

Quader, Fakhrul

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secretary of the Awami League leader, quoted Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, as saying.

Quader further said: "I was waiting for you at Dhaka airport. But, I heard that you were not coming. It would be good if we could come together and talk."

Responding to Quader's remarks, Fakhrul said he had to change schedule for family affairs.

"Our paths can be different in politics, but there can be a formal relation between us. As we do politics, the path of talks should remain open," Quader was quoted as saying.

Both the top leaders of AL and BNP were scheduled to reach Saidpur on the same flight, but Fakhrul later cancelled his schedule.

During his visit to Rangpur, Obaidul Quader said the communal attacks on Ramu, Nasirnagar and Thakurpara were parts of the same sequence of a conspiracy to destroy the close relations between Bangladesh and India.

The Hindus, who are majority in the village, came under attack on November 10.

"It is a Facebook post. The attack on the Hindus of Thakurpara was not an isolated incident, the nature of the attack was similar to that of Ramu in Cox's Bazar and Nasirnagar in Brahmanbaria," he said.

He alleged a political party is trying to destroy the relations between Bangladesh and India and destabilise the country ahead of upcoming national election.

But, the government would prevent

any such attempts with an iron hand, he said, adding that everybody involved in the attacks would be arrested and brought to justice.

The minister also assured the Hindus of the village of all-out security measures for their protection.

Later, he gave Tk 25,000 to 11 families each whose houses were burned and Tk 10,000 to those whose houses were damaged.

Jahangir Kabir Nanak, joint secre-



tary, AL, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, organisational secretary, AL, and Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Oikya Parishad, among others, accompanied the minister.

A Rangpur court has meanwhile granted remand to five accused in connection with the attack.

The Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Tariq Hossain granted the

remand for different terms when police produced them before the court with 10-day remand prayer for each.

The court granted four days each for Mawlana Sirajul Islam, Zillur Rahman and Aminul Islam and one day for Rashidul Islam and Abdul Alim.

Hundreds of agitating Muslims were brought together in Khaleya Shah Bazar and Paglapir areas in Rangpur Sadar on November 10 following a

'Drug addict' kills mother, son in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A "drug addict" stabbed his mother and son to death in Natore last night, said police.

The dead are Bilkis Begun, 55, and Alif Hossain, 12, of Dastanabad village in Natore Sadar.

Biplob Bijoy Talukdar, superintendent of Natore police, said Alam Sardar, 35, hacked his parents and son Alif indiscriminately around 8:30pm following a longstanding feud with his parents over a piece of land. His mother and son died on the spot.

His father was first taken to Natore Sadar Hospital and was later moved to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, the police official said.

Police arrested Alam, he added.

Akhtar Hamid

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and relatives to mourn his death.

Khan said Siddiqui had long been suffering from lung cancer and was taken to the hospital on Saturday morning after he complained of chest pain.

The first namaz-e-janaza of the former deputy speaker was held at 5:30pm in front of BNP's Naya Paltan central office attended by hundreds of party leaders and activists.

His second namaz-e-janaza would be held today at South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban at 10:30am. His body would be taken to Naogaon and be buried at his family graveyard there.

Born in Naogaon in 1947, Siddiqui joined politics on completion of his graduation from Dhaka University.

He was elected MP with BNP ticket four times since 1991 from Naogaon-3 constituency. He was made the deputy speaker of the Eighth Parliament.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir expressed deep shock at his death.

In separate condolence messages, they prayed for salvation of his departed soul and conveyed their profound sympathy to his bereaved family members.

Where traffic

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waited to see what, if any, actions were taken against the errant drivers. But no action was seen.

It looked as if the bus drivers were competing with each other over violating laws. Meanwhile, commuters standing on the road waiting for buses made the situation worse.

"We are forced to stand on the road to catch a bus. We know the buses should not have stopped here. But what can we do?" said a man waiting for a bus.

Nur-e-Alam, a bus driver who stopped on the intersection, said, "People stand on the road and wait for buses. That is why I stopped here."

Lutfunnesa, a woman standing on the road, said the designated place for buses was too small to serve its purpose.

Asked, Adibul Islam, senior assistant commissioner (Teigaon Traffic) of DMP, said the intersection remained too crowded with vehicles and commuters most of the time for police to change the practice.

"We often file cases or punish errant drivers. But that process also adds to the congestion."

