

Bangabandhu killers

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they recovered a letter written by Bari to Bangabandhu's fugitive killer Lt Col (ret'd) Khandaker Abdur Rashid in which Bari called Faruque a "hero" for his role on August 15, 1975, the day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed along with most of his family members.

DB officials said they are yet to explore the entire network of people involved in the bomb attack on Awami League leader Fazel Noor Taposh. They, however, claimed that they are getting information from the arrestees.

Sources said family members of Bangabandhu's killers have been close since the assassination.

At the initiative of Fazlul Bari in 2007, a meeting was held at the house of Mehnaz Rashid, daughter of Bangabandhu's killer Abdur Rashid. Syed Tareq Rahman, son of Bangabandhu's killer Faruque Rahman, a few leaders of Freedom Party and some relatives of the families of the killers of Bangabandhu were also present.

Bari, Mehnaz, Freedom Party Vice-President Syed Tareq Rahman and former joint secretary Abdul Hai launched a travel agency together in Banani in 2007 at the initiative of Bari, DB sources claimed.

Talking to The Daily Star, Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam of DB-South said they picked up retired joint secretary Abdul Hai from his Siddhirganj home Tuesday for questioning and he admitted about their travel agency business.

Asked about the recovered letter, the DC said Bari wrote the letter to Rashid about marrying Mehnaz. Mehnaz said she made a photocopy of it before sending it to Rashid via fax, DC Monirul said.

The DB so far arrested six people in connection with the bomb attack on Taposh.

Of the arrestees, four people are from the families of convicted killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The arrestees are Mehnaz Rashid, Nazmul Hasan alias Soheli and Mahbubul Hasan, sons of convict Lt Col (ret'd) Mohiuddin Ahmed, Kamrul Haque Swapan, younger brother of convict Major (ret'd) Shariful Haq Dalim, and Freedom Party leaders Abdur Rahim and Sheikh Shafiqul Sofu.

'US risks losing global clout if it fails to engage Asia'

AFP, Washington

Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew has warned the United States it risks losing global leadership if it did not remain engaged in Asia to "balance" China's military and economic might.

The influential Lee called on President Barack Obama, whom he meets for talks in Washington on Thursday, to ensure that the United States "stay engaged not just in China but in the whole of East Asia and India."

The United States, he said Tuesday, had to strike a balance for the region when China transformed into a top power unrivalled by the rest of Asia.

"The size of China makes it impossible for the rest of Asia, including Japan and India, to match it in weight and capacity in about 20 or 30 years," he said.

"So we need America to strike a balance," said the 86-year-old Lee at the presentation of a "Lifetime Achievement Award" to him by the US Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Business Council.

BDR proposal

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most members of the four battalions were involved in the mutiny.

The secretary said since they have been detained, the four battalions now don't have enough manpower to operate as individual units.

He said the BDR has given the government a proposal for replacing the four battalions with new ones but their names are yet to be finalised.

"We have received government permission and will disband the four battalions at the end of the process of trying the mutineers," said BDR Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam.

He said a few members of the four battalions would be attached to other battalions.

Gen Mainul however said those who are in the four battalions will not lose their jobs after the disbanding.

He said they will provide the home ministry with the names of the new battalions after finalising them.

BDR in its reform proposals to the home ministry proposed disbanding of the four battalions and replacing them with new ones.

Govt plans

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"The program for increasing the number of buses to carry large numbers of passengers is now at the final stage. Numbers of three wheelers and other small transports will gradually be reduced," she said.

The premier said the activities of mobile courts will continue, and bus bays and parking spots will be designated in the city.

About climate change, she reiterated the demand for formation of an international fund to overcome the fallout. The premier urged the people of the country to be aware of the possible effects of the climate change.

Speaking on the tourism sector, the prime minister said her government wants to open up entire Bangladesh for tourists, as all parts of the country are beautiful.

"We are examining whether a regional tourism network can be built comprising Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Bhutan," she said.

Replying to queries on persons with disabilities, the premier urged all to be sympathetic to them. She said her government is sincere to ensure their rights and to create suitable environment for them at workplaces.

She said steps could be taken, so financially poor persons with disabilities may ride on public transports for free.

The premier said her government took various measures for the welfare and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

"We have planned construction of training centres in each district for persons with disabilities. Besides, the government is also considering setting up specialised schools at district levels for disabled and autistic children," Hasina, also the leader of the parliament, said.

Replying to another query, the premier said her government will conduct a survey in the Sundarban area for exploration of gas, and if gas is found that will be supplied to Khulna area.

Referring to traffic jam, the parliamentary body recommended that the government designate parking places in the capital, enforce traffic rules strictly and take actions against violators of traffic rules.

