

Govt slated

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country to darkness, it said.
"We demand the government stops such a suicidal game and urge all patriotic, democratic and non-communal forces to wage a united movement against such an unfair move," said the statement, adding that the moves worried the 408 personalities.

On April 10, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared certificates of Dawra Hadith under Qawmi Madrasa Education boards as equivalent to Master's Degree in Islamic Studies and Arabic.

The distinguished citizens alleged that the recent changes had not been brought in the textbooks from class 1 to class 10 in a normal way.

"They said the government was "creating a proper environment for creating militants" through such educations.

They questioned why "the government surrendered to the fundamentalist groups if it claimed itself to be a non-communal force".

"The country's conscious and non-communal citizens are angered at the implementation of the suicidal decision of making the changes in the textbooks."

"We vehemently protest such moves and strongly demand that the government takes measures so that such incidents do not repeat in future."

Pointing to the recognition of the certificates of Dawra Hadith, the statement said, "We are in great fear thinking that followers of Hefajat-e-Islam chief Ahmed Shafi who have grown up upholding the ideology of Pakistan would take position in different administrative posts of the country."

Ahmed Rafiq, Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, Prof Anu Muhammad, Syed Hasan Imam, Prof Ajay Roy, Rafiqur Rabbi, Ahmed Rafique, Prof Kazi Madina, Anupam Sen, Abul Momen, Poet Golam Kibria Pinu, Mofidul Haque, Abed Khan, were among the signatories.

Liberal wins

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He told his party he would push for reform and national unity if he was confirmed as the next president.

A Gallup Korea poll last week showed Moon had 38 percent support in a field of 13 candidates.

Moon is expected to be sworn in today after the National Election Commission releases the official result. Most candidates including Moon have said they would skip a lavish inauguration ceremony and start work straight away.

The new leader is expected to quickly name a prime minister, who will need parliamentary approval, and main cabinet positions, including national security and finance ministers, which do not need parliamentary confirmation.

Moon's victory was bolstered by strong support from younger people, the majority of whom voted for him, according to the exit polls.

Many of his supporters participated in big, peaceful weekend rallies over the last few months of 2016 and early this year, demanding Park step down.

US ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM

Moon, whose campaign promises include a "National Interest First" policy, has struck a chord with people who want the country to stand up to powerful allies and neighbours.

He wrote in a book published in January South Korea should learn to say "no to America".

Moon favours dialogue with North Korea to ease rising tension over its accelerating nuclear and missile programme. He also wants to reform powerful family-run conglomerates, such as Samsung and Hyundai, and boost fiscal spending to create jobs.

Moon, who narrowly lost to Park in the last presidential election, in 2012, has criticised the two former conservative governments for failing to stop North Korea's weapons development. He advocates a two-track policy of dialogue while maintaining pressure and sanctions to encourage change.

The election is being closely watched by allies and neighbours at a time of high tension over North Korea's accelerating development of weapons since it conducted its fourth nuclear test in January last year. It conducted a fifth test in September and is believed ready for another.

Moon said in a YouTube live stream yesterday South Korea should take on a more active diplomatic role to curb North Korea's nuclear threat and not watch idly as the United States and China talk to each other. His election could complicate the deployment of a US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system, which the former Seoul government and the US military agreed last year to deploy in South Korea as defence against North Korean missiles.

Moon, a human rights lawyer and former student activist, has said the next administration should have the final say on whether to deploy the system.

11 months old

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claiming to be sick.

Metropolitan magistrate Khurshid Alam yesterday ordered him to appear before his court on May 16.

Rubel's mother Shamima Akter yesterday took him to the court for the hearing. The child started crying when journalists encircled her asking questions.

Shamima demanded exemplary punishment of the IO.

"We have been sufferings as we have to bring my 11-month-old son to the court for appearance before it," she told reporters.

Arifur's father Mahub Ullah was stunned that his dead son was accused of a "crime" committed three years after his death.

He said Arifur used to run a cosmetics shop in the area and he had died of a stroke on July 31, 2013, at the age of 27.

