

# Govt resorts

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 leadership of party chief Khaleda Zia. "It's possible to oust the government through a strong movement at the grassroots level," Fakhrul said, adding that a reshuffle of the party would be followed by a movement by the opposition along with people to restore people's rights and democracy. The government will not be able to eliminate BNP through repressive acts, he said.

"Instead, the BNP will become stronger gradually with the support of people."

The council of Sylhet city BNP and its district units was organised at Shaheed Soleman Hall of Sylhet Kendrio Muslim Sahitya Sangsad. The last council was held in 2009.

New committees of the two BNP units will be elected through direct votes of 132 councillors.

Meanwhile, BNP Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed yesterday at a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltn central office said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina could not put up with protest of oppressed people.

"The country has fallen victim to the premier's continuous threats. That's why she is known to the people as threat leader," Rizvi said.

# Zika virus fails

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 The health ministry and local authorities have been handing out leaflets alerting residents and tourists to the risks of Zika.

Over a million visitors are expected in Rio de Janeiro for the carnival celebrations, which end on Wednesday morning.

This is the first test of whether fear of contamination by the Zika virus may scare tourists from the Olympics the city will host in August and September, says the BBC's Julia Carneiro.

Brazilian authorities and the International Olympic Committee have pointed out that the Games will be held during the Southern Hemisphere winter, when conditions for the proliferation of the mosquito that spreads the virus will be less favourable.

Fumigation to try to eliminate the Aedes aegypti, which also carries the dengue and chikungunya viruses, is continuing in many Brazilian cities during carnival.

Some 220,000 armed forces troops will launch a big clean-up operation next week to eliminate puddles of stagnant water where the mosquitoes breed.

President Dilma Rousseff has urged all Brazilians to join the effort.

More than 20 countries in the Americas have been affected by the Zika virus outbreak. Brazil has been the worst hit country.

# DMP moves

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 Nevertheless, working such long hours out in the sun is not easy for female sergeants.

There are no washroom facilities, and we are to go to nearby places when we feel need of a washroom during our eight-hour duty time, said Rosy Akter, 26, who is posted at Rupashi Bangla Hotel intersection.

"I use the toilets of bus counters on the opposite side of the road," added Ismat.

The problem gets even more severe during the menstrual period when remaining standing for eight hours at a stretch is quite difficult.

Another downside of this job is the absence of weekly holidays for police department.

"If the government could consider and give us a weekly holiday that would be helpful, said Rosy, who joined the force after completing graduation from a Tangail college.

All three sergeants said they did not face any discrimination in the force because of their gender.

# Cops careless

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 Babul died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital after fighting for life for 16 hours.

Following the incident, five policemen of Shah Ali Police Station were suspended and Officer-in-Charge AKM Shahin Mondal was withdrawn.

Babul's son Raju alleged that the policemen, who were present at the scene, had not even helped him take his critically burnt father to hospital.

"When I reached the spot, my father was writhing in pain but the policemen stood idle watching," Raju told The Daily Star.

He demanded punishment of the cops and others responsible for his father's death.

"After I came here [Shah Ali Police Station] to lodge a complaint, they [police] asked me not to tell anyone about anything that goes against police," said Babul's wife Lucky Begum.

Eventually, no policeman has been accused in the case.

Sub-inspector Md Morshed of the police station said Babul's daughter Rokhana Akhter had filed a case, accusing seven identified people and two-three unknown drug peddlers of the area.

Those identified are police informant Delowar and local drug peddlers Paruli, Ayub, Robin, Shankar, Dulal Hawladar and Parvin.

# There is no free media

Says BNP leader Rizvi Ahmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed has said there are so many media houses who cannot say the truth these days.

There is no free media and the Awami league is to blame for this, he said, while addressing a discussion organised by the "Shahid Ziaur Rahman er 19 Dofa Bastobayan Parishad" at Jatiya Press Club on Saturday.

The Baksal (Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League) government had closed many papers, he said, adding that the Awami League only wants praise for itself and the existence of no other party.

He said attempts were being made to capture the media and run reports intended to malign Zia.

