

Khaleda still

FROM PAGE 1
What I did for him. Where he was and where I brought him. But he destroyed my two sons. He also destroyed me and my party," a BNP standing committee member quoted Khaleda as saying in a committee meeting on Thursday night in her Gulshan office.

Khaleda made the comment after standing committee members Moudud Ahmed and Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, echoed by MK Anwar, urged her to restore Bhuiyan's party membership considering his contributions to the organisation. The chairperson's reply astonished a number of top BNP leaders, meeting sources said.

Khaleda expelled Bhuiyan from the party right before her arrest by the immediate past caretaker government in September 2007.

The expulsion was due to Bhuiyan's unveiling of a set of party reform proposals for the organisation's democratisation.

Thursday's standing committee meeting however ended up deciding to consider any appeal for restoration of Bhuiyan's party membership. It also decided to send a delegation to visit ailing Bhuiyan in a hospital.

Bhuiyan, a veteran politician, is now fighting cancer, and his condition is critical.

A BNP delegation led by Standing Committee

Member Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain visited the renowned freedom fighter in the hospital yesterday afternoon.

BNP leaders MK Anwar, Nazrul Islam Khan, Mirza Fakhruul Alamgir, Emran Saleh Prince, and Shamsuzzaman Dudu accompanied Mosharrif among others.

"We've come here to see Mannan Bhuiyan not only because he is a politician, but also because he has been a long term friend. We, on behalf of BNP, wish his recovery. We're worried about his health," Mosharrif told reporters in the hospital.

He also said the former BNP secretary general has been a dedicated politician and freedom fighter. He contributed greatly to the country and BNP in his 11-year tenure as the party's secretary general, Mosharrif added.

Asked about Bhuiyan's restoration in the party, Mosharrif however said they did not discuss anything or reached any decision about the matter.

MK Anwar said it is not the right time for taking such political decisions as Bhuiyan is fighting for his life right now.

Meanwhile, ruling Awami League leader Abdul Jalil, Amir Hossain Amu, Obaidul Quader, and Subid Ali Bhuiyan also visited Mannan Bhuiyan in the hospital.

N-E Indian business team due today

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

Senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar will arrive here today along with a business delegation from West Bengal and northeastern states of India aiming to improve trade ties and connectivity between the two countries.

Aiyar, a Rajya Sabha member and ormer minister, will visit Dhaka and Chittagong to explore opportunities for expansion of business ties between India's northeastern states and Bangladesh.

More than 20 businessmen are expected to accompany Aiyar. He is to hold talks with Industry Minister Dilip Barua and Commerce Minister Faruk Khan and call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Serving as a minister from Tamil Nadu during 2004-09, Aiyar has a caring eye for the development of the north-eastern region.

To Aiyar, lack of proper connectivity and trade relations with neighbouring countries is a key reason for backwardness of northeast India.

Northeast India consists of the contiguous Seven Sister States, Sikkim, and parts of North Bengal.

'Little final'

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third-place bronze medal was nothing to celebrate.

"This team had a higher goal than ending up playing for third place," said the Bayern Munich defender ahead of Germany's record fifth appearance in a third-place match.

The two countries met at this stage of the World Cup once before, in 1970, when Helmut Schoen's Germany prevailed 1-0. Uruguay's sole competitive victory in nine attempts against Germany came at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, the South Americans winning 4-1.

If Uruguay are to end their 82-year wait for a victory against Germany, they might have to do so without captain Diego Lugano and Diego Forlan, who are both struggling to recover in time.

Lugano missed the 3-2 semifinal defeat to the Netherlands with a thigh strain while Forlan was substituted shortly before the end of the game against the Dutch.

However, coach Oscar Tabarez has Luis Suarez and Jorge Fucile available for selection, who served one-match bans.

"It will be a difficult game," said Tabarez. "Finishing fourth is not the same as third. We'll go into the game with the same engagement and passion as we did against Holland."

Germany coach Joachim Loew has a doubt over striker Miroslav Klose, who is suffering from a back problem.

