

Corruption case against Ershad

Tajul refutes charges of leading immoral life

Tajul Islam Chowdhury, the defence witness in the corruption case against deposed President Ershad, Monday refuted prosecution suggestion that he is a disgraced, characterless man living un-Islamic life with a woman who has divorced him, reports UNB.

An MP, elected from Kurigram, Tajul sharply reacted to the Attorney General's suggestions. "Outright false. I have performed Haj four times. I cannot indulge in un-Islamic acts. No un-Islamic act can be done by me," he said.

Cross-examination of Tajul by the prosecution was completed on the 8th day Monday. A minister during the Ershad regime, he appeared as first defence witness in the special divisional judge court where the former President faces trial for amassing wealth including Tk 1,90,81,565 beyond known sources of his income.

The defence witness claimed the money found in Ershad's official residence belonged to Jatiya Party. Jatiya Party had raised the funds from August to November 1990 for buying party central office at Dhanmondi.

He showed documents in support of the claim. But the prosecution pointed out in the court many interpolations in the register showing collection of subscriptions and donations.

Fallen from power in December last after ruling the country nearly nine years, Ershad has been sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for keeping illegal arms. He now faces three corruption cases including this for amassing wealth which may earn him maximum seven years in jail.

Wearing a chocolate colour full-sleeve safari, Ershad was sitting on the dock apparently unconcerned, sometimes smiling, scanning magazines given by his lawyers and whispering with counsels including Advocate Strajul Haq and Sudhir Kumar Hazra.

Experts of the cross-examination of Tajul Islam by Attorney General Aminul Haq are as follows:

Q: Can you say the dates and time when you received money from your office clerk?

Ans: No.
Q: Have you signed against receipt of the money?

Ans: No.
Q: Do you find any signature of the clerk in the money collection register?

Ans: No.
Replying to a question, Tajul mentioned the amount of funds received on different

dates as entered in the 81 pages of the register that totalled Tk 1,46,42,800.

Q: Can you name and say the whereabouts of the clerk who collected the money and made entry in the register?

Ans: I do not remember his name and whereabouts.

Q: Can you produce him in the court as witness?

Ans: I do not know his whereabouts.

From the register he produced in the court, Tajul estimated that Tk 30,20,700 was collected during the period between October 10 and November 26, 1990.

He denied a prosecution suggestion that it was totally false that collection of any subscription could be possible during that period when the entire country was in grip of hartal processions, curfew and demonstrations against the government.

"It was only in newspapers. It didn't affect us, we attended office and carried out day's work regularly. There was no mass upsurge outside the capital," Tajul said as regards the situation immediately before the fall of Ershad.

"We collected subscriptions at night on hartal days," he said amidst laughter in the court.

The defence witness also refuted a prosecution suggestion that collection of party funds is a tapestry of lies.

Tajul said the party constitution was later amended to sign up the money receipts by Treasurer/Secretary General/Office Secretary. As Office Secretary, he was empowered by a party resolution to raise funds for making payment for the party house.

Attorney's suggestion: Receipt books are totally cooked up. DW (defence witness Tajul): There can be no truth like these receipt books (laughter in the court room).

Attorney: You are in your national life a disgraced person.

DW: It's your assumption, it's not correct.

Attorney: Available records prove that you are a characterless man.

DW: Downright false. Attorney: You are engaged in un-Islamic activities and living with a woman who has divorced you against the Sharia.

DW: Utterly false. I have performed Haj four times and cannot do it. Un-Islamic, un-Islamic acts cannot be done by me.

Hearing of the case was adjourned till November 10.



Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament addressing a memorial meeting at the Institution of Engineers organised by her party Monday on the four party leaders killed in Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975. —Star photo

Hasina

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lected government has been installed after fall of autocracy. The power is still there where it had been confined during last 16 years," she said, adding "only rulers have been changed, not the system."

The people shed blood to snatch their rights from a "particular quarter," establish democracy and rule of law, but none was fulfilled, the Awami League chief said.

She observed that the rule by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has given rise to the question: why the fight against autocracy was for? In an oblique reference to the BNP chief, Hasina said "why don't you (Begum Zia) have confidence on the people who elected you? You don't know the people around you now."

Presided over by former Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof Mazharul Islam, the function, held at the Engineers Institute was also addressed by Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, former Registrar of Dhaka University, Syed Badruddin Haasain, Advocate Gazil Huq and Prof Abu Sayeed.

Also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Hasina reiterated her demand for repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance to pave the way for trial of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the four Awami League leaders. This would help establish rule of law and consolidate democracy in the country, she observed.