"A legal provision should be introduced to fine violators of traffic rules. If anyone is found guilty of violating the rules and causing traffic congestion, the person should be fined Tk 1,000. Even the ministers and lawmakers should not be spared," said the parliamentary body.

The committee told the home ministry to equip the police stations with adequate number of vehicles.

It also asked law enforcement agencies not to harass people during drives against criminals.

The committee observed that a section of ruling party activists work as brokers at police stations and force people to give them money by issuing threats.

"This situation must change, otherwise it would not be possible to have a digital Bangladesh," it said.

During a discussion on the LGED and cooperatives ministry, the parliamentary body recommended that the government increase allocation of funds for upazila parishes and provide vehicles and office allowances to upazila parishad chairmen.

The committee observed that development activities under upazila parishes and municipalities should be intensified to ensure decentralisation of power and people's welfare.

The police went to Khabir's house on information that a few JMB men sat in a meeting there, said Ashmaruzzaman, additional superintendent of police in Naogaon.

According to locals, the arrestees had roles in the Purbo Banglar Communist Party activities and were working for JMB.

Khabir Sheikh is an accused in the JMB victim Idris Ali Khejur murder case.

Babar's remand

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on November 1.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced the former state minister before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) court by a prison van around 12:35pm. He was brought to the conducting court on a chair.

Chief Prosecutor Syed Rezaul Rahman read out the forwarding report submitted by the IO of the case and prayed for the 10-day remand.

Defence lawyers submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the remand hearing saying that there were not enough documents in their hand and also their senior lawyers, including Rafique-Ul Haque, would join the hearing. But the court rejected the plea.

At one stage, both the prosecution and the defence lawyers became agitated and hurled abusive words on each other that halted the court proceeding for a while.

Later, the court passed the order placing Babar on a five-day remand.

Enraged, over a hundred of BNP backed lawyers who took part in the hearing left the courtroom and brought out a procession on the court premises that halted proceedings of several courts.

FORWARDING REPORT
In the forwarding report to the court on Monday, the IO, also CID's Additional Superintendent of Police, said former deputy minister and BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu while on remand told the interrogators that Babar gave administrative support to the Awami League rally attackers.

Following his directives the investigation officers of the case arrested several people including Joj Miah and forced them to make confessional statements.

The report said Babar and other accused in the case were involved in supplying the grenades hurled at the AL rally on August 21, 2004 that left 23 people dead and 300 others injured.

While on remand, Harkatul Jihad (Huji) chief Mufti Abdul Hannan also disclosed Babar's involvement in the grenade attack.

Babar needs to be placed on remand to glean information about the grenade suppliers and patrons of the attackers, added the IO.

Police filed two cases -- one for murder and another under the Explosive Substances Act -- with Motiheel Police Station a day after the grenade attack.

But on August 3, 2009, a speedy trial tribunal ordered further probe into the cases following petitions filed by the prosecution seeking fresh investigation.

HIGH COURT ORDER
The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to interrogate Babar at the jailgate regarding August 21 grenade attack case, if necessary.

The meeting chaired by the state minister expressed concern that many militants are going abroad after having passports, and getting involved in militancy tarnishing the image of the country. It urged the authorities concerned not to issue passports to militants.

Tuku said the government would gradually ban some more organisations linked to militancy, and the activities of several organisations are being keenly watched by the law enforcement agencies.

French DPM
will make courtesy calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzak and State Minister for Environment and Forest Hassan Mahmud, according to a press release of French embassy in Dhaka.

He will present the French position regarding climate change negotiations, particularly for the least developed countries (LDC), as Bangladesh plays a very important role in this group.

The French minister will expose the absolute necessity for Copenhagen to agree on a "Climate Justice Plan" to finance adaptation and sustainable development for the developing countries. The plan places economic development and poverty eradication at the heart of the fight against climate change.

After Nicolas Sarkozy had been elected president in 2007, the French government organised a round table, the Grenelle Environment, bringing together national and local government, trade unions, business and voluntary sectors to develop a national strategy on climate change, particularly to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

With the all-out support from the president, Jean-Louis Borloo played a major role in developing such a strategy for his country.

Ex-DIG quizzed
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around 10:45am and continued till 4:30pm at the CID Chittagong divisional headquarters at Dampara Police Lines.

They inquired about the high-level probe committee's findings that implicated only five persons creating scope for most of those involved in the incident escape the charge, said the sources in CID.

The former DIG said they had to submit the probe report in a haste following the directive of former home secretary Omar Faruk who led the probe body, the sources added.

Besides, the investigation was in the primary stage while time constraint was also a factor, said Muniruzzaman Chowdhury, investigation officer (IO) of the case and a senior ASP of CID Chittagong region, quoting Shamsul Islam.

