

## Baby suffers injuries during Caesarean, dies

### Family sues doctor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A doctor was sued yesterday over the death of a baby during a Caesarean operation at a private hospital in Chandpur's Faridganj.

The accused doctor, Mahmuda Begum, has gone into hiding since, said Mahub Mollah, officer-in-charge of Faridganj Police Station.

With labour pain, Khadiza Begum, wife of expatriate Nasir Hossain of Paschim Dayachara village in the upazila, was admitted to Central Hospital in Faridganj Bazar area around 8:00pm on Wednesday.

As advised by doctors, she was then taken to the Caesarean section of the hospital and Mahmuda, a gynaecologist from Faridganj Health Complex, and another doctor from the health complex started her surgery there around 11:00pm.

During the operation, the baby died inside the womb after it sustained injuries from a scalpel of the

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## BB fire doused without major damage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out on a floor of the Bangladesh Bank headquarters in the city's Motijheel last night, but was doused after an hour's efforts.

No one was hurt in the flame; only some furniture was damaged, said fire service officials.

The fire broke out on the 13th floor of the 32-storey building around 9:30pm. On information, 12 firefighting units rushed to the spot and doused the flames, Mahmudul Hasan, duty officer of the fire service and civil defence headquarters, told The Daily Star.

The cause of the fire could not be known immediately.

Brig Gen Ali Ahmed Khan, director general of fire service and civil defence, told journalists in front of the bank that a five-member committee headed by a deputy director of the department was formed to probe the incident. It was asked to submit its report in five working days.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir, and other top officials of the central bank also rushed to the spot.

Contacted, Abul Kalam Azad, a general manager of the bank, told The Daily Star that the 13th floor housed the foreign exchange policy department, which is responsible for formulating and implementing policies related to foreign exchange.

## Letter

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the names of the officers who will carry the letter [to the UN]...It will be given within this month," the minister said at a briefing held at Press Information Department (PID) Conference Hall to declare the programme schedule for Genocide Day.

Diplomats will drum up support in favour of the proposal before replacing it to the UN, he added.

On March 11, the Jatiya Sangsad passed a resolution to observe March 25 as Genocide Day. The cabinet on Monday approved the resolution, completing all formalities to recognise the brutal genocide committed on this day in 1971.

From now on, Bangladesh will observe March 25 as Genocide Day, the day when the Pakistan army unleashed its war machine against the population of the then East Pakistan.

Since 2015, the UN has been observing December 9 as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of Prevention of this Crime.

Now Bangladesh will try to persuade the UN into changing the day to March 25 and recognise it as International Genocide Day, Mozammel Huq said.

To observe the first-ever Genocide Day, the ministry has planned several programmes to be organised in the capital and across the country.

It has not been possible to plan elaborate programmes to mark the day due to time shortage. "However, it will remain as a milestone for Bangladesh and the world history as well," the minister said.

On the day, a photography exhibition and discussion will be arranged at Suhrawardy Udyan. Alongside, cultural and discussion programmes will be held at district and upazila levels.

MA Hannan, secretary of the liberation war affairs ministry, and officials of PID and the Prime Minister's Office were present at the briefing.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with some of the winners of this year's Independence Award at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

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## No plot will work against Bangladesh

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She handed over the Independence Award 2017, the highest state award, to Bangladesh Air Force and 15 personalities for their outstanding contributions at national level.

A Canadian court last month acquitted three business executives of the charges that SNC-Lavalin Group Inc staff had planned to bribe Bangladeshi officials in a bid to win a \$50 million contract to supervise the Padma Bridge project.

"The Federal Court of Canada in its verdict said the allegation was false, and fabricated, and the accusation was baseless. Such a verdict of the court further brightened Bangladesh's image abroad," Hasina told the programme.

Greeting the awardees, she said: "You're such personalities who could

be followed by others and I think those who want to build and develop their lives, could follow your path. We want to build a dynamic society by using your merits and talents. We want our successors to be groomed in such a way."

