

'Biggest triumph of my life'

SUSHANTA GHOSH, *Barishal*

"This is the biggest triumph of my life," said Ziaul Hassan, who was over the moon after successfully taking his ailing mother to the hospital on his motorbike, that too while carrying a 20-kg oxygen cylinder on his back.

Earlier, a picture of the mother-son duo on the back of a motorbike had gone viral on social media. After his mother was released from the hospital, they took pictures, holding up a V-sign.

Later, Ziaul wrote on Facebook, "After six days, I'm going back home, following my mother's treatment. Her oxygen saturation level had decreased to 70. Carrying eight litres of liquid oxygen and a 20-kg oxygen cylinder on my back, I took her to the hospital."

"Today, my kind-hearted mother is returning home, with oxygen saturation of 96. It is the blessing of Allah. I want to thank the country's people whose sincere prayers helped heal my mother."

Earlier, Rehana Begum, a teacher at Nalchity Government Primary School, could not get results of her Covid-19 test done at Nalachithi Upazila health Complex on April 10. She was then in self-isolation at her residence.

She still did not get the results before getting admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) on April 17, said Ziaul.

Ziaul, an officer of Jhalakathi Krishi Bank, told The Daily Star, "My mother's oxygen saturation rapidly decreased. Dr Mehedi [medical officer of the health complex] told me to admit her at Sher-e-Bangla quickly. But I couldn't get any three-wheeler or ambulance in the lockdown."

"Then I tied the oxygen cylinder to my back, rode the motorcycle with my mother and admitted her at Sher-e-Bangla," he said.

Ziaul underwent Covid-19 antigen test yesterday at the health complex, and it came out positive. But his condition is stable, and both mother and son are under self-quarantine at home, he added.

Dr Moniruzzaman Shahin, in-charge of the Covid-19 ward at SBMCH, said Rehana was released from the hospital after her condition improved.

IUB ranks top pvt university in country

CITY DESK

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) has ranked first among all private universities in Bangladesh by SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2021. IUB was also ranked tenth among all universities, public and private, in the country, said a press release.

SIR is a global ranking of scientific institutions published by SCImago Laboratories in partnership with Scopus, which is an abstracting and citation database owned by Elsevier.

Institutions are ranked by a composite indicator that combines three different sets of indicators based on research performance, innovation outputs, and societal impact measured by their web visibility.

Whip's son

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The next day, around 10am, family members started receiving phone calls from Morshed's investors, searching for him, narrated Ishrat.

"His older brother, who lived in the same building, went to his room and found him hanging from the ceiling," she added.

He left a note stating that he was forced to pay more than he owed. "I'm now completely bankrupt, trying to pay off people who I did not owe any money," wrote Morshed in the note.

"Morshed had taken Tk 25 crore for different businesses from his cousins Javed Iqbal Chowdhury, Parvez Iqbal Chowdhury, and Syed Sakib Nayeem Uddin. He returned that, along with profits, giving back Tk 38 crore in total. We have the deposit slips as proof," said Ishrat.

But the brothers wanted more money -- Tk 12 crore more -- and that is where Nazmul Karim Sharun got involved, she alleged.

"He first began by calling my husband on his cellphone. When my husband pointed out that he did not have business relations with Sharun, he began to threaten him," she alleged.

She also said in May 2019, Sharun and his men came to their house and tried to knock down the door. "Our guard informed us that Sharun was sitting in the car, while my husband's cousins attacked our front door. I was alone with my daughter in the house. They left when I told them that I am videoing them," said Ishrat.

A day after Morshed's death, Ishrat filed a case against three cousins, along with Jubo League leader Shahidul Haq Chowdhury Rasel with Panchlalaish Police Station. However, Sharun was not named.

When asked why Sharun was not named in the case, Ishrat said they did so out of fear.

Contacted yesterday, Sharun said, "This is media slander. Since I do politics, a lot of people come to me to try and mediate issues about money. I was just present at a community meeting. My name is not in the case. An industrial group with media interests is supporting this defamation." He did not elaborate any further.

Meanwhile, Ishrat also alleged that Bijoy Basak, former deputy commissioner (north) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, had held several meetings with Morshed and his investors to realise the money from him.

She provided a phone call recording to this correspondent where Basak was heard verbally abusing Morshed, calling him a cheat and a liar.

"The DC had multiple meetings with my husband and his investors over the years. I went with him once, but he mostly went alone," she said.

Asked, Basak had earlier told our Chattogram correspondent, "They had tried to file a case against him but the banker requested me not to take the case saying it will cause him to lose his job. That's why I tried to negotiate between them."

