

2000 ATTEMPT TO KILL HASINA Death reference of 14 convicts at HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death reference of the case, in which 14 militants were sentenced to death for attempting to kill Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2000, has reached the High Court for the examination of the trial court verdict.

Officials of the Dhaka tribunal concerned brought the documents of the case, including the judgment, to the HC on Monday afternoon, its special officer Md Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

He said the officials concerned of the HC received the documents. The HC authorities will now prepare paper books for hearing on the death reference, Saifur added.

If a lower court sentences any person to death in a case, its judgment is examined by the HC through hearing arguments for confirmation of the death sentence. The case documents and judgment reach as death reference to the HC from the lower court as per the relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

A Dhaka tribunal on March 23 sentenced 14 members of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji) to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Sayed, a hawker who usually sells children's clothes and bed-sheets on the roadsides of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, sits next to the row of closed makeshift shops in the area because he could not bear to sit alone at his tiny rented room in the capital. His shop, like countless others, is closed due to the lockdown and he does not have the money to go back to his village home in Munshiganj. He told this newspaper around 3pm yesterday that he had no food since morning, and his family back home was also going hungry because he could not send any money to them.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'He made a fortune through extortion'

Murder accused Hannan's reign of terror in Dakshinkhan comes to light

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Once a driver by profession, Aminul Islam Hannan of the capital's Dakshinkhan area, who was recently arrested on charge of shooting a man dead in broad daylight, made a fortune in the last one decade through widespread extortion, said locals.

Hannan, also known as Japani Hannan, through his criminal gang spread terror at Ainusbagh of Dakshinkhan, but no one dared to challenge him, as he used to identify himself as a ruling party leader, they added.

They said he used to take photographs with leaders of the ruling party or influential persons and display those in banners and posters at the gate of his house and on the walls.

His posters are still hanging at Ainusbagh that show him as the joint general secretary of Bangabandhu Sainik League. Some influential AL leader also visited his Ainusbagh residence, said locals.

They alleged that law enforcers were always reluctant to take any action against Hannan, despite some locals lodging general diaries with police against him.

Any resident of Ainusbagh constructing a building or shop and selling or purchasing flats had to give him extortion money, otherwise they had to face dire consequences, they said.

Hannan also collected Tk 2,500 per month as toll from around 500 battery-run auto-rickshaws that ply from Ashkona Hajj camp

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Patients with chronic conditions in a fix

Ctg BMA re-introduces telemedicine service to ease their worries over seeing doctors amid lockdown

ARUN BIKASH DEV, Ctg

In his 70s and with a chronic kidney disease, port city resident Rupak Paul has a lot to worry about as it is. But for this week, his worries multiplied after the government declared the countrywide lockdown. Rupak has an appointment with a nephrologist today, but as of yesterday, he wasn't sure if it's going to take place.

"The consultant is really busy. I managed to get the appointment after trying for 10 consecutive days," Rupak told this correspondent. Now he's worried whether the doctor's chamber will be open during the lockdown, or whether he will have to sit for the consultation virtually or over phone, or whether he'll have to contact another doctor altogether.

The same can be said of every other chronic disease patient across the city. For them, every week's a matter of life and death, and whether they get access to their doctors or not may determine everything.

Doctors said they're trying their best to

come up with alternate solutions during such dire times. While talking to The Daily Star, they have assured that they will either attend patients at their private chambers for limited hours, or resort to telemedicine services for duration of the lockdown.

"I exclusively did telemedicine during last year's lockdown, but have decided to keep my chamber open for limited hours this time around. We understand the importance of in-person consultations," said Farida Yasmin Sumi, assistant professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

But she admitted it'll be a difficult task for patients to get to the chambers during lockdown, due to the government-imposed limitations on public transportation.

Retired-CMCH teacher Dr Mujibul Haque Khan, an ear, nose, and throat specialist, also told The Daily Star that he will be available for telemedicine sessions

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

ASSAULTING NAVY OFFICER

Erfan Salim seeks cancellation of stay order on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Erfan Salim, son of Awami League lawmaker Haji Md Salim, yesterday filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court to vacate its stay order on his High Court bail in a case filed over attacking a navy officer in October last year.

