

Victim pinpoints DGFI detention centre

ZYMA ISLAM

If there is one thing that differentiates the arbitrary detention of HM Rana from the other victims of enforced disappearance, it is that he knows exactly where he was inside the Dhaka Cantonment.

Almost every victim of enforced disappearance who came back alive said they were blindfolded the entire time while they were being transported and until they were taken inside their cells, or interrogation rooms.

They were similarly blindfolded when they were taken out of the centre and dropped off in random places.

INT'L DAY OF THE VICTIMS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

HM Rana, a musician with Closeup-1 fame, was not picked up in the same manner as others. Other victims usually say they were picked up by men in plainclothes who showed up in unregistered minibuses with tinted windows in the middle of the night.

Since Rana's uncle was also in the military, he was escorted to the centre by a military officer on February 14 this year.

It was the day of his wedding reception. "I was taken to a two-storey building with a chocolate-brown gate to the left of the CSD TESS restaurant next to the post office," said Rana, 'WE WANT TO KNOW IF THEY ARE ALIVE' - PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A woman drying paddy in the sun next to her home in Katabomarak Ghona area of Feni Sadar upazila yesterday. The paddy, which would be used as poultry feed, was damaged when floodwaters entered her house. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE Bangladesh signs UN treaty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh signed the instrument of accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances yesterday.

The signing, led by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, took place during the weekly meeting of the interim government's advisory council amid applause from the council members, according to chief adviser's press wing.

"It is a historic occasion," Yunus said. The move comes just one day before the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.

Earlier this week, the interim government established a commission to investigate cases of enforced disappearances during Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule.

Speaking on the signing of the convention, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the practice of making people disappear with the intent to suppress dissent was over.

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Hasina and 28 journos accused in ICT case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A complaint was filed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, 28 journalists, and others yesterday on charges of crimes against humanity and genocide.

The complaint was filed with the investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal.

It mentioned that the accused journalists termed the protesting students and people razakars and terrorists who were on a rampage.

Referring to a press conference, the complaint said the accused journalists "through different questions, made instigating remarks and provoked Sheikh Hasina to eliminate the protesting students and general public".

Several ministers of the Awami League government, noted educationist Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, former Supreme Court judge Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik, Dhaka University teacher Prof Mesbah Kamal were also accused.

Supreme Court lawyer MH Gazi Tamim filed the complaint on behalf of Golam

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Govt to take reform ideas from parties

To hold dialogue with them regularly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has decided to engage in regular dialogue with the political parties to get reform proposals from them.

The decision was made yesterday during a meeting of the government's advisory council at the State Guesthouse Jamuna.

"We will continue the process of holding dialogue with the political parties. We will accept the reform proposals that would come from them. We have discussed a method in this regard," Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan told reporters after the meeting.

The move came at a time when the BNP called upon the interim government to hold talks with the political parties regarding the next general election.

A BNP delegation, led by party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, yesterday met with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and made similar requests.

The government will sit with several other political parties tomorrow to exchange views, said sources at the chief adviser's press wing.

The advisory council yesterday also approved the scrapping of the law on protecting the family members of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It also made some decisions, including cancelling the scope

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Law on providing security to Bangabandhu's family members to be repealed.

Scope to whiten black money shuts Yunus seeks Swiss help to bring back laundered money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday decided to cancel the provision for whitening black money.

"The government does not earn much from [the provision to whiten black money]; rather such practice raises questions about values," Syeda Rizwana Hasan, the environment adviser, told reporters after the meeting of the advisory council of the interim government at the state guest house Jamuna.

As a result, the government has decided to scrap the provision, which was supposed to remain in place until June 2025.

"Now it cannot be said that the black money will be whitened," she said, adding

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No BNP-Jamaat alliance exists now

Fakhrul tells Star in an exclusive interview

The BNP has been hounded over the last 18 years. The party chief, Khaleida Zia, was put in jail and not allowed treatment abroad while her son, Tarique Rahman, has been living in London since 2008 and faces a prison sentence back home. But with the Awami League regime gone, change is in the offing. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir talks about a host of issues with Special Correspondent Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee.

TDS: You have said that the BNP agrees to give reasonable time for reforms before elections. How much time are you willing to give the interim government for that?

Fakhrul: The interim government is not elected. It is, in fact, selected. The main responsibility of this incumbent is to reform institutions -- that are on the verge of complete collapse -- that are indispensable for holding a free and impartial election.

It is difficult to say how much time will be needed for that as the previous Awami League government destroyed each of these institutions.



TDS: You urged the interim government for a roadmap for the next election and its reform plan. Where do you think immediate reforms are necessary? And if the BNP is voted to power, will it move to endorse those reforms at the parliament?

Fakhrul: The immediate past government has totally destroyed the judiciary, election commission as well as law enforcement. These institutions were politicised and criminalised. This is where we need immediate reforms.

Bangladesh's economy is facing problems that cannot be resolved RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Exim Bank freed from the grip of Mazumder

BB reconstitutes the board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The control of influential businessman Nazrul Islam Mazumder over Exim Bank ended yesterday as the Bangladesh Bank reconstituted the board of the Shariah-based lender.

Mazumder, who founded the bank along with Shahjahan Kabir in 1999, has been its chairman since 2007. His wife Nasreen Islam was also removed from the reconstituted five-member board.

The couple's shareholding in the bank stood at 6 percent after transferring a portion of their shares to their children -- Walid Ibne Islam and Anika Islam -- in November 2022.

Mazumder's removal from his bank board comes on the heels of

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Without using the footbridge, which is yards away, jaywalkers scale the fences of the central reservation of a street in front of Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the capital yesterday. Many put their and others' lives at risk just to save a few minutes or to avoid climbing the stairs of the footbridge. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Flood raises spectre of diseases

At least 6 die, around 3,000 admitted to hospitals: DGHS

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, SIFAYET ULLAH, and HELEMUL ALAM

A week into the ongoing flood situation in the country, outbreaks of waterborne disease are being reported from affected districts.

In the 24 hours till yesterday morning, at least six people died and around 3,000 patients were hospitalised because of waterborne diseases in flood-affected areas, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Of the deceased, four people died in Feni, one in Noakhali, and one in Lakshmpur.

Among the cases, the highest was in Cumilla at 1,606, followed by 686 in Feni, 246 in Moulvibazar, 172 in Noakhali, 120 in Lakshmpur, 81 in Sunamganj, 44 in Habiganj, 10 in Rangamati, and eight in Chattogram.

The diseases broke out mainly in the areas where people did not get fresh drinking water or water purification tablets.

In Lakshmpur, Jahid Hossain, a resident of Kolakopa village in Charbadam union under Ramgati upazila, said he had been suffering from diarrhoea for the last three days. "Without access to fresh water or water purification tablets, I have been forced to drink dirty floodwater."

Gias Uddin, a farmer from the union's Azad Nagar

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