

## Khoka's body

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presence of Bangladeshis living in the US, Ishraque said.

"We've completed all necessary preparations and received all the travel documents to take my father's body to Bangladesh along with my mother," he said.

Quoting BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Sayrul Kabir Khan, the party chairperson's media wing member, said several janazas, including one in front of South Plaza of the National Parliament at 11:00am, would be held in the capital.

Khoka's body would be kept at the Central Shaheed Minar at noon for people to pay homage to the freedom fighter, he said, adding that after Zuhr prayers, the body would be taken to BNP central office, and later would be kept at Nagar Bhaban around 3:00pm.

After the last namaj-e-janaza at Dhupkhola field, he said to be buried beside the graves of his parents at Jurain graveyard as per his last wish.

Bir Pratik Sadique Hossain Khoka, died at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York on Monday. He was admitted to the cancer centre on October 18.

Khoka had been suffering from kidney cancer since 2014 and went to the US in May of that year for treatment.

Khoka left behind his wife Ismat Ara, two sons and a daughter.

## Crucial talks

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recruiting agencies. Under the G2G Plus deal signed in 2016, the migration cost was supposed to be below Tk 40,000, but it went up to Tk 4 lakh.

Current Malaysian cabinet, led by Mahathir Mohammad, formed an independent committee to streamline policies on foreign workers and devise a mechanism to eliminate corruption in the recruitment system.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) earlier urged the Malaysian counterpart for a transparent, low-cost and sustainable process of recruiting labour.

BAIRA Secretary General Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman said they wanted a system where all capable recruiting agencies can operate.

However, there should be a strong monitoring mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability in every stage of migration, he added.

Shariful Hasan, head of BRAC Migration Programme, said the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia had always been tainted by malpractices. Powerful lobbies and layers of illegal brokers in both the countries always made the migration cost high.

For example, in 2006-08 migration cost was set at Tk 84,000, but it went up to Tk 2 lakh. More than four lakh Bangladeshis migrated to Malaysia during that time.

"The migration cost must not be more than a worker's three-month salary," Hasan told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh government must make sure that the migrants pay recruitment fees to the agency only through bank. Malaysian government must enforce a rule that the employers pay salaries only via bank, he said.

Hasan said the conditions and salaries of jobs should be very clear in the job contracts. Those should be clearly explained to the workers before they leave for Malaysia. The deal to be signed should include the means of how the disputes, if there are, would be addressed.

"We want everything transparent, and not any labour exploitation," he said.

## HC stays

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and Shawkat on August 20, September 1 and 5 in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam came up with the orders and rules after hearing of three petitions filed by the ACC on Monday challenging the lower court orders.

Khurshid Alam Khan appeared for the ACC and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state.

During hearing of the petitions, Khurshid told the HC that there are specific allegations against the three accused of committing a forgery in preparing the design of FR Tower and issuing certificates for constructing the building and violating the Building Code rules.

The accused cannot be granted bail in the sensational case due to gravity of the offence, he said, adding that Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court gave them bail without considering the gravity of the offence.

The lawyer urged the HC to cancel the lower court orders.

He said the accused would have to surrender before the trial court within seven days after receiving the certified copies of the HC order.

The lawyer added that all the accused were now out of jail following the trial court orders.

A devastating fire in the 23-storey building left at least 25 people dead and 73 others injured in March.

Later, the ACC lodged the case with Banani Police Station against the accused on charges of forgery over the design of FR Tower and violating the Building Code rules in constructing the high-rise building.

# US wants to make big investment

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to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, civil society members, as well as visit the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

"The point that I always underscored is that it's going to be very attractive to foreign direct investors to strengthen Bangladeshi institutions, and so the free press; which has investigative journalism; the rule of law, judiciary and well-functioning civil society," she said after meeting Abdul Momen at the foreign ministry.

These are the forces that should play their role to advance Bangladesh, she said, adding, "All of that comes together and makes Bangladesh an advanced society."

Momen said Alice showed US interest in big investments in Bangladesh under the IPS -- a vision of the Trump administration to improve connectivity between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Three major components of it are economy, governance and security.

"We said we want to be partners and welcome investments in energy and infrastructure projects," he told journalists separately at his office.

Momen sought strong support from the US in repatriation of the Rohingyas.

In response, Alice said they were the biggest donor to address the humanitarian crisis and that the US wants to engage the Asean countries in ensuring Rohingya repatriation.

Alice confirmed that the US is engaged and fully supportive

of Bangladesh and stands beside Bangladesh in addressing the crisis, he added.

Regarding relocating 100,000 Rohingyas to Bhashanchar, Momen told Alice that the government won't force them to go there, but the plan was to ensure safety as there are risks of landslides in the crowded camps in Cox's Bazar.

Alice told Momen that the US is concerned over the education of the Rohingya children.

"We talked on how efficiently Bangladesh can run the Rohingya camps and provide education and reduce incentives for radicalisation," Alice said.

She added that the US wants to help the host community who are facing socio-economic burdens due to the existence of some one million Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar.

Momen requested Alice to repatriate the killer of Bangabandhu, Rashed Chowdhury, who is now in the USA.

In response, Alice wanted the documents of the judgement, Momen said.

Alice also raised concerns over the Digital Security Act that could hurt the freedom of expression, specifically the freedom of the press.

In response, Momen said that it was meant to prevent social unrest that may have been caused by falsehood on social media.

"I told her that we need regulations to ensure discipline in society," Alice, however, told him they differ

on the matter.

The US diplomat congratulated Bangladesh for the National Action Plan to combat human trafficking and signing Palermo Protocol meant to prevent it, but stressed on prosecuting the criminals.

She mentioned that cooperation between the two countries on counterterrorism has grown substantially after the Holey Artisan terrorist attack in Dhaka. The US will continue the cooperation to help detect terrorists and prevent terrorist attacks, Alice said.

She said the US looks forward to the under Bay of Bengal Initiative to expand ties of military cooperation -- both on humanitarian assistance and disaster response as well as maritime domain awareness.

The two countries are also continuing conversation on defense cooperation as Bangladesh wants to buy advanced military hardware from the US, but that requires signing two foundational deals.

The deals -- General Security of Military Information Agreement and the Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement -- are meant to protect information on military technology and allow the US and partner nations' forces to procure and pay for common types of supplies and services, US officials said earlier.

"We have 14 million dollars in military assistance. We are talking with Bangladesh authorities on how best the fund can be utilised for Bangladesh's security," she said.

# Robi may go to int'l body

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our shareholders may exercise the option," said the CEO.

Currently, Malaysia-based Axiata holds 68.7 percent controlling stake of Robi while Indian Bharti Airtel holds 25 percent and NTT DOCOMO of Japan 6.3 percent.

Following an audit in 2016, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) claimed that Robi had owed Tk 867.23 crore for dodging revenue share, taxes and late fees accumulated until December 2014 since its inception in 1997.

The BTRC on July 31 last year issued a notice asking Robi Axiata to pay Tk 867.23cr as dues.

Later on, Robi file the appeal with a lower court in Dhaka seeking an injunction on the realisation of the money by the BTRC but the court turned down the petition.

Robi then moved the appeal to the High Court in October this year.

The HC initially fixed November 3 for hearing the appeal, but it was later shifted to November 14.

Mahtab said they are interested to settle the matter out of the court and willing to show the respect to the decisions taken at the meeting with Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy on October 21.

But the telecom regulator didn't comply with Joy's directive, he said.

At that meeting, a decision was made that Robi will have to deposit Tk 50 crore in BTRC's account to review the audit report by a review committee and no case proceeding will move forward, he said.

"We are always ready to deposit for the review as we know that the claim in the BTRC's audit report will not sustain eventually," said Mahtab, the first Bangladeshi CEO of a foreign-

owned mobile operator.

He said based on the audit claim, the BTRC had halted issuing all kinds of no objection certificates (NOCs) to Robi since July this year.

These NOCs are directly linked to our new investments, network maintenance and upgradation, he said, adding that such restrictions have made it difficult for them to offer quality service to the subscribers.

"As we can't maintain our network and can't increase the capacity, our service quality starts deteriorating," said the Robi CEO.

Robi had a plan to invest \$248 million in 2019, but about \$150 million may remain unused at the end of the year, Mahtab said, adding that shareholders might slash their next annual budget.

As of September 2019, Robi has 4.82 crore active customers with a market share of 29.49 percent.

# Iran to restart enrichment

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Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"We support the preservation of this deal."

At the same time, Peskov said Moscow understood Tehran's concerns over the "unprecedented and illegal sanctions" imposed by Washington.

The move is the fourth announced by Iran since it began responding to Washington's abandonment of its commitments.

Iran has repeatedly warned the remaining parties to the deal -- Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia -- that the agreement can only be rescued if they help it circumvent US sanctions.

European governments have strived to come up with a mechanism that would allow foreign firms to continue

to do business with Iran without incurring US penalties.

But to Iran's mounting frustration, their efforts have so far failed to have any significant impact.

Rouhani stressed that Iran remained committed to efforts to save the 2015 agreement despite its phased suspension of some of its commitments.

"The fourth phase, like the three previous ones, is reversible," he said.

"We are committed to all the behind-the-scenes negotiations we have with some countries for a solution."

"Over the next two months, we will negotiate more."

Rouhani said Iran wanted to return to a situation in which "we can easily sell our oil, we can easily use our money in banks."

If that were achieved, "we will

completely go back to the previous situation."

The European Union warned Monday that its continued support for the deal depended on Tehran fulfilling its commitments.

Maja Kocijancic, spokeswoman for EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini, said the bloc "remains committed" to the deal but "our commitment... depends on full compliance by Iran."

"We have continued to urge Iran to reverse such steps without delay and to refrain from other measures that would undermine the nuclear deal."

On July 1, Iran said it had increased its stockpile of enriched uranium to beyond a 300-kilo maximum set by the deal, and a week later, it announced it had exceeded a 3.67-percent cap on the purity of its uranium stocks.

# Anti-drug crackdown

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The report revealed how the Bangladeshi authorities have failed to investigate deaths of people killed in alleged "gunfights".

The 466 suspected extrajudicial executions last year alone marked a threefold increase from a year earlier and the highest in a single year in decades, according to the report.

Amnesty examined hundreds of cases of suspected extrajudicial executions carried out by the Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies in anti-narcotic operations and chose to document seven cases in detail by interviewing 40 people, including witnesses, relatives and family members of the victims, and local people. The interviews were carried out in November last year.

"The 'war on drugs' has led to the death of at least one person per day. Wherever there has been involvement of the Rapid Action Battalion, it appears they have acted outside of the law, the victims were not arrested, let alone put on trial. Some were forcibly disappeared from their homes and their relatives only saw them next as bullet-riddled corpses in the morgue," said Dinushika Dissanayake, deputy South Asia director of Amnesty International.

"The Bangladeshi authorities must put an end to these killings immediately. The 'anti-drugs' operations have spread terror in some of the country's poorest neighbourhoods, where people fear the slightest suspicion of being

involved in drug abuse may lead to their loved ones being subjected to another alleged extrajudicial execution," she said.

Instead of launching proper investigations into these killings, the authorities allegedly sought to fabricate evidence to support their "gunfights" or "crossfire" claims, the report says.

In interviews with Amnesty, supposed "witnesses" revealed that they had not seen the killings but were asked by the police to provide fabricated statements supporting the police version of the deaths as having taken place in alleged "gunfights" or "crossfire".

In all the cases investigated by the graft watchdog, the victims were first subjected to apparent enforced disappearances, lasting anywhere from one day to a month and a half, before their bodies were eventually discovered.

In one case, relatives of one of the victims claimed to have bribed police in exchange for the victim's release, but to no avail, the report said.

It said Bangladeshi officials have routinely claimed that the victims of apparent extrajudicial executions were caught up in a fire fight, where the suspects fired the first shot at the members of law enforcement agencies, forcing them to resort to lethal force.

Amnesty spoke to supposed "witnesses" who said that they were involuntarily taken to the crime scene only after the killings had taken place.

"We did not see anything," one

such "witness" told Amnesty. "They called and took me with them to the location around 5:30am and asked me to witness what they were taking from there. I only saw a motorbike and nothing else."

At least five witnesses interviewed by the rights watchdog said they were involuntarily taken to the spot after the incident and they could not refuse police requests to act as witnesses fearing harsh consequences.

"Security forces have taken signatures, names, phone numbers and personal details of the witnesses," referring a number of case studies.

All the victims of the supposed "gunfights" appear to have been forcibly disappeared by the police and the Rab prior to their deaths, the report said.

It said when relatives sought information of their whereabouts, the authorities either denied they were in their custody or refused to say where they are.

Amnesty called for the Bangladesh authorities to carry out a prompt, impartial, independent and effective investigation into the wave of apparent extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations committed by the police and Rab as part of its ongoing anti-drugs operations.

"These killings have taken place in the wider context of a blanket prohibition of drugs under which the government has deliberately punished and violently attacked people, particularly those from the most marginalised communities," said Dissanayake.

# Justice still eludes santals

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than 100 accused Santals like Tatu have to borrow about Tk 500 to Tk 600 per month to cover legal expenses, including travelling to court.

Sufal Hembrom, 65, from Joypurpara village said, "Police and mill authorities filed eight cases against me after the eviction. Because of lack of work and shortage of money, it has become very difficult for me to appear before court every five days."

**STATUS OF THE CASES**

Zakirul Islam, sub-inspector of Gobindaganj police station and also the investigation officer of the cases, said 12 cases were filed before and after the clash -- eight against the evicted Santals and Bangalees and four against police and mill staffers.

He said that charge sheets in only three cases and final reports in four had been submitted so far due to a lack of evidence.

One of the cases that police claimed lacked evidence was for attempted rape. A Santal woman filed it against three mill security guards on June 19, 2017.

Meanwhile, Gaibandha's Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) dropped the names of 11 prime accused from the charge sheet in a case filed by one Thomas Hembrom, alleged the members of the indigenous community.

These 11 include former MP Abul Kalam Azad, former managing director of the Rangpur Sugar Mill Abdul Awal, its former general manager Abdul Mazid, former UNO of the upazila Abdul Hannan, and Chairman of the Katabari Union Parishad Rezaul Karim Rafik.

The charge sheet also did not have the names of any police officials as accused, even though a video footage of the attack showed their involvement. Two cops were also suspended in 2017, following a police investigation.

An investigation by a judicial magistrate also found the involvement of three policemen in the attack.

Mohammad Abdul Hai Sarker, assistant superintendent of police (PBI-Gaibandha), said, "We did not get any evidence of involvement of some of the people who the Santal

mentioned as the prime accused in their case statement. Therefore, we dropped their names from the charge sheet."

He added that the video footage did not provide "sufficient evidence" and they did not find witnesses to give statements against the suspended police officials.

Santal leaders have presented a no-confidence petition to the Gobindaganj Senior Judicial Magistrate Court on September 04 against the PBI's charge sheet and the next hearing on the petition is on December 12, according to court sources.

**NO REHABILITATION YET**

Santal leaders claimed that, at a meeting held in December 2017, government high-ups had promised to rehabilitate them to their ancestral land in Shahebganj sugarcane farm.

"Even after three years, there is no sign of fulfilling our demand from the government side," said Philimon.

Meanwhile, at least 300 evicted Santal families went back to the farm in October and started living there in make-shift houses and tents, defying the threat of eviction by local administration and mill authorities.

**ORIGIN OF THE DISPUTE**

During the Pakistan regime, the government had acquired 1,840 acres of land at Shahebganj for the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, which subsequently set up Rangpur (Mahimaganj) Sugar Mills between 1954 and 1957.

In 1962, the then DC office, on behalf of land owners, who were the forefathers of the evicted Santals and Bangalees, signed an agreement with the corporation stating that the land was acquired for cultivation of sugarcane by the mill authorities and that the corporation would return the land to the government if it was used for any other purpose.

However, the deal was violated by the mill authorities as they leased out most of the land in 2004, 2009 and 2015 for cultivation of other crops.

Backed by some politicians, the Santals reportedly started building houses on the land around July 2016 after they learned about the mill authorities' breach of contract, due to which the clash broke out in November of that year.

source -- such as from power plants and oil drilling.

Professor Wu said: "I'm extremely excited about the potential of this discovery to change the game. Climate change is an urgent problem and we can help reduce carbon dioxide emissions while also creating an alternative fuel."

Cameron Hepburn, professor of environmental economics at the University of Oxford, who was not involved in the research, said an artificial leaf could be an interesting way of pulling carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

"Key is cost, scalability and their impacts on other key social objectives like the Sustainable Development Goals," he said.

"If valuable products can be made from carbon dioxide, this could lower the costs of climate change mitigation in the long run."

# Artificial leaf

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"The next step is to partner with industry companies to scale it up with a system engineering of flow cell for the production of liquid fuels. More efficient artificial leaves can be developed along the lines with industry partners," he said.

He says it will take several years before the process is commercialised.

The power is created by a chemical reaction involving four substances -- glucose, copper acetate, sodium hydroxide and sodium dodecyl sulfate -- which are added to water.

In order to start the reaction, scientist heated the water to a specific temperature, blew carbon dioxide through it and shone a beam of white light onto it.

Next, researchers want to increase the amount of ethanol produced and commercialise the process by converting carbon dioxide from

# Dismay as US starts

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rationale in 2017 that the accord would disadvantage US businesses.

"It was America that would suffer the straitjacket," Pompeo told the Fox Business network. "It would be quintessentially unfair to the American people and to the American workers."

Pompeo said in a statement that the United States would advocate a "realistic and pragmatic model" that included renewable energy but preserved a role for fossil fuels.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who unsuccessfully tried to persuade Trump to stay in the accord named for his nation's capital, lamented the decision.

"We regret this and it makes the Franco-Chinese partnership on climate and biodiversity even more necessary," the French presidency said as Macron visited China, the world's largest emitter of the greenhouse gases blamed for climate change.

Beijing also expressed "regret" over Washington's decision ahead of the planned signing Wednesday of a joint document on climate by President Xi Jinping and Macron.

"We hope the US can take more responsibility, and do more to contribute a driving force to the multilateral cooperation process, instead of adding negative energy," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang.

Russia warned that the US withdrawal seriously undermined the Paris accord.

"Without the largest economy in the world, it's very, very hard to talk about any kind of climate agreement," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

The United States, the number-two emitter, is still planning to attend this month's COP climate negotiations in

Spain, according to a State Department official.

Pompeo in his statement pointed to a 13 percent US reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 to 2017 even as the economy grew.

But Trump, who took office in 2017, has pledged to turn back environmental regulations as states such as California and New York try to take stronger action on their own.

Trump has sought to block California from setting tighter standards on car emissions and moved to let states set their own standards on existing coal-fired power plants.

Robert Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that the Trump administration has "once again thumbed its nose at our allies, turned a blind eye to the facts and further politicized the world's greatest environmental challenge."

Former vice president-turned-climate champion Al Gore deplored Trump's decision -- but said that a new president could re-enter the Paris accord within 30 days.

The Paris accord set a goal of limiting temperature rises to well within two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial levels, a goal that scientists say is vital to check the worst damage from global warming such as increasing droughts, rising floods and intensifying storms.

Contrary to some predictions, Trump's decision did not trigger a domino effect of withdrawals by countries such as Brazil and Australia.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, an ideological ally of Trump, has belittled environmentalists but has held off on threats to withdraw from the Paris accord, with the European Union requiring adherence as a condition for a major trade deal.