

Salah

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Spanish sports newspaper Marca of the injury to Salah during Liverpool's Champions League final defeat by Real Madrid.

"In principle it will be between three and four weeks but we will try to reduce those dates, that's the big goal," he added.

Egypt begin their campaign in World Cup Group A against Uruguay on June 15, before facing hosts Russia on June 19 and Saudi Arabia on June 25, meaning if Salah takes four weeks to recover he could be fit in time for the knockout phases.

Egypt reached the tournament after Salah scored a 95th minute penalty to help them beat Congo 2-1 in October.

Salah, who scored 44 goals in a sensational first season for Liverpool after joining from Roma, was voted Player of the Year by the Football Writers' Association this month, completing a sweep of England's individual prizes and becoming the first African player to win the prestigious award.



Firefighters try to douse a fire at a sub-station of Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd in the capital's Paribagh last night. The fire raged the sub-station for about an hour, burning one of its four transformers. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Drug purge on, so is killing

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Three of 14 were killed in Dhaka while one each in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Chuadanga, Comilla, Sirajganj and Narail. The other five were killed in so-called infightings in Magura and Jessore's Benapole, our correspondents reported quoting police and Rab officials.

During the drives, the officials claimed to have recovered a huge quantity of drugs.

Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday again expressed concern over the "extrajudicial killings" and condemned the shootout spree.

Citing media reports, it said 119 people have been killed in so-called gunfights and around 10,000 people have been apprehended during the ongoing clampdown.

"The deaths of such a huge number of people in such a short span of time are not acceptable," the ASK said in a press release.

As per the constitution and international human rights charters, every citizen is entitled to justice. Therefore, the offenders must be tried through the legal process but not by law enforcement agencies, the release added.

Earlier, different rights activists and political leaders criticised the deaths, saying "killing could never be a solution to ending crimes". Recently, diplomats stationed in Dhaka also expressed concern over the "extrajudicial" killings.

During the nationwide drive, law enforcers have arrested around 11,000 people over their alleged involvement in drug peddling while mobile courts have jailed and fined at least 3,547 others.

They also claimed to have recovered over 25.41 lakh yaba tablets, 26.5kgs of heroin and over 23,000 bottles of phensedyl.

YESTERDAY'S "GUNFIGHTS"
In the capital's Bhashantek Dewanpara area, an exchange of fire took place between members of Rab-4 and drug peddlers in which Aatur Rahman alias Atabar alias Ata, 46, Mostafa Hawlader alias Mostafa Kasha, 52, and Faruq Islam alias Bappi, 37, were killed, according to the Rab.

Aatur was wanted in around two dozen cases, including narcotics cases, with Savar and Manikganj police stations, while Mostafa and Bappi were notorious drug dealers, the Rab claimed.

It also claimed to have recovered two foreign pistols, ammunition and 18,000 yaba pills from the "shootout" spot.

In Cox's Bazar, Majibur Rahman, 42, was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab near Kabitachattar point sea beach area around 12:00am.

Rab-7 Company Commander in Cox's Bazar Maj Ruhul Amin said Mujibur was a top-listed drug dealer in Netrakona and accused in 10 cases. The Rab claimed that its officials recovered a gun, five bullets and 6,000 yaba tablets from the spot.

In port city Chittagong, Md Ishaq alias Yaba Ishaq, 35, was killed in a "shootout" between Rab and a group of drug dealers in Pologround area around 1:30am, said Rab-7 Deputy Director Ashequr Rahman. In a text message, the Rab said Ishaq was accused in at least 19 cases.

A firearm, ammunition and 4,000

yaba pills were recovered from the scene, Rab claimed.

In Comilla, Rosmat Ali, 40, was killed at Laribagh in Burichang upazila around 1:00am, said OC Manoj Kumar of Burichang Police Station. Rosmat was wanted in seven cases filed under the narcotics control act, he added.

Police claimed to have recovered a pipe gun and 40kgs of cannabis from his possession.

Another alleged drug dealer Shah Alam sustained bullet wounds in a "shootout" with police in Palpara Bridge area. He is accused in six cases, including for possessing drugs and firearms, police said.

In Narail, Sajib was killed at Malibagh in the suburban area of the district town, UNB reports quoting Mehedi Hasan, senior assistant superintendent of Narail police.

A firearm, one sharp weapon and some illegal drugs were recovered from the spot, the report said quoting the official.

In Chuadanga, Tanjil Hossain, 40, a "top drug dealer" and an accused in 12 cases, was killed at Satgari Natunpara in the municipality area around 3:00am, said Abdul Khalek, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Law enforcers also claimed to have recovered a firearm, four bullets and 170 bottles of phensedyl from the spot.

Tanjil's cousin Akram Hossain, however, said they heard Tanjil was arrested by plainclothes men on Monday night from Bostapatti area of Chuadanga town. "Since then, we had no communication with him," he said.

In Sirajganj, alleged drug peddler Ahsan Habib, 45, was killed in Kamarkhand upazila, said Md Sakibul

Islam, commander of Rab-2, Sirajganj camp.

The deceased was said to be a listed drug peddler and wanted in seven cases. Rab claimed to have recovered a firearm, 20 bottles of phensedyl, and 1,000 yaba pills from the spot.

Three Rab personnel were also hurt during the "gunfight" that left Ahsan dead, the Rab official said.

Two alleged drug peddlers -- Liton Mia, 42, and an unidentified man, aged around 45 -- were killed in an infighting of two rival gangs of drug peddlers in Boro Archa area of Benapole around 4:00am, said Apurba Hasan, OC of Benapole Port Police Station.

Police seized 10kgs of cannabis, one pistol, two bullets and shells of bullets from the spot, he claimed.

In Magura, three alleged drug dealers were killed in a similar incident between two groups of drug peddlers at Batikadanga in Sadar upazila around 1:30am, said Sayruddin Ahammad, assistant superintendent of police in Magura.

They were identified as Bacchu Chopdar, 48, Raihan Dhali alias British, 22, and Kishore Odhikari alias Kala, 32.

Police recovered 320 grams of heroin, 1kg of cannabis, six bottles of phensedyl, two bullets and eight bullet shells from the spot, the law enforcers claimed.

Raihan and Kishore were accused in 10 narcotics-related cases each and Bacchu was wanted in seven such cases, they said.

A lucky escape?

Family members of Chittagong man accuse police of 'crossfire attempt'

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chittagong

Police allegedly implicated a 60-year man, Samar Krishna Chowdhury, in two cases related to narcotics and arms recovery, after being influenced by a local expatriate man.

Family members claimed Samar was being taken to a deserted area where he might have become another victim of "crossfire". However, the plan changed after police high-ups got involved.

Plainclothes men "picked up" Samar, who works as an assistant to lawyers in the Judge's Court of Chittagong, from the city's Hawkers' Market area on Sunday evening, alleged the family members. They added his cell phone was seized after he was forced into a microbus and then blind-folded.

"My father was taken to Boalkhali Police Station and fortunately a local man saw him there," said Alakananda Chowdhury, one of Samar's daughters, adding, "He [the man] informed the local union parishad member Suresh Chowdhury."

"As Suresh informed us, we instantly went to Kotwali Police Station to record a general diary but the on-duty officer refused to record any complaint against police."

She said they then contacted Boalkhali Police Station but they too were uncooperative.

Police said Samar was arrested in a case filed against him under the narcotics act in March while he was on bail in another case filed over yaba recovery in November last year.

"As per his accounts, Samar was taken to his house at Sarwatoli village [where the family would go on holidays]. From there, 310 pieces of yaba pills were recovered from under the couch of the bedroom along with a light gun with four rounds of bullets," said Officer-in-Charge of Boalkhali Police Station Himangshu Das Rana.

PASSING THE BLAME

Family members alleged that UK expatriate Sanjoy Das "implicated" Samar in these cases "in connivance with police".

Sanjoy is a local in Samar's Sarwatoli village under Boalkhali upazila.

"Sanjoy and his cousin Swapan, both hailing from our village, have cases against each other over a land

ownership dispute...as my father works in court, he assisted Swapan by introducing him to a senior lawyer," said Alakananda.

She claimed that Sanjoy became angry at this and warned him against helping Swapan. Refused, Sanjoy implicated her father.

Denying the allegation, Sanjoy said he had no connection with the incident. "I do not even know Samar," he told The Daily Star, adding, "I have been living in London for around 20 years and got citizenship of the country...we had a land dispute with our cousins and now all the cases are about to be settled."

Asked, why Samar's family members were blaming him, Sanjoy said they were influenced by the local UP member Suresh and a land brokers' syndicate.

Asked why Suresh was involved, Sanjoy said, they wanted to blackmail him and grab his lands.

However, Suresh, a member of ward 8, denied the allegations over phone and said he was the local public representative and so he spoke for Samar as his family members came to him.

"I am receiving threats over the phone and being blamed for instigating Samar's family members to organise a press conference and form a human chain on Tuesday," he said, adding, "Police even raided my house in the village on Tuesday night...being frightened, I am now on the run."

OC Himangshu denied the allegation of police's raid at Suresh's house. He also denied the allegation of being influenced to arrest Samar. "Police arrested Samar as he was accused in the yaba recovery case," he said.

THE ESCAPE

"They beat him up and then blind-folded him. On the way, an official told someone over phone he was being taken to Charandipuri Canal for the 'operation'...but after a while, he received some phone calls and asked the driver to change the direction towards Samar's house saying that it was not possible to go for the 'operation' now as he had received calls from his high officials," said Samar's other daughter Tomalika Chowdhury, quoting Samar who she visited at Chittagong Central Jail yesterday.

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HC raps ACC

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ex-deputy managing director of BASIC Bank, and its ex-deputy general manager Shipar Ahmed, seeking bail in loan scam cases.

The court fixed today for passing order on six bail petitions filed by Sobhan and one by Shipar.

Justice Enayetur said it is evident from case documents that the BASIC Bank's credit committee had given negative opinions to the bank's board of directors about granting loans to some applicants. But the board approved the loans ignoring the committee's recommendations.

The board should have sent back the loan applications. Instead, it approved the loans immediately after some loan seekers submitted applications, he said.

"It has been found that a single person has taken loans in the names of different institutions ... State money has been plundered this way. If the state agencies don't act on this, we have nothing to say," said Justice Enayetur.

He also mentioned that the ACC chairman reportedly said the commission has been trying to trace the embezzled money.

"If the commission is still trying to trace the [embezzled] money, the probe will not end till the doomsday," Justice Enayetur said, adding that the commission is applying "pick and choose" policy in arresting people in the corruption cases.

The judge further said some high-profile graft suspects are seen in the television talk-shows and state programmes, but no action is taken against them.

Justice Shahidul said the commission's intention becomes clear from its delay in investigation in the corruption cases.

Eight IOs and their two team leaders appeared before the HC bench yesterday in line with its May 23 summons.

The bench heard the statement of Syed Iqbal Hossain, one of the two team leaders, about the delay in completing investigations.

Iqbal told the court that the IOs could not complete the probes as they were transferred at different times.

The investigations will be completed within a very short time, added the ACC official.

ACC lawyers Khurshid Alam Khan and Syed Mamun Mahub told the HC that the commission has been working sincerely and neutrally to combat corruption.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud appeared for Sobhan, who has been accused in 48 cases.

The lawyer prayed to the court for Sobhan's bail, saying his client had advised the BASIC Bank board not to approve the loans.

On November 8 last year, the same HC bench severely rebuked the ACC for foot-dragging and showing weaknesses in investigating the cases over the BASIC Bank loan scams.

The commission lacks neutrality, transparency and competence in dealing with the cases, the bench had said.

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday quizzed former BASIC Bank chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu over Tk 4,500-crore loan scams.

ACC Deputy Director Shamsul Alam grilled Bacchu for around three hours from 10:00am.

Bacchu got out of the interrogation cell around 1:00pm and left without talking to reporters.

He was first quizzed on December 4 last year and was grilled for the fourth time on March 8.

According to a Bangladesh Bank enquiry, around Tk 4,500 crore was siphoned out of BASIC Bank between 2009 and 2013 when Bacchu chaired the board of the bank.

Kazi Faqurul Islam, the then managing director of the bank, was removed on May 25, 2014 over his alleged involvement in the financial scams.

Bacchu resigned as the chairman on July 5 that year amid growing allegations that he misappropriated funds by approving shady loans of several thousand crores of taka.

On July 14, 2014, the BB gave the ACC a report on the BASIC Bank scam, detailing how money was embezzled from that bank through fake companies and dubious accounts.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith on several occasions expressed anger in parliament as he could not take steps against all involved in the scams in BASIC Bank and Sonali Bank.

On February 24, 2016, he told the House that 27 bank officials, 56 organisations and eight surveyor firms were involved in the BASIC Bank loan scams.

He also said external audit firms appointed by the BB and BASIC Bank detected involvement of Bacchu and the then board members in granting irregular loans.

The BB found that Bacchu illegally influenced all the activities of the bank, leaving it in a grave state.

On July 26 last year, the HC directed the ACC to probe the alleged involvement of Bacchu and board members of the bank in the scams.

No godfathers will be spared: PM

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The government did not launch the operation all of a sudden, she said. "Intelligence agencies have collected information for a long time. They have worked on those involved in it...we have put them under surveillance."

Hasina said the government would not spare anyone if found involved in drug dealing.

