

QUOTA PROTESTS Judicial probe body gets two more judges

They'll visit scene of Abu Sayed's killing, other spots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judicial commission formed to investigate the deaths and injuries in violence during recent quota reform protests will visit Rangpur on August 4.

They will visit the places where Begum Rokeya University student Abu Sayed and five others lost their lives and record testimonies of witnesses from August 5, Commission Chairman Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman told reporters at its makeshift office on the Supreme Court premises.

The commission was expanded to a three-member body yesterday. New members Justice KM Zahid Sarwar and Justice Mohammad Showkat Ali Chowdhury of the High Court were also present at the press meet.

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Lebanese civil defence workers extinguish a fire following an Israeli air raid on the town of Shamaa in southern Lebanon yesterday, amid ongoing cross-border clashes between Israeli troops and Hezbollah fighters.

PHOTO: AFP

Govt to give legal aid to HSC examinees held over quota protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will provide legal support to the HSC examinees who have been arrested in connection with the recent violence centring the quota protests.

They will receive assistance in securing bail if they apply with their admit cards and relevant documents, said a press release from the home ministry, signed by Sharif Mahmud Apu, a senior officer at the ministry.

The government will also provide legal assistance to the detained students who do not face serious charges, according to the release.

Meanwhile, three HSC examinees, who were in police custody, secured bail yesterday with the support of the education ministry.

The trio, students of Rajuk Uttara Model College, will soon be released from prison and return to their families, said a press release signed by MA Khair, public relations officer at the ministry.

The release also mentioned that information about another HSC examinee was found, and they are expected to be released by Sunday.

Moreover, the ministry requested that any information regarding the detention of other HSC examinees be sent to helpsc24@gmail.com, the release added.

TIMELINE

In 1941, Jamaat was founded by highly controversial Islamist ideologue Abul Ala Moududi

In 1959 and in 1964, the party was banned for its communal role

In 1971, Jamaat sided with the Pakistan army and worked against the country's liberation

In 1971, Jamaat formed Al-Badr, Razakar, Al-Shams and peace committees, which were involved in crimes against humanity

In 1972, Bangladesh government banned Jamaat

Jamaat was allowed back in politics during late president Ziaur Rahman's rule

In 1992, Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee tried the then Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam at the people's court (Gono Adalat) for war crimes

In 2010, the government formed International Crimes Tribunal

Between 2013 and 2016, five top Jamaat leaders were executed for crimes against humanity in 1971

In 2013, the HC declared Jamaat's registration with the EC illegal

In 2018, EC scrapped Jamaat's registration, rendering it ineligible to take part in polls

In 2023, the SC upheld the HC verdict

In 2024, Jamaat and its associate bodies are banned

F-16s delivered to Ukraine 'will be shot down' Says Kremlin

AFP, Moscow

The Kremlin said yesterday that any F-16s delivered to Ukraine would be shot down and have little impact on the battlefield, in response to reports that the first fighter jets have arrived.

"Their number will gradually decrease, they will be shot down... But of course, these deliveries will not have any significant impact on the development of events on the front," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

For more than two years, Ukraine has pleaded with Western allies for the US-made fighter jets — long considered the crown jewel in the sprawling list of military hardware Kyiv has sought from its Western backers.

Jamaat-Shibir banned

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In August 2013, the gazette said, the High Court declared the registration of Jamaat with the Election Commission illegal. The Supreme Court later upheld the HC verdict.

Justice seekers and war crimes victims and their family members have long been demanding the trial of Jamaat as a party. Their voices grew louder after February 5, 2013, when people occupied Shahbagh demanding highest punishment for war criminals and a ban on Jamaat Shibir.

The investigation agency of the tribunal recommended that charges be pressed against Jamaat after concluding a probe into Jamaat's role in 1971.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on many occasions had said that the government would amend the International Crimes (tribunals) Act-1973 to try parties, but the act was neither amended nor the charges were pressed.

The issue of banning Jamaat came up again after the government blamed Jamaat Shibir men for the recent violence centring the quota reform protests.

Shyamoli Nasreen Chowdhury, president of Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, said, "With the banning of Jamaat, we are relieved of the curse. We are satisfied with the decision."

She, however, demanded confiscation of all properties belonging to Jamaat and its associate bodies.