He said, "An English daily, which we all read, has recently published reports linking BNP founder Ziaur Rahman with the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"Some years ago, maybe 1998-99, the newspaper published an editorial, 'Tribute to Zia', on his death anniversary," he said.

"I don't know why they are doing

this ... the famous media should remember who are its readers," said Rizvi, adding that like Awami League men, BNP supporters read this paper too.

He said ruling party leaders, who do not know the "culture" and were not "civilised", never provide any space for anyone else.

Rizvi said both former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had faced the same situation after the 1/11 change over.

When the BNP chairperson was freed from jail, her party never launched any propaganda against the media house or took the path of vengeance.

"The BNP chairperson never hurled any harsh language at the media houses involved in this; rather she forgave them and made a good term with all and called upon for the national unity.

"But others [the government] were not like that; today [Saturday] we observe that the son of the prime minister gave a status on the Facebook in which he said the editor of an English daily was a traitor. I do not know why he made such a comment. We never made this kind of comments," said Rizvi.

# MP, ex-MP, 23 others

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International Crimes Tribunal for further proceedings, the plaintiff's lawyer Abdul Rahman Al-Hussain Raz said.

The accused are JP lawmaker from Trishal MA Hannan, former JP lawmaker from the same constituency Anisur Rahman Manik, 70, his two brothers -- Muklesur Rahman Mukul, 65, and Saidur Rahman Ratan, 64, Shamsul Haque Bachchu, 70, Maulana Md Mofazzol Hossain, 72, Mukul Master, 70, Razakar commander Adil, 70, Shamsul Haque Fakir, 72, Nurul Haque Fakir, 70, Nazrul Islam Fakir, 65, Sultan Fakir, 62, Gedu Chairman, Morshed Ali, 65, Kafil Uddin, 70, Helal Uddin, 65, Ibrahim Miah, 70, and Khadem Ali, 65.

Kalam also named seven dead men in the case -- Sirajul Haque, Abdul Khaleque Sarker, Abdul Latif, Maulana Khaleque Ghudu Miah, Asmat Ali Fakir, Md Faruq and Badal Miah.

Contacted, Raz said though the accused are dead they were involved in the crimes and the investigator would take a decision about implicating them [dead men] after the probe.

All the accused are from different villages in Trishal upazila.

On May 19 last year, a martyr's widow filed a case against MA Hannan and two others for allegedly committing crimes against humanity during the War. The investigation agency of the tribunal is now carrying out an investigation against Hannan and seven others.

Following an arrest warrant issued by the International Crimes Tribunal-1, police arrested Hannan, the alleged general secretary of Mymensingh district Peace Committee, an anti-liberation organisation in 1971, and four others. Three others are still on the run.

Yesterday's case is the third filed against Manik, who became a member of parliament with Jatiya Party ticket in 1988, in connection with war crimes.

In October last year, a former leader of Bangladesh Chhtrata League, associated student organisation of ruling Awami League, filed a case against Manik, Mukul, Ratan, Sultan and Shamsul. Besides, a son of a martyr filed a case against 12 people

including Manik in December last year.

According to yesterday's case documents, the accused were involved with Muslim League, Islami Chhtrata Sangha and Nezam-e-Islami, all anti-liberation organisations, and subsequently got involved with the Peace Committee and Razakar force in Trishal.

More than 100 people were killed by the anti-liberation forces during the War and a list of 57 martyrs was also mentioned in the case.

The accused helped the Pakistani army in the area and also committed crimes including murders, rapes and arsons, reads the case statement.

On April 21, 1971, the Pakistani army advanced towards Trishal breaking a barricade put up by hundreds of pro-liberation people. When the invaders reached Kalirbazar area, they started shooting at unarmed people, leaving huge casualties, it adds.

During the attack, the accused in several groups and equipped with weapons rushed to the spot and expressed their solidarity with the military. The accused later led different anti-liberation organisations and continued killing, looting, rape, torture on women and arsons, reads the statement.

They also set up a torture cell at Kanihari School where many pro-liberation people were allegedly tortured. Yunus Ali Inu, Abdul Hamid, Golam Rasul and Abdus Samad were killed by the accused and they were buried at a mass grave behind the camp, it was alleged.