The 32-year-old is one player desperate to play as he needs just one more goal to equal Brazilian striker Ronaldo's 15-goal World Cup record.

Midfielder Sami Khedira and Lahm have both recovered from knocks while Loew is expected to give run outs to the four German players who have yet to feature.

"That would be simply a reward for their hard work," said assistant coach Hansi Flick.

No new judge

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Appellate Division on seniority basis for quick disposal of cases, Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, told The Daily Star recently.

If the government suppresses promotion of the judges to the Appellate Division, the lawyers will protest the move, he said.

Now the HC Division of the SC has 90 judges though over 3 lakh cases are pending with it, sources said.

Rafiqul Islam, FRI divisional officer (forest protection), said most of the felled trees were immature and hardly any of them was over-aged.

"The trees do not appear to be dead and diseased," he said.

Mohalder cut 3,300 trees with betel leaf creepers on them in two Khasia settlements this year, half of which were not marked for felling, said Ferly Surong, headman of Kailin punji.

"The trader has damaged over five thousand other immature trees at Aslom and Kailin punji joom," said Dibarmin, a Khasia at Aslom punji.

Mohalder however claimed that he felled only 1,650 trees this year.

A forest in ruins

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felling many trees without "felling mark", a coloured sign given by the forest department on trees earmarked for cutting.

"He ... admitted that though he was supposed to fell only those trees marked by the forest department, in fact, most of the trees he had cut had been without marking," the report says.

It adds that although the trader was supposed to cut only mature trees, "in reality it was found, Mohalder had cut many trees having less than required circumference".

According to a contract the timber trader signed with Nahar Tea Garden proprietor at the time of buying the trees, Mohalder was allowed to chop only those trees having circumference of three feet or above at breast height.

Responding to allegations of cutting unmarked and under-aged trees, Mohalder earlier said, "I cut trees that were commercially profitable."

But reached again later, he denied cutting any unmarked tree, and that he had spoken to police or confessed to violating tree-cutting rules.

Mohalder is denying it, said Md Abdullah, officer-in-charge of Sreemangal police station. Police carried out the investigation along with forest officials.

Mohalder bought 4,000 trees from Nahar Tea Garden and got forest department's permit in 2008. He cut 1,200 trees until the permit was stilled by the forest department the same year, in the face of protests by the Khasias and environmentalists due to the adverse effect of the tree felling on the ethnic community's livelihood, and the environment.

The Sylhet divisional forest officer (DFO) revived the permit in February this year, and allowed cutting 2,350 trees that were categorised as "mature, dead, decaying, and uprooted by storms"; and the trader was asked to spare 450 trees in the punji (Khasia settlement) area.

Mohalder filed a petition with the HC against the forest department's ban on cutting the 450 trees.

In response, an HC bench of Justice Md Mamta Uddin Ahmed and Justice Naima Haider directed the forest authorities and local administration to allow cutting 3,550 trees, pending final judgment.

The forest department then filed an appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC order.

Murad Reza, additional attorney general, who appeared for the government at the SC hearing, said the HC bench, while passing the order, had not taken into consideration the number of trees that had already been felled.

The timber trader, however, armed with the HC order, embarked on wholesale cutting of trees including a large number of unmarked ones in March this year, and continued well into April, according to the local Khasias.

The SC stayed the felling of trees on May 24 until final judgment on Mohalder's petition pending with the HC. The SC also scrapped the government appeal at the same time.

During a visit to Khasia paan joom at Aslom and Kailin punji, this correspondent found that most of the hundreds of trees felled had no felling mark.

As a result of felling the trees at random with labourers, many immature trees have been damaged, says the police report, and many of the trees felled had betel leaf creepers.

The Daily Star sent around seventy digital photographs of the chopped trees to the authorities of Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (FRI), seeking expert comment.

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The trees felled include Gamar, Gorjon, Jaam, Koroi, Bonak, Awal, and others.

The forest department had put felling marks in 2007 that faded away over a span of three years. The forest authorities did not put fresh marks when the trader embarked on tree felling again this year.

Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF) of Sreemangal Mohammad Mizanur Rahman said the garden manager and Mohalder defied forest department terms and conditions, and obtained an HC order.

"We could not move to mark the trees for felling again as fast as Mohalder embarked on cutting the trees," he said.

Sylhet DFO Delwar Hossain said they could not intervene and do the routine task of marking the trees afresh, as a case was pending with the HC.

But then he added, "The range officer was supposed to do the job, but he could not, due to a lack of manpower and logistics."

As to what actions they took so far, he said nobody had informed them of the illegal tree felling by Mohalder.

The Daily Star has consistently reported on the issue since March this year, and there have been a number of public demonstrations protesting the felling of unmarked trees.

The forest department officials could have done their routine task of ascertaining the trees for felling, said Murad Reza.

Pijush Kanti Bhattacharjee, the tea garden manager, however claimed that he along with forest officials kept a watch on tree felling, and that no unmarked tree was cut.

Then he went on to say, "I will not allow Khasias to cultivate betel leaf, they can work as teagarden labourers if they wish."

Md Harun-or-Rashid, Moulvibazar police superintendent, said following the police investigation, they asked the forest officials to take legal actions. But the forest authorities have yet to file a complaint with police.

Though required by the permit, no officer from district administration nor the forest range officer was present during tree felling, said Lutmon of Aslom punji.

The deputy commissioner (DC) of Moulvibazar was informed of the matter with a copy of the permit.

DC Md Mofizul Islam, who was recently transferred, said the tea garden manager did not ask him for an officer.

Head of Forestry and Wood Technology of Khulna University Prof AK Fazul Hoque said tree cutting in this manner will gravely affect both the local ecology, and Khasia livelihood.

A total of around 500 people of 70 Khasia families live in Aslom and Kailin punji.

Govt staff

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guesthouse at Gangachhara upazila of the northern district.

Of the arrestees, most are candidates.

The SP said an intelligence agency had tipped them off that some 300 applicants would be given question papers at the guesthouse.

Besides question papers meant to be used in the exam the following day, Tk 18 lakh, three motorcycles, a microbus, and a photocopier were recovered during the swoop.

Police sources said the arrested suppliers have admitted they were to charge each candidate Tk 5 lakh. They had asked them to come to the guesthouse with Tk 2 lakh in advance.

The candidates were supposed to pay the rest after the examination.

Once they were at the guesthouse, they were given multiple-choice question papers along with answers.

During their stay at the guesthouse, the candidates were not allowed to keep their mobile phones switched on. They were asked to return the question papers and answers once they memorised those.

The organisers did all this to ensure the leaked questions did not reach anyone outside the guesthouse.

Abdur Razzak of CO Bazar area in Rangpur town arranged the guesthouse named 'Bhinno Jagat' for the purpose, added the sources.

Raihan, a candidate from Mymensingh who was also arrested, said he had paid Tk 2 lakh in advance for the questions.

Question papers for teacher recruitment at government primary schools too were leaked in the same area a few months back. And the education ministry had to suspend that examination as well, said the police sources.

AL MP sued

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Abdus Salam, the inspector general of police (IGP) called the sergeant to his office Thursday and asked him to file the case.

Sergeant Shariful Islam told The Daily Star, "I have filed the case with the approval of IGP Nur Mohammad."

In the case statement, Shariful said the lawmaker swooped on him as he failed to provide Ilias a satisfactory answer when he asked why his vehicle was stuck in a traffic jam on June 30.

The angry MP hurled abusive words at him, slapped and beat him up so severely with a stick that it knocked him out, the case statement said.

ASP Abdus Salam told The Daily Star, "During the enquiry, the lawmaker admitted that he slapped the traffic sergeant as he did not show proper respect. Besides, the MP got angry as he was suffering due to the traffic jam."

Dhaka Superintendent of Police Iqbal Bahar said attack on a policeman on duty is unacceptable.

"If there was any reluctance on that sergeant's part or it was his fault, the lawmaker could have complained to his high-ups against the policeman," the SP said.

A top-ranking police official said it is an unprecedented incident of filing a case by law-enforcers against any ruling party lawmaker.

