

Trump-Russia 'collusion': Democrats file lawsuit

The Democratic Party in the US is suing Russia, the Trump campaign and the whistle-blowing website Wikileaks for conspiring to disrupt the 2016 presidential election.

Documents filed in court allege that the campaign “gleefully accepted Russia’s help” to win the election.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly denied collusion, and Russia has also denied the allegations.

Several investigations are already under way.

US intelligence agencies previously concluded Moscow had tried to sway the election in Mr Trump’s favour.

- [Trump Russia – the saga in 200 words](#)
- [Key questions answered in the Trump Russia affair](#)
- [Who’s who in the drama to end all dramas?](#)

The BBC’s Nick Bryant in Washington says the lawsuit by the DNC is seen as a publicity stunt by many there, as it may not unveil anything that is not already being examined in other investigations – but could keep the matter in the public eye.

The lawsuit, filed in a federal court in Manhattan, names senior Trump aides including his son-in-law Jared Kushner, strategist Roger Stone and former campaign chairman Paul Manafort as defendants, as well as the Wikileaks founder, Julian Assange.

Democratic National Committee chairman Tom Perez said in a statement that the alleged hacking was “an act of unprecedented treachery” and “an all-out assault on our democracy”.

[The Washington Post reports that foreign nations usually have immunity from US lawsuits](#), but Democrats argue the rule should not apply in this case because Russia trespassed on private party servers.



Media caption All you need to know about the Trump-Russia investigation

In May 2016 the first reports emerged of hackers targeting the Democratic Party. Over the next two months, the reports suggested US intelligence agencies had traced the breaches back to Russian hackers.

In July, on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, Wikileaks published 20,000 internal emails stolen by the hackers.

US intelligence officials said they believed with “high confidence” that Russia had been behind the operation but the Trump campaign publicly refused to accept the findings.

Earlier on Friday, [memos by ex-FBI director James Comey detailing his conversations with Donald Trump were published](#).

He writes that he was asked by Mr Trump to drop an inquiry into links between his former national security advisor, Michael Flynn, and Russia.

Mr Trump sacked Mr Comey last year while he was leading an FBI investigation into allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

[Skip Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump](#)

End of Twitter post by @realDonaldTrump

Mr Trump tweeted that the memos showed there was no “collusion and no obstruction”.

Sociedad thrash Atletico to leave Barca on brink of title

Atletico Madrid slumped to a 3-0 defeat at resurgent Real Sociedad on Thursday which means runaway La Liga leaders Barcelona need one more victory to wrap up a 25th Spanish league title.

Second-placed Atletico were outplayed by the Basques from start to finish and fell behind in the 27th minute to a thumping strike off the post from forward Willian Jose after a cut-back from former Manchester United winger Adnan Januzaj.

Real Sociedad have been on a good run of form since Imanol Alguacil succeeded sacked coach Eusebio Sacristan and they welcomed Atletico after hammering Girona 5-0 and winning 1-0 at Las Palmas in their last two games.



They continued to create chances against Atletico, who were missing striker Diego Costa through injury, and sealed a deserved victory when forward Juanmi knocked in a pass from Willian Jose in the 80th minute. Juanmi struck again in stoppage-time to complete Atletico’s heaviest league defeat this season, sending Real Sociedad up to 11th in the standings.

Second-placed Atletico have 71 points after 33 games while Barca have 83 and third-placed Real Madrid 68. Barca, who drew 2-2 with Celta Vigo on Tuesday and are still unbeaten in the league, will clinch the title if they win their next league game away to Deportivo La Coruna on April 29.


"We need to analyse what has happened and take steps to improve in our final few games because recently we have suffered a lot away from home," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone, whose side have lost three of their last four away games in all competitions.

"We had a bad first half and although we improved we couldn't manage to score and Real Sociedad finished the game stronger than us and we have to congratulate them on the victory."


UK Awami League demonstrates in London, demands Tarique's extradition

A day after Sheikh Hasina said her government is trying to negotiate the extradition of Tarique Rahman, the UK chapter of the Awami League has demanded that the top BNP leader be sent back to Bangladesh to face justice.