Campus terrorism should not be viewed in isolation. It is part of the politics of killing that began in August 15, 1975, she said. In this regard she mentioned that activities of her party's student front has been suspended in Dhaka University and also that it should have been equally reciprocated.

But the party in power did not do that she said. "Who would now be responsible for campus violence?"

Hasina also criticised the attitude of the government for its alleged indifference to show respect to Bangabandhu and the four national leaders by broadcasting programmes on the Radio and Television on August 15 and November 3.

Zillur Rahman Siddiqui said killing of Bangabandhu and four national leaders were part of a single conspiracy to destroy the spirit of the independence war.

Siddiqui said deeds of people now in power were contrary to their commitments to institutionalise democracy and establish rule of law.

Badruddin Hussain said that with the killings of Bangabandhu and his four close associates in 1975, the defeated forces in the war of liberation started taking revenge and they were still continuing to do so.

Gazil Huq accused that actions of the present government does not show that they believe in democracy.

Zahir Shah

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try to the former king's villa by posing as a journalist. Zahir Shah, who took the throne in 1933 and was deposed 40 years later by his cousin and brother-in-law, General Mohammed Daoud, lives in a villa in Via Cassia in the suburbs of Rome.

He was stripped of his Afghan nationality in 1978 but the Kabul government restored his citizenship in September of this year.

A return to Afghanistan of Zahir Shah had been raised on occasions during the search for a settlement of the conflict between the Afghan resistance and the Soviet-backed Kabul government.

In Islamabad, a spokesman for the national Islamic Front of Afghanistan, which is close to Zahir Shah, blamed Monday's attack as a "terrorist attack (by) frustrated people consider him as a threat."

The spokesman, Nasir Azim Zia, told AFP that the former monarch remained "the best solution for an interim set-up" in Kabul ahead of general elections and a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Jail killing

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checked to know about the commission's report and proceedings of previous Parliament should be looked into before any decision. He said that opposition's pressure for a hasty decision on the issue was aimed at embarrassing the government.

At one stage the Minister said that 30 thousand people were killed by the Rakkhi Bahini during Awami League rule which drew strong protest from the AL members.

BNP MP Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain said that the jail killing issue was discussed in the Parliament in 1979 and the then leader of the House late Shah Azizur Rahman made statement on it. Akbar Hossain observed that raising the issue after a long time would only create confusion.

Another BNP MP Alamgir Kabir said that reviving such an old issue would disrupt the national unity.

Drawing conclusion on the debate, Local Government Minister Abdus Salam Talukder said that the jail killing issue came up for discussion in the parliaments elected in 1979 and 1986, in which Awami League was also represented.

He, however, added that, scope of more discussion on the issue is there after examining the related proceedings of those two parliaments. As regards obituary references on the four leaders, he said that the matter deserves consideration since it is a very old issue.

Deputy Leader of Opposition Abdus Samad Azad appreciated Salim Talukder's positive approach and said that government may take time for it, but that records should be

IDB assistance

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omponent of Bangladesh. The IDB will also extend assistance in the field of rural electrification, export trade and education," Dr Ali told the Prime Minister.

Referring to his recent visit to the cyclone-battered areas of Chittagong, Dr Ali expressed his appreciation at the measures taken by the present government to rehabilitate the affected people there.

He also noticed a great deal of enthusiasm among the people for participating in the development activities initiated by the government.

The IDB chief recalled that it was late president Zia's dream to see that there was solidarity and unity among the Muslim ummah. He took a number of bold initiatives to unify the Muslim countries.

Dr Ahmed Mohammad Ali expressed his satisfaction over the various steps taken by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and hoped that her efforts would contribute to realise that dream.

The IDB president described the development activities undertaken by the government during the short span of time despite natural calamities as "most impressive and encouraging."

Begum Khaleda Zia appreciated the assistance provided by the Islamic Development Bank in various development programmes of Bangladesh.

Explaining the development objectives of her government the Prime Minister said there were many areas where the IDB could play a more significant and helpful role. She referred to the rural electrification, primary education, health and population planning, development of trade especially export market development of Bangladesh where the bank could provide help.

Begum Zia appreciated the leadership of Dr Ahmed Mohammad Ali as the president of the bank and expressed the hope that he could play a vital role to bring about further solidarity of the Muslim ummah and the Muslim countries in different fields.

