

Khaleda asked

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five reasons for requesting Khaleda to return the house to the military estate officer.

Firstly, there is no way to sell, lease out or hand over a military property inside cantonment area to a civilian, according to the Military Services Regulation. Neither the government nor the president, or any other authority, has the right to do so. So the proposal and all activities regarding the leasing out of the land on July 10, 1981 were illegal.

Secondly, military properties can be abandoned but the land was not abandoned for Khaleda Zia.

Thirdly, considering public interest any property of a cantonment can be auctioned to a person, according to the Cantonment Administration Rules. But the provision of public interest was not considered and there is no scope for such consideration.

Besides, it is illegal to conduct political activities inside the protected area of a cantonment. This is also a threat to military discipline, safety and security of defence establishments, the notice mentioned.

Lastly, the army cannot lease out any military land to a person, according to the Cantonment Act.

Earlier in the evening, Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah, adviser to the BNP chief, told The Daily Star, "Asking her to leave the house within 15 days is a violation of the Cantonment Act."

The former prime minister's counsels Rafiqul Islam Miah and Mahbub Uddin Khokon said they will soon file a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the notice.

Caretaker of the house, Mohammad Yunus, received the official letter from cantonment officials at around 4:00pm and later handed it to Khaleda, who has been living there with her family for around three decades.

On April 7, the government cancelled the allotment citing a number of 'anomalies in the way the house was allotted'.

The decision came at a cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina.

A week before that, Hasina told parliament that the BNP chief was given the Shaheed Mainul Road house 'bypassing the rules of the Cantonment Board'.

She urged her to leave the house of her own accord so that a block of flats could be built for the families of the army officials killed in the BDR carnage on February 25.

Quarter Master General Lt Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury was asked to take necessary measures to implement the cabinet's decision.

That an individual cannot be allotted two government houses was the rationale mentioned for cancelling the allotment.

Highly placed sources in the administration however told The Daily Star that Khaleda's activities and remarks following the bloodbath at BDR Pilkhana headquarters were the reasons behind the cancellation.

According to some ministers, the cabinet in 1981 did not allot her the Mainul Road house; it rather gave her one on a 1.5 bigha land in Gulshan the following year.

As the cantonment authorities cannot allot anyone a house, the allotment of the house in BNP chairperson's favour was illegal, they argued.

Khaleda, widow of late president Ziaur Rahman, has been renting out the Gulshan house since its allocation in 1982.

AL lawmaker and former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru in parliament said the 99-year lease on the cantonment house is subject to a number of conditions including restrictions on political activities there.

"But Khaleda has violated the stipulations by carrying out political activities from that house and allowing Dandy Dyeing to set up an office," he reasoned.

Khasru wanted to know if the government would cancel the allotment for a breach of the lease.

In reply, Hasina said her government would soon take a decision about it.

5 hurt in bomb explosion in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people sustained injuries as a bomb exploded in front of a fruit shop near a police check post in Mirpur last night.

Injured Rana, 22, Nasir, 32, Sajid, 28, and Alam, 30, were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Ali Akbar, 60, was rushed to a local hospital.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Zakir Hossain Mullah of Shah Ali Police Station told The Daily Star that a bomb exploded in front of Ali Akbar's roadside fruit shop near the police check post on Dhaka Zoo Lane at Rainkhola around 9:15pm.

He said an unidentified man apparently abandoned the bomb in a bag. At the time of the explosion two petrol cars of Rapid action Battalion (Rab) were parked on both sides of the shop, he added.

Quoting Akbar, the OC said when Akbar attempted to put the abandoned bag aside it exploded.

However, the OC could not ascertain the target of the criminal.

Following the incident, members of different law enforcement agencies rushed to the scene.

None was arrested in this connection, police said.

JMB suspects

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Sadar Police Station.

Later, they were arrested there under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code and produced before a local court, which placed them on a five-day remand each.

The arrestees are Abdus Salam, 25, of Daspara in Modhupur of Tangail, Mizanur Rahman, 21, of Gopinathpur in Sarishabari of Jamalpur, Mohammad Zakaria, 28, of Krishnapur in Nalitabari of Sherpur, his wife Rabeya Begum, 23, Tareque Mostafa Masum, 29, of Moghbazar in Dhaka, and his wife Syeda Halima Yasmeen.

