

Saifur's last Sylhet visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Sylhet
Saifur Friday made his last visit to Sylhet where he went to college and competed in parliamentary elections of 1996, 2001 and 2008.

Saifur Rahman spent a few hours in Sylhet for the first time in eight months. A little sick, Saifur told his party workers and leaders that day, "Although I am not in the government or have been elected, I would always work for the development of this region."

He offered his Juma prayers at the city's Bandarbaraz Jame Masjid and exchanged views with devotees. He donated Tk 1 lakh and 500 bags of cement to the mosque. "We had donated Tk 1 crore for the mosque when we were in power," Saifur had said.

Expressing his desire to spend the coming Eid in

Sylhet, the former finance minister while talking to party activists and newsmen at Sylhet Circuit House said "Sylhet is my last address".

He refused to comment on issues of Sylhet BNP and said BNP is in a crisis nationally.

"We had done a lot when we were in power. However, many of the development projects remained incomplete. We request the people concerned to complete those," he said.

Saifur offered fateha at the shrines of Hazrat Shahjal (RA) and Hazrat Shahpor (RA) in Sylhet before leaving Sylhet for his village home in Moulvibazar in the afternoon.

In 1996 he lost the parliamentary polls in Sylhet to Humayun Rashid Chowdhury and in 2008 to his classmate and now Finance Minister AMA Muhith. Saifur won in 2001 beating Muhith.

1932-2009

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Fazlul Haq Muslim Hall at DU. He was president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh, principal of Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, and president of Bangladesh Jatiyashonga Samiti.

In the late 70s, he joined Jatiyatobadi Gonotantric Dal, the political party founded and later changed into BNP by late president Ziaur Rahman.

Saifur was elected to parliament first in 1979 and then in 1996 and 2001.

He served as finance and planning minister for three terms - 1976-1982, 1991-1996 and 2001-2006.

He had drawn up and tabled a record 12 national budgets since independence.

As an elected governor, he presided over the golden jubilee conference of World Bank and IMF in Madrid in 1994.

He was awarded Ekushey Padak in 2005 for his role in the Language Movement.

Procurement

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worth, for example, around Tk 12 lakh, the service provider has to show an annual turnover of a past contract worth the same amount. But the amended PPR relaxes this condition, giving chance to a contractor seeking a Tk 12 lakh bid to qualify for the job by showing a turnover of Tk 5 lakh.

The rules also allow a contractor to qualify for a job worth Tk 10 lakh with an experience of just one such work instead of an experience of 10 years.

Earlier, a contractor could not purchase more than Tk 20-lakh a year after a natural disaster. Now a government entity can procure up to Tk 50 lakh in each case with the highest purchase ceiling fixed at Tk 5 crore.

The ceiling for most urgent purchases has been set at Tk 1 lakh to Tk 5 lakh instead of the previous Tk 50,000 to Tk 1 lakh.

The limits of Tk 1 lakh and Tk 5 lakh for purchases under quotation in the revenue budget have been revised to Tk 2 lakh and Tk 20 lakh while the limits in the development budget have been increased to Tk 5 lakh and Tk 40 lakh from Tk 2 lakh and Tk 10 lakh.

The purchase ceiling under limited tender has been fixed at Tk 25-50 lakh from Tk 15-30 lakh.

The timeframe of floating tender for work up to Tk 2 crore has been reduced to 14 days from 21 days.

The amended procurement rules have also a provision for a fee or honorarium for the members of the committee to open the tender.

The amendment to the PPR also covers a good number of other issues.

3 killed

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As per his statement, Rab and police took him to an abandoned hospital at Hatiandha village in Koirai upazila to recover arms on the night.

When the law-enforcers reached the village, the associates of Akkas opened fire on them triggering a gunfight.

Akkas was caught in the line of fire while trying to flee and died on the spot, police said.

They said two police and two Rab men were also injured during the gunfight. Two guns and six bullets were recovered from the spot.

In Kushtia, acting on a tip-off police raided Kaya Child Heaven School where a group of Gano Bahini men were holding a meeting at about 4:30am yesterday.

Sensing the presence of police, the outlaws opened fire at them prompting them to fire back. At one stage, the outlaws managed to flee the scene.