She said the trend of grabbing power through violating the constitution began after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

"Bangladesh was supposed to be a secular country with people of all faiths enjoying equal rights and getting their basic rights like food, shelter, clothes, education, treatment, but the country was then guided to a totally different path, pushing it backwards."

Besides, ill-efforts were made to distort the history of Liberation War,

said Hasina.

Highlighting the successes achieved by the country over the last eight years, she said the poverty rate came down to 22 percent and efforts were on to reduce it by another 7-8 percent.

The premier said the present GDP growth rate of 7.11 percent would increase further in future. The size of the national budget was increased manifold and the salaries and allowances of public servants were hiked by up to 123 percent, she pointed out.

Ministers, state ministers, advisers to the PM, lawmakers, diplomats and high civil and military officials were present.

### WINNERS

The Independence Award, 2017 winners are: Group Captain (ret'd) Shamsul Alam Bir Uttam, Ashrafal Alam, Shaheed Md Nazmul Huq

(posthumous), Syed Mohsin Ali (posthumous), NM Nazmul Ahsan (posthumous), Shaheed Faizur Rahman Ahmed (posthumous) and Bangladesh Air Force (Independence and Liberation War); Prof AHM Touhidul Anwar Chowdhury (medical science); Begum Rabeya Khatun and Golam Samdani Koraishi (posthumous) (literature); Prof Enamul Huq and Ostad Bazlur Rahman Badal (culture); Khalil Kazi OBE (social service); Shamsuzzaman Khan and Prof Lalit Mohan Nath (posthumous) (research and training) and Prof Mohammad Asaduzzaman (public administration).

The PM handed over a certificate, a gold medal, and a Tk 3 lakh cheque to each of the winners and their representatives.

## Change of tactics in recruitment

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radical group will, however, continue to share terror knowledge through different social media platforms.

The group has set guidelines for its members about duties and responsibilities - like gaining knowledge from websites on making arms and bombs and disseminating the know-how to others online, and collecting information about targets and sharing it with other jihadists.

Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of DMP, said, "Ansar al Islam leaders and activists have taken refuge in safe shelters and become more defensive to avert arrest."

However, the group is still active on different online platforms, he added.

Previously known as Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), Ansar al Islam began gaining strength in 2013-14 and started selecting targets by monitoring social media and hacking them to death.

It took the government a couple of years to ban the Islamist radical group though it has so far claimed responsibility for 13 attacks in which 11 individuals including writers and bloggers, one publisher and two LGBT activists were killed. The ABT was banned in May of 2015.

"It took some time to ban [Ansar al Islam] as our detectives were busy tackling militancy," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told The Daily Star recently when asked why it took years to ban the group.

Earlier, the government had banned six militant organisations following their increasing involvement in terror attacks, but covert operations of the groups never stopped.

Ansar al Islam did not carry out any killing since they claimed to have murdered LGBT rights activists Xulhaz Mannan and Mahub Tanay in the capital on April 25 last year.

Law enforcers have so far managed to arrest around a dozen people for their suspected links with the militant group but most of its leaders and operatives remained untouched.

The group has around 200 leaders, activists and supporters, according to the CTTC chief.

"We had earlier carried out a number of raids on Ansar al Islam dens in the capital and on its outskirts, but in recent months we are finding it difficult to trace them," said a counterterrorism official, wishing anonymity.

Major (dismissed) Syed M Ziaul Haq, the group's military commander and mastermind of the targeted killings of

individuals, is still at large with a bounty of Tk 20 lakh on his head.

Another top counterterrorism official said they could trace Zia last time was around two months back, but he managed to escape before they could reach the place.

The official also said law enforcers in September last conducted a raid on a den in Savar but failed to arrest Zia as he had left just hours before the operation.

The home boss on more than one occasion had said Zia was under the surveillance of law enforcers.

As a rising militant outfit, ABT wanted to launch al-Qaeda in Bangladesh (AQIB) like al-Qaeda in Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS). But the AQIS headquarters in Pakistan did not approve the idea and suggested ABT be renamed Ansar al Islam and work as the Bangladesh branch of AQIS, investigators said.

