

Bangladesh created for Ayub, Yahya's shortsightedness

State deptt documents say

UNB, Dhaka

The creation of Bangladesh was due to political incompetence and shortsighted policies of military generals Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, who sent the Pakistan army to put down what they thought was a rebellion against the Pakistani administration, according to US State Department documents.

In the turbulent years preceding the birth of Bangladesh, the situation in Pakistan under Gen Ayub Khan and Gen Yahya Khan, the widespread discontent of the people both in the East and West Pakistan and US concerns to prevent China or Russia getting involved in the Indo-Pakistan conflict have been effectively captured for history in the transcripts just released by the US State Department and carried by an Indian media.

The consulate general in Dacca (Dhaka) in its report on the crisis described how the Pakistani army let loose a reign of terror and indulged in atrocities, targeting Hindus, students and faculty members of the Dhaka University.

In a telegram to the State Department it said: "Here in Dacca we are mute and horrified witnesses to a reign of terror by the Pak military."

According to the transcripts, assistant to former US president

Richard Nixon for national security affairs Henry Kissinger assessed the political tensions in Pakistan that were raising questions about the continued viability of the state and which were compelling the US "to walk a very narrow tightrope".

Kissinger also instructed the departments of state and defence and the CIA to prepare a contingency study examining the options open to the US in the event of a movement toward "secession in East Pakistan."

In one of his dispatches to the United States, Yahya Khan said he did not "intend to preside over the dissolution of Pakistan." This led to him sending the Pak army to quell the movement and that was the beginning of the end of Pak control over the East Pakistan.

Kissinger, who derided India and then prime minister Indira Gandhi in a private 1971 conversation with President Richard Nixon, said he regrets his choice of words, and insisted the comments be viewed in the context of cold war politics, according to an interview with New Delhi Television channel.

He told the private TV channel that Nixon's reference to Gandhi as an "old witch" - a comment revealed earlier this week in transcripts of Oval Office tapes and newly declassified documents - was "Nixon language."

Spiralling prices

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Besides, the 'national taskforce' formed to contain the price spiral will hold a meeting on July 6, it added.

In Karwan Bazar yesterday, one kg of salt was selling at Tk 15, up from Tk 10 last week, while sugar at Tk 36, up from Tk 32. Soybean oil, which was selling at Tk 52 last week, now sells at Tk 55. Price of pulses swelled to Tk 48 yesterday from Tk 44 last week.

Tea sells at Tk 170, up from Tk 160.

Patal was selling at Tk 14 yesterday, up from Tk 10 a week back. Bitter gourd was selling at Tk 20 a

kg, up from Tk 16. Cucumbers cost Tk 20 a kg yesterday, though it was Tk 12 a week ago. Aubergine, which was selling Tk 16 seven days back, sold at Tk 24 yesterday.

Price of kidney beans (barbati) ranged between Tk 10 and Tk 12 last week, but it cost customers Tk 15 for a kg yesterday. The price of tomato increased to Tk 30 a kg yesterday, from Tk 20 a week ago. Price of green papaya rose by Tk 2, while that of a one-kg coriander leaf shot up to Tk 70, from Tk 40 a week back.

Snake-gourd (chichinga), which sold at Tk 10 last week, is now selling at Tk 16, while okra at Tk 18, up from Tk 12 a kg, potato at Tk 9, up from Tk 8 a week back.

Growers cannot plant and harvest vegetables in rain, which also hampers the transportation of perishable items, traders explained.

Besides vegetables, price of onion went up from Tk 12 to 18 and garlic from Tk 55 to 62 (imported) and Tk 40 to 48 (local). Prices of a dozen of eggs increased to Tk 48 yesterday, from a range between Tk 36 and Tk 38 10 days ago.

JCD man

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including one murder and four attempts to murder offences.

RAJSHAHI

Abdul Matin alias Matin Bangal alias Kosai Matin, an alleged leader of underground Naxal movement, was killed in 'crossfire' at Hariandaha in Motihar in the city, according to our staff correspondent from Rajshahi.

The Rab arrested Matin from Shahjadpur upazila in Pabna on Friday and was off to Tanore upazila in Rajshahi to seize his arms cache.

Rab sources said they came under fire near Hariandaha bridge and countered the attack. They added that after a skirmish, Matin was found bullet-hit on the spot. He was pronounced dead at Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital.

The Rab seized one local revolver and one knife.

Budget

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Hasina said the government is afraid of an impartial international probe into the August 21 carnage as a fair and neutral probe would find out the truth that many ruling party leaders and their kin and kin were involved in the attack.

"People are being the victims of the government's inefficiency and corruption," she said pointing to the recent blowout at Tengratila gas field. Thousands of people in villages around Tengratila are affected by the blowout, she added.

The opposition leader blamed a particular "bhaban" for protecting the drilling company Niko, which is responsible for the Tengratila blow-out. "Why the government is not taking action against them?" she asked.

Referring to Friday's DC-10 accident at Chittagong airport, she said the government should take action against the persons involved in leasing old aircraft for Bangladesh Biman in exchange for commission.

The AL president called upon all to join a united movement to oust the BNP-Jamaat government for its misdeeds and misrule.

About her Europe tour, Hasina said she attended the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe where she called upon the developed countries to cooperate with the developing countries in their efforts towards progress.

15 AL men sent to jail for 'killing' cop

BDNEWS, Sherpur

Fifteen Awami League (AL) leaders and activists, including the president of Nalitabari upazila unit of the party, were sent to jail yesterday on charge of killing a police constable.

The District and Sessions Judge's Court, Sherpur, sent the AL men to jail when they surrendered before the court as per an order of the High Court.

Earlier on June 20, they appealed for bail to the High Court. The court granted two weeks' bail and asked them to surrender before the District and Sessions Judge's Court.

Police constable Ashraf Siddiqui was killed in a clash between police and pickets at Nalitabari Bazar during a 36-hour hartal enforced by the Awami League in February. Four other police personnel and 10 AL leaders and activists were injured in the clash.

After investigation into the incident, police pressed charges against 37 leaders and activists of the AL and its front organisations.

Probe body

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it became six-member after three of its members had resigned from it terming the probe 'an eyewash'.

The DU treasurer told The Daily Star that they could not make any progress in probing the violence, as most of the members tend to bunk off the probe committee meetings.

Besides, Prof Hasan said, the students and the student leaders do not respond properly to the committee's calls. "For these, I really am not sure when I am going to finish the investigation and submit report to the authorities," he added.

"I know it well that the investigation would not make any difference as the authorities hardly take into account recommendations of the probe committees. Still, we would submit the report, be it late," Prof Hasan said.

Meanwhile, two of the DU Syndicate members-Prof Sadeka Halim and Dr Rahmat Ullah -- yesterday met the treasurer and expressed concern over the pace of investigation.

Bangla Bhai

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Sources said local BNP leaders lobbied police for the release of Peter, who is said to be a nephew of Deputy Minister for Land Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu.

But the police sent Peter to a court immediately. However, the law enforcers are not going to sue him for attacking them, police sources said.

Peter and his group attacked and injured Shahikul Islam, daily Janakantha correspondent of Bagmara, when he was going to the local press club.

They attacked him for assisting journalists to report on Bangla Bhai men and the activities of Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh.

Tata, govt

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third-round negotiations finalised the agenda and schedule of the complex negotiations to run through July 7.

The government side led by Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan and Tata Group led by Tata Bangladesh Chapter Head Manzer Hussain identified the core issues of the investment during the meeting.

The finance secretary told journalists that the negotiations are going ahead well.

"Both parties are advancing in a positive mood to make the deal a success," the secretary said after the meeting.

Tata Group will sit in a series of meetings with the power, communications, gas and coal and land sub-committees tomorrow.

The Tata representatives will hold the wrap-up meeting of the negotiations with a secretary-level committee led by the finance secretary on July 7.