"Measures should also be taken so that Jamaat cannot emerge in politics again under a new banner," she said.

Shyamoli, widow of Shaheed Alim Chowdhury, said they have long been demanding trial and ban of Jamaat for committing crimes in 1971.

"Jamaat even came to power and

carried out terrorist activities. We are happy as they [Jamaat] are finally banned," said the eminent teacher who testified in a war crime trial.

Prof Anu Muhammad, a former teacher at Jahangirnagar University, said the issue of banning Jamaat-Shibir has been discussed for a long time.

"But the government has banned Jamaat-Shibir to gain political mileage at a time when a massive movement is going on in the country," he said.

JAMAAT'S RESPONSE
Hours after issuance of the gazette, Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman in a statement said, "We strongly condemn and protest this unconstitutional, undemocratic and unjust decision of the government."

The constitution gives all citizens the right to assemble and organise. The government has violated the constitution by banning Jamaat and Chhatra Shibir, he said.

"The government wants to divert the ongoing movement by banning Jamaat and Chhatra Shibir through an executive order to cover up their misdeeds.

"However, they may try to increase their efforts to blame Jamaat by creating some untoward incidents. The countrymen should be careful in this regard," he added.

BNP'S RESPONSE
The BNP yesterday said it was unfair and unconstitutional to ban any political party without a justifiable, credible, acceptable, and impartial investigation of international standards.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir in a statement sent to the media last night said, "The right to form a political party or organisation is enshrined in the constitution of Bangladesh. With this constitutional right, anyone can form

a political party or organisation."

It also said with these undemocratic activities, the government would not be able to divert people's attention from the BNP's one-point demand, resignation of the government.

"We call upon all those who believe in democracy, irrespective of party affiliations and opinions, to intensify the movement to topple the government," the statement read.

It also noted the "Awami League's past affinity with Jamaat". "They were once allies. During the all-party mass movement against autocracy in the 1980s, the Awami League, along with Jamaat-e-Islami, undermined the movement and participated in an election to legitimise autocracy," it said.

The then leaders of Jamaat met Hasina at her Dhanmondi 32 home and presented her a Quran and jainamaz, it said, adding that many remember the smiling pictures of the leaders of both parties exchanging gifts.

ICT VERDICTS
The ICT-1 in the verdict against Ghulam Azam observed, "... Jamaat-e-Islami, as a political party under the leadership of accused Prof Ghulam Azam, intentionally functioned as a criminal organisation especially during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971."

The Tribunal 2 in the verdict against Kamaruzzaman observed, "Jamaat-e-Islami had played a substantial role in the formation of the Al-Badr, Razakar, Al-Shams and peace committees [during the war].

"Jamaat had indulged in indiscriminate massacre of their political opponents belonging to the Bangalee nation in the name of liquidating 'miscreants' and 'infiltrators' for which it had used Razakars and Al-Badr."

UN offers to send fact-finding team

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Till Sunday, this newspaper was able to confirm 163 deaths.

Since then, The Daily Star has confirmed 38 more deaths that occurred during the violence.

This number could go up even higher as this newspaper could not get confirmation from different hospitals where dozens of critically injured victims were taken for treatment.

The reports of violence against its citizens advocating for fundamental rights have serious implications not only domestically and in terms of Bangladesh's human rights obligations, but also for its international standing, Turk said.

"As one of the largest contributors to the United Nations peacekeeping missions, Bangladesh has consistently been steadfast supporter of global peace and security. However, the use of excessive force, arbitrary arrests and tortures reported during the protests raise serious concern."

He also spoke about the use of bullets, arbitrary arrests, detention, ill-treatment and torture by the law enforcers and violent attacks by groups reportedly affiliated with the government.

The deployment of paramilitary units, such as the armoured police force, Border Guard Bangladesh and the Rapid Action Battalion, poses further risks, he said, adding that he is aware of arrests of the opposition figures.

The Supreme Court ruling narrowing the quota may open a space for meaningful and inclusive

dialogue with all relevant national stakeholders to address the underlying issues and grievances.

For a conducive environment for public dialogue, the UN has urged the government to ensure that all operations of the law enforcers are in line with human rights international standards.

An impartial, independent and transparent investigation into all alleged human rights violations is essential to ensure accountability and justice for victims of past violations and to contribute to preventing recurrence, Turk said.

