

Lawyers still hope Suu Kyi to be 'freed unconditionally'

AFP, Yangon

Lawyers for Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi said Sunday they still hoped she would be "freed unconditionally", despite widespread fears of a guilty verdict in her prolonged prison trial.

The Nobel peace laureate faces up to five years in jail if convicted on charges of breaching the terms of her house arrest following an incident in which an American man swam across a lake to her heavily-secured villa in May.

The two-and-a-half month trial has provoked international outrage and critics have accused Myanmar's junta of using the intrusion as an excuse to keep her locked up during elections scheduled for 2010.

A verdict had been expected on Friday but judges postponed their pronouncement

until August 11, saying they needed time to review the case.

"We hope that she will be freed unconditionally," said Nyan Win, one of Suu Kyi's lawyers and a spokesman for her National League for Democracy (NLD).

"We have nothing much to do. We are just waiting for the next trial date. Tomorrow we will submit an application to the authorities to meet Aung San Suu Kyi and we hope to meet her on Wednesday or Thursday," he told AFP.

He said Suu Kyi, currently detained at Yangon's notorious Insein prison, had instructed her defence team to visit her before August 11.

The delayed verdict, which adds to uncertainty over the junta's plans for the democracy icon, was halved Friday by her lawyers as a sign that the judges have "serious legal problems".

Sacked dist judges

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decision was made hurriedly," the law minister added.

Shafique said the president also has the authority to call off his orders, and the government already took an initiative to reverse the decision of sending the two judges into retirement.

Asked if the government will take any action against the judicial officers who demonstrated at Bangladesh Secretariat, the law minister said, "If there is any allegation against any of them, then that should be investigated."

Replying to a query regarding whether the government's reversal of decision will become an embarrassment for it, the law minister said he does not feel so, "since the government detected an error and took steps to remedy it".

Asked whether there was any pressure from the law ministry to send the two judges into retirement, he said there was none.

Prominent lawyer Dr M Zahir welcomed the reversal saying, "The government reversed its decision for the sake of the judiciary. I welcome it."

On July 27, Shafique Ahmed said the Supreme Court (SC) is the authority to take any action against the judicial officials who demonstrated at Bangladesh

Secretariat, as they serve under the SC since the separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of the government.

A leader of the association recently told The Daily Star that Awal became the law secretary using his clout over the ministry during the immediate past caretaker government following 1/11.

"Awal had come to the drafting wing of law ministry from the judicial cadre during the previous Awami League government. According to the promotion rules-2002, the highest official position in the drafting wing is the post of an additional secretary. But, he was elevated to the post of the law secretary violating the promotion rules, due to his influence in the caretaker government, including Khatami's former vice president.

The High Court declared his appointment illegal on different grounds, but the Supreme Court stayed the High Court verdict. Since then Awal has been repeatedly petitioning for rescheduling the hearing for a settlement of the issue in a bid to keep delaying possible upholding of the verdict," he said.

When The Daily Star tried to contact Awal for comment, his private secretary said the law secretary was not interested in talking to the media.

Pakistan police have laid charges of treason, terrorism and rebellion against a radical Islamic cleric who brokered a peace deal with Taliban in the Swat valley, officials said yesterday.

Sufi Mohammad, the father-in-law of Maulana Fazlullah, the leader of the Taliban in Swat and head of a banned Islamist militant group, was arrested on July 26 on the outskirts of Peshawar.

"We have registered a case of treason, rebellion and terrorism against Sufi Mohammad," Swat police chief Sajid Khan Mohmand told AFP by telephone.

He has been charged on the basis of a speech he delivered on April 19, declaring that he does not believe in democracy, the constitution of Pakistan or its judicial and parliamentary system, Mohmand said.

"A case of waging war and conspiracy against the country has also been registered," he said.

Information minister for North West Frontier Province (NWFP) Mian Iftikhar Hussain, earlier said the cleric had killed a lot of people and was planning violence again.

"His actions so far indicate that he still has close ties to the Taliban of Swat," Hussain told AFP last week.

Fazlullah, who has a 50-million-rupee (615,000-dollar) price on his head, is the architect of an uprising that marked the only time that a district under Pakistani government control has effectively slipped into hands of the Taliban.

He has led thousands of supporters, a mixture of hardcore ideologues and disenchanted young men, in a brutal campaign beheading opponents, burning scores of schools and fighting against government troops since November 2007.

Under a deal brokered by Mohammad, the Pakistani government agreed to allow the implementation of Islamic law in Swat once violence had stopped but Taliban militants led by Fazlullah refused to lay down arms and undermined the deal.

Pakistan troops launched an operation in late April to root out the extremists after Taliban Islamized to within 100km of Islamabad. Officials say more than 1,800 militants and 166 security personnel have been killed since then.

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5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of BDT 10,000 or in US dollar 150. The method of payment will be direct deposit to Current A/C # 1014720, Sonali Bank Limited, Nagar Bhaban Branch, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh, (head-government/foreign funded project miscellaneous income). The document will be sent by air mail for overseas delivery and surface mail or courier for local delivery.

6. The provisions in the instructions to bidders and in the general conditions of contract are the provisions of the World Bank Standard Bidding Documents: Procurement of Works.

7. Bids must be delivered to the above office on or before 13.00 hrs (BST) on 16 September 2009 and must be accompanied by a security of BDT 7.5 million or USD 110,000. Late bids will be rejected.

8. Bids will be opened in presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend at 1400 hrs (BST) on 16 September 2009 at the office of:

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9. Qualified domestic bidders may be eligible to receive a margin of preference of 7.5 percent in bid evaluation.

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10. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at the office of:

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