

STUDENT'S DEATH SUST forms probe body

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology yesterday formed a three-member probe committee to investigate the death of its student Taifur Rahman Pratik.

The 25-year-old died by suicide at his home in Kajalshah area of Sylhet city on Monday, said police. His body was found hanging from the ceiling.

Police recovered the body and handed it over to the family members after autopsy.

Pratik was a student of Genetics Engineering and Biotechnology department of SUST.

Pratik's sister Shanta Tawhida, a teacher of Communication Disorder department of Dhaka University, termed the death as "murder".

On her Facebook, Shanta uploaded a list of seven teachers of Genetics Engineering and Biotechnology department of SUST and alleged they were responsible for the death.

The teachers gave Pratik lesser marks and did not approve supervisor for his thesis, she alleged.

A written complaint of unnatural death was filed with Kotwali Police Station in this connection, said Akbar Hossain Bhuiyan, sub-inspector of the police station and the investigating officer of the case.

Primary investigation suggests Pratik died by suicide following long-term frustration. However, the reason of the frustration needs to be investigated. Police are considering three issues -- academic, family and personal affair, the sub-inspector added.

SUST proctor Zahir Uddin Ahmed said the three-member committee was headed by Professor Mohammad Belal Uddin, dean of the School of Life Sciences. Two other members of the committee were Samiul Islam, assistant proctor of SUST, and Prof Anwarul Islam of Mathematics department.

The Daily Star could not contact Dr Shamsul Haque Proddhan, head of Genetics Engineering and Biotechnology department of SUST, despite repeated attempts over phone.

However, among the seven teachers, with whom Pratik's sister brought allegations, two denied the allegations.

SUST Vice-Chancellor Farid Uddin Ahmed said, "We have formed a probe body and will be investigating the matter."

Ivanka Trump won't be US candidate for World Bank

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump's daughter and advisor Ivanka will help the United States choose its candidate to lead the World Bank but she will not be the one, the White House said on Monday.

Jim Yong Kim abruptly announced last week that he would cut short his tenure as president of the Washington-based global development lender more than three years before his second term was to end.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney "have asked Ivanka Trump to help manage the US nomination process as she's worked closely with the World Bank's leadership for the past two years," said Jessica Ditto, the White House Deputy Director of Communications.

However, Ditto said reports that Ivanka Trump "is under consideration are false."

London's The Financial Times reported on Friday that both Ivanka Trump and Washington's former United Nations ambassador Nikki Haley were among possible US candidates to replace Kim.

Other names being floated include Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs David Malpass and Mark Green, head of the US Agency for International Development, the newspaper reported.

UNHCR

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Britain in December circulated a draft Security Council resolution on Myanmar that would have set a deadline for authorities to roll out a strategy for addressing the Rohingya crisis.

China, backed by Russia, however raised strong objections and refused to take part in negotiations, suggesting it was ready to use its veto at the council to block the measure.

Myanmar's violent military campaign in 2017 forced more than 720,000 Rohingya across the border to Bangladesh, with refugees bringing accounts of murder, rape and arson.

Britain, France, the United States and UN chief Antonio Guterres have described the campaign as ethnic cleansing while UN investigators have called for top generals to be investigated for genocide.

Rohingya in Buddhist-majority Myanmar have suffered decades of persecution and are denied citizenship rights.

Myanmar has denied that it has singled out the Rohingya and described its army operations as a campaign to root out terrorists.

Suicide at public univs

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and none of them went to the Student Counselling and Guidance Office situated on the second floor of TSC, said sources at the office.

Asked whether help was properly reaching those who needed it, Mahjabeen Haque, chairperson of Psychology Department and also director of the centre, said, "During students' orientation, the university authorities inform them about the counselling and tell them to go there if they want."

"Afterwards, it is the students' responsibility to come here."

She added that apart from providing students with proper guidance on academic activities, the university authorities give counselling to at least 500 students on various issues every year.

Mahjabeen said, "A self-centred life dependent on technology is one of the main causes behind depression."

She stressed the need for building direct social relations through communication, sports and cultural activities for the student's mental health development.

Talking to The Daily Star, DU Vice-chancellor Md Akhtaruzzaman said the authorities had directed all teachers to pay extra attention to the problems facing the students.

However, there are other public universities, such as the Islamic University (IU) in Kushtia, that have yet to establish a counselling centre. There have been seven cases of suicide at the university last year.

Student adviser M Rezwanaul Islam said the university would have a counselling centre soon.

Suicide cases were also reported in some other universities in the last few years.

