



FARDIN'S DEATH

They now say it's suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police and Rab are now saying that Buet student Fardin Noor Parash died by suicide by jumping off a bridge into the Shitalakkhya.

"Considering all aspects, it appears that Fardin died by suicide. His last known location was on the Sultana Kamal Bridge in Demra," Detective Branch Chief Mohammad Harun Or Rashid told reporters at his office yesterday evening.

It also seems Fardin was mentally disturbed and he was wandering from one place to another that night, he added.

Rab yesterday also changed its earlier statement with spokesperson Khandaker Al Moin saying that Fardin jumped into the river at 2:34am.

He might have suffered the injuries to his head and chest when he hit the base of the bridge pillar, he said.

Moin earlier claimed that Fardin might have been killed in Narayanganj's Choppara by local drug dealer Raihan Mahmud and his gang members.

About his earlier claim, Moin yesterday

evening said Rab officers had the suspicions after verifying circumstantial evidence and statements of some locals.

Asked whether the detectives consulted a psychiatrist before concluding that Fardin was disturbed, Deputy Commissioner (Motijheel) Rajib Al Masud replied in the negative.

He added that previous suicide cases were compared with this case.

This newspaper contacted a psychiatrist over the issue. On condition of anonymity, the psychiatrist said it was difficult to say

whether Fardin died by suicide solely based on the fact that he had been wandering the streets of Dhaka before his death.

Fardin's father Kazi Nooruddin cast doubt on the claims of the DB and Rab.

"It is not certain that Fardin was on the bridge," Nooruddin told The Daily Star over phone after the DB press conference.

"How did he get from Rampura to Jatrabari?" he asked. He, however, hung

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Randal Kolo Muani scored France's second goal just 44 seconds after coming on as a substitute against Morocco in yesterday's World Cup semifinal. The reigning champions won the game 2-0, bringing down the curtains on Morocco's dream run.

PHOTO: AFP



AL government never violates human rights Says prime minister



BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party never violates human rights rather protects it. She criticised efforts of several countries to brand Bangladesh negatively despite the fact that they are protecting human rights of the killers.

"The Awami League never violates human rights. It will give protection. AL ensures rights of the people," she said while presiding over a discussion meeting organised by the AL at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the capital

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

SCRULE ON JP CHIEF Quader can't perform his party duties till Jan 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday ruled that Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader cannot perform functions of his post till January 9.

The Appellate Division of the SC, however, ordered the lower court concerned to hear and dispose of the case filed in this connection by that day.

A three-member bench led by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the order after disposing of a petition filed by Ziaul Haque Mridha, former JP lawmaker and adviser to JP chairman, challenging a High Court order that permitted Quader to carry out his duties as the party chairman.

The two other judges of the bench are Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim.

The court's ruling bars Quader from performing his duties as the JP chief

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Target is to save Tk 20,000 crore Finance Division for spending cut in land acquisition, machinery purchase

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAMIL MAHMUD

After the prime minister's directive, the Finance Division yesterday asked the authorities to cut government spending on land acquisition, building construction, and machinery purchase.

The measures may save up to Tk 20,000 crore from the national budget, said a finance ministry official.

The Finance Division's move came after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 27 at a meeting with secretaries directed them to take more austerity measures.

The latest directive from the Prime Minister's Office is for all government, semi-government, autonomous and statutory bodies as well as state-owned enterprises and financial institutions.

In the directives, the division asked all to fully suspend spending money on land acquisition from the revenue budget of this fiscal year.

Besides, it asked not to issue any fresh notification of award (NOA) for construction of residential and non-residential establishments.

However, where NOA has already been issued, expenses must be limited to 50 percent of the allocation.

The Finance Division also directed the authorities to fully suspend expenses for purchasing computers and computer accessories, other electronic accessories, electrical equipment and furniture.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7

DESERT FEST Mystical forces at play



SAMAMA RAHMAN

Argentina's run to the World Cup final has been nothing short of breathless, with a loss against Saudi Arabia in their opening World Cup game triggering a fight-or-flight response that has seen La Albiceleste come out swinging in each of their games since.

