



PHOTO: STAR

Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh holds a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, demanding withdrawal of cases against journalists, including CRAB members, and cancellation of section 57 of the ICT act.

Cyclone SHelters Dhaka donates \$5.3 lakh for Rakhine state

Diplomatic Correspondent

Bangladesh has donated \$530,000 for the construction of two to three multipurpose cyclone shelters in the Rakhine State of Myanmar with a hope that these shelters will reduce the vulnerability of the Rakhine people from cyclones and tidal bores.

Bangladesh Ambassador in Yangon M Sufur Rahman formally handed over a cheque to Myanmar Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Win Myat Aye at the latter's office yesterday.

Bangladesh is also going to donate three ambulances equipped with modern medical features to the Rakhine State soon, said a press release of the Bangladesh Embassy in Myanmar.

The embassy has also been co-ordinating with the authorities of both countries on applying the Solar Home System (SHS) in parts of the Rakhine and Chin State.

The donation is part of the pledged humanitarian assistance by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a simple ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement of Myanmar will coordinate with the Rakhine state government and the authorities concerned for the construction of the cyclone shelters expected by the end of 2018.

The cyclone shelters will be built taking into consideration the models of multipurpose shelters that evolved in Bangladesh over decades and are globally acclaimed.

Bank loans

FROM PAGE 20 deposits and for proposing a 15 percent uniform VAT. Later, he revised both the plans and eventually backed away from imposing the flat VAT rate.

Referring to the lawmakers' discussions on the proposed budget, the PM said both ruling party and opposition lawmakers discussed the budget. Some ruling party lawmakers even criticised some proposals. "It is rare and it proves that everyone has freedom to express their opinion. And the finance minister changed some proposals following their [MPs'] recommendations."

Now, by implementing the budget, the government will transform Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed nation by 2041, she said.

Describing her government's success, Hasina said through effective measures Bangladesh became third in vegetable production, fourth in paddy and fresh water fish production, and major mango production, weighing in gava production and fifth in mustard production in the world.

Responding to opposition leader Raushan Ershad's concern over waterlogging in the capital, the PM blamed her predecessors for unplanned urbanisation of Dhaka.

She said construction of unplanned box culverts, filling up of rivers, canals and ponds were responsible for the city's waterlogging.

Hasina reiterated the government's "zero tolerance" policy against militancy. "There will be no room for militancy in the soil of this land. Bangladesh has been marching forward and the journey will continue."

The PM also warned that this year's flood might be devastating. "For this, we're importing food grains and stockpiling them so that we can face any kind of calamities. The flood victims are getting enough relief materials."

Qamrul finds food

FROM PAGE 1

More rice is being imported through international tenders and the government is hopeful that 4.5 lakh tonnes rice will reach Bangladesh within next month, said Qamrul.

The minister told reporters that he would visit Cambodia on August 1 to explore the possibility of importing rice from there. Also, two Indian and Thai delegations would visit Bangladesh within next few days for the same purpose.

Private traders brought in 84,000 tonnes of rice from India since June 20 when the government slashed the import duty from 28 percent to 10 percent, he added.

According to government statistics, consumers imported 47 percent rice on a year-on-year basis. The Daily Star ran a report yesterday on the food ministry's indifference to low stock and delayed decisions on rice import and cutting import tariff.

Asked why the decision on rice import was delayed, he said they started importing rice in "proportion".

He said the ministry had earlier written to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to withdraw rice import tariff, but she took a "proper and timely decision" considering the farmers' benefit and the people were being benefited from the PM's decision.

He expressed optimism that the government would be able to collect 3 to 4 lakh tonnes of rice through internal procurement within next month.

"We'll be able to build a handsome stock within next month. Our stock would be at least 8 to 10 lakh tonnes within August and 12 lakh tonnes within September."

"You guys won't have any opportunity to run negative news on food," he added.

About the recent media reports on low food stock, he said, "Your news has no basis. I am telling you we have sufficient stock. Except for relief work, we don't need to supply rice to any other sector now... We have sufficient stock to cutting import tariff."