The government and the Tata Group on May 9 agreed to kick off formal negotiations on May 25 and wind it up by August 31 to clear the way for signing of the investment agreement before November 30.

Tata on April 20 formally submitted a \$2.5 billion investment proposal for setting up a 1000 MW power station, a steel mill with an annual production capacity of 420,000 tons and a one million-ton fertiliser unit.

Tk 830 crore

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The health ministry owes Tk 7.73 crore, education ministry Tk 7.25 crore, defence Tk 5.58 crore, communications Tk 5.3 crore, liberation war affairs ministry Tk 5.35 crore.

The unpaid bills of other ministries range from Tk 30 lakh to Tk 2 crore.

Meanwhile, a power ministry source said different government organisations as well as private ones owe a large sum of money as electricity bills to the power ministry and many of them are not paying bills for more than a year.

Consequently, the ministry is unable to pay the bill for gas used for power generation, the source said, adding that despite taking various measures, they have failed to collect the dues.

Industries ministry sources said they have failed to pay the gas bill as they have not received their due allocation from the government.

The ministries are given allocation in the budget as per their requirement, finance ministry sources said, adding that they would ask the ministries concerned to explain the cause of their failure to pay gas bills in time.

Govt to meet

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Kamal said, "It is more true for what we call 'fast food'."

More than 50 people including Deputy Minister for Land Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu reportedly fell sick after having fast food at the annual general meeting of Bangladesh Samabany Bank on June 25.

The bank's Deputy General Manager BK Patwari filed a case on Tuesday with the Paltan Police Station against the food shop, Food Plus, at the Sena Kalyan Bhaban, which had supplied the fast food. The police arrested the manager and two staff of the shop.

A series of investigative reports by The Daily Star also found cases of serious food adulteration and use of chemicals in it, which the experts consider a serious threat to the public health.

Talking to the journalists on the computer network system, Kamal said the network, set up in 92 offices of the ministry including those at the district levels, will have all the information on food procurement, reserve and dispatch, which will ensure the food security system in the country.

"Previously it would take minimum 7-15 days to prepare and send any report on food reservation,

average price or dispatch to the policy makers, but now the networking will make the whole process possible in a very short time," he said.

The government will now be able to combat immediately any crisis including food shortage, price hike or natural disaster in any part of the country thanks to the easy access to information through the computer network system, said Abdur Rouf, project director of the Computer Network System.

Analysis of food price of previous years, comparing the present

reserve with those of the previous ones will also help the policy makers formulate new policies in the wake of new crises, he told the journalists explaining the functions of the system.

The project was implemented at a cost of Tk 6.21 crore and ended on June 10 this year. The food ministry is consulting with other ministries to extend the project, Rouf noted.

On the recent price hike of rice despite a bumper boro harvest this year, the food minister said the procurement price fixed at Tk 14.50 this year is an all-time high, which might have contributed to the price hike. The government price for rice procurement last year was Tk 13.25 a kg.

"We also want that the farmers get a reasonable price," the minister said. The price in the rural markets and other divisions, however, is much less than that in Dhaka, he claimed.

The amount of food reserve in the country is now 808,000 metric tons, and the government has already purchased 6 lakh metric tons of the targeted 10 lakh metric tons of rice. The remaining 4 lakh metric tons will be procured within August, the minister said.

Md Fazlur Rahman, acting secretary of the food ministry, and other officials were present at the dialogue.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Food Planning and Monitoring Committee on food procurement held at the ministry earlier yesterday also expressed satisfaction over the present procurement situation, a ministry official said.

The meeting observed that the government does not need to increase the procurement price at present as it may add to the present price hike, he said.

Part of coal mine

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Phulbari mines. Besides, it wants exploration rights at the existing Barapukuria mine, applying open mining.

Tata prefers open pt mining than shaft mining since it allows extraction of more coal in one go. Up to 90 per cent of a deposit can be extracted this way.

