

## Guns turn to Babar

FROM PAGE 1  
Despite a change in the government on January 11, 2007 not one of these regulatory institutions came to WTBH's aid, rather the true majority shareholders of the company in Bangladesh had to face legal harassment from the swindlers, the complaint added.

Sources said on June 12, 2000 WTBH of Bermuda formed WorldTel Bangladesh Limited (WTBL) under a shareholders agreement signed between March 24, 2001 and July 5, 2001. WTBH's Mauritius based subsidiary WTBH was to hold the majority of shares of WTBL.

On July 9, 2001 three Bangladeshi citizens formed a British Virgin Islands based company named World Communications Investments Inc (WCII), which acquired the minority share of WTBL.

As representatives of the minority shareholder, Nayeem Mehtab Chowdhury, a Bangladeshi citizen with residency rights in the USA, and Mirza Baber Beg, a Pakistani citizen with residency rights in the UK, joined the board of directors of WTBL on September 22, 2001 as nominees of WCII.

According to the schedule of shares of WTBL issued on May 24, 2004, WTBL had 1,684 shares or 56.7 percent of the shares, and WCII had 1,287 shares or 43.3 percent of the shares of WTBL.

WCII managed to buy the shares of WTBL in spite of having no bank account in Bangladesh at the time, which is an illegal practice. And it was possible because Nayeem used the influence of the then telecom minister Mohammad Nasim and the then state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir to get the illegal deed done, according to sources.

**BABAR AND OTHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN WCII**

WTBL sources said after the change in government through the 2001 election, Nayeem suddenly became a 'good friend' of Babar using the connection of the former state minister's alleged flunkie Badal.

WTBL officials said in January 2005 Babar helped Nayeem get Tk 15 crore loan from Sonali Bank and Tk 31 crore loan from the National Bank of Pakistan, forging the signature of WTBH Chairman also WTBH President Sam Pitroda.

When the fraud became public and a case was filed by other directors of WTBH, Babar ordered an investigation against the plaintiff instead of Nayeem, and managed a written final report from the police by virtue of being the state minister for home affairs, which stated that there were 'mistakes in the facts of the case', a WTBH official said preferring.

"Babar arranged it to be accepted by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka too," the WTBH official said.

Nayeem withdrew loans from the banks despite his membership on the board of directors of WCII being suspended, stripping him of the right to trade in the company's shares.

But he managed to get everything as he wished with the help of Babar, the WTBH official said adding that Nayeem also used Babar's influence on the erstwhile BTTC chief Omar Faruq to illegally obtain a permission to import equipment and to release them from the customs without any hassle.

WTBL officials also alleged that \$3 million gathered by Nayeem, through forging the signature of Sam Pitroda, was siphoned off-shore under the guise of equipment import through a fake company named Starley Ltd of Bahrain. He also arranged to inflate the prices of the equipment on the invoices to facilitate quick siphoning of the alleged stolen money.

Ex-premier Khaleda Zia's nephew Shareen Islam Tuhin was also allegedly involved in the process under a deal for buying the imported equipment from ZTE, a Chinese company, which he used to represent in Bangladesh.

"The siphoned amount of money could be brought back to Bangladesh if Nayeem and Babar could be interrogated properly," a WTBH official said.

**BABAR TRANSFERRED OFFICIALS OF RJSCF**

Other board members of WCII in a letter on July 12, 2005 withdrew their nominations for Nayeem and Beg for the board of directors of the company, and also dismissed the two as their nominees on the board of WTBL.

Despite the dismissal, Nayeem and Beg claimed that the board of WTBL had issued 3,55,000 additional shares of WTBL to WCII, making WCII the majority shareholder of WTBL with 99.5 percent of shares.

But according to section 155(1) of the Companies Act 1994, issuance of new shares is prohibited without the consent of a general meeting of all shareholders.

In February 2006 WCII tried to file with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSCF) the securities documents of the company regarding the loans taken from Sonali Bank and the National Bank of Pakistan, supposedly to buy equipment for WTBL.

But, RJSCF on February 28, 2006 rejected the application, stating that Nayeem at the time was not connected to WTBL at all due to his dismissal from the board of directors. This position of RJSCF however did not last for long, and it subsequently proceeded to register WCII as the 99.5 percent shareholder of WTBL, making it the controlling partner of the company.

Sources said when RJSCF refused to register WCII as the majority shareholder of WTBL, former state minister Babar, former commerce ministry adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu, and other vested interest groups close to Hawa Bhaban forced RJSCF to register WCII as the majority shareholder.

The officials of RJSCF repeatedly refused to engage in illegal activities, they were quickly transferred with the influence of Babar, the sources added.

RJSCF sources said Babar then arranged appointments of new officials to RJSCF and the registration of WCII shares was completed within seven days.

RJSCF officials said Nayeem had no intention of doing business in Bangladesh, he just wanted to earn some quick illegal money which he did successfully.

**BANKS' SILENCE ABOUT BABAR'S INFLUENCE**

Sources said the banks, which provided large sums of loans to Nayeem without any proper justification, were influenced by some former lawmakers including Babar and some people close to Hawa Bhaban.

Pitroda, on learning of the forgery of his signature, wrote to Sonali Bank in a letter served on April 5, 2006 that he denounces the fraud and warned the bank that the majority shareholders had no knowledge of the loan facilities extended to Nayeem under the auspices of WTBL.

But, Sonali Bank did not carry out any investigation following Pitroda's letter.

A similar letter was sent to the National Bank of Pakistan on September 6, 2005 but that bank also did not carry out any investigation.

**NAYEEM'S VERSION**

Denying all allegations against Nayeem, one of his officials said the allegations submitted to the ACC are totally 'baseless' and 'unrealistic'.

He said the Bangladesh Bank repeatedly investigated the matter, but failed to find any financial crime.

The official also claimed that Nayeem invested Tk 73 crore in WTBL, and WTBH invested only Tk 16 lakh, making Nayeem the majority shareholder of WTBL automatically.

He said if anyone demands the controlling share of the company he or she should go to a court to resolve the issue. He claimed that everything Nayeem owns is legal and proven to be so through investigations by different government authorities at different times.

## Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the 1996 caretaker government that had placed a budget for two months, she said the government could have given a short-time interim budget.

"Where and how will they place the budget?" she posed a question.

About an AL man's filing of the case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 27 others for the August 21 grenade attacks, Hasina said she does not know whether the complainant has any affiliation with her party. "I am not sure whether the name of the person has been included in the list of those who were wounded in the attack. I should see the list again," she said.

Badar Aziz Uddin, reportedly a worker of Cox's Bazar AL who was injured in the August 21 attacks, on Tuesday filed a case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka against 28 people, including Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman and BNP-led coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami chief Motiur Rahman Nizami on allegations of attacking an AL rally that left 24 people dead and many others injured.

Hasina criticised publication of news items based on the statements made by a few senior leaders of her party who have been recently arrested and interrogated by the joint forces.

When the top leaders of extremist outfit JMB were arrested, their statements were not published although people wanted to know it, she said, adding, "But this time the statements came out in CD format which is merely suspicious."

AL leaders Motiul Rahman Chowdhury and Hasan Mahmud, among others, accompanied Hasina to Birbhum.

**CID starts**

FROM PAGE 1

if the general elections can be held before the end of 2008...as early as possible."

The Troika team leader said that quick elections would also mean a quick withdrawal of the ban on indoor-politics, but "ban on political activities indoors should be lifted in a responsible and appropriate time before you can hold general elections."

He also said that there is a "chance to improve the democratic reality of Bangladesh in the coming months if the civil society and the government play together to aim for the quality that I have just described."

Home Ministry sources said in their meeting with the home secretary, the EU Troika delegation asked whether al-Qaeda exists in Bangladesh and inquired about militant activities here.

Touching on the human rights situation, Michaelis said, "When the government bases its power on a state of emergency, it is particularly important for the government to build trust," adding, "We were assured the government is willing to deliver."

He however, observed that a country under the state of emergency has to be governed in a credible and convincing way, and reported cases of human rights violations should be investigated and the perpetrators should be brought to justice.

"We understand the government is looking for a 'speedy' way to achieve this and the EU stands by the government to provide assistance," Michaelis, who is the German Foreign Ministry's Director-General for Asian and Pacific Affairs, added.

## EU Troika

FROM PAGE 1

if the general elections can be held before the end of 2008...as early as possible."

The Troika team leader said that quick elections would also mean a quick withdrawal of the ban on indoor-politics, but "ban on political activities indoors should be lifted in a responsible and appropriate time before you can hold general elections."

He also said that there is a "chance to improve the democratic reality of Bangladesh in the coming months if the civil society and the government play together to aim for the quality that I have just described."

Home Ministry sources said in their meeting with the home secretary, the EU Troika delegation asked whether al-Qaeda exists in Bangladesh and inquired about militant activities here.

Touching on the human rights situation, Michaelis said, "When the government bases its power on a state of emergency, it is particularly important for the government to build trust," adding, "We were assured the government is willing to deliver."

He however, observed that a country under the state of emergency has to be governed in a credible and convincing way, and reported cases of human rights violations should be investigated and the perpetrators should be brought to justice.

"We understand the government is looking for a 'speedy' way to achieve this and the EU stands by the government to provide assistance," Michaelis, who is the German Foreign Ministry's Director-General for Asian and Pacific Affairs, added.

Despite the dismissal, Nayeem and Beg claimed that the board of WTBL had issued 3,55,000 additional shares of WTBL to WCII, making WCII the majority shareholder of WTBL with 99.5 percent of shares.

But according to section 155(1) of the Companies Act 1994, issuance of new shares is prohibited without the consent of a general meeting of all shareholders.

In February 2006 WCII tried to file with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSCF) the securities documents of the company regarding the loans taken from Sonali Bank and the National Bank of Pakistan, supposedly to buy equipment for WTBL.

But, RJSCF on February 28, 2006 rejected the application, stating that Nayeem at the time was not connected to WTBL at all due to his dismissal from the board of directors. This position of RJSCF however did not last for long, and it subsequently proceeded to register WCII as the 99.5 percent shareholder of WTBL, making it the controlling partner of the company.

Sources said when RJSCF refused to register WCII as the majority shareholder of WTBL, former state minister Babar, former commerce ministry adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu, and other vested interest groups close to Hawa Bhaban forced RJSCF to register WCII as the majority shareholder.

The officials of RJSCF repeatedly refused to engage in illegal activities, they were quickly transferred with the influence of Babar, the sources added.

RJSCF sources said Babar then arranged appointments of new officials to RJSCF and the registration of WCII shares was completed within seven days.

RJSCF officials said Nayeem had no intention of doing business in Bangladesh, he just wanted to earn some quick illegal money which he did successfully.

**BANKS' SILENCE ABOUT BABAR'S INFLUENCE**

Sources said the banks, which provided large sums of loans to Nayeem without any proper justification, were influenced by some former lawmakers including Babar and some people close to Hawa Bhaban.

Pitroda, on learning of the forgery of his signature, wrote to Sonali Bank in a letter served on April 5, 2006 that he denounces the fraud and warned the bank that the majority shareholders had no knowledge of the loan facilities extended to Nayeem under the auspices of WTBL.

But, Sonali Bank did not carry out any investigation following Pitroda's letter.

A similar letter was sent to the National Bank of Pakistan on September 6, 2005 but that bank also did not carry out any investigation.

**NAYEEM'S VERSION**

Denying all allegations against Nayeem, one of his officials said the allegations submitted to the ACC are totally 'baseless' and 'unrealistic'.

He said the Bangladesh Bank repeatedly investigated the matter, but failed to find any financial crime.

The official also claimed that Nayeem invested Tk 73 crore in WTBL, and WTBH invested only Tk 16 lakh, making Nayeem the majority shareholder of WTBL automatically.

He said if anyone demands the controlling share of the company he or she should go to a court to resolve the issue. He claimed that everything Nayeem owns is legal and proven to be so through investigations by different government authorities at different times.

## Mayor Minu lands

FROM PAGE 1

requested them to include Nazrul and Milon in the college's governing body.

As Shamsul did not agree to do it, Nazrul, Milon and Sento went to the college and demanded Tk 1 lakh toll on July 4 last year. They forcibly took away bricks worth Tk 25,000, and furniture worth Tk 13,000 from the college.

**LOBI, OBAIDUL, MAMUN REMANDED**

Lobi was placed on a three-day remand when police produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka with a prayer for seven-day remand in the case filed against him on March 11 with Gulshan PS.

Complainant Zakaria Khan Julu accused Lobi of trespassing into his house, threatening on his life and plundering valuables from his house in Gulshan.

Lobi was arrested on February 5.

Giasuddin Al Mamun, business partner of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, was also sent on a five-day remand in a criminal case.

Selim Malik, chairman of Japan Bangladesh Group, filed the case with the Gulshan PS on May 31 accusing Mamun and his two associates of extorting Tk 8.4 crore from him at different times between December 8, 2001 and December 20, 2006.

The other accused--Rajib Siraj Apu and Kawsar Zaman Bappi--have been absconding.

Mamun had earlier been remanded for 50 days in different cases.

AL leader Obaidul Quader was sent on a three-day police remand for further investigation into his anti-state activities. He was taken into custody in March and the court had sent him on detention under the Special Powers Act.

Obaidul was brought to the court from Kashimpur Jail where he had been put after his arrest on March 8.

**CASE AGAINST BABAR**

Our Correspondent in Netrakona reports, rice trader Mushtaqur Rahman of Khaliqjuri in Netrakona filed an assault case with a district magistrate's court accusing Lutfuzzaman Babar and 36 others including Babar's assistant personal secretary Mirza Haider.

In the case statement, the complainant said Babar forced him to withdraw the nomination paper he had submitted as an independent candidate to contest the general election in 2007 from Netrakona 4 constituency.

He also said on December 26 last year Babar and the other accused confined him to a house in Khaliqjuri and asked him to withdraw the nomination paper so that Babar could win the election uncontested.

Babar also demanded Tk 1 lakh from Mushtaqur for his release. As he failed to pay the toll, Babar and his cohorts beat him up.

The complainant also mentioned that Babar's associates, using Babar's influence and assistance, made crores of taka through terrorist activities, extortion and misappropriation of government property in the area during the five-year tenure of the immediate past government.

**CASE AGAINST RAHMAT ALI**

A Correspondent in Gazipur reports, retired army lance corporal Mohammad Ziarat Hossain of Dainiknila village under Kaliakoir filed a case yesterday against former AL lawmaker Advocate Shahjahan Mian, Islami Bank Managing Director Nurul Islam and businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun.

The other accused are Jamaat leader Abdul Kader Mollah, Brig Gen (retired) Hannan Shah, the then National Security Intelligence (NSI) chief Maj Gen (retired) Rezzakul Haider, police chief Modabir Hossain Chowdhury, BNP leader and former minister Aminul Huq, Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, ex-additional IGP Faruq Ahmed, ex-DMP commissioner Khuda Bux, Islami Bank Chairman Abdul Halim, Shahidul Huq Jamal of Pirojpur, DCC Ward Commissioner and BNP leader Chowdhury Alam and AKM Ahsanul Tayab of Bogra.

</