

Ershad's letter a conspiratorial move : Matin

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury informed parliament yesterday (Sunday) that police had gathered some important information from Nurul Islam Milon, International Affairs Secretary of Jatiya Party, reports UNB.

Customs officials at Zia International Airport on February 10 (Wednesday) recovered from Milon a letter, allegedly written by deposed president Ershad to a head of state.

He was accompanying JP acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury who left for Saudi Arabia on the day to perform Omrah Haj'. Milon was offloaded and arrested after the recovery of the letter from his luggage.

The Home Minister termed the letter a conspiratorial move against the Bangladesh government by a man (Ershad) who, he said, is hated by the people and was put in jail for killing democracy and introducing a corrupt regime in the country.

The letter was being smuggled out of the country in utter violation of all international norms, Matin said, adding that the government is contemplating legal action in this matter.

"None is above law. Maudud Saheb, being a barrister, will not be able to protect Mizan Chowdhury from the hands of law. Ershad was tried and given punishment and a similar process will be adopted in this case also."

The Home Minister said

that many important information was gathered by police from Milon after interrogation. Milon was under interrogation of police, he added, assuring the House that the government will unveil the conspiracy to the people in due course.

He said that what Barrister Maudud stated in the House about the incident was not based on fact.

Earlier rising on a point of order, Jatiya Party leader Maudud Ahmed described how Mizan Chowdhury was humiliated at the airport on February 10 "in the name of search by customs officials."

He said Mizan Chowdhury got permission from the Supreme Court to leave the country to perform Omrah but faced humiliation and discourteous treatment from the customs officials.

"It does not look nice if such a behaviour is meted out to an elderly member of this parliament," Maudud said, narrating the political background of Mizan Chowdhury, who was elected to parliament eight times.

Referring to the letter, Maudud said an "unsigned letter" was recovered from the baggage of Nurul Islam Milon but it did not contain any scintillating matter.

The Jatiya Party leader alleged that police tortured Milon inhumanly in the name of interrogation and said that he (Milon) was taken to CMIL and later to Suhrawardy Hospital for treatment.

Rich polluters should compensate poor sufferers'

By Staff Correspondent
The rich polluters of the global environment should compensate the poor sufferers. This demand was made at a seminar on Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Dhaka Sunday.

A country like Bangladesh contributes very little to the global environment pollution but faces a grave threat from it, the scientists and environment activists said.

Jointly organised by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and GEF, the day-long seminar at the Sheraton Hotel was participated by 40 scientists and environmental crusaders.

GEF is a body co-managed by World Bank, UN Development Programme and UN Environment Programme and finances different environment projects in developing countries.

Administrator of the GEF Ian Johnson, Climate Network Europe representative Ms Anne Roncerel, Director BCAS Dr. Atiq Rahman, Open University Vice-Chancellor Dr. Shamser, Ali Abdullah Al Mutt Sarfuddin were present among others at the seminar chaired by Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forest.

The speakers said that even after the GEF had sanctioned nearly 700 million dollars since 1991 to some 100 projects on global warming, biodiversity and international water nothing was allocated for Bangladesh.

They said that the government should move faster to have funds for such projects.

Some of the speakers said that the world was now divided into two parts in terms of environment—the developed North and the developing South—and that the latter had to carry the pollution of the former.

Johnson said that Bangladesh's Sundarban mangrove could effectively be useful for a better ecological system if it was brought under a project for conservation.

He said that the GEF was a pilot project aimed at bridging the gap between North and South.

Johnson also assured that Bangladesh would get some projects on environment in near future.

EC decision

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concerned that all the ballots had lawfully been preserved and it would recount votes of all the 117 centers today afternoon.

The BNP Joint Secretary General and Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah while expressing his reaction over the EC decision said, "The BNP believes in the transparency of the government activities."

The BNP leader, however, expressed concern over the possibility of democracy loving people's assuming that the EC's decision to recount the ballots was a consequence of the AL pressure on it by means of observing continued hartal at Mirpur.

