the ministry's Joint Secretary Sadar Ali Biswas was formed on September 21, and it launched a probe into the matter after the Eid vacation.

Hedayatullah Al Mamoon, senior secretary to the commerce ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We will get a primary report from the probe committee on Monday. It will be based on the video footage. If the official is found involved in the bribery, he will be suspended from his post."

The committee will later submit a detailed report to the ministry, he said.

"We are very serious about it, and will take very tough action against him if he is proved guilty. We have zero tolerance for any corrupt practices," added Mamoon.

Asked about the video tapes, Shahidul yesterday said this was all part of a conspiracy by some officials at his office and outsiders.

Shahidul joined the public service in 1985. Before being made controller at Dhaka office, he held important positions at the commerce ministry, the Tariff Commission, and the Export Promotion Bureau.

According to the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), corruption is widespread in many government offices, and bribe takers, in most cases, go unprosecuted.

Bangladesh topped the list of corrupt countries published by Transparency International between 2001 and 2005. Though the country's ranking improved in the following years, it was ranked the 14th most corrupt nation last year.

The latest bribery scandal is a reminder of corrupt practices at public offices.

A number of businesspeople lodged complaints with the commerce ministry against Shahidul, and provided video clips as evidence.

According to the rules, businesses have to obtain registration certificates from the CCI&E to import or export goods. The fees for imports and exports are fixed, and they vary depending on the volume of the goods.

Kejriwal did not specify whether Khan would continue to remain in the anti-corruption Aam Aadmi Party, which trounced Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party in February elections.

The party seized power on the platform of providing a corruption-free government in the capital and Kejriwal has challenged Modi's party to take action against leaders accused of graft.

But Kejriwal has come under pressure from opponents over a series of scandals involving his party members. In June, law minister Jitender Tomar resigned after he was arrested for acquiring a fake law degree, while former minister and party member Somnath Bharti is accused of trying to kill his wife.

picked up her husband around 1:30am. She said they promised her to bring him back soon after questioning.

"I cannot understand how farmers who once worked for the slain man's grass farm could help find the murderers?" asked Mallika.

Monwara, Abed's wife, said, "Dozens of people worked at the farm. Is it a crime to work there?"

None of them were produced before a court even though 24 hours have passed since they were picked up.

Lawyer ZI Khan Panna said it was illegal and unlawful under the laws of the country to keep someone in custody without having him produced before a court.

Rangpur police also detained Monnaf, Murad and Zakariya Bala for questioning soon after Kunio was gunned down.

Though Kaunia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rezaul Karim claimed to have released Murad Hossain and Monnaf Ali, their families refuted his claim.

"Murad is still in police custody," said his elder sister Nurjahan.

Monnaf, a rickshaw puller, used to take Hoshi to his grass farm. Hira also gave Hoshi rides on his motorbike and was one of them who brought him to a hospital after he was shot. Hira has his own fishery project near Hoshi's farm.

Hoshi stayed in Zakariya Bala's house whenever he was in Kaunia. He has not been released yet.

Cops took Zakariya's wife Ayesha in custody from Rangpur Medical College and Hospital where she went to attend her husband who had suffered a "cardiac arrest" following police detention.

The couple are still in police custody, according to Zakariya's niece Akifa Akhter.

(Our Rajshahi and Pabna correspondents contributed to this report.)

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 16
Saudi's official figures of 769 killed and 934 injured in the stampede remain accurate, said Saudi officials, though an investigation is on to find out the reasons behind the stampede.

Two weeks before the Mina incident, 107 people died as a construction crane collapsed into the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

Many countries that sent pilgrims to this year's Hajj estimated the number of deaths in stampede alone at more than 1,000.

News agency Associated Press yesterday claimed that at least 1,453 people died in the September 24 disaster in Mina. This new tally shows that the last month's Mina stampede incident was the deadliest event to ever strike the annual pilgrimage.

The AP count is 684 higher than Saudi Arabia's official tally of 769 killed and 934 injured in the stampede.

The AP figure comes from statements and officials' comments from 19 of the over 180 countries that sent citizens to the five-day annual pilgrimage.

Saudi authorities have not updated their casualty toll since September 26, two days after the disaster, reports AP.

The previous deadliest-ever incident happened in 1990, when a stampede killed 1,426 people.

UK firms

FROM PAGE 16
which can blast larger drones out of the sky.

A drone flying in sensitive airspace can be detected by the Auds radar and then sighted via a camera equipped with thermal imaging capabilities so that it can be targeted visually.

Then, a high-powered radio signal can be focused on the drone - essentially overriding the connection to whoever is operating it. The whole process takes as little as 25 seconds, according to the manufacturers.

"It's a radio signal. There are a number of frequency bands that are used by all of the manufacturers," explained Paul Taylor of Enterprise Control Systems, which developed the product along with Blighter Surveillance Systems and Chess Dynamics.