They staged a demonstration in front of the British Parliament at London's Westminster on Wednesday to put pressure on Prime Minister Theresa May's government.


 The protest was also meant to counter demonstrations by BNP activists in London on the same day as Prime Minister Hasina is attending the Commonwealth summit. Now heading the BNP from exile, Tarique is convicted of money laundering and corruption in two separate cases.

He is also being tried in many other cases, including one on charges of attempted assassination of Hasina.

 The prime minister on Tuesday said they were trying to get the British government to extradite the BNP leader from London. "The UK is a free country, anybody can take shelter, refuge...that's true. The crime that the person committed... and already he is convicted," Hasina said.

"And I don't understand how UK enjoys keeping a convicted person," she had remarked.

Hasia also said her government was "eager" to take Tarique back.

 "He should face the court," she said. "Well, we are talking to the British government about it and definitely one day we will take him back," she added. BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique, in London for a decade, is standing in for his mother Khaleda Zia who was jailed for five years for corruption on Feb 8.

He has also been sentenced to 10 years in prison in the same case. He had earlier got a prison term

Govt. to impress diplomats with tourist safety measures

The Tourism Development Ministry will be reaching out to the diplomatic community to show the remedial action taken by the government to ensure that tourists aren't harassed or harmed in the future after the recent trouble experienced by tourists in Mirissa and the local communal violence which took place in Kandy.

"We will invite foreign ambassadors to visit Mirissa and brief them on the safety measures taken by the government.

The Kandy Hotels Association President has also invited ambassadors to visit the hill country to show that all is well," Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs Minister John Amaratunga said.

He said that this is being done to address any reservations foreign governments are holding on their citizens visiting Sri Lanka. Law & Order and Public Administration and Management Minister Ranjith Madduma Bandara said that due to the recent incidents which were covered by the media, bad publicity is being spread about Sri Lanka in foreign countries.

The government has now called on all tourism service providers in Mirissa to register with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, while 17 establishments constructed on the beach illegally would be removed next month by the Coast Conservation Department.

Amaratunga, who stressed that the two recent incidents in Mirissa were isolated, said that his ministry would also contribute funds to the Tourist Police to increase its effectiveness in ensuring the safety of tourists, in addition to the Rs. 50 million allocated in the 2017 budget and Rs. 30 million allocated in the 2018 budget for such purposes.

The Tourist Police, which is currently present in 11 tourism hotspots, would be expanded to another 20 locations as fast as possible, Inspector General of Police Pujith Jayasundara said. He admitted that there weren't enough police officers in the force to cover all tourism hotspots. "There aren't enough police officers. Those who are appointed to the Tourist Police however have a fair knowledge of English. We're also training them in languages like French and appointing officers who have a knowledge of Mandarin. We aren't treating this as a second tier responsibility. We are doing the best we can given the resource constraints," he said.

Amaratunga added that until new officers are recruited and trained, the police is exploring a possibility of appointing officers from other regions to tourism hotspots during the peak season of each hotspot.

Jayasundara however requested tourists to lodge complaints with the police as soon as any incidents occur, instead of complaining only to diplomats, or making complaints after going back to their home countries, as such actions delay the process of justice.

So far, 14 suspects have been arrested and remanded for their connection to the incidents in Mirissa, but the process of identifying them out of a line-up has been delayed since the tourists have returned to their home countries.

Meanwhile, Amaratunga added that the Excise Department also has to bear some responsibility since such incidents usually occur at establishments which sell liquor illegally and remain open until dawn.

Demonstrations turn aggressive as Indian tricolour ripped during PM Modi's UK visit

LONDON: Some groups protesting against atrocities in India during Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s visit here turned violent after a tricolour was torn down from one of the official

flagpoles set up for all 53 Commonwealth countries.

Modi, who is in the UK for bilateral talks and the multilateral Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), was greeted by protesters as he met his British counterpart [Theresa May](#) on Wednesday.

Some of the protesters at [Parliament Square](#) turned aggressive after the Indian tricolour was torn down from the flagpole.

“Police are investigating after an Indian flag in Parliament Square was pulled down at 1500 (UK time) on Wednesday, 18 April. The flag has been replaced. There have been no arrests. Enquiries continue,” a Metropolitan Police statement said.

The [Ministry of External Affairs](#) (MEA) said the matter was taken up with the British authorities, who expressed their regrets and immediately had the torn flag replaced with a new one.

“We’re deeply anguished with the incident involving our national flag. Matter was taken up strongly with the UK side. They have regretted the incident. The flag was immediately replaced. We expect legal action against the people who were involved in this,” MEA spokesperson [Raveesh Kumar](#) said at a press briefing on Thursday.

[View image on Twitter](#)

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<blockquote class="twitter-tweet" data-lang="en"><p lang="en" dir="ltr">We’re deeply anguished with the incident involving our national flag. Matter was taken up strongly with the UK side. They have regretted the incident. The flag was immediately replaced. We expect legal action against the people who were involved in this: Raveesh Kumar, MEA Spox. <a href="https://t.co/c5ZxUv8zAa">pic.twitter.com/c5ZxUv8zAa</a></p>&mdash; ANI (@ANI) <a href="https://twitter.com/ANI/status/987027087507804160?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw">April 19, 2018</a></blockquote><script async src="https://platform.twitter.com/widgets.js" charset="utf-8"></script>
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A UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) spokesperson said, “While people have the right to hold peaceful protests, we are disappointed with the action taken by a small minority in Parliament Square and contacted High Commissioner Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as soon as we were made aware.

“The visit to the UK by Prime Minister Modi has strengthened our relationship with India and we look forward to working even more closely together on a number of important areas.”

A senior broadcast journalist from one of the leading Indian media channels covering the protests was caught in a violent scrum with some of the more aggressive pro-Khalistani protesters and Scotland Yard officers on duty had to step in to the rescue. The group is planning to file a complaint with the Metropolitan Police on the incident.

“We have expressed our concerns with the British authorities and they have apologised for the incident. We have been warning against some of these elements out to make trouble and they have assured us of action. The Indian flag has now been replaced,” a senior Indian official associated with the PM’s visit said.

The pro-Khalistani demonstrators from Sikh Federation UK and demonstrators from the so-called “Minorities Against Modi” group, led by Pakistani-origin peer Lord Ahmed, were among nearly 500 protesters who descended upon Parliament Square. These included groups led by some Kashmiri separatist groups and at one point, some of them had surrounded the Mahatma Gandhi statue at the square with their banners and flags.

Officials involved with the prime ministerial visit to the UK had said that protests and demonstrations are “part and parcel of any democratic society” as long as they remain peaceful. There are now concerns that some of the more aggressive elements hijacked the tone of the

protests.

Earlier on Wednesday, flash mob of sari-clad women with dhols set the tone for the pro-Modi crowds opposite 10 Downing Street as the Indian PM arrived for his breakfast meeting with British Prime Minister Theresa May. They were joined by the Friends of India Society International (FISI) group, which spearheaded a crowd of Indian diaspora from across the UK waving banners such as “Chak De India” and “Jai Hind” outside Downing Street and nearby Parliament Square.

“We want to welcome the Indian PM to the UK and show him the diaspora support he enjoys,” said one of the members of the gathering.

On the other side, the anti-Modi protesters from Caste Watch UK and South Asia Solidarity group waved banners such as ‘Modi, you have blood on your hands’ and ‘Modi Not Welcome’.

“Hindu nationalism must be curtailed to avert India sliding towards wholesale dictatorship threatening democratic fabric, rule of law and the unity of India,” a Caste Watch UK spokesperson said.

They were joined by other protestors carrying images the eight-year-old rape victim from Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir, and Gauri Lankesh, the Indian journalist who was shot at her doorstep last year.

Concern over Khaleda’s health grows as jail authorities cancel planned family visit

The jail authorities have cancelled a planned meeting of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia with her family members citing illness, the party says.

Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir says they are worried about her health. Khaleda’s sister Selina Islam, son Tarique Rahman’s mother-in-law Iqbal Mand Banu and Tarique’s sister-in-law Shahina Khan Zaman Bindu, and several other relatives went to visit her at the old jailhouse on Nazimuddin Road in Dhaka on Friday afternoon.

