

BUSINESS PROJECTS

Bangladesh Army following model of Pak Army

Says BBC radio documentary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The business Bangladesh Army is carrying out in the country, is just following the model of Pakistan Army, reported the second episode of the nine-part BBC radio documentary "Probaho" yesterday.

The documentary revealed this while investigating business projects of Bangladesh Army, particularly the Mongla Cement Factory in Khulna.

Regarding the relations between two armies, eminent expert on military affairs in the sub-continent Dr Ayesha Siddika told the weekly BBC documentary, "There is a keen interest in building links with Bangladesh. I mean, older officers, Pakistan Army officers, want to develop a close relationship with Bangladesh Army."

Ayesha also said that she had taken part in many discussions in which high ranked officials of Pakistan Army and Air Force talked without due respect and dignity that another sovereign country deserves.

"I know a retired general of Pakistan who is a businessman nowadays and frequents to Bangladesh. He can be defined as a medium of communication," Ayesha added.

While investigating the history of Mongla Cement Factory, a concern of

Bangladesh Army Welfare Trust, the documentary found that a bilateral deal was signed between Pakistan and Bangladesh on October 13, 1988 focusing on a loan of \$ 5 crore at 2 percent interest.

The deal was signed at a time when Gen Ziaul Haque of Pakistan was killed in a mysterious plane crash nearly two to three months back and Pakistan was heading for a general election.

The then Pakistan Army chief was Aslam Begh when Pakistan government approved the loan for Bangladesh considering it as a state matter, the documentary said.

The Mongla factory was financed by a portion of the loan. A government document shows though there were discrepancies in the deal the two states signed, Sena Kalyan Sangstha (SKS) did not face much problem in purchasing machineries for the cement factory project.

The documentary quoted a letter addressed to the then managing director of SKS on June 6, 1990.

"The deal between SKS and Pakistan Heavy Mechanical Complex Ltd have discrepanciesThe institutional deal allows payment in advance, which was not entertained in the state deal. We need an immediate explanation in this regard,"

the letter reads.

The time when the cement factory was financed also coincides with the military rule in Bangladesh.

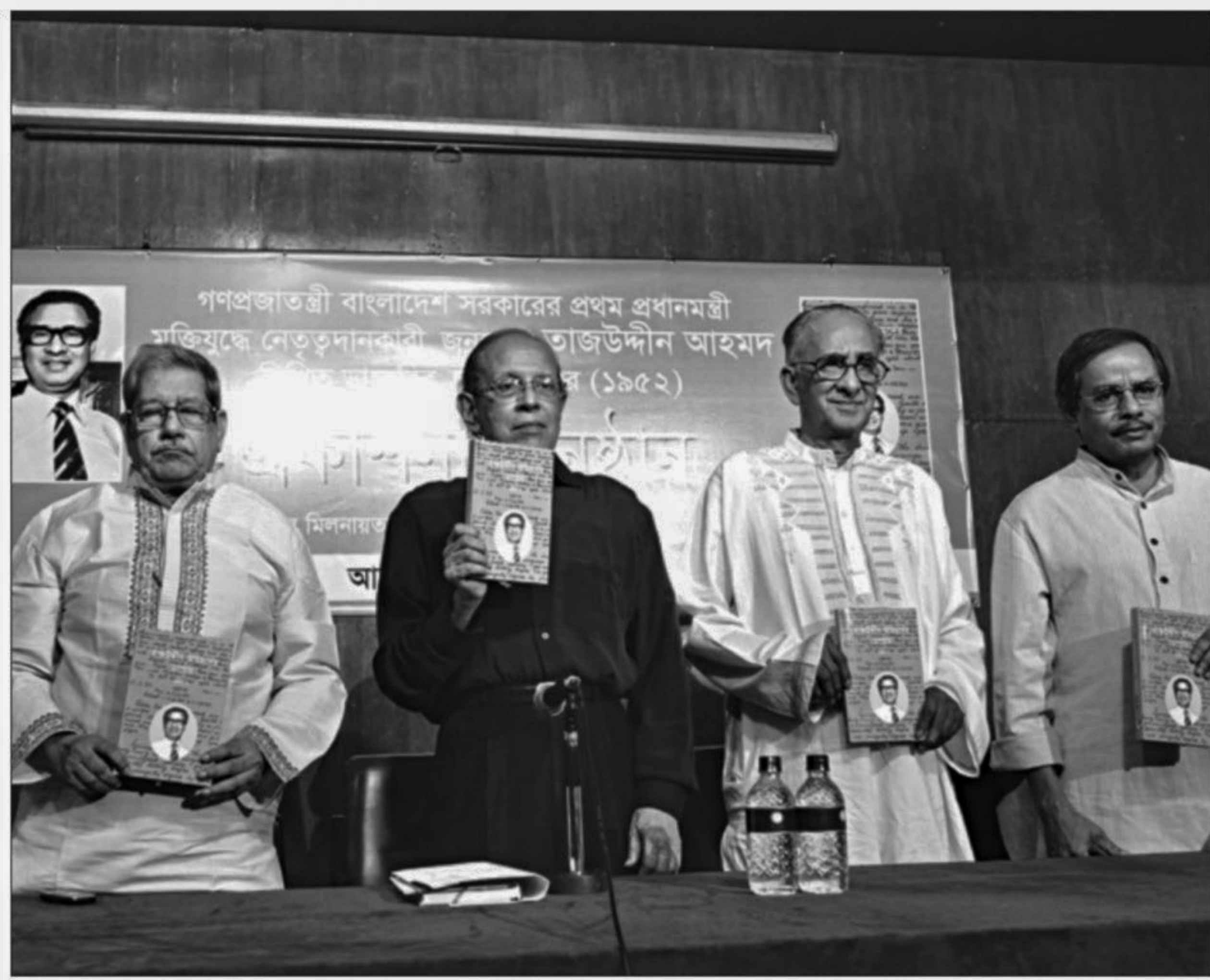
High ranking army officers of that time confirmed BBC that the then Pakistan high commissioner in Bangladesh was much eager to have the loan used in implementing the cement project of SKS.