He did not want to comment about the phone call recording.

Taking

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committees at grassroots level to effectively fight domestic violence and child marriage.

Prof Sadeka Halim of Dhaka University said Bangladesh is still fourth globally in terms of child marriages.

Netz Executive Director Max Stille said child marriage and domestic violence increased due to economic crisis amid the pandemic.

Selina Ahmed, head of Brac Gender Justice and Diversity Programme; Shamima Begum, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police; gender expert Sheepa Hafiza; executive director of Research Initiatives Bangladesh Meghna Guhatrakurta; and reserved seat lawmaker Arima Dutta; among others, addressed the roundtable.

Lockdown

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frontline workers during vehicle checks. They have since relaxed their grip on the situation, allowing more vehicles to pass through, unchecked.

Upon visiting some key intersections in the capital's Airport Road, Pragati Sarani, Vatara, Natun Bazar, Gulshan, Banani, Bijoy Sarani, and Farmgate areas, this correspondent found moderate to high traffic congestion on the streets.

On Airport road, there was a tailback from morning to noon with hundreds of private cars, CNG-run autorickshaws, goods-laden covered vans and trucks, plying the road.

This correspondent crossed several check-posts in some key-points of the city where police were seen sitting idly there.

Iftekharul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (media) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told the Daily Star "It is not possible to check everyone when there are so many people on the road. This can end up causing further congestion on the road. As a result, we are doing randomised checks," he added.

With Covid-19 cases continuing to rise alarmingly from mid-March, the government imposed a nationwide "lockdown" for one week from April 5.

Later, a week-long "stricter lockdown" was declared from April 14, which has been extended till April 28.

A pioneer

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obesity. Prof Shamsuzzaman has suffered damages to his lungs due to Covid-19 infection, he added.

Even with a shortage of staff and equipment, Prof Shamsuzzaman set an example by testing the highest number of Covid-19 samples at his NILMRC lab.

According to the health directorate, more than seven lakh Covid-19 samples have been tested in the lab so far.

"We still didn't have any government listed technologists. But instead of waiting, Shamsuzzaman sir helped build a 50-member team of volunteer technologists," Dr Arifa Akram told The Daily Star yesterday. "He used to compare our struggle with the 1971 Liberation War to motivate us."

"He knew how to inspire his fellow colleagues -- from the peon to every other staff -- and invigorate team spirit," Dr Zakir Hossain Habib, a former colleague of Shamsuzzaman and principle scientist of microbiology at the IEDCR told The Daily Star yesterday.

He completed MBBS from Rajshahi Medical College in 1986. Before his role in this pandemic, he contributed to controlling visceral leishmaniasis (black fever) in the country.

A professor of microbiology, Shamsuzzaman earlier served as the director of the disease control wing at DGHS and was the principle scientific officer at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

He was also a writer, poet, and lyricist. Bangladesh Health reporters Forum expressed condolences at his death.

Feel unlucky

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compensation for victims and deceased persons' families. But no one paid heed to our demands," she said.

Another survivor, Babli Akter, had joined Rana Plaza after completing her PSC some time before. She had to start working because her father could not make ends meet as the only earning member of the family.

She had sustained injuries in her head and legs. She recovered from the injuries, but is still traumatised about the accident.

"After receiving treatment for three years, I continued my education. Passed my ISC exam in 2018 and I want to sit for the next SSC exam," said Babli, now 22.

Mentally, she has not been doing as well. "The trauma is still unbearable. When I remember that day, I feel numb with fear," she explained.

"I want to be a teacher when I am older, but I worry if my father will be able to pay for further education," Babli said.

President of Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers' Federation, Rafiqul Islam Sujon, said the government has never taken any steps to meet their demands for rehabilitation, treatment and compensation.

"The pandemic only exacerbated the situation for Rana Plaza survivors," he said.

"The government should make a list of the survivors and extend aid. They could also ensure further education for Babli," Sujon added.

A mother's

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Aroti Begum, who worked at the sixth floor of the building and lost her right leg in the incident, said, "Even though many of us lost the ability to work and support our families, no initiative has been taken for our rehabilitation."

Meanwhile, eighth anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy was observed in a limited scale yesterday due to the pandemic.

In the morning, 18 workers' organisations under the banner of "Sramik Samannay Parishad" placed wreaths at the base of a temporary memorial at the site where at least 1,136 people were killed and over 2,500 were injured when Rana Plaza collapsed.

Victims and families of the deceased were also present.

Workers' organisations have long been demanding maximum punishment for those responsible including the building owner, compensation and rehabilitation for injured victims and deceased's families, life-long free treatment for workers, a hospital for workers at the site and declaration of April 24 as "National Workers' Mourning Day".

