

Syed Ashraf

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The LGRD minister said India was the destination of 10 truckloads of illegal arms seized in Chittagong and a huge quantity of bullets in Bogra during the BNP-Jamaat

alliance was in power," he told a roundtable at the Jatiya Press Club.
Bangladesh has not been on good terms with India since 2001 due to these reasons, he said. Terming prime minister's India tour very important, Ashraf said it is not important what the government would achieve through the premier's tour.

"The important thing is the premier is going to India to establish a friendly and trust-worthy relation with India," said the Awami League leader adding that Bangladesh should not be kept away from the rest of the world in the name of security and sovereignty.

Earlier in the morning, Ashraf said they had clear evidence of a meeting between former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf and India's separatist Ulfa leader Anup Chetia in Dhaka during the BNP-led alliance rule.

"I am aware that no comment should be made about a former president without any evidence," he told newsmen after placing wreaths at the Sheikh Mujib's portrait at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the morning.

On Friday, Syed Ashraf alleged that the previous BNP-led coalition government had arranged a meeting between

Dhaka-Ctg

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government, signed the agreements with the representatives concerned of the constructing companies at a function in a city hotel here.

The work of the project, divided into ten roadwork and three bridgework packages, is scheduled to be completed within 36 months, officials said.

The project will have a five-metre wide median with plantation, a number of bridges totalling 1,137 metres in length, three railway overpasses, 33 steel foot-over-bridges and two underpasses.

The underpasses will be constructed at Comilla Cantonment and Chittagong while railway overpasses will be constructed at Comilla, Feni and Chittagong.

Chinese company Sinohydro Corporation Ltd was awarded the work of seven road packages as the lowest bidder while two other local firms--RECLA Construction and TBL-ACI-JV were given the works of three other road packages.

The present government took the project as a priority one since the existing two-lane road has become insufficient to carry the present traffic loads.

Officials said the highway will have a provision of six lanes and, if necessary, an access controlled road would be constructed to separate the passenger transports and goods carrying vehicles.

Additional Secretary of the ministry of communications Iftekhar Haider, Economic and Commercial counsellor of Chinese Embassy in Dhaka Lin Weiqiang and senior officials of the communications ministry were present.

Binod Bihari

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said the lone alive hero of the historic Jalalabad Pahar (hill) War that kept Chittagong free for four days from the British colonial rule.

Nobel laureate Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus was the chief guest at the reception with former vice chancellor of Chittagong University Dr Alamgir Md Sirajuddin in the chair.

Binod Bihari said he is not the actual person to get such love and great honour rather all this should go to his mentor and leader Master Da Surya Sen who inspired many youths for dedicating their lives for the country's freedom.

Dr Yunus said, "We feel pride to get such a strong personality still alive. He [Binod Bihari] in his teenage dared to occupy the British armoury in Chittagong and to fight against the armed forces."

"It was beyond the imagination of many adult people to do such impossible act during the colonial rule, that a few teenagers and young people did," he said.

Historian and former pro-VC of Kolkata University Bharati Roy on the occasion wished that the legendary person lived for many more years fighting against injustice.

Former Chief Adviser and Justice Habibur Rahman said Binod Bihari has crossed 100 years not only leading a simple life but also carrying the flag of idealism.

The speakers urged the government to observe the birth anniversary of the role model in state honour.

Pervez Musharraf and Anup Chetia in Dhaka.

"Pervez Musharraf had a one-and-a-half-hour meeting with detained Ulfa leader Anup Chetia when BNP-led alliance was in power," he told a roundtable at the Jatiya Press Club.

Hours after Ashraf's speech, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain asked his ruling party counterpart to substantiate the claim regarding the meeting.

Paying tributes to late president Ziaur Rahman at his grave, Delwar termed Ashraf's remark "irresponsible" and called upon him to produce evidence before the nation to prove that such a meeting took place.

He also said the government is whipping such propaganda for political gains.

TFI Cell

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In the face of criticisms from different human rights organisations following the rising number of deaths of BDR jawans, the government formed a committee to probe into the 'unnatural deaths'.

Headed by the then deputy home secretary Zakir Hossain, the committee submitted its report after months of investigation, terming all the deaths as 'unnatural'.

Two murder cases were filed with New Market police station against unidentified persons on October 2, 2009 in connection with the deaths of two BDR jawans.

