

Another toxic ship

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from the shipping ministry and Department of Environment (DoE).

Contacted, the owner of Kabir Steel however said they will import the ship in January next.

"The government has permitted another company to scrap a Greenpeace listed toxic ship. So, the law should not be different in our case," he said.

In August, the shipping ministry allowed a shipyard - Madina Enterprise -- to scrap an oil tanker it imported, MT Enterprise, black-listed by Greenpeace for containing hazardous substances. Violating a court order, the owner of that ship started dismantling it even without taking clearance from the DoE.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) last month filed a writ petition with the High Court against scrapping of MT Enterprise. The court issued a stay order on scrapping the toxic ship. Despite this, the owner started dismantling it saying he did not get any such court order.

But later, he appealed to the Supreme Court, and it vacated the stay order. So, the owner did not have any bar to scrapping the ship.

The owner of Madina Enterprise and MT Enterprise and others concerned alleged that a section of importers and government offi-

cials pushed the matter into legal tangles for their gains.

Interestingly, shipping ministry's Chief Chemist Dr Md Mosharaf Ashraf had earlier cancelled the NOC (No 08070384, issued on August 13), on grounds of the ship's being on the Greenpeace blacklist.

Sources said 'huge underhand deals' are involved in toxic ship scrapping business.

Dismantling of toxic ships poses serious threats to the fragile coastal marine ecology. No other country but Bangladesh allows this on its land, environmentalists say.

And they are worried that importers will start bringing in more hazardous ships once they can break one such vessel.

Meanwhile, the Basel Convention subjects all import of ships containing hazardous substances and destined for recycling or disposal to have a prior notification with a full inventory of all hazardous substances onboard the ship including PCBs, asbestos, heavy metals, residual fuels and so on.

Until 1970s, a significant number of aging ships ready for retirement was processed in Europe and the US, according to the International Labour Organisation's Workers Safety in Ship-Breaking Industries, published in 2001.

Talks with Hasina

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"That is for the people to decide but frankly I am worried that if the election is postponed, when will it be held?" Moriarty told newsmen when asked for his comments on deferring the polls.

It is important that the polls are held soon and people understand that it is going to be held, he said, adding that he is looking forward to an election held on December 18.

Moriarty said he wanted to know from the AL chief about her party's election preparation. He said Hasina told him that the AL is prepared and looking forward to taking part in the December 18 polls.

As Hasina congratulated the American people on the historic polls, Moriarty said he hopes the same will happen to Bangladesh.

Talking to the media, Syed Asrafur Islam said AL calls upon all political parties to take part in the next polls as scheduled instead of blaming or conspiring against each other. The AL wants the election to be peaceful and free of all sorts of criminal activities, he added.

"Let's participate and accept victory or defeat... Let's build harmony among us," he said, adding that the national polls scheduled for December 18 must be held and there is no alternative to it.

He also said the state of emergency must be lifted to make the

election acceptable to all.

"We want a free and fair election because it is important for the people, for politics and politicians," Ashrafur said, observing that it is the political parties that suffered the most after the January 11, 2007 changeover.

He said, "We believe that the election will be held on December 18 and all the political parties will take part. There should be no doubt about it."

Asked about BNP's demand for deferring the election, the AL leader said they make demands for the sake of making demands but AL believes BNP is preparing for the polls and will participate in the polls.

"We told James F Moriarty that we are committed to uprooting corruption from Bangladesh, establishing the rule of law and good governance. We want to see a prosperous and happy Bangladesh," he told journalists.

Hasina during the meeting said if voted to power, AL would bring the spiralling prices of essentials under control and within the reach of the common people, create fresh employment opportunities and enhance social harmony.

AL leaders Hasan Mahmud, Dipu Moni, Tanjim Ahmed, Sohel Taj, Major Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and Abul Kalam Azad were present during the meeting that took place between 4:30pm and 5:10pm.

BNP steals the show

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seen struggling to manage the welcomers.

The massive gathering of people on the road to Chittagong was a part of the party's strategy to exhibit its popularity and glazing the image of its chief, who had been arrested by the military backed caretaker government on September 3, 2007, implicated in several graft cases, and was released on bail on September 11 this year.

Additional law enforcers deployed at some points of the highway including at Jatrabari and Padua Bazar had to struggle to control the crowd desperately trying to have a glimpse of one of the two most prominent political leaders of the country.

Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, ASM Hannan Shah, Selima Rahman, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and other senior BNP leaders accompanied Khaleda.

Some other party leaders seeking nominations for the December 18 parliamentary election joined the motorcade with their supporters at different junctions.

Donning colourful headbands and holding equally colourful banners, festoon and placards supporters of the BNP chief tailed her from Dhaka to Chittagong blaring horns while hundreds others lined both sides of the highway at different points.

Traffic on some local roads connected to the highway clogged when the motorcade reached the areas.

A grand reception was accorded to the BNP chairperson at the port city by thousands of party leaders, activists and supporters.

A sea of people, gathered on Laidighi Maidan for the anticipated appearance of Khaleda Zia in the rally, broke out into a thunderous applause, singing and chanting slogans when their leader in her usual outfit of a sari and sunglasses got on the stage around 4:00pm.

Flanked by her senior party colleagues, Khaleda waved to the crowd who gathered there from all over Chittagong Division.

Traffic in the entire area around the rally venue came to a stand still, as the ralliers spilled over on to the streets from the vast field.

Several groups of honking motorcyclists had been disrupting traffic on the city streets since morning as it turned into a city of processions and slogans.

On the occasion of the BNP chief's arrival in Chittagong yesterday, the sufferings of commuters however knew no bound as traffic jams clogged all city arteries including the at Anderkilla, KC Dey Road, Jail Road, Boxir Hat, Terry Bazar, Court Building, Kotwali Intersection, New Market, Patharghata, Momin Road, Loyal Road and Sirajuddowla Road.

On Fridays, Chittagong is usually very quiet as most of its residents are usually busy attending family events on the weekly holiday.

But yesterday, the scenario was very different, as along with party supporters people from all walks of life thronged Laidighi Maidan in their thousands to witness the first major political showdown ahead of the parliamentary election by one of the two major political parties after a break of almost two years since the declaration of the state of emergency in January last year.

Grassroots level leaders, activists and supporters of BNP poured into the main venue with processions from every nook and cranny of the city, and from the rural areas.

They came on charter buses, trucks, human haulers, and minivans carrying banners, festoons, and placards while beating on drums non-stop.

The outburst of emotion among the supporters of BNP and its chief made one feel as if they had been holding their breath for such a day since the events of 1/11.

Polls rules

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cantonment executive officers (CEO) of Dhaka and Chittagong took part in the workshop.

Kabir said all matters relating to the upcoming parliamentary and upazila elections were discussed at the workshop.

About the loan and bill defaulters, the EC secretary said they will be eligible to contest the election only if they (defaulters) have the clearance showing payment of loans and bills for the last three months from the date of filing nomination papers.

Badruddoza

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generation has been quite inadequate.

Negating any possibility of an alliance between BDP and BNP he said, "BNP has been derailed from its original ideology."

Talking about bringing changes to the nation's political culture, he said any qualitative change will remain a far cry as long as politicians do not learn to hate corruption and terrorism, and start embracing politics of responsibility.

Badruddoza, the country's 15th president, spoke in favour of increasing the power of the president.

"For that, I suggested establishing a separate secretariat for the president, which will be free of the prime minister's interference."

No decision yet

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demand for immediate cessation of its oil and gas exploration off the western Rakhine coast. Terming the demand "unlawful" and "wrongful," Myanmar government stated that the operations would continue.

Foreign Secretary Toudid Hossain reiterated that the area falls in Bangladesh's territory and expressed hope that those working at the site will leave. "We have received indications to this effect," he added.

On Thursday, Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury said Daewoo initiated the process of dismantling the installation in the disputed waters of the Bay of Bengal and that the foreign ministry received a letter from Daewoo in this regard.

The Myanmarese ships started the exploration activities on Saturday ignoring Bangladesh Navy's warnings that they were intruding into Bangladesh waters. The area is well within Bangladesh's maritime territory and marked as deep-sea blocks 8-13.

Dhaka officially lodged a protest with the Myanmar ambassador on Sunday. Myanmar protested back to the Bangladeshi ambassador to that country the same day.

Besides requesting South Korean government to ask Daewoo to stop its activities, Dhaka also requested Myanmar's closest ally China to ask Myanmar to quit Bangladesh waters until the maritime boundary is demarcated as per UN guidelines.

In 2005, Myanmar awarded rights of exploration in the area to Daewoo, which conducted the initial feasibility studies in 2007. Bangladesh's protest came after Daewoo began formal exploration in the area in September.

BJSa deadline

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They appreciated the government's decision to withdraw administration-cadre officials Hedayetullah Al Mamun and Humayun Kabir from the posts of additional secretary and joint secretary of the law ministry.

They called for appointing officials from the judiciary to the two senior posts.

Dhaka District Judge AKM Ishtiaq Husain chaired the meeting. Judicial officials from different districts attended the meeting.

2 of 11 doctors

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November 6 asked the 11 doctors, including Prof Alauddin and Prof Gopal, and BSMU Registrar Muhammad Abdul Gafur to appear in the office of its registrar on November 9 in connection with the skewed medical document.

Prof Gopal told The Daily Star that he had never been on any medical board formed for Falu and had nothing to do with any recommendation for him.

It was not possible to contact Prof Alauddin. He is now abroad.

The other doctors who were asked to report to the SC registrar are Prof Serajuddin Ahmed, chairman of orthopaedic surgery department, Prof AKM Fazlul Haque, chairman of colorectal surgery department, Prof AKM Anisul Haque, neurology department chairman, Prof AKM Anwar Ullah of neurology department, Dr ABM Abdullah, associate professor of medicine, Dr M Idris Ali, associate professor of spinal surgery, Dr Md Jonayed Shafiq, associate professor of anaesthesia, and Dr Chowdhury Meshkat Ahmed, associate professor of cardiology.

Iran leader offers Obama landmark congratulations

AP, Tehran

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Thursday congratulated Barack Obama on his election win the first time an Iranian leader has offered such wishes to a US president-elect since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

An analyst said Ahmadinejad's message was a gesture from the hard-line president that he is open to some sort of reconciliation with the US.

Obama has said he is willing to hold direct diplomacy with Iranian leaders as a way to break the impasse between the two countries or give the US more credibility to press for tougher sanctions if talks fail. His policy marks a departure from the Bush administration, which has refused high-level engagements with Iran.

Ahmadinejad congratulated the Democrat on "attracting the majority of voters in the election," according to excerpts carried by the official IRNA news agency.

The Iranian leader also said he hopes Obama will "use the opportunity to serve the (American) people and leave a good name for history" during his term in office.

Iran and US have no formal diplomatic relations since 1979 and the hostage drama when militant Iranian students held 52 Americans captive 444 days.

Current US-Iranian relations

remain tense, with Washington accusing Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons and of providing support for Shia militants who are killing US soldiers in Iraq charges Iran denies.

In Jerusalem, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, a contender for prime minister in her country's elections, warned against any dialogue with Iran a first sign of Israeli disagreement with the incoming US administration.

3 of a family killed in road accident

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Three members of a family were killed and ten others injured when a bus hit the pedestrians at Navaran on the Jessore-Benapole highway yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Javed Ali, 60, his wife Rahela Khatun, 52 and grandson Rahul, 5, of east Burujigan village under Navaran upazila.

Javed and Rahela died on the spot while Rahul on way to hospital. The injured are undergoing treatment at different hospitals and clinic.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at noon as the driver of the Benapole-bound bus from Jessore lost his control over the steering.

Certificate trade

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against those colleges. For this purpose, a committee comprising top officials of the education ministry will be formed very soon," said the adviser.

It is widely alleged that most of the time the private TT colleges remain closed. During a visit to a large number of such institutions in and around the capital, it was found that the rooms were dark and dusty and most of the pieces of furniture were broken.

It could be easily realised that most of the rooms were not used for long and the colleges were unfit to offer BEd degree.

A committee led by Education Joint Secretary Shafiqullah investigated the activities of TT colleges from May 2006 to March 2007 and found a lot of irregularities. The committee has categorised the colleges in four groups examining the education quality in BEd and MEd courses.

The categories are red, grey, yellow and green. Red indicates the worst situation, grey represents poor condition, yellow medium quality and green refers to well performing TT colleges.

Seven colleges have been marked red, 33 grey, another 33 yellow, while only five private and 14 public colleges earned green.

The committee recommended that the National University cancel the red-marked institutions -- College of Education in Jhalakathi, Patuakhali Teachers Training College, Dakkhinbanga Teachers Training College in Patuakhali, Dakkhinbanga Teachers Training College in Moukan in Patuakhali, College of Education in Barisal, Pirojpur Teachers Training College and College of Education in Comilla.

Sources in the education ministry say six private universities also provide BEd degree and their quality is tremendously low. The universities are Eastern University, Shanta Mariam University, Asian

Allow convicts

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It also demeaned that the fresh local body poll schedule be announced after the nation election. Ashraf observed that both the national and local body elections could be foiled if the two polls are held in a close time gap.

The last date for submission of nomination forms for both polls is November 13.

The ALCWC meeting also demanded the Election Commission to give copy voter list with photograph to the polling agent.

The dismissal of any party unit committee dissolved between January 11 and the day of resumption of indoor politics would be treated as illegal and the committee would function legally, the meeting decided.

Extortionist

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storeroom on Thursday night and was found dead in the morning.

Police suspect involvement of the other employee in the killing, as he remained missing since morning.

Shop owner Solaiman told police that Ershad had been working in the shop for the last four years.

S Africa

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Kallis went for a big slog-sweep against Nayeem Islam only to be left shaking his head in dismay after Tamim dived backwards to pluck the ball out of thin air.

In front of a cheering crowd the South Africans lost wickets in regular interval after a huge mess-up saw Hashim Amla falling victim of run out to put end the impressive 56-run opening partnership.

Amla made 35 off 34 balls that contained six sweetly-timed boundaries.

Left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan gave another quick breakthrough when Justin Ontong went for the big haul over long-off but to no benefit rather hitting it straight down the throat of Abdur Razzak. Ontong scored 27.

Bangladesh took control after the dismissal of Kallis as the scoreboard was reading on 165-4 after de Villiers, who looked to ease the pressure by hitting big, holed out on the deep mid-wicket fence when Imrul Kayes took a good low catch off Nayeem Islam. The innings of Villiers, who added 35, could have been finished early if wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim hadn't dropped him off Syed Raseel when he was on seven.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza then removed danger man Mark Boucher through another excellent catch by Naeem Islam after Boucher flicked the ball away only to find mid-wicket for eight.

South Africa however blasted off towards the end by scoring 89 runs in the last ten overs thanks to Louw's 7-ball 23 that saw three huge sixes and a boundary while captain Johan Botha smashed a 17-ball 23 with the help of five boundaries.

Nayeem Islam captured three wickets for 60 runs in his share of ten overs while Shakib took two for 48 runs.

BNP undecided

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Jote (Aminee) are pressing the party hard for a decision in favour of polls participation, some of its [BNP] top leaders appear hell-bent on boycotting the election.

They say the party must not join the parliamentary race if its detained and convicted leaders are not allowed to contest.

Addressing a public gathering in Chittagong yesterday, Khaleda alleged the government has failed to create a level playing field.

The former prime minister however did not drop any hints about their next course of action.

On condition of anonymity, a former BNP lawmaker yesterday told The Daily Star, "It would not be wise to boycott the election as people want to get out of the current situation through a free and fair election."

AL nomination

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Meanwhile, nomination seekers of AL bought around 2500 nomination forms at Tk 7500 each until yesterday.

Senior AL leaders, including AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak and Matia Chowdhury bought nomination forms yesterday.

Amir Hossain Amu bought two forms against Jhalakathi-1 and Jhalakathi-2 constituencies, while Abdur Razzak bought two forms against Shariatpur-1 and Shariatpur-3 constituencies.

Matia Chowdhury bought form for Sherpur-2 constituency, while AL advisory council member HT Imam bought nomination form for Sirajganj-4 constituency.

AL sold around 300 forms to leaders of Dhaka Division, 60 forms to leaders of Chittagong Division, 45 forms to leaders of Khulna Division, 70 forms to leaders of Rajshahi Division, 40 forms to leaders of Barisal Division and 12 forms to leaders of Sylhet Division.

BNP observes

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placed a wreath at the grave of the late president and founder of BNP.

In the afternoon, she addressed a rally in Chittagong to mark the day.

Leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations visited the grave of Zia and offered prayers and placed wreaths.

The BNP front organisations and affiliated socio-cultural bodies organised discussions, seminars, milad mahfil, Qurankhawni, video shows and cultural functions on the occasion.

On November 28 last year, the present caretaker government scrapped November 7 as a public holiday. It had been a public holiday since 1976 until the Awami League government cancelled it in 1996. After coming to power in 2001, the BNP-led four-party alliance government re-instated the day's previous status.

The JSD organised a discussion at the Taher Auditorium in the capital. The 1975 Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee held a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday to observe the day as "civil-military upsurge day".

US missile strike

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in to the foreign ministry to hear the dissatisfaction of Pakistani officials.

Pakistan's national security adviser also reportedly made a personal protest to White House officials in Washington after a strike in September that claimed the lives of civilians.

Official sources, however, admit privately that successful US strikes benefit Pakistan's military efforts to eliminate foreign militants on its soil.

Last weekend, two separate strikes in the North Waziristan and South Waziristan areas killed at least 32 mainly al-Qaeda operatives, according to Pakistani security sources.

One just outside the North Waziristan town of Mir Ali killed an Egyptian al-Qaeda operative, Abu Jihad Al-Misri, described by the United States as the terror network's propaganda chief.

Pakistan is waiting to see how US president-elect Barack Obama will tackle militancy in Pakistan and Afghanistan once he takes office in January.

The Democratic senator from Illinois has said he favours continuing the strikes and increasing the number of US troops to crush an insurgency by Taliban and other militants in Afghanistan.

Pakistan rejects accusations that it is not doing enough to tackle the extremist threat within its own borders.

Last month the military said that some 1,500 rebels and 73 soldiers had died since an operation began in August against militants in the semi-autonomous Bajaur region of north west Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

In fresh attacks at least 16 militants were killed Friday as Pakistani forces bombarded several suspected Taliban hideouts in a restive

Saifur

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constituency," the former minister said replying to a query.

When asked about the party's internal feuds in Sylhet and elsewhere, he said necessary steps have already been taken to end intra-party squabbling.

He said his party might have to field new candidates in about 60 constituencies as many former BNP lawmakers had been jailed.

The former finance minister left Sylhet for the capital in the evening.

Saifur has long been in dispute with Sylhet district BNP convener and former lawmaker M Ilyas Ali.

Edible oil

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Bazar, Shyambazar and Jatrabari-- but prices of those vegetables are still quite high.

Bean, a popular vegetable of winter-season, was selling at Tk 35 to Tk 50 in different city markets yesterday whereas potato of the current season at Tk 60. Cabbage and cauliflower were sold at Tk 15 to 30 per piece.

Obama, world leaders

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10-minute telephone conversation with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso, their spokesmen said.

Aso also raised Afghanistan, climate change and North Korea, the Japanese foreign ministry said.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon and the US president-elect discussed immigration and drug smuggling on the restive southern border, the Mexican foreign ministry.

Most of the world leaders will attend the emergency summit on the economic crisis in Washington on November 15, but Obama has not yet announced whether he will take a role in the event.

Even some of the US's traditional arch foes have welcomed Obama's election such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who issued a message of congratulation on Thursday.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, branded a dictator by Bush after staging a one-man election in June, also extended an olive branch to Obama Friday by saying he "cherish(ed) the hope of working with your administration".

Obama was to convene his economic advisers on Friday before his first press conference (at 1930 GMT) since his triumph in Tuesday's election against Republican John McCain.

Several names mentioned as potential Treasury overseers to command a 700-billion-dollar bank bailout were to attend the meeting, including former treasury secretary Larry Summers, ex-Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker and Laura Tyson, chairwoman of the National Economic Council under President Bill Clinton.