They had rented the ground floor of the three-storey house at Munshipara around one and a half months ago.

Contacted last night, Officer-in-Charge of Jamalpur Police Station Abdul Matin said that during primary interrogation, the arrestees said they are followers of Prof Abdul Majid of Charfasiyan upazila in Bhola.

"We are checking whether the detainees are involved with JMB or any other militant organisation," he said.

Our Correspondent reports from Barisal: Three separate letters in Bangla signed as JMB reached Unicef, International Federation of Red Cross and World Food Programme Barisal offices by post yesterday afternoon.

Assistant Commissioner of Barisal Metropolitan Police Hayatul Islam told The Daily Star that the officials of the organisations submitted copies of the letters to police. Visiting the offices, police have increased the surveillance activities in the areas, he added.

The sender of the hand written letters had threatened to kill the chiefs of the organisations if they didn't stop their operations and quit Bangladesh immediately, said Hayatul.

He further said police are preparing to lodge a general diary and take special security measures in this connection.

Chennai thrash

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scene recently at the age of 37, struck a sizzling 65 at Saint George's Park in this southern coastal city before being run out by Rahul Dravid.

The departure of Hayden just one ball after fellow opener Parthiv Patel was out for 30 did slow a Chennai charge that saw them dash to 106-0 after 10 overs, but they finished on 179-5 to set Royals a challenging target.

Enter Sri Lanka wizard Muralitharan to cause havoc and snap up three wickets, including the prized one of former England captain Kevin Pietersen for a duck, and all the damage was inflicted at the expense of just 11 runs.

Bangalore were in trouble from the start, losing opener Praveen Kumar in the third ball of the innings and quickly fell behind the nine-run-an-over victory target.

South African Jacques Kallis made a quick 24 before becoming the next Chennai victim and by the 'strategy break' the Challengers needed a miracle as they languished at 56-5 with 10 overs completed.

There was no miraculous turnaround, only more Chennai wickets on the same track that produced a bucketful of runs when South Africa trumped Australia in an ODI clash last week.

Kallis finished as top scorer and opener Robin Uthappa and Dravid contributed 20 runs each as Bangalore slipped from top spot after the opening round to fifth while 2008 runners-up Chennai climbed two places to third.

Wari-Bateshwar

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Janapada or Mahajanapada, but it requires further research to determine the name of the Mahajanapada," he adds.

Discovery of a brick-built "unique structure" inside the fort city confirmed last year that urbanisation flourished there around 2,500 years ago and reached its excellence.

Last year's discovery of silver punch-marked coins of the pre-Mauryan period dating back to 600 BC to 400 BC also indicates that the place was a Janapada or Mahajanapada.

The archaeologists are excavating in three sites to trace the ancient settlement. The sites are Rangartek, a site one kilometre off the fort city, Algartek, two-km off the fort city, and Kamrabo, four-km off the fort city, which were among the 48 sites identified by the archaeologists.

The discoveries that confirm timeframe of the settlements contemporary to the fort city are northern black polished ware (BNPW), Knobbed Ware, Metal artefacts, semi-precious stone beads and brick, which were also discovered inside the fort city.

These discoveries were made both in Rangartek and Algartek, while a perfectly square brick-built 35 square feet structure was partially unearthed in Kamrabo, which is identical to the modern age architecture in its foundation style.

Though timeframe of the brick-built structure couldn't be confirmed immediately, the large size of the bricks and one-metre wide wall confirm the structure at least dates back to pre-medieval period (it may go back to early historic period), archaeologists say.

What fascinates the archaeologists about the perfect square is positioning of the structure and the planned landscape, on which the structure is situated. Excavators say the structure is situated on the top back of the turtle-shaped landscape.

Situation of the structure at such a magnificent place indicates the structure might be used for special purposes by the ancient people, while the landscape indicates professional excellence of urban planners and architects, interpret the archaeologists with reference to the Indian archaeological literature.

Archaeological literature in the Indian subcontinent suggests that the structures built in such a special place in such a planned landscape might have been used for religious purpose.

The discovered foundation of the brick-built structure has so far been found multi-layered, one step supported by another. The archaeologists say they have unearthed three steps of walls with foundation always being wider than the wall, which is identical to modern day style.

Existence of satellite settlements indicates that other classes like farmers, labourers and artisans used to live outside and support the city life.

