

BANGLADESH UPDATE



3,357
New cases in 24hrs



15,00,618
Total cases



26,195
Deaths



14,25,985
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



4,529,329
Deaths



218,270,557
Total cases

2 CID men 'framed trader for murder'

Says complaint filed with PMO

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Two police officers -- a special superintendent and a sub-inspector of the Criminal Investigation Department -- allegedly confined a trader to the CID headquarters for about three days and then framed him in a murder case as he refused to pay them extortion money, according to a complaint the trader filed with the PMO.

The 46-year-old trader, Yakub Ali, alleged that he had been tortured after he refused to pay Tk 10 lakh to Sub-inspector Dolon Majumder, the investigation officer of the murder case. His family later paid Dolon Tk 2 lakh so that he is spared from torture and also hassles of the case.

Contacted, Dolon claimed that the trader's allegations were false and his name came up after a witness in the case gave a statement before a court under Section-164.

But the witness, who gave the statement, later submitted an affidavit to a court, saying she was forced to

give the statement against the trader as she and four of her family members, including her daughter and son, were kept confined to the CID headquarters for three days.

In the complaint, Yakub alleged that Special Superintendent of CID (Dhaka North) Khalidul Haq Hawlader and Dolon framed him in the case.

The trader said he was in jail for one and a half months after he had been shown arrested in the case on June 13.

Securing bail on July 28, Yakub lodged the complaint with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on August 11 and sent its copies and relevant documents to home and law ministries, the police headquarters and the CID headquarters.

According to the complaint, a CID trader detained Yakub on June 10, confined him to their headquarters for 60 hours, tortured him and then produced him before a Dhaka court on June 13 seeking his remand for seven days. The court granted one day.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

No direction out of slump

FROM PAGE 1

department, however, would not put it all down to the party itself.

He said when an "authoritarian" government is in power and it does not give any space to the opposition, it's no wonder the BNP's activities are limited to seminars and wreath-laying programmes.

The party was founded on September 1, 1978, by late president Ziaur Rahman with a 19-point programme designed to build a "self-reliant" Bangladesh.

Since then, it formed government four times -- once under the leadership of its founder Ziaur Rahman and thrice under the leadership of his widow Khaleda Zia -- and was in opposition twice. It boycotted the January 5, 2014 election but participated in the 2018 election with Khaleda in jail and got only five seats.

Khaleda landed in jail on February 8, 2017 after being sentenced to five years' imprisonment by a special court in Dhaka in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case. On October 30 the following year, the High Court raised her punishment to 10 years after dismissing her appeal in the case.

The former prime minister was convicted by another special court in Dhaka in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case on October 29, 2018. She was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment by the court.

She was released from custody for six months on March 25 last year, just a day before the government announced a general holiday to contain Covid-19 transmission.

The government stayed her conviction for six months and freed her on humanitarian grounds considering her age on two conditions: she will not leave the country and will take treatment at home.

Since then, Khaleda has been staying at her home, away from political activities. With Khaleda in such situation, Tarique, who has been staying in London since 2008, is

instructing the leaders about how the party should be run.

However, some political analysts and many of the party's rank and file believe an active presence of the mother-son duo would have made a huge difference and steered the party out of its present sorry state.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir denies there is any leadership crisis. He alleges it's rather a propaganda by the government machineries.

"More than five lakh cases were filed against 35 lakh party leaders and activists, 500 were victims of enforced disappearance and more than a thousand were killed. Though there is no space for any political activities, BNP is on the streets, fighting for restoring democracy," he added.

Party's top brass said it is not the BNP rather the whole country is in a deep crisis as all the state machineries are politicised.

They said from the civil administration to political parties to the media, all are under severe pressure as the government is "authoritarian" in nature.

Abdul Moyeen Khan, party's standing committee member, said the BNP was established when the people strongly felt that democracy must be revived in Bangladesh, a country liberated through a bloody struggle with the sole objective of creating a democratic nation.

He said the party is based on Bangladeshi nationalism that everyone irrespective of race, religion and class embraced.

"The appeal of the BNP persists till today as it was founded by no other than Ziaur Rahman, who declared our independence. Now after 43 years, it is also time for the BNP to take stock (of the situation), since the democracy-loving people still look to the BNP as an organisation that can see off the current challenge and once again re-establish democracy in this country."

They raced against time

FROM PAGE 1

Sepehira in consultation with her six-member leadership team -- Frough, Batool, Sabira, Humaira, Niab and Samira -- was making the on-spot decisions.

After five days of repeated unsuccessful attempts to get through all the checkpoints into Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport, which saw huge crowds fleeing the country, the students eventually made it to the airport.

To make things worse, three students were detached from the group amidst the crowd at the airport. Failing to communicate with the others instantly, the three women found a room where they could charge their phones.

"As the phones were being charged, the exhausted girls fell asleep. And alas! Amidst the rush and confusions, the other 145 students of the team departed the airport without them for an unannounced US airbase in the Middle East," said the source.

Panic seized them when they woke up and found out what had happened. Terrified, they communicated with the team leaders through WhatsApp. Finally, a volunteer friend from Direct Relief (which is helping the AUW students with a shipment of Covid-19 supplies) could communicate and reach the stranded students at the airport. Later the three students could catch the next Milair flight to Doha last week.

"When they reached Doha, they

kept searching for the others but there was nobody else there because the other 145 students had all gone to Riyadh," the source said.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Kamal Ahmad, founder and trustee of AUW, in an open letter at the AUW webpage, said, "Our students and alumnae have been evacuated in US military planes out of Kabul. They have now safely reached bases in the Middle East where they will be processed for their onward journeys."

He said an extraordinary group of people helped them pull off this miracle. Those contributions will be appropriately acknowledged at a later date.

"This ordeal succeeded only after two grueling but failed attempts with our students huddled in a convoy of seven buses for forty straight hours."

"Our Afghan student leader and six others who supported her in the overall coordination and communication, showed a measure of competence, tenacity, and what Ernest Hemingway described as grace under pressure that I have not seen before, even myself as a child of a civil war of our own in Bangladesh. My deep gratitude to each of them."

"We pledge to continue to support that vision of another Afghanistan that has eluded us till now but inshallah will one day be realised. It is because of these women, like Sepehira and the others whom AUW has helped educate over the years, that that day must come and shall come."



PHOTO: COLLECTED

A helicopter of Bangladesh Air Force takes off from a helipad in Bandarban's Alikodom upazila yesterday to aerially plant seeds of 30 endangered trees, including Champa, Chapalish, Jarul, Gutgutia, Boyara and Haritki, in Sangu and Matamuhuri reserve forests. The Department of Forest has taken the initiative to plant five lakh seeds in these forests where the number of trees has dropped over the years. Green activists say timber smugglers in connivance with some dishonest officials of the forest department have destroyed the forests.

Stay alert, they are conspiring

Warns PM about anti-liberation forces

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to remain alert as anti-liberation forces along with their companions were still conspiring against Bangladesh taking assistance from abroad.

"War criminals, defeated forces, the August 15 killers and their children are still conspiring against Bangladesh. They're plotting against the country," she said.

The premier was addressing a programme, organised by Chhatra League at the city's Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh, marking the National Mourning Day.

She joined the event virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina said the evil forces are pampered by some international forces which had acted against Bangladesh's Liberation War. "The nation must remain alert to it."



Talking about Ziaur Rahman and his involvement in the Liberation War, Hasina said there is no instance that Zia fired a single shot at the Pakistani forces.

"No one can prove that," she said.

The PM mentioned that Mustaq, Rashid and Farooq during their interviews with the BBC admitted that Ziaur Rahman had always been with them. "Zia was the source of all power

[for them]; he betrayed."

Hasina said she sometimes wonders how these people, who had always visited Bangabandhu's house for various purposes, including personal matters, could kill the Father of the Nation. "How could they do that!"

She said the defeated forces took their revenge with the August 15 carnage and distorted the history of Bangladesh, its struggle for liberation and independence.

Hasina, the chief patron of Chhatra League, asked its leaders and activists to work for the country being imbued with patriotism and follow the ideals of the Father of the Nation.

Awami League presidium members Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Abdur Rahman, BCL President Al Nahean Khan Joy and General Secretary Lekhak Bhattacharjee also spoke at the programme.

Firdausi Qadri honoured with Magsaysay

FROM PAGE 1

foundation recognises her passion and lifelong devotion to the scientific profession and her vision of building the human and physical infrastructure that will benefit the coming generation of Bangladeshi scientists, and women scientists in particular, the press release said.

The board also considered her untiring contributions to vaccine development, advanced biotechnological therapeutics and critical research that have been saving millions of precious lives.

On the award's website, where this year's winners are listed, Dr Qadri is described as an "affordable vaccine champion".

The award is given every year to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the eradication of poverty and the development of the society in Asia.

Dr Qadri, 70, is an emeritus scientist at the Mucosal Immunology and Vaccinology Unit at the Infectious Diseases Division of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease and Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b).

She completed her doctorate in biochemistry at Liverpool University in the United Kingdom after obtaining a postgraduate degree in the subject. She joined the icddr,b in 1988.

Her biggest challenges came in

the fight against cholera and typhoid -- major diseases in Bangladesh and other Asian and African countries with poor access to safe water, sanitation, education, and medical care.

She played a key role in the development of a more affordable oral cholera vaccine (OCV) and the typhoid conjugate vaccine (ViTCV) for adults, children, and even infants as young as nine months.

Under the World Health Organization and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), she led a team of experts in the 2017-2020 OCV mass vaccination of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and prevented a mass cholera outbreak.

Last year, she helped facilitate the OCV vaccination of 1.2 million people in six high-risk districts of Dhaka.

The other recipients of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award are: Muhammad Amjad Saqib from Pakistan, recognised by the foundation as a "poverty alleviation visionary"; American Steven Muncy for his work as a "humanitarian and peace builder" in Southeast Asia; Watchdoc of Indonesia, a production house termed a "media truth crusader"; and Roberto Ballon of the Philippines, a fisherman and "community environmentalist".

The annual Ramon Magsaysay Award was established to perpetuate

former Philippine president Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society.

The prize was established in April 1957 by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund based in New York City with the concurrence of the Philippine government.

So far, 12 Bangladeshis received the prestigious award regarded as Asia's equivalent to the Nobel Prize.

Tahrunessa Ahmed Abdullah was the first among the Bangladeshis who received the award in 1978.

Brac founder Fazle Hasan Abed, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Prof Muhammad Yunus, Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, one of the founders of Notre Dame College Father Richard William Timm, enterpriser of Deedar Comprehensive Village Development Cooperative Society Mohammad Yeasin, founder of Banche Shekha Angela Gomes, founder of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Editor of Bangla daily Prothom Alo Matur Rahman, Executive Director of Centre for Disability in Development AHM Noman Khan and Chief Executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) Syeda Rizwana Hasan also received the prestigious award.

Killers' goal was to gag free speech

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammad Ziaul Haque alias Maj (sacked) Zia, Akram Hossain, Mozammel Hossain Saimon, Arafat Rahman Siam, Sheikh Abdullah alias Jubair, and Asadullah alias Foyjul.

The charges against them were proven beyond doubt, the judgement said.

Mozammel, Abdullah, Arafat, Asadullah and Akram had reced the area, where Xulhaz lived, several times before the murder. Xulhaz and Tonoy were killed at Zia's directive, it said.

Zia and Akram are still on the run. The other convicts are behind bars. Mozammel, Sheikh Abdullah, Arafat and Asadullah had earlier confessed their involvement in the murder.

The court acquitted, however, two accused -- Sabirul Haque Chowdhury and Junaid Ahmed alias Maulana Junaid -- as the charges against them could not be proven.

The verdict was pronounced around 12:10pm with four of the accused in the dock.

With their hands cuffed, the four were taken to the courtroom in helmets and bullet-proof vests around 30 minutes before noon amid tight security.

While getting off a prison van in front of the court building, Asadullah was all smiles. There was no sign of any remorse.

A large number of police personnel surrounded the four accused as they stood in the dock. An archway metal detector was set up at the entrance to

the bloc that housed the tribunal.

The trial was completed in 13 working days after charges were framed against the accused, the judge said, adding that 24 prosecution witnesses testified during the trial proceedings.

On April 25, 2016, Xulhaz and Tonoy were hacked to death inside Xulhaz's Kalabagan home in the capital.

Xulhaz was also the editor of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) magazine "Roopbaan", while Tonoy was an activist of theatre group Loknatya Dal.

Minhaz Mannan Emon, elder brother of Xulhaz, filed a murder case accusing some unidentified assailants with Kalabagan Police Station the same day.

On July 23, 2019, Inspector Muhammad Monirul Islam of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTC) unit of police submitted the charge sheet in the case before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka naming eight Ansar Al Islam members, including Zia, as accused.

On November 19 last year, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal framed charges against them.

On February 10 this year, Zia, Akram, Mozammel and Abdullah were sentenced to death for murdering Jagriti Prokashoni publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan inside Aziz Super Market in the capital's Shahbagh area.

On February 16, Zia, Akram, Mozammel and Arafat were also sentenced to death for killing writer-

blogger Avijit Roy near the TSC of Dhaka University.

COURTROOM YESTERDAY

The four convicts seemed calm when the judge read out the verdict. None of them showed any sign of repentance. They talked among themselves and laughed occasionally.

After the judge delivered the verdict and left the room, Arafat and Asadullah hailed the verdict.

Around 20 minutes before the verdict was delivered, Arafat and Abdullah got engaged in a verbal altercation with on-duty policemen as the cops tried to cuff them.

Asked about his reaction on the verdict, Xulhaz's brother Minhaz Mannan Emon said he was not the right person to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction over the judgement.

"I don't know the killers. I could not even lodge the complaint against any specific person," he told The Daily Star over phone.

"Some unidentified assailants brutally killed my brother. I filed the case seeking justice. I wanted the killers to be identified and arrested. After a long time, the judgement has been pronounced."

"It will be better if you take the opinion of the state, which is engaged in the entire procedure and discharged its duties."

Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu expressed satisfaction over the verdict.

Defence lawyer MABM Khairul Islam said they were not satisfied. He said they would challenge the judgement with the higher court.

86 more die from Covid, 3,357 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country recorded 86 deaths from Covid-19 in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, said a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

With this, the total number of novel coronavirus deaths in the country now stands at 26,195. The death rate is 1.75 percent.

A total of 28,097 samples were tested across the country during the 24 hours and at least 3,357 new infections were recorded, taking the total number of people infected to 15,00,618, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 11.95 percent while the overall positivity rate stands at 16.81 percent.

At least 4,102 Covid patients have recovered during the 24-hour period.

The total number of recoveries now stands at 14,25,985 and the recovery rate is 95.03 percent.

Among the 86 deceased, 44 were men and 42 women.

Of them, one was aged between 0 and 10 years, three were between 21 and 30, six between 31 and 40, eight between 41 and 50, 15 between 51 and 60, 29 between 61 and 70, 19 between 71 and 80 and four between 81 and 90, and one was between 91 and 100, said the release.

Pori Moni granted

FROM PAGE 1

valid until the police file its report in the case, the judge said, adding that the prosecution could not come up with any strong reason as to why the bail would not be given.

During the hearing, her lawyers told the court that Pori, 31, was not produced before the court within 24 hours of her arrest, which is a violation law.

She was placed on remand for seven days in three phases, which is also against the law, the defence claimed, adding that Rab recovered narcotics at her bedroom, she was not carrying it.

The actress had signed up for a number of films which cannot be completed if she remained in jail. Moreover, she suffers from vertigo attacks, the defence told the court.

The lawyer also assured the court that Pori would not hamper investigation against her and will not flee getting the bail.

Opposing the bail petition, Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu said Pori had committed a heinous offence by possessing narcotics.

Upon hearing from both the sides, the judge granted her ad-interim bail.

On August 22, Pori filed a bail petition with the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court challenging a lower court's order rejecting her bail plea.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh then set September 13 to hear the petition.

But the High Court on August 26 issued a rule asking the government to explain by today why the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court should not be directed to hear and dispose of Pori's bail application within two days.

The HC also fixed today to hear on the rule.

On August 5, Pori and her associate Ashrafur Islam Dipu were arrested in the case filed by Rab with Banani Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

The previous day, members of the force detained them. They claimed they seized foreign liquor and narcotics from her residence.

Stalin-era mass graves unearthed in Ukraine

AFP, Odessa

The remains of up to 20,000 people have been found in Ukraine's southern city of Odessa as excavations continue at a site believed to be a mass grave of victims of Stalin's Terror, historians said Monday.

According to various estimates, the bones of between 5,000 and 20,000 people lie in the ground, making it one of the largest mass graves unearthed in Ukraine so far.

They were discovered this month close to Odessa airport after exploratory works started as part of expansion plans.

"As of today, 29 graves have been discovered. The bodies lie in several layers," local historian Oleksandr Babych told journalists at the site which until recently was a garbage dump.

"Already we can clearly see at least five layers," he said.

Historians believe that these people were executed in the 1930s, the time known as Stalin's Great Terror.

Archaeologist Tetyana Samoylova, a chief consultant at the site, highlighted the "cynicism" with which the sentences were carried out.

"They dug out pits in the garbage and threw these people in or shot them dead as they were standing there," Samoylova said.