



A Palestinian protester burns an American flag during a protest near the Erez crossing with Israel yesterday in the northern Gaza Strip protesting against the US decision to stop funding and backing the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). PHOTO: AFP

'Treated' by quack, cancer patient dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

A cancer patient died while he was undergoing treatment by a local quack at Chatotda of Chandina upazila on Monday.

The dead, Shamim Khan, 45, son of Mahub Khan of Matlab Dakkhin upazila, went to Abul Kalam for a cure for his disease.

Shamim approached Kalam as the quack's cohorts claimed that he could treat incurable diseases like cancer and also rid people of evil spirits.

Kalam asked Shamim to bring 107 bottles of rose water and eight pieces of gamchas, a traditional cotton towel.

When Shamim brought the items, Kalam asked him to drink all the bottles of rose water. After drinking 60 bottles of the flavoured water, Shamim began feeling sick and said he could not drink anymore.

However, Kalam forced him to drink from the remaining bottles.

At one stage, Shamim became unconscious and then died on the spot.

News of his death incensed locals. A mob picked up Kalam and handed him over to police.

Shamsul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chandina Police Station confirmed the incident.

A case was filed against Abul Kalam.

Asaduzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Chandina Police Station, said primary investigation showed that the allegation against Kalam was true.

Shamim's body was later sent to Comilla Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

BNP moves

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respective parliamentary constituencies, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Officials of the Election Commission said they have drafted a list of 40,000 polling stations for 104.2 million voters ahead of the 11th parliamentary elections, scheduled to be held anytime between October 30 this year and January 28 next year.

As many as 613 polling centres will be in the Chittagong Hill Tracts area and the rest elsewhere in the country.

BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal said they were monitoring the formation of the committees.

"We have asked the grassroots leaders to include courageous and dedicated party leaders and activists in the committees."

He, however, expressed worries that the formation of the committees might be hampered due to "massive arrests" of BNP leaders and activists.

Alal also said the committees were being formed keeping in mind the next parliamentary elections, Khaleda's release and the party's upcoming movement over holding the national polls under a non-partisan interim government.

The BNP had boycotted the January 5, 2014, parliamentary polls demanding a non-partisan polls-time government. The elections saw 154 lawmakers being elected uncontested.

Party insiders said the BNP was preparing for the next Jatiya Sangshad polls taking lessons from the movement ahead of the 2014 national elections.

BNP Vice Chairman Mohammad Shahjahan said there would be no more "one-sided election" in the country like that of 2014.

"We have been demanding polls under a non-partisan interim government as we have preparations for contesting the next parliamentary elections. We are working on national polls and movement," he said.

Khaleda landed in jail on February 8 after a Dhaka court had sentenced her to five years' rigorous imprisonment in Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

Court sits today

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Orphanage Trust graft case on February 8, Khaleda has not been produced before it.

The law ministry issued a gazette yesterday, saying the proceedings in the Zia Charitable Trust case would now be held at the old Dhaka central jail on Nazimuddin Road. The decision was made taking Khaleda's security into consideration.

The gazette, signed by Md Mahbub Khan Sarkar, deputy secretary (administration-1) of the ministry, said the proceedings could not be held at Bakshibazar because it is a crowded area. Instead, the trial would take place at a temporary court at Room-7 of the jail's administrative building.

Asked, Deputy Commissioner (prosecution) Anisur Rahman told The Daily Star that the government has set up a temporary court for the trial.

Judge Md Akhtaruzzaman of the Special Judge Court-5 of Dhaka will be holding the trial from today.

In 2016, the law ministry had issued another gazette, saying the trial proceedings in the two graft cases would be held at the makeshift court at Bakshibazar.

Contacted, Khaleda's lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder said the decision for holding the trial inside the jail was an "illegal attempt". Any trial should be held where everybody has access.

"But the jail is a restricted area where nobody can enter easily to witness the trial," he said.

The Anti-Corruption Commission had filed the Zia Charitable Trust graft case against Khaleda and three others with Tejgaon Police Station in August, 2011. According to the case statement, the former prime minister and three others abused their power and raised funds for the trust from unknown sources.

Once abandoned

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water resources ministry yesterday said the project design remained the same.

Shamsul Alam, a senior planning ministry secretary and member of the General Economic Division (GED) who placed the Delta Plan at yesterday's NEC meeting, said the barrage project would be implemented once funds are available.

Asked about its inclusion despite the PM's reservation last year, he said that before the approval, they presented the Delta Plan before the PM, and she did not reject it.

All projects under the Delta Plan would be implemented by the next government, Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal later told The Daily Star.

The 80 projects would require about \$37 billion in phases, he added. "So, money would not be a problem."

The projects were picked from 133 priority projects chalked out by various ministries and divisions, a planning ministry official said.

