

SC stays Erfan

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Daily Star that his client cannot be released from jail following the apex court's stay order.

The SC chamber judge passed the stay order considering the allegation against Erfan Salim of attacking a navy officer in the capital's Dhanmondi, the lawyer added.

Additional Attorney General Sheikh Md Morshed appeared for the state.

Following a bail petition filed by Erfan, the HC on March 18 granted him permanent bail in the case.

Lt Wasif Ahmed Khan of Bangladesh Navy filed the case with Dhanmondi Police Station on October 25, against Erfan, 37, and three others -- AB Siddique Dipu, 45, Md Zahid, 35, and Md Mizanur Rahman, 30 -- for attacking him.

A team of Rapid Action Battalion conducted a drive at Erfan's house in Old Dhaka and arrested him the same day.

The state filed the petition with the Appellate Division on March 23 challenging the HC verdict that granted bail to Erfan in the case.

The Attorney General's office submitted the petition on behalf of the state seeking stay on the HC verdict.

Govt officer

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pains on Monday. She gave birth to a baby girl on the same day.

Her husband came to visit her at the hospital around Saturday noon. Then Redwana's aunt took the newborn to the other room for feeding, leaving the couple in the cabin. She returned sometimes later and found the cabin locked from the outside.

Being informed, an official of the hospital went there and opened the lock with a spare key in the afternoon and found Redwana's body on the bed. He later informed Mirzapur police of the matter, the OC said.

"Injury marks were found around her neck. We suspect that her husband strangled her and fled the spot after locking the door," the OC said.

Redwana's younger sister Fadwana Islam said Redwana and Delwar, 40, of Pabna Sadar upazila, got married in 2019. It was the second marriage for both of them. Redwana already has a 12-year-old son.

She also alleged that since the marriage, Mizan used to torture her sister physically and mentally for dowry. Moreover, he did not accept the pregnancy of Redwana and pressured her for abortion, she also alleged.

OC Rizaul said the body was handed over to the victim's family members after an autopsy at Tangail General Hospital.

"Police were trying to arrest the accused," he added.

Hearing the news, Ataul Gani, deputy commissioner of Tangail, went to visit the hospital.

3 Cox's Bazar

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Sharif Uddin, deputy assistant director of the ACC, told The Daily Star that they were arrested for helping Rohingyas get enrolled in the voter lists through forgery.

They were shown arrested in the case filed in this connection, the ACC official said.

The four were produced before a Cox's Bazar court, which sent them to jail after rejecting their bail prayers.

Mobile 3G

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problem was or how long it would take.

Benchmark PR, employed by Facebook, said Facebook and its messaging app have been shut down in Bangladesh since Friday.

"We are aware of the issue of restricting Facebook in Bangladesh. We are trying to understand it. We are working to ensure that everyone has full access quickly. The way of Bangladesh government has limited the services of Facebook, at a time when there is a need to maintain effective communication during the coronavirus epidemic, is worrying.

However, the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has been saying that users could not use the two apps due to "technical glitches".

On Saturday, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar said his ministry had not shut down Facebook. "It is not our decision. It has been done by the law enforcement agencies for national security reasons."

He did not mention which agency was involved.

Experts said, "Facebook services are being disrupted amid demonstrations over Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Bangladesh."

They said there was precedent of shutting down internet to suppress protests in Bangladesh.

A number of internet service providers (ISPs) said the government no longer has to rely on internet service providers or mobile carriers to shut down Facebook. The government has such technology in its hands.

The Daily Star called an additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police but the official refused to comment.

Some people are, however, using Facebook bypassing the block, which cyber security analysts say threatens security.



People mourn as they attend the funeral of Kyaw Win Maung, who was shot and killed during a protest against the military coup, in Mandalay, Myanmar yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar troops fire at funeral

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There were no reports of large-scale protests in Yangon or in the country's second city, Mandalay, which bore the brunt of the casualties on Saturday, Myanmar's Armed Forces Day. Funerals were held in many places.

At least six children between the ages of 10 and 16 were among those killed on Saturday, according to news reports and witnesses.

