



People trying to salvage whatever they can at Dokkhin Kaminibashia village of Khulna's Dacope upazila yesterday after a tornado struck the village Tuesday night destroying many homes.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Mahfuz Ullah flown to S'pore for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior journalist Mahfuz Ullah was flown to Singapore last night through an air ambulance for better treatment. AZM Jahid Hossain, former secretary general of Doctors Association of Bangladesh, said Mahfuz left Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 12:10am while his daughter Meghla and her husband Minhajul Abedin accompanied him. "As Mahfuz's situation improved in last two days, he was sent to Bumrungrat International Hospital through air ambulance for better treatment," he said. Mahfuz was admitted to the capital's Square Hospital on Tuesday with severe chest pain. He was in Intensive Care Unit and under life support. Family members of Mahfuz sought prayers from the people of the country for his recovery.

'Robber' killed

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him dead, the OC said. The body was sent to Kishoreganj General Hospital morgue for an autopsy. Police claimed to have recovered a firearm, five bullets, two sharp weapons, 25 bottles of Phensedyl and 100 yaba tablets from the spot. Morom, the ringleader of an inter-district robber gang, stood accused in 12 robbery cases filed with different police stations in Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria and Narsingdi, the OC said. Eight of the cases were lodged with Bhairab Police Station. Six policemen, including two sub-inspectors, were hurt in the incident and they took first aid at the local health complex, said the police official. A case was filed with Bhairab Police Station in connection with the "gunfight". The Daily Star could not contact the deceased's family for comments.

Madrasa head

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police arrested Md Akram, 22, a teaching associate at the madrasa, from Bangshal area. Police recovered a towel, two sacks, two ropes, a mobile phone and the victim's clothes from their possessions. They confessed to the kidnapping and murder of the child during primary interrogation, the DC said. Police said Monir's sister took him to the madrasa on Sunday morning. When she went to pick him later in the day, his teachers said he had already gone home. Since there was no trace of him for hours, the family began searching the locality by making announcements on microphones. After a while, an anonymous caller demanded Tk 3 lakh over phone. Saidul managed Tk 1 lakh and went to Nur-e-Ayesha mosque, where the caller had asked him to meet. Despite waiting all of Sunday night, nobody came. The DC said the arrestees had taken Monir to the under-construction mosque after kidnapping him. "The kidnappers wrapped Monir's face in a towel when he started crying. When they realised that he was dead, they put the body in a sack and left him beside the staircase," said the DC, adding that they demanded the ransom even after they knew the child was already dead. Police suspect Monir died from suffocation. Monir's father said he was too poor to arrange the ransom and it's unacceptable that someone killed his son for money.

Tk 5 lakh given

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that he was incurring losses and was unable to comply with the court order. He said he was ill, his elder son was blind and his wife was suffering from kidney damage and prayed to the court to exonerate him from paying the compensation. Alauddin appeared before the court after the bench yesterday morning ordered the transport owner to pay some of the compensation to Russel by 3:00pm. After Alauddin appeared before the bench, defence lawyer Ozi Ullah told the court that his client could not pay the compensation as per the court's order as he had been ill and was abroad. The court expressed deep dissatisfaction saying that the Green Line neither compensated for his loss nor showed any humanity to him.

On April 4, the HC ordered Green Line to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russel by April 10 and said it would pass an order for confiscation of its buses otherwise. The HC also ordered the company not to sell bus tickets for April 11 if it failed to compensate the victim. Russel, 26, who was a driver, lost his left leg from below the knee after he was knocked down by a Green Line bus near Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital on April 28 last year. An altercation broke out between Russel and the bus driver over rear-ending his car. As Russel chased down the bus, its driver ran him over. During hearing of the same writ petition, the HC bench on March 31 directed Green Line to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russel by April 3 and asked the company to inform it by April 4 after complying with the order.

The Appellate Division on March 31 upheld the March 12 HC order that asked Green Line to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russel. Umme Kulsum Smrity filed the writ

petition with the HC on May 13 last year, seeking necessary order to compensate Russel and to stop reckless driving. The HC the next day issued a rule asking the Green Line and the government authorities concerned to explain why they would not be ordered to pay a compensation of Tk 1 crore to Russel. Advocate Khandker Shamsul Haque Reza appeared for the writ petitioner while Ozi Ullah defended the Green Line. Talking to The Daily Star, Shamsul had earlier said a case was filed in connection with the accident and the bus driver was out on bail. Russel said he has faith on the HC.

They prefer

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years back during one such firing. The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit came to know about these after arresting ringleader Motin, 48, and his associates Saiful Islam Titu, 45, and Md Arman Hossain, 42, early yesterday. During the interrogation, the CTTC also came to know that the gang used to target Sundays for robbery as they considered the day to be lucky for them. Most of the business firms withdraw and deposit their money in banks on the day. Jahangir Alam, additional deputy commissioner of CTTC, told The Daily Star that they conducted a drive in Sayedabad area of the capital on information that around 10 people gathered there with arms. Law enforcers arrested the trio during the drive, he added. The CTTC team also claimed to have recovered two foreign pistols, one revolver, three magazines, 28 rounds of bullets and two motor-bikes. Sheikh Jane Alam alis Kaiyum, 32, right hand of old Dhaka's top criminal Sultan Ahmed Imu, tipped the law enforcers off about the group during interrogation, said CTTC officials. The CTTC unit arrested Kaiyum in March this year and took him on a four-day remand that ended yesterday, said Mejbah Uddin, inspector of CTTC unit. Of the three arrested, Motin is accused in 18 cases, Saiful is a murder case suspect and Arman is accused in 24 cases, claimed police. CTTC unit's ADC Jahangir Alam said the criminals had a plan to conduct another robbery at a firm in the capital's Motijheel area. Police, however, did not mention the firm's name for security reasons. A high official of CTTC said Motin became a robber in early 1999 and started conducting robbery in Jurain, Shyampur and Jatrabari areas of the capital. "In 2004, when Rapid Action Battalion started massive crackdown against criminal groups and his four close associates -- Boska Kabir, Sanaullah, Tapa and Amira alias Kailla -- were killed in 'gunfights' with law enforcers, he went to Saudi Arabia," said the official, seeking anonymity. "After staying eight years in Saudi, Motin came back to Bangladesh and started living in Narayanganj where he set up his criminal empire in support of local worker leaders, said investigators.

Two held

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Technologies Moshihur Rahman Sarkar filed a case with Metropolitan Session Judges Court accusing eight persons that include former deputy general manager and branch in-charge of BASIC Bank's Gulshan Branch Sipar Ahmed, former general manager Mohammad Joynul Abedin Chowdhury, former deputy general manager Khan Iqbal Hasan, former officer Abdul Muzid, Chairperson of Techno Shahida Aktar Simu. The case was later transferred to the ACC for investigation. The ACC found the involvement of two more officials of BASIC Bank -- it's Gulshan branch Manager Masudul Alam and Officer Nishat Nasrin. Producing Hemayet and Kamal before the Metropolitan Magistrate Court, the ACC yesterday pled to send them to jail. Metropolitan Magistrate Shahidul Islam granted their plea. In the four years between 2009 and 2013, Tk 4,500 crore was swindled out of BASIC, once a healthy public bank. In 2015, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed 56 cases in connection with the scam, but ironically neither BASIC Bank's then chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu nor any of the board members were named as the accused. The ACC quizzed Bacchu several times between 2017 and 2018 in connection with the loan scam.

Indian polls kick off amid high alert

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seats at stake, just one more than the required majority. In the last election, BJP-led alliance won more than 330 seats - the biggest mandate in three decades-- defeating Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Most of the polling agencies that released surveys in the last four days said Modi got a boost from recent tension with arch enemy Pakistan after a militant group based there killed 40 Indian policemen in the disputed region of Kashmir in February. India blamed the attack on a Pakistan-based group and launched a cross-border air raid, which sparked a retaliatory strike by Pakistan that briefly brought the rivals close to a new war. Modi has used India's action against Pakistan to bolster his strong-man image and divert attention from criticism over a lack of jobs across the country and a farmers' debt crisis. At a rally on Tuesday, Modi urged first-time voters to dedicate their ballot to the military who staged the air strike inside Pakistan. Congress said the speech breached an Election Commission order that political parties should not use the armed forces for propaganda. A biopic of the prime minister has also caused controversy, with the opposition Congress party waging a legal battle to prevent the showing of what it has called unfair propaganda. The film however was given a censors' certificate earlier in the week after the Supreme Court dismissed an appeal, and will be released today. "We are very happy that we got the 'U' (universal) certificate from the Censor Board," producer Sandeep Ssingh said in a statement.

Battle rages on Tripoli

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The United Nations wants to bring both sides together to plan an election and way out of the chaos. 'I JUST WANT TO SURVIVE' On its Facebook page, Haftar's forces published a video purporting to show their seizure of a government base in the Aziziya district of southern Tripoli. The images, which could not be verified, showed a vehicle on fire and soldiers firing in the air, shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest). UN humanitarian agency OCHA said it was extremely concerned about the "disproportionate and indiscriminate use" of explosive weapons in densely populated areas. Half a million children were at risk, it added. As well as the humanitarian consequences, renewed conflict in Libya threatens to disrupt oil supplies, increase migration across the Mediterranean to Europe, scupper the UN peace plan, and encourage Islamist militants to exploit the chaos. Islamic State killed three people in a remote desert town under LNA control two days ago. In Tripoli, nearly 50 people have died, mainly combatants but also some civilians including two doctors, according to latest UN casualty estimates. The toll is expected to rise. Several thousand migrants, detained after trying to use Libya as a

staging point for crossing the Mediterranean to Europe, have also been caught up in the crisis. UN refugee agency UNHCR said on Tuesday it had relocated more than 150 of them - among several thousand in total - from one detention centre in south Tripoli to a facility of its own in a safe zone. One official at that detention centre said he flung open the doors yesterday and released another 150 migrants for their own safety due to the proximity of clashes. The United Nations, United States, European Union and G7 bloc have appealed for a ceasefire, return to the UN peace plan, and halt to Haftar's push. But instead of that, he was moving men and equipment from southern and eastern Libya to a forward base at Gharyan, a town south of Tripoli, according to a foreign diplomatic source observing the deployments. Opponents cast Haftar as a would-be dictator in the mould of Gaddafi, though he projects himself as a champion against extremism striving to restore order to Libya. Haftar was among the officers who helped Gaddafi rise to power in 1969 but fell out with him during a war with Chad in the 1980s. He was taken prisoner by the Chadians, rescued by the CIA, and lived for about 20 years in Virginia before returning in 2011 to join other rebels in the uprising against Gaddafi.



Activists and leaders of Samajtantrik Mahila Forum demonstrate in front of the Jatiya Press Club demanding punishment of those who set madrasa student Nurat Jahan Rafi on fire in Feni's Sonagazi.

PHOTO: STAR

Bridges that bridge little

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The bridge would be useful only after construction of connecting roads, said Ruhul Amin, headmaster of Senbhag Government Primary School in Naldanga upazila. This correspondent also found that three bridges were built in Koigari village and one each in Diyarsaturia, Bolakandi and Nobinkrisnapur villages under Natore Sadar upazila without any link road. The bridges were built under the supervision of the two upazila nirbahi officers upon recommendations from the local lawmaker (Natore-2). The project implementation officer (PIO) of the two upazilas had sent proposals for building the 45 bridges after conducting an on-the-spot feasibility study. Aysha Siddika was the PIO of the two upazilas when the plan was drafted and executed. Siddika, now the PIO of Pabna's Bhangura upazila, said, "Projects are implemented as per recommendations of the public representatives,

especially of the local lawmaker. The upazila chairman, the UNO and other officials concerned select the location. Officials of my rank cannot play a vital role in making any decision." Shafiqul Islam Shimul, lawmaker from Natore-2, said he had recommended building the bridges and also inaugurated those. "I made recommendations in line with the demand of the local people. They are very happy that a lot of bridges have been built which reduced their sufferings greatly," said a satisfied Shafiqul. About the lack of approach roads, he said, "I will build roads in those areas where there is no road link." PROBE BODIES FORMED Meanwhile, the disaster management ministry and the Department of Disaster Management have recently formed two inquiry committees to investigate the construction of the bridges. Additional Secretary Mostafizur Rahman, chief of the three-member inquiry committee formed by the

ministry, said they were probing the construction of all the 45 bridges. "We will submit the report to the ministry within a short time. If found guilty, all those responsible will be punished," said Mostafizur, also the project director of bridges under the Department of Disaster Management. ATM Kamrul Islam Tang, director of planning and development at the disaster management department, is heading the other probe committee. "We are investigating how the bridges were built, the necessity and output of the bridges. Stringent actions will be taken if the officials concerned are found involved in irregularities." Talking to The Daily Star, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder said there was no specific policy on the construction of bridges and culverts in local areas. "Bridges and culverts are constructed on the basis of necessity. But the type of necessity has changed over time. Now influence from the contractors and politicians mostly defines the necessity," he said.