BRICK-BUILT UNIQUE STRUCTURE
The brick-built structure discovered inside Wari-Bateshwar measuring 32ft by 18ft is called "unique" as literature on archaeology does not have reference to any such structure, the excavators claim.

"The structure can be considered as an inverted house without any opening -- windows or doors -- surrounded by 12ft high walls," the excavators explain as the The Daily Star correspondent makes a visit there.

A part of the structure was first discovered in 2007-2008 and was unearthed fully this year.

The excavators believe archaeologists, architects and enthusiasts from home and abroad would soon crowd the site as the structure is "unique" in nature.

"The site should be constructed as a permanent onsite museum with suggestions from conservation and civil engineering experts. So adequate fund is required to turn the site into an onsite museum," comments Prof Rahman.

"This is a peculiar structure constructed in a specialised style and it's a wonder how a 12-foot wall could be standing this way," he adds.

WARI-BATESHWAR DISCOVERED SO FAR

The discovery of coins last year provides substantial and significant information about a well-established urban civilisation as part of the second urbanisation on the context of Indian subcontinent in Wari-Bateshwar.

Existence of a large number of coins discovered there also suggests trade, a money-based economy system and administration besides bearing sociocultural and sociopolitical condition prevalent at that time, archaeologists explain.

Studies also reveal punch-mark symbols found on the faces of the silver coins are distinctive in symbols, shapes and forms. This reveals that the Mahajanapada was a distinctive one in addition to the 16 Mahajanapadas so far unearthed in the subcontinent by archaeologists and described in the Jain and Buddhist literature.

The discovery of Rouletted Ware (RW), Knobbed Ware, sandwich glass beads and other artefacts indicates that the place had relations and trade with the Mediterranean and Southeast Asian regions, the archaeologists believe.

Meanwhile, archaeological studies on semi-precious stone beads and other artefacts discovered in Wari-Bateshwar indicate people of this land had a rich history of craftsmanship as old as around 2,500 years.

Local admin

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The Ministry of Establishment yesterday issued an official order to all DCs to monitor these three matters and report to the government monthly, reported private television channel, Desh TV.

In the directive, all district administrations were asked to report to the government about their progress within the first 10 days of every month. An additional secretary to the ministry will monitor their reports.

The secretary to the ministry told Desh TV that corruption would be greatly reduced if accountability could be ensured at all spheres of the administration. The move was made to make people aware of corruption at district and upazila levels, the secretary added.

The secretary said quality of education should be ensured at primary and high school levels as schools create human resources. The DCs have been asked to monitor them, he added.

Involving local government representatives and representatives from government offices and non-government organisations, the district administration was also asked to launch a combined initiative to ensure services for all people.

Body formed

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The five-member search body, led by judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court Abdul Matin, will recommend the names of two competent individuals to President Zillur Rahman for appointment to the vacant post. The president will choose one.

Four other members of the body are Sayed Mahmud Hossain, judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, Comptroller and Auditor General Ahmed Aul Hakim, Public Service Commission Chairman Saadat Hussain and former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder.

The cabinet division on Thursday issued a circular on the formation of the body. As per a provision of the ACC Act, the new commissioner must be appointed by May 2.

Mashud resigned on April 3, 85 days after the Awami League-led grand alliance assumed power, disengaging himself from the challenging task he took to fight corruption during the caretaker government's rule.

Following the resignation, commissioner Habibul Rahman was made acting chief of the anti-graft body, which has been accused of contempt of Parliament as the two incumbent commissioners refused to appear before the Committee on Public Undertakings on April 12 with necessary documents.

The parliamentary body will hold a joint meeting early June with the parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry to discuss the issue of ACC that questioned the jurisdiction of parliament to examine its functions.

The Committee on Public Undertakings asked the ACC to explain, before May 26, the reasons for the commissioners' absence at the April-12 meeting.

Appointment

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Declining to give the names of these masterminds, he said they are 'known to all'.

Qamrul said the government has enough documents and evidence on the war crimes. Trial of war criminals is a very difficult and complicated process, he noted.

Replying to a query, the state minister said there is no pressure on the government from any country regarding trial of the war criminals.

On the cases filed against many of the war criminals across the country, he said those will not be linked to investigation of the war crimes.

NSI officer

FROM PAGE 16
offloading and transporting the firearms and ammunition seized at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd jetty on April 02, 2004.