"We have been pressing for our demands for a long time but those are yet to be met," said Rafiqul Islam Sujon, president of Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation.

He urged the government to provide assistance to the victims and their families, who are going through a hard time amid the pandemic.

78pc

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It also covered job loss in rural and urban households, increased poverty rate, women's income reduction, and the proportion of unpaid care work of men and women.

The study was conducted between November 2020 to January 2021 in nine rural and urban districts. The interviewees comprised 87 percent women and 13 percent men, aged between 31 and 45.

Of the respondents, 47 percent were homemakers, while others were from a wide range of occupations.

Neelormi said women's diminishing assets can have hidden gender costs, because it is women who lose their property during financial crises, be it their jewellery or domestic animals raised by them.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam, in her speech at the event, said if people can think of women's work as work, without considering it as just a responsibility, only then will it add value in women's work.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir, who is also a member of the forum, joined the webinar and recommended that "to recognise and redistribute unpaid care work, support women in such work by establishing the infrastructure and system that cater to them,

create support mechanism at the local level, support initiatives for women in the informal sectors, and provide vaccination on a priority basis to women and girls".

She also suggested recognising women's contribution to the protection of natural resources, designing special training packages for women to deal with present demands on unpaid care work, and having support for women who are full-time employed and involved in unpaid care work.

Speaking as chief guest, lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury, also a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Planning, said, "We need to find out how we can incorporate informal work in the national database. We want to add women's unpaid labour to the System of National Accounts of the coming fiscal year. There is also a need of finding out the monetary value of women's work in the protection of natural resources."

Rokeya Kabir, executive director of BNPS; Sarah Hall, manager of women's empowerment and care of Oxfam Great Britain; Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD; Shoko Ishikawa, country representative of UN Women Bangladesh; among others, spoke at the event.

OCAB gets new committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new convening committee of the Overseas Correspondents Association Bangladesh (OCAB), a platform of Dhaka-based journalists working for foreign media, was announced yesterday.

The nine-member committee, headed by BBC correspondent Qadir Kallol, will be working to hold a new election within the next six months.

The convening committee will also conduct regular activities of the prestigious organisation. The new development came in a virtual meeting presided over by senior OCAB member Farid Hossain.

German news agency DPA's Nazrul Islam Mithu has been made member secretary of the committee.

Expat-turned

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When the team chased those who were at the tea stall, Latif ran away to the highway, said witnesses and the covered van driver Mohammad Yusuf yesterday.

Later, a private car belonging to Mizanur Rahman, former mayor of Tanore and member of the district unit of BNP, hit Latif confirmed the police officer, Lutfar Rahman.

Puthia UNO Nurul High Mohammad told The Daily Star, "I was half a kilometre from the spot during the incident. I didn't even get off my vehicle. None of the team chased anyone. Through loudspeaker, we asked all to go home."

Latif died on the way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital at 9:30pm, said Lutfar.

In Jashore, a mother and her son were killed as a speeding truck ran them over on Jashore-Benapole highway in Navaran area on Friday night.

Three motorcyclists were also injured when the truck hit them in front of Navaran Ansar Camp. Locals took the injured to Jashore General Hospital, sources said.

The deceased were identified as Safura Begum (60) and her son Shafiqul Islam (40) from Shalkona village in Sharsha.

Navaran Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Asaduzzaman said the truck was seized and its driver was detained.

In Joypurhat, two bikers were killed when a tractor hit their vehicle in Khetlal upazila yesterday. Roni Hossain (28) and Limon Hossain (25) from Bogura died on the spot, said Khetlal Police Station OC Nirendranath Mondal.

In Natore, a truck hit a motorbike on Natore-Bogura highway in Singra upazila yesterday, killing two bike riders and injuring another. The deceased were identified as Khalilur Rahman, founder of Tebaria Halimatus Sadiya Madrasa; and Md Belal Hossain, a teacher, said police.

Singra Police Station OC Nur-e-Alom said the injured -- Abdul Hamid -- was admitted to Singra Upazila Health Complex.

To celebrate

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Two write ups immediately came to my mind -- one by my eldest daughter Ruby Angela -- titled "Mourning, My Baby Brother Fahim". Millions of people had read and shared the article. Many newspapers and networks around the world reported on it. The other article is - "Fahim Saleh lit up Bangladesh's start-up scene like no other", written by Mahmudul Hasan, a journalist with Bangladesh's top English daily The Daily Star.

