

# ARREST OF LEADERS Jamaat calls hartal for tomorrow

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Jamaat-e-Islami last night announced a three-day protest programme, including a dawn-to-dusk peaceful hartal for tomorrow, to protest against the removal of its top leaders.

The announcement came hours after a Dhaka court placed Jamaat Ameer Maqbul Ahmad, its Secretary General Shaikhur Rahman and six other senior party leaders on a 10-day remand case.

Amaluchances and vehicles of fire service and the media would be out of the purview of the hartal.

The youth rally in the BNP-led 20-party alliance, said in a press release.

The Jamaat leaders were arrested on Monday in a case filed with Kadamtoli Police Station on September 29 over creating anarchy during Durga Puja and Ashura procession and plotting to topple the government.



The shacks of Rohingya refugees on a hill slope in Thyangkhali camp of Ukhta in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

# DU student stabbed over trifle matter

**PROFESSOR ANWAR ALI**  
**DU CORRESPONDENT**

A four-year student of Dhaka University was stabbed allegedly by a former Chhatra League leader over a trifle matter last night.

Taliba Iubayer, ex-vice president of Chhatra League's Salimullah Hall unit at DU, stabbed Omar Faruk of political science department six times in the abdomen and hands as the latter had protested the former's decision of not paying for food at the student mess, said Badiuzzaman Sufi, a student and member of the mess.

Critically injured Faruk, who has been managing the mess, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, he added.

Faruk is said to be in a critical condition.

Confirming the incident, DU Professor Prof. Anwar Ali said they formed a three-member committee to probe the matter and submit a report within 24 hours.

# Fear of HIV spread grows Myanmar stays indifferent: FM

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REFUGEE LIFE in congested camps in the country's south-eastern district.

Shahreen Mf Akbar Rahman Chowdhury, residential medical officer of Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, said 16 AIDS patients had been brought under treatment.

Having seen the number of such patients increasing, the health ministry provided 300 kits to detect HIV patients at the upazila level in Ukhta and Teknaf, he told The Daily Star. Doctors, nurses, pathologists and technicians are being trained in how to use the kits and safety measures, he added.

According to the UNAIDS, 2.3 lakh people are living with HIV in Myanmar, and 7,800 people died due to the infection. Myanmar is one of the 35 countries witnessing 90 percent of new HIV infections globally.

“Preferring not to be named, a gynaecologist working for an international organisation in Ukhta said the actual picture was worse.”

“In the field level, we don't have any mechanism to detect HIV patients. We refer those who have symptoms of HIV to the district hospital for confirmation.”

Though the HIV positive patients are spread in few in number, the risk of spreading of the infection is very high, the gynaecologist said, fearing a rapid spread of contagious disease if such patients are not taken immediately.

Health personnel working in the refugee camps said most of the Rohingya people were not covered by

vaccination and so their immune system was comparatively weak. Besides, their hygiene practices are not up to the mark, while many of them maintain ‘risky sexual behaviour’.

Mishah Uddin Ahmed, Ukhta Upazila health and family planning officer, said six Rohingya people were identified as HIV positive this hospital.

“Myanmar is one of the countries in the world where HIV/AIDS is endemic. Rohingyas are not excluded. We never know how many Rohingyas people are HIV infected and how many of them entered Bangladesh,” he said.

Ahmed also said HIV tests were being conducted in delivery cases at his health centre.

“We have taken various measures to identify HIV positive patients and vulnerable patients. The situation is still under control,” Abdus Salam, civil surgeon of Cox's Bazar, said.

Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, said a team of national HIV programme was working in Cox's Bazar and was already identifying HIV patients.

“We are providing treatment once they are detected... We will not go for mass screening for HIV detection. It is not required. We will screen only those vulnerable to the disease.”

According to the health ministry, 4,143 Bangladeshis, one of the lowest in the world, have been found to be HIV-positive so far and 658 patients have died.

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in Gonia last year.

