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New malady for BNP

Leaders, grassroots allege poor leadership in Khaleda's absence

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

In the absence of its chairperson, Khaleda Zia, the unity within the BNP is almost in tatters, with some leaders tendering their resignation over growing differences with the top brass.

BNP vice chairman and former foreign minister M Morshed Khan has already handed in his resignation, while the party's standing committee member Lt General Mahbubur Rahman said he too did so two months ago.

Although they officially said they were stepping down from their posts due to personal reasons, speaking to the media on different occasions, both said otherwise.

They alleged that there was no democracy within the party and a number of senior leaders were aggrieved over the leadership of party acting chairman Tarique Rahman.

Lack of organisational activities and programmes demanding release of Khaleda Zia, not getting any party nominations, being unable to run their business without any hassle, and feeling devalued by the party's top leadership are the reasons that have led to the latest resignations, sources said.

A section of senior leaders has not been able to accept Tarique's leadership or his organisational decisions, which were made "ignoring the opinions of party leaders".

Some, however, think there are other important factors at play here.

"We should not expect politics to be in our favour all the time. There will be adverse situations. We have to face those. Those who resigned, did so on personal grounds and there is no ideological issue," Goyeshwar Chadra Roy,

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, flanked by Bollywood superstars Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif, along with Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan, at the opening ceremony of the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

MITHILA-FAHMI Take down their personal photographs

High Court to BTRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to immediately remove the personal and confidential photographs of media personality Rafiath Rashid Mithila and director Iftekhar Ahmed Fahmi from all news portals as well as social media.

The court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain in four weeks why their failure to regulate publishing personal and confidential information and pictures of people on news portals and social media should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the HC also asked them to show cause why they should not be directed to control the publishing of personal and confidential pictures and information of citizens on social media.

Secretaries to the ministries of home,

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Man arrested for killing pregnant wife, 2 children

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police yesterday arrested a man in connection with the murder of his six-month-pregnant wife and two children in Rangpur city.

The deceased are Asfia Aktar Ratna, 32, her three-year-old daughter Neha, and one-year-old son Nishat, said police.

The law enforcers arrested Abdur Razzak, 38, of Baharkasna area in the city on charge of the killing.

Deputy Police Commissioner (Crime) Kazi Muttaki Ibnu Minan of Rangpur Metropolitan Police said the woman and the children might have been strangled.

While walking by the house, a woman in the area looked through the window and saw Razzak, with a knife in his hand, standing beside the bodies lying on a bed around 11:00am, said police.

As the woman screamed, people in the area gathered and caught Razzak from the house.

Police recovered the bodies around 1:00pm and sent those to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for autopsies.

During primary interrogation, Razzak said he intended to kill himself with the knife but failed, said police.

The law enforcers suspect that family dispute might be one of the reasons

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43 killed in Delhi factory fire

AFP, New Delhi

At least 43 people were killed yesterday in a devastating fire that ripped through a bag factory in the cramped, congested old quarter of the Indian capital New Delhi, trapping scores of workers who were sleeping inside.

The blaze was the worst in Delhi since 59 movie-goers died in a cinema in 1997, with the city's poor planning and enforcement of building and safety regulations often responsible for such deadly incidents.

Tearful relatives spoke of receiving desperate calls from factory workers from around 5:00am pleading to be freed from the inferno in the dark, poorly lit premises in the commercial hub of Sadar Bazar.

The four-storey building was home to a series of manufacturing units producing items including schools bags and packing materials which only worsened the spread of the fire, officials said. Locals said the factory also made purses.

"Most of the casualties happened because of suffocation," witness Mohammed Khalil told AFP.

"After the fire, people didn't have any way to get out and I believe many were asleep and because of the smoke, they got suffocated."

No details were immediately available on the cause of the fire.

Outside a nearby hospital morgue, anxious relatives and friends gathered to identify the bodies.

Naushad Ahmad, was desperately looking for his friend who remained missing, unable to reach him on his mobile phone.

"I have been to the factory and this tragedy was waiting to happen," he told AFP.

"There was only one exit and entrance to the building, with all the electricity meters installed at the main door... People didn't get a chance to escape."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that the fire was "extremely horrific", as state and national authorities said they would offer financial assistance to the victims' families and to survivors.

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50 hurt as AL, BNP clash in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 50 people, including five policemen, were injured in a sporadic clash between supporters of the Awami League and the BNP on EB road in Sirajganj town yesterday.

Law enforcers fired 86 rounds of bullets in the air to take the situation under control. Additional law enforcers were also deployed in the district town to avoid further clashes, said police.

Abu Eusuf, additional superintendent of Sirajganj police, said the BNP men brought out a protest rally in the morning. When returning to their party office on EB road, the rally encountered with another which was led by Awami League lawmaker Habibe Millat Munna.

As soon as the rallies encountered, supporters of the two parties attacked each other, making a place a battle field, the police

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Man eats piece of art worth \$120,000

AFP, Miami



The move was bananas... or maybe the work was just too appealing.

A performance artist shook up the crowd at the Art Basel show in Miami Beach on Saturday when he grabbed a banana that had been duct-taped to a gallery wall and ate it.

The banana was, in fact, a work of art by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan titled "Comedian" and sold to a French collector for \$120,000.

In a video posted on his Instagram account, David Datuna, who describes himself as a Georgian-born American artist living in New York, walks up to the banana and pulls it off the wall with the duct tape attached.

"Art performance ... hungry artist," he said, as he peeled the fruit and took a bite. "Thank you, very good."

A few bystanders could be heard giggling before a flustered gallery official whisked him to an adjoining space for questioning.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

2 sent to jail for torturing two minors

UNB, Dhaka

A Pirojpur court yesterday sent two people to jail in connection with torturing two boys over alleged theft on Saturday.

Police arrested Khalilur Rahman, 65, and his son Mehedi Hasan, 27, of Bhandaria upazila, in connection with the incident.

Officer-in-Charge SM Maksudur Rahman of Bhandaria Police Station said they had tied Rakib, 9, and Hridoy, 11, up to a tree and beat them up.

They accused the boys of

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 9

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-15	12-45	3-45	5-19	7-00
JAMAAT 5-50	1-15	4-00	5-22	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

One held for raping step-daughter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested a man for allegedly raping his 13-year-old step-daughter in the capital's Jatrabari area.

Sub-inspector (SI) Komol Baral of Jatrabari Police Station said they arrested the accused, an auto-rickshaw driver, at Matuali in Jarabari.

Yesterday around 5:00am, while the girl was sleeping, the accused went to his daughter's room and allegedly raped her. The girl's mother was working outside at the time, police said.

When the mother returned around 9:00am, the girl began crying and narrated the incident to her.

she then filed a case with the police station.

The victim told police that around a month ago, Lokman took another attempt to rape her but failed.

At that time, he sought pardon from his wife promising not to repeat such thing again.

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A red flag flutters in the wind, while two labourers, without wearing any safety gear, work on top of an under-construction footbridge in Aminbazar on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday. The flag is supposed to warn pedestrians of the ongoing construction overhead, but little regard for safety is shown for the workers engaged in the construction itself.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

KHULNA-JASHORE JUTE MILL WORKERS Thousands to go on hunger strike tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Thousands of workers of nine state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jashore industrial belt yesterday vowed to launch an indefinite hunger strike from tomorrow demanding due salaries of two weeks and implementation of the wage commission.

Workers of Star, Platinum, Crescent, Alim, Eastern, Daulatpur and Khalishpur jute mills in Khulna and JJI and Carpeting jute mills in Jashore staged sit-in programmes in front of their respective factories around 9:30am.

They staged the demonstration to press home their 11-point demand. The other demands include cancellation of public-private ownership of the jute mills, and the payment of provident fund and gratuity for retired workers.

Anawar Parvez, 57, a worker of Crescent Jute mill who took part yesterday's demonstration, told The Daily Star that it was not possible for him to switch his job at this age on the one hand while the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation was not clearing his dues on the other.

Sahana Sarmin, president of Platinum workers Union, told The Daily Star that the government was yet to implement the wage commission though it was announced in 2015.

"Government paid due salaries of 12 weeks on December 6, but salaries of two weeks are still pending," she added.

Murad Hossain, former president of Crescent Jute Mill CBA, said, "The authorities always give assurance as part of their policy to keep the workers away from demonstration. "But this time, we won't go back," he added.

Some 30,600 workers work in the nine state-run jute mills in Khulna and Jashore.