

I am evicted

FROM PAGE 1
She added she was harassed, humiliated and ashamed by the way she was treated.

After the briefing, she moved into her brother Shamim Eskander's Gulshan residence. Some of her household items had already been shifted there.

Khaleda had been living in the cantonment house for 38 years since the days when her husband Ziaur Rahman was deputy chief of the army. After the assassination of president Zia in 1981, the then army chief HM Ershad had allotted her the 2.72-acre house at a token price.

In April last year, the Cantonment Board declared the allotment illegal and issued a notice asking her to leave the house. Khaleda's lawyers filed a petition challenging the legality of the notice.

On October 13, the High Court declared the notice legal and asked Khaleda to vacate the residence. It directed the government to give her 30 days' time for that.

The BNP chief's counsels went to the Supreme Court for permission to file an appeal against the HC ruling. The apex court is scheduled to hear the leave-to-appeal petition on November 29.

BNP sources said the army authorities on Friday night communicated a message to their chairperson, saying she should leave the house in the morning.

As the news spread, party leaders and workers started gathering at the Shaheed Jahangir Gate.

At around 6:00am, some army men sought to get in Khaleda's residence, but the guards refused to let them in. Shortly afterwards, a large contingent of Rab and policemen cordoned off the house.

At around 8:00am, the BNP sources continued, the law enforcers entered the house by knocking down a part of the front door. Between 10:00am and noon, they hauled 61 people out of the house.

While BNP claimed most of the 61 were staff of Khaleda Zia, the ISPR described them as "unauthorised occupants".

On the house premises, the law enforcers rapped on the door of the building where Khaleda resides. As she did not respond, they forced their way inside and damaged a few rooms.

According to the party sources, the security men slapped a few of Khaleda's staff when they tried to stop them.

This prompted Khaleda to come out of her bedroom. As the officers requested her to accept the High Court verdict and vacate the house, she said she would first consult her lawyers.

This led to an argument, and at one stage, the law enforcers asked her to follow them.

Two of them ushered the BNP chief towards her car, which came out of the cantonment through Banani gate at 3:15pm. Amid police protection, she reached her Gulshan office at around 3:50pm, as the opposition activists burst into anti-government slogans.

BNP PROTESTS
The opposition supporters clashed with the law enforcers in many places across the country, including in Dhaka's Shaheed Jahangir Gate area, Mohakhali, and in front of the BNP Central Office at Naya Paltan.

Hearing the news that Khaleda would be "evicted" from the house, around 100 BNP leaders including Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque gathered in front of Jahangir Gate, one of the main entrances to Dhaka cantonment, early in the morning. Police chased them away around noon.

The law enforcers did not allow any BNP leader or lawyer, including Supreme Court Bar Association President Khandaker Mahub Hossain and former law minister Moudud Ahmed, inside the cantonment.

The BNP activists staged a sit-in on the road between Mohakhali and Farmgate for half an hour and vandalised a number of vehicles when police tried to disperse them.

They locked into a clash and police charged truncheons on them. A female activist was injured during this clash near Jahangir Gate.

The BNP men took cover in lanes and by lanes across the street from Shaheen College and Mohakhali Flyover and started vandalising vehicles.

Halting traffic, they ransacked vehicles in phases for more than two hours. This continued until they heard that Khaleda had left the house.

At a press conference in the afternoon, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said Khaleda's "eviction" was absolutely unlawful, undemocratic and autocratic.

"She [Khaleda] was taken to an unknown location with force from her cantonment house before being taken to her Gulshan office," he said at the press conference at Khaleda's Gulshan office after having a meeting with the BNP chairperson.

ISPR refutes

FROM PAGE 1
also dismissed the BNP chief's allegation that she and her family members were subjected to misbehaviour.

It said as the High Court's 30 days timeline to vacate the cantonment house ended on November 12, the Cantonment Board authorities went to the residence to get it's occupation legally and requested Khaleda Zia to vacate the house.

"Within 9:30am, 61 staffs out of 67 left the house. Message was received that Khaleda Zia was not up yet. Later at 11:00am, she came to know that the authorities had come to request her to vacate the house. Then she started getting ready casually and spent two hours for make up and other related activities.

