

Afghan governor escapes Helmand ambush

AFP, Kandahar

The governor of Afghanistan's troubled Helmand province yesterday escaped unharmed from an insurgent ambush and gunbattle that left two attackers dead, his office said.

Mohammad Gulab Mangal was returning to Lashkar Gah, capital of the southern province, after an official visit to Sangin, a pocket of some of the worst fighting in Afghanistan, when his motorcade came under fire from insurgents.

"The security forces returned fire and killed two of the armed attackers. Their bodies were left on the ground," a statement from his office said.

Pictures released with the statement showed at least four bullet holes in Mangal's armoured vehicle.

Helmand is one of Afghanistan's most dangerous provinces and a major focus for US-led NATO operations in the war-torn country.

Mangal has survived numerous previous attempts on his life.

The attack came on the same day that the deputy chief of Afghanistan's spy agency, Ahmad Zia, escaped an apparent attempt on his life in Kabul when guards shot and killed a man who tried to ram a bomb-laden car into his motorcade.

JSC scholarship

FORM PAGE 20 formulating a policy on scholarship.

As a replacement for scholarship exams, the government last year introduced the JSC and JDC examinations with some 13,96 lakh students from 27,289 general schools and madrasas participating in those.

Eight general education boards and one madrasa board conducted the exams in grading system where a total of 8,556 students scored the highest GPA-5 (Grade Point Average).

On the day the results were published, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told the reporters that the scholarships would be announced soon after formulating a policy on it.

Admitting the sluggishness in preparing the policy, Khandakar Rakibur Rahman, joint secretary (secondary), said "There were some errors in the policy which took some time to solve."

"We hope the process would be complete within the stipulated time," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, sources at DSHE said they prepared the policy as per the direction of the ministry and sent it to the ministry on April 18.

But, the ministry split the policy into two parts—one for general boards and another for madrasa, creating more complexities, they said. Eventually the ministry merged it again under one policy, they added.

The ministry, however, did not bring any major change in the draft which said the scholarship would be in two categories—talent pool and general.

In JSC, 30,800 scholarships would be awarded among the students of general boards while 6,000 were allocated for JDC, according to the draft.

GPA-2.00 would be the minimum eligibility to get scholarship in general category while GPA-3 would be the minimum eligibility to get scholarship in talent pool category.

In talent pool category under JSC exams, a student would get scholarship money of Tk 300 per month and Tk 375 per year for two years. In general category, the students would get Tk 200 per month and Tk 225 per year for two years, the draft said, adding the same amounts also apply for JDC and madrasa students.

After finalising the draft, the ministry would send a letter along with the copy of the policy to the finance ministry asking for its permission for issuing circular, said ministry officials.

Stand by Khaled

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after Bangladesh-Thai Aluminium Ltd sued Khaled demanding Tk 100 crore as compensation for the damage caused for his statement linking the company with irregularities in the stock market.

"How can somebody file a case against someone for an enquiry report?" Suranjit said referring to the government-formed probe body's activities and the case by Bangladesh-Thai Aluminium.

He was speaking at a discussion on the 30th anniversary of Sheikh Hasina's return to Bangladesh organised by Bangladeshi Awami Mukti Joddha Projonno League at the Jatiya Press Club.

Stressing the need for taking actions against "gamblers", who were identified by the probe body, as key players involved in the recent share market crash, he said the market needs to be taken care of.

He said, "The Awami League won't tolerate that these [lower income and the middle-class] people would wander out in the field losing everything and some people would walk away with crores."

"We want justice for those people who lost everything and punishment for the culprits who took away the

Noakhali University

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to Sonapur Royal Hospital, while six others were undergoing treatment at the camp clinic.

Witnesses said a group of BCL activists, led by computer science final year student Monzurul Islam Mohsin, occupied 11 rooms on the second floor of the under-construction Bhasha Shaheed Abdus Salam Hall around 11:00pm on Monday.

Another faction of the student organisation brought out a procession on the campus yesterday morning protesting the incident. A final year student of fisheries science Nurul Afsar Kajol led the group.

At one stage both the factions locked in chases and counter chases. They used hockey sticks, Chinese axes and other lethal weapons during the clashes.

Incensed, students ransacked the academic building

money," he said.

He pointed out that a number of ruling alliance lawmakers on Monday decried the delay in taking actions against "gamblers" and asked the finance minister to take necessary steps.

Speaking at the discussion, the veteran AL lawmaker and member of the advisory council of the party also touched a number of current issues of the country.

He said talks in the country have been going on about Rapid Action Battalion.

"Some suggested dismantling of the elite force but I think it cannot be dismantled rather we can reform the force," he observed.

Suranjit, also the co-chairman of the parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendment, said the opposition have been demanding mid-term elections, which is totally a comical, unconstitutional, undemocratic and unacceptable demand.

