

Bir Protik Taramon Bibi hospitalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Freedom fighter Taramon Bibi is undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).



Taramon has been referred to the National Institute of Chest Disease and Hospital in Dhaka for better treatment. She will be sent there today, according to the hospital sources.

Taramon, 68, who was awarded Bir Protik for her outstanding contribution to the Liberation War, was admitted to the hospital's coronary care unit (CCU) on Monday noon due to severe respiratory and lung diseases, said SK Apu, cardiologist and resident physician at the CCU.

She was taken to the hospital from her village home in Rajibpur upazila of Kurigram.

A three-member medical board, headed by Prof Saiful Bari, was formed yesterday to check the physical condition of Taramon.

After her medical tests, the board found lung disease, said Bari, who is the head of the CCU unit.

The patient had been suffering from lung diseases for long, said doctors at the CCU.

Earlier, Taramon was admitted to Rangpur Combined Military Hospital in January and released later that month, said hospital sources.

As her condition deteriorated recently, she was taken to the MMCH, they said.

Taramon is now receiving treatment under the supervision of SK Apu and Ashish Kumar Roy of MMCH's CCU.

Apu said Taramon was given oxygen support on Monday to keep her breathing normal.

Her condition was improving gradually, he said while talking to this correspondent.

Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association Mymensingh unit, said the veteran freedom fighter would be provided all sorts of medical and financial support.

The MMCH authorities would bear all her treatment expenses, said Brig Gen Nasir Uddin Ahamed, director of the hospital.

IFJ worried

FROM PAGE 1
coordinated" legal proceedings against the editor was a clear attempt to intimidate the media and muzzle press freedom in Bangladesh.

At least three dozen cases, including six sedition pleas and a dozen defamation cases, were filed in the past weeks against Anam in 17 districts of Bangladesh by various individuals and political groups, the statement said.

The Federation also expressed its solidarity with Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangbadik Forum (BMSF) in offering its concern over the matter.

"The use of sedition and defamation laws in this case is extremely concerning," it said.

The legal actions were launched after the editor admitted during a televised interview on February 3 to a lapse in his editorial judgement in publishing reports based on information supplied by the country's task force intelligence cell during the caretaker government regime almost a decade ago without being able to independently verify them.

The organisation said the military-backed interim government had declared a state of emergency in 2007, detaining the leaders of the two biggest political parties and initiating cases against them.

"Sedition laws are regarded as a relic of the past but are too often being revived as a means to silence political opposition and criticism in the region. This is a worrying development in an already extremely challenged media environment of Bangladesh," it said.

The statement also referred to lawmakers' demand on February 7 for Anam's punishment and suspension of the newspaper for "lacking professional integrity".

The newspaper suffered massive losses in revenue after the Bangladeshi authorities forced a leading telecommunication company to stop advertising, it said.

"It is critical that legal system is not used by some groups to harass the journalist and media and we urge the judiciary to intervene in the matter to ensure a full and fair trial, with all cases being heard in one court."

The IFJ is the largest organisation of journalists representing around 600,000 members in 139 countries.

First established in 1926, it was relaunched in 1946 and again, in its present form, in 1952. The federation promotes international action to defend press freedom and social justice



Shorno Mondir (Golden Temple) of Bandarban will be off-limits to tourists from February 20. The temple authorities said they made the decision after failing to guide the tourists to show respect to Buddhist relics.

FILE PHOTO

Court orders arrest of Star editor

FROM PAGE 1

provision for directly issuing arrest warrants against journalists, writers and others for writing or saying anything defamatory. The amendment to the CrPC, passed by the JS on February 2, 2011, introduced a provision for issuing summonses on them.

During the passage of the bill, Barrister Shafique Ahmed, the then law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister, told the JS that the previous provision had curtailed freedom of the press. The provision should have been amended much earlier since it was a repressive one, he said.

Talking to The Daily Star last night about yesterday's arrest warrant, Law Minister Anisul Huq said, "I have talked to the law officers in Narayanganj. I am saying this with responsibility that it won't be an arrest warrant, it would be a summons."

With 18 fresh cases, Editor Mahfuz Anam now faces a staggering 55 lawsuits filed by leaders of the AL and pro-AL student body Bangladesh Chhatra League.

Of the cases, 12 involve complaints seeking to sue the editor for sedition while the rest are defamation suits.

The lawsuit spree began days after the Star editor at a talk show on February 3 made an introspective comment about a lapse in his editorial judgement in publishing a few reports, based on information given by the Task Force Interrogation Cell during the 2007-08 tenure of the last caretaker government, without being able to verify those independently.