As two women police personnel knocked her window noticing the waste of time, she became seriously angry and started rebuking and unleashed a torrent of abuse at the army. "She even did not hesitate to term the armed forces personnel ungrateful dog and national enemy."

"Besides, she kept on saying that she remembers faces of everyone and that she would kick them out of service one by one when she assumes power."

In the meantime, she talked to several BNP leaders over mobile phone and many party workers and leaders started to gather near the cantonment, the press release said.

"She was attending her packed household items and gave the orders to move 10 bags and four cartons. Those were loaded onto three cars. Afterwards, she visited every room of the house and asked for a written promise that the belongings she was leaving behind would be safe."

After she was given the assurance, she finally decided to leave. It may be mentioned that as of yesterday she had shifted over 100 cartons and bags to her brother Sayeed Eskander's house and son Arafat Rahman Koko's in-laws place."

The remaining belongings in her house are packed well to be moved. This is evidence of her good preparation to leave the house.

Everything inside the palace-like house is very expensive and mind blowing. All chandeliers and light bulbs provided by the military were removed. It is hard to believe that very trivial things made it to the list of items to be shifted.

Not forcibly, rather she left the house by accepting the court order. Her personal driver drove her out of the house. If she had been forced, she would have had to leave the house at 8:00am. But she left at 3:15pm on her own.

Her brother and his wife were with there when she left the house.

Armed forces' and Rab personnel, officials from cantonment board and directorate of military land administration present there were astonished by the behaviour they had to endure at the house. Despite the bad behaviour, officials and personnel there managed to do their duty.

Her eight expensive vehicles and over 50 house helps are evidence of her luxurious lifestyle. The house is now under police custody not under army custody, the release said.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque termed ISPR's statements false and said it was made to mislead people.

POLICE REFUSAL
Kafur Police Station last night refused to record any case over the "forced eviction" of Khaleda Zia from her cantonment residence, BNP chief's lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder told The Daily Star.

Mahub-Al Amin Deu, personal assistant of the BNP chairperson, along with Masud and another lawyer Sanaullah Mian, went to the police station to file the case.

Suicide blast

FROM PAGE 1
acting headmaster of Taragonia High School, Jubo League activist Siddique, son of Bhabbar Ali of Taragonia, and the unnamed bomber.

The AL lawmaker said two bombs went off around 8:15pm soon after two unknown visitors entered his living room when he was talking to some high school teachers of his upazila.

One attacker blew himself up killing two people while another attacker fled, he told The Daily Star last night.

Asmat, who was sitting on the right of the lawmaker, was killed on the spot while Siddique succumbed to his wounds on his way to Kushtia General Hospital.

"I saw the two unknown youths stand up when I was talking to the teachers. Within a second, one of them blasted one of the bombs he had wrapped around his belly. The youth died on the spot," said Afaz Uddin.

"The attack might have been carried out to kill me," he said, adding that extremists might have involvement in this.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Mostafa Kamal said law enforcers had cordoned off the area. Police are investigating the incident, he added.

Police and Rab sources said they believe there were more attackers near the lawmakers' house to carry out a well-planned attack.

Meanwhile, Awami League said the BNP-Jamaat men might have had a hand in the attack since the incident happened right after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia left her cantonment residence.

Taking a pause and visibly emotional, Khaleda said: "I am leaving the matter of justice to Almighty Allah and the people of the country."

Wishing anonymity, a former chairman of the law

Home-goers

FROM PAGE 16
for the people," said Saifur.

A number of bus service providers, however, have cancelled trips during hartal hours.

"We don't want to take any chances," said Ramesh Chandra Ghosh, chairman of Shyamoli Paribahan Ltd.

"To avoid untoward incidents, we've cancelled all trips from dawn to dusk," he said.

Shyamoli Paribahan was to carry about 10,000 passengers from Dhaka to other districts from 6:00am to 6:00pm today.

Golam Murshid Pintu, a consultant at the Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners' Association, said bus companies will offer extra trips later on.

Passengers travelling by train or launch, however, will not get this benefit.

"Hartal won't hamper train schedules," said Md Habibur Rahman, Dhaka divisional engineer of Bangladesh Railway.

But trains could be delayed for a few minutes if requested by the passengers who are on the way to the station, he said.

