

THREE ARSON, VANDALISM CASES

SC asks Fakhru to surrender before lower court today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday ordered BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir to surrender before a lower court concerned by today in three arson and vandalism cases.

The Appellate Division of the SC also asked the High Court to hear and dispose of the rules regarding his regular bail in the cases within two weeks.

Following three bail petitions filed by Fakhru, the HC on June 21 granted an interim bail to the BNP leader in the cases and also issued three separate rules upon the government to explain as to why he should not be granted regular bail in the cases filed with Paltan Police Station in the capital on January 4 and 6.

A four-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha yesterday passed the order after hearing three separate petitions lodged by Fakhru seeking an extension of its order that granted him bail in the cases.

On July 13, the SC granted a six-week bail to the BNP leader on medical grounds, clearing the way for his release from jail.

The apex court also directed him to surrender before a lower court concerned after the six weeks.

On August 31, the SC extended the bail order for six weeks more. On October 6, it further extended till yesterday its bail order for Fakhru on medical grounds in the cases.

Fakhru, who stands accused in 89 cases, got bail from the HC and lower courts in other similar cases.

During yesterday's hearing, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza opposed the extension petitions of Fakhru, saying though the BNP leader sought extension of the SC order of his bail on medical grounds, he is not sick because he is participating in the political programmes.

Fakhru's bail could not be extended on the grounds, he argued.

Zainul Abedin appeared for Fakhru and prayed to the SC to extend its order of bail to his client for eight more weeks.



Black banners are hung over bookstores in the capital's Aziz Super Market to denounce the savage murder of Faisal Arefin Dipan, owner of Jagriti Prokashani. Unidentified assailants hacked him to death at his second-floor office at the market on Saturday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Minister only for Magura?

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But instead of distributing the fund on the basis of need or priority, the state minister along with some influential lawmakers and a top official of the Prime Minister's Office took the lion's share for their own areas, depriving other districts.

The fund was allocated in April this year, but at least 25 districts did not get any money. Many ministers and lawmakers do not even know about it.

The deprived districts are Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Natore, Tangail, Rajbari, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Barguna, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Laxmipur, Khagrachhari and Bandarban.

In contrast, some districts, including Dhaka, Gopalganj, Sylhet, Magura, Jessore and Comilla, got allocation from the fund for multiple projects.

"I am not aware of the fund and got no allocation from the sports ministry [for my constituency]. I will raise the issue at the next meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Party," a senior minister told The Daily Star.

The minister from a southern district is also a member of the AL presidium.

A minister from a northern district said he too did not get any allocation. Construction of a stadium in his district had to be abandoned for a lack of fund. A few months ago, he made a commitment to his constituents that he would complete the work.

"What he [Biren] has done is very bad. Also, he cannot use the fund for one project in another," the minister added, asking not to be named.

Another senior minister believes that building a gym in Magura will be a waste of money as people will hardly use it.

At a recent meeting, the sports ministry approved all the projects and the release of funds against them, a sports ministry official told this correspondent late last month.

"This means, implementation of the projects will begin in a month or two," he added, asking not to be named.

Since February, there had been heated arguments between Biren Sikder and deputy minister Joy, also former captain of Bangladesh football team, over the fund distribution. Initially, Sikder had sought to take Tk 20 crore for this district. But as Joy protested, he later tried to take Tk 14 crore, officials said.

When he failed to get hold of even that, again in the face of opposition from Joy, Biren involved central AL leader Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul and

Vice-president of Bangladesh Football Federation Badal Roy in negotiating with Joy, added the officials, requesting anonymity.

Even, the state minister with the help of some influential people in the government allegedly put pressure on Joy, who remained unmoved.

The negotiation continued for weeks. As the deputy minister remained firm on not signing the official documents for the allocation, the matter went to the PMO for the prime minister's intervention, one official said.

"The deputy minister [Joy] had repeatedly requested the state minister and the secretary not to allocate the money violating policies and guidelines of the finance ministry. But they did not pay any heed to his request," added the official.

Of the total fund, Tk 7.7 crore was given for renovation of 21 district-level gymnasiums. The districts include Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Faridpur, Chittagong, Rangamati, Noakhali, Comilla, Rajshahi, Pabna, Khulna, Kushtia, Jessore, Dinajpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Sylhet, Feni, Bogra, Rajshahi and Cox's Bazar. They each got between Tk 29 lakh and 70 lakh.

Tk 6.69 crore went for renovation and development of district stadiums in Sirajganj, Brahmanbaria, Chandpur, Netrokona, Jessore, Jhenidah, Munshiganj and Comilla, and Narail stadium's two-storey tennis complex building, Gopalganj women sports complex and Netrokona tennis complex.

Another Tk 6.25 crore has been given for renovation and development of Dhanmondi Sultana Kamal Women Sports Complex, Paltan Wooden Floor gymnasium, Mirpur Kira Palli, Mirpur National Swimming Pool, Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium, NSC Building old conference room, and repair of sub-station room of NSC building.