Police later found the body of Murad lying on the ground.

Police recovered a shutter gun and two bullets from the spot.

According to police, Murad was accused in 11 cases, including six for murder.

Police said the gang entered the bank through a back window having failed in their first attempt through the main gate. The robbers tried to open the vault using sophisticated equipments. But police of nearby station and local people encircled the bank after its night guard sought help hearing a noise from inside.

Hasan, wanted in a number of cases, was killed during the gunfight, police said.

He was also a convicted fugitive sentenced to 32 years' imprisonment in a murder case, police added.

A case was filed with Sadullapur police station.

Saifur dies

FROM PAGE 1

his way to Dhaka from Moulvibazar when the accident occurred.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel recovered the body and sent it to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. On-duty doctors at the hospital said Saifur Rahman drowned following the accident.

Jeep driver Siraj and three other people accompanying Saifur - his personal secretary AG Shamsul Haque, and two aides Sajib and Md Sharif - were also injured in the accident. They were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Immediately after the accident, Rab-9 members rushed to the spot and smashed the windowpanes of the jeep, fallen in the five-feet deep water of the ditch, to rescue Saifur and others.

"Saifur Rahman had his seat belt fastened. It took 10-12 minutes to get him out of the water by breaking the door of the car and cutting the seat belt," local Awami League (AL) lawmaker Lutful Haq Sachchu told newsmen.

"Saifur died on the spot," said Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital doctor Tofig Ahmed.

Thousands of people, including local leaders of different political parties, thronged the hospital after hearing the news of his death.

An accountant by profession, a partner in the firm of Rahman Haque Huq, the veteran politician placed 12 national budgets as finance minister.

His son Kaiser Rahman received his body at 5:00pm.

Earlier, the body draped in the national flag lay in state at local Mukto Mancha. Additional police forces were deployed in the town to tackle huge crowd.

AL lawmaker Lutful Haq Sachchhu, BNP leader and ex-state minister Harun-ur Rashid, Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Haiful Kaiyim, Superintendent of Police Mukhlesur Rahman and Civil Surgeon Dr Nurul Amin, among others, rushed to the hospital.

His body was brought to his Gulshan residence in the capital at 8:00pm. BNP leaders, supporters and workers

gathered there to have a glimpse of the late leader.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu were among the senior leaders of different political parties who paid their last respects to Saifur at his house in the evening.

Intense emotional moments followed Khaleda's arrival at her former cabinet colleague's residence at 8:45pm. The bereaved family gathered around her as she tried to offer them comfort.

Our Moulibazar correspondent said the jeep of Saifur Rahman hit the stairs of his relative's house and was damaged slightly when he was ready to board the vehicle for going to Dhaka at about 11:30am.

Seeing this, his cousin and other relatives present there requested him not to go to Dhaka yesterday, as it is a bad sign for journey. But Saifur told them that he was sick and must go to Dhaka. He repeatedly sought doa from all before leaving the house.

Earlier, he offered Fateha at the graveyard of his wife. As he was ill, he did not perform fasting yesterday. He took egg fry and bread at the house of his relative Badrul Alam before departure.

Minu, Saifur's sister-in-law, said this to the reporters.

FUNERAL

Saifur will be buried tomorrow at Paharmardan in Moulvibazar Upazila following his funerals in the capital and at his native place.

Sources said with no testing equipment, two health officers and a pharmacist assigned at Hilli, Shona Masjid and Banglabanda are just asking few questions to the visitors and letting them go. Although about four months ago, two people have been trained for each district with a view to containing the epidemic flu.

The district administration officials also said there is no preparation to deal with the flu threat effectively as they do not have sufficient space to isolate the infected.

Contacted, the Civil Surgeon of Dinajpur Motiar Rahman said they have taken effective measures at the port area and no patient has been detected in the district yet.

"I came abroad accompanying my expecting daughter and ailing daughter-in-law. At that time, I came to know that a murder case had been filed and arrest warrant issued against me in Bangladesh. I decided to return to Bangladesh without delay. But the caretaker rulers threatened to shoot me on sight at Dhaka Airport," she said.