The then National Security Intelligence (NSI) director Enamur Rahman Chowdhury, another member of the committee, would also be interrogated within next two weeks, said IO Muniruzzaman.

Former DGFI director Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezaul Haider Chowdhury and former CID DIG Faruk Ahmed Chowdhury were also in the probe committee as members. Rezaul is now behind bars in connection with the case.

Hillary acknowledged there can be "misunderstanding" and "miscommunications", but stressed that the Obama administration was committed to building a long-term relationship with the troubled country.

The United States is keen to bolster the civilian government, whose relations with the powerful military have been fraught, following on from a massive 7.5 billion dollar non-military aid package already signed into law.

The military and political opposition slammed the package -- designed to help Pakistan fight Islamist insurgency by building schools, training police and strengthening democracy -- for allegedly violating Pakistan's sovereignty.

Hillary said she was "concerned" by the opposition and reiterated that the bill imposed no conditions on Pakistan, pledging further assistance.

"We will be making some announcements about some of the investments we are making with Pakistan on the civilian side," she added referring to jobs, reliable sources of energy, education and healthcare.

Around 30,000 troops are pressing an assault against Pakistani Taliban fighters holed up in South Waziristan, part of the tribal belt on the Afghan border where US officials say al-Qaeda is plotting attacks on the West.

Hillary said it was "important to recognise the high price the Pakistanis are paying" in the war on Islamist militancy.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Hussain and Justice Md Rais Uddin passed the order upon a petition filed by Babar praying for direction for the police officials to interrogate him at the jail gate in any case filed against him.

Babar filed the petition stating that he was seriously ill and he might be tortured during remand, which would put his life in danger.

Sources said the attorney general's office has prepared an appeal to file with the Supreme Court against the HC order.

BACKGROUND
On March 5 this year, a Dhaka court sent Babar to jail for the second time on his surrender. He sought bail in an arms case in which he was later sentenced to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment.

He had earlier been arrested on charge of corruption on May 28, 2007 but later was released on bail.

A tribunal on October 30, 2007 sentenced Babar to 17 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing illegal arms and ammunition at his Gulshan residence in 2007.

The HC on October 16 last year granted Babar a six-month bail in the case on health grounds following an appeal against the verdict of the trial court.

However, the Supreme Court on October 23 revised the HC order and granted Babar bail for three months asking him to surrender before the trial court within the time.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed a case against Babar with Ramna Police Station on October 4, 2007 for taking Tk 21 crore in bribe to drop murder charge against Bashundhara Group chairman's son.

He was also accused of amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information from the ACC.

Agencies blasted
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religious rallies and discussions in the coming winter, he added.

Tuku said the government is also considering inclusion of anti-militancy, write-ups, essays and poems in textbooks, and a letter in this regard has been issued to the education ministry.

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Indian
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days' remand and the court granted for two days, the AC DB said.

The DB suspects that Jibon Singh alias Timir Das, who is also suspected to be linked with Rabindranath Tagore's Nobel prize theft, is in Dhaka.

Talking to The Daily Star, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Monirul Islam of DB (South) said during primary interrogation, Tapan, son of Jibon's sister, said he sneaked into Bangladesh six years ago to avert arrest in India and had been residing with his family in Rangpur town.

"Tapan was under our watch and we suspected that he came to Dhaka to meet KLO boss Jibon Singh," the DC DB said adding, "Jibon Singh bears the living expenses of Tapan and his family."

DC Monirul Islam said some five to six other KLO men might be staying in the country.

DC Monirul Islam quoted Tapan as saying, "I have talked to my uncle over the Nobel prize theft, but he (Jibon) denied the allegation saying he is not a thief."

Earlier on February 2, the CID arrested Mohammad Hossain Shiplu from the city's Azampur saying Shiplu was a Bangladeshi aide to Jibon Singh and also linked to the stealing of the Nobel prize.

Jibon Singh alias Timir Das hailed from Kumargram in Jalpaiguri district and emerged as the KLO chairman in 1995. The KLO was formed by the Koch-Rajbanshi tribes who strove to carve out a separate Kamtapur State comprising six districts of West Bengal and four of Assam.

Singh was first arrested by the Assam police in 1999 but managed to get out of the custody after an alleged deal that he would ensure the surrender of a large number of armed underground activists if he were let off.

EC delays action

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firm, and submit the audit report to the EC by July 31.

Before the ninth parliamentary election, registration of political parties was made mandatory for contesting the polls. This was intended to bring transparency in political parties' funding and expenditure of their funds.

The political parties got registered with the EC in October-November last year, qualifying to contest the December 29 parliamentary election.

According to rules, all these parties were supposed to submit audit reports on their financial transaction, particularly for the last few months of the last financial year after they got registered, EC officials said.

