



The main accused in freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed murder case, Amanur Rahman Khan Rana, Tangail-3 Awami League lawmaker, is being taken to First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court in Tangail from Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Faruk feared lawmaker Rana would kill him

FROM PAGE 16
case began yesterday with the deposition of his widow Nahar Ahmed, who is the plaintiff of the case.

Judge Abul Mansur Miah of First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court in Tangail recorded her statement.

The prime accused Amanur Rahman Khan Rana, Awami League lawmaker of Tangail, was taken to the court from the Keraniganj jail in Dhaka in an ambulance.

The court had framed charges against Rana and 13 others on September 6, 2017. But the recording of depositions was deferred on four occasions as Rana's lawyer said he

could not be produced before the court due to his illness.

Charge framing was also deferred on six occasions on the same ground.

In her statement, Nahar told the court yesterday morning that her husband Faruk called her on the phone on the day of the incident and told her that he would return home from the district AL office shortly.

Soon afterwards, a local municipality councillor and several others went to her house and told her that Faruk's body was lying on a roadside not far from the house.

After they took the body to Tangail General Hospital, doctors declared him dead, she said.

Amanur Rahman Khan Rana and several others went to the hospital soon afterwards and told doctors to thoroughly examine the body.

After examining, the doctors found a bullet under the neck and said Faruk was shot dead.

Nahar was later informed that the investigators found involvement of MP Rana and others accused of murdering her husband.

Her son and daughter Sumon Mazid and Farzana Ahmed were present at the court during yesterday's hearing, Additional Public Prosecutor Monirul Islam Khan told The Daily Star.

After Nahar's statement, defence

lawyer Abdul Baki Miah cross-examined her.

MP Rana told the court that the security at the court was inadequate.

The court then adjourned and fixed March 20 for the next proceeding.

Although additional law enforcers were deployed at the court area on occasion of the hearing, supporters of Faruk Ahmed and MP Rana demonstrating nearby engaged in a chase and counter-chase, until police took the situation under control.

Four of the 14 accused, including Rana, are in jail while three are on bail and seven others, including three younger brothers of Rana, are on the run.

Dhaka to stress peace, stability in Rakhine

FROM PAGE 16
so that the refugees sheltered in Cox's Bazar are encouraged to return home.

Myanmar's Home Minister Lt Gen Kyaw Swe is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on February 15 to hold talks on various important issues with his Bangladesh counterpart Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

Apart from Rohingya crisis, the two sides would discuss halting smuggling of arms and drugs and full implementation of border agreement, among other issues. Bangladesh would ask Myanmar to take effective measures to stop narcotics production and smuggling and end drug trafficking across the border.

During his visit to Myanmar last year, Foreign Minister Mahmood Ali and Myanmar Home Minister Kyaw Swe on November 23 exchanged the long-awaited "Instrument of Ratification" of the Agreement on demarcation of the land section of boundary north of the Naf river" concluded in 1998.

The two countries also signed "Supplementary Protocol on the demarcation of a fixed boundary in the Naf river" earlier agreed in 2007.

In another development, the United Nations Security Council will meet tomorrow to discuss the latest situation in Myanmar that has sent about a million Rohingyas to Bangladesh since

violence erupted in Rakhine on August 25 last year.

The UNSC meeting seems important following a Reuters special investigative report on killing of 10 Rohingyas in Inn Din village in Rakhine who were buried in a mass grave after being hacked to death or shot by Buddhist neighbours and soldiers.

Four parliamentary delegations have meanwhile begun visiting the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar to see for themselves the plight of the refugees.

The delegations -- European Parliament's sub-committee on Human Rights (DROI), Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN) and the delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia (DSAS) -- would pay a three-day visit to the camps beginning yesterday.

Three of the delegations would move to Myanmar to see the situation in Rakhine tomorrow, while the DSAS team led by Jean Lambert would return to Dhaka to hold discussion with different levels including Election Commission, government high-ups, opposition leaders, civil society members and media.