The cases were filed after post mortem reports confirmed that Lance Nayek Mobarak Hossain of Battalion-29 and Havildar Mohiuddin, 48, of Battalion-28 of Chittagong had been murdered.

Mobarak died in Pikhana Hospital on March 22 and Mohiuddin on May 5. Later, New Market police sent the bodies to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sources said police filed the murder cases against unidentified persons, although the victims were in joint custody of the CID, Rapid Action Battalion, and army personnel at Pikhana.

Family members of the victims alleged although the two BDR soldiers were tortured to death, the police filed two unnatural death cases.

Sources at Dhaka Medical College morgue said Mobarak's wrists, arms, knees, and shoulders were badly bruised and swollen. Mohiuddin's body also bore several injury marks, they added.

Proshika

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prayer by Faruque.

Deputy Commissioner Lutfar Kabir told The Daily Star that police would be withdrawn from Proshika Bhaban, if no untoward incident occurs there.

Proshika staff locked the main entrance of the head office after they got to know that Faruque might return to the office.

The High Court in a previous order said that Faruque is allowed in the office to meet Proshika chairman, chief executive officer and governing body members if he maintains peace.

The court also asked Faruque and the new Proshika management to maintain status quo until disposal of a case filed by Faruque with the HC.

Officer-in-Charge of Pallabi Police Station Iqbal Hossain and Assistant Commissioner Akbar Ali went to Proshika office on Saturday and informed the staff that they had been directed by higher authorities to provide Faruque with security when he enters the building, acting Director of Proshika Qamrul Hasan Kamal told The Daily Star.

The governing body of Proshika, a leading NGO with 220 offices across the country and more than 5,000 employees, removed Qazi Faruque and appointed advocate Abdul Wadud as the chairman of the organisation.

Following his removal, Faruque filed a case with First Assistant Judge's Court on May 27 challenging the decision but the court rejected the case on May 31. Faruque filed an appeal with District Judge's Court on June 1, which was also rejected on June 6. He then filed the civil revision case with the HC on August 11.

On December 26 last year, police raided the Proshika building upon receiving information about firearms and lethal weapons at the office but they failed to get any.

Attack on Taposh

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"Following our prayer, the Dhaka District Magistrate's Court on December 23, directed the jail authorities to provide a division cell and proper treatment to Swapan at Apollo Hospital. But the jail authorities did not obey the court order."

Talking to The Daily Star, Inspector General of Prisons (IG-Prisons) Brig Gen Ashrafur Islam Khan said he was not aware of any court order.

Asked about the division status in jail, the IG Prisons declined to make any comment.

Detective Branch of police arrested Kamrul Islam Swapan, brother of Bangabandhu's fugitive killer Shariful Huq Dalim, from his Gulshan residence last year.

Family members of Swapan said police picked him up just four days after he underwent a major surgery at Apollo Hospital on October 10 last year and his kidney operation was due in November the same year.

Salma Haq told The Daily Star, "We told the jail authorities through the court that we would bear all his treatment expenses but they didn't pay heed to our request."

"Even the jail authorities didn't let my husband take treatment at the jail hospital for a single day though he is a serious patient," she said.

Contacted, a jail doctor told The Daily Star yesterday as per the jail code they would take Swapan to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) within a day or two.

There are provisions that any patient can get treatment from any private hospital at his own cost with the approval of the court or the government.

Earlier, former Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil, BNP leaders Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Mirza Abbas and late BM Bakir were treated at different private hospitals during their imprisonment.

BCL men warned

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stern actions against those who are making trouble in the name of student politics.

"Hasina is very much sincere to this end," Matia, also agriculture minister, told The Daily Star.

Another presidium member Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star that both the party and government must not limit them to only warnings. "We must take action and ensure exemplary punishment to amend Chahra League," said the AL policymaker.

Awami League joint general secretary Mahbub Alam Hanif said, besides legal actions, his party would take actions against the BCL men involved in violence and expel them from the organisation.

Sources said many BCL leaders from grassroots to central level -- have become desperate to make money through tender manipulation and 'illegal admission business' across the country.

BCL's chain of command has totally collapsed as almost all the committees from grassroots level to central are long overdue and the current leaders are now largely busy with making quick bucks instead of looking after organisational activities, party insiders said.

BCL general secretary Mahfuzul Haider Chowdhury Roton claimed that outsiders in the name of his organisation are creating chaos across the country. About the violence at Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute Roton said he does not know anyone.

The BCL general secretary claimed that violence is taking place in some places where BCL has no organisational structure or committee.

"We are trying to form new committees in those places as well as hold council at district level," he said, adding that the central council would be held after completing councils of the district and university unit committees.

JS sitting

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warrants.

Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira is likely to place a bill seeking amendment to the Vested Property Return Act to return the vested properties to their owners.

The fourth session of the ninth parliament began on January 4 without participation of lawmakers from BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Manju). They have been abstaining from the House since the second session in June raising various demands.

President Zillur Rahman addressed the House on the inaugural day of the fourth session, also known as the new year session.

The Chief Whip of treasury bench, Abdus Shahid, is scheduled to place in parliament a thanks-giving motion on the president's address. A long discussion will be held on the motion.

Land grabbers

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"The government is well aware of the unplanned urbanization filling rivers, canals and wetlands. If the practice goes on, there won't be a single bigha cultivable land after 60/70 years," he noted.

"To get ourselves out of this terrible state, we have taken steps to expand the city. A detailed area plan is almost complete," he said.

Besides, the government is not encouraging distributing plots. Instead, it is promoting high-rise buildings in four proposed satellite towns around the capital.

Earlier, Bashundhara Chairman Shah Alam demanded approval for the projects floated before the land development rules for private housing project were framed in 2004.

He claimed his business has made some 30-40 thousand people multi-millionaires.

Shah Alam also said the 1/11 government had failed due to non-cooperation by businessmen.

In response, Mannan said, "Maybe it's true to some extent. But we can also conclude that some profit-hungry businessmen had welcomed 1/11 changeover to realise their high ambitions."

REHAB President Tanvirul Haque Probal urged the government to revise the land development rules so that it gets easier for housing projects to get approval.

He said, "Rajuk is not giving permission for buildings over 10 storeys for the last one and a half months. But we don't know the reason."

Mannan said a sub-committee is working on the matter and will submit a report soon. Things will be okay after that.

In his written speech, BLDA senior vice-president Enamul Haque said the gov-

ernment is earning more than Tk 1,200 crore from the sector.

The sector has around 29 lakh engineers, architects, experts and workers employed in it. Indirectly, around 1.5 crore people depend on the housing industry, he added.

Referring to an opinion poll conducted by Bangla daily Prothom Alo, Mannan said about 86 percent of the respondents have voted in favour of boycotting the land grabbers socially.

The developers assured the state minister of expelling the grabbers from their associations.

Moeen's plea

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properties before judgment.

Tuku was present before the court during yesterday's session.

Earlier on September 8 last year, Moeen filed the petition asking for dismissal of the case against him.

But Tuku's lawyers submitted a written statement against the petition saying that Moeen's petition should be rejected, as it is not reasonable.

Former state minister Tuku filed the Tk 100-crore defamation suit on July 12 last year accusing the former army chief of making derogatory remarks that damaged Tuku's reputation.

After the hearing, the court issued a notice asking Moeen to explain within three weeks why his properties would not be attached.

On March 27, 2007, Moeen said at a tea party at National Parade Square that corrupt politicians had siphoned at least Tk 20,000 crore from energy sector during the tenure of four-party government, reads the complaint.

The party was held in honour of freedom fighters.

BIWTA yet

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activities, BIWTA Chief Engineer (dredging) Abdul Matin told The Daily Star yesterday.

The sudden stalemate in the long expected and highly publicised clean Buriganga drive that started on January 6 indicates lack of proper planning by BIWTA engineers. The drive aims at removing an estimated 1.9 million tonnes of accumulated rubbish from the beds of Buriganga, Turag and Balu in several phases.

So far three out of four dredging companies have deployed six dredgers in the Buriganga for removing 3,000 tonnes of rubbish in the first phase of the drive to clean one kilometre stretch of the river near Sadarghat launch terminal. The first phase will cost the public exchequer over Tk 6 crore.

The chief engineer said they are exploring several options to dump the rubbish safely.

"One option is to separate soil from rubbish, and use the DCC site for dumping rubbish and find buyers for soil," he said.

Matin further said BIWTA engineers found on Saturday that the rubbish-laden barges could not berth any-

where near the DCC dumping site due to lack of required draft in the Turag. "We are also thinking of installing pump machines to unload the rubbish at Amin Bazar site," he added.

He mentioned that private land owners and real estate developers at Shoalmachi readily agreed to filling up an area of around 100 bighas with rubbish and soil.

At Shoalmachi, local people said yesterday this area becomes a massive conduit for floodwater in rainy season. Workers deployed by the developers were seen yesterday installing pipes and also building a platform on the Turag shore preparing to pump the waste and soil for filling the land.

These real estate developers are delighted to have the area filled free of cost while they normally charge land owners up to Tk 1 lakh for filling one katha of land.

Din Islam, a tea stall owner at Shoalmachi, said the land developers are doubly delighted because the environmental certificate, for which they have been trying in vein for long, will now be given by none other than the government.

Orphanage case

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The court also said the trial will be continued in absence of former principal secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddique and former president late Ziaur Rahman's nephew Mominur Rahman as they have been absconding since the case was filed against them.

The BNP chairperson was not present at the court due to personal problem while Tarique Rahman's lawyer represented him. Tarique, also senior vice-chairman of BNP, has been abroad for treatment.

The accused Sharfuddin Ahmed was present in the court while former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haq Kamal, who was earlier granted bail by the High Court, was absent as he went abroad for treatment.

Both Khaleda and Tarique earlier got bail from the HC in the case.

The Anti-corruption Commission on August 5 last year pressed charges against Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and four others, showing 39 people as prose-

BRDB fire

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among the people prompting them to come out of the building quickly.

Assistant Rural Development Officer AKM Ayub Ali, who got trapped on the rooftop, told The Daily Star, "When I, along with my two colleagues, tried to get down from the 6th floor, a cloud of smoke covered us. I fell down on the stairway on the third floor."

"I managed to go to the rooftop with the help of my colleagues from where fire fighters rescued us."

Maj Sheikh Mohammad Shahjalal, director (Operation) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said vehicles and valuables in the basement could be saved as they were able to control the fire confining it to the storeroom.

The official said documents, electric cables and old furniture kept in the storeroom were gutted in the flame.

BRDB Director General Mohammad Humyun Khalid said there was no casualty as most people went out of the building to offer prayers and have lunch at the time.

The LGRD and cooperatives ministry formed a five-member committee headed by Joint Secretary Abdul Mannan to investigate into the incident and ascertain the extent of damage. The committee was asked to submit report within a week.

Another five-member probe committee headed by the BRDB director (Administration) was also formed and asked to submit report.

NO FIRE-FIGHTING MECHANISM

The Palli Bhaban has been using the building's basement as a warehouse for scrap vehicles, stationary materials and site for an electric sub-station though it is designated for car parking.

Regarding fire-fighting mechanism, Humayun Khalid said, "It is true that there are lapses on our part too. Fire-fighting system has never been installed at the building."

"Electric sub-station is not allowable in the basement of a building as per the law," said an official of Power Development Board requesting anonymity.

Though the BRDB authorities earmarks a small space of the basement for car parking, the jeep of its DG and other vehicles of officials remain parked prominently on the street as usual.

"My jeep is parked on the street as I have to move frequently," said Khalid.

Criminal cases

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distribution of the powers of the judges. The lawyers included Jamiruddin Sircar, Moudud Ahmed, Khandaker Mahub Uddin Ahmed, AJ Mohammad Ali, Abdur Razzak, Khandaker Mahub Hossain and Rafiqul Islam Mia.

After the meeting, TH Khan told newsmen that the senior judges should be given powers of hearing and disposing of the cases including the writ, bail and appeal petitions for upholding the dignity and image of the judiciary.

He also said the chief justice assured them that he would look into the matter.

The Supreme Court Bar Association president AFM Mesbahuddin, however, told The Daily Star that the reconstitution of the HC benches is the sole discretionary jurisdiction of the chief justice. There is nothing to raise question on this matter, he said.

However, hearings of a few long pending important cases were not held at the HC yesterday due to the reconstitution of the benches. An HC bench, presided by Justice AFM Abdur Rahman, was due yesterday to hold hearing on its suo moto rule for explanation on the extra judicial killing in the law enforcers' custody.

Another bench headed by Justice Mohammad Anwarul Haque was set to continue hearing on a 12-year-old writ petition that challenged the government move to sign production-sharing contracts with foreign gas and oil exploration companies.

The Deputy Attorneys General said the chief justice would constitute new benches for disposing of the matters.

Huda, Mohiuddin

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The IG (prisons) was present at that time.

On November 19 last year, the SC confirmed the death sentences to a dozen ex-army officers including the five.

Of the others, one is dead and six are on the run.