A team of investigators quizzed the NSI field officer at Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday arrested 62 more BDR members from the Pilkhana headquarters while two more persons, including a civilian, confessed to their involvement in the mutiny before the magistrates.

An assistant superintendent of police (ASP), who is a CID official and investigator in the case, said they arrested the 62 BDR jawans after verifying the video footages and other information from various sources.

With yesterday's arrests, the investigators have so far arrested 1,099 persons, including 20 civilians.

Our court correspondent said civilian Ibrahim Khalil and sepoy Mohammad Obaidullah confessed to their involvement in the BDR carnage before the magistrates. A total of 39 persons have so far confessed to their involvement.

20 killed as Pak troops raid militant hideouts

AFP, AP, Peshawar/ Dera Ismail Khan

Pakistan helicopter gunships raided suspected militant hideouts near the Afghan border killing 20 insurgents and destroying their positions, a military official said yesterday.

"The operation was launched on Sunday and at least four militants' positions have been destroyed so far," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to media.

There was no independent confirmation of the death toll.

The ground and air assault on militant bases near Giljo in the semi-autonomous tribal district of Orakzai comes after a suicide attack in the nearby town of Hangu killed more than 20 security personnel on Saturday.

Officials in the area had put the death toll at 12 late Sunday. They said the air assault targeted hills where Taliban militants are hunkered down.

Residents said helicopter shelling continued early Monday.

Earlier Pakistani security forces shelling Taliban attackers in a militant stronghold

RMG workers

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Ashu Miah killing him on the spot while he was on his way to the factory around 8:00am.

Soon after his death, the garments workers gathered on the highway and set a truck on fire.

The firemen of Gazipur Fire Station tried to douse fire but fell victim as the workers hurled bricks at them.

The agitating garment workers also engaged in a clash with the law-enforcers injuring four fire fighters and six pedestrians. Firemen Abu Zafar (35), Shamsul Haq (32), Kamrul Hasan (38) and Dipak Kumar Dey (35) were injured in the clash.

On information a huge number of law enforcing personnel reached the scene. At one stage, police charged truncheon on the workers to disperse them.

Meanwhile, the sweater factory authorities announced a one-day holiday under the circumstances.

Sub-Inspector Nazmul Islam Khan said a case was filed with the Joydevpur Police Station in this connection.

Lanka gives

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Showing AFP aerial video from a military spy plane over the tiny area where the Tigers are staging a last stand, Rajapakse said 35,000 non-combatants had crossed the lines into government-held territory within a five-hour period.

The military said the surge of civilians had continued 10 hours after the initial exodus of men, women and children. "The footage clearly shows that the people are defying the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and escaping. They are running to safety," the president said.

"What we are doing is not a military operation, but the world's biggest hostage rescue,"

Edible oil prices

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the local market of edible oil stable.

But the minister did not say instantly when and how the TCB would import the edible oil to sell it in the local market.

He said the current stock of edible oil is enough to feed the local market as 70,000 tonnes of edible oil is waiting for unloading at Chittagong Port while another 30,000 tonnes being imported is in the pipeline.

MA Rouf Chowdhury, the BEOR president, told The Daily Star that the prices of the oil have been fixed after analysing its current international price.

He hoped that edible oil at this fixed rate would be available for at least four weeks supplied from the existing stock, imported earlier.

He said they did not discuss bottled edible oil at the meeting.

Rouf said the minister assured the edible oil importers and refiners of removing different barriers to its import as well as slashing duty and VAT.

US favours

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issues facing Bangladesh," said a spokesman for the embassy when the US government's reaction was sought.

"We hope that the government and the opposition will work together for the common good of the country," the spokesman added.

Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia was yesterday asked to vacate her Dhaka Cantonment house within 15 days. The Directorate of Military Lands and Cantonments issued the notice.

near the Afghan border killed at least three civilians, officials said Monday.

The overnight clashes occurred in the vicinity of Wana, the main town in the South Waziristan tribal region. A Taliban compound in the same area was targeted by a US missile strike on Sunday that a government official said killed three people.

The target of the attack was an area controlled by a top Taliban commander, Hakimullah Mehsud, who claimed Saturday's suicide attack, they said.

Pakistan Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud's deputy, Hakimullah, said the assault was carried out to avenge US missile strikes by drone aircraft.