The bloodshed drew renewed Western condemnation. The UN Special Rapporteur for Myanmar said the army was carrying out "mass murder" and called on the world to isolate the junta and halt its access to weapons.

Foreign criticism and sanctions imposed by some Western nations have failed so far to sway the military leaders, as have almost daily protests around the country since the junta took power and detained elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

"We salute our heroes who sacrificed lives during this revolution and We Must Win This REVOLUTION," one of the main protest groups, the General Strike Committee of Nationalities (GSCN), posted on Facebook.

Heavy fighting has also erupted between the army and the ethnic armed groups that control swathes of the country.

About 3,000 villagers from southeastern Karen state fled to Thailand yesterday following air attacks by the army on an area held by an ethnic armed group, an activist group and local media said.

Myanmar's military launched air strikes on five areas in Mutraw district, near the border, including a displacement camp, the Karen Women's Organization said.

"At the moment, villagers are hiding in the jungle as more than 3,000 crossed to Thailand to take refuge," a statement from the group

said.

"RINGING HOLLOW"
Saturday's dead included 40 people in Mandalay and at least 27 in Yangon, Myanmar Now said. The casualties took the overall number of civilians reported killed since the coup to more than 440.

Countries including the United States, Britain and the European Union strongly condemned the violence.

UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews said it was time for the world to take action - if not through the UN Security Council then through an international emergency summit. He said the junta should be cut off from funding, such as oil and gas revenues, and from access to weapons.

"Words of condemnation or concern are frankly ringing hollow to the people of Myanmar while the military junta commits mass murder against them," he said in a statement.

UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Alice Wairimu Nderitu and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet called the killings "shameful, cowardly, brutal actions of the military and police, who have been filmed shooting at protesters as they flee, and who have not even spared young children".

The top military officer from the United States and nearly a dozen of his counterparts said in a statement that a professional military must follow international standards for conduct "and is responsible for protecting - not harming - the people it serves".

The military took power saying that November elections won by Suu Kyi's party were fraudulent, an assertion dismissed by the country's election commission. Suu Kyi remains in detention at an undisclosed location and many other figures in her party are also in custody.

Positivity rate jumps

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The novel coronavirus infection declined to its lowest throughout January and February. It had its peak in June and July last year.

The transmission, however, started rising again from the second week of this month.

Experts said the actual positivity rate is higher than the reported rate every day.

For the last 10 days till Saturday, samples of over 500 members of the law enforcement agencies, who were deployed to ensure security on the occasions of golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence and Mujib Borsho, were tested as part of regular screening.

"Today [yesterday], the positivity rate increased as tests of those members of the law enforcement agencies stopped yesterday. Tomorrow the positivity rate will be higher as more such members of the law enforcement agencies will not be tested," Mushtuq Hussain, consultant of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the detection of positive cases is higher as many samples are being tested every day simply for screening purposes.

"A good number of outgoing passengers are being tested simply to get Covid-19 negative certificates. If we exclude these sorts of testing, the rate is

definitely higher," Mushtuq said.

In the last 24 hours, 2,019 Covid-19 patients recovered from their illnesses, raising the recoveries to 5,35,941.

The recovery rate was around 90 percent.

"TAKE STRICT MEASURES"
While the transmission has been on the rise since the second week of this month, the government's efforts to check virus transmission and ensure treatment are still inadequate, an expert said.

The government has not been able to strictly enforce the health safety rules, a key instrument in the fight against virus transmission.

A large section of the population is still reluctant to wear masks though it is

mandatory to use those in public places.

"There is no strict measures yet. If the government starts enforcing health safety guidelines today, it will take two weeks to decrease the infection rate. If not, the transmission will continue to rise and so will the deaths," Mushtuq said.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 hospitals in the capital continued to struggle to deal with the new patients yesterday.

Only three ICU beds out of 108 in Dhaka's 10 Covid-19 dedicated hospitals were vacant as of yesterday noon.

Countrywide, 3,545 Covid-19 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds while 358 were in the ICU beds till yesterday.

