



## Khaleda home after tests in hospital

Her doctor says she needs treatment abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is sick and the decision of her further hospitalisation would be taken after receiving her latest medical tests' reports, said doctors.

Khaleda's physician AZM Zahid Hossain yesterday said the 76-year-old former premier needed to be taken abroad for better treatment.

He made the statement after Khaleda's check-ups were done in the capital's Evercare Hospital.

"Following the advice of the medical board, Khaleda Zia was taken to the hospital. All the necessary tests including heart, kidney, liver and other tests were performed. After getting the reports, the next step would be taken," he told journalists.

Zahid said that the medical board again

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



After her condition worsened, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was taken to Evercare Hospital for some tests yesterday morning. Whether she would be admitted to hospital will be known once the results are received.

PHOTO: BNP

## Lanka president won't resign

Says his govt's whip as parliament Speaker warns crippling economic crisis risks starvation

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will not resign, his government's whip said yesterday, despite demonstrations against his handling of the country's worst economic crisis in decades and as doctors held street protests over a shortage of medicine.

Rajapaksa, governing the country since 2019 with other family members in top positions, revoked a state of emergency late on Tuesday after five days as dozens of lawmakers walked out of the ruling coalition, leaving his government in a minority.

The debt-laden country has been struggling to pay for imports due to a shortage of foreign exchange.

Sri Lankans have been suffering from shortages of fuel, power, food, drugs and other items for weeks, and doctors say the entire health system could collapse.

Street protests began a month ago and have intensified in recent days, with people openly defying the emergency and a weekend curfew to demand the ouster of Rajapaksa.

"May I remind you that 6.9 million people voted for the president," Chief Government Whip Johnston Fernando said in parliament in response to criticism from the opposition and cries of "Go home Gota".

"As a government, we are clearly saying the president will not resign under any circumstances. We will face this."

The Speaker of parliament warned yesterday that Sri

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## His stance against illegal activities got him killed

Rab says on Soheli Chowdhury murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Film star Soheli Chowdhury's strong stance against anti-social activities in Trumps Club in Banani and his subsequent feud with businessman Aziz Mohammad Bhui led to his murder 24 years ago, according to the charge sheet of the case filed after the murder.

The sensational murder in front of the club on December 18, 1998, came to fore again on Tuesday after Rab arrested Ashish Rai Chowdhury, one of the accused.

After investigation, the Detective Branch of police pressed charges against Aziz, the club's co-owners Ashish and Afqul Islam also known as Bunty Islam, and suspects Sanjivul Hasan Emon and Harun Ur Rashid also known as Leather Liton and four others on

July 30, 1999.

The charge sheet mentioned that Bunty and Ashish started anti-social activities – alcohol consumption and inappropriate dance shows – in the club which was near Banani Jame Masjid.

"Soheli Chowdhury along with people of the mosque management committee tried to shut the club down, but failed," said the charge sheet.

Soheli on July 24, 1998, had a brawl with Aziz. He also had tussles with Bunty and Ashish at the club. The charge sheet

further said Bunty and Ashish had threatened Soheli Chowdhury.

On the day he was killed, Soheli wanted to get into the club but he was barred. Around 3:00am, he tried again when the accused and their hitmen killed Soheli, the charge sheet read.

Khandaker Al Moin, Rab's legal and media wing director,

at a press conference yesterday, claimed that the club became a den for criminals. Aziz, a relative of Bunty, frequented there and became friends with Ashish, said the Rab officer.

He claimed that Soheli the mosque management committee's moves became obstacles for Aziz.

After the July 24 brawl with Soheli, Aziz asked Bunty and Ashish to take revenge, he added.

Aziz, Bunty, and Ashish hired club regular and listed criminal Emon to kill Soheli. Emon then killed Soheli, Rab said.

Rab said Ashish, who had never been arrested in the case, planned to flee to Canada after a Dhaka court recently issued an arrest warrant for him.

Ashish, also a Canadian, wanted to fly to Canada today but deferred his flight to April 22.

Replying to a query, Moin said Rab arrested him with 27 bottles of liquor after receiving a copy of the arrest warrant issued against him and five others on February 27.