By then, Fahim's birthday, December 12, was approaching fast. I felt restless. I grabbed a pen and tried to write something about him after a long time. After some initial struggle, I came up with two write ups, one of it -- "Whom would I wish happy birthday to and whom would I embrace?" -- was printed on his birthday in the popular Bengali daily Prothom Alo. The other piece was published in Kaler Kontho -- "Little Fahim's Economy".

As the Ekushey Book Fair was coming up, I decided to publish the first print in Bengali. But who will publish it?

This is when I remembered Mazharul Islam of Anyprokash. Twelve years ago, my friend and renowned novelist Humayun Ahmed introduced me to Mazhar. Humayun Ahmed himself took a manuscript of one of my books from New York to Mazhar. The book "Ghuni Nilay" was published by Anyprokash in 2010.

I called Mazhar one night. It was difficult to speak, my physical and mental weakness and emotions were all mixed up. I don't know how much of my voice Mazhar recognised, he just said, "Send me a few pages by email. We will review and let you know if we want to pursue." I was disheartened. Still, I sent him the two articles on Fahim.

The next morning I got a call from Mazhar. He apologised for not recognising me. He said the only thing he understood from the phone call was that someone wanted to publish a book on Fahim Saleh.

He said he was happy that I contacted him after so many years. "Fahim Saleh is a youth icon of Bangladesh. I will definitely publish the book, and do it with pride," he said. I was relieved, grateful, and happy.

Fahim was a highly skilled web designer and artist. Each of his professional products and services have great graphics design. I gave Mazhar only one condition, that the quality of the book should be in line with Fahim's works. Mazhar has kept his word. He published the book with a lot of care and emotion. Artist Ahmed Shamsuddoha painted a portrait of Fahim for the cover. Masum Rahman is another great artist. He worked very hard and decorated each page delightfully well. I was always delighted to see his imaginative style on the covers of Humayun Ahmed's books.

I hope everyone will love the book as soon as they get it. People will know Fahim in a new way after reading the book. Fahim was light-hearted and playful, but he had uncompromising determination in his work. He was a millionaire, but that wasn't his focus. He was just passionate about anything he found a purpose in.

There are many stories in the book about how Fahim became 'Fahim'. This is not a book for mourning his passing, but a book to celebrate his life.

Saleh Uddin Ahmed is the father of Fahim Saleh. His book "Fahim Saleh Shopner Karigor" came out at the Ekushey Book Fair this year

WE MOURN

Mrs Salima Zahir Uddin
D/O of late Dr. Syed Heydayatullah
and wife of Shah Alam Zahiruddin,
chief Architect of Bangladesh govt
from 1970-1996, breathed her last
on **12 April 2021**. She had
died from **Covid-19**. Innallahhi
Wainnailahi Rajjun.

Salima Zahir Uddin did her graduation
in Fine Arts from the institute of Fine
Arts. She also was known for her
culinary craft and had conducted many cooking courses.
She is survived by her husband Shah Alam Zahiruddin,
one daughter Simeen Zahir son in law Shaheen Quader,
one son Shehzad Zahir, daughter in law Shaila Abedin,
grandchildren Barakhah, Bariza, Zayan and Waniza,
in addition to a host of relatives and friends to mourn her death.

May Allah grant her Jannat ul Firdous.

Nothing really

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came from both public and private sectors as donations but not as compensation that workers are legally entitled to.

Rana Plaza survivor Rupali Akhter, who now works at Savar EPZ, said, "We work for hours at the factory and spend our lives there but our situation doesn't change."

"We have to go to workplaces spending money amid the pandemic. Most of our incomes are being spent as travel cost... we want our lives to improve... we want safety and security," she said.

She demanded proper compensation for victims and exemplary punishment for those responsible for the Rana Plaza tragedy.

Writer and anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed and BGWS secretary Julhas Nain Babu were also present at the discussion.

Former

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He then developed bronchial complications and passed away in the morning, family sources said.

Bakht was one of the early members of The Daily Star team and became its news editor.

He later joined telecom operator GrameenPhone and eventually became its director of communications.

He ended his professional career at the company, his family said.

The Daily Star family expresses its deepest condolences to the bereaved family and urges all to pray for the emancipation of his soul.

Remembering on Her
10th Death Anniversary

"Whoever works righteousness, male or female, and has Faith, Verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions. "

Al-Quran; Surah Al-Nahal: verse-97

Family and well wishers

Fawzia Samad
(1929 - 2011)
Ex-President, Dhaka Ladies Club

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

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- Public Health Officer/SSA
- National Consultant - Health Emergency Operation Center (HEOC)/SSA
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Qualified female candidates are highly encouraged to apply

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