"It would be dangerous for democracy-if the people start believing that an independent institution like the Election Commission has bowed to the pressure mounted on it by a political party."

According to the prior announcement of the Election Commission, the BNP candidate won the Mirpur by-election.

Tofael Ahmed of the Awami League, while giving his reaction over the EC decision said, "We welcome the EC step because the commission, by taking the step, has further proved its neutrality in conducting elections."

The EC decision to recount the ballots also proved that the UNB did not have any right to file any story on the results prior to the announcement of the results by the Election Commission.

Rashed Khan Menon of the Workers Party while commenting on the EC decision said that it would unquestionably help restoring the neutral image of the Election Commission.

Unscheduled debate

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tion over other members. Speaker Sheikh Ruzak Ali, much before this unscheduled debate, passed a ruling that the issue would be discussed in the House today. He also described police attack on Nasim as a very unfortunate incident and called all concerned to behave themselves.

But an uproar erupted in the House when Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, making a statement over the police atrocity on the opposition Chief Whip said that Nasim might have been hurt in the melee when police tried to disperse an unruly crowd in front of the AL central office on February 6.

The Home Minister, however, expressed his regret at such an "undesirable" incident and conveyed his sympathy to the Chief Whip of the Opposition.

The Home Minister also informed the House that an one-member inquiry committee with an Additional Inspector General of Police had already been formed to probe into the incident.

Dissatisfied with the Home Minister's statement, the AL MPs started shouting in the House and unanimously termed the statement 'untrue'.

Tofael Ahmed of the AL took the floor at this stage and referring to the newspaper reports published on February 7, informed the Chair that Nasim was beaten up by the police 'deliberately'.

At this stage Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina took the floor and held the Home Minister responsible for all acts of terrorism in the country.

Hasina noted with bitterness in her voice that the Home Minister had masterminded the terrorist activities outside the Parliament and then gave a fictitious and concocted statement inside the House.

The opposition leader said that during her visit to Rajshahi she had talks with all political parties and their student fronts, including the JCD. They were found to be

Golam Mustafa to decline Nat'l Film Award

Star Report
Golam Mustafa, the winner of the National Film Award 1990 for best supporting actor, had decided to decline the award.

"It is not possible for me to receive the award because Peak Vote is the protagonist in the story of Chhutor Fande for which I cannot be given the supporting actor's award," says Mustafa explaining his decision to The Daily Star yesterday.

Awards for 1990 have been announced recently. "Should an actor doing the role of Santiago in the Old Man and the Sea be given the award for supporting actor just because the character is that of an old man," the disgruntled actor argued to make his point.

He is expected to officially decline the award soon.

Mirpur votes

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main rival candidates, all the 18 candidates or their respective agents and journalists can be present only with Election Commission's permission.

The Election Commission on Saturday cancelled the by-election results and ordered recounting of votes.

PM : Health

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The inaugural function was addressed by Chowdhury Kamal Hossain, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Strajul Huq, Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Syed Ahmed, Health Secretary Ana Abeyesundere, WHO representative in Bangladesh, Prof Habibuzzaman, Chairman of the Scientific Committee of the third congress, K M Nazrul Islam, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the third congress, Prof S A Khaleq, President BSP, Abu Obaida Mohammad Mohsin, General Secretary of BSP, Prof Badur Rahman Khan, President APASP, Shah Munir Hossain, Secretary General of APASP and Prof Kazi Masihur Rahman, Director General of Health Services.

The Prime Minister hoped the participating medical experts would be able to identify the problems facing our medical sector and suggest their remedies.

Contraband goods seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent
During its first operation with a well-equipped modern vehicle Customs surveillance and preventive teams seized contraband goods worth about Taka 7.5 lakh at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) in the city late Saturday night.

Weekly cabinet meet held

The regular weekly meeting of the cabinet was held yesterday morning at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair, reports BSS.

A report on the outcome of SAARC Ministerial Conference on children held at Colombo recently was placed before the cabinet. The Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs led a delegation in the conference.

The annual report on the activities of different ministries and divisions for 1990-91 was also placed before the cabinet.

The accused are: A K Dutta, Chief Accountant, Rafiqul Islam, Accountant, M Mannan, Commercial Manager, Abdul Wahab, Commercial Assistant and Fazlul Huq, Circulation Manager.

The Midnight File

Iraq pulls all missiles out of no-fly zones

ANKARA, Feb 14: Iraq has pulled all missiles out of the southern and northern no-fly zones as a gesture to the new US administration, Turkey's Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin said. Cetin, in remarks carried by Anatolian News Agency, said on Saturday night that Iraq has also withdrawn troops from the north and closed all radars there. "Now it has come to a normal period," Cetin said in the remarks quoted by Anatolian. "...By this attitude, Iraq wants to give a message to the new Clinton government," reports Reuters.

Pak-Turkish accord on defence industry

ISLAMABAD, Feb 14: Pakistan and Turkey have signed an agreement to cooperate in the defence industry sector, officials said here today. The accord, which provides for a military consultative ground and the exchange of classified information, was signed by Turkish defence Minister Nevzat Ayaz and his Pakistani counterpart Syed Ghauas Ali Shah, a joint statement said, reports AFP.

Sharif cancels BBC phone-in programme

ISLAMABAD, Feb 14: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif cancelled his appearance on a BBC phone-in programme today due to a visit by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said. Sharif had to receive the Malaysian leader whose arrival in Islamabad today for a four-day official visit coincided with the British Broadcasting Corporation programme, the agency said, reports AFP.

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill passed

The Jatiya Sangad yesterday night passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 1993, increasing driving licence fee and its renewal fees, reports BSS.

Under the amendments, the driving licence fee will be increased to Taka 100 from Taka 60 and the renewal fee to Taka 50 from Taka 30 and late renewal fee to Taka 70 from Taka 50.

Bangla Academy

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Professor Montazur Rahman Tafaer will present 'Amar Ekushey Bakritra' (lecture on Amar Ekushey). At the end of the first session on the day, Gazi Shamsur Rahman will deliver the presidential speech. In the evening, a musical programme will be held.

The 14th day of the Amar Ekushey book fair yesterday witnessed a seminar on 'Literary practise among the youth writers in Bangladesh: Seventies and eighties.'

PM's farewell

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Bangabhaban where Begum Khaleda Zia introduced the members of her cabinet to the distinguished guest.

The Malaysian Prime Minister also introduced the senior members of his entourage to the Prime Minister Begum Zia.

Departure ceremony over, the Malaysian Prime Minister left for Zia International Airport in a motorcade to undertake a day-long visit to Chittagong and Kaptai.

Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister Majidul Haque and Begum Laque saw the visiting dignitary and his wife off at the VIP terminals.

Two diplomats

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The government can ask an official to retire after 25 years of his or her service.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, the official spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, refused to talk when contacted by phone last night.

The Foreign Minister was away from the country when the orders were issued. The minister left Dhaka yesterday morning on visits to Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

MOU on shipping

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Among others who attended the signing ceremony were Malaysia's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Minister of International Trade and Industry Rafidah Aziz and Bangladesh's Communications Minister Col. (Retd) Oli Ahmed, Planning Minister Zahiruddin Khan and other high officials of the two countries.

Prior to the signing of MOU Col (Retd) Shahabuddin Ahmed, Chairman, Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) briefed the Malaysian Premier on the possibilities of foreign investment and availability of facilities at the CEPZ.

The signing over, the Malaysian Premier accompanied by his delegation members, Bangladesh Ministers and officials went inside CEPZ and visited a shoe and a fishing equipment manufacturing factories.

While Mahathir was visiting Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) his wife Dr. Siti Hasmeh went on a separate programme to see Chittagong Eye Infirmary Hospital at Pahartal here.

At 12-30 pm Mahathir and his wife along with some of his delegation members flew to Kaptai, a hilly lake town, by helicopters to have a glimpse of the scenic beauty. The Malaysian Premier also hosted a luncheon in Kaptai.

After returning from Kaptai Mahathir flew for Pakistan at 3-24 pm by special flight from Chittagong airport. Mahathir arrived in Chittagong airport today at 10-30 am and reached at Chittagong Export Processing Zone at 11 am.

Talking to this correspondent, the Managing Director of Malaysian Shipping Corporation said, "Through the signing of MOU, we want to develop relation and cooperation with Bangladesh on shipping services."

The Managing Director said the signing of MOU came following the bilateral maritime agreement which paved the way for maritime activities and cooperation.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian trade delegation which arrived here with their Prime Minister visited Chittagong Chamber and held a discussion with Chamber members.

Mahathir : Jt venture

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community here. "I consider it very successful, very useful and I look forward to fruitful results in the near future ... we have also learnt a lot on Bangladesh's policies ... what bureaucratic processes (are) required (to get projects approved), said the Malaysian Prime Minister."

He brought along with him a large team of entrepreneurs, a couple of senior ministers and a number of top bureaucrats in the trade and industry departments.

To expand trade, he stressed the need to take steps to correct the weaknesses in the area of communications, especially in air and shipping.

On the international scene, Mahathir spoke in his usual fashion, criticising the West for linking aid to human rights and calling for restructuring the UN system.

"ASEAN countries are very concerned about the linkage between aid and human rights... they (Western nations) try to use aid as a means to twist arms in the South. That's what ASEAN objects," the Malaysian leader replied to a question on how ASEAN viewed West's bid to link aid to human rights at the Vienna conference on human rights this June.

There are many interpretations about what constitutes human rights... ASEAN is also for upholding human rights... but standards differ in different countries... our practices differ from the practices in the West."

"The use of human rights for twisting arms is grossly unfair," Mahathir went on. "We can also point to the lack of human rights in the West. We should also be able to twist their arms as much as they can twist our arms. It can't be a one-way thing."

In reply to another question, Mahathir said that Malaysia wanted the UN restructured and the permanent members of the Security Council stripped of their veto powers. Veto power was contrary to the concept of international democracy, he said and added that the results of the World War Two should not "influence the UN for eternity."

"We think the veto power should go. The countries playing major role (in international affairs) should be given seats in the Security Council," he said.

Mahathir said that he had discussed the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina with his Bangladesh counterpart Begum Khaleda Zia. "We both stand for an effective UN participation in the solution of the problem."

To another question, he refused to condemn India for not letting an OIC team investigate the affairs of Kashmir, saying that he was not to say how India should handle a particular situation.

Farm labourers

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demands and assuring that he would raise the matter in parliament.

Demands of the union include round-the-year work for the farm labourers at a salary equivalent to 4 kg rice, loan, ration at the rate enjoyed by defence forces and distribution of khas land among them.

A delegation comprising Bimal Biswas, Saiful Haq, Prof Sattar, Anwar Hossain and Nasiruddin Nasu went to Sangsad Bhaban and submitted the memo to the Speaker, the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition at about 4.30 pm.

SKOP

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signed between the government and the SKOP on December 21, 1991 on the five-point charter of demands submitted by it.

The MOU envisaged that the national minimum wages would be announced by two months and the recommendation of wages commission by four months from the date of signing the MOU, they added.

After the signing of the MOU, the SKOP leaders said, an agreement on the 10-point demand was signed between the government and the SKOP on July 6, 1992 on the eve of observing 48-hour hartal programme on July 7 and 8 last.

SKOP also called off a 48-hour strike scheduled for November 29-30 last following a series of meetings where the government had assured of implementing the agreement, the leaders said.



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