The documentary said that the cement factory in 2008 earned Tk 24 crore as profit--equivalent to the half of the total business profit earned from the business ventures under the trust.

The trust was established in Bangladesh in June in 1998 following the model of Pakistan Army Welfare Trust, which was established in 1965.

Pakistan army established the trust showing reasons that as army is the biggest defence force in the country and largest number of personnel are going into retirement every year, the force needs a separate business platform for welfare of the soldiers, said a book titled "Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy" by Ayesha Siddika.

The projects taken under the trust are more profitable than SKS's and mainly controlled by army headquarters, the documentary added.



(From left) Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, former chief adviser Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman and Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam hold copies of the fourth part of Tajuddin's diary at a publication ceremony at Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium at National Museum in the city yesterday.

Tajuddin spoke for war crimes trial

Muhith tells publication ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad had spoken for trial of war criminals at the time of the Liberation War, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday.

Reminiscing his days with the first premier of Bangladesh, Muhith said, "In August or September of 1971, he spoke for the trial of war criminals."

"So the war crime trial is not a new issue to us. We had plans to try them [war criminals] even the time when they were committing war crimes," said the finance minister while addressing the publication ceremony of the fourth part of Tajuddin's diary.

The diary was published marking the 85th birth anniversary of Tajuddin at Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium at National Museum in the capital. Eminent academic Prof Khan Sarwar

Murshid chaired the ceremony.

Distinguished citizens and intellectuals including former chief adviser Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, National Professor Anisuzzaman, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, founder of Biswasahittya Kendra, Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam of Dhaka University, poet and writer Belal Chowdhury and Governor of Bangladesh Bank Atiur Rahman also spoke at the function.

Tajuddin's daughter Simeen Hussain Rimi made the inaugural speech thanking the people who helped her publish the book.

Habibur Rahman said Tajuddin was a successful organiser of the Liberation War.

Prof Murshid said, "Tajuddin was an extraordinary human being."

"Tajuddin," said Prof Anisuzzaman, adding that the first premier led the Liberation War

overcoming numerous obstacles.

Prof Abu Sayeed said Tajuddin was a man of discipline and his diary is of huge value to us.

Tajuddin was killed in jail on November 3, 1975, along with three national leaders, Syed Nazrul Islam, AHM Kamruzzaman and Mansur Ali.

Atiur Rahman said the diary reflects Tajuddin's sense of responsibility towards the country.

Tajuddin played an important role in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during the Liberation War.

Manzoorul Islam said Tajuddin had feelings for farmers from his young age.

Whenever the price of jute fell, Tajuddin used to think of farmers' agony and say that the farmers should not be deprived of fair price of jute, he added.



Sikder Monowara Bhaban at the Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitri Hall.

PHOTO: STAR

SIKDER MONOWARA BHABAN AT DU

Females' dorm remains unused for lack of gas, water

RAKIB AHAMMED

A newly constructed three-storey building meant for nearly one hundred female students of Dhaka University (DU) remains unused as connections of gas, water and sewerage are yet to be given, four months into the completion of its construction.

Starting in 2006, the construction work of Sikder Monowara Bhaban at the Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitri Hall was finished in February this year with suspension of work for over one year, said DU officials.

Sikder Medical College of Sikder Group donated the dormitory.

"We will be able to accommodate nearly 95 students on the first and second floors once the connections of gas, water and sewerage are fixed," hall provost Prof Farida Begum said, adding that there will be an auditorium on the ground floor.

A number of house tutors of the hall said these utility connections were not set up because the DU administration and Sikder Group remain undecided as to who will do it.

While DU administrators said Sikder Group will set up the connections, Sikder Group representatives say it is the responsibility of the DU administration.

Sikder Group Chairman Zainul Haque Sikder donated the fund under condition to name it after his wife Monowara Sikder, DU officials said.

Sikder Group engineer Kamrul Huda, however, said DU administration willingly decided to name it as Sikder Monowara Bhaban.