"The case has been filed at the decision of the Police headquarters as the attack on an on-duty policeman was an attempt of tarnishing the police image," he said.

Meanwhile, despite repeated attempts, lawmaker Ilias Mollah could not be reached. Sources said the MP is now abroad on a government tour.

Implement DAP

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Besides, speakers at the rally asked the government to take punitive action against the land grabbers.

They thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for approving the DAP in the cabinet and publishing a gazette notification on this.

Presided over by BAPA General Secretary Md Abdul Matin, the rally was addressed by Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh Iftekharuzzaman, joint secretaries of BAPA Zakir Hossain, Md Shahjahan Mridha, JK Baral and Mihir Biswas, among others.

They said the DAP must be implemented to make Dhaka city a better place to live.

The government should implement the DAP overcoming all obstacles, they said.

Feroza Begum

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she was flying to Singapore last night, said her family sources.

Feroza Begum was undergoing treatment at Apollo Hospital for the last few days as she was suffering from breathing difficulties and pneumonia, sources said.

She popularised Nazrul Sangeet, songs of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, in the 1960s both in Bangladesh and West Bengal and became an icon of the music genre.

Two pirates

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speedy trawler, but the gang started firing at the law enforcers, after a gunfight of half an hour the gang fled, but the law forces recovered the two bodies and the arms, Maj Shamshersaid.

Coast Guard and Rab started patrolling the area as pirate gangs increased their activities there during the current Hilsa catching season.

GM Quader

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and explained the situation.

He told the prime minister that he would quit his job but would not renew the lease since it involves people's lives and he will have to bear the responsibility if any accident occurs, the sources said.

The minister is waiting for the prime minister's instruction about the matter, they added.

Meanwhile, despite repeated attempts the minister could not be contacted for his comments. An official at his residence told UNB over phone yesterday evening that the minister is not entertaining any press call.

Tahrir tried

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have a panel with the job of checking all the leaflets and publications and he is a member of that panel. They wanted to convey their message to the army through the people, Maola told interrogators.

He also said they were also developing relations with Jamaat-e-Islami.

Deputy Commissioner Mahbubur said, "Recently Maola had been keeping regular contact with a Jamaat leader."

They were trying to forge a secret alliance with Jamaat to destabilise the government by creating anarchy across the country so that they can foil the trial of war criminals, the police official claimed.

Mahbubur, however, said they are verifying the information gleaned from Maola regarding the Jamaat connection.

The government imposed a ban on Hizb-ut Tahrir on October 22 last year in connection with its anti-state and anti-democratic activities.

Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh had been launching open campaign for last few years calling people to establish its self-styled Khilafat rule.

Despite the ban, the organisation is still holding processions at different places.

Police have arrested 300 leaders and workers of the organisation including its chief coordinator Mohiuddin Ahmed, an associate professor of the IBA at Dhaka University, and deputy chief Kazi Morshedul Haque.

Islami thinker Tokiuddin Al Nakhani formed Hizb-ut Tahrir, also banned in many countries across the globe, in 1953 in Jerusalem, five years after Israel occupied Palestine.

Meanwhile, police last night arrested four suspected leaders, including Chittagong unit chief Nur Mohammad, of the banned outfit from the capital's Kalabagan area.

The other detainees are Mohammad Nasir Uddin Majumder Jilani, 24, Rakib Uddin Ahmed, 35, and Sheikh Omar Sharif alias Russell.

20 hurt

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convener Khalil Ullah snatched the microphone from him that sparked tension.

Soon the Imam of the mosque intervened and defused the tension.

But members of the both committees were locked into a clash after the prayers that left 20 persons injured, witnesses said.

Masud said that he gave eight ceiling fans and Tk 2,000 to the madrasa committee in 1982 for making a 160-foot long and eight-foot wide road through the land owned by the madrasa.

In 1994, he also paid Tk 80,000 for the purpose but did not get any passage. The madrasa committee recently gave a piece of land to Masud adjacent to the mosque for the road.

But Khalil protested the decision of the madrasa committee, Masud said.