One of the students was from Khulna University who died in 2016. Two students of Bangladesh University of Science and Technology (Buet) died by suicide in 2005 and 2015, two students from Chittagong University in 2014 and 2009, a student from Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology in 2016, and two Jagannath University students in 2014, according to newspaper reports.

In the latest case of reported suicide, Md Taifur Rahman Pratik, a student of SUST's Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, was found dead at his home in Sylhet on Monday.

SUST Proctor Prof Zahir Uddin Ahmed said a probe committee was formed to investigate the matter.

[According to the World Health Organization, some of the warning signs of suicide are: threatening to kill oneself; making indirect statements such as "no one will miss me when I am gone", or referring to death as a place to go; looking for ways to kill oneself (e.g. seeking access to pills, firearms, pesticides); describing suicide as a solution to a problem; giving away valued possessions; saying goodbye to close friends or family members.

If you or anyone you know are exhibiting these signs, contact Kaan Pete Roi, an emotional support hotline, at: 01779554391, 01779554392, 01688709965, 01688709966, 01985275286, 01852035634, 01517969150]

UK PM suffers heavy defeat

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called "not perfect", was meant to establish terms for the March 29 exit and beyond, but was criticised from all sides. It was so much so that the prime minister recently had to fight off a non-confidence vote in her leadership that has now been challenged.

The British PM said on Tuesday if new election were to be held, "whatever the results, the choices facing us will not change", adding, "all it would gain is two more months of uncertainty and division".

May's earlier win in the leadership challenge means she can't face a similar vote for a year. But some MPs from both government and opposition parties are exploring ways to use parliamentary procedures to wrest control of the Brexit process away from the government, so that lawmakers, by majority vote could specify a new plan for Britain's EU exit.

Conservative MP Dominic Grieve, who is spearheading efforts to unite parliament to prevent a no-deal Brexit, said ahead of the vote that the prime minister is, "pursuing a policy which doesn't meet with parliament's approval, and it's gradually running into the sand".

But with no clear majority in parliament for any single alternate course, there is a growing chance that Britain may seek to postpone its departure date while politicians work on a new plan.

MOST IMPORTANT VOTE 'IN A GENERATION'

Ahead of yesterday's Brexit vote, Corbyn said the blame will "lie firmly with the government and firmly at the feet of the prime minister".

Labour MP David Lammy, who has previously said Brexit is a "con" that will harm the country's most vulnerable, told CBC News that he thinks it's certain May will lose the vote, which he called "the most important in a generation".

"At that point, it's clear in our constitutional arrangement, the only thing you can do is go back to the country for a clear decision and direction," he said.

"That either means a general election or it means a people's vote -- a second referendum in which the issues, the more complex issues around Brexit, are put to the people."

And of course, a potential no-deal Brexit looms.

Grieve, who has backed calls for another referendum, said leaving without a plan would cause "immense" economic damage and hurt the country's most vulnerable.

Still, it's a possibility -- one many people in the UK have been readying for.

A major issue in the pre-Brexit wrangling has been around the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In a bid to win support ahead of yesterday's vote, the UK MP sought reassurances from EU leaders about the deal's most contentious measure -- an insurance policy known as the "backstop" that would keep Britain in an EU customs union to maintain an open border between the UK's Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland after Brexit.

Pro-Brexit lawmakers worry that Britain could be trapped indefinitely in the arrangement, bound to EU trade rules and unable to strike new deals around the world.

As Britain's deepest political crisis for at least half a century built to a head, a spokesperson for May said she would respond quickly to the result of the vote.

He also said there had been no

discussion at a meeting between the prime minister and her cabinet on Tuesday morning of delaying Brexit beyond the March 29 deadline.

Cotton seed

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Scientists from Chongqing University -- who designed the "mini lunar biosphere" experiment -- sent an 18-centimetre (seven-inch) bucket-like container holding air, water and soil.

Inside are cotton, potato, and arabisopsis seeds -- a plant of the mustard family -- as well as fruit fly eggs and yeast.

Images sent back by the probe show a cotton sprout has grown well, but so far none of the other plants has taken, the university said.

Change-4 is also equipped with instruments developed by scientists from Sweden, Germany and China to study the lunar environment, cosmic radiation and the interaction between solar wind and the moon's surface.

The lander released a rover, dubbed Yutu-2 (Jade Rabbit), that will perform experiments in the Von Karman Crater.

The agency said four more lunar missions are planned, confirming the launch of a probe by the end of the year to bring back samples from the moon.

China wants to establish a lunar research base one day, possibly using 3D printing technology to build facilities, the Chinese space agency said Monday.

From worker

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neighbourhood. She had more than 100 workers and 60 sewing machines at the new place.