Contacted, accused Saidur Rahman Ratan denied his involvement in war crimes saying, "The allegations are totally baseless, motivated and fabricated to tarnish my social and personal images."

He said his brother Manik was physically sick and unable to talk to reporters.

Sanaul Huq, co-coordinator of the investigation agency, told The Daily Star that an investigation against Hannan was going on.

He said they would carry out a preliminary probe into the allegations upon receiving the case documents and start a formal investigation if they found preliminary evidence.

# Return case files

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and that he would send those immediately.

An SC press release yesterday said, "The honourable chief justice of Bangladesh hopes that former Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury will return all the files of cases of unsettled judgments pending with him to the Supreme Court's registrar general's office immediately without making any statement to the media about the judgments and orders, so that justice seekers do not suffer further."

The press release, signed by Abu Syed Diljar Hussain, acting registrar general of the SC, said Justice Manik yesterday held a press conference on the SC premises during court hours, which is unprecedented. The matter came to the notice of the chief justice through the electronic media.

The CJ hoped that the judges would refrain from doing such things in order to uphold the sanctity and dignity of the court.

At the press conference, Justice Manik said, "My presiding judge, honourable justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, refused to accept the judgments and orders written by me ... saying that judgments and orders written by retired judges are not being accepted on instructions of the chief justice."

When the statement of Justice Manik came to the notice of the chief

justice, he drew the attention of Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah. Justice Wahhab Miah informed the CJ that Justice Manik did not submit to him the written judgments or orders, according to the SC press release.

Manik later told this correspondent that he completed writing all the 15 judgments and around 70 orders pending with him after his retirement.

# Erdogan calls on US to choose between Turkey or Syrian Kurds

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed anger over a US official's visit to a Kurdish militia group controlling the Syrian town of Kobane, urging Washington to choose between Turkey and the "terrorists" there.

A delegation including senior US diplomat Brett McGurk, special envoy to an international coalition fighting IS in Syria and Iraq, last week met members of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), a powerful militia that is in control of Kobane.

# 14-party for consensus

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AL leaders, however, did not clear their stance about the issue but said the matter would be discussed further in the next meeting, sources said.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) General Secretary Sharif Nurul Ambia chaired the meeting.

Sources said leaders of National Awami Party (NAP) and Communist Kendra at the meeting demanded severing diplomatic ties with Pakistan over Pakistan's comments about the ongoing war trials.

NAP leader Enamul Haque and Communist Kendra leaders Wajedul Islam Khan and Asit Baron Roy said Pakistan had the audacity to interfere in Bangladesh's internal matter and thus Bangladesh should not maintain diplomatic relations with

Pakistan. Jatiya Party (Manju) General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam requested the AL leadership to raise the issue in the Saarc forum.

Pakistan had raised questions about the war crimes trials. Pakistan national and provincial assemblies adopted resolution expressing concern over the execution of war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah.

The country last year officially questioned the ongoing trials, especially the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, and BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury.

Bangladesh protested the move and warned Pakistan about interfering in its domestic issues.

Tension between the two countries have risen after Bangladesh asked

Pakistan to withdraw two of its diplomats last year in connection with terror financing and Pakistan asked Bangladesh to remove a Bangladeshi diplomat without citing any reason earlier this year.

Meanwhile, yesterday's alliance meeting decided to form a human chain on February 15 to protest Pakistan's interference in Bangladesh's internal issues and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's controversial remarks about the number of 1971 Liberation War martyrs.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, AL presidium member and 14-party spokesperson Mohammad Nasim said, "We hope that Pakistan will try to keep good relations with us. Otherwise, we have to think whether we will maintain diplomatic ties with Pakistan."

# Non-students rule

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Tejgaon College chapter while Asaduzzaman Rana, Majharul Islam Rassel and Md Al Amin have been named as joint general secretaries of the Jagannath University unit.

Contacted, new JCD Office Secretary Abdus Sattar said, "We hope that they would someday return among us alive. That's why we have kept them in the committees."

But another central leader of the student body gave a different explanation.

"It's completely a political move. This was done so that we can say the law enforcers made our party colleagues to disappear," said a JCD vice president.

Established in 1979, the JCD is yet to have a constitution. Though a draft charter was prepared more than 12 years ago, it never got the final approval.

"But we follow the draft and it stipulates that the central committee cannot have more than 151 members in it," said the JCD vice president, preferring anonymity.

Asked why then the new committee has so many members, he said that the central command of the BNP wanted to "reward" everyone who worked for the party since 1/11 changeover in 2007.

However, while doing so, the JCD in a Dhaka University hall committee gave membership to a person who never even studied at the university.

"One Lahul Galib got membership in Ziaur Rahman Hall committee though he is not a DU student," alleged JCD Assistant Organising

Secretary Amir Amzad Munna.

"While verifying the information he provided, we found that he was never admitted to Dhaka University. We conveyed to the [BNP] high command our protest but in vain," he told The Daily Star.

There are more anomalies. According to the draft JCD constitution, one must be a student to be eligible even for the primary membership.

"But almost all of the 151 members of the partial committee announced in 2014 were not even students. The same goes for the full-fledged committee," said another JCD leader, who was involved in the selection process.

"We tried to keep only students in the committee but no one listens to us. We send a list to the party high command for approval but they replaced all the names in most of the cases," he added.

To fulfil the requirement, around 100 leaders of the committee had recently enrolled themselves as MBA students or MPhil researchers in different universities, according to JCD insiders.

Then again, there were at least 500 people in the 736-strong committee who were "never seen in the field in the last four or five years," according to another vice president of the student organisation.

"We requested the senior [BNP] leaders not to pick any inactive member for the central committee posts. But they did not pay heed," he added.

According to him, only five of the

35 JCD vice presidents and five joint secretaries out of 29 in the new committee are active. "The rest were never even seen in party gatherings in the past five years."

Some JCD leaders alleged that many of the central leaders were married.

According to them, Khaleda, before the "partial committee" was announced in 2014, asked the then JCD leaders to not pick married people for the top five posts.

"The new president of the organisation's DU unit, Al Mehedi, got married five to six years ago and got divorced a few years later," said one of the vice presidents. He too wished anonymity.

Mehedi, however, rejected the allegation. "If anyone has any proof, let them present it."

Some central leaders also alleged that Mehedi got admitted to the accounting and information system department of the DU in 2002-03 and was no more a student.

Mehedi claimed he was currently doing masters in Japanese Studies at the university.

New General Secretary of the DU JCD, Bashar Siddique, has been accused of not being a student anymore and was accused in a case over running drug business.

Justifying his selection, Bashar said, "Though I am now out of study, I have completed my honours and I will sign up for a masters programme later."

About the case, he said, "A false case was filed against me four years ago to harm my political career."

# 7 lawmakers

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against her and put her in jail."

"He published those fabricated, false and cooked-up stories in The Daily Star without confirming or verifying authenticity of the information provided by the DGF [Directorate General of Forces Intelligence]."

"I demand resignation of Mahfuz Anam for carrying out propaganda and for publishing reports on those false allegations... I demand that the newspaper be shut immediately."

"People like Mahfuz Anam have been conspiring to bring an unconstitutional government and destroy democracy throughout their life," Taposh said.

Referring to article 7A of the constitution, Taposh said Mahfuz Anam's activities were obviously a seditious offence as per the charter, and he should be tried for treason.

Article 7A(1) of the constitution says: If any person, by show of force or use of force or by any other unconstitutional means-(a) abrogates, repeals or suspends or attempts or conspires to abrogate, repeal or suspend this constitution or any of its article; or (b) subverts or attempts or conspires to subvert the confidence, belief or reliance of the citizens to this constitution or any of its article, his such act shall be sedition and such person shall be guilty of sedition.

(2) If any person-(a) abets or instigates any act mentioned in clause (1); or (b) approves, condones, supports or ratifies such act, his such act shall also be the same offence.

Taposh said, "Journalism is a noble profession, but he has disgraced it. He has no right to be a journalist any more. Steps should be taken so that he cannot do journalism any more."

