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A homecoming that ended in heartbreak

7 of a family killed as microbus plunges into Lakshmipur canal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

It was meant to be a perfect day of a long-awaited reunion, a joyful ride home, a chance to make up for three lost years.

Abdul Bahar, 25, had just returned from Oman, and was heading from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport back to their home in Lakshmipur Sadar's Choupalli village with 10 of his family members who had gone to receive him.

But everything he waited for was lost in a single, unforgettable moment as the microbus carrying them plunged into a roadside canal in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila early yesterday, killing seven of them except Bahar and three others.

Among the dead were Bahar's wife Kabita, 24; their two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Samia Sultana Bhabna; his mother Murshida Begum, 50; grandmother Foyzunnesa, 80; sister-in-law Laboni Begum, 30; and nieces Lamia, 9, and Bibi Fatema, 10.

All seven bodies were laid out in a row in the family yard in the village in the afternoon. A hush

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As they walked into their campus, the students of Milestone School and College could not look away from the remnants of the carnage left behind by the jet crash in one of their school buildings. With full bags and heavy hearts, they returned to their classes yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

KILLING OF ABU SAYED ICT-2 frames charges against 30 accused

Trial in case to begin on August 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday framed charges against 30 individuals, including Begum Rokeya University's former vice-chancellor Md Hasibur Rashid, senior officials, and police personnel, in a case filed over the killing of student protester Abu Sayed in Rangpur during last year's July uprising.

The three-member tribunal, led by Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, passed the indictment order after reading out the charges to six of the accused. It then fixed August 27 to begin the trial.

The six, all currently in jail, were produced before the court, which detailed their alleged roles in aiding, inciting, or directly carrying out the shooting that killed Sayed, who was unarmed at the time.

The trial against the 24 others, who remain absconding, will proceed in absentia. State-appointed defence lawyers will represent them.

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RUSSIAN OIL PURCHASE Trump raises India tariffs to 50%

New Delhi calls move 'unfair, unjustified' as Indo-US ties hit new low

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump imposed an additional 25 percent tariff on Indian goods, citing New Delhi's continued imports of Russian oil in a move that sharply escalated tensions between the two nations after trade talks reached a deadlock.

The new import tax, effective 21 days after August 7, will raise duties on some Indian exports to as high as 50 percent -- among the highest levied on any US trading partner.

Trump's executive order imposing the extra tariff did not mention China, which also imports Russian oil.

Exemptions remain, however, for goods targeted under sector-specific duties, such as steel and aluminium, as well as categories that could be affected later, including pharmaceuticals and semiconductors.

Smartphones are among this list of exempted products for now, notably shielding Apple from a major hit as the US tech titan shifts production from China to India.

India's foreign ministry condemned Trump's tariff announcement, calling the move "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable."

"India will take all necessary steps to protect its national interests," it said.

The ministry previously said India began importing oil from Russia as traditional supplies were diverted to Europe over the war -- noting that Washington had "actively encouraged" such imports to strengthen "global energy market stability."

Analysts said Trump's move marks the most serious downturn in US-India relations since his return to office in January. The tariffs threaten to disrupt India's access to its largest export market, where shipments totalled nearly \$87 billion in 2024, hitting sectors like textiles, footwear, gems and jewelry.

The development comes as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

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Stay united for the sake of the nation

Tarique urges pro-democracy forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday urged all pro-democracy forces to remain united for the greater interest of the nation.



"Political parties will always have different views on various issues. But those differences must be resolved through discussion. In national interest, especially for the sake of democracy, pro-democracy parties should never turn their backs on each other," he said at a rally.

Tarique made these remarks while virtually addressing a rally organised by the BNP in front of its central office in Nayapaltan, marking the first anniversary of the July 2024 Mass Uprising.

Thousands of leaders and activists from the capital and nearby districts attended the event, filling the road from Fakirapool to Kakrail intersection.

"We all need to stay united in

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Jamaat, NCP okay with polls timeline

Most parties, except BNP, describe July Declaration as incomplete

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most political parties have welcomed Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus announcing national election in February next year.

However, the parties, except the BNP, expressed reservations about the July Declaration, which was unveiled on Tuesday.

They said the declaration was "incomplete" and demanded a complete July Declaration and July Charter, and the promised reforms before the polls.

Jamaat-e-Islami said they had expected that the chief adviser would hold talks with political parties regarding the announcement of the election timeline.



The work of Prof Muhammad Yunus shows that he won't do anything in the future that would make the election questionable.

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR
BNP secretary general



"The nation has been stunned and surprised that he did not," Jamaat Naye-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher told a press conference at Al-Falah auditorium in the capital's Moghbazar area yesterday.

He, however, said, "We view the chief adviser's announcement positively in the greater national interest."

In reply to a query, Taher said, "As you know, the Jamaat ameer told journalists on April 16 that it would be appropriate to hold the election before Ramadan, which is in the month of February."

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Forex reserves cross \$25b again

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Country's foreign exchange reserves have crossed the \$25 billion mark for the second time this year, thanks to an increased inflow of foreign currency from remittance and exports.

As per the International Monetary Fund's calculations, forex reserves stood at \$25.05 billion yesterday, up from \$24.77 billion a week ago.

However, according to BB's calculations, forex reserves stood at \$30.07 billion, up from \$29.80 billion a week ago.

At the end of June this year, reserves crossed \$25 billion after two and a half years, thanks to an increased inflow of remittances and the release of funds by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and other lending agencies.

The forex reserves, however, dropped below the \$25 billion mark following the payment of import bills through the Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

Bangladesh Bank officials said the reserves increased in recent months as remittance inflow grew since the political changeover in August last year. Declining use of hundi, an illegal cross-border transaction, also helped.

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ICT CASE AGAINST HASINA Tribunal records testimony of two more witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two prosecution witnesses yesterday testified before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her two top aides, detailing the killing of Begum Rokeya University (BRU) student Abu Sayed.

"Sayed stood with arms outstretched near the central reservation when two policemen shot him from about 12 yards away. He collapsed," said Rina Murmu, 29, a former BRU student.

She learnt of his death around 3:30pm on July 16 last year.

Giving identical account of the incident, NTV senior correspondent AKM Moinul Haque, who covered the protest live, confirmed the shooting occurred at 2:17pm. He submitted a copy of the raw footage and the footage that was telecast live. The court played the clip.

Sayed's defiance against oppression turned the protests into a mass uprising that eventually toppled Hasina's regime on August 5 last year.

Hasina and co-accused former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal are being tried in absentia in the case. The third accused, ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who became a state witness, was present in the court during the hearing.

The tribunal also set August 17 for the next witness deposition, having so far recorded statements of five prosecution witnesses.

Rina said their protest against the quota system in government job was peaceful until July 14. That day,

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