Mirza Fakhrul said they had permission to visit her, but the jail authorities did not allow them to see her. He said the authorities told Khaleda’s relatives that she was “unable to come downstairs”.

“It seems her condition has deteriorated a lot. We (BNP leaders) have also been denied an appointment,” he added. Mirza Fakhrul and two other BNP leaders went to visit the former prime minister in jail on Thursday, but the jail authorities did not let them in.

“Her family members have expressed concern after hearing about her condition from the jail authorities. We are also concerned,” the BNP secretary general said. Senior Superintendent of Dhaka jail Jahangir Kabir neither took bdnews24.com calls nor did he answer text queries on the issue. Khaleda has been in the prison since Feb 8 when a court sentenced her to five years in prison for corruption in Zia Orphanage Trust case.

Mirza Fakhrul met her in jail for the last time on Apr 6. The BNP chief underwent a medical checkup at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University the following day. On Mar 29, the jail

authorities cancelled her meeting with Mirza Fakhru'l, citing her illness.

The authorities also formed a team of doctors for Khaleda's treatment. After a checkup, the doctors said Khaleda's condition was 'nothing serious'.

Political telenovela: Peruvians captivated by Fujimori sibling rivalry

Still reeling from the [abrupt resignation of its president last month](#), Peru is now captivated by a new political drama: the sibling rivalry between the children of the former authoritarian leader Alberto Fujimori, as they battle over his controversial legacy.

The power struggle between Keiko and Kenji Fujimori has all the intrigue, melodrama, plots twists and cliffhangers of an over-the-top Latin American soap opera or telenovela – and it has Peruvians hanging on the edge of their seats.

Keiko Fujimori, the leader of the majority opposition party, played a key role in the toppling of Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, as her party released a series of secretly filmed videos showing his allies offering to buy the votes of opposition lawmakers to avoid impeachment.

In releasing the videos, however, she also implicated her brother Kenji and his political allies in the alleged vote-buying, which could see him face criminal charges.

He has vowed revenge, and on Friday is due to testify to prosecutors investigating allegations that Keiko received \$1.2m in campaign donations from the scandal-plagued Brazilian firm Odebrecht in 2011.

The long-simmering sibling rivalry erupted spectacularly – and now threatens to wipe out both their political futures.

Keiko, a two-time presidential candidate, tweeted her regret that “her own brother had become involved in practices which had done so much damage to us as Peruvians and as a family”. She was referring to [videos which showed her father's intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos](#) bribing politicians, judges and army chiefs – which ended her father's decade-long regime in 2000.

[The former president was jailed in 2009](#) for authorising death squads, overseeing rampant corruption and vote-rigging. He was pardoned by Kuczynski in December, but his children could both now face criminal charges.

Ironically, the father's pardon may have aggravated the split between the children, said Gustavo Gorriti, a Peruvian journalist who was kidnapped by Fujimori's regime in the 1990s.

“Kenji remains completely faithful to his father and did everything possible to secure his release,” he says. “While Keiko realised it was better that he was in prison.”

Thrown into politics aged 19, Keiko became her father's first lady in 1994 when her parents separated. Now aged 42, a seasoned politician and twice presidential candidate, she cuts a strikingly different image from Kenji, 37.

While Keiko is seen as cold and vengeful, Kenji is indulged as a spoilt youngest son, and won the highest number of votes in Congress when he was re-elected in 2016

Styling themselves as The Avengers, Kenji and a band of dissident lawmakers from his sister's Fuerza Popular party, split the *Fujimorista* support base by abstaining from an impeachment vote against Kuczynski in December saving him from being ousted.

For a while the tactic worked. Kenji, a self-confessed comic-book geek depicted himself as hammer-wielding Thor or dressed in the Bruce Lee-style yellow jumpsuit of the heroine of Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill films.

But then, Keiko got her own back entangling Kenji and his group in the incriminating videos.

In giving evidence against his sister in the Odebrecht investigation "Kenji has shown he is prepared to go down the kamikaze way, taking his sister with him," says Gorriti.

Facing expulsion from Peru's congress, Kenji has lost that political capital, says Giovanna Peñaflor, director of pollster Imasen.

