

NEWBORN'S DEATH IN MYMENSINGH

3 owners of pvt hospital held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police yesterday arrested three owners of a private hospital over the death of a newborn in C-section due to alleged negligence of a doctor, who performed the operation.

They are Rezaul Kabir Murad, Azhar Mahmud Jewel and Ashrafur Rahman Rony.

The arrestees were being interrogated, said Monsur Ahmed, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kotwali Police Station, adding that the victim's family filed a case against six people, including the three and the physician concerned, in this connection.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said Harun-or-Rashid, a garment worker, admitted his wife Jannat Begum, 22, to Porosh Private Hospital in Mymensingh town for a caesarean operation on Sunday night.

The baby was the first of the couple of Kalyanpur village in Sadar upazila, the police said.

Dr FD Amin Shishir of Community Based Medical College Hospital, Bangladesh, a private hospital in Mymensingh, carried out the operation around midnight.

After the operation, the hospital

authorities told Harun that the female child had died in her mother's womb.

Harun and his other family members protested it and claimed that the baby died during the operation as there were injury marks on child's face and back.

Contacted, Shishir claimed that the child had died in her mother's womb three to four days ago.

Shishir said as the patient was screaming with serious pain, they decided to operate on her. The patient's blood sample was tested, but no ultrasonogram was done.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Victim's family demanded a proper investigation into the death to bring the persons responsible for the death to book.

AKM Abdur Rob, civil surgeon of Mymensingh, said the hospital was launched around six months ago, but it has no licence.

"I visited the hospital over a month ago and asked the hospital authorities to stop its activities until they get a licence. But they continued their activities," he said.

A probe body will be formed to investigate the death, added the civil surgeon.

'ABUSE' IN BANGLADESH FACTORY

Spice Girls probe charity T-shirts

THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION, London

British pop band the Spice Girls said they will fund an investigation into a Bangladesh factory over its treatment of women who make T-shirts for a charity campaign backing equality.

Factory workers making the tops in Gazipur, Bangladesh, earned as little as 35 pence (45 cents) an hour, were forced to work up to 16 hours a day and suffered insults and harassment, according to an investigation by the Guardian newspaper.

The T-shirts, which were commissioned by the Spice Girls and retail for about 20 pounds, aim to raise money for a campaign by British charity Comic Relief championing gender justice.

The group topped charts in the 1990s with a "girl power" mantra that appealed strongly to young women, selling the idea that girls from ordinary backgrounds could make it big.

The slogan '#IWannaBeASpiceGirl' appears on the front of the tops, while the phrase 'gender justice' is printed on the back.

A spokeswoman for the Spice Girls - who announced in November that they would reunite for a tour of Britain this year - said they were "deeply shocked and appalled by the claims".

"The girls will personally fund an independent investigation into the working conditions of this factory," the spokeswoman said. "Equality and the movement of people power has always been at the heart of the band."

GIRL POWER?

Comic Relief said both the charity and the band had carried out ethical sourcing checks on the online retailer commissioned to make the T-shirts, Represent, but that it had subsequently changed manufacturer without their knowledge.

Represent could not be reached for comment, but Comic Relief said the retailer had taken full responsibility for its choice of supplier, and that it would refund customers on request.

Workers making the T-shirts told the Guardian they were forced to do

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

ROHINGYAS IN COX'S BAZAR

UN expert Yanghee Lee visits camps

UNB, Cox's Bazar

UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar Yanghee Lee is now in Cox's Bazar on a three-day visit to see the Rohingya situation, amid Myanmar's refusal to grant her access to Rakhine State.

She arrived here yesterday noon and visited a Rohingya camp on the zero line at Tumbru Konarkpara in Naikhkhonchhari upazila of Bandarban.

The UN expert talked to some persecuted Rohingya women and children, and assured them of standing beside them.

She also spoke to the officials of Border Guard Bangladesh to know the border situation.

Later, Lee visited a UNHCR transit centre at Kutupalong of Ukhia and talked to Rohingyas staying there.

She, however, did not talk to

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Israeli jets hit Iranian targets

FROM PAGE 16

Assad has said Iranian forces are welcome to stay in Syria after years of military victories that have brought most of the country back under his control, though two large enclaves are still held by other forces.

