

Indian oppositions

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 chaired by General Secretary Prakash Karat, that discussed his defiance ever since the party withdrew support to the UPA government.

The 79-year old barrister and ten-time MP, Chatterjee rejected both subtle and explicit hints from the party leadership which asked him to quit the post to which he was elected unanimously after the 2004 elections, saying he was above party politics given the post held.

The BJP expelled eight of its MPs who cross-voted or abstained during the trust vote despite the party having issued a whip to vote against the confidence motion sought by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The eight members were among 24 opposition MPs who either voted for the government or abstained or remained absent.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD), a constituent in BJP-led NDA, expelled Harihar Swain dubbing him as a "betrayer" while Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP M Jagannatham also faced similar action for defying party whip.

MDMK sources said in Chennai that the party will be seeking the disqualification of two of its MPs—L Ganesan and Ginge Ramachandran—for voting for the government.

Stung by his fellow MPs switching loyalties, BJP's prime ministerial candidate L K Advani said it sparked so much outrage in the party that it did not take more than five minutes to proceed against the MPs.

"If there was no cross-voting, the government would have lost the trust vote," Advani told reporters a day after the Congress-led UPA government sailed through the confidence vote.

Advani said action was also being taken to seek the disqualification of the eight MPs from the Lok Sabha for violation of party whip.

Undeterred by their defeat in the trust vote in Parliament, leaders of ten opposition parties, including the Left and BSP, today announced launching of a nation-wide campaign against Indo-US nuclear deal, price rise and agrarian crisis and decided to provide an anti-Congress, anti-BJP alternative.

"The UPA government may have won the vote in Lok Sabha yesterday, but has lost the trust of the nation due to the immoral manner in which it engineered its win," BSP supremo Mayawati told a press conference after leaders of these parties worked out a fresh political realignment.

"She said the way in which the UPA garnered votes for victory shows that democracy has been 'defeated and murdered'."

Announcing a nation-wide joint campaign, CPI(M) General Secretary Prakash Karat said though the government won the confidence motion, it has "lost the trust of the nation".

Besides Mayawati and Karat, top leaders of TDP, CPI, Forward Bloc, RSP, JD(S), RLD, INLD and Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) were present at the breakfast meeting at the BSP chief's residence. TRS leader K

CA wants

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 constructing six-storey buildings.

"If the model project sees success, such housing projects can be launched in Savar and Gazipur areas," he said about the newly conceived plan for accommodation of the burgeoning population of the capital city, where most people don't have a house of their own.

He stressed the need for construction of multi-storey buildings instead of tin-shed houses to solve the housing problem of people having low income.

The CA asked the housing and public works and LGRD ministries to put their heads together to immediately go for action for permanent accommodation of the people in low-income group.

He suggested short and long-term plans for this important scheme of housing.

It is envisaged that the houses can be allotted on 99-year lease, which ultimately makes the lessees owners.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed newsmen about the meeting.

LRGD Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal, Housing and Public Works Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Gulam Quader, Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Majumder, secretary of the CA's office, housing and public works secretary, CA's press secretary, Rajuk chairman, National Housing Authority chairman and chairman of the national committee on housing were present at the meeting.

Recovered money

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 BB Governor Salehuddin told reporters, replying to a question after the bankers' meeting held at the central bank yesterday.

He said: "Bangladesh Bank has nothing to do in this regard. We will give the money back if the government wants."

Reportedly, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has requested the central bank to give the money back so they could adjust the money against VAT and taxes of the people who deposited the money with the bank.

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam in his budget speech said Tk 1,219 crore has been deposited with the central bank against siphoned off money.

Chandrasekar Rao also briefly attended it.

"We will work together with BSP and other parties," Rao said before leaving for Hyderabad.

On whether a new front was born, Karat said it was not so as these parties got together to launch a joint campaign and work out future course of action on several issues.

Karat said the Manmohan Singh government has lost all moral authority to remain in power because of the manner in which the victory was secured in Parliament.

SPEAKER EXPELLED
 Biman Bose, a senior party leader from West Bengal who reportedly met the Speaker on Tuesday night asking him to quit ahead of the trust, said Chatterjee had promised to give up the office on July 23.

"Somnath Chatterjee has violated party discipline. We (Communists) have to abide by party rules. The party will sever all connections with those who do not follow party dictates," he said.

The party invoked Article 19 (13) of its constitution to expel him under summary procedures without any notice on the charge of "seriously compromising" the party position.

The veteran parliamentarian's run-in with CPI(M) leadership is said to date back to 1996 when he had supported the proposal for prime ministership for Jyoti Basu, which was vetoed.

He was also said to have disagreed with the leadership over their lukewarm attitude to his becoming UPA-Left's consensus candidate for the post of President last year.

Over the last fortnight, Chatterjee, who resented with CPI(M) including his name in the list of MPs withdrawing support to the UPA government, had been maintaining that the Speaker's post was above party politics. But it became increasingly clear that he was not going to obey the party dictate.

Even yesterday, he maintained he may be going to Kuala Lumpur for a Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference early next month.

The party hoped that Chatterjee, who was leader of its Parliamentary Party in the Lok Sabha from 1989 to 2004, would quit before the confidence vote on Monday but he went ahead and presided over the proceedings of the two-day special session of Parliament.

Zimbabwe crisis talks may begin today

AFP, Harare

Full-scale talks aimed at resolving Zimbabwe's months-long political crisis are expected to begin in neighbouring South Africa today, according to a report in state media.

Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, chief negotiator for President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PP party, told the Herald newspaper it had been agreed with the opposition to begin the talks only when all the delegates were in place.

"All parties to the dialogue agreed that talks should begin on Thursday," Chinamasa told the daily.

The talks had initially been due to begin on Tuesday but Chinamasa said that all the delegates should now arrive in South Africa by the end of Wednesday and would then "travel to the venue for the talks, wherever that would be".

Chinamasa and ZANU-PP's other senior negotiator Nicholas Goche stayed in Harare on Tuesday to attend a cabinet meeting while opposition officials also delayed their travel plans.

Gas line blast

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 stranded vehicles in the vicinity were seen running for safety, said witnesses.

Two fire service units reached the spot within 40 minutes and doused the fire. Police reopened part of the road about an hour later. Titas Gas personnel were repairing the damaged pipeline till filing of this report.

After the fire was put out, a pothole about the size of a manhole, nearly two square feet, was visible on the road and gas was still spewing out of the pothole and nearby manholes.

Mamun Mahmud, senior station officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence, and leader of the fire service team that extinguished the fire, told The Daily Star, "We reached the spot in about half an hour of the incident and we put out the fire in about 10 minutes."

Abdul Hannan, deputy general manager (DGM-Distribution) of Titas Gas, said, "We are yet to determine the cause of the fire."

"After the road is dug, we'll be able to know if the pipeline was leaking or if there's any other cause," he said and adding, "It may take between three and ten hours to repair the damaged pipeline."

The supply of gas through the pipeline will remain suspended during the repair work, he also said.

The four Igloo workers who were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with gas inhalation injuries were identified as Rebecca, 16, Suma, 18, Rashida, 25, and Kabita, 15.

Police said the gas pipeline inside the factory building located at Kutubpur of Shyamkur exploded with a loud bang at around 1:00pm, emitting heavy smoke and gas that injured the workers.

Delwar

FROM PAGE 16
 must have an ill motive as it is yet to withdraw the emergency despite repeated demands from political parties," he told the Zia Parishad members who had observed a token hunger strike outside Delwar's Nam flat demanding release of Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman and lifting of emergency.

Referring to the chief adviser's remark that the right time for lifting emergency has not come yet, he said, "The time to withdraw emergency has already passed. But you [the caretaker government] are making delay."

"No elections can be held under the state of emergency," he said, asking the government to withdraw emergency to create a congenial atmosphere for holding a credible election with participation of all parties.

Former lawmakers Sohrab Uddin and Nurul Kabir Shaheen, party leader Habib Un Nabi Shohel, and Zia Parishad Chairman Kabir Murad, among others, were present.

ANWARMEETS DELWAR
 BNP Vice President MK Anwar, who was released from jail on Tuesday, met the party secretary general at his Nam flat yesterday and discussed different issues with him.

Khaleda, Tarique

FROM PAGE 16
 Gias Uddin Ahmed, Sharfuiddin Ahmed and Khaleda's nephew Momtazur Rahman.

According to the case, the accused embezzled the amount unlawfully by establishing an organisation named Zia Orphanage Trust that exists only on paper.

On June 9, 1991, a grant of \$1,255,000 (about Tk 4.45 crore at the time) was transferred from United Saudi Commercial Bank to the Prime Minister's Orphanage Fund created by Khaleda shortly before transferring the grant. Only Khaleda administered the fund.

Earlier, the ACC interrogated Khaleda and her two detained sons Tarique and Arafat Rahman Koko and a member of the trust in connection with the allegation. Khaleda is also accused in Gatco, Niko and Barapukuria graft cases while Tarique is accused in 15 cases.

Power plant

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 He said the 24MW power plant has been feeding 19MW electricity at best to the national grid since April although as per the contract it was supposed to supply at least 20MW for the next 15 years.

Meanwhile, in order to ensure gas supply to GBB and other establishments including CNG filling stations in Bogra the PGCL failed to provide smooth gas supply to the Baghabari 71MW and 24MW government power plants, which forced the plants to stop power generation for 12 hours from 9:00pm on Monday to 9:00am on Tuesday.

As per the ordinance, the commission will run for five months with three members. The president will appoint one of the three members as chairman of the commission.

The government has already appointed 26 officials on deputation for the Truth and Accountability Commission.

The Right to Voluntary Disclosure Ordinance 2008 defines corruption and corrupt activities as in the schedules of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1947, Customs Act 1969, Income Tax Ordinance 1984, VAT Law 1991, and the Anti-Corruption Act 2004.

These also include violation of any rules of the Bank Company Law 1991 or evasion of stamp duty, registration fees or any other charges or revenues imposed by any law or rules of the country. Along with those who will make voluntary disclosure about their corruption, the commission will also deal with persons referred by the National Coordination Committee (NCC) on serious crimes and corruption, the Anti-Corruption Commission and by any court dealing with their cases.

Persons who will make voluntary disclosure will be disqualified for a period not exceeding five years from holding any offices that include parliament, Zila Parishad, Upazila Parishad, Union Parishad, municipality, city corporation, or any trade organisation and professional body, or any post in any bank, financial organisation or public limited company or any other organisations formed under the constitution or any law, says the ordinance.

President's wife

FROM PAGE 16
 Anwara Begum, wife of President Iajuddin Ahmed.

It was learnt that the matter was also discussed at the meeting of the task force formed for keeping the city rivers' flow normal.

The meeting discussed cancellation of the lease of the canal at Ramchandrapur of Mohamadpur in the capital to Dr Anwara Begum.

A day after publication of a report in the daily Prothom Alo, the chief adviser yesterday directed the land secretary to inform him of the details of the leasing in written.

Following the directive, the land ministry started preparing the report which might be submitted to the chief adviser today.

Seeking anonymity an official of the chief adviser's office said the lease would be cancelled if there are no provisions of leasing out canals.

Punitive measures will also be taken against the government officials involved in the leasing process, he said, adding that the final decision would be taken only after receiving the report from the land ministry.

Israel not deterring Jerusalem attackers: Security chiefs

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel's security chiefs said yesterday that more needed to be done to protect Jerusalem from Palestinian attacks as debate raged over a second bulldozer rampage in the Holy City this month.

A Palestinian from occupied east Jerusalem ploughed through a crowded street on Tuesday, wounding 16 people before being shot dead in an apparent copycat attack modelled on a similar rampage this month that killed three people.

There have since been mounting calls for Israel to return to a policy of destroying the family homes of Palestinian attackers, despite a military report that concluded in 2005 that the practice was ineffective.

"Sanctions should be applied against the families of terrorists in cases where it is proved that they collaborated in attacks, or did nothing to stop them," Interior Minister Meir Sheerit told public radio.

"If it is determined that there is a real tendency among Palestinian workers from east Jerusalem to use heavy equipment to perpetrate attacks, then replacements should be found in Israel."

Yuval Diskin, the head of Israel's internal Shin Beth security agency, had ironically told a powerful parliamentary committee hours before Tuesday's attack about the "problem of deterrence" in mostly Arab east Jerusalem, where both bulldozer eruptions lived.

Diskin had been briefing the foreign affairs and defence committee about the July 2 bulldozer attack and a shooting in March, when a lone gunman from east Jerusalem attacked a Jewish semi-

nary and killed eight students.

The YNet news website quoted security officials as saying that what they characterise as "popular attacks," such as stabbings and the throwing of Molotov cocktails, are on the rise.

There have been five major attacks in Jerusalem this year, which claimed the lives of 12 Israelis, and the number of terror-related arrests has risen sharply, according to media reports.

Prior to that, the last major attack in Jerusalem dated back to 2004, when two border policemen were killed in a suicide bombing.

Media quoted officials as saying that during the first six months of 2008, police arrested 71 Palestinians from east Jerusalem, compared with only 37 for all of 2007 and a total of 270 since 2000.

Some 250,000 Palestinians live in east Jerusalem, which was occupied and annexed by Israel in the 1967 war in a move not recognised by the international community.

They are issued with Israeli identity cards, which allow them to circulate freely throughout the country and to work there, as well as enjoy such social benefits as unemployment compensation and family allowances.

After the July 2 attack, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert spoke out in favour of resuming the demolition of the family homes of those that carry out attacks.

During the Palestinian uprising which was unleashed in 2000, Israel systematically destroyed the homes of Palestinians involved in deadly attacks.

But the practice stopped in 2005 after then army chief Lieutenant General Moshe Yaalon said it was not a deterrent.

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The meeting discussed cancellation of the lease of the canal at Ramchandrapur of Mohamadpur in the capital to Dr Anwara Begum.

Truth Commission

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 under process."

On May 25, the Council of Advisers approved the Right to Voluntary Disclosure Ordinance 2008, paving the way for forming the Truth and Accountability Commission.

President Iajuddin Ahmed promulgated the ordinance in early June. On July 6, the Council of Advisers proposed some amendments to the ordinance.

As per the ordinance, the commission will run for five months with three members. The president will appoint one of the three members as chairman of the commission.

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Persons who will make voluntary disclosure will be disqualified

Nato soldier killed in Afghanistan

AFP, London

A British soldier serving with NATO forces in Afghanistan was killed in fighting with insurgents, the Ministry of Defence in London said yesterday.

The soldier, from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers attached to 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, died Tuesday in the Kajaki area of Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan.

The soldier was part of a patrol, which came under fire from insurgents. Two others were injured in the incident but their injuries are not thought to be life-threatening.

"Whilst returning fire, one soldier from 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment was injured by a mine," the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

BDR-BSF

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 and killings on the borders of the two countries. The conference concludes today.

A member of the BSF was reportedly killed in a gunfight with Indian terrorists in the bordering area of Pirojpur village under Shibganj upazila, said BDR sources adding that the BSF is trying to shift the blame on BDR.

BBC Bangla Service however reported a BSF member named Shatrughna of MS Pur under Murshidabad district was killed in BDR firing.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent reported a group of BSF personnel from Shashani camp entered the Bangladesh territory while chasing terrorists. Firings ensued when the BDR challenged the intruders, sparking panic and fear among residents of the area.

Hundreds of cargo vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the borders as cross-border trade and customs and immigration formalities ground to a halt following the firings.

Maj Syed Abu Hassan, commanding officer (CO) of BDR 39 Battalion, declined to comment if there were any casualties.

He however told news agency UNB that at around 6:00am, they first heard the sound of gunfire, presumably by BSF coming from inside India. "At one stage they opened fire on us. We fired a shot in response," he added.

Earlier on Friday, BSF gunned down two BDR personnel on the same border at Raghunathpur village. Both sides are on high alert and have been massing additional troops on the border.

The Bangladesh cattle trader shot dead by BSF on Nimtola border in Chudanga yesterday morning was identified as Rakibul Islam, 30, son of Babur Ali from Sultanpur village in Damurhuda upazila.

Sources in 35 Rifle Battalion said a BSF patrol team of Gede camp in Krishnapur opened fire on the Bangladesh cattle trader at around 5:30am near border pillar 74 as he was returning to Bangladesh from India after buying cattle.

Rakibul died on the spot and the Indian border guards took the dead body inside the Indian territory.

The BDR sent a letter to the BSF protesting the killing and asking to hand over the body to BDR, said Lt Col Sultan, CO of 35 battalion, while speaking with journalists.

The BDR is yet to receive any response from the BSF till filing of this report at 4:30pm, he added.

Our correspondent from Dinajpur reports: BSF yesterday pushed in six Bangla speaking Indian nationals through Tentulia border in Panchagarh.

The Indian nationals were identified as Monwara Begum, 52, wife of M Abdul Zabbar, her daughter Shahida, 15, Kulsum, 15, Moyna, 10, and son Farid, and Salma, 48, wife of M Shajahan.

They said they have been living in Golta village of Rajasthan in India for the last 25 years, but the Indian police had arrested them on July 10 from Rajasthan and handed over to the BSF.

Doctor's wife

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 With the help of Nargis, he took Nazma to the bathroom and cut the tendons of her legs and poured hot water on her face.

Police recovered Nazma's body from the bathroom of the house at Lane-5 in the city's Mirpur section-2 the same day after Tozammel reported that he found his wife dead after returning home.

The police have arrested Tozammel, a senior consultant of the National Institute of Traumatology, Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation (NITOR).

Nargis, the wife of Tozammel's relative Humayun Kabir, told the court that she has been engaged in an extramarital relationship with Tozammel since 2005.

She said Tozammel gave her Nazma's cell phone after the murder and asked her not to tell anyone about it. He also told her that he would cook up a story of robbery to cover up the murder.

Detective Branch of police, which is investigating the case, arrested Nargis on July 17 and seized the cell phone from her.

Nargis told the magistrate that Tozammel killed Nazma after she came to know about the extramarital relationship between her (Nargis) and Tozammel.

UNSC to discuss Thai-Cambodia dispute

AFP, Phreah Vihear

The UN Security Council is expected to discuss a tense military standoff between Cambodia and Thailand this week as more troops amassed along the border, officials said yesterday.

Thailand's ambassador to the UN, Don Pramudwinai, said the Security Council on Thursday would discuss the border dispute that has troops from both countries facing off near the 11th-century Phreah Vihear temple.

"I have been informed that the UN has included Phreah Vihear on the emergency agenda to be discussed at the Security Council meeting tomorrow," he told reporters in Bangkok.

More than 500 Thai troops and at least 1,000 Cambodian soldiers are squaring off over the small patch of land near the temple ruins, but Cambodian officials said yesterday thousands more Thai troops were positioned along the border.

Cambodian cabinet spokesman Phay Siphon estimated about 4,000 Thai troops in total have gathered along the frontier in several areas -- not just near Phreah Vihear.

"They just want to show off their muscle, but we don't care about that. We stick to a peaceful way to solve the problem," Phay Siphon told AFP.

Cambodia has sent heavy weapons to reinforce troops on its northern border in Anlong Veng, where there is also disputed territory, said a military official on condition of anonymity.

"There are more (Thai) troops now at Anlong Veng than there are here (at Phreah Vihear). There are tanks and artillery," said the

Cambodian colonel with close ties to Thai armed forces.

But Thailand denied it was reinforcing the frontier.

"Thailand has not been building up forces along the border," deputy army spokeswoman Colonel Sirichan Ngathong told AFP.

"We maintain the same amount of soldiers, and more than 400 soldiers were sent to the overlapping area."

Cambodia called for the UN to help broker a solution to the standoff after the countries failed to any headway in two days of talks over the disputed land near Phreah Vihear, which legally belongs to Cambodia.

Thailand's chief negotiator to the crisis called Wednesday for leaders of the two nations to meet, saying an existing border committee would not be able to solve the problem.

"At this stage I think it's rather the leaders who must hold a summit as they are the decision makers," armed forces head General Boonsrang Niumprad told reporters, adding that Thai troops had been ordered to remain peaceful.

Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej on Wednesday accused his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen of capitalising on nationalist sentiment ahead of Sunday's general election in Cambodia, saying talks would be "less intense" after the polls.

A spat in 2003 over Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple -- the most significant symbol of the country's ancient Khmer empire -- sparked a night of riots in which Thailand's embassy and several Thai-owned businesses were burned and looted.

A few months ago, the EC drafted proposals to bring amendment to the electoral roll ordinance clearing the way for registering expatriates in the voter list. But the move did not see any progress, the sources added.

A senior official engaged in voter listing yesterday said they knew nothing about listing the Bangladeshi citizens living abroad in the electoral roll.

5 kids die

FROM PAGE 16
 Nipu pushed me up and a local youth rescued me," she recollected the moments in tears. "I cried out for help but none of the witnesses came forward. Only Nipu and the boatman tried to save us," she said.

"Though Nipu knew how to swim he could not save his life. He sacrificed his life to save us," Ajanta added.

Boatman Haroon told reporters the accident occurred as the students started merry-making "desperately", ignoring his repeated requests.