"There was a time when I had to wait for my salary at the end of every month to feed my family members. Today, I disburse Tk 6 lakh in monthly salaries to my workers," said the 32-year-old hailing from Pashchim Sholkata in Anwara upazila.

While talking to this correspondent at her factory on January 5, Chhobi said she had been demotivated by many people when she started the venture but nothing could derail her.

After moving the factory to New Chaktai, Chhobi faced objections from local businessmen and neighbours over running power generators. She tried to convince them and was finally able to run generators after four months' of tirelessly effort.

Chhobi mentioned her husband Amalendu Das Gupta and his friend Dipankar Dastidar when talking about motivation.

"Without their support, I would not reach this stage," she said. "They were always by my side during the ups and downs and encouraged me whenever I broke down."

Chhobi, without going into details, said she had heard of the government's loan schemes for women entrepreneurs but claimed that she had been turned down by several banks when she asked for money to expand her factory.

She made a plea to the government to provide her SME loans so that she could expand her factory and continue creating jobs.

Girl hacked

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relationship with her family," the accused said.

The victim was admitted to Kalkini Upazila Health Complex after the attack.

Police will take action if the victim's family files a case, the OC said.



The mangled microbus which was involved in an accident on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila yesterday. The road crash in Birpasha area, around 35 kilometres off the district town, claimed five lives.

PHOTO: STAR

Pvt universities

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and Fahad in pasting the posters and arrested them.

Deputy Commissioner of CT Mohammed Shahidullah told The Daily Star that Sabqat led a group of 20 to 25 students before his arrest and maintained communications with his senior leaders.

Seeking anonymity, a CT inspector told this newspaper that Sabqat came from a well-off family and he joined the outfit two years ago.

"During interrogation on remand, Sabqat told investigators that Hizb ut-Tahrir has a number of operatives and supporters at different colleges and universities, including Chittagong University," said the inspector.

CT officials, who quizzed Sabqat, said Hizb ut-Tahrir leader Tazwar had motivated Sabqat to join the outfit when he was a college student in the city.

Sabqat also admitted that they used to hold meetings in the city's Kazir Dewri, Lalkhan Bazar and GEC areas as the places were crowded, said the officials.

Before the election, Tazwar, who works at a private organisation, supplied the posters to Sabqat and Fahad, said CT officials, adding that they then, in separate groups, pasted the posters at the dead of night.

CT's Additional Deputy Commissioner (operation) Polish Kanti Nath said they got the names of several people involved in coordinating the outfit's organisational activities.

Police are trying to arrest Tazwar and the others, he added.

According to CT sources, the CMP arrested some 65 alleged Hizb ut-Tahrir men from 2010 to 2018.

Spinners

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bagged three wickets to help bundle out Rajshahi on 103 and hand the side their second defeat in four games.

In chase of the small total, the Sylhet pitch remained a spinner's paradise as apart from a 23-run knock from Rajshahi skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz, none of the other batters were able to score significantly.

Earlier after taking the first guard, Khulna continued their batting woes with Ariful Haque's 26 being the highest score of the day for the batting side, a fact which proved crucial for Khulna in the end.

In the day's second game it was yet another low-scoring encounter as Sylhet Sixers were all out on just 69 runs, courtesy of off-spinner Mahedi Hasan's brilliant bowling.

Mahedi picked up four wickets for 22 runs from his four overs, making it seem as if Sylhet were about to be bundled out for the lowest ever target -- which remains to be Khulna's 44 runs in the 2016 edition of the tournament -- as were reeling on 22 for seven at one point.

Sylhet's Alok Kapali was compact at one end, remaining unbeaten on 33 runs off 31 balls while none of the other batsmen were able to reach double figures.

Apart from Mahedi's heroics, Comilla's Pakistani pacer pacer Wahab Riaz bagged three wickets.

In reply, despite losing the wickets of Tamim Iqbal and Anamul Haque for ducks early on, Shamsur Rahman and Imrul Kayes steadied the ship with an unbeaten 59-run partnership which helped the side sail to an eight-wicket win -- their third victory in five games. With three defeats in four matches, Sylhet will be desperately looking to stage a comeback on home soil.

PM to invite parties

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urged it to accept the reality and help the new government, reports BSS.

Imam made the statements when the newly appointed five advisors to the PM yesterday placed wreaths at the portrait of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of Bangabandhu Memorial at Dhanmondi road 32 yesterday.

There has been confusion over the PM's talks with political parties as her second in command gave three different statements in this regard within three days.

On Saturday, Quader termed the opposition's demand for a dialogue "ridiculous" and said there was no need to hold talks. On the following day, Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said the PM would hold a dialogue with political parties. He said this after Hasina, at an AL central working committee meeting, hinted at holding such talks.

Quader again changed his position on Monday and said the PM would invite parties only to exchange post-election greetings with them, and not hold any dialogue.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Monday said the BNP-led Oikyafront would decide whether it would sit for a fresh round of talks with Sheikh Hasina, once the agenda is set.

Rejecting the December 30 election due to allegations of widespread irregularities and rigging, the main opposition alliance -- the Jatiya Oikyafront -- has been demanding that the government hold a national dialogue with all stakeholders for a fresh election in line with the constitution and laws.

Before the polls, Hasina held dialogues with 75 political parties at her Gono Bhaban residence over different major contentious issues, including the nature of the polls-time government and dissolution of parliament before the announcement of the election schedule, among others.

After the confusion created by

Quader's statements, Imam yesterday said the PM would invite all political parties, who were earlier invited to the Gono Bhaban, to hold further talks.

He also said establishing good governance in all sectors was their major challenge, adding that corruption, militancy and drug abuse must be uprooted from society.

No 'ghost'

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dead people for some incidents that did not happen.

Zillur Rahman, son of Abdur Rahman from the capital's Jurain, died on March 26, 2018. He was buried at Azimpur Graveyard the same day and the receipt of the graveyard bears the serial number of 10342.

However, police filed two cases with the city's Kadamtoli Police Station on September 11 and 12, in which they charged Zillur with vandalising vehicles and throwing brick chips at police.

Similarly, Jahangir Alam, son of late Rowshan Ali Molla in Gendaria, died on July 1, 2017, at the age of 65 due to cardio-respiratory failure, according to the death certificate issued by Asgar Ali Hospital in the locality. But police filed a case against him with Gendaria Police Station on October 3, 2018.

Besides this, police have also filed cases over incidents that did not even happen.

For example, police in the capital filed 38 cases against several thousand leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations within 12 hours of the BNP rally on September 30 at Suhrawardy Udyan.

The Daily Star visited the 10 spots each named as "place of occurrence" in the cases filed with Hazaribagh, Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, New Market, Kamrangirchar, Motijheel, Paltan, Shahbagh, Ramna and Jatrabari police.

This newspaper spoke with more than a dozen roadside vendors, shop owners and their employees, and local residents around each of those spots. None of them could recall any incident of attack on police, vandalism or obstruction of police duty as claimed in the case statements.

Victims of river erosion

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As more Bangladeshi families are uprooted by climate change pressures, including rising seas and coastal erosion, the Forest Department is distributing fallow land formed from riversilt.

Poor, landless people can use the plots without paying rent for 10 years, although they cannot live on the land, as much of it is outside protective embankments.

The land scheme, launched two years ago by the Bangladesh government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), covers Hatiya and some islands in Bhola district.

So far, 9 hectares (22 acres) of fallow land in Hatiya sub-district have been divided up between 45 families who have each received a plot with a pond to farm fish. Fruit and timber tree saplings have also been handed out to plant on the land.

The families have been trained to rear ducks and grow vegetables, so that they can earn more money.

Demand to participate in the program is rising by the day, said UNDP community development officer Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan.

Forest officials said a new effort is underway to distribute another 20 hectares with ponds to 100 families in Hatiya, which has a population of about 500,000 -- and the scheme may be expanded further.

Such land is at risk of being appropriated for financial gain by powerful people like politicians and landlords, he said. Leasing the land to vulnerable

families can protect it from encroachment, while tackling poverty, he added.

The Forest Department expects the 10-year leases to be extended, he noted.

Internal displacement is now common on Hatiya as a large part of the island is being devoured by riverbank erosion accelerated by sea level rise. The phenomenon is particularly fierce during the monsoon rains when large volumes of water flow downstream.

According to officials at the Bangladesh Water Development Board, several hundred acres of arable land, as well as many houses, markets, mosques, schools, roads, cyclone shelters and 14 km of embankments on Hatiya Island have been gobbled up by seawater in the last two years.

Erosion continues, putting many more islanders at risk of being uprooted.

Villager Majhi said that after losing homes and agricultural land, about 100 families are now living in centres intended as cyclone shelters.

In its 2016 annual report, development group BRAC warned that about 27 million Bangladeshis were predicted to be at risk of sea level rise by 2050, with two-thirds of the country less than 5 metres above sea level.

Government data shows sea level rise of about 5.7 mm per year at Char Changa station in Hatiya, and 3.4 mm per year at Hiron Point in the Sundarbans.