

# Khaleda welcomes

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cantonnement house. The Daily Star sent a questionnaire to her and she replied in writing.

**Q:** what do you think about the reforms in political parties? As Chief of the party what will be your first step in this effort?

**Ans:** Political reform is an ongoing process. BNP had initiated political reforms long back and paved the way for multiparty democracy in Bangladesh.

I believe it is only through reforms that a political party can survive the test of time in a fast developing country.

Reforms in a political party are always in the interest of the people and the nation, but reforms should come from within the party not imposed from outside. I prefer committees for reforms before lifting of ban on indoor politics. All reform proposals shall be discussed openly in party forums and council sessions. I welcome any suggestion for reforms from my party leaders and workers from all parts of the country.

**Q:** What do you think about the formation of new political party?

**Ans:** We have multiparty democracy in Bangladesh and everybody has the right to float a party. However, the nation would scrutinize the newcomers, their past records, ability to lead before accepting them.

Late president Zia introduced multiparty system in the country.

I encourage political leaders to be united and engage themselves to strengthen the party through reforms instead of defecting from their own party.

In the past, many senior leaders had defected from BNP but my countrymen did not consider this as an acceptable move as they failed to get people's mandate and win the hearts of party workers.

**Q:** In a recent unilateral decision, you made your brother Syeed Iskander vice president of the party. The decision evoked criticism even from your own party. Do you think that it was the right decision? Do you have any plans to remove your brother from the post?

**Ans:** The decision was taken in consultation with the leaders. He is not new in BNP politics. Reforms in the party shall review all issues.

He was already holding a post in BNP. All vacant posts in Standing committee and other committees were filled up in consultation and discussion with leaders of the party.

**Q:** Lt Gen. Mahbubur Rahman suggested you to step down from the post of Chairperson or retire from politics as a prerequisite for democratic reforms in BNP. How do you respond to this demand? Do you have any plans to quit politics?

**Ans:** Lt Gen. Mahbubur Rahman (Retd) is a new comer in the party and is not fully aware of the BNP constitution.

I am an elected chairperson by the council and the council is the supreme body to decide any reforms of the party. All will get opportunity to participate in the discussions.

My entrance to politics was through public support and I am grateful to all my leaders, workers and countrymen for their trust and love for me and BNP.

Gradually with public support I transformed BNP into a more popular, people oriented stronger party. BNP is a party for the people and by the people. I was elected as a chairperson in the party council. Anyone can contest and prove popularity, whom-ever the council elects becomes the chairperson. During the time of my recent news of leaving the country, the party leaders and workers wanted me to stay in Bangladesh and lead the party for a better future. I have discussed party reforms which would bring more democratic ideas, with them, at different times.

I am grateful to my partymen and countrymen for their love for me, Shahid Zia and BNP.

The truth of dedication towards BNP lies in the history of the last few elections.

Inshallah, BNP shall be a more modern and popular party in the future.

**Q:** Many of your long-time colleagues will form a new platform of BNP by removing you. If it happens, what will you do?

**Ans:** BNP has strong support base at the grass root level. The leaders and workers of this party are dedicated and united. I don't believe that any body leaving the party can harm BNP would remain sold and united and emerge stronger than before. This can be judged from the past history of BNP. There might be another party or parties but not BNP.

**Q:** Many BNP leaders have been arrested. What action you will be taken regarding the corrupted party leaders?

**Ans:** As per BNP constitution no corrupt leaders have any place in party. If convicted through fair and proper trial, action will be taken pas per BNP constitution.

**Q:** Your eldest son, also BNP's senior joint secretary general, is now in jail for corruption charges while there are also allegations of corruption against your youngest son. What is your reaction to the charges?

**Ans:** Charges brought against my family members are false fabricated and baseless to tarnish my family image. However I respect law of the land and expect fair and proper trial.