She also suggested that centre of excellence of higher learning could be developed in different Islamic countries so that students from these coun-

Ahmed Mansur

Anam dead

From Our BAU Correspondent
MYMENSINGH, Nov 4: Litterateur and journalist Ahmed Mansur Anam died Sunday night of a heart attack at his residence here. He was 55.

The eldest son of late Abul Mansur Ahmed, a renowned litterateur and journalist of the sub-continent, Ahmed Mansur Anam was the district manager of Green Delta Insurance in Mymensingh.

He left behind his wife, a son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held today at the Gopukurpur Jame Masjid following Zohr prayers. He was later laid to rest at the Goulkbari graveyard at College Road.

A large number of well-wishers and elite of the town visited his residence to express their condolences to the bereaved family.

District BNP General Secretary Abul Kashem, Mymensingh Pourashava Chairman Prof Matur Rahman, Mymensingh Press Club Secretary Nawab Ali, Mymensingh Journalists Union President Kazi Yasin and General Secretary Ataul Karim Khokon also expressed their condolences.

AL, BNP equally responsible for campus terrorism, says Inu

RANGPUR, Nov 4: Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Hasanul Huq Inu said today campus terrorism should be stopped forthwith if Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia had issued a joint declaration for purging armed hoodlums from their student organisations, reports UNB.

Awami League and BNP both are equally responsible for campus violence, said Inu, also a leader of the left-leaning 5-party Alliance.

He was addressing a protest meeting organised by the district unit of his party to condemn the killing of student leader Habib.

The JSD General Secretary said his party would dissociate with those parties which would not work democratically.

Habib, a leader of the district unit of Chhatra League (N-S), was killed brutally at Rangpur Medical College allegedly by the armed activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on September 25.

He resented police inaction and said after about one and a half months of the killing of Habib, the killers were yet to be tracked down. He demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Inu accused the government of influencing the police administration in the ruling party interest alike the past autocratic regime.

Mosaddek Hossain Bablu presided over the meeting.

Imelda returns

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women can indeed withstand as many gruelling hours of mental and emotional anguish — and silence too — as the men."

Chess was considered to be the game which most often resembled life, she said.

"In several instances now and in the past, women have demonstrated that they are as capable as the so-called stronger gender," said the 58-year-old former housewife who led a rebellion which ousted Ferdinand Marcos and his wife.

While Imelda wept, sang and wailed to cheering supporters on her return from six years of exile in the United States, Corazon stuck rigidly to formality, discussing a geothermal energy project with visiting Union Oil of California President Richard Stegeman.

Imelda, blowing kisses to thousands of people who lined the streets from the airport to her luxury bay-side hotel, said she hoped to meet Aquino and discuss her husband's burial in Manila.

Ferdinand Marcos's body lies in a refrigerated crypt in Hawaii where he died in exile in 1989.

A government spokesman said Corazon was unlikely to agree to a dialogue with Imelda, and that Corazon had no time for a "liar."

Aquino holds the Marcoses responsible for the airport assassination of her husband, opposition leader Benigno Aquino, when he returned from exile in 1983.

"Let us not be distracted from the principal purpose of allowing her return," Aquino's Executive Secretary Franklin Drilon said in a statement.

Outside the hotel, supporters created a fiesta atmosphere. Streamers read "Marcos again" and "Marcos for 1992," referring to possible bid for presidential elections in May next year.

Vice President Salvador Laurel, politically at odds with Aquino, had earlier greeted Imelda at the airport.

The Midnight File

USSR to extradite Honecker

BERLIN, Nov 4: Former German communist leader Erich Honecker will be extradited to Germany from the Soviet Union this month to face manslaughter charges, German Justice Minister Klaus Kinkel said. "He'll be back by the end of November," the newspaper Berliner Kurier quoted Kinkel as saying in an interview published on Monday. "By the end of November all misunderstandings and formalities will be cleared up," reports Reuter.

Kashmir militant shot dead

NEW DELHI, Nov 4: Muslim militants attacked security forces in Kashmir today with grenades, rockets and guns in a spurt of violence which left one person dead and 11 others injured. The dead man was identified as an activist of the militant Hizbul Mujahideen, shot and killed by police when he tried to hurl a grenade on a security patrol in the north Kashmir huff town of Sopore, reports AFP.

Black workers protest VAT

JAHANNESBURG, Nov 4: Between 3.5 million and four million black workers went on strike across South Africa today in protest against introduction of a value added tax (VAT). Predictions of massive intimidation and violence had not materialised, trade union organisers said. Police used tear gas and rubber bullets on two occasions, reports AFP.