NARAYANGANJ
Advocate Muhammad Mohsin Mia, joint secretary of the district lawyers' association and an activist of city AL unit, filed the defamation case with Senior Judicial Magistrate Saiduzzaman Sharif, seeking Tk 10 crore in compensation.

According to the complainant's counsel Mahmuda Mala, Mohsin pointed out that The Daily Star editor himself talked about publishing the reports.

The AL chief had to suffer harass-

ment because of the reports, alleged the complainant identifying himself as a worker of Hasina.

After the hearing, the court issued a warrant for Mahfuz Anam's arrest. It was confirmed by Public Prosecutor advocate Wazed Ali Khokon.

LALMONIRHAT
Advocate Sariful Islam Raju, general secretary of the district unit Swachhchasebak League, filed a complaint with the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, seeking to sue Mahfuz Anam for sedition.

He also claimed Tk 100 crore in compensation.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Mehedi Hasan Mandal ordered the OC of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station to investigate the matter upon taking permission from the government.

SATKHIRA
Advocate Sahiduzzaman Shahed, district unit general secretary of Torun League, filed a plea with Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohibul Hassan to bring a sedition charge against the Star editor.

He also brought defamation allegations against Mahfuz Anam.

SHERPUR
Anwarul Hasan Utpal, former president of the district BCL unit, made a plea to Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohammad Saifur Rahman for bringing a sedition charge against the Star editor.

The court asked the OC of Sadar Police Station to take necessary steps in this regard.

BANDARBAN
Touhidur Rahman Chowdhury Russel, district BCL unit president, filed a complaint with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, seeking to sue Mahfuz Anam for sedition.

The complainant also demanded Tk 100 crore in compensation.

The court asked the OC of Sadar Police Station to take steps on this matter.

BARISAL
Rafiqul Islam Khokon, former Jubo League leader, filed a defamation case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, claiming compen-

sation of Tk 100 crore.

The court asked Mahfuz Anam to appear before it on March 20.

Another defamation case against the Star editor was lodged with the court of Judicial Magistrate Rafiqul Islam.

The complainant, advocate Mamun Khan Kaiser, a member of the city Jubo League unit, claimed Tk 100 crore in compensation.

The court summoned the Star editor to appear before it on March 29.

MEHERPUR
Ariful Enam Bokul, Meherpur district unit president of Awami Swachhchasebak League, filed a defamation suit against Mahfuz Anam, demanding Tk 10 crore in compensation.

Judge Mohammad Abdul Hye

The complainant also demanded a compensation of Tk 10 crore.

The court issued a summons, asking Mahfuz Anam to appear before it on March 6.

Besides, Anwar Hossain Bipul, general secretary of Jessore district BCL unit, lodged a defamation case with the same court on the same charge.

The court summoned the Star editor to appear before it on March 6.

MANIKGANJ
Badrul Islam Khan Babul, former joint secretary of the district AL unit, filed a defamation suit with the Senior Magistrate's Court-1 against Mahfuz Anam. He also sought Tk 5-crore in compensation.

Judge Mohammad Abdul Hye

Clarification

In a report headlined "Trade union in EPZs gets nod" published yesterday, it was mentioned that the cabinet approved the draft Bangladesh EPZ Labour Law 2016 with a provision for forming legal trade unions in the factories inside export processing zones (EPZs).

Actually, the workers' welfare associations in the EPZ factories will act as collective bargaining agents similar to trade unions.

Banani SI

FROM PAGE 1

weighing 900 grams.

During interrogation on the spot, Ashraful, who was in uniform and wearing a vest, told Helal that Rezaul had put his hand inside his pocket in the bus and he had detained Rezaul for attempting to pick his pocket.

Helal could not find anybody who could substantiate Ashraful's claim.

Rezaul told Helal that he bought the gold from Tantibazar and was about to go to Jessore. He told police that he was carrying the gold for someone else in exchange for money.

SI Helal filed two cases in this connection -- one against Ashraful and his source for attempting to mug Rezaul and the other against Rezaul under Special Powers Act.

Deputy Commissioner (Media) Maruf Hossain Sarder of Dhaka Metropolitan Police told The Daily Star that a three member probe committee, led by the joint commissioner (logistics), has been formed in connection with the incident.



The gazette dated March 9, 2011, shows the amendment made to the CrPC by the Jatiya Sangsad scrapping the provision for issuing arrest warrants against journalists, writers and others for writing or saying anything defamatory and introducing the provision for summoning them instead.

IMAGE: SCANNED

Chief Judicial Magistrate Sheikh Nazmul Alam ordered the OC of Meherpur Sadar Police Station to take necessary steps in this regard.

NARSINGDI
Alamin Mia, joint convener of Narsingdi district BCL unit, filed a libel case with the Senior Chief Judicial Magistrate's court, claiming a compensation of Tk 50 crore.

