

15-pt proposal

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nominate different subject committees with members from the National Council, if necessary under circumstances of important national problems. The subject committees may be formed, among others, on the matters concerning national planning and finance, health and population control, rural development, flood control, food and agriculture, eradication of illiteracy, education, labour welfare, women, youth community, international affairs and welfare of children. Experts on different sectors, competent and efficient people, who are not members of the party, could be co-opted in these committees. But, under no circumstances the number of such members should exceed one-third of total members of the committee. Co-opted members will enjoy all other facilities like other members. To be added: The chairman will take approval of national standing committee before nominating the committees. Activities of the committees will be specified.

d. Article 6 (11) mentions that the party chairman will nominate members of the National Executive Committee. This provision will be replaced with the following: Councillors will elect all members of the National Executive Committee.

e. Article 6 (12) states that the national standing committee, nominated by the chairman, will be comprised of 15 members. Instead of this provision, members of national standing committee will be elected through a national council. A person, who is not member of the national executive committee, will not be eligible to become a member of the National Standing Committee.

f. Committees in all strata of the party will be elected through council of respective stages.

2. Article 6 (14) points out that the parliamentary party shall comprise the elected party lawmakers. The parliamentary party shall select its leader, deputy leader, chief whip and other whips after consultation with the party chairman. This provision will be replaced by: Members of the parliamentary party will elect their leader, deputy leader, chief whip and other whips.

3. It is stated about the party chairman's advisory council that there shall be a advisory council comprising 15 members with the status of vice-president for giving advice to the chairman on different issues. But, on special demand the party chairman has the authority to increase the members of the advisory council. They will be nominated by the chairman and will be treated as ex-officio members of the national executive committee.

Instead of this provision, the chairman will be able to appoint advisors on demand with approval of the National Standing Committee and this will have to be approved in the next Executive Committee meeting.

4. Article 8 (a) says that the party chairman shall be elected for a two-year term with common majority of direct votes by the national council members. Anyone can be elected for another tenure after completing the term. The following provisions will replace this provision:

8 (a) (1): Party chairman will be elected for a three-year term winning common majority votes of the members of the national council.

(2) No one can continue as chairman for more than two terms or six years. This provision will also be applicable for those who have been already in the post for two terms or more than six years in the aforesaid post.

5. The elected prime minister will run operations in government and parliament in consultation with the party's chairman and National Standing Committee on policy issues.

6. If elected the prime minister twice, a person can no longer be the prime minister or the party chairman.

7. In sections 1,2,3,4 of 8 (b), it is mentioned that (1) as the party's highest official, the chairman will control, supervise and coordinate all party affairs, and to that end, will officiate over the national council, National Standing Committee, National Executive Committee, subject committees and other committees nominated by the chairman, and will control, super-

wise and coordinate their operations. (2) The chairman can also take punitive measures against members of the aforementioned committees if necessary. (3) As the president of the mentioned committees, the chairman will also assign the committee members' responsibilities, power and duties. (4) If he/she thinks necessary, the chairman can dissolve the National Executive Committee, National Standing Committee, subject committees and other committees nominated by the chairman.

8. Section 13 of Chapter 6 states: There shall be a parliamentary board to nominate candidates for national parliamentary elections or any other elections. The party's Standing Committee shall be the party's parliamentary board. But, when a district's candidate is asked to appear before the parliamentary board, that district's party president, first three vice-presidents, and general secretary will be considered as members of the parliamentary board. But, if a member of the parliamentary board runs for election, he cannot be present at the meeting when the candidate nomination for their constituency is being decided. The party chairman will be the parliamentary board president. The parliamentary board will serve to nominate the candidate for national parliamentary elections or any other elections and their decisions shall be considered final.

To be added: Measures are to be taken to reflect the wishes of the leaders and workers from the constituencies.

9. Council of all the committees must be completed by the time allocated by the party constitution.

10. The party treasurer will collect the organisation's funds and maintain its accounts. A bank account shall be opened in any commercial bank and the account shall be operated with the joint signatures of two among the president, treasurer and the general secretary, but one of the signatures must be of the treasurer. An audit of the party's account must be held annually, and the audit report has to be published within six months of the completion of a fiscal year. The party's fund will be created through the donations and grants of members.

To be added: All donations will be acknowledged with a receipt. All income and expenditures of all organisational units will also be annually audited for the fund's transparency. A specific guideline must be drawn up to collect funds and the fund's maintenance must adhere to the rules and regulations set by the standing committee. An annual budget must be prepared and all income and expenditure accounts presented before each meeting.

11. Party ministers, MPs, Standing Committee members, Executive Committee members, subject committee members, district committee members, and thana committee members will have to submit their annual wealth statements to the National Executive Committee.

12. The inclusion of family members and close relatives of leaders on all levels of the party must be discouraged.

13. Section 2 of the Article mentions that if required in case of an emergency the party chairman can make a change to the party constitution, but the decision must be accepted at the next meeting of the national council as described in Section A.

This section will be cancelled.

14. The candidates' wealth statements must be submitted to the party during all nominations, and on behalf of the party, a committee will determine their veracity.

15. The reform programmes that the Election Commission will undertake through discussion with the political parties will be adjusted with the party constitution.

Reacts Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, according to the BNP constitution, presidents, general secretaries and organising secretaries of all the 480 upazila and 147 municipality committees of the party, presidents, vice-presidents, general secretaries, assistant general secretaries and organising secretaries of 72 organisational district committees, all members of the central executive committee, standing committee and advisory council of the party chairperson will be treated as councillors, and they may effect any changes in the party constitution.

Besides this, the chairperson may nominate 10 percent more people as councillors from different units of the party. Around 3,000 councillors will decide on reform proposals, and among them at least 400 are in jails across the country on different charges.

Goyeswar hoped the government will now allow them to hold party council so that it could take the decision on reform proposals.

Brushing aside reports of conflicts among top leaders of the BNP, he said there are no differences among them on the reform issue.

LDP

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party's Maghbazar office is being used by the Oil supporters.

Leaders from both factions told The Daily Star that the decision of forming LDP was made without any discussion in the party forum. Many leaders became anxious about the party's existence as they said that questionable people, including corrupt and even patrons of militants, were taken into the party.

In a bid to establish absolute power, both Badruddoza and Oli have been show-causing leaders of their rival factions, which might witness an outburst after the lifting of the ban on indoor politics, LDP sources said.

About the reported conflict with Badruddoza, his rival Oli told The Daily Star that if anybody does not like reforms in the party, he may leave. "The LDP was not formed to make anybody the monarch or a king," Oli said.

Badruddoza, however, kept mum over the current state of the party. Sources close to him said that he is observing the situation and might tell the media about his stand soon.

Dhaka-Delhi

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Dhaka and New Delhi are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to remove non-tariff barriers at the end of today's talks. The MoU will standardise quality controls on each side of the border.

Both sides also decided to follow-up on the pledge made at bilateral meetings in April to revive all mechanisms, the first of which were the current foreign secretary-level meetings.

Two such joint mechanisms include the Joint Border Working Group to discuss the troubled border between the two neighbours and the Joint Committee of Experts to demarcate water territory and share common waters.

The last foreign secretary-level talks were held in New Delhi in 2005.

Bhuiyan

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said, "Soon."

He said followers of president Zia are facing new challenges. The past glory of the party has to be reinstated, he added.

"Competent, honest and dedicated leaders and workers have to take the place of corrupt and incompetent ones," he said adding that competence, honesty and dedication should be valued, not blind loyalty or black money.

The BNP secretary general said, "The failure to hold the January 22 elections brought the disaster in the party but the honest and dedicated leaders and workers of grassroots level still do not know who were responsible for this."

"Those should be identified who brought disaster by misusing power, being arrogant, being involved in criminal activities, making mistakes, being involved in corruption and nepotism," he said.

He said the country witnessed a qualitative change in January 11 and the caretaker government saved the country from troubles as a civil war like situation was created due to the failure of political parties.

Rejoinder

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creating reserve forests and orchards and rehabilitation of landless families is not correct.

OUR REPLY

The Daily Star reporter contacted at least 50 people, including forest officials, loggers, labourers, and rehabilitated people of the area for the report.

Before filing the news, our reporter had also contacted DFO Shah-e-Alam for his version about actual figures of expenditure for reserve forest, orchard and settlement purposes. But the DFO avoided giving the figures saying that it was not easy to find out the expenditure files maintained 21 years ago.

Ex-BNP MP Anwar

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Even after paying 2 lakh 71 thousand taka to the former lawmaker, he failed to get the permission to arrange the circus that was planned for the development of the school, he added.

Magistrate Siddiqur Rahman of the cognisance court ordered the officer-in-charge of Bhangura Police Station to investigate the allegation.