"By the same token, it's been a pyrrhic victory for Keiko," she adds, saying the dirty tactics used in the feud have worn down public sympathy for both siblings.

That has done nothing to diminish Peruvians' fascination with the ongoing Fujimori saga, says Jorge Bruce, a psychoanalyst and newspaper columnist.

"Peruvians love telenovelas and this is a real life soap opera," he says.

"We are a Latin American country where family is still what matters above everything else. The Fujimoris are a particularly complicated, dysfunctional family," he adds.

"Years passed by and we are still under the spell of the Fujimori story – which says more about us than it does about them."

36 accused in biggest blasphemy lawsuit of recent times



In what is potentially one of the most significant blasphemy lawsuits of recent times, 35 individuals have been accused of having “offenses against religion” in Bangladesh. In accordance with Bangladesh Penal Code 295, C. R. case number 273/18 was filed with the Judicial Magistrate Court this past 16th of April 2018.

The plaintiff, one Mr. Shamim, has named 36 individuals in this lawsuit, and accused them of writing abusively about religion, in particular, Islam. The other accused are Nazmul Hossain Ghatok as the main accused, Editor Arifur Rahman, Roosevelt Halder, Adnan Saqib, Suranjoy Sarker, Sharmin Khan, Tahera Sultana, Syed Sunvy Anick Hossain, Syed Mohammad Sajeeb Abed, Saiful Islam, Faysal Hossain Onik, Pinaki Deb Apu, Milton Kumar Dey, Sujan Chandra Dey, Abu Taher Muhammad Mustafa, Enyetul Huda, Husni Mubarak, Syed Isteak Hossain Shawon, Tofail Hossain, Naymul Hossain, Ashef Abrar Titu, MD Abdullah Al Hasan, Tamzid Hussain, Siddikur Rahman, Reana Trina, Hussain Muhammad Parvez, Shahadat Hosain, Syed Samun Ali, Abdul Ahad Shanto, Saiful Islam, Shipon Ahmed, Zubayer Ahmed and Kamrunnaher Shahana.

The primary defendant, one [Mr. Nazmul Hossain A.K.A “Ghatok”](#), and a magazine called “Atheist In Bangladesh”, who published an article he wrote, seem to be at the center of this lawsuit.

Our court correspondent reports that the plaintiff Mr. Shamim came across Mr. Hossain’s article first in this particular magazine. The abusive content he found in the said article, prompted him to go through the entire magazine which he found to be inundated with crude, offensive and vehemently demeaning words towards religion as a whole.

We launched a small investigation in an attempt to uncover the history of this magazine. It appears “Atheist in Bangladesh” have been publishing such obscene content about religion, Islam in particular, for a good while now. Alongside that, it has also been endorsing and facilitating several individuals, particularly those accused in the lawsuit, who devote themselves towards producing such obscene, rude content.

This lawsuit comes of course on the back what is currently rather a fragile environment in

Bangladesh. On one side we have a society readily embracing and accepting fundamentalism. And on the other, we have a government and law enforcement authorities currently engaged in an almighty tussle with bouts of terrorism, militancy that have plagued the nation in recent times.



Nevertheless, we were unable to get in touch with Mr. Shamim. Unsurprisingly our correspondent was not able to get in touch with any of the accused. However, he did manage to track down Mr. Nazmul Hossain's house in his hometown of Kalkini, Madaripur but found it to be devoid of living souls. When he queried some of the neighbors they revealed that the house has been empty for some time now and no one knows the whereabouts of its previous inhabitants.



Reactions towards the lawsuit have been generally mixed. Social media platforms which have been rife ever since news of the lawsuit broke in, are a perfect indicator of that. There were several users on Facebook for instance who claimed that "justice had been served". Some stated that 'Kafir's Munafiks and Indian agents like that' should be hanged till death. Some claimed that the accused should be grateful that they are even getting a chance at

fair trial, instead of being shot dead.

Meanwhile, several writers, bloggers, and online activists have firmly criticised Mr. Shamim for his actions. They described the Bangladesh Penal code 295 as the nation's excuse for stifling freedom of speech. Some claimed that it encourages individuals like Mr. Shamim, who do not even have the required depth to understand religion and its roots, to take up arms against free-thinking souls at will.

