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SABOTAGE CASE
Gayeshwar, Rizvi among 173 BNP men discharged
COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday discharged a total of 173 leaders and activists of BNP – including its standing committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy and senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi – from a case filed over sabotage charges in 2018.

Judge Shihabul Islam of Dhaka Special Tribunal-16 passed the order after their lawyers submitted separate petitions for discharging them from the case.

BNP leader Advocate Zainul Abedin, Barrister Kayser Kamal, and Shama Obayed are also among the accused.

According to the case statement, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was returning home after appearing at a special

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A mother gently cradles her child, wrapped snugly in a shawl, shielding them from the chill of a winter morning. The photo was taken in the capital's Farmgate yesterday while they were returning home from school together.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

‘She suffered in jail, was deprived of treatment’
Khaleda’s lawyers tell SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia’s lawyers yesterday told the Supreme Court that she (Khaleda) suffered in jail and was humiliated and deprived of proper treatment for many years because of the Zia Orphanage Trust case, which was filed on false allegations.

“There was no evidence in support of the allegations brought in the case... I went to the authorities concerned for her proper treatment but she did not get it,” senior advocate Zainul Abedin, a lawyer for Khaleda Zia, said.

He said this while presenting arguments before a five-member bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed during the second day’s hearing on Khaleda’s appeals against a 2018 High Court verdict that increased her jail sentence from five to ten years.

Khaleda’s another lawyer AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon said this was a politically motivated case.

He appealed to the apex court to grant the appeal and acquit her from the charges.

The former prime minister, aged 79, landed in jail on February 8, 2018, after a Dhaka special court sentenced her to five years in the case.

While five other accused, including her son Tarique Rahman, were given 10 years’ imprisonment for misappropriating over Tk 2.1 crore intended for orphans, the special court cited Khaleda’s age and status to impose a lighter sentence.

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North shivers
IN COLD



STAR REPORT

Sagar Islam, a farmer of Tegra village under Dinajpur’s Biral upazila, has been looking to hire farm labourers to prepare lands for Boro cultivation.

However, amid the ongoing cold wave, he has been struggling to find anyone to work in open fields.

“Hardly anyone is willing to work in this severe cold, and many are demanding extra pay,” he said. “But I need to prepare the land, as time is running out,” he lamented.

The severe cold weather in northern districts, including Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat, has disrupted lives and livelihoods.

In Dinajpur, cold winds from the Himalayas, overcast skies, and slight drizzle since Tuesday night have caused significant hardship. Most residents stayed indoors, seeking warmth under blankets or around fires.

Those who could not afford to stay home, especially low-income people and daily wage earners, suffered greatly while working outside in the biting cold.

Tofazzal Hossain, acting officer at the Dinajpur Regional

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Secure Dhaka airport from bird strikes
Urge flight safety officials at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top flight safety officials from various airlines yesterday expressed concerns over bird strike hazards at Dhaka’s Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) and urged regulators to take action to address the issue.

They said the airport is particularly prone to bird strikes.

At a workshop organised by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), safety officials from four airlines also highlighted the challenges posed by low visibility during winter due to dense fog, which often forces flight diversions and causes passenger inconvenience.

They suggested upgrading the airport’s Instrument Landing System (ILS) from Category 1 to Category 2 to address the visibility issue.

The workshop was organised by CAAB at its auditorium, following recent aviation disasters, including South Korea’s Jeju Air plane crash on December 29, which killed 179 people on board.

According to an Al Jazeera report, the pilot had reported a bird strike moments before the plane crashed.



Bird strikes are common in Bangladeshi airports. The presence of waste collection centres, landfills, and dense bushes near the airport area attracts birds, particularly black kites, posing significant risks of bird strikes.

Anwarul Haq Beg
Professor at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

officials said bird strikes, though not fatal, frequently damage their aircraft at HSIA and other airfields.

Officials of other airlines said bird strikes have become frequent at Dhaka airport, resulting in significant financial losses.

Presenting his paper, Capt Intekhab Hossain, deputy chief of flight safety at Biman, noted 10 major bird strike incidents between May 2023 and May 2024.

Referring to the Jeju Air crash, he urged CAAB to implement measures to deter birds in and around the airport to avoid such accidents.

Capt AAMA Shamsuzzaman, head of safety management at US-Bangla Airlines, said HSIA’s bird strike rate is three times higher than the global average.

Citing International Air Transport Agency data from January 2023 to October 2024, he said HSIA recorded 1.73 bird strikes per 1,000 flights, compared to 0.5 at other international airports.

Talking to reporters, Capt Kamrul Islam, head of safety at Air Astra, said bird strikes can occur

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Hasina’s visa extension not welcomed: Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said the people of Bangladesh have not reacted positively to India’s decision to extend former prime minister Sheikh Hasina’s visa.

“Sheikh Hasina’s visa extension is an internal matter of India, but we cannot rule out the possibility of ill intentions behind it,” Rizvi told reporters after meeting the family of Shahriar Khan Anas, a student who was killed during the July-August mass uprising in Dhaka’s Gendaria area.

Rizvi, accompanied by organisers of “Amra BNP Poribar”, consoled the family of Anas, a 10th-grade student of Gendaria Adarsha School, who was killed during the student-led uprising.

Referring to Sheikh Hasina as a “killer,” Rizvi said India, being a democratic nation, should reconsider sheltering someone accused of such acts.

“Sheikh Hasina is responsible for the deaths of children, adolescents, youth, rickshaw pullers, and CNG drivers. How could a democratic country grant her shelter and extend her visa? The people of Bangladesh have not taken this positively,” he remarked.

The BNP leader also accused India of adopting a “domineering and aggressive” stance toward Bangladesh. He alleged that India undermines

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IJTEMA CLASH
23 accused get anticipatory bail from HC
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to 23 accused, followers of the Tablighi Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, in a case filed over the death of four devotees at the Biswa Ijtema ground in Tongi on December 18 last year.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam and Justice Md Hamidur Rahman granted them anticipatory bail till submission of the police report in the case.

The court passed the order after holding hearing on two bail petitions filed by the accused.

Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun accompanied by lawyers Shahin Hawlader and Khaja Tanvir Ahmed placed arguments on behalf of the petitioners, while Additional Attorney

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Dismissed BDR members, families demand justice
Continue sit-in at Shaheed Minar, warn of ‘Shahbagh blockade’ if demands not met
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Families of the dismissed BDR (now Border Guard Bangladesh) members have vowed not to back out of their seven-point demand, including bail or release of innocent members of the paramilitary force arrested after the 2009 Pilkhana massacre.

They have decided to spend the night at the Central Shaheed Minar to press home their demands, which also include the withdrawal of all false cases filed after the incident against the force members.

The family members warned they would “blockade Shahbagh” if their demands remained unmet, during today’s (Thursday) hearing at the metropolitan special tribunal-2 (makeshift) of Dhaka in Keraniganj.

Mahin Sarker, a member of the executive committee of Students Against Discrimination, who joined the protesters, confirmed the developments to The Daily Star.

“We will wait for the court orders. If the demands are not met, then we will blockade Shahbagh and continue our protest,” he said.

Mahin said, “Some 2,000 people, including the

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, AMRAN HOSSAIN

Families of dismissed BDR (now BGB) members gather at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday, demanding justice for the victims of the 2009 Pilkhana massacre, and reinstatement of dismissed personnel. Police intercept their procession at Shahbagh, inset, while they were marching towards the state guest house Jamuna, the chief adviser’s residence.

