

Tikka Khan

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issued some new directives authorising banking transactions for the purchase of industrial raw materials for running of mills and also for bona fide personal withdrawals of up to 1,000 rupees. Relevant government offices were directed to remain open for the purpose of supplying fertiliser and fuel to power pumps.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO AL
During the non-cooperation movement the whole government machinery in East Pakistan was in liaison with the Awami League to ensure a modicum of continuity in their day-to-day functioning. Ninety-eight representatives of the Coordination Council of Associations- Unions of the Public Employees of Pakistan, after an emergency meeting on March 8, issued a press release formally pledging their allegiance to Awami League.

The radio station in Dhaka began broadcasting at 8:30am by airing Bangabandhu's March 7 rally's speech. Other stations in the then East Pakistan followed suit.

Citing a member of the Indian diplomatic mission in Dhaka, a New York Times report said, "Gandhi at the height of his popularity during the struggle against British rule in India was never able to get more than 1 or 2 per cent of Government workers to go out on strike. Here every body has quit." | The Political Tidal Wave That Struck East Pakistan, May 2, 1971

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She could

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The girl was behind her mother when the buses -- of N Mullick Paribahan and Aram Paribahan -- crushed her mother while competing to make U-turn at the intersection, said Jane Alam Jahid, a Red Crescent member who was volunteering to manage traffic there.

As the gap between the vehicles narrowed, Parveen was caught between the buses and collapsed on the ground only after one of the drivers reversed, he said.

With critical injuries, she was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy, Bachchu Mia, in-charge of police outpost at the hospital, said.

Mamun-or-Rashid, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said they seized the two buses and detained one of the drivers from the spot. Another driver is on the run.

I did not do anything wrong: Kishore

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condition to go home.
I did not realise how grim his condition was. When I saw him in person on the evening of March 6, the realisation set in -- even walking and moving was painful for Kishore.

Every footfall hurts, his knees ache, there's pain in his hands, neck and back. These are the results of planned torture. Even though the pain has dulled, he is still deeply worried about his ear. I told him, he must shave his beard and stand tall again. He must get well soon and start working. He must draw cartoons and sketches again.

He gazed intently as he listened and then murmured, "Life... I had drawn many sketches of Mushtaq Bhai while in prison..."

His face mask gets damp, as the tears free-flow. Writer Mushtaq Ahmed is all over Kishore's broken mind.

Even his smiles are fleeting -- his eyes are downcast and pensive. The trauma of mental and physical torture does not leave him.

"Many people in the jail were surprised and said, 'You are an artist, yet you have been made the number one accused. Brother you are the victim of a conspiracy,'" said Kishore.

"I did nothing. I did not do anything wrong, or commit a crime. They showed me completely unrelated cartoons and asked me if I mocked the prime minister and the father of the nation," Kishore told me.

"No matter how many times I told them that I did not draw any cartoon about the prime minister or the father of the nation, they told me I was lying. There was no food, no sleep. I can't stay without food for long because I have diabetes. Again and again they asked the same question.

"I could not control my temper. When they addressed me in 'tui', I also started calling them 'tui'. I challenged them. What are these questions? I told them I could teach them about cartoons. In response, they beat me up and abused me using filthy words. I responded with similar language," Kishore said in one breath.

Kishore was looking for a scholarship to study cartoons. He made progress, but Covid-19 stopped everything. Kishore did not have a job. He asked around for gigs. He drew a sketch for Mushtaq's book and got Tk 10,000.

"Why did Mushtaq give you money?" they asked Kishore before beating him up. All of these happened to Kishore within the first 60 hours of his detention.

The house in Kakrail, from where

Kishore was picked up, is owned by his friend who lives in Australia. Kishore was in charge of taking care of the house.

"Is anyone in your family involved in the Awami League?" they asked him. "Yes," he replied, "My father, my sister."

Then came the worst of the torture. They slammed his head from both sides with their hands. Kishore later learned, that this is a common and monstrous tactic of torture. This is done mainly to perforate the eardrum.

Kishore's world was turned upside-down. A throbbing buzzing took over his hearing. He could neither see, nor hear. When he regained consciousness, he found blood coming out of his right ear. "The shirt was stained with the blood from my ear," Kishore told me, staring blankly.

Kishore did not clearly articulate the pain or suffering he had undergone, but the floodgates opened when it came to describing the torture Mushtaq had suffered.

"Mushtaq bhai asked me not to tell anyone that he had been tortured with electrocution," said Kishore as he wept. "Don't let your sister-in-law or my parents know. Mushtaq bhai told me this over and over again."

He did not want to let his 89-year-old father and 85-year-old mother know.

A weeping Kishore said, "While we were in prison, Mushtaq Bhai collapsed thrice. A good man like Mushtaq Bhai was electrocuted, he soiled his clothes... Mushtaq Bhai was very fit. But electrocution..." Kishore could not finish his sentences.

"Mushtaq Bhai and I were taken on foot to a microbus. He could not walk properly. I could not walk either. From the place of torture, we were taken to Khilgaon office of Rab. We were shoved into the microbus, and shoved out again. They kept shoving us around so we walked normally into the Rab office. Almost like a rehearsal for filming. My ears were still bleeding and soaking my shirt. Someone said, 'He is still bleeding.' Another offered water and then poured water on my ear and body to clean the blood. From the Khilgaon Rab office, we were taken to the Tikatuli Rab office where they shot a video. Then we were handed to Ramna Police Station. What our condition was like at the time will be known if those videos are released."

Kishore's diabetes is under control to some extent. The severity of his leg injuries is also reducing. But his ears continue to worry him. He no longer has the perfect eyesight. Pus oozing

from Kishore's ears has stopped after two days of care, but he still cannot hear through his right ear.

A test of Kishore's ears will be done today. The test will provide a clearer assessment of the damage done, and the next course of treatment will be decided based on the test report. Doctors will decide whether he needs surgery and get an idea of how much they will be able to fix.

"I got a six-month bail, but I am not free. I can't stand by the road and have a cup of tea. I can't walk. I had not committed an offence. An unjust crime has been done against me and Mushtaq Bhai," Kishore said. "My case will continue, and I will have to deal with the case in this situation. But nothing will happen to those who took us and tortured us in an unknown place. The case is supposed to be filed against them... They asked several times why I drew a cartoon about a certain businessman, and tortured me."

Lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said, "The entire process of arresting Kishore and prosecuting him under the Digital Security Act was done illegally. The same thing happened in the case of Kajol and Shahidul Alam. A law was passed in 2013 to stop torture in custody."

It is legally possible to file a case against the perpetrators, he added.

"No law enforcement officer in plain clothes can arrest anyone, according to directions given by the Appellate Division in 2015. How are you still arresting a citizen while not being in uniform? Article 111 of the constitution states that the judgment of the High Court is the law," said the Supreme Court lawyer.

Kishore wants to believe that the Digital Security Act will be repealed and withdrawn.

To be released

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Speaking on the recommendation of cancellation of the gallantry award vested upon BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, Mozammel said a committee has been formed in this regard and it was given two months' time to submit a report.

"After receiving that report, the Jatiya Mukijhoddha Council will sit and consider the matter. Then we will be able to express our views," he added.

He said through the mobile museum, the true history of the Liberation War will be presented to the new generation as they will be able to know the correct information about the war and the country's liberation struggle.

SC clears way of trial

FROM PAGE 12
SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the dismissal order after hearing the petition yesterday.

Ariful's lawyer Ishrat Hasan told The Daily Star that the High Court on March 23 last year directed police to immediately record Kurigram journalist Ariful Islam's assault and attempted murder case against Sultana and the other officials.

The HC also stayed the proceedings of the case filed by the mobile court against Ariful, his conviction, and sentencing.

In the early hours of March 14 last year, a mobile court of Kurigram administration, led by three assistant commissioners allegedly following DC Sultana's orders, convicted and sentenced Ariful to one year in prison after arresting him at his home.

Nine days later, the HC issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government, Sultana, Nazim, and assistant commissioners Rintu Bikash Chakma and SM Rahatul Islam to explain in four weeks as to why the mobile court's action against Ariful should not be declared illegal.

Kurigram Sadar Police Station recorded the case against Sultana and the other officials on March 30 for

assaulting Ariful. Sultana and the executive magistrates were suspended following the incident, lawyer Ishrat said.

In the leave to appeal petition, Nazim requested the Appellate Division to stay the HC order that asked the police to record the case against him.

The suspended officials are fugitives in the eye of the law as they have yet to surrender to the trial court, the lawyer said.

Lawyer Shahanara Begum represented Nazim during the virtual hearing on the petition.

Lawyer Ishrat said Ariful and his family members were about to go to sleep when several Ansar members, accompanied by magistrates Nazim, Rintu Bikash Chakma and Rahatul Islam, stormed the house and tortured him.

The mobile court sentenced him around 1:30am.

The incident happened after Ariful reported on alleged corruption by Sultana, said Ishrat.

Ariful later went to Kurigram Sadar Police Station to sue Sultana, Nazim, Rintu, Rahatul and the Ansar personnel for torturing and attempting to kill him. But police refused to record the case, the lawyer added.

Oral drug yields promising

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The findings of this study -- a quicker decrease in viral load among individuals with early-stage Covid-19 who are treated with molnupiravir -- are promising, said William Fischer, lead investigator of the study and a professor of medicine at the University of North Carolina.

"If supported by additional studies, (they) could have important public health implications, particularly as the SARS-CoV-2 virus continues to spread and evolve globally," Fischer added.

Merck is also working on another oral Covid treatment called MK-711.

Preliminary results from clinical

trials will show a more than 50 percent reduction in risk of death or respiratory trouble in patients hospitalised with moderate to severe Covid-19, the company said in January.

The coronavirus has killed at least 2,589,408 people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP yesterday.

The US Senate on Saturday voted to approve a \$1.9 trillion relief package in what President Joe Biden called a "giant step" towards reviving the pandemic-stricken American economy, capping frenzied negotiations and a marathon overnight voting session.

Youth stabbed

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Chhatra League Chattogram city unit General Secretary Zakaria Dastagir told The Daily Star that the deceased did not hold any post in any unit of Chhatra League and claimed that the clash was not for political reasons but to establish supremacy in the area over occupying a piece of land.

Sub-Inspector Iqbal Hossain of Bayezid Bostami Police Station said they were investigating the incident.

No one was arrested and no case had been filed till the time of filing of this report last night.

Willing

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Protesters demand the release of Suu Kyi and respect for November's election - which her party won in a landslide but which the army rejected. The army has said it will hold democratic elections at an unspecified date.

Israeli-Canadian lobbyist Ari Ben-Menashe, hired by junta, told Reuters the generals are keen to leave politics and seek to improve relations with the United States and distance themselves from China.



"Our village gets inundated every day during the tidal surges, water breaks in through the damaged part of the embankment" - Rahima Khatun (43), Day laborer



"I want my normal life back, I want to go back to school, please help us" - Sagor Mia (11), Student, Class 5



"I want to eat a decent meal two times a day every day, I just do not want to starve anymore" - Sadia Afrin Tuli (09), Student, Class - 4

Honorable Prime Minister,

You are particularly aware that main problems of the districts Satkhira and Khulna in the south-west coast of Bangladesh are cyclones, subsequent tidal surges and long-term waterlogging. Over the last 20-25 years, these problems have been linked together, making the area uninhabitable and causing major crises in people's livelihoods. Waterlogging is a pressing concern at this time of global climate change that became worse day by day for the people of southwest Bangladesh. The prolonged waterlogging has caused significant displacement and created challenges in safe drinking water supply, sanitation, shelter, food security, and employment opportunity. There are areas where people have to live in waterlogged conditions for the whole year; even many cultivable crop lands are inundated for major part of the year, losing valuable agricultural production especially rice. It is painfully true that Khulna and Satkhira districts are economically backward from the other parts of Bangladesh. Despite the various disaster risk reduction initiatives of the government, a large number of people are migrating every year only due to superficial disasters.

Cyclone SIDR which was one of the most powerful cyclones to impact Bangladesh left behind a horrific death toll, damaging crops and infrastructures. Cyclone Aila and Bulbul followed in its footsteps and created unthinkable havoc. The catastrophic super cyclone Amphan made landfall on May 20 last year. Massive destruction took place in Shyamnagar, Asashuni upazilas of Satkhira and Paikgachha, Koyra upazilas of Khulna. The floods followed by the cyclone caused severe damage to houses, livestock and agriculture. Most of the fish farms and crop lands in those regions have been washed away and majority of the roads were flooded for days. About 30,000 families have been affected by the cyclone, and more than 5,000 families have been forced to live under the open sky on the embankments. In addition to these damages, many of the major embankments have been destroyed by the cyclone making hundreds of other coastal dams vulnerable. As a result, waterlogged conditions due to the flood and tidal surge still prevails in those areas. Many of the schools are still inundated, making them unusable.

Despite the implementation of various useful and praise worthy plans and people-oriented development projects by the current government, the poor and miserable people are still living a half-starved life. They have no more assets left to sell, nowhere to go to beg for, no more savings to deplete rather than helplessly migrating from those areas in search of livelihood. In this situation, if the poor and helpless people are not given continuous and effective assistance, a large section of the poor people will be forced to leave their homes.

Due to your efficient and far-sighted leadership, Bangladesh has come this far today. You are the true worthy daughter of our father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, you are the Mother of Humanity, our Savior. It is our earnest request to you to continue the food aid for the poor for at least one year, to help build houses for those people who are still living on the embankments and to provide feasible livelihood restoration opportunities so that the starving and helpless people can stand back on their feet again. With this, we request to take necessary steps to repair the high-risk dams before the next monsoon season. We wish Bangladesh to become a more prosperous country under your leadership, to become the Sonar Bangla of Bangabandhu's dream.

- From the affected people.



"It is high time we take necessary steps to reconstruct the damaged parts of the embankments, otherwise during the next cyclone the effect will be catastrophic" - Ripon Kumar Mondal, Chairman, Deluti Union, Paikgachha



"The Government has taken many initiatives but to extirpate the waterlogging problem permanently we need more assistance" - GM Abdullah Al Mamun, Chairman, Moharajpur Union

Humanitarian Assurances Provided by START FUND Bangladesh and UKaid for the Vulnerable People of the South Western Regions of Bangladesh