Hasina also recalled her days in sub-jail during the caretaker government and how she was forced not to come home when she was in the United States of America at the time, when there was a crackdown launched on the political arena following the 1/11 changeover.

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"They (caretaker government) also had threatened me that if I came home, they would take me to such a place wherefrom I would never return. I didn't care. Because I knew that the people are with me," she told her audience in this diplomatic Swiss city.

Sheikh Hasina categorically said she is afraid of none but Allah the Almighty as the only aim of her politics is people's welfare.

"I do politics for the people. Had I known that every person of Bangladesh were literate, they have accommodation, have health services, there is no scarcity of food, I would have quit politics," she said.

Hasina further mentioned that an adviser of the caretaker government even dared to offer her that she would be the prime minister of Bangladesh had she agreed that there would be no elections in the country.

"I told the adviser that only people will decide my fate," she said, making the disclosure on the post-1/11 episodes in the country's political arena.

In this context, Sheikh Hasina expressed her gratitude to the Bangladeshi expatriates for their contribution behind her release and restoration of democracy in Bangladesh through the December 29 polls.

She said the present government has been able to bring back an environment of confidence among the people.

"Just after assuming office, we have been able to bring the prices of essentials, including rice, within the buying capacity of the commoners. Though the prices of some Ramadan items have increased slightly, but these could not destabilise the market," the prime minister said.

Hasina said her government wants to build Bangladesh as the most peaceful nation in the South Asian region. She emphatically said that the soil of Bangladesh won't be allowed to be used for any type of terrorism and militancy.

She also mentioned that the present government has taken various stern steps to stop extortion as it is firm on its resolve to curb all social menaces.

Whilst driving from Ohrid towards the Albanian border, he said, "I saw a boat filled with tourists which, for some unexplained reason, veered like an outboard motor boat to the right and then immediately fell onto its side."

It is alleged that though people recommended by the AL city unit of Cox's Bazar, were listed as eligible for the VGF card, some ward-level leaders of the ruling party are not satisfied with the list.

Due to hindrances caused by the ruling party activists, some 2,000 cardholders of different wards in Cox's Bazar could not receive VGF rice or not."

A few days ago, Cox's Bazar Municipality Mayor Bulbul Aktar said quality rice was delivered to Anisur Rahman for distribution among the cardholders but he distributed rotten rice. She filed a case with Harinakundo police station against Rahman who went into hiding after the incident.

In Moulvibazar, name of Rajnagar upazila AL General Secretary Md Asif Khan was entered in the list of VGF.

They said two police and two Rab men were also injured during the gunfight. Two guns and six bullets were recovered from the spot.

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Govt moves

FROM PAGE 1

Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Shah Monir Hossain yesterday.

While talking to the press he also said that patients suffering from flu-like illness would be divided into three categories.

The patients under A category need only symptomatic treatment. If they don't recover by three days then they will fall under B category and be provided with anti-viral drug. If the patients develop respiratory complications then they will immediately be hospitalised under C category, he added.

Since June 18 around 281 patients have been detected with swine flu. But the trend is now static, he said.

On the issue of availability of the anti-viral drugs in the market Shah Monir Hossain said that a decision would be taken tomorrow whether the drugs would be made available in local pharmacies or in the outlets of the drug companies.

The health ministry, on Thursday, decided to make the anti-viral drug available in the market. The anti-viral drugs have already been sent to all the district and medical college hospitals to be given to

patients free of cost.

The government sources also said that the government had sufficient stock of Oseltamivir to treat three lakh patients.

Resident physician of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) Dr Golam Kibria said that only one-fifth patients seeking treatment have swine flu-like symptoms.

"Most of the people come for treatment as they are panicking," he said, adding that every day around 150 patients come to the swine flu outdoor. Only eight patients are currently staying at the hospital.

When asked about the death of a patient at the swine flu corner Prof Torikul Islam of the department of Medicine said 20-year-old Sobhan who died on Friday night was not having confirmed swine flu in laboratory test, but he was clinically diagnosed with the flu.

The patient had been ill for last three days and as his condition deteriorated, he was admitted to the hospital Friday evening and died after three hours.

Experts said that in 80 percent cases the disease is self-limiting and only in two percent cases the condition of the patient deteriorates.

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