

ICT CASE  
Charges against Hasina to be pressed today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) is set to press formal charges against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina today in a case filed over crimes against humanity during the July mass uprising.

The ICT prosecutors confirmed the development yesterday.

On May 12, the Investigation Agency of the tribunal submitted its probe report against the deposed prime minister, bringing five allegations of crimes against humanity during the July uprising.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and former IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun were named co-accused in the report.

Hasina is already facing two other cases filed with the ICT -- one over alleged involvement in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings during the Awami League rule, and the other over killings during the 2013 Hefazat-e-Islam rally at Shapla Chattar in Motijheel.

Citing the probe report, ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam on May 12 said Hasina is directly responsible for ordering all state forces, her party, and

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON  
Hundreds of patients are suffering as the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital remained non-operational for the fourth consecutive day yesterday following a tripartite clash on Wednesday.



NAT'L EYE HOSPITAL  
Services halted for fourth day, patients suffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gazi Mohammad Akhter arrived in Dhaka from Cumilla on Friday, expecting to be admitted to the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital yesterday for a surgery scheduled for today.

"The doctor fixed June 1 for the date [of operation] on March 23. But I found the hospital out of service today [Saturday]," Akhter told this correspondent at the gate of the specialised hospital.

At the time, he was asking an Ansar member deployed at the gate when the hospital might resume operations.

"I am a cancer patient, and my next course of treatment depends on this operation. What can I do now?" he said.

Neyamat Ullah Momin, a private service holder who had travelled from Rampura for a follow-up appointment, shared similar frustration.

"I had no idea about the situation... This is unfair to the patients," he said.

Like Akhter and Neyamat, hundreds of patients suffered as the 250-bed hospital remained non-operational for the fourth consecutive day following a tripartite clash on Wednesday.

The Daily Star could not reach Prof Khair Ahmed Choudhury, the hospital's director who is currently on leave, or acting director Zane Alam for comment.

Meanwhile, the health ministry issued a statement

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EC REGISTRATION  
SC verdict on Jamaat's appeal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is scheduled to deliver its verdict today on Jamaat-e-Islami's appeal against a High Court verdict that scrapped its registration with the Election Commission (EC) as a political party.

According to the Supreme Court website, the appeal has been listed as item No-1 in today's cause list of a four-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, for pronouncement of the judgement.

On May 14, the apex court bench fixed the date after concluding hearing on the appeal.

On August 1, 2013, the High Court cancelled Jamaat's registration with the EC following a writ petition. Maulana Syed Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, secretary general of the Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, along with 24 others, filed the petition on January 25, 2009, seeking a court order declaring the party's registration illegal.

The EC subsequently scrapped Jamaat's registration in October 2018, ahead of the 11th national election.

Jamaat later filed an appeal with the Appellate Division, challenging the HC verdict.

Japan eyes Bangladesh as key investment hub

Foreign-policy and trade analysts say Dhaka needs to improve environment, ensure stability

PORIMOL PALMA

Emerging from the initial uncertainty following last year's political transition, Japan has re-engaged with Bangladesh in a robust way, which was reflected during Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's recent visit to Tokyo, according to foreign-policy and trade analysts.

During the trip, Japan agreed to provide Bangladesh with budgetary support alongside loans and grants worth \$1.063 billion, while eight other memoranda of understanding were signed covering human-resource development, worker recruitment, the business environment, and factory set-ups in the Bangladesh Special Economic Zone.

The chief adviser and his Japanese counterpart Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba also committed to signing an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in the coming months -- an indication of Tokyo's eagerness to relocate factories here under its China Plus One strategy, analysts said.

Japan is in the process of providing five patrol boats to the Bangladesh Navy, and the two countries have agreed in principle to sign an agreement on Transfer

of Defence Equipment and Technology as part of security cooperation.

"Since independence, Japan has been the largest development partner of Bangladesh. It wants to relocate many more factories



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Japan pledges \$1.063b in budgetary support, loans, and grants
- 8 new MoUs signed covering human resource dev, worker recruitment, factory setups
- EPA talks underway, aiming to boost trade, investment
- China Plus One strategy fuels factory relocations
- Japan to provide 5 patrol boats; pursue defence equipment transfer agreement

here, but faces different forms of bottlenecks. That's also true in the case of recruiting workers to Japan," said Abdullah-Al Mamun, associate professor of Japanese Studies, University of Dhaka.

Since 1972, Tokyo has provided more than \$24 billion in loans and grants for infrastructure projects such as the metro rail, Dhaka airport's third terminal, Araihaazar Special Economic Zone and Matarbari Deep-Sea Port.