The government several months ago formed a committee comprising Petrobrangla experts. The committee in its report said the government may award Tata exploration rights in the two unexplored zones but Barapukuria mine is already under a contract.

The report further said that before awarding the exploration rights, the government must first see Tata's detailed plans on mining to understand if they will affect the existing Barapukuria mine and have negative environmental impact.

Sources pointed out that since CMC will be operating in the coal mine, the PMO is considering awarding one area of Barapukuria coal reserve away from the present mining site. It is estimated that the mine has two billion tonnes of coal, which in terms of its thermal value is equivalent to 6 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Under the Coal Development Policy, 1993, the government would get only 6 percent royalty from Tata for operating the mine. The policy was framed when petroleum price was between \$12 and \$25 per barrel. Now the price has gone up to \$50 to 60. Six percent royalty is now too less, the sources pointed out.

Since Tata is interested in open mining only, energy ministry adviser Mahmudur Rahman twice instructed Petrobangla to appoint a consultant to see if open mining is more profitable than shaft mining.

At a meeting with officials of the ministry and Petrobrangla, the adviser said if open mining is more profitable, the mine will be awarded to Tata for production. One source however pointed out, "A decision has already been taken on awarding the coal mine to Tata."

Tata plans to utilise this coal for its proposed steel mill and power plant, and also export it to India.

"Barapukuria mine will help lower Tata's operational cost and act as a long term energy source. To operate its steel mill, Tata will import iron ore from India. The 100 tonne-capacity wagons that will carry iron ore from India will not return empty if Tata can export coal. That way the carrying cost of coal and iron ore will reduce significantly. This is why Tata is so much interested in the coal mine," the source said.

While Tata's plan has its merits, energy experts vehemently oppose open mining.

One expert said if Tata is so much interested, it can be awarded Khalashpir coal deposit at Pirganj, not very far from Barapukuria. "Khalashpir deposit is located at a higher point and its reserve is bigger than Barapukuria's. But the government should first revise its coal development policy and increase the percentage of royalty."

Khalashpir deposit is actually in the same belt of coal reserve as Barapukuria.

Barapukuria mine was discovered in the late eighties by the Geological Survey of Britain (GSB) that later deployed British consultant IMCL to suggest the best way to produce coal from the reserve, mainly located at a depth of nearly 150 to 250 metres.

The IMCL through a study ruled out open mining because of the depth of the coal reservoir and serious environmental damage it causes. Open mining will lead to widespread destruction.

tion of paddy fields in the area, and since land is scarce in Bangladesh, such mining will cause additional miseries to local people.

"Open mining is an option when it is not located in a populated area, or when the deposit is near the surface. This was debated in the early nineties and we had a consensus that the geological condition in that region poses great risk for open mining," noted one expert.

Accordingly, the then BNP government struck a Suppliers' Credit agreement with China in 1994 to develop this mine using shaft method.

While developing the mine, CMEC under-estimated the complex geological nature of that area, especially presence of a large number of sub-soil water reservoirs. As a result, the mine was completely flooded in 1998. Mining remained nearly stalled till 2002.

The Chinese company then installed a new shaft half a kilometre to the south of the original shaft that remains flooded till date. The new shaft does not give access to as much coal as the original one gave, sources said.

From mid-2002, the mine started pilot production of coal. It now has a production capacity of seven lakh tonnes a year, which will gradually go up to one million tonnes. Nearly 75 percent of this coal will be consumed by the 250 megawatt Barapukuria power project now being developed by another Chinese company.

Thomas

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh will be free and fair.

He was the 11th US ambassador to Bangladesh, and upon his return to Washington, he will replace Karl Hofmann as executive secretary at the State Department.

He praised the people of Bangladesh for their hospitality, saying that they were wonderful to his family and to him. "Our heart will always be with Bangladesh and we will miss you. The people are wonderful and they impressed me most - they are resilient and inseparable."

Ambassador Thomas stayed in Dhaka with his wife Enicka O. Smith Thomas, a vocalist, and his daughter Casey Marie Eunice Thomas.