Quakes rock Iranian town

NICOSIA, Nov 4: Three earthquakes hit the southwest Iranian town of Behbahan today, injuring at least 51 people. Geologists at Tehran University measured them at 6.2, 4.2 and 4.8 degrees on the Richter Scale and put the epicentre at 580 km southwest of the capital, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said, reports Reuter.

Bill raising salary of PSC chairman, members passed

Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) last night passed a bill enhancing the salary and allowances of Chairman and members of the Public Service Commission (PSC), reports UNB.

The bill titled the members of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (Terms and Conditions of Service) (Amendment) Bill, 1991, sought to increase the salary of the PSC Chairman to Tk 10,250 from Tk 6,000 and that of members to Tk 9,000 from Tk 5,500.

The bill piloted by State Minister for Establishment Nurul Huda also provides for housing allowance to the Chairman and members equivalent to 40 per cent of their salary and domestic aid allowance of Tk. 425 per month.

Opposition members strongly opposed the passage of the bill saying that enhancement of the salary at this time was illogical when a "silent famine" was prevailing in the country, people remained without food and a huge educated youth unemployed.

Some members argued that instead of raising the salary, the government should halt the price spiral of essential commodities. They were also critical of wide discrepancy of salary between the government officials and employees.

Defending the bill, State Minister Nurul Huda told the House that the enhancement of salary of the Chairman and members of the Public Service Commission was necessitated following the announcement of National Pay Scale.

Biswas

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called on him at his residence Monday morning.

President Biswas said a society cannot always submit to its problems and must keep its head high with the active cooperation of the intelligentsia.

Referring to the terrorism in the campus, he said our efforts should also be given in curbing violence in educational institutions.

President Biswas said terrorists are minority in number and for them the common students and brilliant boys cannot spoil their future. He urged the teachers to patronise the meritorious student.

Emphasising the need for continuation of a democratic government in the country, he said this was imperative for keeping the development unhindered.

He advised the teachers to cooperate with the government to materialise the people's aspirations and maintain congenial academic atmosphere.

Recalling the memory of his teachers including poet Jibananda Das and Dr Dani, the president said the teachers should discharge their duty responsibly to build their own students. He urged them to support in spreading female education so that the woman folk could be inspired to participate in the national development.

The teachers have also placed before him some of their problems and the President assured them that they would be looked into.

BCL (S-A) memo to Speaker to stop campus violence

By DU Correspondent

Chhatra League (S-A), the student wing of Awami League, submitted a memorandum to the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) Monday demanding effective steps in routing out terrorism from the educational institutions.

The BCL (S-A) in its memorandum also demanded immediate arrest and trial of the killers of its leader Mizanur Rahman Mizan. Mizan died in a gunbattle between the activists of BCL (S-A) and BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on the Dhaka University campus on October 27.

Earlier, it held a rally in front of the National Press Club. The rally was addressed by BCL President Shahe Alam, and other leaders, Quamuzzaman Ansari, Matjur Rahman and ABM Mozammel Huq.

Speakers at the rally accused the JCD of terrorism on the campus and said Prime Minister and BNP Chief Begum Khaleda Zia would be responsible for any incident of violence there.

After the rally, the BCL activists marched towards the Jatiya Sangsad in a procession but was obstructed by police at Bangla Motor crossing.

Later, a six-member delegation led by Shahe Alam went to the Parliament and submitted the memorandum to the Speaker.

Ganges waters

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40,500 cusecs under an interim arrangement, the minister said.

After the commissioning of Farakka Barrage in 1975 and under interim arrangement, India withdrew 11,000-16,000 cusecs of water through feeder channel during 41 days of dry season starting from April 21 to May 30.

The main feature of the 1977 accord was that it included a "guarantee clause" which ensured 80 per cent flow of the Ganges water for Bangladesh for 10 days during the dry season.

Majid-ul Huq informed the House that an expiry of the Ganges water agreement of 1977, an MOU was signed in October 1982 for two consecutive dry seasons 1983 and 1984 without any guarantee clause.

In 1985, there was no agreement and India withdrew water unilaterally during the dry season of that year.

In November 1985, he said, another MOU was signed for 1986-87 and 1987-88 and the tenure of that MOU expired in May 1988.

There has not been any new agreement till date, the Irrigation Minister added.

He informed the House that two secretary-level meetings were held in Dhaka and New Delhi in April and October this year to work out an acceptable formula on the sharing of the Ganges water.

The water sharing featured prominently during Indo-Bangladesh bilateral talks in Delhi when Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman visited India recently.

Editor: S. M. Ali