On June 19, another extortion case was filed against Anwarul Islam and three other BNP leaders in Faridpur Police Station for demanding Tk 3 lakh.

The former lawmaker has been absconding since February 17 following the joint forces' operation to recover corrugated iron sheets of government relief fund.

2 more forest bosses

FROM PAGE 1

The crack forces confiscated the money since no document could be presented justifying the money kept in the office, said sources.

DFO Tapan was absent from the office yesterday, the sources added.

The security personnel also picked up three forest officials -- Malekuzzaman, Accountant Lutfur Rahman, and Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) Md Ali from the office and handed them over to police.

They were taken to Panchlaish police station for interrogation in the evening.

On Sunday the crack forces arrested four other custodians of the country's forests in Dhaka, Khulna and Rangamati. Three of them were put on different terms of remand yesterday while another one Ashit Ranjan Pal was handed over to Potenga police yesterday.

The arrestees are on the list of suspected corrupt top-level officials who allegedly plundered the forest resources. The list was prepared based on information gleaned from detained multimillionaire CCF Osman Gani.

SYLHET

Our staff correspondent reported from Sylhet that DFO of Sylhet Lashkar Maksudur Rahman was arrested on charge of corruption yesterday. The joint forces picked him up from the Forest Beat Office at Srimangal in Moulvibazar around 5:00pm and took him to Sylhet in the evening.

An official said the DFO was arrested on charges of corruption and he was being interrogated.

Meanwhile, the joint forces started searching the DFO's Tophkana residence in Dhaka in the evening. They seized some important files and compact disks (CD) from the house. The search was going on till filing of this report late last night. His father-in-law's house in the capital's Segunbagicha area was also being searched last night, sources said.

CHITTAGONG

Our Chittagong University (CU) correspondent reported that Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested DFO (Practical) Dewan Jafrul Hasan yesterday after he had surrendered to Rab - 7 head quarters at Patenga in the city around 4:00pm.

Jafrul Hasan was being questioned by Rab officials till 6:00pm.

Earlier in the day, Rab raided his Nandan Kanan office, prompting him to surrender to the elite crime fighting force.

On Sunday afternoon, the joint forces raided the offices of CF Atiqul Azam and Jafrul Hasan at Nandan Kanan in the city and the office of DFO (North) Dr Tapan Kumar Dey at Sholoshahar Gate No 2.

Tapan reportedly had close ties with detained CCF Osman Gani,

having special privileges.

He served as a DFO in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (South), in the forest department of Rangamati Circle, in Sundarban forest department, and in Chittagong Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department.

Osman Gani appointed Tapan as the DFO of Chittagong (North) department, the sources said. It is alleged that Tapan earned several crores of taka during his tenures in different important posts always providing a share of his illegal earnings to Osmani Gani.

REMAND

Deputy Forest Conservator (DFC) Shamsul Azam and CF of Dhaka Division Ali Kabir Haider were put on five-day remand each by a Dhaka Court yesterday.

Besides, a Khulna court on the same day sent CF of Khulna Circle Sheikh Mizanur Rahman to five days of remand for questioning about his corruption, abuse of official power, and about making a large amount of illegal wealth and properties.

Police told the court that being a government official Haider in association with detained CCF Osman Gani had been involved in destroying forests of the country and accumulated a huge amount of wealth in the process.

About Azam, police in their forwarding report mentioned that he was involved in smuggling timber during his service since 1985 and misappropriated government wealth. He also amassed a huge amount of wealth through bribery and corruption.

KHULNA

Our staff correspondent reported from Khulna that Khalishpur police filed a case against Mizanur Rahman under the Emergency Power Rules.

Sources in the joint forces said Mizanur told them on Sunday night that he has a bank balance of Tk 9 lakh deposited with Khulna branches of Oriental Bank and Standard Chartered Bank. He also admitted that he owns a shrimp farm on over 40 bighas of land under Dakop upazila of Khulna.

Besides, the crack forces picked up forest ranger Yunus Ali, and Mohammad Paltu, a boatman of west wing of Sundarban Forest Division (SFD), on Sunday night. They were however released yesterday morning after a nightlong interrogation.

Forest ranger Yunus Ali is one of the eleven SFD officials identified as an aide to detained CCF Osman Gani. The forest ministry had directed Yunus to submit his wealth statement by June 20, which he failed to do.

BNP reformists

FROM PAGE 1

about the tenure of the secretary general's post that he has been holding for over 10 years.

The proposals also said no one of the party will be allowed to be the prime minister for third time. Besides, the same person shall not hold simultaneously the posts of chairperson and the premier.

In a somewhat uncharted political setting following the declaration of a state of emergency, leaders of the BNP and Awami League have moved to bring intra-party reforms including those to trim back the pervasive influence of the party chiefs.

At the crowded news conference, Bhuiyan read out the proposals prepared in consultation with some senior leaders and former lawmakers. The proposals call for radical changes in the party constitution.

The reform advocates believe the amendments will translate into a BNP that the leaders and workers across the country have always wanted.

"The reforms have to be carried out to enable the party keep pace with the changing time," Bhuiyan said, brushing aside the allegation that they have drawn up the proposals to spare themselves the heat of the anti-graft operation.

The pro-reform leaders however did not consult Chairperson Khaleda Zia before making public their plans. Rather, they have been avoiding meeting her since the military-backed government launched the crackdown on corruption suspects.

"We will send a copy of the proposals to the chairperson today [yesterday]," the BNP secretary general said replying to a query.

He said these are the draft proposals and will be finalised after discussion at the national council or executive committee, once the ban on indoor politics goes.

Asked about the chairperson's announcement that she too would come up with some proposals, Bhuiyan said he does not know anything about it. "Anyone can put forward proposals. Everything will be discussed at the party forums," he added.

Bhuiyan, who was nominated for secretary general's post by Khaleda, proposed that from now on the council will elect members of the national executive committee including the secretary general and standing committee members.

Biman

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the Council of Advisers differed on some of the points in the draft ordinance. The council wants to review the proposed Memorandum of Association (rules and regulations of Biman) and Articles of Association (terms and conditions) contained in the draft ordinance.

Biman's proposed name -- Bangladesh Airlines Limited -- is one of the points of difference, the sources said.

The adviser hoped Biman would certainly have better days when a private operator is appointed for it.

Replying to a question, he said action against corrupt Biman staffs could not be taken due to lack of evidence.

Earlier on June 23, the council approved the draft ordinance on Biman's turning into a PLC.

On May 19, it approved some steps to complete this process by June 30.

HAAJ FLIGHTS

The government has selected Phuket Air of Thailand for carrying Hajj pilgrims, Malin said.

It will carry some 22 thousand pilgrims to Saudi Arabia.

Phuket was selected out of seven airlines that took part in the tender process, the adviser added.

BIMAN GETS \$22 MILLION

Biman got \$22 million from the insurance companies concerned as compensation for damage of an aircraft of the national flag carrier at Dubai International Airport on March 12, Matin told the media.

The Dhaka-bound Airbus developed wheel disorders while taking off, forcing the airport to suspend its operations for about eight hours.

No severe injury was reported in the accident involving the BG 006 flight on London-Dubai-Dhaka route. The Airbus was bought in 1996.

The insurance companies--Messrs AON in London and Messrs CTC--were immediately informed of the incident.

Customs officials

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container depot (ICD) here yesterday.

The forces also held the employee of the private ICD and a middleman.

Immediately after the arrest of the two customs officials--Principal Appraiser Emdadul Haq and Preventive Officer Md Anisul Haq--the authorities concerned put the two under suspension.

The three other arrestees are customs security man Md Masum, employee of the private ICD Masud Parvez and middleman Humayun Kabir.

Receiving information that the customs officials were taking bribe from an employee of private ICD of Ishaq Brothers Limited through a middleman for documentation of export and import goods at Chittagong Customs House, the joint forces raided the depot at around 2:00pm and arrested the five.

They recovered Tk 14,000 from the customs officials and handed over the five to Bandar Police Station.

Attack on UK envoy

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Jihad (HuJI) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, his brother Mofizur Rahman, HuJI operatives Delwar Hossain Ripon and Sharif Shahedul Alam alias Bipul. The four are in jail now.

Atiqur said they named 55 people as prosecution witnesses in the charge sheet.

Three people were killed and the Bangladesh-born British high commissioner along with 70 others were injured in the grenade attack on May 21, 2004 at Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine in Sylhet.

Farmers

FROM PAGE 16

Seed-monitoring Committees have been instructed to monitor the withdrawal, transportation and distribution of the fertiliser among the farmers as per their demand.

The government has taken the initiative apparently in the wake of reported crisis of the essential farming input across the country and manipulation of the market by profiteers.