On the ongoing situation, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star that construction of the building began under the previous administration and that the current administration is unaware of its deed.

Hall provost Farida Begum is just in the dark about the contract. "I just want the rest of the work is completed so the students can stay there," she said.

Sikder Group engineer Kamrul Huda told The Daily Star that there was no deed whatsoever for the construction of the building that cost nearly Tk 2 crore.

The VC, however, said he would arrange a meeting with Sikder Group representatives to decide on the unfinished work.

House tutors and resident students of Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitri Hall said they have an acute accommodation crisis. "We have arranged accommodation for 45 students in three rooms because of seat crisis," said a house tutor preferring not to be named.

They also said they could not accommodate all the students of 2007-08 session while request for accommodation from the students of the current session is piling up.

CONSTRUCTION OF PADMA BRIDGE

Dhaka seeks Tokyo's support

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has sought Japanese assistance in the construction of the Padma Bridge as well as power sector and dam management.

"Our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina always places emphasis on attracting more foreign investment in these sectors to build the future Bangladesh," Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said when she met her Japanese counterpart Katsuya Okada on the sidelines of 17th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, on Thursday.

Indicating communication a vital sector for the overall socio-economic development, the foreign minister sought Japanese cooperation for the construction of the Padma Bridge as it did for the Bangabandhu Bridge.

During the meeting, Dipu Moni recalled the historical relations that happily exist between Bangladesh and Japan, mentioning that Father of the Nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman paid a visit to Japan in 1973 which in fact laid the foundation of today's relation.

She also said that the Bangladesh PM is very keen to visit Japan at a mutually convenient time this year to revitalise our bilateral relations.

Emphasising the importance of visit of the Bangladesh premier, the Japanese foreign minister said that Bangladesh is one of the close comprehensive economic partners and Japanese business communities are taking interest to invest to develop socio-economic infrastructure of Bangladesh.

Expressing Japanese positive indication regarding the Padma Bridge, Okada said that they would like to work together with ADB and the World Bank. He further informed that they have already signed the exchanged notes regarding the Bheramara Cycle Power Generation Plant and hoped for its quick implementation.

Dipu Moni said that despite various constraints Bangladesh is moving forward and it has been possible because of the

friendly cooperation of Japan and other development partners of Bangladesh.

The Japanese foreign minister enthusiastically said they would like to take some environment-friendly projects in Bangladesh.

Referring to a study report of JETRO, Dipu Moni informed her Japanese counterpart that the business environment of Bangladesh is better in South Asia, which she expects that the business community of Japan would be interested in Bangladesh.

The Japanese foreign minister sought Bangladesh's co-operation to work together in various regional and international forum.

Meanwhile, she also had a meeting with her Myanmar counterpart U Nyan Win on the sidelines of the ARF Ministerial Meeting.

Both the FM talked about the forthcoming visit of the Bangladesh PM to Myanmar.

Dipu Moni also invited her Myanmar counterpart to visit Bangladesh at his convenience.

Speed up war crimes trial

SCF urges govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Tangail

Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF) leaders yesterday reiterated that speed up the trial of the war criminals who committed "brutal" crimes against humanity during the country's liberation war.

The crimes the war criminals committed are unprecedented in the history and that they should be tried on the soil of this land, they said.

Their call coincides with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's speech at a public gathering in Sakhira yesterday that the trial of war criminals will start in a few days and the offenders would be brought to justice.

The Forum leaders were speaking at a discussion meeting

at Tangail Coronation Dramatic Club auditorium organised by its Tangail district unit.

"It isn't a matter of hostility or revenge. They should be tried for their inhuman crimes," said Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiullah, also senior vice-chairman of the Sector Commanders' Forum.

"We urge the government to speed up the trial and complete the trial of some identified war criminals within the tenure of the government," said Planning Minister AK Khandaker, also the chairman of the Forum, who was the chief guest.

Maj Gen (ret'd) M Masudur Rahman, organising secretary of the Forum, Lt Col (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, vice-chairman and Lt Gen (ret'd) M Harun-or-Rashid, general secretary were present at the programme.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at many places over all seven divisions of the country with moderately heavy falls at places in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:46pm today and rises at 5:25am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 35.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Iswardi and lowest 25.0 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius percentage		Humidity in	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.8	27.4	75	73
Chittagong	30.6	25.7	81	83
Rajshahi	35.4	27.4	80	87
Khulna	33.0	27.5	84	83
Barisal	31.5	26.5	80	86
Sylhet	33.0	25.3	79	76
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.8	87	88



After being released from Dhaka Central Jail BNP Vice-chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury meets BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

Civet is safe now

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The civet, captured by locals of the district's Ashekpur on Wednesday, was handed over to Madhupur Forest Department yesterday morning.

Forest Officer Ratan Chandra Das of Tangail Sadar Range went to Ashekpur Thursday evening and received the civet. It was tied up with rope at a local's house.

Later, Ratan Chandra gave it to National Park Range of the forest department.

He told The Daily Star that the civet had now started taking food and saline water although it was slightly weak before the handover.