Of them, the Ganges Barrage project would cost the highest, an estimated \$5.15 billion, according to the Delta Plan document seen by The Daily Star.

Once built, the barrage would facilitate irrigation, help restore ecological balance and increase livelihood opportunities in the project area in Rajbari district, some 98km downstream from the Farakka barrage. It will also ensure the use of water to be available under the 1996 Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India, according to the document.

In 2009, the government hired DDC and Associates Ltd as an international consultant for conducting the feasibility study as well as preparing the design. The firm submitted its report in 2013.

A barrage on the Ganges river can stop salinity creeping in the southwestern region and help reap a net benefit of Tk 7,340 crore every year, says a government study.

After the construction of the barrage, the area will likely produce an additional 25 lakh tonnes of rice and 2.4 lakh tonnes of fish a year. Also, some 52 lakh hectares of land could be brought under cultivation in different agricultural projects. The main barrage could also be used to generate 113MW electricity.

Though only 240km of the 2,200km Ganges river flows through Bangladesh, an area stretching thousands of kilometres depend on the

The three others are Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to the then PM Khaleda, Ziaul Islam Munna, assistant private secretary (APS) to Harris, and Monirul Islam Khan, APS to former Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

'IT'S TRIAL IN CAMERA'

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the government's decision to try Khaleda Zia inside the old Dhaka central jail in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case was "contradictory to the country's constitution".

"We are considering it as a trial in camera. We are demanding withdrawal of such a decision," he said.

The BNP leader was speaking at a press conference at the party chief's Gulshan office last night, hours after the government issued a gazette notification over holding her trial inside the jail.

Fakhrul warned of waging a tougher movement immediately if the decision was not withdrawn.

"We are telling very clearly that it is a blatant violation of the constitution. According to article 35 (3) of the constitution, the trial will have to be held in public," he said.

Article 35 (3) of the constitution stipulates that an accused in a criminal case shall have the right to a speedy and public trial by an independent and impartial court or tribunal established by law.

"The civilian rights of a former prime minister are being violated by violating the constitution. What can be a bigger offence than this?" Fakhrul questioned.

Strongly condemning the government's move, he demanded immediate release of Khaleda for the sake of holding free, fair and inclusive general elections.

river system for farming and irrigation.

After India commissioned Farakka barrage in the upstream of the Ganges in 1975, Bangladesh suffered badly as the water flow into Bangladesh fell drastically.

The Delta Plan has 65 infrastructure projects. The rest 15 aim to enhance institutional capacity, efficiency and research.

Eight of them, including the barrage project, involve more than \$1 billion each.

One of them is Integrated Jamuna-Padma river stabilisation and land reclamation project at a cost of \$3.65 billion. The project seeks to stabilise the Jamuna-Padma river corridor, reclaim land, reduce flood risk, restore river water distribution and navigation, increase land-based productivity and protect environment.

Some of the other schemes include a \$1.77 billion river bank improvement project to accelerate the socio-economic development in greater Dhaka; a \$4.76 billion project to ensure better drinking water and sanitation in Dhaka; and a project for improvement of urban drainage in district and upazila levels at an estimated cost of \$1.99 billion.

The General Economics Division (GED) of the planning ministry has prepared the draft with assistance from the Dutch government and the World Bank.

According to a planning ministry document, the projects under the Delta Plan would be jointly funded by the government, Green Climate Fund, development partners, the private sector and from foreign direct investment.

At present, the government spends 0.8 percent of the GDP for Delta management projects and programmes. Implementing the new plan would require 2.5 percent of the GDP.

Bangladesh is likely to get \$2 billion assistance from Green Climate Fund, a UN project, every year.

Besides, about 0.5 percent from the private sector's annual income could be added to the Delta Plan fund.

Coastal, Varendra (Barind) and drought-prone, haor and flood-prone, riverine and urban areas and Chittagong Hill Tracts will be given priority under the Delta Plan.

A high-level Delta Governance Council led by the prime minister would be formed to implement the plan.

Arrest order issued for slain Jubo League leader's wife

The widow, eight others sued over making 'derogatory comments' on religious affairs minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Diluba Akhter Dilu, wife of a slain Jubo League leader, and eight others have been sued for their alleged derogatory comments on Religious Affairs Minister Motiur Rahman.

Mustafizur Rahman Shaheen, joint secretary of Muktijuddha Sansad Sontan Command, Mymensingh district unit, lodged the case with Cognizance Court No-1. Additional Judicial Magistrate Rozina Khan of the court accepted the case and issued an order of arrest for Dilu this afternoon, said Abdur Rahman Al Hossain Taz, who stood for the plaintiff.

Dilu is the wife of slain Jubo League leader Sajjad Alam Sheikh Azad alias Azad Sheikh of Mymensingh town's Akua area. Azad, a member of the Jubo League City Convening Committee, was shot and hacked to death in his locality on July 31.

In the case, the plaintiff alleged that the accused addressed a rally over the killing of Azad on August 28 where they termed the minister a "Rajakar". Later, the incident went viral on social media.

Following the killing, Azad's wife Dilu lodged a case with Kotwali Police Station on August 2 accusing some 25 named and 10 unnamed persons. Mohit-ur-Rahman Shanto, Motiur Rahman's son and secretary of Awami League Mymensingh City unit, was made the prime accused in the case. However, the case was not recorded at the time.

Police finally recorded the case following a High Court order on Friday night, a month after it was filed with Mymensingh Kotwali Police Station.

Meanwhile, Dilu claimed they never made any derogatory remarks about the minister. "The case was lodged only to harass us and with a view to turning the murder case into another direction..." she said.

Two killed

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to jail, they did not get any information about Sumon. They went to Palong Model Police Station several times, but law enforcers did not give them any information about him, he added.

Contacted, Md Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station, said he did not know anything about the detention of Suman and the two others.

The police official said on information, a joint team of police and detectives raided Chhayaon village where some drug peddlers had gathered to share drug money around 2:30am yesterday.

Sensing presence of law enforcers, the drug peddlers hurled crude bombs and opened fire on them. The law enforcers returned fire, triggering the "gunfight". After the "gun battle", bullet-hit Suman was found lying on the spot, the OC added.

He was taken to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The police official claimed to have recovered one kg of cannabis, six crude bombs and a motorcycle from the spot.

In another incident, an alleged drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Sultanpur Kabiraj pond area in Feni Sadar last night.

The victim, Suman alias Lal Suman, 35, stood accused in 14 cases, including murder, robbery and narcotics, lodged with Feni Sadar Police Station, according to Rab-7 officials.

A team of Rab-7 conducted the drive in Sultanpur Kabiraj pond area around 10:00pm, acting on information that some drug traders gathered there to sell drugs. Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the criminals opened fire, prompting them to retaliate, Rab officials claimed.

Lal Suman was injured during the "gunfight" while the others managed to flee. Rab took him to Feni Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

With the two deaths yesterday, at least 222 suspected drug dealers and peddlers have been killed since the anti-narcotics drive began on May 4. Most of them were killed in "shoot-outs" with police and Rab.

Our correspondents in Faridpur and Feni contributed to this report.

Flying into a new chapter

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hours away.

Using the plane on medium-haul flight has its vices. The plane would chew through its 44,000 flight-cycle designed life faster.

With one 787-8 already on the tarmac of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and one more due later this year, Biman seems to be on damage limitation mode.

Secretary-in-charge Mohibul Haque of the civil aviation ministry said the 787 would be used for KL flights because now they use a much bigger Boeing 777-300ER to serve the destination. He said the 777 on that route was not always full and placing the 787 there would save Biman a lot of fuel bills.

He said Biman was tired of paying the expenses of leased planes so it had opted to gradually remove the leased aircraft and replace them with their own planes.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) being labelled subpar by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) only made things worse for Biman. It blocked Biman from opening the Dhaka-New York flight.

Mohibul, however, was hopeful that in 2019 the FAA would place CAAB in category-1, allowing Biman to serve US cities.

But still, that's just one long-haul route for the 787. Biman would have four 787s in 2019.

Shakil Meraj, general manager for public relations at Biman, recently said the airlines plan to expand its routes and include cities like Hong Kong and Rome and increase flight frequency to London.

He, however, did not say when these would happen.

Had Biman planned better, researched the market better, bought landing rights to new destinations and got the required paperwork done, the new Dreamliner christened Akashbeena would have flown today to a destination much further than Kuala Lumpur.

Now Biman has a somewhat modern fleet. Gone are the inefficient gas guzzling DC-10s and A310s. Biman has an all Boeing mid- to long-haul planes and Bombardier Dash-8 Q400s for short-haul flights.

With the two leased Dash-8s, Biman serves mostly national destinations, while the four Boeing 737-800s (two leased) and four 777-300ERs are used for regional and long-haul destinations in Asia, the Middle East and London.

"Biman touched a new milestone with the addition of Dreamliner Akashbeena to its fleet," said AM Mosaddique Ahmed, the national flag carrier's CEO, yesterday.

But Bangladeshi expatriates, a large number of whom reside in Montreal, Sydney, Los Angeles and New York, won't be served by this new plane.

Despite the shortcomings of Biman, Bangladeshis like to use Biman when possible. It often is a matter of patriotism for them but in many cases, it is the more than generous luggage allowances the carrier offers to its passengers.