Gen John W Nicholson, former commander of NATO Allied Land Command, recently said he was concerned about AQIS' "interference" in Bangladesh. The home minister trashed this, terming it propaganda, as the government never admits existence of AQIS in Bangladesh.

Counterterrorism officials said Ansar al Islam might have changed its strategy

due to frequent police raids based on information divulged by some of its arrested members and anti-militancy sentiments created among people following the Gulshan café attack.

### THE STATEMENT

In the statement circulated by the Global Islamic Media Front, followers have been asked to collect information about home and office addresses and daily routines of targets and share it with the Mujahideen.

It also focused on some school textbook contents which it termed shirk (sin of participating in idolatry), kufr (disbelief) and hatred against Islam. It asked followers to draw public attention to such write-ups.

Hefajat-e-Islam and Awami Olama League have been demanding exclusion of some of the poems written by "Hindus and atheists". Finally, those items were dropped from the curriculum, sparking severe criticism.

Ansar al Islam also suggested forming study circles, each comprising three to four persons, for preaching jihad and preparing for it.

The statement also asked followers to send their children to madrasas, particularly in Qawmi madrasas which are not regulated by the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board.

## Amazing grass!

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within a week.

Rezaul Karim, a principal scientific officer at the BCSIR and key initiator for producing hydroponic grass in the country, told The Daily Star, "Once a dairy owner or a commercial grass farmer installs one such unit, he will require regular supplies of good quality grass-growing seeds (of wheat, maize or other grains) and some mineral solutions, all of which are available in our market."

Hydroponic grass is economically more lucrative to many dairy farmers in the US because of its high productivity, greater nutrition values and non-susceptibility to diseases and infections (which is usually the case when grass is grown in the open), Rezaul pointed out.

Also in India, some dairy propri-

etors have started growing grass in such indoor facilities, he added.

Rezaul mentioned that fodders grown in this system are more nutritious, rich in minerals and micronutrients, and also germ-free, and they could increase milk production by up to 15 percent at a dairy farm.

Some of the dairy farm owners, who visited the BCSIR indoor facility for growing grass, said initial involvement of high investment is a concern. They hoped the BCSIR scientists would work out how to build such hydroponic fodder machines at a low cost in the country.

FodderTech, a Utah-based leading US hydroponic fodder technology company, sold the three units to the BCSIR for Tk 17 lakh with a guarantee of 30-year service.

Talking to The Daily Star, Russell Black, operation manager of the com-

pany, said they use seeds with a germination rate as high as 98 percent.

"We soak the seeds in seed treatment solutions for 86 hours and then put them on the trays and place them inside the hydroponic fodder facility, which has a controlled environment with required minerals, micro and macronutrients, light and temperature."

Using specially-designed equipment, this system converts grains into fresh, green feed available for harvest all year round regardless of outside climate and temperature.

The FodderTech official said hydroponic fodders have become popular among American dairy farmers, and that there is no reason why the same should not happen in Bangladesh.

After visiting the BCSIR fodder facility, Tofazzal Hossain, owner of a small dairy farm on the outskirts of the

capital, said, "I know I alone cannot afford one (fodder producing unit) but certainly we will be looking forward to install one through a collective effort."

"We have an association named 'Panchagram Dairy Farm Owners Association'. It has more than a hundred members. We will hold a meeting soon to see if we can have one under the association's ownership," he said.

Tofazzal has grazing land at his disposal but many of his peers in the association don't have any. They have to either buy grass or lease land for growing grass to feed dairy cattle.

Asked what feature of the hydroponic fodder attracted him the most, the dairy farm owner said, "It's nutritious, safe and hygienic. The grass we buy or grow in open fields for our animals sometimes causes diarrhoea and other diseases to the animals."

## White-tailed mole found after 167 yrs

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which was reported from Sylhet by Edward Blyth in 1850 when he first described it.

It was never found since then, so its name was not listed in the "Encyclopedia of Flora and Fauna of Bangladesh, Vol. 27, Mammals" (2009) and the most recently published "Red List of Bangladesh, Vol 2, Mammals" (2015).