A warm gesture with connectivity at heart

FROM PAGE 1
However, the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh warmed up the relations, especially after the Awami League's return to power in 1996.

Later, the two countries saw further improvement of relations through the resolution of a number of major disputes including that of land and maritime boundary. Bangladesh took the important step to help India ensure security in its Northeast. Modi expressed deep gratitude to Hasina for all the actions in improving Bangladesh-India relations.

Now, the two countries have embarked on a new journey to have better connectivity between them and beyond. While India has a big interest in connecting its Northeast to the rest of the country via road, rail, water and seaways, Bangladesh also can gain immensely from this.

Bangladesh is eagerly seeking greater access to Indian territory to get linked to Nepal and Bhutan for expanding trade and importing hydroelectricity. Bangladesh also seeks to join the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project to be connected to Southeast Asia by road. Regional connectivity has come up prominently in the speeches of the two leaders at the golden jubilee celebrations and also bilateral talks.

At Saturday's bilateral meeting,

both the leaders spoke of trade barrier removal, exchange programmes involving entrepreneurs and cultural activists, training for youths, and cooperation in the areas of IT and sports.

Modi's meeting with young entrepreneurs and cultural groups speak of the importance on such exchanges between the two countries that share history, culture and traditions.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, former ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad said, "Narendra Modi's visit is very significant this time. It reflects the deep-rooted relations between the two countries. It is also a time for renewal of our commitments and further consolidation of our relations."

The main purpose of the Indian premier's visit was celebrations, not bilateral issues. However, the two premiers brought up important issues, including the water-sharing of the Teesta and other common rivers, border killings and trade barriers that often raise concern in public mind.

"We have a very strong friendship, and if we can strengthen it, we can solve any issues we have," said Faiz, also former chairman of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

Referring to a recent World Bank report saying the national income of

both the countries can double if there is seamless connectivity between them, former foreign secretary Shahidul Haque noted that integration is very critical, not only between the two countries but also in the entire South Asia region. Though there had been obstacles in the past, that integration is happening now.

"This integration is very natural and has economic value." The historic relations between the two countries got a new impetus through Modi's visit, he observed.

Shahidul, also senior fellow at North South University, said trade and people-to-people connectivity can see a real boost once the two countries establish seamless connectivity.

Both countries can jointly set up universities for providing world-class education. Such people-level initiatives are working well in Europe, he said.

"Our relationship needs to be at people's level now, not only at the government level," he added.

Joyeeta Bhattacharjee, senior fellow at Delhi-based Observer Research Foundation's Neighbourhood Regional Studies Initiative, said the Indians were excited about Modi's visit to Bangladesh to join the celebrations of the golden jubilee and Mujib Borsho.

"This shows the real bond and collaboration between the two

countries. I think this is going to help forge a new level of partnership."

Both the premiers also spoke of a peaceful and stable South Asia, Joyeeta said.

Asked how the two countries could go about the pending issues, she said those can be settled when the understanding is deep, and that is happening now.

Modi's visit to Orakandi and his meeting Matus community have been linked by some to the elections in West Bengal that is home to a large number of members of the community.

Asked, Joyeeta said this reflects that the relations are not only at the state level, but also at people's level, and this is actually very important.

In the future, Orakandi in Gopalganj or Jeshoreshwari Kali Temple in Satkhira could become popular places of pilgrimage among a large number of Indians as well. That's how people-to-people connectivity can grow, she said.

Munshi Faiz said top leaders may visit such iconic places and it should not be interpreted wrongly or be seen from a narrow perspective.

About street protests over Modi's visit, he said Modi visited Bangladesh as a state guest representing India, not as an individual. It was unwarranted that some groups raised a hue and cry over the visit.

Jupiter's winds

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bands of swirling clouds of moving gas but as they are not part of the atmosphere, astronomers find it difficult to measure exactly how strong the winds between cloud layers are.

The author of a new study on the planet's winds, Dr Thibault Cavalie and colleagues have now directly measured atmospheric jets on Jupiter - similar to Earth's jetstreams.