India amble

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matches, Lankans took an experimental approach to the game after lady luck had smiled for the fourth time on their skipper Kumar Sangakkara. Win the toss and bowl first had been the norm of the tournament so far, although hosts skipper Shakib Al Hasan went for the extraordinary by deciding to bat first against India and paid a heavy penalty for it.

While on Shakib's case it was a matter of trying to outsmart the common conscience, for Sangakkara it was sheer courage and the luxury of experimenting. He had a valid reason though as he might not have luck again and may have to face the daunting task of bowling under lights with all the dew and a soaked ball in the final.

Sri Lanka, however, didn't experiment with the team combination and opted for their strongest side, under the conditions, with the return of the world's best one-day batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan.

India brought a couple of changes; Virender Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh, and Ashish Nehra were sitting out, while playing were Dinesh Karthik, Amit Mishra and Sudeep Tyagi respectively.

Despite receiving an early blow after losing last match's centurion Upul Tharanga for nought in the very first over from Sudeep Tyagi, the Lankans were given a flying start by Tillakaratne Dilshan who showed no signs of rustiness after sitting out the previous three matches.

Dilshan started from where he had left off in the first match against Bangladesh, threading both Tyagi and Sreesanth through the gaps with utmost ease. He raced to eight boundaries and a single in just 17 balls. The handful of fans that adorned the largely-empty stands thought they were in for some delicatessen, but their course ran down early as the experienced Zaheer Khan came in and made an immediate impact by bringing Dilshan's enterprising knock to a premature end. Kudos to Dhoni who had put Gambhir at fly-slip for that sort of an opportunity, which the fielder grabbed with both hands.

The innings had the tempo of a T20 match as the Lankans went after everything. But as it happens on more occasions than not, their urgency was more reflected in the number of wickets to fall than the runs put on board. They lost three more wickets in quick time, including that of Mahela Jayawardene, to be reduced to 68 for 5 after fifteen overs, thanks to Zaheer Khan whose first spell read 5-2-9-2.

PM to receive

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The award was introduced by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust in 1986, two years after the Indian prime minister was assassinated.

Nobel Laureate and Grameen Bank founder Muhammad Yunus was the twelfth recipient of the award in 1998.

Other recipients include former Mauritian President Shridath Ramphal, late Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai, former Irish President Mary Robinson, renowned Indian agricultural scientist M S Swaminathan and the organisation UNICEF.

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development seeks to recognise the efforts of individuals or organisations to promote international peace, development and a new international economic order.

The prize carries a cash award of 25 lakh Indian rupees and a citation.

Law ministry

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Constitution says the President shall have power to grant pardons, reprieves and respite and to remit, suspend or commute any sentence passed by any court, tribunal or other authority.

In its opinion the law ministry said, "The assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and members of his family is an unprecedented massacre in the history. To create an illustration, punishment of such heinous killings should be executed."

In the mercy petition one convict was learnt to have said he was not involved in the killings. He was assigned to preserve the dead body of Bangabandhu. Another victim said he is a diabetic patient and another said he wants to die a natural death.

The crucial opinion file was signed by Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed at about 5:30pm, official sources told UNB.

Zardari

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that Zardari has faced media trials throughout his political career.

The book 'Asif Ali Zardari: A Mature Politician' by writer and journalist Daud Ahmad, is a political biography of the PPP chairman.

The Daily Times quoted Raisani as saying that President Zardari has made the country stronger by acknowledging that the rights of the Baluch people had suffered a great deal due to Pervez Musharraf's policies.

He went on to say that those involved in the fall of Dhaka were now conspiring against Pakistan, and that they were eventually bound to fail.

Sindh Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah was also present at the occasion.

Skinner Kumar Sangakkara took the responsibility of reviving the innings and found good support towards the end from spinner Suraj Randiv and paceman Thilan Thushara. Sangakkara scored 68 runs including nine exquisite boundaries off 78 deliveries before Yuvraj Singh caused his downfall. The other spinner Amit Mishra caused more damage to the Lankans as he took three wickets including that of Randiv (56). The Lankan innings didn't go the full distance as a disciplined bowling and a much-improved fielding performance from the Indians skittled them out in 46.1 overs with 213 runs on the board which was less than modest on this wicket.

And so it proved as the Indian batsmen made easy work of the Lankan bowlers. The opening stand between Dinesh Karthik and Gautam Gambhir put on 80 in the first ten overs. Karthik perished for 48, while Gambhir scored a few more (71).