

SINHA MURDER CASE Prosecution witnesses finish testifying

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Upon completion of recording depositions of prosecution witnesses in Major (ret) Sinha Rashed Khan's murder case, the court yesterday fixed December 6 to 8 for producing defence witnesses.

The case's investigation officer Mohammad Khairul Islam, also a prosecution witness, was cross-examined by the defence counsellors yesterday.

Including him, 65 witnesses have testified before Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court since August 23 when the court began the case's formal trial.

According to the charge sheet, 83 people are witnesses to the incident. But the prosecution now says testimonies of 65 witnesses are enough.

On June 27, the court framed charges against 15 accused. Of them, 12 are police personnel, including former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradeep Kumar Das, police inspector Liaqat Ali, sub-inspector Md Shahjahan, and assistant sub-inspector Liton Mia, who were all suspended.

Sinha, 36, was killed in a police firing at a checkpoint of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) at Teknaf's Shamlapur area on July 31 last year.

Police claimed that they tried to search the vehicle, and Sinha pulled out a gun.

Sword carried

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After being crowned emperor, Napoleon is believed to have presented the sword to general Jean-Andoche Junot, but the general's wife later was forced to sell it to pay off debts.

It was then recovered by a London museum. A US collector was its last owner, but the man recently died, according to the auction house.

In May, France celebrated the bicentennial of Napoleon's death.

The famed Corsican is one of the most divisive figures in French history, his huge contribution to the creation of the modern state set against his imperialism and war-mongering.

Complete trials

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communal harmony is completed in 90 working days.

He also said the judiciary maintains a zero-tolerance policy against those trying to damage the country's communal harmony.

He said this while speaking as the chief guest at a function organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) at its auditorium. The programme was arranged on the occasion of "Bijaya Punarmilani", a reunion after Durga Puja.

Pressure on India

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She further said, "There is a charge that India is allowing the Mukti Bahini to operate from her soil. How can we check it? Our border with East Pakistan is so long that even if India deployed her entire army, it would not be able to stop them."

MUJIB IN EXCELLENT HEALTH:

YAHYA Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in excellent health, reported UNI quoting Pakistan president Yahya Khan.

US Senator William B Saxbe told newsmen before leaving for Karachi en route to Bombay that he met president Yahya today and asked that he be allowed to see if Mujib was still alive, but the request was turned down.

BHUTTO CALLS SEVEN-PARTY FRONT BOGUS

Pakistan People's Party leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto today sharply attacked the seven-party united front as a gap apparently widened between the two groups which president Yahya had sought to combine.

"They have formed a bogus coalition," said Bhutto in reference to the United Coalition Party (UCP) headed by the Pakistan Democratic Party chairman Nurul Amin who was widely regarded as the major candidate for prime ministership in a civilian regime promised by the military.

THANT RELAYS NOTE ON A PAKISTAN TEAM

A United Nations spokesperson said today that secretary-general Thant wished "to have action by a major organ" of the UN before sending international observers to the borders of East Pakistan.

The statement was the first public explanation why the secretary-general had opted to take no direct action on Pakistan's request for observers, which was delivered on November 29, 1971.

Thant relayed the request to the president of the UN Security Council, whose members had been privately considering draft resolutions concerning the Indian/Pakistan conflict.

However, Western diplomats said that the Council seemed unlikely to act unless the situation deteriorates further. *Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com*



A farmer sprays pesticides on his cabbage field in Singair upazila of Manikganj yesterday. The chemical he is using can be harmful to human health but he has no protective gear on.

PHOTO:
PALASH KHAN

Axe irritants, engage deeply

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a sovereign territory. I hope the leadership [of both the countries] will give content to these concepts."

He said there are some outstanding agenda including on water issues, border management and non-tariff barriers in trade that need to be addressed at the earliest.

Debapriya also said that geopolitics is evolving around the Indian Ocean, and that bilateral relations can often become hostage to extra-regional politics. "So, keep in mind that you have to develop a bilateral relationship within that."

Former foreign secretary Md Shahidul Haque said Indo-Bangla relationship will grow under the framework of a larger Indo-Pacific global politics.

"It will also depend on who is

in the leadership. New issues like technologies will also define a lot of it," he said.

Haque said the Indo-Bangla relationship is not only economic but also political. Therefore, political understanding between the two countries is very important.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahrir Alam said it is necessary that Bangladesh receives its fair share of the Teesta water based on the draft agreement agreed upon by both the governments in 2011.

He said the deals on the Teesta and other common rivers should be signed at the earliest.

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said the Indo-Bangla relations flourished pretty well, but there are a lot more opportunities untapped. For example, Indian investments to

Bangladesh and connectivity and trade with the Northeast Indian states are still works in progress.

Former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri said some critical issues, including water resources management, need to be solved to build trust in the bilateral relationship.

She said it should be asked why Indian investors are reluctant to invest in Bangladesh.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami said comprehensive border management and addressing the factors that lead to illegal activities by the people in the borders need to be addressed for stopping border killing, which is very unexpected.

He stressed on reducing hassles at the land borders, strengthening river and rail routes for augmenting trade.

Water expert Dr Ainun Nishat said the water issue should be looked at from management perspective, instead of water sharing. How to go for basin-wide water management, checking drought and saving rivers should be the approach.

Dr Sachin Chaturvedi, director general of RIS; Prof SK Mohanty and Dr Prabir De of RIS; CPD Distinguished Fellow Dr Mustafizur Rahman; Dr Uttam Kumar Sinha, research fellow at Manohar Parrkar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India; Dr Sreeratha Datta, senior fellow at the Vivekananda International Foundation, India; Kazi Nabil Ahmed MP of Bangladesh; Muchkund Dubey, former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, also spoke.

CPD Executive Director Dr Fahmida Khatun moderated the discussion.

Bring back Capt Mahbub

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The meeting, on November 28, identified Capt Mahbub, also the president of the pilots' association, as one of those "troublemakers".

A day later, he got a letter on "termination of service" signed by the Biman MD. In the letter, he was asked to receive all his dues.

Capt Mahbub alleged that authorities sacked him without serving him any show-cause notice or giving him any chance to defend himself -- all in violation of Biman's service rules and labour law.

Contacted last night, Biman CEO Saleh Mostafa said Capt Mahbub's service is no longer required and that's why his contract has been terminated.

When the coronavirus came to the country's shore last year, Biman had slashed salaries of pilots along with other officials as a cost-cutting measure.

Recently, the national flag carrier decided that the salaries of its employees would not be cut from August this year but that was not applicable to pilots.

Govt sets strict rules for arrivals

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Services organised the discussion to mark World AIDS Day. This year, the day was observed with the theme -- "End inequalities, End AIDS. End Pandemics".

Maleque said, "People coming from Africa must undergo a 14-day quarantine. If 20,000 people from Africa come to the country at a time, then it won't be possible to keep them under institutional quarantine."

If anyone comes to Bangladesh, he or she must show his or her Covid negative report done 48 hours before

departure. Earlier, it was 72 hours.

If anyone fails to show Covid test report, then the traveller must stay in an institutional quarantine for 48 hours, he added.

The health ministry will write to the ministries concerned to take measures in this regard.

The hotels which were used for institutional quarantine before have resumed their normal activities, but now they have been requested to rearrange quarantine centres, said Maleque.

On Tuesday, at a briefing after an inter-ministerial meeting on

preparation and prevention of Covid-19 pandemic, the minister requested people who live in African countries not to come to Bangladesh right now.

Till yesterday, 27,983 people died of Covid-19 in the country. Since the detection of the first case of the disease on March 8 last year, 15,76,566 people have tested Covid positive. The death toll and positivity rate shot up after the spread of Delta variant earlier this year in the country.

Amid the improvement of situation, the new variant -- Omicron

-- was first detected at a lab in South Africa on November 19.

Countries are now limiting travel from the region and imposing other restrictions for fear it could spread quickly even in vaccinated populations.

Regarding AIDS issue, the health minister said the government has been providing free test and treatment to AIDS patients.

"AIDS patients are getting free treatment at 11 hospitals," he said, adding that the HIV test facilities would soon be expanded to district level.

Return to classes, don't damage vehicles

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marking the inauguration of a mural of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the premises of Bangladesh Shishu Academy and the laying of the foundation stone of Joyeeta Foundation tower in the capital's Dhanmondi.

The programme was organised at Osmani Memorial Auditorium. The PM joined the event virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

"A new wave of coronavirus is coming. If it hits [the country], the educational institutions will be closed. So, go back to your educational institutions and concentrate on your studies," the premier asked students.

Hasina said those who are responsible for vandalising and torching vehicles would also be identified and punished. "If anyone

dies in such a vehicle [vandalised and torched], if anyone is burnt, tough punishment will be meted out. We need to keep this in mind."

About the recent road accidents, the premier said the law enforcement agencies are very much aware and alert and the culprits have been captured already with the help of video footage and modern technologies.

She urged all to remain cautious and careful on roads and strictly follow traffic rules. "There are specific places to cross roads. If people try to cross roads indiscriminately, then accidents will happen. A moving vehicle cannot stop abruptly. It has to happen slowly."

She came down heavily on those who always block roads, damage vehicles and set vehicles on fire after any accident instead of helping the victims to get treatment promptly.

Teachers of KUET go on strike after teacher dies

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A group of 40-50 students, led by Sadman Nahyan Sejan, general secretary of KUET Chhatra League, intercepted Prof Selim on the campus road around 12:30pm on Tuesday.

General students and teachers alleged that the BCL activists tortured him mentally over the selection of the dining manager for December of the Lalon Shah Hall.

Prof Selim was the provost of that

hall. He was appointed around nine months ago.

A CCTV footage of the incident showed several students entering the teacher's room around 12:30pm on Tuesday and they came out after 40 minutes.

Rita Khanam, the victim's wife, said that he came from the campus around 2:00pm and went to the bathroom.

Finding no response, they broke open the bathroom door and found

him motionless, she said.

"He was declared dead after rushing to Khulna Medical College Hospital. He died due to cardiac arrest," she said, quoting doctors.

She said her husband had no problem or health complications other than high blood pressure.

Sadman Nahyan Sejan, general secretary of the KUET BCL, said, "I did not go there as a BCL leader. I am the member secretary of

the University Student Welfare Committee.

"I went to meet him for the first time after Selim sir took charge as provost of Lalon Shah Hall and talk about various programmes in the month of victory," he said.

Prof Ismail Saifullah, director of the KUET Student's Welfare Council, said a three-member investigation committee was formed on Tuesday night to investigate the matter.

Case against

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that day recorded the complainant's statement and set yesterday -- the date previously scheduled for submission of the probe report -- to pass an order on the withdrawal petition.

The court also directed the PBI to halt investigation.

Lawyer Imrul made headlines and received flak online for filing the case against the band which performed at the "Concert Against Violence" in Dhaka University's TSC on October 22. The concert was organised as a protest against the recent communal attacks on the Hindu community.

In the case statement, Imrul said he watched the performance on YouTube and alleged that it "hurt religious sentiment".

Different artistes and media personalities expressed solidarity with the band, posting comments with the hashtag #Meghdoler pashe darao (stand by Meghdol).

HSC exams

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during the exam as the new highly transmissible Omicron variant is looming large.

The exams are very important for students as those will decide where they end up for higher education, she said at an event in Chandpur on Tuesday.

The number of examinees in this year's HSC and its equivalent exams has gone up by 33,901 from last year. About 14 lakh students are expected to sit this year's tests. Of them, 7.30 lakh are boys and 6.70 lakh are girls.

About 11.4 lakh students will participate in the exams under nine general education boards, 1.13 lakh under the madrasa education board and 1.48 lakh under the technical education board.

MARKS DISTRIBUTION Science group students will have to take exams carrying 32 marks in each paper, while examinees from humanities and business groups will need to take exams carrying 45 marks in each paper, said education board officials.

According to a directive of education boards, science students will need to answer two out of eight questions and the total marks will be 20. They will have to answer 12 out of 25 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and the total marks will be 12.

Humanities and business students will have to answer three out of 11 questions and the marks will be 30. They will need to answer 15 out of 30 MCQs and the marks will be 15.

The results of the three optional subjects and the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the students' SSC and JSC tests will be taken into consideration while preparing the HSC results for this year.

'Don't freak out'

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is rooted in science: If a virus achieves immune escape, it achieves it against antibodies, but there is the second level of immune response that protects from severe disease—the T-cells," he told the WSJ.

The interview with BioNTech's chief followed on the heels of comments made by Moderna's CEO Stephane Bancel on Tuesday. In an interview with the Financial Times (paywall), Bancel warned that current Covid-19 jabs will be far less effective against Omicron.

"There is no world, I think, where [the effectiveness] is the same level... we had with Delta," he said.

"I think it's going to be a material drop. I just don't know how much because we need to wait for the data. But all the scientists I've talked to... are like 'this is not going to be good.'"

Bancel's comments rattled European and Asian markets, sending stocks and oil prices lower.

In his interview with the WSJ, Sahin said that bringing an adjusted, Omicron-targeting jab to market would take about 100 days, but that it might not be necessary.

"We have a plan to administer a third shot to people, and we must stick to this plan and speed it up," he told the WSJ. "Whether or not we will need extra protection by an adapted vaccine, this remains to be seen, later."

US TIGHTENS TRAVEL RULES Air travellers to the United States will face tougher Covid-19 testing rules and other countries tightened border controls yesterday to try to slow the spread of the Omicron variant that Nigeria said had been circulating weeks earlier than thought.

Retrospective tests on confirmed Covid-19 infections in travellers to Nigeria had identified the Omicron variant among a sample collected in October, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control said, without naming the country of origin.

India yesterday suspended resumption of regular international flights from December 15, in view of the emergence of Omicron variant.

A new date for resuming international flights would be announced in due course, the directorate general of civil aviation of the country said in a tweet, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Australia said at least two people visited several locations in Sydney while likely infectious and Denmark said an infected person had taken part in a large concert.