More than 350 Japanese companies currently operate in Bangladesh.

Abdullah, who is also executive director of Japan-based think-tank Pan-Asia Research Institute (PARI), said "Japan is usually reluctant to provide budget support".

"This must be a great relief to our economy that Japan this time is providing budget support to Bangladesh. It's a gesture of cemented relationship," he said.

"Under the China Plus One business strategy, Japan has been relocating many of its factories to other countries including in ASEAN and South Asian countries," he said, observing that Bangladesh has lagged behind Vietnam and Thailand in capturing Japanese relocation.

"Complicated procedures at the National Board of Revenue and ports, frequent changes of law, slow supply chain network became bottlenecks on the way of Japanese investments into Bangladesh," Abdullah said.

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Robbers loot vehicle carrying expat on highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Robbers looted cash, mobile phones and other valuables on a microbus carrying an expatriate from Jordan and her relatives yesterday on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila.

Following the robbery, police seized the microbus which had been abandoned by the gang while being chased by the police.

Sumaiya Akter, a passenger of the microbus, said her sister-in-law, Beauty Akter, is an expatriate who arrived from Jordan at Dhaka airport on Friday. They rented a microbus from Tongi area. Beauty's sister, father, and their children were also in the vehicle.

"Around 2:30am, when our microbus reached Postkamuri Charpara on the highway, a gang of 7-8 armed robbers on a microbus came from behind and intercepted us. They looted everything from us at gunpoint," she said.

A patrol team of police chased the robbers, but the gang opened fire and managed to flee. Tuhin Miah, assistant to the wrecker driver of the

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'Murdered' in July uprising, man fights to prove he's alive

His brother filed murder case following 'dispute' over property

AMINUL ISLAM and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Md Selim, a grocer from Beltoli Bazar in Mymensingh's Phulbaria, has been listed as dead in a murder case filed over last year's July uprising.

The case alleges that he was shot dead by police near Kajla Petrol Pump in Dhaka's Jatrabari on August 3 and was subsequently buried near a graveyard in Gopibagh.

Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal were among 41 people named as accused in the case.

The case was filed by Selim's elder brother, Golam Mostofa, who claimed his 50-year-old brother was gunned down during the protest. Two more brothers -- Helal Uddin and Abul Hossain -- backed up the claim as witnesses.

But there's just one problem: Selim is alive.

These days, Selim -- who had never even set foot in

Dhaka before August 5 -- finds himself going from one government office to another, trying to prove that he is, in fact, alive.

The case has stirred up quite a commotion in Mymensingh, as Selim is very much alive despite being shown as dead in a case filed in connection with the July uprising.

**These days, Selim -- who had never even set foot in Dhaka before August 5 -- finds himself going from one government office to another, trying to prove that he is, in fact, alive.**



The answer, many believe, lies in a bitter inheritance feud. After the death of their father nearly two decades ago, the four brothers had been locked in a dispute over ancestral property. With Selim having no sons -- only two daughters -- his brothers allegedly saw an opening.

And they took it.

To achieve this, Mostofa reportedly hatched a plan to

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WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

Amend law for stronger tobacco control  
Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum yesterday said the government spends far more on healthcare than the revenue it earns from tobacco companies.

"If we can prevent the use of tobacco products, we won't have to spend so much on treating tobacco-related diseases such as cancer. If we want to focus on disease prevention, we must build a tobacco-free Bangladesh," she said.

She was speaking at a discussion at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital, marking World No Tobacco Day, according to a press release of the ministry.

The National Tobacco Control Cell organised the programme, with this year's theme being: "Unmasking the appeal: Exposing industry tactics on tobacco and nicotine products."

The health adviser said although Bangladesh has signed the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, government officials still hold positions on the boards of tobacco companies "to ensure their businesses run smoothly."

"This contradiction is completely unacceptable. We must speak out clearly about this. If we cannot speak now, we may never be able to," she said.

The health adviser added, "They [tobacco companies] exploit our labourers and poison our soil, air, and environment -- we can never accept this."

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Nurjahan Begum, Health Adviser

To effectively enforce the tobacco control act, it must be amended, and work is already underway in this regard, she said.

Tobacco companies are targeting teenagers and youth in various ways and are creating numerous obstacles, she

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A boy crosses a precarious makeshift bridge amid ongoing DPDC construction work in the capital's Kalyanpur area. With a blocked road causing prolonged disruptions for over a month, pedestrians and vehicles alike struggle to move through the congested site.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON