

Khaleda welcomes

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cantonment 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 Syed 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, whenever 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 will you take 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 as 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 its 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.

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Bangabandhu

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

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:

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 as 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 to 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 grassroots 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 think 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.

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Possessing liquor

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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 new bench would be formed for disposal of the case.

Mohamad 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.

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.

In the forwarding report, Sub-Inspector (SI) Faruq Hossain, also 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 as an autocrat ruler HM Ershad's government as 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 in connection with the case.

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 Monna 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 Morshed 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.

GANISTER 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 Shafiqul 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 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.

SELM 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 Akther 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