"We transmit into those frequencies in the direction of the UAV using a directional antenna," he told the BBC.

"There's quite a lot of radio power on to the UAV - so much so that it can only hear our Auds signal."

The Auds operator can then choose to freeze the drone just for a short time - to convince its owner that there's something wrong with it - or for a longer period, until its battery dies and it crashes.

Auds has been tested in the UK, the USA and France, said Taylor, and government organisations in all three countries had been involved in those tests.

Aviation authorities are increasingly concerned about nuisance hobbyists flying drones close to large aircraft at airports.

The US Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) is now receiving around 100 reports per month from pilots who have sighted drones within a five-mile radius of their aircraft.

Last year the sightings numbered only a few per month. In response, the FAA recently signed an agreement to test new technology which detects drones and identifies the location of their operator.

Four killed

FROM PAGE 16
where they were declared dead. The bodies were later taken to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital for autopsies, he added.

The two hailed from Khulna. Around 2:00pm, police recovered the body of an unidentified boy, aged around 12, from the rail tracks near Tongi Bridge of Gazipur. He was wearing a red shirt and a pair of jeans, said Abdul Majid, officer-in-charge of Dhaka Railway Police Station.

In Comilla, an unidentified woman, aged around 50, was killed by a train in front of Gumti Bridge at Laksam in the morning, said Officer-in-Charge Ahsan Habib of Laksam Railway Police Station.

Shahida Begum, said hearing the sound of gunshots, they rushed to the spot.

Five patrolling BSF men of Singimari camp of West Bengal's Cooch Behar chased some cattle smugglers and entered Chawratari village, around one kilometre off the border's no-man's land, said Havildar Yusuf Ali, Durgapur BGB camp commander.

"We were informed [about the incident] by the villagers, but the BSF men had left the village before we reached the spot at night," he said.

A letter was sent to the BSF, protesting the killing and injuring of Bangladeshis after entering Bangladesh, said Lt Col Bazlur Rahman Hayati, commanding officer of Lalmonirhat 15 BGB Battalion.

He said a flag meeting was called in this regard.

However, the Indian border force did not respond to the Border Guard Bangladesh's call, said Havildar Yusuf.

Dumped on hospital

FROM PAGE 16
talking to The Daily Star over the phone. She said there was nobody in the family to take up the "burden".

"My father and elder brother had died. I am just a housewife so I could not look after him but I used to visit him at the hospital," Kaniz claimed, adding that the hospital did not inform her of his death.

Kaniz's name was not in the hospital register as Mahabub's guardian.

Mahabub is not the only one in PMH to be abandoned by their families.

Forty-seven-year-old Sakina Begum too died in the hospital the day after Mahabub passed away. She waited 12 years to go home, hospital sources said.

Sakina was admitted to PMH with reference from the then Pabna municipality mayor on August 5, 2003. Her address could not be found even after her death, said Abdul Bari, ward master of PMH.

There were 21 more patients who were well enough to stay with their families but were at the hospital since their families refuse to take them back.

"Most of these patients were admitted during the early 90's and they had fake addresses. At that time, certificates issued by union parishad chairmen or the municipality were accepted as legal documents during admission," Bari claimed, adding that nowadays voter ID cards are used.

Visiting the wards last week, The Daily Star correspondent found Nazma Nilufa, now 54. She came to PMH in 1989 when she was 28. Her mental health improved within a few years but none from her family took her back.

Weak and unwell physically, she could hardly speak.

"There is no need of me in this world," Nilufa lamented.

Md Akramuzzaman, 54, son of Kazi Golam Gaus of House-113, Road-4, Mirpur-12/A, Pallabi, Dhaka, as per hospital register, has been in PMH for the last 21 years.

He became well many years ago but the hospital authority could not send him back to his address as it was found to be fake, said Bari, adding that Akramuzzaman has been staying in the general ward since 2003.

Bari said according to hospital rules, they could not rely on the addresses given by the patients themselves and thus the addresses in the register were the only way.

"We cannot send them back to their fake address, that's why these long-term patients have been causing extra burden on the hospital for years," Tonmoy Prokash, director of PMH, told The Daily Star.

Prokash feels the government should open an asylum for these patients within the PMH so that they could stay there.

Keeping patients well enough to go home in the hospital occupies beds which new patients need. They cannot admit new ones as they don't have vacant beds, he said.

A stigma surrounds mental patients and even new patients of the hospital are neglected by their family members.

"I am suffering from a trivial mental trouble but my family members sent me here to save the cost of medicine. They never came to visit after my admission on August 25," said Muktar Pramanik, a newly admitted patient.

However, doctors said medicine was not enough to help psychiatric patients recover.

"Community support, including family, is essential for the recovery of patients with mental disorders but the people in our country often depend on doctors instead of community support ...," said the superintendent of PMH.

France strikes IS in Syria

FROM PAGE 16
is not to go fight for IS in the Levant but to come to France, to Europe, to carry out attacks," said Le Drian.

He said France's air strikes were complicated by the fact that IS uses human shields.

"IS organises itself in such a way that children, women and civilians are in the frontline," he said.

"The leaders hide in schools, mosques, hospitals, which makes the job of the (international) coalition difficult."

Le Drian criticised Russia's recent involvement in the conflict, saying that "80 to 90 percent" of its air strikes in Syria were not aimed at IS, but instead at propping up the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, Moscow's long-term ally.

"The Russian military action in Syria over the past 10 days does not target Daesh, their main aim is (to ensure) the security of Bashar al-Assad," said Le Drian.

"We do not consider Bashar part of the solution."

France launched its first air strike in Syria on September 27, destroying an Islamic State training camp near Deir al-Zor in the east of the country, saying at the time it was acting in "self defense".

France, which has provided weapons and logistical support to rebels linked to the Free Syrian Army in the past, has repeatedly said Assad would have to go before government troops and rebels could together defeat

In developed countries too families abandon members suffering from psychiatric problems, said Anika Hossain, residential counsellor of a private company in the USA that works to rehabilitate mental patients.

She said these companies with licence provide a home-like environment to patients who learn basic living skills such as cleaning, basic hygiene, attending doctor's appointments, socialising, cooking, learning to self-medicate, pursue interests, and vocational training.

The residential counsellors work with each client's healthcare providers, case managers, and guardians in order to come up with treatment plans that would help the client become more independent, find employment if possible and eventually re-integrate into society, Anika said.

Unrest spreads

FROM PAGE 16
"Forces on the site responded with fire toward the main instigators to prevent their progress and disperse the riot," she said.

The spokeswoman confirmed "five hits" without elaborating.

The clashes came as Hamas's chief in Gaza called the spreading violence an intifada, or uprising, and urged further unrest.

In a sermon for weekly Muslim prayers at a mosque in Gaza City, Ismail Haniyeh said "we are calling for the strengthening and increasing of the intifada."

"It is the only path that will lead to liberation," he said. "Gaza will fulfil its role in the Jerusalem intifada and it is more than ready for confrontation."

Stabbing attacks in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Israel itself along with rioting have raised fears of a third Palestinian intifada, following a first that began in 1987 and a second in 2000.

Hamas rules Gaza, squeezed between Egypt and Israel and separated from the West Bank. It remains deeply divided from Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party.

The enclave has been hit by three wars with Israel since 2008. A 50-day conflict between Palestinian militants in Gaza and Israel summer 2014 left more than 2,200 people dead and 100,000 homeless.

Yesterday's stabbings included one by a 17-year-old Jew in the southern Israeli city of Dimona that lightly or moderately wounded two Palestinians and two Arab Israelis.

The teen was arrested and told police he acted because "all Arabs are terrorists."

The incident marked the first such attack against Palestinians after multiple stabbings that have targeted Jews since Saturday, killing two of them.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly condemned the attack by the Jewish youth, a sign of concerns it could trigger further violence.

Attacks also continued against Israelis and Jews, with a Palestinian stabbing and lightly wounding a policeman near a West Bank settlement before being shot dead by the victim.

A Jewish 16-year-old was slightly hurt in a stabbing in Jerusalem by an 18-year-old Palestinian suspect, who was arrested.

And a woman was shot and wounded when she tried to stab a security guard at a bus station in the northern Israeli town of Afula, police said.

There have been 13 stabbing attacks since Saturday, including the revenge assault. Five of the alleged attackers have been killed.

Yesterday's escalation came as Israeli security forces sought to prevent the further spread of Palestinian unrest, with Netanyahu saying Thursday night the country faced a mostly unorganised "wave of terror".

Islamic State.

Meanwhile, Iran yesterday declined to confirm a claim by a US official that Russian missiles targeting rebels in Syria crashed in its territory this week.

"We don't confirm" this information, foreign ministry spokeswoman Akhram Marzieh said when asked about the claim.

The US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, had said the missiles crashed in Iran on Wednesday, but did not provide details about where they might have come down or whether they caused any damage.

Russia's defence ministry has flatly denied the claim.

"Any professional knows that during these operations we always fix the target before and after impact. All our cruise missiles hit their target," said ministry spokesman General Igor Konashenkov.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced one of its senior commanders was killed by IS in the Aleppo region on Thursday, without revealing the exact circumstances.

A Guards statement said Hamedani had played an "important role... reinforcing the front of Islamic resistance against the terrorists" but was killed "during an advisory mission".

Germany and Spain yesterday urged Washington and Moscow to work together to help unlock a political solution to the Syrian war, after Russian air strikes there raised tensions.