"I was in the US for 24 years and had no enmity with anyone... I had asked the complainant why he accused my dead son of committing the crime," he told The Daily Star.

Mahubub said his wife and a son-in-law were also accused in the case.

Habibur Rahman, complainant of the case, told The Daily Star that Arifur's name was on the First Information Report (FIR) as "he tried to grab my land making a fake document in 2011".

"Arifur, along with a number of goons in the area, were trying to take possession of around 28 decimal land of mine in Pirebag of Mirpur. So, I accused him. I was not aware that he had died," Habibur said.

On why he accused a baby boy,

Habib said he accused one Rubel in the FIR but he was 30 years old.

He claimed that Rubel's father Abul Kashem was one of the attackers, hired by some locals who had long been trying to grab his land making fake documents and filing "false" cases against him.

"I did not know many of the attackers. Some policemen, their informants, and locals identified the criminals and as per their suggestions, I accused them in the FIR," said Habib.

"It is the duty of the police to verify who were involved in the attack and vandalism.

"The investigation officer did not even communicate with me before pressing the charges," he said.

The Daily Star called IO Maruful Islam over the phone and asked how a dead person and a then newborn ended up on the charge sheet.

Maruful declined to talk saying he had undergone surgery at the Central Police Hospital.

Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that there was no doubt that Maruful mistakenly included the names in the charge sheet.

Masudur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner (media and publication) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that they have suspended the IO over the incident.

In a similar incident on March 20, 2007, SI Ruhul Amin, the IO of an extortion case, pressed charges against a man who died six years prior to the incident. A Dhaka court even issued an arrest warrant for the deceased man.

Attacker claims

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Two of his classmates -- Johirul Islam and Elias Uddin -- were with him, he told police during a preliminary interrogation.

Johirul and Elias are from Majhiakandi and Ashrabpur villages in Ishwarganj upazila.

The trio, students of an HSC equivalent course, were expelled from the madrasa following the incident, said its Vice-Principal Mufti Nazim Uddin.

Meanwhile, police early yesterday detained Ahad's wife and two brothers from his Netrakona village, said Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Kalmakanda Police Station.

His wife Joshnara Begum and brothers Ainuddin and Mainuddin were handed over to Mymensingh Detective Branch of police.

Police were yet to ascertain the motive and identify the people behind the attack.

Syed Nurul Islam, superintendent of Mymensingh police, told reporters that a group of people who has grudge against the Ahmadiyya community might have carried out the attack.

The badly wounded imam was first taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. He was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) early yesterday.

With four major stab injuries in his neck, head, back and abdomen and some minor stabs, Mustafizur underwent a six-hour surgery, DMCH doctors said.

He gained consciousness in the evening. Doctors said they couldn't say anything about his condition until 24 hours passed after his surgery.

Mohammad Solaiman, a central leader of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh, said a group of five to six devotees went to the mosque around two weeks ago to meet Mustafizur and know about Ahmadiyya doctrine.

Since then, they visited the mosque quite frequently, he said.

As three men came to Mustafizur's

quarter adjoining the mosque after the Esha azan on Monday, the imam thought the same group of people went to meet him.

"He took them inside the mosque. It was dark inside. As he was about to switch on the light, one of them hacked him from behind," said Solaiman.

The imam rushed out of the mosque screaming, but the attackers followed him and stared hacking the 32-year-old indiscriminately on the mosque yard in the dark, he added.

Hearing screams, some of his neighbours thronged the yard and found two people were lying on the ground, groaning, the Ahmadiyya leader said.

One of the attackers suffered injuries when his fellow attackers were hacking the imam, he said quoting Mustafizur as saying to his attendants on way to Dhaka from Mymensingh.

Locals suspected that the other injured was one of the attackers. They tied him with a rope and handed him over to police.

Solaiman said the attack sparked panic among Ahmadiyya devotees across the country. There are more than 150 mosques of the Ahmadiyya community in the country, he added.