His other main ally Russia, worried about the consequences of Israeli strikes for the wider pursuit of a war that is now entering its ninth year, has provided Syria with air defence systems.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is hoping to win a fifth term in the April 9 election, said, "Yesterday evening, the air force struck a strong blow against Iranian targets in Syria after Iran fired a missile from there toward Israel."

"We do not allow such acts of aggression to pass by. We are acting against Iran and against the Syrian forces who are tools of Iranian aggression," Netanyahu said at an inauguration ceremony for a new airport in southern Israel yesterday.

In a highly publicised operation last month, the Israeli military uncovered and destroyed cross-border tunnels from Lebanon that it said were dug by

Hezbollah to launch attacks during any future war between them.

NIGHT ATTACK

The Israeli military said its fighter jets had attacked Iranian targets early yesterday, including munitions stores, a position in the Damascus International Airport, an intelligence site and a military training camp.

Its jets then targeted Syrian defence batteries after coming under fire, the Israeli military said, and the Defence Ministry of Russia, Assad's strongest ally, said four Syrian soldiers were killed and six wounded.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said 11 people had been killed.

Syrian air defences, supplied by Russia, had destroyed more than 30 cruise missiles and guided bombs, the Russian Defence Ministry said, according to RIA news agency.

Syrian state media, citing a military source, said the country had endured "intense attack through consecutive waves of guided missiles, but had destroyed most 'hostile targets'".

Israel's target was the Iranian Quds

Force, a special unit in charge of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps overseas operations, the Israeli military said.

It followed a previous night of cross-border fire, which Israel said began when Iranian troops fired an Iranian-made surface-to-surface missile from an area near Damascus at a packed ski resort in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Iran has yet to respond to the accusation, reported Reuters.

IS SUICIDE ATTACK

A suicide car bomb attack on a military convoy in northeastern Syria yesterday killed five members of a Kurdish-led force accompanying US troops in an anti-jihadist coalition, reported AFP.

The attack, claimed by the Islamic State group, came less than a week after another deadly attack on US forces in Syria and a month after Washington announced a US troop pullout from the war-torn country.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said five fighters from the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were killed in the blast on a road in Hasakeh province.

sons".

In recent years the Afghan government has stopped releasing detailed casualty figures but U.S. commanders have said repeatedly that the losses being suffered by Afghan forces are "unsustainable". Last year Ghani said 28,000 Afghan police officers and soldiers had been killed since 2015.

The British embassy in Afghanistan said yesterday's casualties were "a stark reminder of the sacrifice the Afghan security and defence forces make for their country".



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the first meeting of the new cabinet at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Perform duty with honesty

FROM PAGE 1

worked with sincerity and honesty.

Meanwhile, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam yesterday said the one percent quota in government jobs for the differently-abled people has been kept unchanged, reports our staff correspondent.

"The cabinet didn't discuss the issue [quota]. For your information, I would like to say that the legal provision in this regard has not been cancelled. It's because a law cannot be overridden by issuing an administrative order," he told reporters while briefing them on the meeting at the secretariat.

Speaking at the meeting, the PM said the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was to bring smiles to the faces of distressed people. "That's also our aim. We will work with that desire...we'll fulfil that desire. We will build Bangladesh as a country that will be free from hunger and poverty."

Hasina said the development works initiated by the previous AL government had to be taken forward in future.

The AL won the December 30 parliamentary election with an absolute

majority.

PRESIDENT'S JS SPEECH CLEARED

Cabinet Secretary Shafiqul said the cabinet approved President Abdul Hamid's draft speech, to be delivered at the inaugural session of the 11th parliament on January 30.

He said the full speech of some 75,000 words would be placed in the House, but the president would read out a short version of it having about 6,000 words.

The speech would focus on the country's overall scenario, including economic development activities and measures taken by the government to establish good governance and implement the Vision 2021 and the Vision 2041, he added.

The cabinet also gave the go-ahead to three draft bills - the Brick Manufacturing and Brick Kilns Establishment (control) (amendment) Bill-2018, the National Social Welfare Association Bill-2018 and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (land acquisition) Regulation (amendment) Bill-2019.

About the brick kiln bill, Shafiqul said the cabinet earlier had cleared the draft bill and an ordinance was pro-

mulgated. The bill was brought again in amendment format in the cabinet meeting due to legal obligations.

Referring to the social welfare bill, he said there would be a Board of Governance, to be headed by the social welfare minister, for the Social Welfare Association. The state minister for social welfare will be its vice chairman.

Alongside some other government officials, a noted social activist would be nominated by the government from each district as member of the board. Of the district-level social activists, at least 20 must be women.

Besides, the government will nominate five noted personalities from famous social activists, social researchers, writers and teachers as members of the board.

About the CHT land acquisition bill, the cabinet secretary said it had been formulated to remove disparity between the plain-land districts and the CHT region over having compensations against land acquisition.

According to the draft bill, 300 percent of the market price of a piece of land will be given to its owner as compensation in case of land acquisition in

the CHT area like that of plain land.

On December 20 last year, an ordinance was promulgated increasing the compensation to 300 percent from 15 percent.

The cabinet also approved in principle the draft of Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC) Bill-2018 for bringing the organisation under a legal framework.

As per the draft law, there will be a board of directors to run the centre. The industries secretary will be the chairman of the 11-member board.

The cabinet also cleared the draft of the National Action Plan on the Affairs of Disabled Persons in line with the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act-2013 and the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Rules-2015.

In the action plan, there is a guideline for increasing the accessibility of persons with disabilities in all infrastructures and transport.

The cabinet also adopted a condolence motion at the death of former AL general secretary Syed Ashraful Islam.

Ashraful passed away at a hospital in Thailand on January 3.

KSA to deport 250 Rohingyas to Bangladesh

flown out either late on Sunday or yesterday evening.

Nay San Lwin added that many of the Rohingya entered Saudi Arabia after obtaining passports belonging to countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal through smugglers via fake documents.

Myanmar stripped the Rohingya of their citizenship in 1982, rendering them stateless.

Under the 1982 Citizenship Law, the Rohingya were not recognised as one of the country's 135 ethnic groups, restricting their rights to study, work, travel, marry, vote, practise their religion and access health services.

Saudi Arabia stopped issuing residency permits to Rohingya who entered the country after 2011.

Nay San Lwin said that several human rights activists had appealed to Saudi authorities over the past two years and that he had personally approached Saudi officials and diplomats to intervene.

"When these Rohingya arrive in Bangladesh, they could be jailed," he said. "Saudi Arabia should stop these deportations and grant them residency permits like the other Rohingyas who arrived in the country before them."

Last year, Middle East Eye (MEE) reported that Rohingya detainees were being prepared for deportation shortly after Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Saudi Arabia.

Some of the detainees held at the Shumaisi detention centre said they had lived in the kingdom their entire lives and had been sent to the facility after Saudi

police found them without identification papers.

Described as the "world's most persecuted minority", around one million Rohingya fled to neighbouring Bangladesh in late 2017 when the Myanmar army launched a brutal campaign against them.

The UN accused government soldiers and local Buddhists of massacring families, burning hundreds of villages and carrying out mass gang rapes.

Myanmar denies the allegations, saying security forces are battling armed rebels.

However, many of the refugees housed in the cramped and unsanitary camps in Bangladesh said they feared returning to Myanmar without guaranteed rights such as citizenship, access to healthcare and freedom of movement.

Surprise on cards

FROM PAGE 1

They, however, said the PM was likely to pick a new deputy speaker.

"Khashru bhai [AL presidium member Abdul Matin Khashru] would probably be elected as the deputy speaker," an AL presidium member told this correspondent, wishing not to be named.

Khashru, a former law minister, was made chief of the parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry in the 10th parliament.

AL MP from Gaibandha-5 Fazle Rabbi Miah currently holds the post of deputy speaker.

Lawmakers will elect the Speaker and deputy speaker on the first sitting of the maiden session of the 11th parliament on January 30.

For the post of deputy leader of the House, Hasina is likely to pick AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury, the agriculture minister in her two previous cabinets.

Names of senior AL leaders Tofail Ahmed and Amir Hossain Amu, ministers in Hasina's previous cabinet, were also being discussed by party leaders for the post, said AL sources.

Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, lawmaker from Faridpur-2, is the deputy leader in the 10th parliament.

Hasina may also select a new chief whip of parliament. Instead of Chief Whip ASM Feroz, a lawmaker from Patuakhali-2, Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury Liton from Madaripur-4, to act