He said: "The most spectacular result is the presence of strong jets, with speeds of up to 400 metres per second, which are located under the aurora near the poles."

"These wind speeds, equivalent to about 900mph, are more than twice the maximum storm speeds reached in Jupiter's Great Red Spot and over three times the wind speed measured on Earth's strongest tornadoes."

For scale, Jupiter's polar winds make devastating Earthly hurricanes look like gentle breezes - with Hurricane Katrina clocking in at 174 mph by comparison.

The highest wind speeds of any tornado recorded on earth were just shy of 318 miles per hour which hit Oklahoma, USA in 1999.

The findings have been published in the journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*.

Bangabandhu

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Incas and all the rest. Look what the British did when they took India."

But history proved Nixon wrong.

They also discussed the long-term impact of the separation of Pakistan. Kissinger said, "People now say that the fellow Mujib in the East is really quite moderate and for a Bengali that's right. But that's an extremely unstable situation there and the radical groups are likely to gain increasing strength."

The president commented, "This will be only one blip in the battle and then it will go on and on and on..."

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India records

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Several government hospitals reported they were running out of critical-care beds in Mumbai city.

While Maharashtra leads the surge, several other states - Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh - are also seeing a rise in cases.

Shab-e-Barat

FROM PAGE 1
relatives, and friends as well as the nation and the Muslim Ummah.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted all Muslims of Bangladesh and elsewhere across the world on the occasion of the holy Shab-e-Barat.

In separate messages, they urged the Muslim devotees to observe the holy Shab-e-Barat maintaining the health guidelines as the infection rate of Covid-19 is in a rising trend.

The PM called upon all to establish the spirit of Islam at personal, social and national levels and shun religious prejudice and narrow-mindedness.

"Let us establish the spirit of Islam, the religion of peace, at all levels by avoiding all forms of injustice, inequity, violence and superstition," she said in a message issued regarding the holy Shab-e-Barat.

Hasina said the night of fortune brings mercy and blessings of the Almighty for the whole of mankind.

Urging Muslim devotees to observe the holy night maintaining the health guidelines as the infection rate of Covid-19 is rising, she said, "The holy Shab-e-Barat brings the message of happiness, peace and development for us."

Muslims consider Shab-e-Barat as one of the three most sacred nights and believe that on this night Almighty Allah decides the fate of all human beings fixing their 'rizq' (livelihood) for the next year.

On the night, the devotees across the country would visit graves and pray for their beloved ones seeking their eternal peace. Many people will also visit mazars and shrines all over the country.

Many families will prepare traditional foods like handmade rice-bread, beef, and halua (a kind of dessert made usually from semolina, carrot, chickpea, or papaya) both in rural and urban areas across the country on the occasion.

A good number of Muslims will observe fast on the following day. They will distribute food and sweets among the neighbours and the poor. Besides, food and money will be distributed among the destitute on the occasion.

On the occasion, the Islamic Foundation (IF) has chalked out programme at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

Religious sermons highlighting the significance of Shab-e-Barat will be delivered at the national mosque at 6.30 pm (after Maghrib prayers) while special munajat will be offered after Esha prayers tomorrow.

Senior Pesh Imam of the National Mosque Hafez Mawlana Muhammad Mizanur Rahman will deliver the sermon and administer the munajat.

The day after tomorrow will be a public holiday on the occasion of the holy Shab-e-Barat.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, and private television channels and radio stations will air special programmes on the occasion while newspapers will publish special supplements highlighting the significance of the night.

Syria Kurds launch security sweep, arrests in IS families camp

AFP, Beirut
Kurdish forces launched a security operation in a camp for suspected family members of Islamic State group militants and made dozens of

arrests yesterday, a war monitor and Kurdish officials said.

"More than thirty women and men have been arrested" in a sweeping anti-IS operation in and around the Al-Hol camp, said Rami Abdul

Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"The arrests are ongoing" as part of a days-long operation by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is the Kurdish regional administration's

main fighting force, the Kurdish YPG militia and a local police force, Abdul Rahman said.

Syrians and foreigners "suspected of supporting IS" have been arrested, he said.