BCL men

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1:00pm, damaging furniture, windowpanes of the building and flowerpots.

Police later brought the situation under control.

Campus sources said three MS Thesis Defence examinees Tuel, Saiful and Ovi -- all BCL activists -- beat up another examinee Al-Amin earlier in the morning to prevent him from appearing for the exams.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mahbubur Rahman of Tejgaon Police Station told The Daily Star that following the violence, police along with university authorities conducted a raid in three student dormitories of the university and recovered several hockey sticks used during the violence.

They also detained two BCL activists, Arun Chandra Roy and Zulfikar Ali, from Sher-e-Bangla Hall in this connection. The raid lasted for about three hours, ending at around 4:30pm.

Proctor Sekandar Ali of the university told The Daily Star that Tuel, Saiful and Ovi, declaring themselves as belong to the 'ruling party' had been creating disturbance on the campus for the last couple of days and demanding the postponement of the exams.

He claimed that the BCL activists wanted the exams to be postponed so that they could linger their studentship to continue their 'student politics' on the campus.

The proctor said that the university would be taking punitive actions against them and would also be filing a case against these students.

The police, however, were not able to arrest the three men.

AUG 21 CASE

One more witness gives deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday gave his statement before a Dhaka court saying he learnt from newspapers that the grenades hurled on an Awami League (AL) rally on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004 were targeted at AL chief Sheikh Hasina to kill her.

Constable Azizur Rahman, a protection guard, said this while giving his deposition in connection with the August 21, 2004 grenade attack cases.

Judge Mohammad Masdar Hossain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 recorded the statements of Azizur Rahman and two others -- Abdul Mannan and Abul Gaffar. Later they were cross-examined by defence lawyers.

The court then fixed tomorrow for the next hearing and summoned several witnesses to appear before it.

In his statement, Aziz told the court that he was Sheikh Hasina's protection guard on the day of incident at Bangabandhu Avenue. At around 5:00pm on the day, Hasina gave a speech on the crisis prevailing in the country. Several grenades exploded just as Hasina was about to complete her speech with the slogans 'Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu', at about 5:40pm.

Along with other protection guards and several AL leaders, I climbed up on the dais to protect her," Aziz said, adding that several grenades exploded at the time.

Aziz said he fired three blank shots on security grounds at the time. Later he located havildar Abu Bakar injured as well and helped carry him to the car in which they quit the scene along with Hasina.

Several unidentified people threw bricks on the car in front of the GPO crossing, he said.

The witness further said that he was injured with splinters and the loud explosions at the time also damaged his hearing ability. He was later admitted to Razarbagh Police Lines Hospital for treatment and here he came to learn from newspapers that Hasina had been the target of the attack.

Sircar drew Tk 5.5 lakh

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"What he has done is moral turpitude because he could get maximum Tk 1.5 lakh to that end as minister status as per the Speakers and Deputy Speakers Remuneration and Privilege Act, 1974," Badal added.

"He [Sircar] committed a major crime by taking this amount of money violating the laws and the committee considers this as a major moral turpitude," Badal continued.

Mentioning the undertaking of Sircar through which he took the money, sub-committee chief Shajahan Khan said, "In the note he [Sircar] said he wants to know how much money he is supposed to get for decoration but also instructed the officials to purchase decoration items as required and promised not to spend more than that."

"It's so unfortunate that he [Sircar] gave notes to know the amount of money he was entitled to receive and in the same note he gave the approval for receiving Tk 12.26 lakh for decorating the residence on Bailey Road," Shajahan Khan added.

He said they have summoned the contractor, who was involved in beautification and arboriculture project of parliament worth Tk 1 crore.

Shajahan said Sircar spent Tk 7.24 lakh on entertainment purpose in 2004-05, Tk 2.5 lakh in 2005-06, and Tk 5.51 lakh in 2006-07 (in three months).

PM meets Zillur

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assuming the office as prime minister on January 6, UNB reports.

She will perform umrah during her visit.

She also apprised the president about various decisions and steps taken by the government and informed him that her government has already achieved success in reducing the prices of essentials within a short time.

She also enquired about the president's recent medical check up at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore last week.

President Zillur expressed satisfaction over the government's success in different sectors, especially in controlling the prices of essentials.

High officials of Bangabhaban and the Prime Minister's Office were present on the occasion.