I was optimistic that the species was still found in Bangladesh like in the neighbouring northeast India, Myanmar and China.

Therefore, in the early morning of March 10, I rushed to Srimangal to inspect and photograph the animal. It was clearly a White-tailed Mole (it can be called "Sada-leji Chika"), because it had the characteristic short white tail. In

contrast, the Himalayan mole has short black tail. Its head-body length, as I measured, was 11.5cm and tail 0.8cm.

Since moles are mostly found underground and under fallen leaves, it is difficult to see them. They have velvety black fur that enables them to move at any direction through underground tunnel. They have shovel-shaped fore-paws used in digging soil.

They have long snout and the heavily rely on scent, because they have small eyes covered by skin and they cannot see well. Rediscovery of this rare species indicates extreme richness of wildlife in Bangladesh.

Unfortunately, the captured mole died in afternoon of March 10, probably due to internal injury that it had while being captured by the tea-labourers.

BENEFITS PACKAGE

## 11 hurt as RMG workers clash with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 11 people, including four policemen, were injured in a clash between garment workers and police in the capital's Rampura yesterday.

Demanding their benefits package, some 300 to 400 workers of Lyric Industries Pvt Ltd blocked one side of a road for around an hour before law enforcers tried to disperse them around 11:00am, said witnesses.

The agitators threw brick chips and police responded by charging baton and firing shotgun pellets, leaving several people injured, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner (media) Masudur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Normally returned around 15 to 20 minutes later and the workers claimed that 20 of their colleagues were injured.

The 11 injured took treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Sub-Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of police outpost there.

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## CU student

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going to meet a friend around 5:00pm, the victim's cousin, Mohammed Riad, told journalists at the Chittagong Medical College morgue.

His mother found his cellphone switched off some time after 9:00pm and police informed them of the recovery yesterday afternoon, he said.

The SI quoted the caretaker of the third-floor flat in Syed Para Sahid Nagar as saying that four youths, including the victim and a female, rented the flat around 5:30pm and paid some rent in advance.

The three left around 8:00pm saying they were going shopping and that the victim was cleaning the flat, he added.

The caretaker found the flat's front door wide open around 11:00pm and saw the body before police were informed, he said, adding that filing of a case was underway.

## A mother's cry

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her one-year-old child.

She begged on the streets, worked a maid to feed and educate her son with the hope that her miseries would end one day.

Her hard work didn't go wasted as Soheli reciprocated with similar struggle to get himself settled as a trader of old furniture in the capital's Gulshan.

Soheli studied only up to class 10. He worked as an auto-rickshaw driver first, and then went to Dubai. Coming back, he bought a motorbike on which he used to carry passengers in his village of Barguna.

Three to four years back, he started the business of old furniture at Gulshan.

Soheli lived with his business partner in Badda until this January when he shifted his family to Dhaka thinking of better education of his four-year-old son.

When all seemed to be in place, the family saw it upended overnight.

Talking to The Daily Star correspondents at home in Jatrabari yesterday, Momtaz called for the prime minister's intervention in the rescue of her son the only breadwinner of the family.

"The prime minister has a son like I do. She has a daughter too, but I don't have any other child." The PM will understand the pain of a mother whose son went missing, she said sobbing.

## Water trouble

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rural dwellers. More than 94% of its rural population now has access to safe water, compared with 51.6% in 2000.

The report said lack of government planning, competing demands, a rising population and water-draining agricultural practices were all placing increasing strain on water resources.

It blamed poor management and sustainability of services, social inequalities and poverty, population growth and climate variability for people's struggle to access clean water.

The WaterAid said making communities more water secure also helps them become more resilient to extreme weather and better able to adapt to climate change.

"Now, more than ever, governments must make access to water, sanitation and hygiene a political and financial priority, particularly for their poorest people," said the advocacy group.

It also called for increasing public and private financing for water, sanitation and hygiene; recognising the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in building resilience; making equitable allocation of climate finance and stepping up efforts by government leaders to meet their commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals.