

A section of people

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president to be able to brief him about the allegations in person, jurist Shahdeen Malik said in a statement on January 31 on behalf of the citizens.

Attached with the second letter, sent to the president on January 17, were copies of media reports on irregularities at the EC, the statement mentioned.
A group of lawyers later called for resignation of the election commissioner.

"Since they made the complaints to the president, I have nothing to say about it," Kabita said yesterday.
The commission had trained election officials in the past, and providing officials with training is nothing new.
"No one can say that providing training to election-related officials is illegal," she added.

Regarding the audit objection to the training expenditures, she said an audit objection did not necessarily mean there was corruption.
"Audit objections can be raised

against any institution that spends public money. Audits are done to see whether the money allocated was properly spent," she said.
In their second letter, the citizens cited a media report that said the EC officials embezzled at least Tk 11 crore from the training budget.
The report also said that 18 officials, including the chief election commissioner, several commissioners, and top EC officials, took at least Tk 3 crore of the Tk 11 crore.

In their first letter sent to the president on December 14, 2020, the citizens said members of the commission, under the leadership of KM Nurul Huda, indulged in misconduct and irregularities, including that of taking Tk 2 crore for being "special speakers" at training programmes ahead of the 11th national election and the fifth upazila elections.

In response, KM Nurul Huda on December 24 said the allegations were "false and ill-motivated".

He plotted terror attack

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Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of CTC unit, told The Daily Star yesterday that a case has been filed against Saif Rahman at the Airport Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

"The case is currently under investigation and we are checking whether any other Bangladeshi nationals have engaged in militant activities after joining him," he said.

On Wednesday, CTC submitted a remand prayer in court for Saif's interrogation and the court set February 8 for a hearing on the remand.

According to investigators, born in 1997 in Bangladesh, Saif completed his O-levels in 2014 from European Standard School in Dhaka. He later completed A-levels from Oxford International School. Then on February 7, 2015 he went to France at the age of 18.

In 2016, Saif graduated from the University of Cergy-Pontoise, France and started part-time work in the university administration.

CTC sources said Saif planned to travel to areas controlled by the IS in Iraq and Syria in 2020. But French law enforcement detained him before he could leave for Syria and put him in a detention centre for around two months, they said.

The FIR filed against Saif quoted the translation of the French document, which said youths who failed to go to

IS-dominated areas often conducted terror attacks inspired by the outfit. As the presence of Saif in France became a terror threat, he needs to be expelled, the document said.

He was later expelled from France by the country's court, added the FIR.

A high-placed CTC official, requesting anonymity, said the French law enforcement agency found evidence of Saif's militant activities and connection with the international militant outfit after analysing his digital devices. CTC DC Saiful Islam said they have seized Saif's laptop and cell phone.

"We are suspecting that he might have some communication with local militant outfits. We will send the digital devices for forensic test now so that we can get details of his connections," he added.

This is not the first time that a Bangladeshi tried to go to Syria or Iraq to join an international militant outfit.

On January 23, CTC unit arrested university teacher Minhaj Hossain, 38, who allegedly went to Turkey and then Syria in September 2020 to join international militant outfit Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

Failing to join HTS, Minhaj returned to Bangladesh after a three-month stay in Turkey and Syria, and then tried to communicate with Neo JMB to conduct subversive activities in the country, said CTC officials.

Gambia not eligible

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Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The objection was submitted to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the top UN Court, on January 20, 2021, more than a week before the military took control of Myanmar, when Aung San Suu Kyi was de facto leader of the Southeast Asian country.

"The Republic of the Union of Myanmar filed preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the Court and the admissibility of the Application, and whereas a signed copy of those preliminary objections was immediately transmitted to the other Party," according to an order signed by the ICJ on January 28.

The Court set May 20, 2021, as the deadline within which The Gambia may present a written statement of its observations and submissions on the preliminary objections raised by Myanmar. The content of the objection, however, has not been made public by the ICJ.

Asked about the significance of the preliminary objections raised by Myanmar, Dhaka University Law Professor Dr Mizanur Rahman said this is a procedural and technical issue raised by Myanmar, questioning if the ICJ is ever eligible to conduct the trial on the crimes committed.

"Now, The Gambia has to place its arguments about why the ICJ is eligible to conduct the trial. Only if the arguments withstand, the trial can start," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Such objections are often raised because it's possible that they may

result in the Court declining to rule on the substantive issues of a case, according to the New York-based Global Justice Centre (GJC).

It said justice for the Rohingya genocide could be delayed for a year due to Myanmar's objections.

He said that, however, the fact that the Myanmar military took control of the country will not hamper the justice process.

Some 750,000 Rohingya refugees, mostly women and children, fled Myanmar and crossed into Bangladesh after the Myanmar military launched a crackdown on the minority Muslim community since August 2017.

Nearly 24,000 Rohingyas were killed, according to a report by the Ontario International Development Agency. The Gambia's case also focused on Myanmar's security forces' so-called "clearance operations" in 2016 and 2017 against the Rohingya community.

In response to case, the ICJ in January 2020 issued provisional measures, requiring Myanmar to take certain actions to protect the Rohingya including preventing genocidal acts, ensuring that military, police and other forces within its control do not commit genocidal acts, and preserve all evidence of genocidal acts.

The ICJ also asked Myanmar to report every six months to the Court on the steps it has taken to comply with the measures. In September last year, Canada and the Netherlands also announced formally joining The Gambia's legal bid to hold Myanmar accountable over allegations of Rohingya genocide.

Tarique

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Later, the case was filed by Shahjahan Biswas, former commander of Muktiyoddha Sangsad at Narail's Kalia upazila.

Tarique, who has been living in London since September 2008, was earlier convicted and sentenced in four other cases.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 awarded him life imprisonment in two cases filed in connection with the deadly grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

In February the same year, Tarique was sentenced to 10 years in jail by another Dhaka court in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. Besides, he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by the High Court in a money laundering case in 2016.

Man held

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about the incident, he took her to the police station to file the case. Sabdar harassed her before in various ways including giving indecent proposals, the OC added.

Meanwhile, in Rajshahi, police arrested Moin Uddin Azad, 42, an assistant station master of Rajshahi Railway Station in connection with a rape case yesterday.

He was arrested from the city's Seroil area in the early hours after the police found his links into the rape case after 17 days of investigation, Nibarun Chandra Burman, officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station, said.

On January 18, a woman, 25, filed the rape case with the police station.

According to her case statement, the woman became known to the railway official while commuting on the railway and he used to talk to her on messengers.

The railway official Azad offered her a job in exchange for Tk 8 lakh and she paid him an advance of Tk 2 lakh.

On January 17, Azad invited her to his home on plea for giving her some books that might help her in the recruitment tests and raped her.

Azad also threatened her of dire consequences if she speaks out about the rape, she alleged in her case.

The OC said Azad denied her involvement in the case, but police found grounds for arresting him.

Our correspondents from Rajshahi and Benapole contributed to the report

BB withdraws

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Shah Alam did not respond to a request for comment from The Daily Star.

Halder misappropriated loans of Tk 10,200 crore from the NBFIs and laundered the money to Canada, Singapore and India, using 30 organisations, owned by him and his associates.

The allegation of embezzlement against him surfaced after the Anti-Corruption Commission launched an enquiry into the wealth of illegal casino owners last year.

Halder, who is now in Canada, embezzled Tk 2,500 crore from International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFS), Tk 2,200 crore from FAS Finance, Tk 3,000 crore from Peoples' Leasing and Tk 2,500 crore from Reliance Finance.

Shah Alam supervised the non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) since 2013 when he was appointed as general manager of the DFIM, which is responsible to make policies and monitor those.

He promoted as an executive director in 2017 and was appointed to supervise NBFIs once again.

In the confessional statement, Rashedul Haque, also a former managing director of ILFS, said Shah Alam was given Tk 2 lakh per month to hide the scam.

Reliance Finance and ILFS gave Tk 5 lakh to Tk 7 lakh to the central bank's inspectors when they inspected the NBFIs, he said.

HC issues 3 new orders to reduce it

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Mohammad Ali came up with order during the hearing of a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) in February 2019 seeking necessary directives on the authorities concerned to stop air pollution in the capital.

The bench also ordered the authorities concerned to submit separate reports to it after complying with the directives in 30 days.

Earlier in the day, the two city corporations submitted two compliance reports to the HC bench saying that they were facing a shortage of vehicles and water from Dhaka Wasa for spraying water on streets.

According to the Air Quality Index, monitored by Department of Environment's (DoE) Clean Air and Sustainable Environment project, the average AQI in Dhaka was 117.4 in

October and 194 in November last year.

An AQI value between 0 and 50 is considered satisfactory. Air pollution poses little or no risk at such levels.

A value between 151 and 200 means everyone, especially a member of sensitive groups, is likely to experience health effects.

During the hearing of the same petition on November 24 last year, the HC observed that the air pollution level in Dhaka was very alarming and the people's right to life, one of their fundamental rights, might be compromised if pollution could not be controlled.

On January 13 last year, another HC bench had ordered the government to reduce air pollution in and around the capital and asked the DoE to shut illegal brick kilns in five districts, including Dhaka.

The bench, led by Justice FRM

Nazmul Ahasan, on that day had asked the authorities concerned to seize those vehicles which were emitting black smoke beyond the permissible limit in Dhaka city.

The court in its directives had said appropriate steps should be taken to stop burning of tyres and recycling of vehicles' batteries without the approval from the DoE.

It asked the authorities concerned to take steps to ensure that all market owners or shopkeepers keep their daily waste in a safe trash bin. The waste must be dumped in the designated areas before the closure of shops or markets.

The HC banned plying of particular vehicles, whose economic life has expired, on roads in the capital.

Lawyer Manzill Murshid appeared for the writ petitioner, while Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Basher represented the government.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Bank (বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক) recruitment. It includes the bank's logo, address (Dhaka), and details of a recruitment drive for 10121 positions. The advertisement lists various job categories, eligibility criteria, and application procedures. It also includes a table with recruitment details for different job categories and a list of application steps.

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Earth

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Binocular Telescope, or LBT, that suggested 2020 SO was not an asteroid.
Nasa eventually confirmed that the object was not in fact any asteroid, but was a Centaur rocket booster from the 1960s that likely made its way into space on the 1966's Surveyor 2 mission but failed to land on the Moon.

World faces

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VACCINE RACE
The novel coronavirus - known as SARS-CoV-2 - has killed 2.268 million people worldwide since it emerged in China in late 2019, according to Johns Hopkins University of Medicine.
Israel is currently far ahead of the rest of the world on vaccinations per head of population, followed by the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Bahrain, the United States and then Spain, Italy and Germany.