In defence of EC decision on Monday, some other EC officials however said the political parties did not have to submit audit reports by July 31 as one year was yet to be completed since their registration.

In the absence of clear interpretation of the rules and directives concerning audit reports, the EC Secretariat did not remind the parties about complying with those in time, officials said.

BNP's letter to the EC on August 2, signed by its Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, said the party got registered on November 3 last year, and one year was yet to be completed since its registration.

Besides, during the state of emergency, the central office of BNP was locked for long, and many documents were missing, it mentioned.

So, it was not possible for BNP to get its financial transaction audited, and to submit the audit report to the EC within the stipulated timeframe, the letter said.

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Hillary said she was "concerned" by the opposition and reiterated that the bill imposed no conditions on Pakistan, pledging further assistance.

"We will be making some announcements about some of the investments we are making with Pakistan on the civilian side," she added referring to jobs, reliable sources of energy, education and healthcare.

Around 30,000 troops are pressing an assault against Pakistani Taliban fighters holed up in South Waziristan, part of the tribal belt on the Afghan border where US officials say al-Qaeda is plotting attacks on the West.

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second round election after UN-backed auditors threw out nearly a third of Karzai's votes from the Aug. 20 ballot, determining widespread fraud. That pushed Karzai's totals below the 50 percent threshold needed for a first round victory in the 36-candidate field.

The Taliban warned Afghans to stay away from the polls or risk attacks. Dozens of people were killed in Taliban attacks during the August balloting, helping drive down turnout.

Mir Ahmed Formoly, 64, who lives near the guest house, said he heard the commotion and went outside where he saw muzzle flashes in the early morning light.

"I was so scared," he said. "I went back inside the house."

He said gunfire and explosions lasted about two hours, punctuated by shouts and screams.

Mohammad Ayub, a shopkeeper who lives a few doors down from the attacked house, said he heard gunfire shortly before dawn. He assumed at first that it was an attack on a house belonging to relatives of President Karzai nearby, then saw that it was a different building.

"It was early morning, but I didn't have a watch on to know when. It was dark. Shooting started around this private guest house. I heard some shouts coming from inside the house," Ayub said.

"I heard 'Boom! Boom!' several times. The fighting went on inside for about 10 or 15 minutes before the police came," he said.

The guest house attack was the third major assault in the capital in recent weeks.

On October 8, a suicide car bomber detonated his vehicle outside the Indian Embassy, killing 17 people mostly civilians and wounding at least 76 more. The Afghan Foreign Ministry hinted at Pakistani involvement a charge Pakistan denied.

On Sept. 17, a suicide car bomber killed six Italian soldiers and 10 Afghan civilians on one of Kabul's main roadways.

Gunmen storm

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mission in Afghanistan, Kai Eide, said the attack "will not deter the UN from continuing all its work" in Afghanistan.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid claimed responsibility for the attacks in a telephone call to The Associated Press, saying three militants with suicide vests, grenades and machine guns carried out the guest house assault.

He said three days ago that the Taliban issued a statement threatening anyone working on the Nov. 7 runoff election between Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah.

"This is our first attack," he said.

A security guard working nearby said the attackers at the guest house were wearing police uniforms. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't supposed to talk to media.

UN spokesman Adrian Edwards said six UN staff were killed and nine other UN employees were wounded in the assault, which began about a dawn in the Shar-e-Naw area of the city. Terrified guests fled the building during the assault some screaming for help and others jumping from upper floors as flames engulfed part of the three-story building.

Afghan police and UN officials said 12 people in all were killed, including the UN staff, three attackers, two security guards and an Afghan civilian. The bodies of the attackers were taken out of the house and sent for autopsies, said Gul Mohammad, an officer at the scene.

It was not immediately known how the victims were killed or how the fire started, but witnesses said they heard prolonged gunfire ringing from the house before police arrived at the scene. It also was not immediately clear whether there were any other attackers besides the three killed.

Police were seen pulling the charred body of what appeared to be a woman from a second-floor bedroom. One officer carried an injured German man by piggyback away from the scene.

Edwards said officials were trying to account for several other UN workers who were staying at the guest house. He did not know their nationalities but said they were non-Afghans.

"This has clearly been a very serious incident for us," Edwards said. "We've not had an incident like this in the past."

Edwards said the UN would have to evaluate "what this means for our work in Afghanistan." The Aug. 19, 2003, truck bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, which killed 22 people, prompted the UN to pull out of Iraq for several years.

A security guard, Noor Allah, said he saw a woman screaming for help in English from a second-story window and watched as terrified guests leapt from windows. Afghan police using ladders rescued at least one wounded foreigner.

Afghans vote Nov. 7 in a

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