“In these meetings, Bangladesh spoke about ending any misconceptions and assured the NLD government of cooperation,” Mahmood said.

“Yes, Myanmar remained indifferent to bilateral relations with Bangladesh and is not attempting to show the international community that its relations with Bangladesh are normal.”

He was addressing a discussion titled ‘Rohingya Crisis: Measures taken by Bangladesh and a Review’ organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at its auditorium in the capital.

The comments came when over 520,000 Rohingyas fled violence in Myanmar in the wake of a military crackdown in response to Rohingya insurgent attacks on some 30 police posts and an army base on August 25.

An estimated 3,000 Rohingya Muslims were killed, while more than 284 Rohingya villages were burned down in the army operation. Thousands of Rohingyas continue to seek the border to Bangladesh, the minister said.

Myanmar also violated Bangladesh's airspace and laid landmines along the border apparently to prevent return of the Rohingyas, who are denied citizenship and other basic rights by Myanmar despite having their roots there for generations.

Speaking at the programme, two army officers said Myanmar tried to instigate Bangladeshis into military engagement,

but Bangladesh maintained restraint.

In late September, Bangladesh raised the Rohingya issue in the UN which described the violence against the Rohingyas as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing and while rights bodies called it genocidal crimes against humanity.

The US, UK and France spoke of strong actions against Myanmar, but the UN Security Council could not do so because of opposition from China and Russia, Myanmar's ally.

On October 2, Myanmar officially proposed taking back a part of its nationals after verification as per an agreement signed by the two countries in 1992.

“Myanmar's proposal for partial repatriation of the Rohingyas could be a tacit message to international pressure,” Mahmood said.

He added Myanmar's proposal for verification by itself could be a technique to limit the number of Rohingyas for repatriation and prolong the implementation of the Kofi Annan Commission report.

Since August 25, Rohingya Muslims have been intentionally driven away from Buthidaung and Maungdaw of Rakhine, the minister said, adding that Myanmar continued to establish a ‘demographic balance’ in Northern Rakhine under a special plan.

However, Myanmar, with support from the state media, is trying to confuse the international community and some neighbouring countries as it terms the violence as ‘Islamist terrorism’ or ‘ex-

trémist Bangladeshi terrorism’.

For decades, the Rohingyas have been persecuted in Myanmar, made stateless and forced to leave the country. Though the operation in late August began against ethnic cleansing and crimes against women and children, civilians including women and migrants, faced cruel persecution, the minister added.

“Therefore, the Rohingya problem now is no more an internal issue of Myanmar but a regional one. It is also not limited to a bilateral issue between Myanmar and Bangladesh,” Mahmood said.

The Rohingyas would not be willing to return to Myanmar unless the country provides them citizenship and all basic rights, eliminate all sorts of discrimination and religious hatred, he said, urging stronger pressure and role of the international community in solving the problem.

“However, there is also no alternative to a continuous communication with Myanmar,” the minister noted.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said Dhaka was for all-out diplomatic efforts to end the international community in addressing the issue.

At the same time, the government is arranging all emergency assistance – food, water, shelter and medicine – for the Rohingyas in Kungyalong, he said.

“We have been fighting a tough battle,” said Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque, adding that at least 25 countries had been communicated.

Former ambassador Mahmud Hasan

warned that Myanmar could drag the issue in the pretext of verification.

“It is extremely important that the UN is engaged in the whole affairs of repatriation,” he said.

Former ambassador CM Shafi Sami said the international community needed to realise that the persecution of Rohingyas may lead to terrorism.

This is why the global community should solve an intractable issue,” he said.

Prof Syed Anwar Husain, who teaches history at Dhaka University, suggested formation of a national taskforce – composed of academics and officials from the foreign ministry and the armed forces – to lead the diplomatic efforts for mobilising international support.

Prof CR Abrar of international relations at the DU said what happened in Rakhine was a “clear case of genocide” and everyone should call it genocide.