Insider trading

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after it found the directors' involvement in insider trading and price manipulation.

The SEC probe also gathered that the issue managers, the issuer company and its management including sponsors, directors and officers concerned gave the commission incorrect information and hid important material information in the lead-up to the bank's initial public offering (IPO).

On September 12 last year, the SEC served a show-cause notice on Jamuna Bank, its directors, managing director and the company secretary for concealing facts regarding transfer of shares.

The notice mentioned that the board of directors of the bank at a meeting on November 27, 2005 approved transfer of 14 sponsor directors' shares to 23 people but did not inform the commission about the decision despite that being legally binding.

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Felling trees

FROM PAGE 16

phase, the rest 10 storeys will be built, he said.

"The plan is to complete two floors first to overcome the acute classroom shortages and then finish the rest of the work. The building will take one year at the most to complete," Harun added.

ACC to quiz Tarique

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the ACC would get privilege even if the organisations' law stipulates otherwise.

INTERROGATION OF TARIQUE, HIS WIFE AND MOTHER-IN-LAW

A Dhaka court yesterday gave permission to the ACC to interrogate detained Tarique at the Dhaka Central Jail gate. The reasons for the interrogation were not disclosed.

An ACC official, however, said Tarique would be quizzed about his wealth statement and the anomalies found so far during an ongoing enquiry into it. He said Tarique would be especially questioned about the ownership of the newspaper Dainik Dinkal.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon passed the order following a petition submitted by the investigation officer (IO) Zahurul Huda, deputy director of the ACC head office.

In his petition, Huda said based on an enquiry earlier, Tarique needs to be questioned at the jail gate.

The ACC official said the date of interrogation would be fixed consulting with the jail authorities. IO Huda will be there for questioning Tarique, but Task Force Interrogation (TFI) members from the army, and officials from National Board of Revenue and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) will also be there for questioning Tarique.

The joint forces arrested Tarique at his mother's (ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia) cantonment home in a midnight raid on March 8.

Amin Ahmed, owner of Al-Amin Constructions, filed an extortion case against Tarique, eldest son of Khaleda Zia, on March 8. Tarique was placed on a four-day remand for interrogation about the extortion of Tk 1 crore.

Gulshan police submitted the charge sheet before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka on March 18, showing 12 people as prosecution witnesses.

Proceedings of the case was earlier stayed due to an order from the High Court (HC). The HC stay order came after Tarique's lawyers filed a writ petition challenging the legality of the case.

Tarique was later shown arrested on different dates in six other extortion cases based on controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun's confessional statements.

Meanwhile, the ACC called Tarique's wife Zubaida and mother-in-law Banu to appear before the ACC officials today for questioning about wealth information in Tarique's statement submitted to the ACC.

IO Huda and TFI members will interrogate them, said an ACC official.

CASE AGAINST IQBAL

ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim yesterday filed a case with the Gulshan Police Station against Iqbal and his wife Mortaj Begum Dolly in connection with acquiring wealth worth Tk 11 crore 43 lakhs by illegal means.

Iqbal has been absconding since the launch of countrywide anti-corruption drive against high-profile corruption suspects in February. He had submitted his wealth statement in February to the ACC through a representative. Even though the anti-graft watchdog asked him to submit the statement in person, he obtained an HC order for having it submitted by a representative.

Iqbal in the statement showed his wealth to be worth Tk 38 crore and the properties and the money was in his own and his wife's name.

However, the ACC investigators found that his wealth statement has some discrepancies in his known source of income and he hid information about his wealth.

According to allegations made in the case, Iqbal has a house on Gulshan Avenue, worth Tk 5.3 crore, in his wife's name, which was acquired through illegal means.

Iqbal also did not mention the fixed deposit of Tk 5 crore in his wealth statement which the ACC officials discovered during their investigation.

6 UN peacekeepers

FROM PAGE 16

Lebanon and Unifil only but against the stability of the region. This attack has made Unifil more committed to fulfil its mission in southern Lebanon," he said in a statement.

In Madrid on Sunday, Alonso told a news conference his country "supports and will continue to support the United Nations Unifil mission."

Unifil first deployed in Lebanon in 1978 after an Israeli invasion but was expanded from some 2,000 members after the July-August war between Israel and Hezbollah guerrillas who dominated the south of the country.

The attack came on top of a series of car bombings targeting anti-Syrian politicians in and around Beirut and as the army pursued its bloodiest internal fighting since the 1975-1990 civil war with Fatah al-Islam in the north.

Hezbollah was quick to condemn the bombing in an area considered its stronghold. "This act of aggression is aimed at increasing insecurity in Lebanon, especially in the south of the country," it said.

Unifil was boosted in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701 which ended the war with Israel in August last year.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her French counterpart Bernard Kouchner condemned the bombing as Rice visited Paris for an international conference on Sudan's Darfur conflict.

Lebanon's pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud said the attack was part of a "campaign of destabilisation" against this country.

"This aggression can only reinforce our determination to strengthen the cooperation of the Lebanese army

with Unifil," he said.

Spain has nearly 1,100 troops in southeast Lebanon as part of Unifil, which now has 13,225 soldiers from 30 nations.

In the north, 11 people died in clashes in the port city of Tripoli overnight Saturday, including six Sunni Islamists from Fatah al-Islam and a policeman's 10-year-old daughter.

Two civilians, one soldier and the police sergeant also died in a three-hour firefight which erupted as the army raided the apartment of a militant, an army spokesman said.

It was the first clash in the mainly Sunni Muslim city since fighting erupted between Fatah al-Islam and the army in Tripoli and at a nearby refugee camp on May 20.

Fighters loyal to Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas's mainstream Fatah faction said they had killed three Islamists in the Nahr al-Bared camp.

At least 161 people, including about 60 Islamists and 80 soldiers, are known to have died in the violence but precise figures are unavailable.

Rice called on the international community to send a "very strong message" to Syria -- blamed for supporting extremists in Lebanon -- that continued interference would not be tolerated.

Syria denies any involvement in the unrest in its smaller neighbour.

45 killed in Iraq

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One of those killed was Faisal al-Gawud, an ex-governor of the western Sunni province of Anbar, where several tribal sheikhs have recently allied with US and Iraqi forces against al-Qaeda, according to security officials.

Hussein Shaalan, a Shia MP from the liberal Iraqi National List of former pro-Western premier Iyad Allawi's political bloc and a tribal chief from the central city of Diwaniyah, was also killed along with his son and a bodyguard.

Other victims included Rahim al-Maliki, a poet employed by Iraq's state-run Iraqiya television, and two Sunni tribal sheikhs. Five more unidentified people were also killed.

Sheikh Mahmud Daham from Anbar, who was in the hotel, said the attack "targeted the tribes that are fighting terrorism."

"Iraq will stay standing, no matter what you do. We are not afraid of you and we are going to continue fighting you," he said amid the wreckage with corpses around him.

The attack came shortly after two other suicide bombings killed another 33 people, mostly policemen, in the north and central regions of the country.

The deadliest strike was in the northern oil refining town of Baiji where 25 people were killed when a bomber ploughed an explosives-laden oil tanker into the police headquarters of the town, a local police officer said.

Another 50 people, mostly civilians, were wounded.

"A suicide bomber driving an oil tanker tried to break into the building but he blew himself up at the gate because he could not get in. It resulted in huge damage to the building," said Police Captain Ahmed Hussein of Baiji.

"All the wounded are civilians from shops near the headquarters, but most of those killed are prisoners and policemen," he said.

Local authorities imposed a full curfew and blocked all roads leading in and out of the town, which is just north of executed dictator Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

In central Iraq, in the town of Hilla, a suicide car bomber slammed into a crowd of recruits waiting outside a police academy, killing eight and wounding several dozen.

"The recruits were just a week away from their graduation," said Police Lieutenant Mohammed al-Dulaimi of Hilla police.

An AFP reporter said the attack gouged out a large crater in the middle of the street. A number of nearby buildings, including a school, and many shops were damaged by the blast.

Salim Saleh, the governor of Babil province, who visited the site, blamed the attack on "takfiris" (Sunni extremists).

Hilla has seen regular bomb attacks as Sunni insurgents have targeted Shia pilgrims travelling from Baghdad south to the holy shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf.

Meanwhile, two US soldiers died of wounds sustained in combat in Iraq, the military said Monday, raising the total toll this month to 73.

One soldier died on Saturday after being wounded in a combined attack involving a roadside bomb and small arms fire in east Baghdad, the military said in a statement.

Doctors

FROM PAGE 16

Director Maj Gen (ret'd) Ziauddin Ahmed said he is not the person concerned for job regularisation. It is the Birdem Management Board, which is authorised to regularise the doctors' jobs, he added.