The other five are in different countries, including the US,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

An aide of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu hired the hitman and gave him a gun to have Tipu assassinated, according to the confessional statement of hitman Masum Mohammad Akash.

Shamim Hossain, 37, also took Akash to different places in a motorcycle for two consecutive days before the attack on Tipu, former general secretary of Motijheel AL.

Shamim, who is now on the run, used to participate in all political programmes attended by Tipu.

Detectives came up with the information after analysing Akash's confessional statement. Akash gave the statement before a Dhaka court on Tuesday after his seven-day remand.

Investigators said Shamim's brother-in-law Md Sony is a businessperson and has two buildings – one in Shantinagar and another in Kamalapur.

Recently, Sony became paralysed following a stroke. Shamim now collects rent from the buildings and also looks after his business.

In the statement, Akash told the court that Shamim is his friend.

Completing a diploma in graphic design, Akash worked in a restaurant. He was also involved in the cable business.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## 'MASSACRE' IN UKRAINE'S BUCHA

# India's FM calls for 'independent' probe

China calls it 'deeply disturbing'; US sanctions Russian banks, Putin's daughters

AGENCIES

India's foreign minister said yesterday he was "deeply disturbed" by civilian deaths in the Ukrainian city of Bucha but stopped short of blaming Russia, calling for an independent probe.

New Delhi has historically close ties with Moscow and has refrained from condemning its invasion of its ex-Soviet neighbour, abstaining in several UN votes and hosting Russia's foreign minister for talks in India last week.

The discovery of hundreds of civilians found dead in areas from which Russian troops have withdrawn has sparked global outrage, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky describing them as "war crimes" and "genocide".

Foreign Minister S Jaishankar told parliament yesterday that India was "deeply disturbed" and "strongly condemned the killings".

"This is an extremely serious matter and we support the call for an independent investigation," he added.

The Kremlin has said that the images were fakes produced by the Ukrainian army or that the deaths occurred after its soldiers pulled out.

China also called reports of civilian deaths in Bucha "deeply disturbing". Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said any "accusations should be based on facts" as he said any humanitarian situation should not be "politicised".

"Before the investigation results are

SEE PAGE 6 COL 8



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A man readies iftar plates for the poor on the High Court Mazaar premises in the capital yesterday afternoon. Every year in the month of Ramadan, the Mazaar authorities arrange free iftar for the poor and desolate. The food is arranged through donations and thousands of people come here to break their fast every day.

## Teacher in jail, family in fear

Wife says he is a victim of conspiracy

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Family members of Hriday Chandra Mondal, the Munshiganj school teacher now behind bars in a case over demeaning religion, are passing days in panic.

Even his son has stopped going to school because of social harassment.

"My son cannot go to school. Other students tease him – they call him the son of a criminal. So I have stopped sending him to school," said Hriday's wife Babita Hawlader.

"Even some of our neighbours often hurl abuse at us. We are passing days in fear and insecurity." Babita's elder brother Badal Hawlader said, "We have almost been ostracised. We don't go out during daytime in fear of untoward incidents."

Hriday has been teaching in the school for 21 years, and all these years, not a single complaint was filed against him, he said.

On March 20, Hriday, assistant teacher of Binodpur Ram Kumar High School in Munshiganj, was having a conversation with students about the difference between science and religion.

Later in the afternoon, a group of students filed a written complaint with the head teacher, alleging that Hriday made derogatory comments on Islam.

On March 22, some students staged a demonstration and police detained Hriday. That

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Tipu's aide hired hitman, armed him

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SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Rejoinder and our reply

Paramount Holdings Limited on 31 March sent a rejoinder to our report "Of coercion and collusion" published on 27 March. We are publishing the full unedited rejoinder signed by Robiul Islam FCS, company secretary, along with our reply.

Paramount Holdings Limited as the local arranger & developer of DSEPL [Dynamic Sun Energy Private Ltd] purchased around 139 acres of nonagricultural land through legal process and register deeds & documents are available. It may be mentioned here that this process was started more than three years ago to facilitate our government's renewable green energy pledge, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic, things were on hold for

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1