No case was filed in connection with the incident until last night.

In a statement, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Bangladesh said those who had attacked the community previously might have carried out the Monday's attack.

They demanded the law enforcers identify the attackers and their patrons and bring them to book.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Forum Bangladesh, a platform of 19 organisations, yesterday in a statement expressed deep concern over the incident.

It demanded the government ensures exemplary punishment to the culprits and ensure security of the Ahmadiyya community members.

Our Mymensingh correspondent contributed to the report.

Prime accused

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Mobarak said the five youths, who were wearing pants and shirts, went to the hotel in a microbus. They had no luggage. They walked straight to the reception and inquired about room for rent.

When the receptionists told them the daily rent ranged between Tk 5,000 and Tk 20,000, one of the youths said, "Money is not an issue. Arrange a good room for us."

Asked, none of the youths gave ID cards or any other relevant documents. As the hotel authorities refused to give them any room, they were locked into an altercation, said Mobarak and other hotel staff.

A few minutes later, the youths left the hotel. Mobarak said their behaviour was suspicious and some of the hotel staff had the feeling that they had seen Shafat somewhere. It led them to check newspapers and discover that one of the youths was the prime accused.

Meanwhile, BM Farman Ali, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, went on a five-day leave yesterday amid allegation from the girls that there was an underhand dealing between some officials of the police station and the accused.

Police denied the allegation.

Abdul Ahad, additional deputy commissioner of police (Gulshan division), said the OC took the leave citing family reasons. He, however, could not say when Farman applied for that.

One of the girls also alleged that the police officials tried to brand them as bad girls when she went to the police station for filing the case in the afternoon of May 4. After dilly-dallying, police recorded the case on May 6.

Meanwhile, a team from Banani police raided Shafat's home yesterday afternoon. After the raid, Sub-inspector Milton Dutta said they were looking for the passport of the accused, which was not there.

Invited to Shafat's birthday party on March 28, the girls went to the Banani hotel around 9:00pm. After the rooftop party ended around midnight, the accused raped the girls in two hotel rooms at gunpoint, alleges one of the girls.

NHRC BLASTS POLICE

National Human Rights Commission chief Kazi Reazul Hoque yesterday said the Banani rape case was a shocking incident but police taking two days to register the case was even more shocking.

"Police dilly-dallied [for filing the case] for 48 hours. It's not acceptable," he told a programme in Khulna, reports our correspondent there.

900 families

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dropped due to poor yield from their farms and low prices of bamboo, a major income source for many locals.

Earlier, there was an allegation that all the families suffering were not getting the aid.

Reboti Moho Chakma, 55, karbari (chief) of Paschim Hagarachhari village, said their chairman had asked them to submit a list of families, and he had submitted the list to the chairman. But only nine out of 19 families listed had received rice.

Like Reboti, Shuvo Raj Chakma, 65, of Dakkhin Hagarachhari village, and Horanne Chakma, 80, of Daripara village, said they did not get any rice.

Bikash Chakma, 45, of Hagarachhari village, said he had to walk eight hours to get to Machalong Bazar for collecting the rice. But he had to return home empty-handed because his name was not on the list.

Contacted, Sajek Union Parishad Chairman Nelson Chakma said the number of poor families in remote areas was huge and that it was very hard to make a proper list.

Many of them were not on the list. The families which did not get the government aid would receive the aid in future, he said.

2 'robbers'

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area in Sadar upazila.

In a press briefing around noon, Superintendent of Police Subash Chandra Saha said, "We received information that two gangs of robbers engaged in a gunfight to establish supremacy on Nuru Mia Bypass Road around 3:00am.

"A team of police rushed to the spot and found two bullet-hit robbers on the spot. They were sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital where on-duty doctors declared them dead around 4:00am," he added.

The police said they had recovered a locally made pistol and one round of bullet on the scene.

Dr Md Farid Uddin of FMCH said police had brought two bullet-hit men around 4:00am. Each with a bullet wound in the head was already dead, he added.