Official sources say Dhaka is

expected to hand over a token list of 10,000 Rohingya families to the visiting Myanmar minister asking him to begin the repatriation immediately.

Foreign ministry officials said the government is going to complete a "list of a reasonable number of Rohingya families" and set up two repatriation camps within this month as part of the process of sending back the refugees to Myanmar.

They said officials of different ministries engaged in the repatriation process are now matching the government-prepared refugee data with the one made by UNHRC.

Bangladesh has prepared a database of individual Rohingyas, but Myanmar wanted a family-wise list, which only the UNHRC has prepared. That is why the government signed a deal with UNHRC and is taking support from the body.

They said the government would finalise lists of thousands of families within this month and hand over a complete list to the Myanmar authorities for verification.

The officials added Myanmar would get two months to verify the list. Bangladesh would set up two camps, one for repatriation over land and another via river, they said.

Rouhani calls for unity on revolution anniversary

AFP, Tehran

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani yesterday called for a "year of unity" after recent protests as Iran celebrated 39 years since the Islamic revolution.

Rouhani said conservative officials should not block candidates they dislike from future elections, and that there should be greater trust in the people, including the use of referenda on key issues.

"I request that the 40th year of the revolution, the coming year, be the year of unity. I ask conservatives, reformists, moderates and all parties and all people to come and be together," he said in a speech before a huge crowd in Tehran.

Rouhani, a long-time regime insider who won power in 2013 and again in 2017 with the backing of reformists, has faced tough criticism from conservatives over his efforts to rebuild relations with the West and ease civil liberties.

He has tried to use protests that hit dozens of cities over the new year as a way to convince conservatives that they must follow his calls for reform.

"We should trust the people. We must allow all inclinations to participate in elections," he said in an apparent swipe at the conservative-dominated Guardian Council, which regularly blocks hundreds of reformist candidates from standing in presidential and parliamentary votes.

"Our revolution was victorious when we were all together," he said.

"And today we must once again invite everyone to get on board the successful and victorious train of the revolution."

"All Iranian races, all Iranian religions, Shias and Sunnis, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians -- whoever believes in the constitution, that is our criteria. He is a revolutionary and he must be respected," Rouhani said.

He raised a controversial demand to use referenda, which are allowed under article 59 of the constitution that was passed after the 1979 revolution, but have not been used for decades.

"If there are differences of opinions on a couple of issues... bring the ballot box and according to the article 59 of the constitution, whatever people say, act accordingly," said Rouhani.

His words immediately triggered support on social media, including tweets with the hashtag #referendum.

20-party backs BNP protest programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led 20-party alliance has expressed its solidarity with the BNP's protest programmes announced demanding the release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail.

The combine leaders also said they would take part in the programmes.

"The 20-party alliance will also jointly plan programmes in future," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir told journalists after a meeting of the alliance partners at Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.

The BNP leader said the alliance meeting condemned the verdict and demanded unconditional and immediate release of Khaleda, who has been jailed for five years in a corruption case.

When asked who was in charge of the alliance with Khaleda absent? Fakhru said, "Begum Khaleda Zia is the leader of 20-party alliance. There is no doubt about it. I am working as a coordinator of the alliance."

He said in the meeting, party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman talked to the combine leaders over

phone and urged them to form a platform.

The BNP leader also said the meeting decided to speak to other political parties to expand the alliance.

Chased

FROM PAGE 16

"I suspect he died from a heart attack," the doctor said.

SM Ziaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Pirojpur Sadar Police Station said no policemen from his station had gone to Sheikh Para on Saturday night. He also said there was no warrant against Babar.

Babar ran for the post of the vice-president of sadar upazila parishad election with a BNP ticket in the last upazila parishad polls but lost to an Awami League candidate.

Gazi Nuruzzaman Babul, president of Pirojpur district unit BNP, claimed that police were torturing BNP members to keep them away from political programmes.

Since BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia had been jailed last week, police had not allowed any BNP programmes in Pirojpur, sources claimed.

Covered vans used

FROM PAGE 16

Talking to The Daily Star, Additional Deputy Commissioner (West) of Detective Branch AAM Humayun Kabir said, "We have learned that drug traders are investing in transport business and using the covered vans and trucks to peddle drugs from Cox's Bazar and Chittagong to elsewhere in the country."

"The owners of the transport agencies are running the businesses through supervisors and commissioned agents so that they can remain untraceable if police seize their consignments," he added.

He further said, "The agents of the transport agencies mainly target perishable items like fish and vegetables as law enforcers usually do not check such cargo thoroughly."

Investigating the latest yaba recovery, police have also found that such covered vans carry lighter loads so that the drivers can speed away to avoid arrest in case of a police chase.

Assistant Commissioner of DB (West) Moinul Islam said, "SRP Cargo Service has several covered vans. We are verifying its addresses and documents after recovering yaba from the secret chamber of its covered van."

"We have also got names of some

yaba traders who have resorted to transport business to peddle the drugs."

He, however, did not disclose the names for the sake of investigation.

"We had earlier seized yaba from engine boxes, under driving seats or tool boxes of the vehicles. But now yaba pills are being moved in secret chambers, which are usually difficult to find," said the AC.

Mimtanur Rahman, assistant director, media wing, Rab-7, told The Daily Star, "It is difficult to prove that the vehicle owners are directly involved in drug peddling as they hand over their vehicles to the agents on monthly contracts most of the times."

"We are investigating the matter and trying to gather more information."

Inter-district Truck and Covered Van Owners Association's organising secretary Shafiqur Rahman put the blame on some "so-called" transport businessmen.

"They are not our association members. We are making a central database on transport workers with the help of police," said the transport leader.

ADC (South) Shah Md Abdur Rauf said police are making a central database of transport workers in Chittagong and have already distributed 500 forms to that end.

Consultation

FROM PAGE 16

Born in Sundardighi village in Debiganj upazila of Panchagarh, Dr Roy completed his MBBS from Rajshahi Medical College in 1965. When the time came to open his practice, he found that there weren't enough patients in his village: the reason he moved to Dinajpur.

"When I started my practice here in Kalitola area of the town, I set the standard fee at Tk 2 per patient," Dr Roy recalls. "Other senior doctors were then charging Tk 5; but I noticed that even the Tk 2-fee was quite a burden for many people, so later I decided to include the cost of the most common medicines. It was helpful, I think, for people who were struggling with solvency; and if a more expensive medicine was required I would ask the patients to buy it elsewhere."

It's not only his patients who appreciate the good doctor. His attitude towards the practice of medicine has gained him many well-wishers in the town at large.

"When Dr Roy started he had the mental and physical strength of a young man," says eminent Dinajpur resident Abdul Kalam Azad. "To think

he's still doing the same job at the age of nearly eighty is astounding! He is now treating the fifth generation of some underprivileged families in this area. Patients come from other districts to see him too. And even though his fees are very reasonable if patients really can't afford it he waives the fees altogether."

Dr Roy is an inspiration to his family too. His younger brother Dr Tarun Kumar Roy has followed the elder brother's lead. He also continues to see patients, morning to evening, despite having reached a respectable age. He too has tailored his practice to serve the needs of the underprivileged.

Dr Roy's two daughters Sudipta and Susmita, meanwhile have also become doctors. "I always advise my daughters not to chase after money," their father says.

It dismays Dr Roy that despite the significant advances and breakthroughs made in medical science over the years, a vast number of patients in Bangladesh still seek treatment from local healers of dubious qualifications, often due to considerations of expense.

Of his own long career he says, "It's been my small endeavour to change society."

Govt declares

FROM PAGE 2

year, Narayan said, adding that 71.54 lakh tonnes of meat was produced in the year with a surplus of 0.19 lakh tonnes.

Fish production has increased as the government has taken different measures to do it, the minister said. "The success in country's fish production has got the global recognition."

As per the report of UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation-2016, Bangladesh is the fourth in consuming fish produced internally and the fifth in fish cultivation in the world, he added.

