

Killer Mohiuddin sent to jail on arrival

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In handcuffs, he was first taken to the room of the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Immigration at the ZIA and given a bullet-proof vest and a helmet.

Around half an hour later, the police whisked him away through the international green channel. A prison van parked outside started for the CMM Court with six Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police vans in pursuit.

Hours before the flight carrying Mohiuddin had landed, a huge number of Rab, police and members of different intelligence agencies took position in and around the ZIA.

COURT

Mohiuddin was produced before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar through crowds of press photographers and onlookers at 1:40pm. Clad in a cream shirt and pants, he was wearing the helmet and the bullet-proof vest.

In the forwarding report, OC of Airport Police Station Ruhul Amin told the court that Maj (retired) Mohiuddin, son of late Abul Hossain Talukder of Rangabali in Patuakhali, was a fugitive convict in Bangabandhu murder case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on October 2, 1996.

He is also an absconding accused in Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni murder case filed with Mohammadpur Police Station in November 1996 and Abdur Rob Serniabat murder case with Ramma Police Station in October 1996.

Warrants for his arrest in all the cases are pending with Rangabali Police Station of Patuakhali.

Prosecutor of the Bangabandhu murder case Mosharraf Hossain Kajal told the court that the convict has been absconding since the case was filed against him. He petitioned the court to order for Mohiuddin to be shown arrested in the Bangabandhu murder case and sent to the condemned cell.

After hearing, the court ordered to send the convict to Dhaka central Jail as there was no prayer on his behalf.

The court also directed the authorities concerned to send the copies of the order to the trial court and other authorities concerned.

BACKGROUND

A trial court in 1998 sentenced him to death along with 14 other former and dismissed army men for killing Bangabandhu and 26 others including his wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law, brother, close relatives, and security men.

The High Court on April 30, 2001 upheld the punishment of 12. However, a leave to appeal petition by four of the convicts in jail—Lt Col Syed Farooq Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Lt Col Mohiuddin and Maj Bazul Huda—remains to be disposed of by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Legal experts said there is no bar to execution of Mohiuddin as he did not file a regular appeal against the High Court verdict.

They said though the time for

filings an appeal against the HC verdict ended long before, he would still be able to file an application for leave to appeal and in that case, the Appellate Division would decide whether to grant the permission.

With Mohiuddin, now five of the convicts are behind bars, one has died while six are believed to be holed up overseas.

When Awami League (AL) led by Sheikh Hasina, one of Bangabandhu's two surviving daughters, came to power in 1996, Mohiuddin was serving as a diplomat in a Middle-Eastern country.

The then government asked him to report to the foreign ministry, but he did not comply with the order, and instead fled to the US on a visitor's visa. Since then, he had been fighting a long legal battle for asylum there.

After the US decided to deport him, Mohiuddin's family made appeals for asylum in Canada but to no avail.

The AL government took measures for extradition of the killers, but could not finish the job during its tenure. It managed to get back only Bazul Huda from Thailand.

In the post-75 setting, the killers were granted impunity through infamous Indemnity Ordinance and successive governments allowed Mohiuddin and others to represent Bangladeshi in a variety of diplomatic posts for about two decades.

Driver, staff were drugged

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(SSEA) Zakaria, for not stopping the train at the scheduled station.

The members of probe committee also interrogated two persons from whom the three train staff bought tea at Bhairab railway station on Sunday morning before they were numbered.

"I found something wrong with me when the train was on the way to Narsingdi station and I do not know what happened until 4:00pm Sunday," SSEA Zakaria told the probe body.

The taste of the tea was not normal, he added.

"It is clear that the tea they took was mixed with drugs and the doctors who examined them said no evidence of taking alcohol beverages was found," said Sarder Sahadat Hossain, divisional transportation officer, Dhaka, and chief of the four-member probe body.

"They were, however, suspended for not stopping the train at the scheduled station," Sahadat Hossain said, adding that the probe committee report will be published in a couple of days.

The probe body is likely to recommend not allowing train drivers to have any meal or anything from outside while on duty or driving a train, said probe body sources.

The three suspended railway staff were found 'benumbed' and 'nearly unconscious' inside the engine room of Dhaka-bound Mahanagar Express after Kubbat Ali, a guard working in the train, managed to stop the train from the last compartment by pulling emergency brake.

After a break at Bhirab station, the train started moving and continued for about half-an-hour. As the train did not stop at scheduled Ghorashal flag station at 5:00am and went on running fast, the passengers scheduled to get off

at Ghorashal started shouting and the passengers got panicked at the unusual situation.

Gard Kubbat tried to stop the train through an emergency measure. After his preliminary efforts failed, he informed high officials in Dhaka about the incident over cellphone. Soon the nearby station on the way to Dhaka was directed to arrange emergency measures to stop the train and red signals were hoisted at different stations on the line.