The court asked the Star editor to appear before it on March 27.

JESSORE
Shahjahan Kabir, former president of Chougacha upazila AL unit, filed a defamation suit with the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Abu Ebrahim.

ordered the OC of Manikganj Police Station to investigate the allegation and submit a report by March 20.

BAGERHAT
Monir Hossain, acting president of the district BCL unit, filed a defamation case with the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court against the Star editor.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Jahidul Azad ordered the OC of Sadar Police Station to probe the allegation and submit a report.

JHALAKATHI
Boni Amin Bakly, law affairs secretary of the sadar upazila AL unit, lodged a defamation suit with the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court against

man officer to carry out probes and submit reports by March 27.

HABIGANJ
Muktar Hossain Benu filed a libel case with the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court against the Star editor and demanded a compensation of Tk 150 crore.

The court ordered the OC of Habisganj Police Station to probe the matter and submit a report by April 18.

SUNAMGANJ
Faruque Ahmed Sujon, organising secretary of the district BCL unit, lodged a defamation suit with the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court against Mahfuz Anam, claiming Tk 100 crore in compensation.

Warrant vexes journalist leaders

FROM PAGE 1

Issuing a warrant for the arrest of an editor in a defamation suit was inappropriate and a matter of concern for the journalist community, they said.

On February 2, 2011, the Jatiya Sangsad passed a bill scrapping the CrPC provision for directly issuing arrest warrant against journalists, writers, and others for writing or saying anything defamatory.

The amendment to the CrPC, however, introduced a provision for issuing summonses on them.

A court in Narayanganj yesterday issued an arrest warrant against The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam after a lawyer brought a libel charge for publishing reports based on information given by the Taskforce Interrogation Cell (TIFC) during the 2007-2008 caretaker government rule.

"I think the issuance of the arrest warrant was inappropriate," said Golam Sarwar, president of the Editors' Council and editor of the daily

Samakal.

Veteran journalist Abed Khan viewed that issuing such an arrest warrant can in no way go with the freedom of speech or freedom of opinion.

"Not only as an editor, as a journalist, I think using the law in such a way and harassing him [Anam] so desperately is unacceptable. There is no need to do this," he said.

Mahfuz Anam is a freedom fighter and the role of his newspaper, The Daily Star, on the issue of the Liberation War and the trial of war criminals has been praiseworthy, Abed Khan said.

"Issuing an arrest warrant this way or harassing or putting abnormal pressure [on Mahfuz Anam] is not proper for the pro-liberation forces," he added.

Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, former president of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), said when the law was amended, the journalist community welcomed the

move.

As per the amended law, a court should summon, if necessary, and an editor or a journalist will appear before the court. This was the main spirit of the act, he said.

"But in this case of issuing arrest warrant [against Mahfuz Anam], how the court or the judge concerned made the decision has left us confused," he said.

"We think all decisions regarding the cases related to the media should be taken in line with the spirit of the law," Manjurul added.

Zafar Wazed, acting president of the BFUJ, said issuing arrest warrant against an editor in such a way is not logical and decent.

"It is more like taking a kind of stance against journalists and newspapers. Such a stance could be a matter of concern for the journalist community," he said.

Jatiya Press Club President Shafiqur Rahman said, "At this moment, I have no clear conception of the law. So I

can't make a proper comment on this matter. However, I think [the court] should deal with the matter carefully."

Qamrul Islam Chowdhury, general secretary of the Jatiya Press Club, said the issuance of arrest warrant was a deviation from the law.

The main purpose of the law is to stop harassment of journalists, but this move is a contradiction to it, he said, adding, "Since he [Mahfuz Anam] is an editor, the court should have considered the matter and paid respect to the law."

Razu Ahmed, general secretary of Dhaka Reporters Unity, said any kind of political pressure and misuse of law on the media go against freedom of press.

"Harassing any media person on political grounds is not acceptable," he viewed.

HUMAN CHAIN IN THAKURGAON

Protesting the filing of cases against The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, a cross-section of people in Thakurgaon

formed a human chain in front of the Cooperative Market in the town yesterday afternoon.

The hour-long human chain, formed under the banner of Sangbadpatra Pathak Forum, was followed by a discussion at the same venue.

Protesting wholesale cases against the editor, the speakers said such a move is very harmful for democracy and also for establishing truth in the society.

They said a quarter in the ruling party started filing cases against Mahfuz Anam instead of appreciating him for admitting lapse in his editorial judgement in publishing a few reports during the 2007-08 caretaker government rule without being able to verify them independently.

The role of The Daily Star is remarkable in upholding the spirit of the Liberation War, they added.

They also protested all incidents of harassment of journalists in the country in recent days.