"Latifur Rahman, owner of The Daily Star and Transcom Group, is a corrupt person. His connection with terrorist group Ulfa [the United Liberation Front of Asom] was known to many Bangladeshis. Action should also be taken against them," he added.

Another AL lawmaker, Waresat Hussain Belal, said people like Mahfuz Anam are tainting journalism in the name of practising this noble profession. Their aim is to have their personal interests met.

"Journalism should be done without fear and favour. But he is doing just the opposite."

"People across the country know the source of their money. How a newspaper running with that money can do fair journalism? That is why it published unwarranted comments against Sheikh Hasina and publicised the

blueprint of a few army officials."

"They wanted depoliticisation. They wanted to send politics into exile. They are still engaged in such a conspiracy."

"A few days ago, he [Mahfuz Anam] apologised for his past activities. But the question before the nation is whether such people can expect forgiveness. Because people like them will again engage in such activities after they are forgiven."

"That is why we will have to raise our voice against such people so that they cannot remain in journalism any more. Their misdeeds and their mask must be laid bare before the nation" Belal added.

AL lawmaker Abu Sayeed Al Mahmood Swapon said they wanted to impede the country's progress and destroy the rights of the poor.

"That is why they hatched a conspiracy against the world's best politician -- Sheikh Hasina... they wanted that Bangladesh could never stand before the world as a successful nation." And people like Mahfuz Anam know this very well that only Sheikh Hasina can take the country to that height, he said.

Raising questions about the source of The Daily Star's money, Swapon alleged, "They want to use Bangladesh for the destruction of another country."

"They should be given exemplary punishment through trial so that they do not dare to engage in such activities in the future."

Their wish was to fly flags in their cars and run the country. But people are not with them, he said.

"If you want to fly flags in your cars, you should become politicians, get close to people and work to ease their sufferings."

"But instead of doing that, you are assassinating characters of politicians all the time, taking advantage of being in the media," he added.

Nurjahan Begum, an AL MP elected to a reserved seat for women, demanded trial of Mahfuz Anam and others, who were engaged in "yellow journalism" after the 1/11 changeover.

As Nurjahan concluded her speech, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, who was presiding over the sitting, started the business of call attention notice of MPs.

But she later allowed independent MP Haji Selim, also Dhaka City AL leader, to speak on a point of order on this issue.

AL lawmaker Shamsul Haq Tuku, former state minister for home, also joined the criticism against The Daily Star editor, demanding legal action against him.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal lawmaker

Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal said the freedom of the media is very important for flourishing of democracy.

"We want free media.

"If anyone uses the freedom of the media as a shield to hurt any individual, and if that affects the entire nation... against such a backdrop, the issue of his punishment is being raised here."

Badal accused The Daily Star editor of carrying out "paper trial" of Sheikh Hasina even before the start of the trial process.

"You cannot escape just saying sorry for your mistake. You should resign if you think that you have made a mistake," he said.

The seven MPs spoke for nearly half-an-hour in the unscheduled discussion, criticising The Daily Star editor.

# UN wants

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made the proposal which she accepted.

Ban also said a conference of the UN Police would be held at the UN headquarters in New York in June and urged Hasina to send a high-level Bangladesh delegation for it.

The PM also told him that a conference titled "Global Forum on Migration and Development" was going to be organised in Dhaka in December and invited him to it.

About the current political situation in Bangladesh, Hasina informed the UN secretary general that it was stable and all political parties were participating in local government polls at union council level.

"The political parties are currently busy with election works," she said.

# Cops accused

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locked the room and started beating them and all except Asif managed to escape and he has been missing since then, adds the letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Daily Star.

Ador and Shakil are under arrest while Ador's father and Alamgir's nephew Riazul Islam Pritom have been released on bail.

Police said three of the arrestees confessed and two witnesses provided statements confirming that Asif had been taken to Alamgir's office that day. Alamgir's cellphone was found switched off yesterday.

The case's investigation officer, Inspector Shah Alam, said Alamgir went into hiding and they could not make the arrest despite carrying out several drives.