"I don't know what you are trying to indicate by saying the word 'godfather'. At least I can say when I deal with something, I deal it with an iron hand and everybody knows it well. No godfathers, whoever they may be, are being spared.... I don't look at one's relationship such as whose brother or uncle he is."

The PM said the people were passing days in peace after the launch of the anti-drug drive. Elimination of drug from the society was the desire of the people, she added.

She, however, admitted that "some incidents" might have occurred during the drive.

About her India tour, Hasina said all the bilateral issues, including the Teesta (water sharing) agreement, were discussed during the visit.

She said she discussed strengthening cooperation and water sharing of common rivers with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Shantiniketan.

The Rohingya issue also came up for discussion as India was extending all kinds of support to Bangladesh,

including sending aid for the forcibly displaced Rohingyas, she added. "India has also assured us of keeping pressure on Myanmar over the Rohingya issue."

Hasina went to West Bengal, India, on May 25 on a two-day official visit. **'WANTS NO RETURN FROM INDIA'**
The PM said Bangladesh wanted no return from India and the neighbouring country would ever remember Bangladesh for return of peace to it.

"Bangladesh helped India get rid of daily bombings and shootouts. They have to remember that we have helped them bring peace back to the country."

She said her government worked for the country's welfare and did not protect the interest of any particular person.

Asked about BNP's criticism that she went to India to ensure the Awami League's victory in the next parliamentary polls, the PM said, "I don't know whether India will bring me back to power or not."

Hasina said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and former president Ziaur Rahman had also gone to India.

Reiterating her government's stance about the next national election, she said the polls would be conducted by the Election Commission as per the constitution. "What can we do if any particular party doesn't contest the election?"

About the reported joining of polls by cricketers Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib Al Hasan, the PM said this

has been a practice around the world that celebrities contest elections and join politics. "There is nothing wrong in it."

Giving party nominations to celebrities doesn't mean that it will deprive the grassroots leaders of a political party, she added.

According to a BSS report, the PM said questions were raised previously over an anti-terrorism drive by her government, but it was able to contain terrorism.

Terming addiction and trading of drug a menace to the society, she said some 10,000 drug peddlers, suppliers and druggies have been arrested since the launch of the anti-narcotics drive, but this was not highlighted in the media.

She questioned whether the society would be in a good condition if the anti-adulteration and the anti-narcotics operations were stopped.

Asked about the progress on the proposed Teesta water-sharing deal, Hasina requested all to have patience as the Indian government has assured Bangladesh of looking into the matter.

Hasina informed journalists that the issue was being discussed at the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC).

She questioned why the Teesta Barrage was built by a former Bangladesh government despite being situated downstream on the river.

The PM also questioned the necessity of building the barrage with a huge state fund as there was no water in the

river during the dry season. "Why will you make a hue and cry for water from that river after building such a barrage?"

She revealed her plan to demolish all the box culverts in the capital; dredge the canals in Panthapath, Shantinagar, Begunbari and build roads over those if the Awami League assumed state power for another term.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

A senior journalist requested the PM to go ahead with the process to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Hasina in response said she had no intention to do so as she was not financially capable of appointing lobbyists for winning the esteemed prize.

"Proposals in favour of me were sent there from various countries. The biggest prize for me is to ensure two square meals for my people so that they can live in peace."

She said she would put the DLitt degree from Kazi Nazrul University in Asansol at the top among all the awards she received during her long political career.

The talent of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was multifaceted, she said. "Nazrul has given us a vast reserve of literature and there is no comparison with him."

Hasina said as a citizen of Bangladesh she was overwhelmed at the establishment of Bangladesh Bhaban on the premises of Visva Bharati which was associated with the memories of Rabindranath Tagore.

Man earns high school diploma after 74 years

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and Normandy on D-Day.

He graduated officially as part of the Class of 2018. "It means everything to me. Everything," Lockard told a local CNN affiliate. "All these years man, I thought about this."

Because of his Army service, Lockhard earned the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign

Medal, three Bronze Star designations, and a World War II Victory Medal. He can add high school graduate to that list of achievements now.

Lockhard said he remembered the day he came home from the war as if it were just yesterday. "If it hadn't been raining and a sloppy mess, I think I would've kissed the ground I

was so homesick," he remembered.

He said he had seen "too much death" and by the time he came back, life took priority over graduating high school.

The crowd cheered as the 92-year-old, donned in a maroon cap and gown, walked across the stage to receive his degree. He wiped the tears streaming down his face.

A school official said: "We are honored and privileged to have an exemplary individual whose path to graduation comes full circle today in a pursuit 74 years in the making."

Particularly fitting, the ceremony took place the day before Memorial Day, the US holiday honouring fallen soldiers.