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Let Khaleda go abroad for treatment

Her brother again pleads with govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's brother Shamim Iskandar again wrote to the home ministry, seeking permission to take her abroad for better treatment.

Upon receiving the application, the officials forwarded it to the law ministry, Abdullah Al Masud Chowdhury, secretary of the home ministry's Security Services Division, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will be able to tell what decision is made regarding the application after the law ministry examines it," he said.

On September 25 last year, Shamim wrote to the home ministry seeking permission to take the former prime minister abroad for treatment.

The application was rejected because of the law ministry's recommendation.

The Ministry of Law earlier said that the government has little to do about the matter because Khaleda's jail sentence remained suspended through an executive decision under Section 401 (f) of the Code

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A group of children look out the window in awe during a ride on the metro rail yesterday. On the occasion of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth anniversary and National Children's Day, the Metro Rail authorities organised the fun-filled trip for underprivileged children on the Motijheel-Uttara route.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

INDOMITABLE MARCH

'The military solution' inked

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

March 18, 1971

On the morning of March 18, 1971, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, the then general officer commanding of the 14th division in East Pakistan, and Major General Rao Farman Ali, the then military adviser to the governor of East Pakistan, assembled at the former's office to work on the plan for military action — the infamous Operation Searchlight.

Khadim asked his wife to keep his Bangali ADC busy and away from his office.

"I did not want to arouse his suspicions about Farman working with me in my office the whole morning as it was a very unusual get-together in that environment," Khadim wrote in his memoir.

The two generals agreed on broad details and decided to write their respective pieces: Farman was to supervise the operations of the Dhaka garrison while Khadim was responsible for the rest of the province.

They met again at the Command House the same evening.

The plan was presented before the top generals and it was passed without any discussion except

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BANGLADESH-JAPAN JOINT INITIATIVE PPP projects caught up in myriad problems

Progress to be discussed at meeting today

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Most of the public-private partnership projects that were listed to be implemented under the Bangladesh-Japan joint initiative could not make any significant progress over the last six years because of multiple problems.

The poor progress appears as a major setback for the government's plan to bring huge investment for mega structures under the PPP initiative.

Against the backdrop, the sixth Bangladesh-Japan PPP Platform meeting will be held in Dhaka today.

At the meeting, the Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) and the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) will place five to six new projects, said officials.

Following an agreement signed between the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) in Bangladesh and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism of Japan in 2017, Japanese companies will invest under the G-to-G PPP model without taking part in any bidding.

The poor progress appears as a major setback for the government's plan to bring huge investment for mega structures under the PPP initiative.

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Rail staffers picked up for checking ticket of Rab man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Rab members allegedly picked up two sepoys of Railway Nirapatta Bahini (RNB) from Natore Railway Station on Saturday and tortured them for checking the ticket of a Rab member travelling in a train in plainclothes.

Rab admitted picking the two up, but denied torturing them.

It all began around 3:30am when RNB sepoy Moktar Hossain asked Rab member Al Mamun to show his ticket as the latter was passing through the exit after getting off the Dhaka-bound Druotojan Express train.

Mamun became angry and pushed Moktar. RNB members then led Mamun to the ticket checking room, said Motaleb Hossain, in-charge of Railway Nirapatta Bahini.

Around 5:15pm, some members of Rab-5 went there and took Moktar along with sepoy Ziaur Rahman away, saying they wanted to resolve the matter, he said.

The Rab men took them

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Israeli PM vows to invade Gaza's Rafah

Defying pressure, Netanyahu slams 'short-memory' world leaders; another 91 Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Sunday to send ground forces into Gaza's southern Rafah city despite international fears for the fate of Palestinian civilians sheltering there.

The right-wing premier, whose security and war cabinets were also due to discuss latest international efforts towards a truce deal, stressed that "no amount of international pressure will stop us from realising all the goals of the war".

"To do this, we will operate in Rafah. This will take several weeks, and it will happen," he said, without clarifying if he meant the assault would last for weeks or would begin in weeks.

Israel's allies have repeatedly urged Netanyahu not to attack Rafah, where more than a million displaced people from other parts of the devastated enclave have sought shelter, without a plan to protect civilians.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, in Jordan before a planned visit to Israel, said an assault on Rafah would make

regional peace "very difficult" and that efforts now were "about ensuring we come to a long-lasting ceasefire".

Netanyahu hit out at the pressure from allies, saying: "Are your memories that short? Have you so quickly forgotten October 7, the most horrific massacre of Jews since the Holocaust? Are you so quick to deny Israel the right to defend itself against the Hamas monsters?"

UN World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged Israel "in the name of humanity" not to launch a Rafah invasion, warning that "this humanitarian catastrophe must not be allowed to worsen".

Washington, which provides Israel with billions of dollars in military assistance, has said it cannot support a Rafah operation without a "credible, achievable, executable plan" to shelter civilians.

As tensions have risen with Washington, Netanyahu also criticised the US Senate leader for urging the Israeli government to hold new elections, calling the comments "totally inappropriate."

- Second aid ship set to depart from Cyprus to Gaza
- Biden angry after poll numbers drop over his handling of Israel's war on Gaza: report
- Death toll in the enclave now 31,645

Tigers hope to end losing streak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be hoping to win the third and final ODI against Sri Lanka in Chattogram today and snap out of a losing streak by clinching their first bilateral series in the format in almost 10 months.

Bangladesh have had a torrid time in their most favoured format lately, with their last ODI series win (2-0) coming back in May 2023 away to Ireland. Since then, the Tigers have lost to Afghanistan (2-1) and New Zealand (2-0) at home and again to the Kiwis (3-0) away from home.

This is the 10th bilateral ODI series between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, with the Tigers winning just one of the previous nine ones, a 2-1 triumph at home in 2021.

This will also be the Tigers' chance to register their second ODI series win over the Lankans.

For Sri Lanka, on the other hand, it's an opportunity to seal their fourth straight series win in ODIs, having won against Afghanistan twice and Zimbabwe once leading up to the ODIs against Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Man stabbed to death in Pallabi, two arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested two men on charges of stabbing a 25-year-old man to death and assaulting another in the capital's Pallabi on Saturday night.

Six other suspects have been identified from security camera footage and police are looking for them, said Inspector Mokhselur Rahman of Pallabi Police Station.

Faisal Russel, a resident of Murapara Bihari Camp in Mirpur Section-12, died soon after the attack while his friend Rashed was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Faisal was a craftsman who used to breed and sell birds. Jashimuddin Mollah, deputy commissioner of Mirpur Division, said the man was killed over a dispute with a neighbour.

Police said Faisal and Rashed were returning to their neighbourhood from an iftar party when they were attacked by a group of men at Block C of Mirpur-12.

CCTV camera footage shows the group stopping the rickshaw and beating up the victims, Jashimuddin said, adding that both of the men were stabbed.

Faisal's father Shahadat later filed a murder case with Pallabi Police Station accusing 11 people.

Shahadat said his son was about to get married. Inspector Mokhselur said police were trying to identify three of the suspects.

UNB reports that Faisal's friend Sanaullah said there was an argument between Faisal and one Shaheen the day before the incident, and the attackers were led by Shaheen and his brother-in-law Kalu.

Faisal's body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.



Palestinian children use a makeshift cart to carry water containers to a camp for displaced people in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hijack of MV Abdullah: 'Beware of what you publish'

P3



PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 18

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:50	12:45	4:30	6:12	7:45
JAMAAT 5:00	1:15	4:45	6:22	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
07	18		6:12
08	19	4:44	6:13
09	20	4:43	6:13