Shahnawaz said that they were trying to help Masud get a way to his land.

Suicide attack

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"The death toll is 56 now. There are still 89 injured people in different hospitals," local administration official Rasool Khan told AFP.

"Rescue work is also going on to recover people trapped in the debris."

Khan said women and tribal police were among the dead, adding that dozens of shops had been flattened and more than 100 people were treated for injuries.

Buildings in the downtown market were made mostly of mud and clay. The force of the explosives collapsed flimsy wooden roofs on more than two dozen shops, twisted shutters and snapped off doors, said an AFP reporter.

Slippers and empty bottles of soft drinks littered the market along with bloodied chunks of flesh.

"We suspect that there were two blasts. One was a suicide attack on a motorbike. We have also found the wreckage of a car. It indicates that a car bomb was detonated with a remote control," Khan told AFP.

"The target is not clear but it could have been the local administration and members of a peace committee who come to my office for routine weekly meetings on Fridays."

The four were arrested around 10:30pm while preparing for a meeting at a rented flat on Crescent Road.

Syed Nurul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of Ramna division, told The Daily Star yesterday that the intelligent department informed them that the Hizb ut-Tahrir activists had been living in the building and were preparing for an inter-divisional meeting.

All the four arrestees are former students of Chittagong University and were involved in last Sunday's rampage in the port city, said the ADC, adding that they have seized a number of "jihadi" books, leaflets and some other documents from their possession.

A case was lodged against them under Anti-terrorism Act with Kalabagan Police Station, said the ADC.

The Tahrir leaders were detained a day after the arrest of their advisor Prof Syed Golam Maola of Dhaka University.

The government banned Hizb ut-Tahrir on October 22 last year for its anti-state and anti-democratic activities, but the outfit is still holding processions at different places on different occasions escaping police watch.

Australian PM

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entrance before the egg was thrown," a police spokesman was quoted as saying. "The egg did not hit the prime minister, but instead struck a dignitary protection officer."

Gillard laughed off the incident saying, "There was an egg thrown and it did hit a female police officer on the back of her jacket. I have obviously spoken to her and that is the circumstance there."

IU violence

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them in the incident.

Demanding release of the arrestees, some 200 people including BCL activists barricaded Kushtia-Jhenidai highway Thursday evening and clashed with the police when the latter went to remove the blockade.

Police arrested 19 people from the spot.

Police filed another case accusing 200 known and unknown people of attacking the police and disrupting vehicular movement.

Sources said additional police were deployed in the university to ward off any trouble.

Vice-Chancellor Prof M Alauddin visited the campus yesterday afternoon.

Sources said BCL factions had been locked into clash since May 28 when its new committee was declared with Jahangir Hossain as IU unit BCL president and Shamsuzzaman Tuhin as secretary.

But the faction led by Mahbub Hossain Khokon and Abu Jar Gaffar Al Gaffar and Ali Mortuza Khosru, aspirants for president and secretary candidate, rejected the committee.

The authorities kept the university closed for eight days following clashes on June 2, 4 and 6.

The university reopened on June 15.

Bigger market abroad

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economic cooperation among the eight developing countries.

Moreover, Bangladesh has ratified the "Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of the D-8 countries", which will help businessmen of both Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Mentioning her government's vision to build a digital Bangladesh by 2021, Hasina said the government will introduce an internet program soon through which expatriate Bangladeshis and their children across the world will get the opportunities to learn Bangla perfectly.

The PM said the government wants to send Bangladeshi workforce for agriculture sectors in African countries.

She said since establishment of D-8 in 1997 the relation between Bangladesh and Nigeria has been strengthened.

Earlier, the expatriate Bangladeshis, mostly physicians, engineers, consultants of various multi-national firms said they hoped that the premier's visit will open up a new horizon in the bilateral relation between Dhaka and Abuja.

Referring to existing problems of getting visa by both the Bangladeshi and Nigerian citizens to visit each other's country, they requested the PM to open a mission in Abuja to ease the visa process.

With the opening of a mission in Abuja, a new labour and export market for Bangladesh will be created in the African countries, they added.