Prof Tasneem Siddiqui, a political science teacher at DU, suggested taking the issue to the International Criminal Court.

He also spoke for engaging national NGOs in the management and relief distribution in Rohingya camps because they knew the local realities better.

BISS Board of Governors Chairman Munshi Faiz Ahmad, DG Maj Gen AKM Abdur Rahman, Border Guard Bangladesh, DG Maj Gen Abdul Hossain, former ambassador Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, former chief of mission, former UN Secretary Shaheedul Haque, adding that at least 25 countries had been communicated.

Former ambassador Mahmud Hasan

# Shahreen on draft list

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front. Kamul is the secretary general of Peshajibi Samannay Parishad, a platform of pro-AL professionals.

The list also contains the names of six teachers of DLI, four from Rajshahi University and one from Jahangirnagar University.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shamsunnahar said, “We proposed names of 49 people including some educationists, so that they can give valuable guidelines to the party. Their inclusion in the sub-committee would make it prestigious.”

Prof Mijanur said he was not informed officially about his inclusion in the sub-committee. “I came to know about it from some news portals and social media. I will comment on the matter once I am informed officially,” he added.

Mijanur was a former president member of Juba League, the AL's youth

chairman while Shamsunnahar Chappam member secretary of the sub-committee.

The four VCs in the list are Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman of Dhaka University, Prof Harun-or-Rashid of National University, Prof Mijanur Rahman of Jagannath University and Prof Kamrul Hossain Khan of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman University.

Akhtaruzzaman was elected general secretary of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Data) for three consecutive terms since 2004, and vice-president in 2009 and 2011 from 2004 to 2011.

Prof Mijanur was elected Data member from the Blue Panel.

Mijanur was a former president member of Juba League, the AL's youth

# Batling to bear high living cost

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pace with the hike in prices,” said the BSNNS in a press release yesterday.

BSNS Convener Mohiuddin Ahmed said that under the present circumstances, a fresh increase in electricity tariff would further compound the sufferings of the people.

He demanded that the government reduce electricity prices, instead of hiking those.

MD Saiful Islam, who works at a private firm in the capital, said, “The move to increase prices of electricity is unacceptable at a time when we are paying exorbitant prices for essentials. An increase in electricity prices will further squeeze our purchasing power and lead to a decline in living standards.”

Some give in.

Apurba Bardhan Shoma, 14, allegedly committed suicide in her Central Road home on October 5.

“We are suspecting that Shoma might have committed suicide while playing the game,” said her father Subrata Baran.

“I will definitely file public interest litigation (PIL), so that no one dies like this.”

Aitkur Rahman, officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station, said Shoma's family filed a complaint that she committed suicide after being a victim of an online game.

However, there are several Facebook accounts with disturbing images and the apparent Bangladesh owners of the account claim to be playing the game.

Earlier this month, a 15-year-old boy

Saiful said he has to spend Tk 2,800 for a 50-kg sack of rice which could be bought for Tk 1,950 in January. His monthly expenditure on foodstuffs and other essential commodities, including soap and toothpaste, has gone up by more than Tk 3,000 to Tk 15,000 now.

Out of his monthly salary of Tk 41,000, he has to pay Tk 20,000 as house rent, Tk 7,000 as tuition fees for his two children and a sister-in-law.

“Earlier, I could save a small amount every month. But I cannot save anything now,” he said.

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), said resistance from consumers is necessary to stop artificial price hike by traders.

“The government also has a lot to

do. Many of its achievements will go in vain if prices remain at intolerable levels.”

He also said failure in the government's inventory management is mainly responsible for the spiralling prices of rice.

“We understand that floods and blast attack have caused crop losses. The government's grain stock dwindled fast, but it could not replenish those because of negligence and incompetence. And the private sector took the advantage.”

He appreciated the government's decisions to cut import duty on rice and to import the grain to curb price hike. Rahman said public stock has to be increased to 8-10 lakh tonnes. The government has to ensure a smooth supply chain and also cold

storage facilities for perishable items.