Later, as the guard managed to stop the train 30 metres from the Narsingdi railway station, the LM, ALM and SSEA were found lying nearly unconscious. After treatment at a railway medical hospital in Dhaka, they were released on Sunday evening.

The train reached Kamalapur railway station at 7:30am, being driven by two railway drivers who were travelling on the same train as passengers.

The train with seat capacity for 500 passengers left Chittagong railway station at 10:30am on Saturday night with about 700 passengers on board. As usual the train driver was changed at Akhaura station. The train halted for a while at Bhirab at 3:30am when the LM, ALM and SSEA had tea in the engine room.

Railway sources said most of the 1750 locomotive masters (train drivers) and assistance locomotive masters under Bangladesh Railway lacks adequate training while they are poorly paid.

With a minimum qualification of Higher Secondary Examination from the science group, a person joins as an ALM and undergoes a two-year basic training on train driving.

On the basis of experience, he becomes an LM. In the first phase, an LM runs a cargo wagon and then he sits on the driving seat of a local

train.

It takes around 12-15 years experience to become the driver of a passenger mail train or express train.

The drivers do overtime as they get extra allowances for running over 100 kilometres in a day, which is counted as 'extra mileage'. The drivers often run trains for 150-200 kilometres on a working day.

After a long journey a driver is supposed to take rest for at least eight hours but in most cases a driver sits again on the driving seat within four hours of a long journey, said a high official of Bangladesh Railway.

Running trains by over-worked drivers makes especially the passenger trains vulnerable to accidents, railway sources said.

The engine room is supposed to remain under continuous supervision by a supervisor.

The Dhaka-bound Mahanagar Express crossed a long way violating red signals as the master and assistant master were almost unconscious and the engine would have been stopped without much delay had there been adequate supervision. But the engine remained operative until a train guard could stop it by emergency measures.

It shows that the engine was not under close supervision by an engine supervisor, the railway official said, adding that the train could have met a fatal disaster if there were a train from the opposite direction or a waiting train on the line at any station it crossed.

Yousif Ali Mridha, General Manager of Bangladesh Railway Dhaka Division, however, said running train engines are always kept under supervision.

ACC chairman happy with commission's pace of work

Donors meet chairman to assist ACC

UNB, Dhaka

Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday expressed satisfaction over the pace of work being carried out by the commission and hoped that the cases would go to court in due time.

"We're happy...The work is going on at the same pace as was expected. We hope we'll be able to get the job done quickly and take the cases to court at the right time," he told reporters at his office.

About the submission of wealth statements by 21 corruption suspects who were summoned by the anti-graft body, he said all of them, excepting one, have provided the statements. "Tomorrow is the last date and we hope the remaining person will submit his wealth statement. After that inquires into the cases of 21 individuals will get underway."

On his meeting with representatives from several donor countries and agencies, Mashhud said those who are interested to help came

assist in the fields of training, information technology and investigations.

The ACC chairman said having the experience in the perspective of this subcontinent would be brought from abroad to train the ACC officials to enhance their investigation skills.

About the office automation on a large scale, which would be done in phases. "This office will be different from others. There will be a networking by which can be done what's happening in Chittagong or Rajshahi. It's a big dream...Hopefully, we'll be able to materialise it."

Emerging from the meeting with the ACC chairman, Ambassador of Denmark Einar H Jensen, on behalf of others, told reporters that they discussed their supports for investigations, prosecution, strengthening IT and case management.

"We're talking about some possible support for investigation, prosecution and IT and case management," he said.

Australian High Commissioner Douglas Foskett, World Bank Country Director Zhu Xian, deputy head of Dutch mission Fritz Meijndert, task manager for good governance project of the Asian Development Bank Gambir Bhatta and head of governance of ADB Firoz Ahmed were also present.

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Reformists now want Hasina in the move

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Joint General Secretary Mukul Bose yesterday visited Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence, three days after she spoke against holding any posts in the cabinet and in the party simultaneously. A key-point in the 21-point proposal is that the party chief must not become prime minister.

Mukul Bose told reporters later that the 21-point reform proposal that has been finalised by keeping by Hasina as the party chief would be handed over to her within three days.

Some other influential reformist leaders, who organised a series of informal meetings in the last several weeks and prepared the 21-point proposal without Hasina's consent, have also taken Hasina's views posi-

tively and welcomed her thoughts. They said it was beyond their imagination that the party chief would move a step further than their proposals.

Talking to The Daily Star, some reformist AL leaders said if the party president's views are materialised, it would be good for the party as well as for the nation. And a pro-people government will emerge in the country.

But a section of reformist leaders believe Hasina would never stick to what she is saying now on reforms. "Being irritated by the move for party reforms in the present situation, she might have spoken all this," one leader said preferring not to be named.

In a bid to bring 'drastic' reforms

in the AL, influential party leaders including presidium members Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta had prepared the reform proposals. But getting the proposals informally, Hasina said she wants further amendments to those.