For the longer term, he suggested comprehensive reforms to the security sector to prevent future abuses and safeguard the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

He welcomed an opportunity to discuss with Prime Minister Hasina directly, either through a telephone call or on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September.

In response to Turk's letter, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said he appreciates the concerns of the UN high commissioner for human rights, but noted that the briefs Turk received about the recent events appeared to have conflated a number of facts and issues.

The students' protest initially was peaceful, but turned violent as the "third forces" comprising BNP-Jamaat and extremist forces eventually infiltrated the movement, Momen said.

6 organisers freed from

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custody "for their own security".

Earlier, in the wake of the countrywide complete shutdown by the protesters and subsequent clashes, Nahid was picked up by plainclothes men from his friend's house in Nandipara area of the capital's Khilgaon on July 19.

The next day, he found himself in Purbachal. He had deep bruises in different parts of his body. He then admitted himself to the hospital, from where DB picked him and the other two up again.

Two lawyers, Manjul Al-Matin and Ainunnahar Siddika, filed a writ with the High Court on Monday, seeking the release of the six coordinators and the court's directives on not firing bullets on students across the country.

The writ was heard by a bench on Monday and Tuesday and was on the

cause list for Wednesday.

A court source said the hearing could not be held on Wednesday as one of the judges, Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon, took a two-day leave due to illness.

TODAY'S PROGRAMME
Abdul Kader, one of the coordinators of the anti-discrimination student movement, last night announced fresh programmes for today, including prayers and a mass procession after Juma prayers to press home their nine-point demand.

All mosques, temples and churches were urged to hold prayers for the students who were killed.

Meanwhile, Kader urged all the citizens; including teachers, workers, professionals, cultural activists, human rights workers, intellectuals, students, and even those of madrasas to help make the programme successful.



From left: Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud, Abu Baker Majumder, Sarjis Alam, Hasnat Abdullah, Nusrat Tabassum.

UN free to probe any incident of violence: PM

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The premier was speaking at a programme, organised by Bangladesh Krishak League at the capital's Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh, marking the National Mourning Day.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said, "We will have to take action against the culprits no matter who they are."

She said her government has attained the status of a developing country for Bangladesh.

"But the country's image is being tarnished abroad by carrying out false propaganda and militant activities. I am leaving it to the people to judge it."

The PM said her government has built the country following the ideals of the father of the nation, but infrastructures were destroyed and people were killed.

"They [the perpetrators] would be tried one day. This is why I want those incidents to be investigated and a fair trial be held."

Hasina said not a single incident related to militancy occurred in Bangladesh after the Holy Artisan attack due to the vigilance of the law enforcement agencies.

"But now they have shown the ugly teeth of militancy under the cover of the quota reform movement," she said. The PM said there should be no place for militancy and terrorism in Bangladesh.

Talking about Jamaat-Shibir, she said the main strength of the militants

is Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Jamaat Shibir.

"They [Jamaat Shibir] will be banned under clause-18 of the Anti-Terrorism Act-2009 so that they don't have any social dignity."

She said Jamaat Shibir would try to carry out destructive activities again. "All will have to try to resist them and save the people. All will have to do it unitedly."

She called upon the people to remain vigilant against any such incident.

Hasina questioned the rationale for continuing the quota reform protests by students despite all their demands being already fulfilled.

She criticised a section of intellectuals for supporting the movement.

"Many of our knowledgeable personalities, dignitaries and intellectuals continue giving their support to this movement. What support are they giving? The demand has already been fulfilled completely."

At the outset of the programme, a one-minute silence was observed in memory of the departed souls of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other martyrs of the August 15, 1975, carnage.

A special prayer was also offered seeking salvation of the departed souls of the martyrs of the August 15 carnage and those killed in the recent violence.

Another dies from pellet wounds

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reforms to government job quotas, according to The Daily Star.

Till Sunday, this newspaper was able to confirm 163 deaths.

Since then, The Daily Star has confirmed 38 more deaths that occurred during the violence.

This number could go up even higher as this newspaper could not

get confirmation from different hospitals where dozens of critically injured victims were taken for treatment.

Also, many families reportedly collected the bodies of their loved ones from the scene, and this newspaper could not contact those families.