Ex-husband

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in Bhabaniganj area early yesterday.

The victim, 35, and a mother of two, is now undergoing treatment at Laxmipur Sadar Hospital.

She alleged that her ex-husband and his two aides kidnapped her when she was going to her brother's house in Sahapur village of Sadar upazila. They confined her to a room in Kalam's house and raped her there.

At one stage, she lost consciousness and regained her senses beside a road on Saturday morning. Locals rescued her and sent her to her family, the victim said.

Anwar Hossain, resident medical officer of Laxmipur Sadar Hospital, said the woman was admitted to the hospital on Saturday night and her body bore several injury marks.

He said a medical examination would be conducted on her to know whether she was raped.

Akul Chandra Biswas, officer-in-charge of Kamalnagar Police Station, said drives were on to detain the other accused.

Miladunnabi

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Presided over by Religious Affairs Ministry Secretary Md Anisur Rahman, the meeting was attended by joint secretary of Cabinet Division Mohammad Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, joint secretary of Religious Affairs Ministry Md Hafizur Rahamn, Information Ministry joint secretary (press) Mizan-Ul-Alam and additional principal information officer Fazle Rabbi, among others.

MISSING ARGENTINE SUBMARINE

Desperate search on

AFP, Buenos Aires

A multinational armada of aircraft and vessels battled high winds and giant waves Sunday as they scoured a patch of the south Atlantic for signs of a missing Argentine submarine.

There has been no contact with the ARA San Juan, a German-built diesel-electric submarine with 44 crew members aboard, since early Wednesday.

An air and sea search is underway with help from countries including Brazil, Britain, Chile, Uruguay and the United States.

Hopes of finding survivors were revived when the navy said Saturday that naval bases had received seven satellite calls attributed to the submersible.

The signals were received at 10:52 am (1352 GMT) and 3:42 pm (1842 GMT) on various naval bases with the help from US satellite communication experts, but they did not lock in, thus preventing a full connection.

"Right now, we are working to pinpoint the exact location of what is emitting the signals," presuming that it could be the missing sub, Argentina's defense ministry said.

The calls revived hopes that the submarine has surfaced, but a powerful storm that has whipped up waves reaching seven-meters (23 feet) high has made geolocation difficult, officials said.

There is a feeling of "cautious enthusiasm," naval expert Fernando Morales told C5N television on Sunday.

He said the attempt to use a satellite phone indicates that "the submarine had to emerge to a depth that allowed the call."

The last regular communication with the San Juan was at 1030 GMT on Wednesday, when the submarine was 430 kilometers (267 miles) off the coast in the Gulf of San Jorge.

Rescuers are focusing on an ocean patch about 300 kilometers in diameter located about 430 kilometers from the coast of the southern province of Chubut.

The US Southern Command said Sunday that it was sending a second Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft to join the search. The Florida-based plane and a crew of 21 are to reach Argentina later in the day.

No decision yet

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Anisul Huq, after a meeting in July on the same issue, had said they would decide about section 57 the following month (August) while finalising the draft of the Digital Security Act.

"We have discussed the proposed Digital Security Act. We will incorporate a summary of the meeting in the draft and will sit in a meeting in August. We will take the final decision in that meeting. You [journalists] can then know about our decision on section 57," he had said on July 9.

But, yesterday the law minister said they are "fine tuning" the proposed act so that the law can serve the purpose the government is enacting it for.

Replying to a query on section 57, the minister said "That [section 57] is also related with it [Digital Security Act]. So when we place Digital Security Act, then you [journalists] will see how we address section 57 of ICT Act, include other laws into it [Digital Security Act] and solve all problems."

The cabinet approved a draft of the law in August last year. The prime minister then directed the law ministry to scrutinise the draft to avoid any repetition, contradictory provision or inadequacy.

Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu, who also attended the meeting, along with Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister for ICT Division, Rab and police, yesterday said they have scrutinised the draft of Digital Security Act so that they can place it before the parliament in the next winter session.

However, the meeting was adjourned until November 29 and it is

A NASA P-3 research aircraft is already participating in the search, the Southern Command said.

The California-based Undersea Rescue Command also said it was deploying two underwater crafts designed to rescue trapped submarine sailors at different depths, as well as a remotely operated underwater robot known as an ROV.

"We will do what is necessary to find the submarine as soon as possible," Argentine President Mauricio Macri wrote on Twitter.