Erfan, now in a Kashimpur jail, submitted the petition through his lawyers -- Abdul Baset Majumder and Sayed Ahmed Raza -- to the Appellate Division, along with the certified copy of the HC verdict that granted him bail in the case.

Citing the petition, Erfan's lawyer Sayed Ahmed told The Daily Star that his client has been in jail for five months and 11 days although the maximum punishment of the charge, for which he has been arrested, is six months' imprisonment.

Erfan's mother has died in November last year and his father, who has been infected with Covid-19, is receiving treatment at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka and therefore, the Appellate Division's stay order on his HC bail needs to be vacated for his release from jail, the lawyer said.

After a brief hearing yesterday, chamber judge of the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

SHER-E-BANGLA MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

Neither handwashing, nor social distancing

Hygiene, safety concerns remain as authorities struggle to cope with patient influx



Patients and their attendants crowd the corridor of the outpatient department of the hospital. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) in Barishal -- one of the major healthcare centres in the country's southern region -- lacks handwashing facilities for visitors at outpatient departments that have seen a swelling crowd in recent times, increasing the risk of rapid transmission of coronavirus from there amid the second wave.

Moreover, other health directives, including social distancing, are also being violated blatantly at the hospital.

The SBMCH authorities, however, blamed lack of infrastructural facilities and shortage of manpower for such a situation.

During a recent visit to hospital, this correspondent found hundreds of people gathered at the outpatient department on the ground floor. They were huddling and most of them had no masks on. The handwashing setup that were put in place after the Covid-19 outbreak are all out of order.

A patient said, "The coronavirus ward is not cleaned regularly. Water taps and bathroom fittings have been broken... Even plaster is falling off the stairs at the ward. There is no one to take care of this ward, which is full of garbage."

Sinks and water taps that were set up at around 20-25 points in and outside the hospital last year could not be seen.

Hospital staff said some of those got damaged and some were stolen.

Dr Moniruzaman Shaheen, in-charge of the ward, said SBMCH was established in

1968. At that time, there were 136 doctors against the approval of 224 physicians for 360 beds, he said.

At present, new wards have been included including the one for Covid-19, said Shaheen. The number of seats at the Covid ward has increased from 1,000 to 1,150, but the manpower has remained the same, he added.

As a result, health services and cleaning activities are being hampered, said Dr Shaheen.

He said the number of Covid-19 patients at the hospital on March 12 was only 19. On April 5, the figure was as many as 106, he added. On average, 20 to 25 patients were admitted to the hospital every day. "If this situation continues, it will not be possible to admit patients within two to three days," he told this correspondent yesterday.

Dr Abdur Razzak, acting director of the hospital, told The Daily Star, "We have informed the Department of Public Works to set up sinks again. Due to manpower shortage, we cannot ensure hygiene for around 3,000-4,000 outdoor and 1,500 indoor patients who are receiving services every day."

Last year, visitors without masks were barred from entering the hospital, and after entry service seekers had to maintain physical distance. This year, those health directives are completely absent there. When asked about it, the acting director said they are looking into the matter.

CTTC arrests Ansar Al Islam's IT wing expert

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Counterterrorism unit claimed to have arrested the militant outfit Ansar Al Islam's IT wing expert, who was planning to regroup and restart the outfit's operational activities, including targeted killing, along with sacked army major Syed Ziaul Haq.

For the purpose, the IT chief -- Baki Billah alias Abu Samir alias Zafar alias Faisal (34) -- was scheduled to meet Zia near Tongi railway station on March 26 last year.

In an encrypted message, Zia told Billah that a person will meet him once he reached the station. The meeting, however, did not take place, due to law enforcers' vigilance, and since then Zia again went into hiding.

Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit claimed to have learned about the latest strategy of the militant outfit following arrest of Baki Billah and his associate.

The other arrestee was identified as Ariful Islam Jahed alias Ayman alias Arahana alias Rehan (30), they said.

Based on information, a special action group of CTTC unit arrested the two from the capital's Paltan area around 6:35pm on Monday night, Abdul Mannan, deputy commissioner of the unit, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A case was filed with Paltan Police Station

against the two under anti-terrorism act.

DC Mannan said the outfit may seem to be neutralised but their online recruitment and fund collection in name of different welfare tasks are going on in full swing.

"We have got some details of the outfit's financiers and are conducting drive to arrest them," he added.

According to officials, Ariful is the founding member of the outfit and he is the head of its Dhaka north unit and working for recruiting new members.

Ariful got involved with militant activities through a platform called Jama'atul Muslimin in 2008. Later, he got admitted to a private university in Dhaka.

While working for the outfit, he met sacked Maj Zia. He was responsible for recruiting private university students for the outfit.

In recent times, he has been recruiting members for the outfit through a Facebook group, said CTTC officials, involved with investigation.

Billah is the head of Ansar Al Islam's Information Technology (IT) and Anti-Surveillance Department. He started working for the outfit in 2014 through Zia.

Billah is the creator Ansar al-Islam's main media forum. He has also created encrypted media to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Small traders in Rajshahi open shops defying 'lockdown'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Owners of small businesses in Rajshahi defied the government-imposed restrictions and opened their shops yesterday.

Many traders and their employees opened shops at the RDA Market, in the heart of the city, on the second day of the seven-day "lockdown".

Maksudur Rahman, organising secretary of Rajshahi Babosayi Oikya Parishad, an alliance of 110 local business bodies, said they were demanding an exclusion of small businesses from the restrictions since a day before the lockdown.

On the first day of lockdown on Monday, they demonstrated on the street for two hours and later withdrew as local administrative officials called them for a discussion.

"But the meeting ended without a decision," he said.

"Also, we have not decided to open our shops. But some businessmen opened their shops on their own as they felt helpless in the face of losses that is to occur for keeping their shops closed," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Create funds, launch financial instruments

Suggest parliamentarians for reintegration of migrant workers affected by Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliamentarians of different Asian countries yesterday suggested for creating funds and launching financial instruments to ensure sustainable reintegration of migrant workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Pointing on migrant workers' immense contribution for the development of both the countries of origin and destination, they called for forming regional forums to address issues related to returnee reintegration.

They came up with the suggestions during the concluding session of the two-day "International Conference on Reintegration of Returnee Migrants Affected by Covid-19 Pandemic".

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) in collaboration with Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and British Council's project Promoting Knowledge for Accountable Systems (Prokas) organised the conference virtually.

Addressing the concluding session, Anisul Islam Mahmud, chairman of the parliamentary committee on expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry, proposed that Bangladesh government should give a one percent incentive alongside the existing two-percent incentive against remittance sent by migrant workers.

The money of one-percent incentive could be allocated for creating a fund for returnees' reintegration, he said.

Anisul stressed that migrants' reintegration has to be inclusive from all aspects -- from social to psychological -- as well as at the family level.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



On the second day of the countrywide lockdown, police put up barricades at entrance points to the capital, like this one in Gabtoli. The checkers stopped non-sanctioned incoming vehicles and interrogated passengers about their business in the city.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Two killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Two people were killed three injured in road accidents in two districts on Monday night, according to reports from our local correspondents.

In Patuakhali, an SSC examinee was killed and another injured in a road accident in Baufal upazila of the district.

The deceased -- Jihad Sharif (16), was an SSC examinee of a local secondary school, said Suryamani Union Parishad member Serajul Islam.

According to locals, Jihad and his cousin Abdur Rahman left home with two motorcycles. The accident took place when they collided head-on with another motorcycle coming from the opposite direction at Chaurasta Bazar in Tanterkathi village.

Jihad died on the spot and Abdur Rahman was admitted to Baufal Upazila Health Complex with serious injuries, said Baufal Police Station Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Al Mamun.

In Madaripur, a teenager was killed and two were injured as their motorbike hit a pickup on Madaripur-Shariatpur road in new bus stand area under Sadar upazila.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5