Terminating the management of hilsa resource a priority task of the present government, the minister said coordinated activities, including updating the laws, were being carried out. The hilsa got recognition of geographical indication product of Bangladesh in 2016, he added.

Narayan also said a survey titled "RV Meen Shandhani" was being conducted in the sea.

So far, 157 species of fish, 16 species of shrimp, 11 species of crustacean and six species of mollusk have already been identified by the survey, the fisheries minister said, hoping that a complete study on marine resources, including the floating and under water ones, could be done by the ongoing survey.

About the country's poultry industry, he said chickens were meeting the

per capita demand of meat across the country.

Raisul Alam Mondal, acting secretary of fisheries and livestock ministry, Syed Arif Azad, director general of fisheries department, and AKM Aminul Haque, director of fisheries department, among others, were present at the press conference.

PM reaches

FROM PAGE 2

and Saint Peter's Basilica.

In the evening, Hasina will join dinner to be hosted by the Bangladesh ambassador in Rome.

On Tuesday, the PM will attend the inaugural session of the Governing Council of IFAD and deliver her keynote paper.

Later in the day, she will join a community reception.

The theme of this year's IFAD council is "From fragility to long-term resilience: Investing in sustainable rural economies."

The IFAD, an international financial institution and the UN specialised agency dedicated to eradicating poverty in rural areas of developing countries, has more than 30 years of working experience in Bangladesh.

The PM will return on February 16.

Russia plane crash

FROM PAGE 1

reportedly poor.

The Russian-made plane was reportedly seven years old and bought by Saratov Airlines from another Russian airline a year ago.

Russian media reported that the emergency services were unable to reach the crash site by road and that rescue workers walked to the scene on foot. Emergency services said in a statement that more than 150 rescue workers were deployed to the site.

A source at Domodedovo, Moscow's second largest airport, told agencies that the plane disappeared from radars within two minutes of takeoff.

The Russian transport minister was on his way to the crash site, agencies reported. The transport ministry said several causes for the crash were being considered, including weather conditions and human error.

The governor of the Orenburg region, where the plane was flying to, told Russian media that "more than 60 people" on board the plane were from the region.

Prosecutors opened an investigation into Saratov Airlines following the crash. Russia's Investigative Committee will consider all possible causes, RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Saratov Airlines was founded in the 1930s and flies to 35 Russian cities. Its hub is Saratov Central Airport in southern Russia.

Local media website Ural56.ru in the Orenburg region showed footage of distressed relatives at Orsk airport, where the plane was due to land.

Andrei Odintsov, the mayor of the city of Orsk, told Russian state television that six psychologists and four

ambulances with medics are working with the relatives in the small airport.

Orsk is the second biggest city in the Orenburg region, near Russia's border with Kazakhstan.

Russia has suffered numerous plane crashes, with airlines often operating ageing aircraft in dangerous flying conditions.

A light aircraft crashed in November in Russia's far east, killing six people on board. In December 2016 a military plane carrying Russia's famed Red Army Choir crashed after taking off from the Black Sea resort of Sochi, killing all 92 people on board.

Pilot error was blamed for that crash.

In March 2016, all 62 passengers died when a FlyDubai jet crashed in bad weather during an aborted landing at Rostov-on-Don airport.

America

FROM PAGE 16

for around 75 percent of global GDP and 53 percent of the world population.

Charitable giving by individuals as a percentage of GDP in America was recorded at 1.44%, in New Zealand at 0.79%, in Canada at .77% and in the UK -- which came fourth globally -- at 0.54%.

The report also analysed the impact of taxation and government spending

and the amount given to charity and found there was "no significant correlation" except for employer social security charges, highlighting the complexity behind people's decisions of when to give and how much.

Adam Pickering, international policy manager at CAF, said: "Across the 24 nations we studied, we found no significant link between government

spending, income or corporation tax and the proportion of GDP donated by individuals.

"This suggests the relationship between the amount of taxes people pay and the amount they give to charity is not as clear cut as some may have thought."

"The factors which motivate people to give, and influence how much they give, are incredibly complex."