Towfiqul Islam Khan, research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue said that in 2010, about 57 percent of people in the country had access to the internet on the international minimum standard of \$3.1 a day. The low-earning group spends bulk of its income on food items.

“The drastic rise in food prices would definitely affect them the most. To cope with the price hike, they have to cut expenditure on nutritious food items... Their expenditure on health and education will also be reduced.”

Prof Tasneem Siddiqui continues, the country's overall development and attainment of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 would likely be affected, he added.

# Simple a sick online game

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was ‘cleansing society’, according to a daily report.

The Daily Star was able to talk to a young man who had played Blue Whale Challenge up to level 29.

The youth, requesting not to be named, said he got the link to download the game from an American website and learned about the game from the closed Facebook group called ‘cyber71’.

The game is not available on the Play Store or App Store so he had to side-load the application on his android phone.

While playing the game, he had to do different kinds of tasks daily, like watching psychedelic and scary videos the game curator sent him.

He said as he started to climb up the levels, he was given missions like carving certain things on his arm with a razor, going up to his roof at 4:20am, piercing his hand with a needle, and doing drugs. He was asked to photograph himself completing the missions for proof, which were sent to the game curator.

The youth said that he stopped playing the game after level 29 when one of his friends attempted suicide in

Mymsensing.

The friend was on level 50 and he was asked by the curator to take his own life, said the youth.

“Primarily, I was scared of stopping [playing the game] as the game curator had warned that if I stopped playing then they would kill my parents,” he said.

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However, there are several Facebook accounts with disturbing images and the apparent Bangladesh owners of the account claim to be playing the game.

Earlier this month, a 15-year-old boy

of a government school in Jhunjhunu of India was spotted by a school teacher playing the game, according to a Hindustan Times report.

The report said the boy was scared of receiving psychotherapy as the game administrator told him that he had all the details of his family and if he stopped playing then they would kill his family.

The school had to assure him that his family would be safe.

While the quick and timely intervention of the school probably saved the boy in India, many parents here in Bangladesh have little idea as to what their children are doing online.

Shaheen Ur Rahman of Dhaka said that his 12-year-old son loves to play online games on his tablet PC and that he never asked what kind of games he plays.

“Sometimes, I hear my son screaming in joy after he wins in a game but I never ask what kind of game or which group,” he said.

Asked about the Blue Whale game, Shaheen said he had not heard about it but he would try to know if his son was playing it.

Shawkat Ali Chowdhury, a contractor of ‘whylet’, said he was not aware of the ‘whylet game’. My son plays online games locking his door... but now I will investigate,” he added.

Shamim Hossain of Dhaka, however, said after he had learnt about the Blue Whale game, he stopped giving his phone to his 13-year-old son.

Many parents of children in Dhaka schools have been on Facebook expressing their concerns. Some said they had been checking their children's phones.

Regarding the game, officials of the cyber security cell of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said they have received no reports of anyone killing themselves because of the game.

Nazmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of social media monitoring and cyber security department, told The Daily Star that they have so far heard about one case in the capital on October 5 but were yet to get any proof.

The game link is originated in the dark web by encrypted messages and was difficult for them to look out for it, he said.

The home minister told the media on Monday that he has asked the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to probe the extent of the game spreading in Bangladesh.

Nazmul said, “We inform the BTRC about the game and they suspend or block all links that have information about the Blue Whale game whenever it is found.”

“We will now try to go for offline campaigns to create awareness among the parents about the games,” he said.

Puntaris Maruf, assistant professor of psychiatry at Shahab M Mansur Ali Medical College, told The Daily Star that without actually seeing the game it was difficult for him to comment on it. He, however, said children get addicted to online games as they do not get quality time from their family members, and because playgroups have been disappearing.

Most parents are busy and do not give enough time for their children, he said. “We need to spend more time with our children. Games and create friends in real life and provide playgroups for them to play in...” he added.

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