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Food

FROM PAGE 2

Flood victims of Shariakandi upazila of Bogra were facing a crisis of food and medicines. But the local administration said it was distributing rice and money every day.

The flood situation in Gaibandha has worsened as the water level of the lamine increased.

Over 1.5 lakh people have been affected by flood in 30 unions in five upazilas of Sirajganj. Many complained that they were not getting sufficient relief goods.

(Our correspondents in the districts contributed to the report)

Several parties

FROM PAGE 2

Sub-inspector Shahed of Uttara West Police Station went to his house twice – first around 8:00pm and then around 8:30pm – and asked him not to hold any meeting.

The police officer, however, left the house in the face of strong protest from the organisers and took position outside the house he added.

By 11:00pm all the guests left the house when the police officer also left, he said.

"I have no words to condemn this intervention," he added.

The Daily Star could not contact the officer in question.

Asked, Deputy Commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Mdastur Rahman and Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Abdur Razzaq of Uttara West Police Station said they had no information about the incident.

The meeting was also attended by Biplobi Darshana leaders AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and Mabi H. Chowdhury, Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque, Krishak Samrak Janata League President Abdur Rabb Siddique, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) Convener Khaleduzzaman and Gono Forum leader Subbari Chowdhury.

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carry out relief work."

Asked about a report on the six-year low food stock and its adverse impact on rice prices, he said, "Those who are saying this are giving a wrong explanation."

The government blacklisted 16,000 millers for refusing to sell rice to it and stockpiling the staple, the minister said, adding that the government would not buy rice from them for next three years.

Qamrul said his ministry was not responsible for stockpiling food to manipulate its prices.

When a journalist pointed out that rice prices increased by Tk 30 to Tk 40 per moumd from due to flood, the minister said, "Your information is totally false. There is no question of price-hike of rice. Don't ask such irrelevant questions."

Shafat, Nayem

FROM PAGE 20

Opposing the petitions, prosecution lawyers said all the five accused were directly involved with the rapes. Moreover, four of them gave confidential information to the police.

After the hearing, Shafat and Nayem were charged with raping the victims while Billal, Rahmat and Salat were charged with helping the rapists in various ways during and after the incident.

Shafat is the son of Dildar Hossain Selim, one of the owners of Apan Jwellers.

On June 8, Inspector Ismot Ara Ame of Women Support and Investigation Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, also an investigating officer of the case, submitted the chargesheet.

Invited to Shafat's birthday party on March 28, the two girls went to the hotel around 9:00pm. After the party ended around midnight, Shafat and Nayem raped them in two rooms, alleged one of the two girls who filed the case with Banani Police Station on May 6.

Billal filmed the rape, Rahmat intimidated the girls while Sakif refrained from informing the hotel authorities and the police about the incident, she alleged, adding that all the five accused were "drunk".

But I am not afraid to reveal what happened to me," he said. "People become mysteriously silent after they emerge alive from enforced disappearances. When I return to work, I will begin working on this issue. We have to end this culture of enforced disappearances."

Scientists

FROM PAGE 20

quantum internet that connects different parts of the world at an unprecedented speed.

Until now, experiments had been restricted to short distances because of problems with the wires or signals that would carry the information.

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He travelled

FROM PAGE 20

Shahidul said police traced Farhad near Aricha Ghat around 8:00am soon after his wife lodged a complaint about his "abduction". Law enforcers set up checkpoints at every district but never his mobile phone was traced. Police then searched every inch of the area at the checkpoints, but did not find him.

The IGP, however, could not be found because he went to Khulna from the capital. He suspected the writer travelled by a bus like he did during his return trip before being found by law enforcers in Jessore's Noapara upazila around 11:30pm on the same day.

According to Farhad's judicial statement, he had been in abductors' custody between 5:29am and 7:00pm on July 3. He made 10 calls to his wife and six to another person and sent Tk 15,000 to that number through a mobile banking platform, the police chief said.

"Tracking the second mobile phone, we came to know that the person was a woman from the capital's Bhatara and later she went to Chittagong."