These people want to use Biman and Biman needs to figure out the business end for this demand. It needs to open routes to distant cities, buy landing slots, be punctual and provide better inflight services.

Biman is late to its own party and it needs to act fast to make up for it. It spent \$2.1 billion to buy 10 modern aircrafts and it would be a shame if they were not used to the fullest.

AKASHBEENA

Akashbeena, christened by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is equipped with inflight entertainment system and onboard Wifi. Biman will allocate 10MB free Wifi for each passenger. Passengers can buy more data if required.

Biman has set \$200 and \$290 fare for return tickets to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, excluding tax and other charges, for the Dreamliner.

Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the first commercial flight of Akashbeena to KL today.

DREAMLINER

The Dreamliner is a long-haul, mid-size widebody, twin-engine airliner and the configuration Biman went for gave it a seating capacity of 271. The plane's airframe is constructed primarily with composite materials and touted to be 20 percent more fuel-efficient than the Boeing 767.

It shares a common type rating with the larger Boeing 777 to allow qualified pilots to operate both models.

The first 787 was unveiled in a rollout ceremony on July 8, 2007, at Boeing's Everett factory. The airliner's maiden flight was on December 15, 2009, and it completed flight testing in mid-2011.

Boeing did endure growing pains with the Dreamliner. In 2013, the 787s were grounded for four months following issues with its lithium-ion batteries.

Some carriers, which had opted for the Rolls-Royce Trent-1000 engines for their Dreamliners, had to cancel flights and ground their planes due to engine issues and safety inspections by Rolls-Royce.

Biman chose General Electric engines for all its 787s.

'7,000 Bangladeshis'

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"We gave illegal immigrants the opportunity to surrender themselves voluntarily through the 3-plus-1 programme which ended on August 30."

"In addition, we implemented the Rehiring Programme which was terminated on June 30. However, we still find many who do not adhere to the set procedures."

Mustafar said despite a large number of operations carried out, there were still many illegal immigrants located throughout the country.

"Although we have introduced several programmes, many still refuse to surrender, including employers. After the Rehiring Programme, we implemented Ops Mega 3.0 and of the hundreds of operations that we have conducted, we have arrested more than 1,000 illegal immigrants from over 7,000 who were inspected."

Ops Mega 3.0 is a crackdown against illegal immigrants, launched on August 31.

"We do not want to compromise on the issue of illegal immigrants..."

because there are many other problems that will arise from this, for example, in relation to health issues and drug abuse," said the immigration department boss.

Meanwhile, commenting on the operation carried out at the Sepangar and Kota Kinabalu areas from mid-night to 4:00am yesterday (Malaysian time), Mustafar said 58 illegal immigrants were detained.

"This operation will continue throughout the country, and we want our country to be free of illegal immigrants," he added.

The major crackdown beginning on September 1 drew criticisms from the rights groups who demanded halt to it, arguing that most of the migrants were victims of exploitation or trafficking.

There are some one million Bangladeshi migrants, and nearly 50 percent of those are estimated to be undocumented, an official of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur told this newspaper earlier.

Mymensingh pvt hospital

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at Swadesh Hospital, another private hospital located around one and half kilometre away from Shilangan, Babu alleged.

"When we came back to Shilangan with the reports at around 11:00pm, Dr Monir had already left the hospital for his residence located at the fifth floor of the hospital," he said.

Finding no other way, Babu went to Dr Monir's residence with the reports. "After the doctor saw them, he said he would go for surgery the next day at noon."

On August 28, when Rafia's condition deteriorated further, Babu repeatedly asked hospital authorities to contact Dr Monir. At around 6:00am, Monir came and took Rafia into surgery, Babu said.

After half an hour of surgery, the doctor came and told us that Rafia's condition had worsened, and that she should be kept on life-support.

Rafia was then shifted to a nearby private hospital for life-support that same day, where she died, her father said.

Contacted, Shila Sen said she was just the owner of the eight-storied building and that her husband runs

the hospital. She also said she has no involvement with Shilangan Hospital.

"When I first attended Rafia, she was not in a critical condition. I suggested that they get a surgeon, but I did not mention Dr Monir," she claimed.

She added that she had no knowledge of the girl's admission at the hospital.

Contacted, Dr Monir said the patient had been suffering from dehydration and lack of urine output, for which he had to take 24-hours for her to be fit for surgery.

"I handled the patient with great care as a doctor and a father as well. There was no negligence on my part," he claimed, adding, "If my negligence is found in investigation, I will take the whole responsibility on my shoulder."

He said she died due to cardio respiratory failure resulting from septicemia after her appendix burst.

Rafia's father demanded proper investigation into the incident to avoid such unexpected deaths in the future. "I lost my daughter. I want the end of such negligence in the name of treatment," Babu said with tears in his eyes.