All land communications bases along the coast were ordered to scan for any followup signals, as family members of the missing waited nervously in the coastal city of Mar del Plata.

Claudio Rodriguez, whose brother Hernan is aboard the submarine, was hopeful, saying the satellite signals suggested the vessel was still afloat and would be found.

"They've got to be afloat. Thank God," he said.

"That gives us hope, because we knew that if they were down below, they would be screwed," he told TN news from the western city of Mendoza.

The navy has not ruled out any hypothesis, a spokesman said. The most likely scenario given is that an electrical problem may have unexpectedly cut off the vessel's communications.

Defiant Mugabe

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On Saturday, in scenes of public elation not seen since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, huge crowds marched and sang their way through Harare and other cities, believing Mugabe was about to step down.

The ruling ZANU-PF party sacked Mugabe as its leader earlier on Sunday and told him to resign as head of state, naming ousted vice president Emmerson Mnangagwa as the new party chief.

Analysts say the military stepped in last week after Mugabe's wife Grace, 52, secured prime position to succeed him as president following a bitter power struggle with Mnangagwa, who has close ties to the army.

'Business partner behind kidnap'

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RRMM Sweater Ltd -- are worth around Tk 150 crore, he mentioned.

However, Mohiuddin, who claimed to be the founding chairman of the three firms, said he was not involved in Aniruddha's abduction, and refuted all the allegations against him.

"I am the founding chairman of all the three firms. The accusations made against me are completely baseless, fabricated and motivated. All this has been done to harass me socially," said Mohiuddin, also chairman of Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather goods and Footwear Exporters Association (BFLLEA).

Mystery still shrouds Aniruddha's abduction as a number of BFLLEA leaders believe Aniruddha's rivalry with Mohiuddin wasn't so intense that he would abduct him. They further said Aniruddha is hiding something about the abductors.

After keeping him confined to an unknown location for 81 days, the kidnapppers dropped him off near his Gulshan home around 3:30am on Friday.

Talking to this newspaper over the phone yesterday, Aniruddha said his abductors didn't blindfold him while he was whisked away from Gulshan in a microbus.

He couldn't see anything outside as the vehicle had tinted glasses, and he

was asked to keep his head down.

The businessman further said he had no idea where he was taken.

"I feared that I wouldn't be able to see the world again, breathe again."

He couldn't say how long it took to reach the room on the first floor of a two-storey building where he was kept.

"Can you feel anything when the fear of death grips you?" he questioned.

In reply to a query, Aniruddha said the abductors often came to the room without covering their faces. They behaved well and gave him food regularly.

Contacted, Assistant Commissioner of Gulshan Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Rafiqul Islam said they talked to Anuruddha but he couldn't say anything specific about the abductors.

Asked about Aniruddha's allegations against his business partner, Rafiqul said he was unaware of it.

He, however, said they would look into the matter.

Giving an account of his abduction on August 27, Aniruddha said that soon after he emerged from a meeting at Union Bank in Gulshan 1, a man greeted him and wanted to know his identity.

On confirmation of his identity, the man along with six to seven others forced him into a microbus. They all

seemed to be professionals, he added.

The incident was captured on a CCTV camera. But surprisingly, law enforcers could not trace the kidnappers even in the last 81 days.

"Their main target was to ruin my business by keeping me confined for a long period.

"The firearms they carried might be dummies. But it's very alarming that they have the capacity to abduct someone from a place like Gulshan," he said.

In his statement, Aniruddha alleged that during his absence, his business partner had tried to harm his ventures in many ways such as deposition of Tk 5 crore in his personal bank account instead of the company's account and removal of important documents from his office room.

"As chairman of the BFLLEA, Mohiuddin also tried to impede the approval of a shipment certificate for one of my firms."

"After abducting me, they [the kidnappers] had pressed me to give information about all my properties," Aniruddha alleged.

He urged the prime minister to intervene and take steps so that he gets justice and security.

The statement signed by Aniruddha was issued from his office at Bangla Motor in the city yesterday morning.

War crimes

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the Kofi Annan Commission's recommendations.

Referring to the upcoming winter, Hasina said it would be a big challenge for Bangladesh to manage the situation at the camps.

She said the Rohingyas were in a very dismal state and that she had directed the authorities concerned to keep vigil so that no vested quarter could hire them taking advantage of their frustrations.