Arshaf Uddin, Sabuj's father and also senior general secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's Faridpur unit, said, "My son had no involvement in any crime. He was a truck driver. I talked with him on Sunday and learned that he was going to Satkhira on a trip."

Earlier on Monday, police picked up Pavel's mother Parvin Akter, 42, and his wife Mim Jaman, 20, in connection with three robbery incidents occurred in the town between May 1 and May 6.

S Lanka

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"There were two big nests near two helipads. At the time of landing, helicopters can disturb the wasps and they could sting people in that area," the head of wasp removal unit Tissa Bandara Thambavita told AFP.

"We have cleared the nests and declared the area safe for the VVIPs to visit."

The winged evictees were removed humanely and relocated to a nearby jungle, Thambavita added. A team will remain on site to ensure those kicked out do not return before Modi touches down.

It will be the second time in just over two years the Indian leader has visited neighbouring Sri Lanka.

He will return Thursday as chief guest at the Buddhist celebration of Vesak, which marks the birth, enlightenment and the passing of the Buddha.

Modi will address a Buddhist conference in Colombo before travelling by helicopter to the central tea country to open an India-funded hospital and address Indian-origin plantation workers.

He will also visit Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine, the Temple of the Tooth, before leaving Friday evening.

Sri Lanka police have said they will deploy more than 6,000 officers to provide additional security during Modi's overnight visit.

Ershad

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After yesterday's acquittal, the former military dictator is now facing two more cases --one for Uttara plot allotment scam and another for murder of Maj Gen Abul Manzoor. Both the cases are now under trial.

Ershad joined the Awami League-led grand alliance before the 2008 national elections.

BNP for making House

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speak in parliament. It would also propose to introduce a "by-partisan" process to enable all political parties reach a consensus on important national issues, he said referring to the discussion at a meeting of the BNP standing committee.

To finalise the draft of Vision 2030, BNP standing committee members held the meeting at the chairperson's Gulshan office.

The meeting, which began on Monday night, witnessed a heated debate on various issues of the draft. It was postponed around 1:30am yesterday.

The debate was on the bicameral parliamentary system as most of the standing committee members opposed it saying the system might create problems and confusion.

The meeting resumed yesterday morning and ended around 2:30pm.

The "Vision 2030" will have around 150 points that would cover all the aspects of the country's internal and external affairs. Khaleda will make specific announcements on various ministries and issues, said party sources.

Some committee members suggested that the president should be empowered further.

Meeting sources said a few BNP leaders asked why the draft of the

Vision 2030 was placed before the standing committee just two days before making it public.

Rule of law

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democratic system, the law is supreme."

As an independent judiciary, under the scheme of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the court has played its role effectively in acting as a watchdog through judicial review over the acts of the legislature and the executive.

The chief justice urged people to gain knowledge about the present judicial system.

"Of the total people of this country I am sure more than half of the people do not know what actually is meant by the separation of the judiciary and for that matter what is the bright side of the proposed separated judicial system.

"To address these questions, we should have at least an average knowledge of our present judicial system."

SK Sinha also stressed the need for collaborative activities between Commonwealth Judiciaries in order to surmount "common challenges" in securing the rule of law and good governance.

India's sitting judge

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Monday issued an order sentencing eight Supreme Court judges to five years of "rigorous imprisonment" and imposed a fine of Rs 1,00,000 each under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 and the amended Act of 2015.

The eight include members of the seven-judge Bench, headed by Justice Khehar which, in February, issued a contempt order against him on the charge of degrading the judiciary.

Justice Karnan, on his part, directed the Supreme Court judges "to appear before him on May 28" and later "reposted" the matter to May 1.

The apex court had on May 1 directed medical check-up of Justice Karnan by doctors with police support, as the judge did not appear before it.

On Monday, Justice Karnan refused to undergo medical tests and told the team of doctors, in a written response, that he is "absolutely normal and with a

stable mind."

The SC bench yesterday said the contempt power does not recognise who is what, whether he is a judge and individual or a private person and that it is simple contempt.

"If we do not send him to jail, there will be a blemish that Supreme Court has condoned the contempt committed by a judge," it said.

The apex court had on March 10 issued a bailable warrant against Justice Karnan to ensure his presence before it in the contempt case. The warrant had come almost a month after the court had asked Justice Karnan to appear in person and explain why contempt proceedings not be initiated against him.

On March 31, Justice Karnan had appeared in the Supreme Court, a first in Indian judicial history, and had sought restoration of his powers as a condition for his re-appearance, but the plea was rejected.

Justice Karnan was transferred from the Madras High Court to the Calcutta High Court for his conduct. The apex court even asked the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court not to assign any judicial work to him.

Justice Karnan, who retires on June 11, was sentenced in absentia.

Long queues

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yesterday afternoon demanded adequate support for people of haors and punishing those whose negligence and corruption led to building of faulty embankments, which gave way to flood waters recently.

Eminent rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal demanded that the government take up long-term plans to protect haor areas especially during seasons when natural calamities hit regularly.

Sultana Kamal also demanded an end to the leasing out of haors and giving locals the scope to freely fish in the waters.

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, demanded waiving all kind of loans and giving out more loans to farmers so that they can recoup losses through Boro cultivation again.

The rally was organised for farmers by a platform, Poribesh O Haor Unnayan Sangstha, at the Tahirpur Upazila Parishad Complex in Sunamganj.

The platform raised a six-point demand including providing "compensation" to farmers in haor areas, dredging rivers and canals there, building proper embankments in some areas and protecting the ecosystem there.

[Our Sylhet and Moulvibazar correspondents contributed to the report.]

Farabi hailed from Rikabibazar of the city, Harunur from Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila and the rest from Kanaighat upazila of Sylhet.

Of the accused, Farabi, Rahi and Abul Khayer are in jail, while Abul Hossain, Faisal and Harunur Rashid are on the run.

Arman Ali, inspector of CID and investigation officer of the case, submitted the first charge sheet on August 28 last year accusing five people and recommending acquittal of 11 others.

Later on October 28, the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Haridas Kumar ordered the CID to reinvestigate the case and submit a revised charge sheet.

Ananta Bijoy Das was hacked to death at Subidbazar in the city on May 12, 2015 on way to his office.

Banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team claimed responsibility of the murder through an online post.

Ananta's brother Ratneswar Das filed a murder case accusing some unnamed people with Sylhet Airport police the next day. The case was later transferred to the CID.

JP to 'play religion card'

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country's politics. The two major political parties -- Awami League and BNP -- stoked up religious sentiments to bag votes in elections to local government bodies and parliament.

JP leaders say 15 more political parties, including two "well known" and registered Islamist parties --faction of Islami Oikya Jote, and faction of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis -- are likely to join the JP-led United National Alliance, raising the number of allies to 63.

"As a secular party, Awami League has fixed voters. We will not get those votes. That's why we have taken the strategy to attract anti-Awami League supporters who used to cast votes for BNP and its ally," JP Co-chairman GM Quader told The Daily Star.

"Due to secular image of the Awami League, it is believed that religious-minded people vote for the BNP due to its rightist image and its alliance with different Islamist organisations."

will definitely participate under the alliance to emerge as a "strong opposition party", said JP presidium member Shunil Shuvo Roy.

In that case, he said, "We are hopeful about getting votes of the rightist voters who do not like Awami League."

A section of JP leaders, however, expressed dissatisfaction over the inclusion of name only and unregistered political parties that lack minimum organisational strength and popularity to make an impact on election results.

"There was no discussion in the party's forum about it [formation of the alliance]. Most of us knew nothing about who were going to join the alliance," another JP leader said preferring not to be named.

"The number 58 [present components of the alliance] sounds good but voters don't cast their votes on that basis.

"The way the alliance was formed seemed like people from the streets were invited to join the alliance." Things would have been better had the JP included more registered parties in the alliance, the party leader added.