"If anyone cannot get on board the train in time, they will receive refunds on submission of applications," Rahman told The Daily Star.

Travellers fearful of untoward incidents can also spend the night at the railway stations, he said, adding, the railway authorities will ensure their security.

Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carrier) Association Chairman Mahub Uddin Ahmed said all launches will leave Sadarghat launch terminal on schedule.

"All passengers, therefore, should reach the terminal on time," he said.

He said the launch owners have called for extra launches, as passengers tend to take river transport during hartal.

As many as 40 launches are scheduled to leave the Sadarghat terminal today for different short and long destinations, said Afzal Hossain, an officer at the terminal.

Some passengers at the terminal were seen trying to arrange their trips in advance yesterday.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Truck-Covered van Malik Samity has called to keep the transport sector out of the scope of hartal.

Samity leaders in a statement said a huge number of

Home-goers

trucks and lorries carrying cattle are on the way to the capital.

If they cannot reach the city in time, it will create a huge problem for the cattle traders, transport providers and people, the statement added.

Call off hartal

FROM PAGE 1
an important meeting with Turkish premier in the city to discuss bilateral business issues and to highlight the investment opportunities in Bangladesh.

The statement said the business community believes the hartal will have a "negative impact" on investments in Bangladesh.

The homebound passengers will have to face a lot of troubles for the hartal, the statement said. The sales of sacrificial animals in the makeshift markets will also be hampered.

Moreover, the business houses will have to face troubles in paying their workers salaries and bonuses for thin transactions in banks and financial institutions, the statement said.

The daylong hartal will also hamper the export-import activities in the Chittagong Port, the statement said.

The leather industry of the country has already been severely affected by anthrax scare and the businessmen are now waiting for purchasing the raw hides of the sacrificed animals in the Eid to cover the losses, it read.

"The transportation of the animals and banking activities would be greatly hampered for the hartal," the statement said.

AK Azad, president of FBCCI; Abul Kasem Khan, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI); M Anis Ud Dowla, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI); ATM Wajullah, president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI); Habibur Rahman, acting president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and Abdus Salam Mursheedy, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), signed the statement.

Earlier, at a hurriedly called separate press conferences both AK Azad and Mursheedy called the opposition leader to withdraw the decision of imposing hartal.

It was rushed

FROM PAGE 1
retain her cantonment house.

They later told the media that the chief justice had assured them that the government would not move to evict Khaleda from her residence since the leave to appeal petition remains pending with the Appellate Division.

The government cannot evict Khaleda from her residence since the Appellate Division had fixed November 29 for hearing on her leave to appeal petition, Khaleda's lawyer barrister Rafique-ul Huq told journalists at the office of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president.

BNP chairperson's other counsels barrister Moudud Ahmed, SCBA president Khandaker Mahub Hossain, and its secretary Bodrodoza Badal, who accompanied Rafique-ul Huq to the chief justice's house, were present there.

In the evening, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) issued a statement saying Khaleda left her cantonment house voluntarily at 3:15 pm after several days of preparations showing respect to the HC verdict that upheld the government notice to vacate the house.

BNP leaders immediately rejected the ISPR's statement and claimed that the government evicted Khaleda from her cantonment residence.

SCBA President Khandaker Mahub Hossain termed the government move to evict Khaleda "heinous." He said such a move damaged the image of the apex court and the chief justice.

"We will meet the chief justice again to inform him about the matter," he told The Daily Star.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam said Khaleda's counsels had not moved the stay petition against the HC verdict to gain "political mileage."

According to the SC rules, the HC verdict cannot be automatically stayed at the Supreme Court unless it involves death sentence, he said.

The Appellate Division on November 10 only adjourned the hearing on Khaleda's petition against the October 13 HC verdict and asked the government to give her 30 days' time to vacate the house.

He said the government move to take possession of the cantonment house was legal.

Wishing anonymity, a former chairman of the law

Fire engulfs Ctg temple, shanties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A Shih temple and at least 30 adjoining shanties at Katalganj in the port city's Chawkbazar area were gutted in a fire yesterday, leaving around 50 families homeless.

A two-storied Sri Sri Radha-Krishna Shebasrom was also damaged.

