

Every illegal

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of Assam's population and a majority of the party's vote bank, being excluded. In the run-up to the final list exclusion worries had weighed heavily on people in the state's lower districts, which are dominated by migrant Muslims.

In national elections held this year the BJP won nine of 14 seats in Assam, backed by votes from tribals, Assamese Hindus and Bengali Hindus.

Speaking on NDTV, firebrand BJP MLA Silditya Dev alleged the NRC was part of a "conspiracy to keep Hindus out and help Muslims". He alleged the NRC software was bugged and the process of preparing the citizen's list was steeped in corruption.

Last month, after meeting with Mr Shah, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal appeared to suggest the BJP could use the legislative (or ordinance) route to re-examine the final NRC.

Earlier this year, Mr Shah, while campaigning in Rajasthan for the national election, described Bangladeshi migrants as "termites" and that they would be struck off electoral rolls.

During his address the Home Minister also said the centre had no intention of altering or scrapping Article 371 of the Indian Constitution, which grants special privileges to north eastern states. He said there was a vast difference between Articles 370 and 371.

"I have clarified in Parliament that this is not going to happen and I am saying it again today in the presence of eight chief ministers of North East that the Centre will not touch Article 371," the Home Minister added, amid concerns the centre would do to the North East what it did to Jammu and Kashmir.

On August 5 Mr Shah announced the government would scrap Article 370 and bifurcate Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, sparking the imposition of a state-wide security lockdown that included the detention of senior political leaders and leading to massive protests from the Opposition.

Teacher makes

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shows children wearing boxes with holes cut out for the eyes.

"We hope that this type of violence against the Tlaxcalteca youth is not overlooked, and that the federal and state authorities dismiss this public official and that they cease this type of humiliation in a space destined for learning," he wrote, according to a translation provided by The Sun.

In response to the backlash, the school explained through a Facebook post on Thursday that it was a "dynamic exercise" to help "the students' psychomotor development". According to Ladbible, they added that the students had consented to the exercise.

Mainul

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Iqbal Kabir Chowdhury confirmed The Daily Star.

Earlier in the day, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Tofazzal Hossain had granted him bail considering his age and physical condition after Mainul's lawyer Golam Mostafa Khan submitted a petition seeking bail.

During the hearing, Golam Mostafa said Mainul fell sick after he was sent to jail and he needed to be admitted to a hospital.

Earlier on September 4, Mainul, 80, was sent to jail after he surrendered before the court and sought bail in the case.

On October 16 last year, Mainul hurled abusive words at Masuda and called her "a person of loose moral" during a live talk show at a private television channel.

Following the incident, Masuda on October 21 filed a case with the Court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Asaduzzaman Noor in Dhaka.

On October 23, the Detective Branch of police arrested Mainul from the capital's Uttara. The next day, a Dhaka court sent him to jail after detectives produced him before it.

As many as 23 cases were lodged against him across the country over the incident. On January 13, the HC granted him ad-interim bail for six months in 11 cases.

It also stayed the trial proceedings of 15 defamation cases for the next six months and issued separate rules asking the government to explain why the case proceedings against him should not be stopped.

On January 27, Mainul was released on bail after he had spent three months in jail.

Ctg 'cut off'

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"My daughter and I had to walk on the highway and got on one human haulier after another to travel less than 50km while coming to the city from Dohazari," said Mohammad Saifuddin, who was walking near Karnaphuli Notun Bridge.

No goods-laden vehicle left or entered the city, causing a near-stalemate in Chattogram port.

Chattogram Port Authority Secretary Omar Faruq said imported goods delivery through trucks and lorries had to be stopped.

However, semi-trailer trucks were not part of the strike, said the port official.



Protesters wave US national flags as they march from Chater Garden to the US consulate in Hong Kong yesterday, to call on the US to pressure Beijing to meet their demands and for Congress to pass a recently proposed bill that expresses support for the protest movement.

PHOTO: AFP

'Liberate' Hong Kong

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US Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Saturday urged China to exercise restraint in Hong Kong, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

Esper made his call in Paris as police in Hong Kong prevented protesters from blocking access to the airport but fired tear gas for a second night running in the densely populated district of Mong Kok.

Pockets of protest broke out in Kowloon over the harbour from the main island of Hong Kong last night, including in Prince Edward, close to Mong Kok.

Last month Trump suggested China should "humanely" settle the problem in Hong Kong before a trade deal is reached with Washington. Earlier Trump called the protests "riots" that were a matter for China to deal with.

The vandalism started in the evening. Police have responded to violence over 14 weeks with water cannon, rubber bullets and tear gas.

Several arrests were made.

Hong Kong returned to China under a "one country, two systems" formula that guarantees freedoms not enjoyed on the mainland. Many Hong Kong residents fear Beijing is eroding that autonomy.

FOMENTING UNREST
China denies the accusation of meddling and says Hong Kong is an internal affair. It has denounced the protests, accusing the United States and Britain of fomenting unrest, and warned of the damage to the economy.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam announced concessions this week aimed at ending the protests, including formally scrapping a hugely unpopular extradition bill, which ignited the unrest in June. Many protesters said it was too little, too late.

The bill would have allowed the extradition of people to mainland China to stand trial in courts controlled by the Communist Party.

Hong Kong has an independent judiciary dating back to British rule.

But the demonstrations have long since broadened into calls for democracy.

US legislation addressing China's actions in Hong Kong will be among the top priorities pushed by Senate Democrats when Congress returns to work after a recess next week, their leader, Senator Chuck Schumer, said on Thursday.

Schumer urged Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican who sets the floor agenda, to bring up a bipartisan bill that would require an annual justification of the special treatment afforded by Washington to Hong Kong, including special trade and business privileges, under the US Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992.

The legislation, called the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, would also mandate that officials in China and Hong Kong who have

undermined the city's autonomy are vulnerable to sanctions.

Protesters, in a petition handed to the US Consulate, urged that it be passed in full.

Joshua Wong, one of the leaders of the pro-democracy "Umbrella" movement five years ago, was re-arrested at the airport yesterday on return from Germany and the United States for breaching bail conditions, he said.

He had been charged with inciting and participating in an unauthorised assembly outside police headquarters on June 21 and released on bail.

"Preliminary legal advice suggested that the court had acknowledged and approved my trips to Germany and the US when it granted bail on August 30," he said in a statement. "Therefore, it is believed that there are some mistakes have been made on the bail certificate."

He said he thought he would be freed today.

Tangled up in trauma

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head, food and some compassion for her and her baby.

Following a court order, Tumpa, 13, and her son are now sheltered at the Rajshahi Safe Home -- a place for juvenile delinquents or victims without a safe place to stay.

There, the mother and son anxiously wait for the Bogura magistrate court to decide today who will get custody of her and her child.

Meanwhile, the minor mother has been subjected to physical and mental torture, blackmail, intimidation and social stigma of all kinds.

THE CASE VS REALITY
After the incident and an initial village arbitration, Tumpa's father filed a case on October 3.

According to the case statement, on April 15, 2018, Bakul entered her room and raped her around 4:30pm.

The case statement also alleged that Tumpa's grandfather, after witnessing the incident, blackmailed her saying he would tell the villagers about the rape if she did not have sex with him.

Both the neighbour and the grandfather raped her several times, the case statement claimed.

Tumpa gave her statement to the

magistrate's court on October 24, 2018, alleging that she had been raped by both men, who are now in jail awaiting trial, police said.

However, in a recent conversation with this correspondent Tumpa alleged that her father forced her to falsely implicate her grandfather in the case.

"My grandfather never raped me," Tumpa told this correspondent on August 17 at Dhunat Police Station premises.

"I accused my maternal grandfather when my aunt [maternal uncle's wife] and my father threatened to kill my mother, a garments worker in Dhaka, if I did not do so," she alleged.

Both Tumpa and her mother alleged that her maternal grandfather was implicated in the case because Tumpa's father was trying to avoid "charges of abduction".

Asked why her father may be charged with abduction, police said they have reasons to believe that Tumpa's father had developed a relationship with his brother-in-law's wife. He then took the woman and her child to a separate rented house, just 10 days before filing the case.

After he left with the woman,

Tumpa's grandfather had threatened him of filing an abduction case against him.

Asked, Tumpa's father admitted to the relationship and said his brother-in-law's wife convinced him that Tumpa's grandfather also raped her.

Speaking to this correspondent, the woman, however, refuted the allegations.

BEYOND THE CASE DOCUMENT
After the incident, Tumpa was sent away from her grandfather's home to her father's.

When her pregnancy was confirmed, her father initially tried to marry her off to Bakul.

An arbitration facilitated by the union parishad chairman was held between Tumpa and Bakul's families and where a marriage was agreed upon, on the condition that Tumpa's child's DNA matched with that of Bakul, Tumpa's father told this correspondent.

When Bakul's family found out that there may be involvement of the grandfather, they retracted from the marriage deal, he added.

After this, Tumpa's father decided to file a case accusing their neighbour and Tumpa's grandfather of raping

her.

WILL HER TRAUMA END?
After her son was born, Tumpa's father rented a house and confined both mother and child there.

"We had very little food and money. My paternal grandmother, who lived with us, constantly tortured me mentally, reprimanding me for getting raped and giving birth to a baby," she said.

On August 15, she fled to a relative's house, only to be apprehended by police and taken to Bogura magistrate's court, which had initially given the father the custody of Tumpa.

Sub-inspector of Dhunat Police Station Shahinur Rahman, investigation officer of the case, said, "We collected the DNA samples of the victim, the baby, and the two alleged rapists and sent those to Dhaka. The charge sheet will be submitted once all the DNA tests results arrive."

Regarding the grandfather's involvement, Public Prosecutor Ashequr Rahman Sujon said the rape survivor has the option to apply to provide a second statement to the court, but it would be better to do so after getting the DNA test results.

Calling Zia, Ershad presidents illegal

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of the High Court.

The PM made the remarks during a discussion on the condolence motion on late opposition leader HM Ershad and others in the Jatiya Sangsad.

"This is why General Ershad gave not only two houses but also many other benefits, including Tk 10 lakh in cash, to Khaleda," she said.

This is why the BNP did not hold trial of the Zia killing case at the time. After many years, maybe in 1991, Khaleda Zia blamed Ershad for the killing of her husband, the PM said.

Hasina said Justice Abdus Sattar was the BNP candidate in the 1981 presidential election. In fact, the then Army Chief General Ershad had made Sattar candidate.

In a foreign newspaper, Ershad announced Sattar as his candidate. But the Awami League raised objection to such a candidature and demanded the election be held in a fair manner for the sake of continuation of democracy, she said.

Noting that the HC declared the grabbing of power by Ziaur Rahman

and HM Ershad illegal, the PM said calling them president was illegal.

The obituary reference of the Parliament on HM Ershad, however, referred to him as the "former president", "successful statesman" and veteran politician.

Hasina said Ershad was an amicable person. About the Ershad regime, she said if the 1986 parliamentary election was held in a free and fair manner, Ershad would not have become controversial.

Almost no party joined the 1988 parliamentary election and he was forced to step down amid a popular movement in 1990, said Sheikh Hasina.

She said the BNP also held such an election on February 15, 1996, when Khaleda Zia was in power. Almost no party joined that election. Though Khaleda announced herself as the elected prime minister, she failed to stay in power in the face of people's movement, Hasina added.

"It means, no one can stay in power without the support and mandate of people."

She then thanked Raushan Ershad

for her role in the 2014 election which was boycotted by the BNP and several other parties.

"Although many quarters still try to raise questions about the election in 2014... If there was no participation of the people in the polls, we could not have stayed in power."

Welcoming BNP MPs for joining parliament after being elected in the 2018 general election, the PM said the democratic trend cannot be strengthened without a strong opposition in parliament.

Awami League MP Mohammed Nasim said, "It was very unfortunate that when he [Ershad] was in power, he sheltered and patronised self-confessed killers of Bangabandhu, following the path of his predecessor Ziaur Rahman."

The Jatiya Party was part of the AL-led grand alliance in 2008 and 2018 national elections.

After the 2014 polls, Ershad was made the special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The JP became the opposition and Raushan became the leader of the opposition.

North Korea says typhoon killed five

REUTERS, Seoul

A typhoon pounded North Korea on Saturday, killing five people and injuring three, state news agency KCNA reported yesterday.

Typhoon Lingling, one of the most powerful typhoons to have battered South Korea, moved to North Korea on Saturday, raising concerns about a crop damage in the impoverished country, which frequently suffers food shortages.

"Crops fell down, (were) inundated or buried in 46,200 hectares of farmland," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said on Saturday.

"Active work to eradicate the aftermath is now under way in the afflicted areas," it said.

North Korea held an emergency meeting on Friday under the guidance of leader Kim Jong Un, who berated senior officials for being "helpless against the typhoon, unaware of its seriousness and seized with easygoing sentiment," KCNA reported on Saturday.

Fire at EC office

Source of fire yet to be ascertained

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out in the basement of the Election Commission building in the capital around 11:00pm last night.

Using 10 fire engines, firefighters managed to douse the blaze within an hour and half with no reports of casualties.

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials said the fire originated at the basement, which used to store different electoral materials, including Electronic Voting Machine.

Speaking to reporters at the spot, the officials said the cause of the fire could not be detected immediately.

The fire incident took place at a time when the EC had been facing several audits by authorities concerned.

The EC formed a probe body to investigate the fire incident, which was asked to submit a report within three days.

It was not

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being attacked, Kalam said, quoting the driver.

Contacted, Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said it was not a "mere accident".

"Even if we say that the first incident was an accident, the second one is a premeditated murder," he added.

The tragic incident happened around 9:00pm on Saturday, when Alvi, along with 15-20 of his friends, tried to intercept the bus in Uttara's Switch Gate area, said Tapan Chandra Saha, officer-in-charge of the police station.

"As they tried to stop the bus, the driver ran them over to avoid being caught," he added.

A number of witnesses said they saw the bus trying to speed away as some people were chasing it while some others were attempting to board it through the door and windows. At one stage, the Victor Classic bus hit another parked bus, crushing the two.

Locals then caught the driver, beat him up and handed him over to the police.

The family filed a case against the driver and his two assistants yesterday.

Earlier on Saturday evening, family members held a meeting with the representatives of Victor Classic to strike a deal on the compensation for the death of Parvez.

At the meeting at a neighbour's house, the family demanded Tk 20 lakh, but the operator turned down the proposal and asked the family to do "whatever they can", said Rumana Sultana, widow of Parvez.

After the failed negotiation, Rumana went to the police station to file a case while Alvi along with his friends went shopping for the Quikhwani of his father scheduled for Sunday, she said.

"My house is near the bus stop. The bus driver and helper might have recognised Alvi. That is why they tried to kill my son," she said.

With critical fractures to his waist, Alvi is taking treatment at the Trauma Centre in Shyamoli.

"I have no money now and I don't know how to pay for my son's treatment," said the mother.

JP moves

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Quader will act as the chairman as per the directive of our late founder chairman HM Ershad," Ranga said.

Ranga said there are some leaders in every party who want to fish in troubled waters, and create divisions for their personal gains. "But we've been able to remove the division and we're now united."

A day after Quader's letter for officially recognising him as the leader of the opposition, JP Senior Co-chairman Raushan on Wednesday wrote to the Speaker not to accept it, exposing a fresh conflict in the party.

In the letter sent to the Speaker, Raushan said Quader sent the letter without any decision at the party forum and meeting of the JPPP.

On Thursday, a group of JP leaders declared Raushan its chairperson, putting the party on the verge of a split.

At a press conference on July 18, Ranga formally declared Ershad's younger brother Quader the party chairman.

Ranga said before his death, Ershad through an organisational instruction announced that Quader would be the party chairman in his absence.

Four days later, Raushan in a statement said Quader could not be declared the party chairman without any decision at the party forum.

BNP PICKS RITA FOR RANGPUR-3
The BNP yesterday picked Rita Rahman, chief of People's Party of Bangladesh, a component of the 20-party alliance, as its candidate to contest the Rangpur-3 by-polls scheduled for October 5.

Party Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi made the announcement

at a press conference at the party's Nayapalton central office yesterday.

He said Rita is the daughter of BNP founder member Moshir Rahman Jadu Mia.