The charges have been alleged in a planned way to tarnish the image of Zia family. Late President Zia has sacrificed his life for the country and his family worked endlessly for the country and it's people. I am proud of the gratitude I see in the eyes of the millions in villages of Bangladesh.

I have dedicated my life for BNP and the people of Bangladesh. I see the same dedication and love motherland in the eyes and vision of Zia generation.

Its unfortunate to see the false allegations given against a dedicated worker of BNP who really started

reform with a vision at the grassroot levels of BNP through a democratic process.

**Q:** It is alleged that you avoided or ignored advice of senior party leaders and ministers of different issues. What is your comment is this regard?

**Ans:** Since introduction of parliamentary form of govt all decisions were taken collectively in the cabinet. Particularly I used to consult senior leaders of the cabinet and standing committee.

Party decisions were always taken in consultation with standing committee members.

Govt decisions were always taken in consultation and discussion with my: cabinet colleagues. I never believe in unilateral decision.

**Q:** Reportedly detained leaders of your party claimed that corruption committed by your family members is responsible for the present situation of the country. What is your reaction?

**Ans:** The allegation and blame game is not true and fair. Cabinet members are responsible for running their ministries. So the blame has to be shared by all.

Family members were not involved in running the ministries. Ministers were responsible for their ministries and they were free to take their own decision. Now these are false and fabricated allegations.

**Q:** Your party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has been serving the BNP for a long time. It is reported that he is leading an effort inside BNP to form a new platform by removing you are your family members. What is your reaction? Are you in contact with him?

**Ans:** Mr. Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is secretary general for ten years or more. I don't believe Mr Bhuiyan will take responsibility of breaking historic party like BNP. Reforms in the party will bring necessary changes in the party structure in consultation with party leaders and approved by councils. As soon as ban on indoor politics is lifted I shall convene meeting on the various committee of the party and start dialogue.

**Q:** Have you given any proposal to Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan for a negotiation?

**Ans:** My door is open for discussion with my party men for the greater interest of the party.

Mr. Mannan Bhuiyan is the Secy-Gen of BNP. He is supposed keep the party workers and leaders united at this hour.

**Q:** If anyone of your family wishes to involve in politics in future in their own capability, what will be your advice?

**Ans:** Every citizen has the right to take part in politics. But he or she should come through a political process and on the basis of merit and contribution. This is also practiced in other countries. My only advice is to keep in mind national interest above self interest and follow ideals of Late President Ziaur Rahman.

Any dedicated political worker enjoying grassroot level approval of his policies shall be successful and sustain in sustain in the future politics of Bangladesh. Politics should be for the welfare of the people. Sacrifice, hard work and love for the people makes a person immortal.

**Q:** How will you evaluate the present government's rule?

**Ans:** The present Caretaker government is under oath for a fair, neutral and transparent election for which I believe they have initiated reforms in various sectors.

We appreciate the reforms of Election Commission.

We had initiated the process of independent ACC and the present Govt. has made it effective. We appreciate their initiative in this sector.

I would particularly comment on the price hikes in the markets which brings sufferings to our common people. This is a great challenge which they must tackle effectively.

However, the main attention should be on holding election as soon as possible after completion of an accurate voter list.

**Q:** Once you were tremendously busy as Prime Minister and also as Chairperson of BNP. Now you are not in power and there is no active politics in the country. How do you spend your days at home?

**Ans:** It is true I was very busy in my public life; here I thank the people of Bangladesh and party men from every level for their support which encouraged and inspired me to serve the nation to the best of my ability. Now I have plenty of time to think and evaluate the different stages of party structure and how to modernize and organize BNP in a more democratic way.

I need cooperation for reforms and have asked party law experts and dedicated leaders to analyze the party structure for more democratic reforms. This will help me to prepare for the future. I have full faith in Allah and trust the love of the people of Bangladesh and my BNP party men. I am also giving some time to my family especially me grand daughters.

I spend little more time for my prayers Reading different books, also: religious books.