We spoke to Mufti Babunagari, spokesperson of Hefajat E Islami Bangladesh, He condemned the accused for their actions, lauding Mr. Shamim meanwhile as a true Muslim. He claimed that Kafirs, Munafiks like that should either be stripped of their rights or deported to India.

The Police Bureau of Instigations (PBI) meanwhile has taken charge of this incident. One of their spokespersons, who wished to remain anonymous, revealed that the PBI is hard at work on investigating the claims made in this lawsuit. With time he promised all the details will be revealed, but for now, there is nothing to report.

Bangladeshi gay couple marriage goes viral online, prompts incessant abuse



In breaking news, a Bangladeshi Muslim gay couple tied the knot in London, United Kingdom this past 19th of March 2017.

Mr Shahadat Hosain and his long-term partner Mr Masud Rana decided to tie the knot.

The union, which is a rather rare occurrence in its own right, in light of the fact that Mr Shahadat Hosain and his partner are both reported atheist gathered even more attention when the news of its occurrence spread across social media platforms like wildfire. The couple tried desperately to keep the marriage as low-key as possible, leaving Walthamstow council (where they tied the knot) as soon as they had gone through the formalities, and inviting no-one apart from their best friend Mr Sujan Chandra Dev to the wedding, according to our sources.

Meanwhile, it is unclear as to how or when social media hawks caught wind of the couple's union. But it created a domino effect which spread endlessly across popular social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, generating quite a bit of attention.

The vast majority, sadly, condemned the news and the couple's 'illicit relationship'. Some cited the rules of Islam that prohibit such relationships in order to vilify the couple, while some resorted to downright foul language and verbal abuse of all kinds. Indeed most of the write-ups and links shared or uploaded across the aforementioned platforms, regarding the couple's marriage of course, were inundated with dozens of comments. While some did offer them their sympathies, the number of users actually congratulating them, were next to non-existent.

Some of those shared links and articles referred to above are given below,

<https://www.facebook.com/boysloveworld71/posts/1684269248357985>

<https://www.facebook.com/BengaliFaizlamis/posts/2018045411788769>

<https://www.facebook.com/Almostidiot/posts/1004539943051865>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MairalaGroup.Net/permalink/1740828042678468/>

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1819143381719194&id=100008706493453

Our readers are advised to exercise caution whilst going through the abovementioned links, as they contain some strong and explicit language. Worryingly enough some of the comments appeared to be rather extreme in nature, with some users threatening to kill the couple if they 'ever get wind' of them. There are some comments which we suspect to have stemmed from religiously extremists. The comments vary in nature, but have elements of religious extremism ingrained into them. A few links to those specific comments can of course be seen below. Please bear in mind again that the images contain strong language and are inappropriate for some of our readers. Proceed with caution.

It is hard to gauge what sort of effect it has had in Bangladesh, the newly wed couple's country of origin of course, but it cannot have been a good one. Bangladesh as a nation, has a reputation for harbouring core fundamentalist ideals, and as such its society strictly abhors anything to do with homosexuality. Of course, it has devised a legalized method of punishing those who practice homosexuality, namely via the Bangladesh Penal Code 377. For now, our correspondent reports that it is strictly limited to social media now but 'will not be long' before it reaches Bangladesh's national media and indeed other news local media outlets.

Our correspondent managed to round up a few of the local residents of Naraynganj (where Mr Hosain was born). The majority of them expressed great disdain over their union. A select few offered pity and sympathy rather than congratulations. There were few people who expressed their anger to the higher extent and told our correspondent that this entire act was nothing but a sin and a disgraceful act.

It is also worth mentioning that the same-sex marriage is perfectly legal in Britain. Legislation to allow same-sex marriage in England and Wales was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in July 2013 and came into force on 13 March 2014.

We did manage to track down Mr Hosain's parents in his hometown of Naraynganj in Bangladesh. They however flatly refused to speak to our correspondent regarding the incident, and instead stated that Mr Hosain is 'no longer a part of the family'.