Hasina told the delegation Bangladesh government has already prepared biometric database of over 5 lakh Rohingyas.

The delegation also appreciated the steady economic growth of Bangladesh, saying it is a testimony of hardworking people of Bangladesh

and lauded the women empowerment in Bangladesh.

PM's Adviser Gowher Rizvi, Principal Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Senator Richard Durban, Congressman David Cicilline, Congresswomen Betty McCollum, and Jan Schakowsky, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia S Bernicat, among others, were present.

Later, another delegation of the UK, led by Sophie the Countess of Wessex, met Hasina.

After the meeting, the press secretary said the delegation put emphasis on the continuation of diplomatic efforts to stop the influx of Rohingyas.

The UK also wants Rohingyas return to their country.

Hasina said the entire administra-

tion, including the police, BGB, the Army and Navy, volunteers were working round the clock to mitigate the sufferings of the Rohingyas.

She also thanked the British government for its assistance to the Rohingyas.

The US Senate delegation also met with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at a city hotel on Saturday.

Senator Jeff Markley told the minister that they were looking forward to the successful repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar, says a foreign ministry press release.

Mahmood Ali deeply appreciated their visit to Cox's Bazar and apprised that he hopes to sign an agreement on repatriation of Rohingyas during his forthcoming visit to Myanmar.

cal life.

"Today is not only about (the coalition), but also a day of destiny for Angela Merkel. If she fails to forge a coalition, then her chancellorship is in danger," the top-selling Bild newspaper said.

Frank Decker, a political scientist at the University of Bonn, also had no doubt about what is at stake.

"It is absolutely in her interest for this government to come into being, because failure would spell her end," he told the Phoenix news channel.

A poll by Welt online found that 61.4 percent of those surveyed said a collapse of talks would mean an end to Merkel as chancellor. Only 31.5 percent thought otherwise.

Merkel, in power for 12 years, had initially set a Thursday deadline to decide if the motley crew of parties had found enough common ground to begin formal coalition negotiations.

If they do not, Germany would have to hold new elections in 2018, as the centre-left Social Democratic Party has ruled out returning to a coalition with Merkel after suffering a humiliating loss at September's elections.

"Today is the last day of these exploratory talks. We must decide," CSU chief Horst Seehofer said as he entered into talks Sunday.

Greens leader Cem Ozdemir also said that "so far we've been in extra time, but today it's the penalty shootout."

"Europe is anything but out of the crisis. Now it's time to ask ourselves the question, Would France's President Macron have to take the coal out of the fire because Germany is missing, or would Germany be capable of taking action?" Ozdemir added.

Merkel, who has years of gruelling EU negotiations under her belt, now needs to see through what is likely the most important weekend of her politi-

AFP, Berlin

Chancellor Angela Merkel will make a last push Sunday to forge a government, in a twin battle to save her political future and avert fresh elections that could destabilise Germany and Europe.

Elections in September had left the veteran leader weakened and without a majority as some of her party's voters turned to the far-right AfD because of anger over her liberal refugee policy.

The disputed decision to let in more than a million asylum seekers since 2015 is also proving to be a stumbling block as she seeks an alliance with an unlikely group of parties spanning the left and right of the political spectrum.

Merkel's conservative CDU party and its Bavarian allies the CSU, hoping to find common ground with the pro-business FDP and the Greens, have given themselves until Sunday to clinch a deal.

Merkel in final push for coalition to avert crisis

completed his engineering graduation from CUET, said their work would continue for the betterment of those children's future.

Nupur, a class-III student, said she loves to go to school and wants to study more after class five.

Her younger sister Jumur is a class four student and brother Shahadat is a class two student.

"I want to serve the underprivileged people of the country after becoming a doctor," said Shima Akhter, a class two student.

But she is in uncertainty that pursuing the goal could come to a halt because of her family's financial problem.

Mainur Akhter, a fourth-grader, said she is learning many new things every day.

"We do a lot of fun here and enjoy our classes," she said.

"My daughter wanted to go to school. I was always feeling bad as I could not send my daughter to a good school," said rickshaw puller Mohammad Rafiq, whose daughter is a fifth-grader at the school.

Now other poor dwellers of Tulatali, whose children have not been enrolled in the school yet, are waiting for the next admission session, which the founders say will begin next year.