**Q:** Is there any restriction on your movement?

**Ans:** Bangladesh is a democratic country with strong belief in human rights for all citizens. And everyone has right for free movement.

## Bangabandhu

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"We consulted the ministry also about whether a team of special public prosecutors should be assigned or our office will do the job," the source said.

Asked about the matter, Law Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the court would decide whether a new bench would be formed for disposal of the case.

In about six years, a three-member bench could not be formed as five of the seven Appellate Division judges had either felt embarrassed or heard the case before as HC judges. After Syed JR Mudassar Husain retired as the chief justice on February 28, one post in the seven-member hierarchy of the apex court fell vacant.

To fill the vacancy, President Iajuddin Ahmed appointed Justice M Hassan Ameen to the Appellate Division on March 20. With Justice Ameen's swearing in, the number of judges in the Appellate Division got back to seven.

Of them, three judges -- Tafazzul Islam, Joyinal Abedin and Hassan Ameen -- can hear the Bangabandhu Murder Case as none of them felt embarrassed or heard the case before at the HC.

Chief Justice Md Ruhul Amin and Mohammed Fazlul Karim had heard the case while MM Ruhul Amin and Amirul Kabir Chowdhury felt embarrassed to hear it at the HC level.

The case was filed on October 2, 1996 -- 21 years after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family. A trial court on November 8, 1998, handed down death sentence to 15 retired and dismissed army personnel for the multiple murders.

The HC upheld the punishment of 12. Of them, only five are behind bars, one has died and the rest six are still at large. Later, the four convicts [in jail] filed the petition for leave to appeal.

During hearing at the Appellate Division in August 2001 Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani felt embarrassed and the proceedings stopped.

Meantime, the HC judges who had felt embarrassed or heard the case were appointed to the Appellate Division of the SC.

The then BNP-led alliance government did not take any step to resume the hearing despite there being enough room to do so. The then law minister, Moudud Ahmed, repeatedly cited legal complexities as the reason for not seeking to restart the trial.

Between 2001 and 2005, it would take the appointment of only one judge on ad hoc basis to meet the requirement of three judges for a bench. Later when Justice MA Aziz was appointed the chief election commissioner, the number rose to two.

In October 2001, the then chief justice Mahmudul Amin Choudhury wanted to have a judge in the Appellate Division appointed on an ad hoc basis and suggested that the government do so, but to no avail.

## Chaktai canal

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Magistrate Tahera Ferdous led the drive backed by the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP). Acting CCC Mayor M Manjur Alam, CDA Chairman Shah Mohammed Akhtaruddin and high officials from both the organisations visited the area.

Around 1,200 to 1,500 structures have been erected on both sides of the canal occupying about 15 to 20 feet land. As a result, sewerage system was obstructed leading to serious waterlogging problems in the port city, sources said.

Sources said that although the illegal occupiers were notified earlier to vacate the land, they did not pay heed to it. The authorities also marked the illegal structures in March this year, sources said.

"We repeatedly served notices on the encroachers, but they didn't remove their structures, which forced us to conduct the drive," Acting Mayor Manjur told the reporters while visiting the area. "The drive will go on till all illegal occupiers are removed from both sides of the canal," he added.

CDA Chairman Akhtaruddin observed that the thin canal is one of the main causes of waterlogging in the city. He also said that new roads would be built by the canal sides so that the area cannot be occupied by the encroachers again.

Renovation work of 39 canals in Chittagong would be implemented at a cost of Tk 1,000 crore financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), he said.

As part of the project, scientific measures including setting up of tidal regulator at the main point of the canals will be taken to save the city from waterlogging, he added.

The joint eviction drive was launched as per the decision of the coordination meeting held at Chittagong Circuit House on Sunday evening. Communication Adviser MA Matin, representatives from local administration and other authorities concerned were present in the meeting.

# Possessing liquor

**FROM PAGE 1**  
demanded justice before the court after the charges were read out. The court fixed tomorrow for trial of the case.

Following the order, Moudud's lawyers submitted a petition seeking a month long time. But the court rejected it.

Mohamamd Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, also the investigation officer (IO), submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on May 28 showing 10 people as prosecution witnesses.

The joint forces apprehended Moudud, also an influential BNP leader, on April 13 raiding his Gulshan residence in the capital.

The forces also seized various documents and 220 saris meant for government relief to the poor.

Later, a case was filed against Moudud, a member of BNP standing committee, under Section 25 (B) of the Special Powers Act, 1974 for obtaining foreign licenses evading government tax.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that the charges brought against Moudud were primarily proved and he should be brought to justice.

Following his arrest, Moudud was taken on a four-day remand for interrogation.

On March 25, the National Board of Revenue directed banks to freeze the accounts of Moudud Ahmed and his wife.

Moudud served as a minister in three cabinets since the country's independence in 1971. He also served autocrat ruler HM Ershad's government as a prime minister and as a vice-president.

**HUDACASE**  
The same court adjourned the proceedings of the graft case against Huda and his wife Sigma Huda until Thursday.

In the petition, the defence lawyers mentioned that Sigma Huda could not appear before the court due to her illness.

Opposing the time petition, Special Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajal told the court that the defence had earlier submitted petitions on different excuses. So the petition for adjournment on sick grounds was not tenable at this stage.

Kajal also told the court that Huda had taken Tk 2.40 crore from a construction firm owner while he was in charge of the communications ministry.

On hearing such comment from the prosecution, Huda became angry with him and told that he should not make such comment, as he did not see the bribe taking incident.

On the other hand, the prosecution said they have documentary evidences about his bribe taking.

ACC Deputy Director Shafiqul Islam filed the case against them with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 21 for taking Tk 2.4 crore in bribe from Mir Zahir Hossain, the owner of Mir Akter Hossain Ltd, a construction firm.

On June 4, the ACC pressed charges against Huda and his wife Sigma in connection with the case. ACC Assistant Director Mirza Zahidul Islam, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet against the couple to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) of Dhaka naming 39 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO in the charge sheet mentioned that Nazmul Huda took the bribe from Zahir, elder brother of current FBCCI President Mir Nasir Hossain.

Zahir handed over the bribe to the former minister at the latter's Dhanmondi residence in three cheques in exchange for a Roads and Highways Department's work order of Tk 30 crore.

According to the investigators, the money was deposited to an account with Agrani Bank's corporate branch at Motijheel. The account was maintained by Khoboror Antorale, a newspaper owned by Sigma Huda.

Sources said, later Tk 1 crore from the deposited bribe money was transferred to two fixed deposit accounts of the Motijheel branch of HSBK bank dividing the amount into Tk 50 lakh each in the names of two daughters of the minister.

The ACC charge sheet said the allegation of taking the bribe against the Huda couple was found to be true in the investigation.

The joint forces recovered evidence of Nazmul Huda's taking the bribe during a raid in his residence following his arrest during an anti-corruption crackdown on February 4.

The investigators traced Mir Zahir following a paper trail recovered from the residence.

Zahir corroborated the allegations against Nazmul Huda to a magistrate.

**SILIM REMANDED**  
Detained former minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim was placed on a two-day remand in connection with a case filed for extorting Tk 2.99 crore from owner of a private limited company.

Metropolitan Magistrate Selina Akhter passed the order after officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, also the IO of the case, produced Selim before the court with a five-day remand to interrogate him about the extortion.

On June 13, Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of Eastcoast Trading Private Ltd, filed the other case with Gulshan Police Station against Sheikh Hasina and AL leader Selim for extorting over Tk 2.99 crore.

In his complaint, Azam said Russian power generation company Techno Prom Export (TPE) obtained

work order for the first phase of erecting and commissioning of Siddhirganj power plant in Narayanganj in 2000.

He said his company Eastcoast Trading Private Ltd was appointed as the local agent of the Russian company when Hasina was the premier.

In July 2000, Selim threatened to stop the work.

Selim received over Tk 2.99 crore in eight cheques between October 24, 2000 and March 14, 2001.

Earlier, Selim was shown arrested in the case and sought a five-day remand for interrogation.

**SALAHUDDIN CASE**  
Former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed was placed on a three-day remand yesterday in connection with a fraud case filed with Gulshan Police Station.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon passed the order in the forgery case after Gulshan police produced Salahuddin before the court with a seven-day remand prayer.

In the forwarding report, Sub-Inspector (SI) Faruq Hossain, also the IO, mentioned that Salahuddin and his wife Hasina Ahmed had deprived the government of a large amount of tax by understating the prices of their three luxurious automobiles.

As such, Salahuddin needed to be quizzed so that vital clues about the case could be gathered, the IO said.

The defence submitted a petition seeking cancellation of the remand prayer.

After hearing both the sides, the court rejected the petition for cancelling the remand prayer and placed him on a three-day remand for interrogation.

On April 1, SI Faruq filed the case against the couple with Gulshan Police Station.

Salahuddin and his wife had three luxurious cars--each worth Tk 50 lakh. To evade tax, they prepared false documents showing that the vehicles were sold, SI Faruq said.

The couple again prepared documents with forged signatures of buyers and sellers to show that they purchased the same vehicles for only Tk 1 lakh each, said the IO adding that he found the anomalies while checking the documents of the vehicles.

**NTV MD REMANDED**  
The same court placed ntv MD on a three-day remand after the ACC placed a ten-day remand prayer to interrogate Bappi.

Earlier on March 29 and May 20, Bappi was placed on a five-day remand in two phases.

Two other accused in the case are former BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid and owner of Sky Autos, Istiaq Sadiq.

The case was filed on March 17 with Pallabi Police Station in connection with evading tax during import of a luxury car by abusing duty-free car import privilege of an MP.

In his remand prayer, the IO Monaem Hossain, also assistant director of the ACC, mentioned that Bappi was directly involved with fraud and he needs to be quizzed to find out vital clues.

**MIRZAABBAS CASE**  
Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court rejected bail petitions of detained former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas in connection with two murder cases filed with Motijheel Police Station on different dates.

The court passed the order following two criminal appeals against the rejection orders of the lower court.

The first case was filed on March 28 last year for killing Arif Moshed Khan in front of Shahjahanpur Jheel Mosque while the second case was with the same police station on December 19, 2005 for killing Rakibul Islam at Officers' Club in Shahjahanpur Railway Colony.

Abbas was shown arrested in the cases on different dates for his alleged involvement with the killings.

**GANI SENT TO JAIL**  
Chief Forest Conservator Osman Gani was sent to jail yesterday on completion of a three-day remand in connection with a case filed against him under Passport Act with Uttara Police Station.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar passed the order after the IO produced him before the court on completion of his remand.

He was earlier taken on a nine-day remand under the Emergency Power Rules.

The joint forces on May 29 recovered about 289 tolas of gold ornaments from a bank locker of Chief Conservator of Forests Osman Gani and Tk 6.95 lakh more in cash, savings certificates worth over Tk 5 lakh and ownership documents of flats and plots at this Uttara residence.

The joint forces also raided and sealed two sawmills on Maneswar Road in Dhanmondi last night after Gani confessed to having timber worth over Tk 1 crore in those mills.

Later, two separate cases against Gani, under the Emergency Power Rules and the Passport Act, were lodged after recovery of Tk 1 crore hidden inside a pillow and a rice barrel in his house.

## PRGF loan

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Bangladesh are also sceptic about the IMF loan saying that it is time to examine the loan's sustainability.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) recently asked the government to rethink before going for a fresh PRGF agreement with the IMF.