Gulshan Shooting Club got Tk 3.51 crore.

The rest of the fund has also been distributed for similar works in various districts, according to a copy of the distribution list obtained by this paper.

The state minister defended his decision to construct the gym.

Asked if there was a need to build such an expensive gym in Magura, he said, "Everywhere there is a need [of gym]."

He claimed he did not discriminate against anyone.

Contacted, Joy said, "I told the prime minister what I had to say. I don't want to speak about it any further."

His district, Netrokona, got Tk 62 lakh in allocation.

Expat's body found near Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of an expatriate youth from a ditch near Shahjalal International Airport yesterday, four days after he went missing on arrival in Dhaka from Singapore.

The dead is Rana Sarkar, 26, of Nandigram upazila in Bogra, OC Kamal Uddin of Biman Bandar Police Station told The Daily Star last night.

Cops recovered the body around 1:30pm and found Rana's passport and some documents in a bag there. They collected a phone number from a document and called it.

Family members identified Rana at the police station last night, said the OC.

The youth went to Singapore about five months ago. Upon arrival at Shahjalal airport, he had called one of his relatives, but went missing after the incident, added Kamal quoting his family members.

Act, immediately

FROM PAGE 1

Gonojagoron Mancha, a platform demanding capital punishment for war criminals, is scheduled to enforce a six-hour countrywide hartal from 6:00am today to protest the attacks.

From a rally in the capital's Shabbagh on Sunday, Imran H Sarker, spokesperson for a Mancha faction, said, "The hartal will be called off if law enforcers arrest the culprits within 24 hours."

HUMAN CHAIN

At the human chain, Alamgir Sikdar Loton, a central leader of the association, said, "At first it was the writers and bloggers who were attacked. Now they [assailants] are targeting the publishers. It seems readers are on their next hit list."

Without freethinking it is impossible for any author to come up with good stories and if publishers are not provided with good write-ups, the number of good books will come down. It will only deprive the readers, he said.

Shah Alam, owner of a bookstore in the capital, said a welcoming ambience was essential for the sake of promoting freethinking and publishing books.

Criticising members of law enforcement agencies for their failure

in arresting the killers of Dipan, Robin Ahsan of Srabon Prokashani alleged the government was giving them a false assurance.

"It seems publishing books has become a big crime these days," he said.

Khan Mahub of Kollol Prokashani called for a united movement to prevent attacks on publishers and bloggers in future.

He also demanded that a portion of the five-storey association building, which is under construction, be named after Dipan.

The association has around 10,000 registered and 12,000 unregistered members across the country, according to its members.

In what appeared to be synchronised attacks, suspected militants hacked to death Dipan at Shabbagh and critically injured Ahmedur Rashid Tutul of Shuddhoswar Prokashani and two bloggers in Lalmatia on Saturday.

Both Dipan and Tutul had published books of slain writer-blogger Avijit Roy, a US-Bangladeshi citizen who was hacked to death in the capital on February 26.

On Sunday Farid Ahmed, publisher of Shomoy Prokashani, received a death threat through an SMS.

27 murdered

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In the last 23 years, the number of journalists killed across the world was 1,149, shows the database of the New York-based organisation that promotes press freedom.

It also says the motive behind the killing of eight of the 27 victims in Bangladesh could not be confirmed.

The names of the victims whose cases were identified as "motive confirmed" include Niloy Neel (freelance, August 7, 2015), Ananta Bijoy Das (freelance, May 12, 2015), Washiqur Rahman Babu (freelance, March 30, 2015), Avijit Roy (freelance, February 26, 2015), Sadrul Alam Nipul of Dainik Mathabhanga (May 21, 2014, in Chuadanga), Ahmed Rajib Haider (freelance, February 15, 2013), Jamal Uddin of Gramer Kagoj (June 15, 2012, in Kashipur), Gautam Das of Samakal (November 17, 2005), Sheikh Belaluddin of Sangram, Kama Hossain of Ajker Kagoj, Humayun Kabir of Janmabhumii, Manik Saha of New Age, Shukur Hossain of Anirban, Harunur Rashid of Dainik Purbanchal, Nahar Ali of Anirban, Shamsur Rahman of Janakantha, Mir Illias Hossain of Dainik Bir Darpan, Saiful Alam Mukul of Daily Runner and Mohammad Quamruzzaman of Neel Sagar (February 19, 1996 in Nilphamari).

The CPJ investigates the death of every journalist to determine if it is related to his or her work. Its database does not include deaths caused by accidents. It considers a case as "confirmed" only if it is certain that a journalist was murdered in direct reprisal for his or her work.

The organisation also reports that eight Bangladeshi journalists, including much-talked-about journalist couple Meherun Rumi of ATN Bangla and Golam Mustafa Sarowar of Masranga TV, were killed since 1992, but the motive behind the killings remained unconfirmed.

The others are Nurul Islam Faruqi of Channel I, Shah Alam Sagar of Oporadh Doman, Diponkar Chakrabarty of Durjoy Bangla, Syed Farroque Ahmed of Pubali Barta, Ahsan Ali, a freelancer, and SM Alauddin of Ogrodot.

If the motive behind the murder of a journalist remains unclear and there is a possibility that the journalist was killed because of his or her work, CPJ classifies it as "unconfirmed" and continues to investigate.

It regularly reclassifies cases based on its ongoing research.

Death convicts stay safe abroad

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correspondent, requesting anonymity.

Amid such a situation, the nation observes the 40th anniversary of the Jail Killing Day today to mourn the four liberation movement heroes -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, AHM Quamruzzaman and Captain M Mansur Ali.

The four leaders were shot dead following repeated bayonet charges at the jail on this day in 1975.

They were sent to jail soon after the August 15, 1975, bloodbath that claimed the lives of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members.

The four leaders had led the country's Liberation War while Bangabandhu was detained by the Pakistan army.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam, who is a member of the taskforce, told The Daily Star on November 1 that the government has taken necessary steps to bring the killers back to the country.

But, unfortunately, the governments of the countries, where the killers are hiding, are not cooperating,

he said.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq, who heads the taskforce, repeated his previous statement that the government was trying its best to bring back the fugitive killers through diplomatic channels.

He, however, did not elaborate on this saying if he disclosed the strategy, the convicted killers cannot be brought back.

The Supreme Court on April 30, 2013, upheld the death penalty of three former army personnel and life term imprisonment of eight others for killing the four national leaders.

The three convicts, who were awarded death penalty, are Risalder (ret'd) Muslemuddin, Dafadar (dismissed) Marfat Ali Shah and Dafadar (dismissed) Abdul Hashem Mridha.

The eight convicts, who were handed down life term imprisonment, are Lt Col (dismissed) Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Haq Dalim, Lt Col (ret'd) SHMB Noor Chowdhury, Lt Col (ret'd) AM Rashed Chowdhury, Maj (relieved) Ahmed Shariful Hossain, Capt (ret'd)

Abdul Majed, Capt (relieved) Kismat Hasem and Capt (relieved) Nazmul Hossain.

The apex court affirmed the judgment of a Dhaka court which in 2004 convicted and sentenced Muslemuddin, Marfat Ali Shah and Abdul Hashem Mridha to death and handed down life term imprisonment to 12 others, including the eight.

Four others -- Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooqur Rahman, Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj (ret'd) Bazlul Huda and Maj (ret'd) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed -- were executed in the Bangabandhu assassination case.

In 2011, the SC exempted Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazlul Huda from the jail killing case as they were already executed.

In August 2008, the High Court upheld the capital punishment of Muslemuddin and acquitted Marfat and Hashem. It also acquitted Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazlul Huda.

The HC did not say anything about the eight others who got life term imprisonment from the SC on April 30, 2013.



Christians gather at Patharghata Church Graveyard in Chittagong city yesterday to pray for the departed souls on the occasion of "All Souls Day". They lit candles and placed flowers on the graves.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Unite, help to fight secret killings

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Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, was addressing a public rally organised by her party at Suhrawardy Udyan on the eve of Jail Killing Day.

On November 3, 1975, four national leaders were killed in captivity inside Dhaka Central Jail. They are wartime government's acting president Syed Nazrul Islam, prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed, finance minister M Mansur Ali, and minister for home affairs, relief and rehabilitation AHM Qamaruzzaman.

At yesterday's rally, Hasina alleged certain quarters are trying to portray Bangladesh as a "terrorist state" and as a country where global militant body Islamic State has organisational presence.

She added people of Bangladesh never bow down to any conspiracy and there is no room for militants in the country. "I want to warn those who are trying to hatch conspiracy

against Bangladesh."

Regarding the recent secret killings, the PM said those who are committing those will be tried in this land. At the same time, their masterminds and patrons would also be brought to book. "We do what we say," she said.

Hasina alleged that anti-liberation forces are behind the secret killings to protect war criminals. But, she said, nobody can stop the ongoing trial of war criminals.

The AL chief claimed some of those who carried out the killings have already been identified. "Whenever there were investigations into any killings, it was found that the killers were engaged either in Chhatra Shibir or Chhatra Dal politics during their student lives," she added.

Hasina lambasted her political archrival Khaleda Zia, saying the BNP chairperson is hatching conspiracy from abroad in a bid to tarnish the country's image after failing to topple

the government through killing and arson in the name of hartal and blockade.

"Khaleda Zia's agitation means killing and burning people. She has not withdrawn her blockade yet and her blockade is still in effect. But people do not respond to her call."

Khaleda designed secret killings of Awami League leaders, activists, writers, publishers and foreigners and her affection for Pakistan is the main problem of Bangladesh, the PM alleged.

Sounding a note of warning, Hasina said if anyone tries to create obstacle to the country's progress, he/she must be punished. "Conspiracy started on August 15, 1975, but Bangladesh moved ahead overcoming every conspiracy."

The rally was also addressed by party leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Matia Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Syed Ashraf Islam, among others.