Sources said, around 6:30 pm, fire broke out at a shanty adjoining to Sri Sri Radhamadhab O Sri Sri Gopaljee Thakur Bigrohi Shebasadan at Katalganj.

The blaze spread fast engulfing the adjoining shanties, they added.

Some 50 poor families, all Hindu devotees, lived at those tin-shed shanties built on the temple land, locals said.

The origin of the fire could not be known immediately.

At least five fire fighting units rushed to the spot and finally extinguished the blaze around 7:30pm.

Wikileaks' Assange leading Time 'Person of the Year' poll

AFP, Washington

Julian Assange, founder of whistleblower website WikiLeaks, is leading an online poll by Time magazine for its 2010 "Person of the Year."

Assange, an Australian who has become a thorn in the side of the Pentagon with his releases of secret US military documents about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, had received 21,736 votes as of Friday.

Fox television talk show host Glenn Beck was next with 20,245 votes.

In third place with 18,500 votes, were Comedy Central comics Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, who attracted more than 200,000 people to the US capital last month for their "Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear."

Pop sensation Lady Gaga was next, with 18,090 votes, followed by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan with 13,371 votes.

Others receiving votes in the Time poll were US President Barack Obama, former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, NBA star LeBron James, "The Unemployed American" and "The Chilean Miners."

Turkish PM
FROM PAGE 1
Hotel, where he will be staying during the two-day visit.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Deputy Leader of Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Commerce Minister Farook Khan were, among others, present at the airport.

UNB adds:
All programmes of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday were cancelled as she was upset by her 'ouster' from her cantonment resident, party sources said.

Khaleda was scheduled to meet visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan at Hotel Sonargaon at 9:00pm.

USAID delegation now visiting Dhaka scheduled to meet the BNP chairperson at her Gulshan office at 5:00pm was also cancelled.

51pc girl

FROM PAGE 16
The stalkers are mostly aged between 20 and 25 and among them 15 percent belong to upper class and influential families, 60 percent to middle class and 25 percent to low-income families.

The society and families must show 'zero tolerance' for the evil-mongers.

The existing laws and guidelines of the country are sufficient to stop sexual harassment and we need to work to this end, observed the chief guest Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association.

"Parents will have to take responsibilities to educate their children properly at family level to eradicate stalking," suggested Dr Maleka Begum, a teacher at Department of Women and Gender Studies under Dhaka University (DU).

Prof Nazmunnesa Mahtab and Dr Nazma Siddique of Women and Gender Studies of DU, president Monowara Islam, general secretary Rasheda Hussain and members Dilara Chowdhury and Nilufar Sultana of the BFUW, among others, addressed the seminar.

The demolition work is going on in full swing and it will take around a month to complete the task. No work will be done the day of Eid-ul-Azha, said Aminur.

A team of experts from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) led by AMM Shafiqullah would be supervising the demolition work.

Though Rajuk is leading the task, workers and other logistical support have been provided by the flat owners, who previously made an agreement of Tk 17.50 lakh with a firm named Halima Enterprise to provide such support.

The developer company Asia Comtech Bangladesh Ltd, will bear all the costs related to tearing down the structure.

The demolition work is going on in full swing and it will take around a month to complete the task. No work will be done the day of Eid-ul-Azha, said Aminur.

The building tilted and sank a few feet into the ground last Sunday night.

Suu Kyi freed

FROM PAGE 1
65-year-old, known in Myanmar simply as "The Lady".

"We must work together in unison," she told the sea of jubilant supporters, suggesting she has no intention of giving up her long fight for democracy in what is one of the world's oldest dictatorships.

She asked the crowd to come to her party's headquarters today to hear her speak after she struggled to make herself heard over the roar of cheers, then went back inside her home as the crowds lingered outside.

Although she has been sidelined and silenced by the junta -- occasionally released briefly only to be put back in confinement -- for many in the impoverished nation she still embodies hope of a better future.

"I think of her as my mother and also my sister and grandmother because she's the daughter of our independence leader General Aung San," said 45-year-old Naing Win. "She has her father's blood."

Despite the risks of opposing the military regime in a country with more than 2,200 political prisoners, many supporters wore T-shirts bearing her image and the words: "We stand with Aung San Suu Kyi."

Undercover police were photographing and filming the crowds.