## No move yet

**FROM PAGE 1**  
convicted killers of Bangabandhu. The foreign ministry has no official information on the whereabouts of the killers.

Immediately after AL led alliance came to power in 1996, some of the killers left the country fearing arrest and prosecution. Meanwhile, some others working in different foreign missions of Bangladesh abroad, quit their jobs and went into hiding after they were asked to return home to face trial for killing Bangabandhu.

Fifteen former army officers were awarded death penalty by a lower court in the Bangabandhu Murder Case on November 8, 1998. Later, the High Court upheld the death sentence of 12 killers.

Of them, Lt Col Syed Farook Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Lt Col Mohiuddin and Maj Bazlul Huda had been in jail at that time. One convict has died abroad, while six others are still absconding.

The taskforce formed by the AL government with officials from the foreign, home and law ministries in 1999 came to know from intelligence sources that the killers had been staying in the US, Zimbabwe, Canada, Pakistan, India and several Middle Eastern countries.

It sent copies of the court verdict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case to the governments of those countries and initiated steps to have extradition treaty with them.

Following the move, the Interpol rang a red alert throughout the world to hunt down the killers.

In 2000, the taskforce officials visited the US and completed the preliminary procedures for an extradition treaty. The AL government also appointed two legal advisers in the US for this purpose. However, the whole process was stalled by the four-party coalition government after it came to power.

According to the taskforce, convicted Lt Col Khandkar Abdur Rashid had been hiding in the Middle East. Lt Col Shariful Haque Dalim in Pakistan, Major AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Lt Col Rashed Chowdhury in the US, Lt Col Noor Chowdhury in Germany and Captain Abdul Mazed and Risaldar Moshleuddin in India.

Of them, Noor is now staying in Canada. The Canadian government sought assistance of the Bangladesh mission to send him back, but the mission did not cooperate. Sources said that Noor recently managed a Bangladeshi passport with the help of the mission.

Another convict, Lt Col Aziz Pasha, who had been serving Bangladesh mission in Zimbabwe as deputy high commissioner, was asked to return home during the AL rule to face trial. Following it, he sought asylum in Zimbabwe. On July 8, 1996, he was dismissed from service for disobedience and desertion. Pasha died on June 2, 2001 in Zimbabwe.

Surprisingly, the BNP-led government reinstated him in the foreign ministry even after his death at the directive from the highest level of the government, sources said.

All government benefits, such as pension to the widow of Aziz Pasha, was arranged by the government showing him "retired" from service.

Having captured power through a military coup, Ziaur Rahman rewarded 12 army officials involved in Bangabandhu killing with jobs in Bangladesh missions abroad in 1976. They were incorporated in the Foreign Service in 1980.

Another military ruler HM Ershad and the government of Khaleda Zia followed the policy of Zia about the killers of Bangabandhu. The accused army officers enjoyed all facilities in government jobs and got promotions under during their regimes.

During the Ershad rule, Lt Col Farook and Lt Col Rashid returned to Dhaka and established Freedom Party. Farook contested the 1986 president election and his party took part in the 1988 parliamentary elections that was boycotted by the major parties.

The killers also took part in the February 15, 1996 parliamentary polls of Khaleda regime that was also shunned by major political parties. Lt Col Rashid was elected a lawmaker in that farcical election.

Interestingly, the present government reinstated charge-sheeted accused in the Jail Killing Case Major Khairuzzaman in his foreign ministry job.

Khairuzzaman, who had been serving as acting ambassador in the Philippines, was recalled by the AL government and the charge-sheet in the Jail Killing Case accused him. He was arrested and given forced retirement on September 24, 1996.

Soon after the BNP led alliance government assumed power, Khairuzzaman was shifted from jail to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital and then released on bail. On May 4, 2003 he was reinstated as a key director general in the foreign ministry and later promoted as additional secretary of the ministry.