

Sacked Maj Gen Ziaul 'arrested' at airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sacked Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan was detained at the Dhaka airport in the early hours of yesterday while trying to flee the country.

Ziaul, who was dismissed from the army on Tuesday, was on board an Emirates flight that was taxiing the runway for take-off.



The plane was asked to return to boarding bridge and Ziaul was taken off the aircraft and transported to the Dhaka Cantonment, The Daily Star has learnt from officials at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Ziaul, who joined the Bangladesh Army as a commissioned officer in 1991, is alleged to have been involved in enforced disappearances and assassinations during his time in the Rapid Action Battalion.

In 2009, he was made the vice-captain of Rab 2 in 2009 when he

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Relatives of prisoners crowd near the entrance to Kashimpur High Security Central Jail in Gazipur yesterday, a day after at least 209 prisoners reportedly fled. The jail authorities said six bodies were recovered after multiple attacks were carried out from inside and outside the prison on Tuesday. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of Hindus at border to go to India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Fearing attacks, several hundred Hindus, including women and children, gathered near two border areas of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh yesterday to enter India.

Mojakkarul Alam Kochi, chairman of Aloakhawa union under Panchagarh's Atwari upazila, told The Daily Star around 5:30pm that over 100 young people from different areas of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh reached near Barshalupara border.

They told the chairman that attackers looted valuables from their houses and businesses, and also threatened to kill them.

They refused to return home despite requests from Border Guard Bangladesh personnel, Mojakkarul said.

The UP chairman said nearly 3,000 people had thronged the border on Tuesday, but they returned home after failing to cross the border.

Local journalist Jibon Al Mamun, who visited Jagdal border of Thakurgaon's Ranisankail upazila yesterday afternoon, said around 600 people were waiting near the no-man's land to enter India.

Some of them alleged that their houses and businesses were vandalised and looted, the journalist said.

Uphold rule of law, respect democracy

Blinken urges; Australia asks all to ensure universal rights

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on Bangladesh to respect democracy after Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus was tapped to lead an interim government following an uprising.

"Any decisions that the interim government makes, they need to respect democratic principles, uphold the rule of law, and reflect the will of the people," Blinken told reporters, reports AFP.

The US embassy in Dhaka also reiterated calls for calm and peace, having expressed concerns about reported attacks on religious minorities and places of worship in Bangladesh.

"As a friend and partner to the Bangladeshi people, the United States will continue to support Bangladesh's democratic aspirations and respect for human rights," it said in a statement.

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'Stop violence against minorities, try perpetrators'

Rights groups, eminent citizens demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights groups, eminent citizens and sociocultural organisations have condemned the violence, specifically targeting Hindus, in different parts of Bangladesh amid a power vacuum in the wake of Sheikh Hasina's abrupt resignation and escape.

They demanded immediate steps to protect the religious minorities and bring the assailants to justice in statements issued yesterday, describing the attacks targeting Hindu homes, businesses and temples as an "evil attempt to destroy communal harmony".

Such violation of human rights can tarnish the image of the country, warned the National Human

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Mood in Bangladesh is 'one of hope'

Says UN resident coordinator Gwyn Lewis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis has described the national sentiment as "one of hope" despite recent chaos and violence following the fall of Sheikh Hasina.

"If and when this transitional government is shaped and the voices of the young people in the country are heard, I think we can really shape and move forward to continue the trajectory of positive development," she said in an interview with UN News on Tuesday.

Her comment comes ahead of the formation of an interim government led by Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus today.

"It's really a moment of a crossroads for Bangladesh, and so we're really hopeful that this will become something very positive that we can build

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No detainees in Dhaka facility

Says DGFI; Mikel Changma 'released' after five years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) yesterday said there were no detainees at its Dhaka facility, known as "Aynaghor", at the moment.

The detention cells of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch were found empty yesterday.

Although the Dhaka DGFI claimed that they were not holding anyone, Mikel Changma, 40, a UPDF activist who was forcibly disappeared on April 16, 2019, from Narayanganj, returned to his friend's home in Chattogram yesterday.

A source who spoke to his family confirmed this to The Daily Star.

A delegation of rights activists visited the DGFI headquarters yesterday morning.

The team, led by Sanjida Islam Tulee, coordinator of Mayer Daak, a platform of the victims of enforced

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Civil admin still without direction

BAHARAM KHAN

From rural areas to the secretariat, the civil administration officials have been directionless in the absence of a government since former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's departure on Monday.

The secretariat, usually abuzz with officials and visitors, looked almost deserted for the last two days as very few officials went to work and visitors were not allowed.

Most of the secretaries and other senior officials were absent and some even switched off their phones, leaving the junior officers in the dark and badly affecting the chain of command.

"This has led to the collapse of civil administration across the country," a secretary told this correspondent over the phone.

Cabinet Secretary Mahub Hossain, Public Security Division Secretary Jahangir Alam and Senior Secretary of the Security Services Division Mashiur Rahman, and Agriculture Secretary Wahida Akhter, did not attend office, said sources.

Mohammad Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, senior secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration, was found at his office.

"We are in a special situation. We are working to overcome this. We hope everything will be normal soon," he told The Daily Star.

"Even though there is no government, the President is there. We are carrying out some important tasks. Soon, there will be no administrative vacuum," he added.

Some officials said that they were feeling insecure because of the attacks on important government structures. Secretariat buildings have offices of at least 45 ministries and divisions.

Many had said they did not know offices would reopen on Tuesday. The government on Sunday, when Hasina was the prime minister, announced that all offices would be closed for the three following days.

Army Chief Waker-Uz Zaman on Monday afternoon announced on TV that the offices would reopen the next day. But very few went to work on Tuesday and left shortly after midday.

The situation improved ever so slightly yesterday.

Most of the officers present at the secretariat said they

felt that they had been deprived of promotions over the last 15 years.

Witnesses said many held a meeting at the library room of the public administration ministry and expressed anger at their colleagues who they thought had enjoyed undue benefits.

ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT GUARDIANS

Administration officials in the districts are hardly getting any direction from top bureaucrats.

"The field administration officials feel like

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Most of the secretaries and other senior officials were absent and some even switched off their phones, leaving the junior officers in the dark and badly affecting the chain of command.



Traffic on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway is increasing as the situation is improving following the fall of the Awami League government on Monday. The photo was taken in Paka Rastar Matha area of Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila around noon yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

AL not dead, not easy to wipe it out

Joy says in video message

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sajeeb Wazed Joy yesterday said his family cannot sit idle when Awami League activists are being persecuted.

The comments came in less than 24 hours after he said his mother Sheikh Hasina and other family members will not return to politics.

"I said my family will not do politics again. But we cannot sit idle while our leaders and activists are being persecuted," he said in a video message yesterday evening.

"To whoever is in charge of the country at the moment, I want to say that we, too, want a terrorism-free Bangladesh. To that end, we are willing to initiate dialogues with anyone, as long as they discard terrorism," he said.

"Bangladesh is going through a

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