Their main man, Lionel Messi, has been

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

France end Morocco fairytale

Reigning champions to face Argentina in final

AFP, Al Khor

France ended Morocco's World Cup dream as goals from Theo Hernandez and Randal Kolo Muani gave the holders a 2-0 win in their semifinal clash and set up a showdown on Sunday with Lionel Messi's Argentina.

It looked like France might make short work of their opponents when Hernandez scored inside five minutes at Al Bayt Stadium, despite having a hostile crowd against them.

But Morocco, the first African and Arab team ever to reach the last four at a World Cup, fought on despite losing key players to injury only to see substitute Kolo Muani seal victory for Les Bleus with a late second.

It will be France's fourth World Cup final in seven editions and they are hoping to become the first team since Brazil 60 years ago to retain the trophy when they take on Argentina at Lusail Stadium on Sunday.

That will be billed as a showdown between Messi and his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappe, but this match was not about the latter's individual brilliance.

Instead France's victory was down to a team effort against a Moroccan side who will now face Croatia in Saturday's third-place play-off.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

1 journo killed, 3 detained in Bangladesh in a year

Says Reporters Without Borders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One journalist was killed and three others were detained in Bangladesh in a year till December 1, said Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

According to RSF's annual round-up of violence and abuses against journalists, the number of imprisoned journalists worldwide reached a 30-year high this year.

A record number of 533 journalists were detained, 57 were killed, 65 were held hostage and 49 went missing across the globe, according to the reports published yesterday.

Bangladeshi journalists are exposed to police violence, attacks by political activists and murders orchestrated by jihadists or criminal organisations, the report mentioned.

"They are even more vulnerable because this violence goes unpunished."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Primary school children paying tributes to the martyred intellectuals at the memorial at the capital's Rayerbazar as the nation observed the martyred intellectuals day yesterday. Related story on page 12.

PHOTO PRABIR DAS

MARTYRED INTELLECTUALS MEMORIAL Desecrated by illegal structures

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Ibrahim Khalil owns three plant nurseries along the boundary wall of the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectual Memorial (Boddho Bhumii).

For that, he has to pay off local influential people, who allegedly grabbed the land from the Water Development Board (WDB).

"Every month, I have to pay Tk 12,000 to the leader of our association for my nurseries. He collects the money from all nursery owners and pays off political leaders," Khalil said.

Like Khalil's nurseries, around 100 businesses and other establishments have been built illegally along the Boddho Bhumii boundary wall, which stretches for around two kilometres.

Besides nurseries, the land also has illegal parking spots for trucks, pickup vans, and CNG-run auto-rickshaws; a wholesale vegetable market; offices of several associate bodies of the ruling Awami League; and even an office of the assistant commissioner of police (traffic).

Local AL leaders, ward councillors and their supporters allegedly grabbed the land and allowed the illegal structures to mushroom in exchange for money.

As a result, the two intercity roads that

run through the memorial and connect Mohammadpur, Basila, and Sadarghat are frequently congested, locals said.

In 2020, the Martyred Intellectual Memorial was designated as an important structure for conservation by Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk).

But conservationists said illegal establishments have become a nuisance for people visiting the historical site.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sufi Mostafizur Rahman, professor of archaeology at Jahangirnagar University, said, "The view of the site is being obstructed by illegal establishments. The way the Boddho Bhumii is surrounded makes it look like a kitchen market. Besides, it has made the area unsafe.

"It is a place made for paying homage to the martyred freedom fighters and should be maintained all year round. The relevant authorities should take appropriate action to evict all illegal establishments."

During a recent visit, The Daily Star found that the nurseries, vehicle stands, and political party offices were housed in around a one-kilometre radius of the memorial's main entrance.

Requesting anonymity, ruling party activists said the political offices were built with the support of Dhaka-13 MP

PHOTO ON PAGE 2

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4