Myanmar's most famous dissident has been under house arrest since 2003 -- just one of several stretches of detention at the hands of the ruling generals.

Her sentence was extended last year over a bizarre incident in which an American swimmer was invited to her lakeside home, sparking international condemnation and keeping her off the scene for the first election in 20 years.

The democracy icon swept her party to victory in elections two decades ago, but it was never allowed to take power.

Her release comes just days after the first vote in the country since 1990, which was boycotted by Suu Kyi's party and was widely decried in the West as a sham.

When last released in 2002 she drew huge crowds wherever she went -- a reminder that years of detention had not dimmed her immense popularity.

Some fear that junta chief Than Shwe will continue to put restrictions on the freedom of his number one enemy.

But her lawyer Nyan Win has suggested she would refuse to accept any conditions on her release, as in the past when she tried in vain to leave Yangon in defiance of the regime's orders.

Her struggle for her country has come at a high personal cost: her husband, British academic Michael Aris, died in 1999, and in the final stages of his battle with cancer the junta refused him a visa to see his wife.

She has not seen her two sons for about a decade and has never met her grandchildren.

Her youngest son Kim Aris, 33, arrived in Bangkok ahead of her release but it was unclear whether he would be allowed to visit his mother.

Suu Kyi's freedom is seen by observers as an effort by the regime to tame international criticism of the recent election, the first since the 1990 vote.

Western nations and pro-democracy activists have blasted the poll as anything but free and fair following widespread reports of intimidation and fraud.

The NLD's decision not to participate in the election deeply split Myanmar's opposition and Suu Kyi's party has been disbanded, leaving her future role uncertain.

Her lawyer says she has expressed a desire to join Twitter to reach out to the Internet generation.

Few expect her to give up her long struggle for freedom from repression and attention is now on whether she can reunite the splintered opposition and bring about the democratic change that has eluded Myanmar for so long.

WORLD HAILS
World leaders hailed the release of Suu Kyi from years of house arrest but warned the military junta not to restrict her in other ways and called for hundreds of other political prisoners to be freed.

US President Barack Obama, in Yokohama, Japan for a regional summit, called her "a hero of mine" and said it was time for the junta to free all political prisoners.

"She is a hero of mine and a source of inspiration for all who work to advance basic human rights in Burma and around the world," said Obama, using the country's

former name.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said in a statement, "France will be extremely attentive to the conditions in which Madame Aung San Suu Kyi enjoys her freedom of liberty."

"Any restrictions on her freedom of movement and expression would constitute a new unacceptable denial of her rights," he said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said her release was "long overdue" branding her detention "travesty, designed only to silence the voice of the Burmese people."

Britain is the former colonial power in Myanmar, which achieved its independence as Burma in 1948.

Former prime minister Gordon Brown said: "There will be joy round the world at the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, the world's most renowned and courageous prisoner of conscience."

In his 2007 book "Courage", she was one of eight figures he profiled in an exploration of the concept of courage.

Desmond Tutu, chair of the group of senior statesmen known as The Elders, said, "Aung San Suu Kyi's release offers hope to the people of Burma, who face uncertain times following the 7 November elections."

The Elders said the Myanmar government must respect her political rights as a citizen and not place any conditions on her release. They also called for the release of all the country's political prisoners.

Surin Pitsuswan, secretary-general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) bloc which includes Myanmar, told AFP he was "very, very relieved" at the news.

Surin said he hoped she would be able to play a role in bringing national reconciliation, and that other political prisoners would benefit from the junta's gesture.

The Philippines, the most outspoken Asean member in calling for Aung San Suu Kyi's release, also welcomed her freedom but said more needed to be done.

"This is a positive step toward the right path for Myanmar. But the question remains -- will all of her political rights be restored, will they take more substantive steps toward democratisation?" said Ricky Carandang, spokesman for President Benigno Aquino.

In Brussels, the head of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, said, "It is now crucial that Aung San Suu Kyi has unrestricted freedom of movement and speech and can participate fully in her country's political process."

In Geneva, UN Human Rights Commissioner Navi Pillay, said, "This is a positive signal that the authorities in Myanmar are willing to move forward with the serious challenge of democratic transition, and the need for national reconciliation."