He received wide media coverage during his tenure for his outspoken remarks on major issues in Bangladesh.

During his stay here, he had spoken about the needs for improvement in human-right conditions, highlighting the State Department's annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices as a key tool for moving the dialogue on human rights forward.

In his observations the United States diplomat said, "I know that Bangladesh will continue to succeed and be a model for democracy and tolerance for everyone."

About the visit of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Thomas said he was not sure about her visit to Bangladesh.

Harry was vocal on the issues of security and freedom of journalists who faced "intimidation and violence from criminals, political leaders, and religious extremists".

When asked to speak something in Bengali he said, "Ami asha kori 2-3 bosorer moddye Bangladesh e ashbo (I hope I will be back in Bangladesh within 2-3 years)."

Responding to the reporters' appeal to comment on the political situation of Bangladesh, Thomas said, "You are trying to get the headline from me. I am no longer the ambassador... President Bush accepted my resignation."

OIC to focus on bilateral trade

Says Morshed

UNB, Dhaka

Leaders from the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) have agreed to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation among the member-states and to develop an Islamic Common Market (ICM).

They discussed the strategy at the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) as part of a policy reform towards mainstreaming the OIC to face any negative impact of globalisation and campaign against the Islamic Ummah.

"We've to come out of an orchestrated campaign against the Islamic countries," Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told reporters at Zia International Airport yesterday on return from the 32nd conference of the ICFM held in Sanaa, Yemen, June 28-30.

"It (orchestrated campaign) will not be a problem...member-countries can offer trade preferences bilaterally," he said, replying to a question whether fresh organised campaigns will be launched against the effort to develop ICM.

He said the conference decided to form a committee of enlightened people to devise the means of reform, which will be submitted at the OIC summit likely to be held in Makkah by the end of this year.

The conference adopted a 15-point Sanaa Declaration with a plan to review the progress in the next conference of foreign ministers in Azerbaijan towards fixing the strategy to face the challenges of the new era.

It stressed the need for intensive interaction among the member-states on the tariff and non-tariff issues as adopted in the declaration as well as importance of replicating best practices within the Islamic Ummah.

Morshed said the conference also agreed to augment intra-OIC trade and economic cooperation to narrow the rich-poor gap within the Islamic Ummah.

For developing human resources, Bangladesh requested the conference to expand the education facilities in the Islamic University of Science and Technology in Gazipur with a medical faculty.

The minister had bilateral talks on the sidelines of the conference with the President of Yemen who invited Bangladesh RMC entrepreneurs to invest in the special economic zone of Yemen, taking advantage of the country's location close to African markets.

He also met foreign ministers of Yemen, Iran, Russia, Italy, Thailand, Pakistan, the Philippines and the OIC secretary general.

Niko drilling

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Niko is not scrapped immediately.

Sylhet Bibhag Unnayan Sangram Parishad, a Dhaka-based forum of Sylhet Division people, yesterday started a long march towards Tengratila from Sylhet city. On the way, the parishad held rallies at different points to protest Niko's activities and demand action against it.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) from Dhaka also formed a human chain near the gas field to raise similar demands.

Bapa also arranged a medical camp at the site for treatment of people suffering from various ailments from pollution due to the gas field explosion and fire.

District AL chief ANM Shafique chaired the rally while city AL President and Mayor of the city corporation Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran was among the speakers.

Tengratila Dabi Aday Sangram Parishad yesterday hoisted black flags in the area to press for adequate compensation to the victims.

Niko's project director along with some drilling experts yesterday visited the proposed site of the relief well and gave instructions for preparatory tasks.

The flames at the gas field leapt up to about 250 feet yesterday, witnesses said.

Businessman

FROM PAGE 1

eight gunshots," Mohiuddin Sarkar, a director of the company said, adding, "As we rushed to the room, the criminals pointed firearms towards us and threatened to kill, prompting us to run for cover."

After that they walked away brandishing firearms, witnesses said.

The office staff rushed bullet-riddled body of Kamrul, 48, to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

He received six bullets in the eyes, face, hands and neck.

Many AL leaders and activists rushed to the DMCH hearing the news.

Hailing from Sonagazi in Feni district, Kamrul was a member of the now defunct committee of Feni district AL and owner of Globe Link Container Lines Limited, Globe Link Air Cargo Services Limited and Chowdhury Trade Enterprise Private Limited.

Police are yet to find any clue to the "planned killing". Deputy Commissioner (South) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Mazharul Hoque said, adding that descriptions of the killers do not match the person whose visiting card was given to Kamrul.

No one has been arrested in connection with the killing.

Suicide bombs kill 25 in Iraq

REUTERS, Baghdad

A suicide bomber killed up to 20 people at a police recruitment centre in Baghdad yesterday, while across town an angry crowd of Shia Muslims buried a senior cleric gunned down by insurgents.

Another suicide bomber blew up a car bomb at a police checkpoint just south of the city, killing five and wounding 12.

The bombings were the worst in Iraq in at least six days, shattering a relative lull in the Sunni Arab insurgency against US forces and the Shia- and Kurdish-led government.

A senior Interior Ministry source said 20 people had been killed in the Baghdad blast and that the death toll could rise.

Twelve bodies lay under sheets surrounded by wailing relatives in a courtyard at the nearby Yarmuk hospital.

Doctors there said they were also treating 21 wounded, many in serious condition. Others may have been treated elsewhere and some bodies may have been collected by families at the scene.

The Interior Ministry source said the bomber wore an explosive vest beneath civilian clothes when he approached the ministry's special forces recruitment centre in the Mansour district of western Baghdad.

The same recruitment centre, near the Green Zone government and diplomatic compound, has been targeted by bombers several times in the past. An Interior Ministry source said recruits had been told to come on Saturday, normally a non-working day, in an effort to fox the insurgents and protect the volunteers.

"Apparently the precaution did not work," he said.

A senior police officer in Mahmudiya, just south of the capital, said police and civilians were among the five dead and 12 wounded when a suicide car bomber crashed into a police checkpoint in the centre of town.

Suicide bombings and car bombs have become the deadliest tactic in violence which has worsened sharply since the elected government took office in April. Police recruits are frequent targets, yet many Iraqi men continue to sign up in the hope of a paying job in a country where work is scarce.

Two police colonels were gunned down in their cars in separate incidents, one in the northern city of Mosul, another in Musayyib just south of Baghdad.

In a Shia Muslim neighbourhood of Baghdad, thousands of men held aloft the green-shrouded coffin of

cleric Kamal al-Din al-Ghoreify, gunned down near his mosque as he drove to prayers on Friday.

Ghoreify was a Baghdad representative for Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, recognised as spiritual leader by much of Iraq's Shia majority. Mourners packed the streets chanting and beating their chests, some brandishing AK-47 rifles, others holding portraits of the slain, turbaned cleric.

"It is a calamity for the neighbourhood, for Baghdad, for Muslims and for Shias," Ghoreify's weeping brother Abu Hussein told Reuters. "What was his guilt? He was an old man, 70 years old and paralysed. What did he do?"

Ghoreify's murder was one of three attacks on prominent Shia targets within 24 hours.

A suicide car bomber killed a bystander on Friday at a house in Baghdad used as an office by Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari, also a Shia. The previous night an uncle and a cousin of Shia national security adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie were shot dead in their shop in Baghdad with four others.

US Marines said they were checking to see whether they had killed a cousin of Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations in a raid last week.

Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie said Marines killed his first cousin's son, Mohammed al-Sumaidaie, an engineering student, during a June 25 raid on his home in Al-Shaikh Hadid, near a US military base at Haditha Dam.

"All indications point to a killing of an unarmed innocent civilian -- a cold-blooded murder," Sumaidaie, a Sunni Arab and US ally, said in a statement on Friday. "The Marines were smiling at each other as they were leaving."