

Example of miscarriage

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law and order runs its own course. But that is not the case. Those who are in the higher positions, or who are highly wealthy, spread their web of influence to justify their own crimes by different ways and means," Barua added.

Police should have taken the case immediately, said Muhammad Nurul Huda, a former inspector general of the police.

"As a rule of thumb, it is the police's duty to accept and record assumed cases as they come. Next comes an investigation to determine the truth. Not accepting the case is a weakness."

Huda went on to call for a thorough investigation of the issue.

Supervising officers or the court can ask for an explanation in this regard, he added.

Nur-e-Azam Mia, the OC of Banani police station, said an all-out investigation is going on. "We can share the details after the investigation is complete," he told The Daily Star.

The media also was complicit in the violation of basic rights of Hajong, a retired Border Guard Bangladesh member: it did not take Hasan's name at all.

"Here, a power abuse took place due to the existence of power play. His name was not published because the media is biased towards the powerful," said Robayet Ferdous, a professor of the University of Dhaka's mass communication and journalism department.

Another reason behind not publishing his identity could be the media's fear of the court.

Had Mohua Hajong been higher-ranked police, a senior official from a different force or a prominent businessman instead of being a lower-ranked sergeant, her case would have been filed and she or her family would not have faced any kind of harassment,

Ferdous said.

"Monorajan Hajong faced boundless injustice. He became a victim of an accident. He was wounded, he was suffering in the hospital bed, and yet, virtually no one stood in favour of him."

Instead, a GD was filed against him and his daughter with the intent to harass and intimidate.

"Our administration works in favour of people like the accused -- those in the upper echelons of the power structure. Our media too works in favour of the powerful, the rich, the Dhaka city inhabitants and the men. Those who are women, marginalised and poor are always given less importance by the media," Ferdous added.

Gitiara Nasreen, also a professor at the DU's MCJ department, echoed the same.

While the digital security act and several other harassing and silence-inducing procedures can be blamed for its silence, a bigger reason is the involvement of the media with the power centres.

"In order to stay connected with the power centres or to enjoy certain benefits, the media is becoming more of a 'lapdog' instead of playing the role of the 'watchdog', which they are supposed to play."

The government's wings that are supposed to ensure safety and justice for its citizens are not performing their duties, Nasreen said.

"Under the current circumstances, the citizens are living in constant trepidation. The influential people are holding the common people at gunpoint and for this, they don't have to face any kind of accountability, either."

Translated by Mohammed Ishtiaque Khan



A health worker (L) looks on as people wait to receive a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at a pop-up coronavirus vaccination centre at the Redbridge Town Hall, east London on December 25, 2021.

PHOTO: AFP

In hospital bed, they recall

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Institute with 30 percent inhalation burn.

Her husband was also admitted to the burn institute with 12 percent burns.

At the same hospital with 10 percent burns is Habibur Rahman Hasan, 17, a madrasa student from Barguna, who was in the ill-fated MV Abhijan-10 with his 14-year-old sister Suraiya Akhter.

As the fire engulfed the vessel, Habib decided to jump from the deck's first floor. But his sister hesitated as she cannot swim.

"I jumped as I could not bear the heat of the fire. But when I looked back, I saw my sister crying for help. Please save me, brother...don't leave me alone," Suraiya pleaded to her brother.

Then Habib swam back to the launch. It took a couple of minutes to find her in the chaos.

"Then we both jumped. But my sister was struggling to swim and was sinking again and again," Habib said, adding that he struggled to take her to the shore.

Suraiya was taking treatment at Barishal's Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Habib, Bankim, Monik and the 12 others who are undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute are not out of danger yet as they have

inhalation burns, Samanta Lal Sen, coordinator of the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, told reporters yesterday.

It is important that the patients get enough fluid immediately, he said, adding that subsequent treatment depends on it.

A seven-member team from the hospital has gone to Barishal to attend to the launch victims.

The critical patients will be sent to Dhaka if needed while the rest will be treated in Barishal, he said, adding that they would hold a virtual meeting with the medical team today to take further steps.

The government has taken responsibility for the treatment of the injured in the launch tragedy, said Sheikh Selim, presidium member of Awami League, at an event yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is inquiring about their treatment and other matters, he added.

Some 40 fire victims were taking treatment at the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal yesterday, according to its Director AHM Saiful Islam.

At least seven to eight of them are critical, he said, adding that the seven-member medical team from Dhaka were looking after them.

The tragic fire at MV Abhijan-10 on early Friday claimed at least 41 lives and about 100 sustained burn injuries.

Ethiopia govt says no further advance into Tigray

AFP, Nairobi

Ethiopia's government said on Friday that its troops would not advance further into the war-torn region of Tigray but warned that the decision could be overturned if "territorial sovereignty" was threatened.