"Not only the party president's post but no other party position should as well be held by the same person for more than twice. Not only the chief of the party should be barred from becoming prime minister but all central committee office bearers should be prohibited from becoming ministers or state ministers," Hasina told The Daily Star recently.

Asked about Hasina's proposal, Tofail Ahmed said it is obviously an excellent proposal. "The leader (Hasina) has spoken perfectly. If those are materialised, the party and the government will be different from what they are now. And a pro-people government will get shape, rather than a partisan one," he said.

Another AL central leader, Col (retd) Faruk Khan, who has been keeping close contact with Hasina, strongly supported the AL chief's proposal. "In the past, government used to get the shape of a party. If her [Hasina's] proposals are implemented, it will be good for the nation," he said.

US envoy discourages forming political party

FROM PAGE 16
"But certainly it should not be under any kind of pressure."

Replying to a question, Butenis said she takes the army chief at his word as he said publicly and in meetings that he has no political ambitions.

"Again, we've been pretty straight forward saying that any military personnel can retire or resign and decide to take politics, that's their business, but direct role of military in politics will be a mistake, I think."

Butenis supported the reforms in political parties through discussions among themselves but said any attempt or plan to "impose" changes on parties from above is going to have troubles.

Favouring the lifting of ban on politics, the envoy said there are some concerns that people might take to street and resort to violence again, and nobody wants that. But "I think there should be an opportunity for discussions" on reform proposals from different parties as well as from the Election Commission.

Butenis would not comment on a "minus-two" formula of reform. She said that is not her job to make comment on a particular proposal.

"But everybody agrees that parties have to change, perhaps part of that change may be in their

senior leaders; but they can't do that, or whatever transition they decide, without being able to discuss it," she observed.

Asked if she thought election before the end of 2008 should be too late, the envoy said it is up to the Bangladeshis. However, "what we think is longer you remain with an un-elected government, the greater the risk is to tear democratic tradition."

"Yes, certainly we welcome election sooner than December 2008, but I think that will continue to be certainly our position now," she said, adding, "We're encouraged by the steps the government is taking to put reforms in place."

Asked about the risks she is apprehending, Butenis said, "It is not only in Bangladesh but in any situation that if you have the authority in power without accountability, then risk is perhaps to abuse the authority or make it more difficult for the people to live with the authority. All kinds of risks—it is nothing unique for Bangladesh, it is a lesson of history."

On reported restrictions on Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, Butenis said whoever faces restrictions or charged with crimes, the government should be transparent as to why.

Bangladeshis have the right to

know "why people have been picked up, what are the charges against them, why they cannot travel here and there and why they cannot leave the country", she said.

About the anti-corruption drive, the US envoy praised the Anti-Corruption Commission for its current functioning and the ACC chairman's commitment to his tasks.

"It's a huge and difficult task and we are very sympathetic," she said, adding that USAID has been working with the government for a long time on anti-money laundering legislation, training law enforcement and other agencies.

The envoy, however, vented deep concern over several cases, including the death of a Garo leader in custody and some other cases raised by the EC delegation, which she thinks, undermined the government's commitment to justice and ensuring human rights.

She said the chief adviser assured separate investigation with a retired judge into the Garo leader's case and she raised the matter during the meeting with the foreign adviser. "We remain interested and we will continue to follow this case."

Ex-lawmakers face more criminal cases

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his party in connection with assault on him and his office, attempted extortion and threatening with life on November 19, 2005.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that Zillur Rahman, news editor of daily Arshinagar, filed the case with a first class magistrate's court. Magistrate Iqbal Hossain accepted the case and ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Kushtia Police Station to investigate the case.

According to the complaint the daily ran a news item on November 19, 2005 about the naming of a bridge over the Gorai river. The news said most of the people of the district would like the bridge to be named after veteran literary personality Mir Mosharraf Hossain. However, Rumi was lobbying to name the bridge after his father, a former lawmaker of the constituency.

The complainant claimed the news item angered Rumi and he sent his cadres to pick up the editor of the daily Rashedul Islam on the same day. He said a group of BNP men led by district BNP Joint Secretary Sajedur Rahman Bablu stormed the paper's office at Mazampur around 10:30pm.

As Zillur told them the editor was not in the office, the gang assaulted him and ransacked the office. They also beat up journalists and staffs of the daily and demanded Tk 50,000 threatening them with life, the complainant said.

He said he tried to lodge a case against the lawmaker but the Kushtia police refused to accept the case, as an accused was a "sitting ruling party lawmaker". They, however, recorded a general diary (GD) without naming any criminals.

Others accused in the case are Sajedur Rahman Bablu, joint secretary of district BNP and editor of Dainik Hawa, a daily published by Mehedi Rumi, Nazrul Islam Mukul journalist of Dainik Hawa, Jalaluddin and a number of BNP cadres.

CASE AGAINST SHAHEEN

In Mymensingh, an extortion case was filed yesterday against former MP and vice-president of Bangladesh Cricket Board Shah Nurul Kabir Shaheen