"Since she was communicated by Farhad Mazhar during the period he had been missing, she also came under investigation. The woman gave statement before a court under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. We collected the records of the phone calls between Farhad Mazhar and the woman."

Shahidul further said CCTV footage revealed that the writer was roaming freely at Khulna New Market and Noorjahan Market area between 4:21pm and 7:28pm on July 3.

Asked whether police would take any action again, Farhad for making "false statements", IGP said they had to consider it from a humanitarian perspective if he had done it confessing. But police would consider taking legal actions against the writer if he wanted to challenge the investigation, he added.

The IGP further said police had an audio record of a telephone conversation between Farhad and his wife.

The writer during the conversation told her that he was alright and the abductors were about to release him. He also asked her not to talk about the abduction as the matter went viral on social media.

Giving the judicial statement to a Dhaka court on July 4, Farhad said some unidentified people forced him into a microbus and blindfolded him minutes after he came out of his house.

Shahidul said criticism of the law enforcement agencies by some civil society members, including lawyers and renowned personalities, created confusion among the people about the incident.

Meanwhile, the writer returned home on Wednesday evening after receiving treatment in the city's Birlam Hospital for over a week.

In an interview to British daily The Guardian, Farhad on Tuesday described his abduction as he mentioned in his judicial statement. He said he was still suffering from "heavy trauma" and he would need time to recover.

"But I am not afraid to reveal what happened to me," he said. "People become mysteriously silent after they emerge alive from enforced disappearances. When I return to work, I will begin working on this issue. We have to end this culture of enforced disappearances."

Relief for flood

FROM PAGE 20

treasury branch.

Pointing to the outbreak of chikungunya, Raushan called upon the health minister and two mayors of Dhaka city to take proper measures to control the disease.

She also demanded immediate steps to end people's sufferings caused by waterlogging in Dhaka and Chittagong.

DU teacher

FROM PAGE 20

the mass communication and journalism department alleged that Associate Prof Fahmidul Haque of the same department had brought false allegations against him through a post in a closed group on Facebook.

Pran Mansur mentioned that he joined the Facebook group of MCI 6th batch after he came to know about the post from one of his students.

In the post, Fahmidul held him responsible for the delay in publishing the results of Master's course and accused him of influencing the media to run a report against another professor, he said.

Pran Mansur termed baseless the allegations brought by his colleague.

Contacted, Fahmidul Haque said, "I know what I have written. My writing might have offended someone. Once this is a legal process, I will deal with it as per the law."

Ahmed Hossain, office-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said they would take further steps according to the law.

War crimes tribunal chief

FROM PAGE 20

Justice Haque is survived by his wife, a son of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held on Supreme Court premises after Jum'a prayers today. Later, he will be buried at his family graveyard, the registrar said. His body will be laid at the BSMU mortuary until then, he added.

Justice Anwarul Haque was diagnosed with lung cancer in January this year and took treatment at hospitals at home and in Singapore, a staff of the tribunal said.

Although he was suffering from cancer, he took part in tribunal's proceedings for many days and even delivered judgment of a case during this time, the official said.

He was admitted to BSMU on July 5, the day he returned from Singapore, Alam said.

On hearing the news of his demise, Chief Justice Surenra Kumar Islam, Food Minister Qamrun Islam, judges of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, tribunal's prosecutors and SC lawyers rushed to the hospital to pay their last respect to the judge.

"The demise of such an honest and sincere judge is an irreparable loss for the judiciary," the chief justice said.

President Abdul Hamid and Law Minister Anisul Haque expressed deep shock at Justice Anwarul Haque's death and conveyed their sympathy to the bereaved family.

Born in 1956, Justice Anwarul Haque passed SSC from Dhaka

Government Muslim High School and HSC from Notre Dame College, Dhaka, according to his resume on the ICI's website.

He completed his LLB (Hons) and ILM degree from Dhaka University. He also obtained a Graduation [Advance Diploma] degree in Diploma in drafting of Legislation from the University of the West Indies.

He joined the Bangladesh Judicial Service on 1 December 1981 as a Munsif (Assistant Judge). He served as District and Sessions Judge in Chandpur, Laxmipur and Gazipur districts and was also the Chairman of the Labour Court in Chittagong.

He also served as a section officer, deputy secretary, joint secretary, additional secretary and secretary to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

He was elevated to the post of additional judge of the High Court on December 10, 2010, and was appointed judge of the same division on December 10, 2012.

Justice Anwarul Haque was appointed the chairman of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 on September 15, 2013. Prior to holding this post, he had been working as a member of the same tribunal since March 25, 2012.

He concluded with all 17 verdicts the tribunal-1 had so far delivered since February 2013, including the judgements in the cases against Jamaat leaders Ghulam Azam, Delwar Hossain Sayeede and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

Cops fail again to report

FROM PAGE 20 media report brought the matter to the fore.

The "unusual delay and negligence" in informing the tribunal of the death of the war crimes accused led to the change framing against him in absentia on December 10, 2013 since the prosecution based on an earlier report had pressed formal charges identifying him as a fugitive.

Later, the tribunal asked the inspector general of police and the superintendent of police of Mymensingh to explain police's "blatant inefficiency and negligence" in communicating the information.

It exonerated Mymensingh SP Syed Nurul Islam as he offered an unconditional apology and accepted the IGP's proposal to keep the tribunal informed about the status of the fugitives on a regular basis.

Giving the judicial statement to a Dhaka court on July 4, Farhad said that police would submit reports every 15 days to the tribunal on war crimes fugitives, with reasons as to why they failed to arrest them.

District superintendents of police would maintain a register on the matter. The SPs along with the officers-in-charge concerned would monitor the situation to ensure that court orders are properly complied with, he said in a letter to the court.

Even after all these proposals, Majid's death was not communicated to the ministry concerned, seeking administrative action against them.

On May 21, 2015, the IGP-2 issued arrest warrants for 16 war crimes accused of Moleshkhali, including Majid. Police arrested three of them.

On October 8 of that year, the investigation agency completed its probe into the case and found the involvement of Majid and 17 others in the killing of at least 94 people and other offences during the 1971 Liberation War.

The prosecution pressed 12 charges against them on March 15 last year and the tribunal, taking the charges into cognisance, asked police to give reports on the fugitives.

On February 13, SI Zahur reported to the court that he had visited Majid's house but did not find him, Prosecutor

Eden of egrets

FROM PAGE 20

when sailboats roamed free.

Down a narrow road in southern part of Bangladesh, crisscrossed with many rivers, creeks and seasonal wetlands, turns into a paradise for resident water birds. Food becomes plentiful as wetlands expand with rain, and frogs, fish and other aquatic species breed. For centuries our water birds have been using short window of opportunity to reproduce as they can feed their young with abundant food supply in local wetlands.

However, our wetlands are diminishing quickly thanks mainly to rural development and agriculture. Suitable nesting trees are scarce as people no longer let native trees grow and plant commercially profitable invasive trees in villages. People collect chicks and eggs from heronries and often shoot the birds for food.

In such a dire situation, some people still offer shelter to wildlife even after sacrificing their own comfort. In this quest, we encountered a woman who has a greater heart than many of us. We rarely read positive news about wildlife and often find news of how animals are killed or captured. Therefore, I strive to find positive stories about people who help contribute to nature without expecting anything back.

Sumai Bonik is one such woman. She let around 80 Great Egret, Intermediate Egret and 20 Little Cormorants to build nest and produce offspring in her backyard. She feels that these birds are like her own children as they chose her garden to build nests while suitable nesting trees are available in other villages. She and her family often fight with local hunters to protect these birds. If a chick falls out of the nest, she puts them back.

There are many other water bird colonies in villages across the country where locals protect these birds. They seem to understand the value of nature and their future.

The writer is a Conservation Biologist and Ornithologist, currently working on threatened species conservation and research in Bangladesh and abroad. He can be reached at sayam_icu@yahoo.com.