The announcement comes days after the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) rebel group declared a retreat to their Tigray stronghold, and signals a pause in fighting following a series of battlefield victories claimed by the government.

Although unconfirmed, the TPLF pullout from the Amhara and Afar regions had raised hopes there would be talks to end a 13-month conflict that has killed thousands and left parts of the country on the brink of famine.

On Friday, the government communication service released a statement saying federal forces had secured eastern Amhara and Afar and been ordered to "vigilantly remain in areas under our control".

"The Ethiopian government has decided not to command its forces to further advance into the Tigray region," it said in the statement shared on Twitter.

UN chief Antonio Guterres welcomed the Ethiopian government's announcement and the message from the Tigrayan forces, his deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

"The secretary-general urges the parties to grasp this opportunity, cease hostilities in the year-long conflict, take all steps to ensure the provision of much-needed humanitarian assistance, the withdrawal of foreign fighters, and address political differences through a credible and inclusive national dialogue," Haq said

in a statement.

The temporary halt to fighting may help lower the temperature after months of battles that have seen both sides claim major territorial gains.

At one point, the rebels claimed to be only 200 kilometres (125 miles) by road from the capital Addis Ababa, sparking alarm among foreign governments who urged their citizens to leave the country as soon as possible.

But since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed -- the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner -- headed to the front last month, according to state media, the government has claimed to have retaken a string of key towns.

The government has dismissed Monday's withdrawal announcement by the TPLF as a cover-up for military setbacks.

Communications have been cut in the conflict zone and access for journalists is restricted, making it difficult to verify battlefield claims.

The fighting in Africa's second most populous nation has displaced more than two million people and more than nine million are in need of food aid, according to UN estimates.

There have been reports of massacres, mass rapes and other atrocities by all sides, and the UN Human Rights Council last week ordered a probe into a wide range of alleged abuses, a move condemned by Addis Ababa.

The war broke out in November last year when Abiy sent troops into Tigray to topple the TPLF, accusing its fighters of attacking army camps.

He vowed a swift victory, but the TPLF mounted a shock comeback, recapturing most of Tigray by June and then advancing into Afar and Amhara.

At least 30 killed in Greece

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The UN refugee agency said the Folegandros accident could end up being the worst in the Aegean this year, as an unknown number of people were still missing.

"This shipwreck is a painful reminder that people continue to embark on perilous voyages in search of safety," said Adriano Silvestri, the UNHCR's assistant representative in Greece.

Earlier Friday, the coastguard had intercepted another boat with 92 men and boys on board after it ran aground

on the coast of the Peloponnese peninsula.

Three suspected smugglers who fled the boat on foot were later arrested.

The UNHCR estimates that more than 2,500 people have died or gone missing at sea as they tried to reach Europe from January through November this year.

Nearly one million people, mainly Syrian refugees, arrived in the European Union in 2015 after crossing the sea to the Greek islands close to Turkey.

"These days, the criminal activity

of smugglers, who are indifferent to human life, has intensified, stacking dozens of distressed people, without life jackets, on boats that do not even meet the basic safety standards," Giannis Plakiotakis, Maritime Affairs Minister said late Friday pointing the finger at Turkey, saying Ankara "lets smugglers act unchecked."

Rivals Greece and Turkey regularly spar over the issue of migrants, with Athens accusing Ankara of turning a blind eye to people attempting to cross into EU member Greece and Turkey denying the charges.

Most powerful telescope launched

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Named after a former Nasa director, Webb follows in the footsteps of the legendary Hubble -- but intends to show humans what the Universe looked like even closer to its birth nearly 14 billion years ago.

Speaking on social media, Webb project co-founder John Mather described the telescope's unprecedented sensitivity.

"#JWST can see the heat signature of a bumblebee at the distance of the Moon," he said.

All that power is needed to detect the weak glow emitted billions of years ago by the very first galaxies to exist and the first stars being formed.

The telescope is unequalled in size and complexity.

Its mirror measures 6.5 metres (21 feet) in diameter -- three times the size of the Hubble's mirror -- and is made of 18 hexagonal sections.

It is so large that it had to be folded to fit into the rocket.

That manoeuvre was laser-guided with Nasa imposing strict isolation measures to limit any contact with the telescope's mirrors from particles or even human breath.

Once the rockets have carried Webb 120 kilometres, the protective nose of the craft, called a "fairing", is shed to lighten the load.

To protect the delicate instrument from changes in pressure at that stage, rocket-builder Ariospace installed a custom decompression system.

Crew on the ground will know

whether the first stage of the flight was successful about 27 minutes after launch.

Once it reaches its station, the challenge will be to fully deploy the mirror and a tennis-court-sized sun shield.

That intimidatingly complex process will take two weeks and must be flawless if Webb is to function correctly.

Its orbit will be much farther than Hubble, which has been 600 kilometres above the Earth since 1990.

The location of Webb's orbit is called the Lagrange 2 point and was chosen in part because it will keep the Earth, the Sun and the Moon all on the same side of its sun shield.

Webb is expected to officially enter service in June.

EC breaches law

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The EC officials violated the law and took part in this conspiracy... The High Court declared my nomination papers legal and I will fight to get my symbol back."

Itefkar, first a rival and now an AL candidate, said, "These are all old issues. I am now only focusing on the election."

A similar incident took place in Rajgati union in the same upazila, where Shahadat Hossain submitted his papers with the AL recommendation and Abdur Rauf submitted his independently. However, Rauf got the "boat" candidacy and Shahadat's nomination was cancelled.

Challenging the EC's decisions, both Amdad and Shahadat first appealed to the commission and then to the HC.

On December 20, the HC bench of Justice Md Khasruzzaman and Justice Md Khairul Alam declared their nomination papers valid and directed the EC to accept their nominations.

Till yesterday, neither of them got their nominations back, while the election is expected to be held on

January 5.

Contacted, lawmaker Anwarul Abedin Khan claimed the candidates were changed as per Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's directions.

VIOLATION OF LAW

According to a circular issued by the EC on November 27, no political party can nominate more than one person for the chairman post in the Union Parishad polls.

"If more than one person is nominated by a party, the nomination paper will be considered void," it wrote.

Section 12 (7) of Local government (Union Parishad) regulations 2010 (amended in 2015) states that if any person signs more than one nomination paper, all their papers, except the first one submitted, will be cancelled.

Election analysts' say the Returning Officer and EC have violated the law.

Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Sujam -- Citizens for Good Governance --, who has been observing the UP polls for long, told The Daily Star that the EC has no jurisdiction to receive any party nomination paper after the

scheduled time.

"In this case, the law has been completely violated. This cannot be tolerated in any way," he said Badiul.

Muhammad Fakhruzzaman, upazila election officer and Chandipasha UP polls' RO, told The Daily Star that they are waiting for the certified copy of HC verdict.

"We had received photocopies of the party nomination papers before the due date. The original copies were submitted after some time," he claimed.

The Daily Star, however, obtained a copy of a letter, signed by him, sent to the EC saying they received the paper after the due date without any receipt.

Fakhruzzaman said, "The symbol has already been allotted, now we will do what the court has says."

Rajgati Union RO Mashiur Rahman told The Daily Star, they will follow the HC verdict.

Election Commissioner Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that he was not even informed of these incidents.

"Since the High Court is involved in the matter, we will follow whatever it says."



Afghan boys warm themselves by a bonfire on a street in Kabul, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Daily Covid

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the total number of people infected to 15,82,985, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 2.01 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 13.92 percent.

A total of 13,699 samples were tested across the country in the 24 hours.

At least 224 Covid-19 patients have recovered during the period.

The total number of recoveries now stands at 15,47,180 and the recovery rate at 97.74 percent.

The deceased was a man, between 61-70 years old, added the release.

Ten killed in Iran road crash: state media

AFP, Tehran

Ten people were killed and more than a dozen injured in Iran yesterday when a truck collided with a minibus transporting workers in southwestern Khuzestan province, state media said.

The accident occurred at around 7:15 am (0345 GMT) on the road between the cities of Ahvaz and Khorramshahr, Khuzestan's traffic police chief Reza Dolatshahi said.

"The number of people killed in the crash on the old Ahvaz-Khorramshahr road has reached 10," Dolatshahi said, according to the official IRNA news agency.

The collision caused a pile-up involving three other vehicles, Dolatshahi added.

At least 13 other people were injured, IRNA said, citing a Khuzestan emergency services spokesperson.

Those who died were the truck driver and passengers on the minibus, Fars news agency reported, citing an official from the province's Red Crescent.

The Ahvaz-Khorramshahr road is 100 kilometres (62 miles) long and sees significant truck activity to and from the Shalamshah border crossing with Iraq, according to Iranian media.

Governor of Iraq's Najaf resigns after protests

AFP, Najaf

The governor of Iraq's Najaf province resigned on Friday, a day after another governor also quit following demonstrations against living conditions and corruption.

Louai al-Yasseri resigned from his leadership in Najaf, in central Iraq, a day after the governor of Nasiriyah province in the south quit following the violent suppression of protesters.

Their departures underline the challenges facing war-scarred Iraq and how little has changed despite protests that swept Baghdad and the South two years ago.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets to express their anger at corruption, unemployment and crumbling public services, and hundreds lost their lives in protest-related violence.

Yasseri announced at a press conference that he was leaving his post in the holy Shiite city, according to the official Iraqi News Agency.

His resignation follows harsh criticism from prominent Shiite leader Moqtada Sadr, who emerged as kingmaker following legislative elections in October.

Sadr paid a public visit to the municipality in Najaf on Wednesday after "reports of corruption and shortcomings in this institution", according to the news agency.