"The next parliamentary elections will be held in due time," he said.

The discussion was also addressed by Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, General Secretary of AL city unit, and Baloram Poddar, Janata Bank director and former Chhatra League leader, among others.

IDB gives \$140m

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Talking to journalists later, Muhith said Padma bridge project is the largest one in the country, and work in this regard is progressing quickly as per schedule.

The IDB chief referred to the assistance from other development partners for the bridge project, and said his institution is willing to cooperate with the institutions interested in the development of Bangladesh.

"The future Bangladesh will be brighter... together we'll build a better Bangladesh," he said.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain said, "I want to assure you (IDB president) that my ministry will implement this project with the highest level of transparency and integrity."

At each stage of implementation of the project, media will be invited to help maintain transparency, he added.

The project includes 6.15 km main bridge, 3.8 km road viaduct and 0.532 km rail viaduct. Besides, 14 km river training and 12 km approach road are part of the project.

When completed, Padma bridge will connect 19 south-western districts will with the capital and eastern region of the country.

Khaleda

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the treasury bench and opposition members of New Jersey State Senate unanimously adopted a resolution honouring Khaleda Zia.

Shamser Mobin said the senate resolution termed Khaleda as fighter of democracy, special leader of women empowerment, and a role model for present and future women generations of the US.

New Jersey Senate President Stephen Sweeney handed over the senate resolution to Khaleda Zia.

All the senators gave Khaleda a standing ovation.

This was the first such honour accorded to any foreign personality by the New Jersey State Senate, Shamser Mobin said.

Addressing the Senate, former prime minister Khaleda Zia sought cooperation of the state senators in pursuing duty-free access of Bangladeshi products in the US market.

On democracy and human rights, she said Bangladesh and USA have identical views on both these issues.

On counter-terrorism, the leader of the opposition in parliament said people should be involved for sustainable and effective curbing of terrorism.

Khaleda also expressed her happiness and gratitude for inviting her to the New Jersey State Senate.

Govt handling

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government handled the issue of Yunus was not smart," he said at a luncheon meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) at city's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel yesterday.

Countries around the world respect their Nobel laureates but we could not, said Prof Wahiduddin, also a former caretaker government adviser.

"Think of Nelson Mandela, a Peace Nobel laureate," he pointed out.

Not that the country should respect someone because of diplomatic pressure. As a Nobel hero, Prof Yunus deserves respect of the nation, he added.

On politics, he said leaders should leave behind the culture of confrontation and agitation to better the country's image, which is vital for the development of the nation.

According to him, corruption and lack of good governance are harming the country's progress.

"We've still the problem of corruption," he said, adding that the civil administration in African countries is smarter than that of Bangladesh.

Non-elected institutions in other countries are very strong, and they can therefore function freely, said the just-retired Dhaka University professor.

Locals said a rice-laden boat carrying 8 to 9 passengers capsized in the beel after being caught in the stormy weather.

The boat was going to Kotalpur Bazar from Mirzangarh.

The bodies were handed over to their families.

Ministry investigator

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His left leg had to be amputated after a Rapid Action Battalion team shot him to injury in Jhalakathi on March 23.

Yesterday, ADC Akbar allowed the media in the room where he asked Limon a wide range of questions about the March 23 incident, his childhood and education.

He threw a volley of leading questions minutely examining the alibi of Limon and parents.

As the questioning continued, tears started rolling down the cheeks of Limon. His mother Henoara Begum, touched by her son's ordeal, also failed to hold her tears.

Acbar also asked details about how much the poor family had received from visitors and well-wishers and whether or not any editor had ever visited the maimed boy.

The interrogator also wanted to know who gave them the money and how much, and who helped the family open bank accounts.

Limon's father told the ADC that people from all walks of life helped them according to their ability.

The interrogator eagerly noted down when the father told him that BH Haroon, a local Awami League lawmaker, was so moved that he gave the family Tk 20,000 and promised to help Limon complete his education.

Acbar also took notes when Limon's father told

him that a top Rab official gave the family Tk 5,000 for his son's treatment.

Dr Kazi Enamul Kabir, a doctor on duty, recorded Limon's statement and read it out to the boy who later signed.

After Limon, the ADC quizzed the father for one hour till 1:45pm.

The home ministry had asked Shawkat Akbar to submit a report within 15 working days after the bullet wound in an encounter between the miscreants and Rab officials.

The ministry has given him additional seven days, from May 23 to 29, to complete the probe, the ADC told The Daily Star after completing the questioning.

Asked whether it was necessary to question Limon as the home minister backed the statement that Limon has criminal link, the ADC replied he received no instruction from the ministry or any other quarter regarding how to conduct the probe.

"I have nearly completed the probe and I shall submit my findings to the home ministry," said Akbar.

Limon was transferred to Nitor after being released from the Jhalakathi jail on a six-month bail granted by the High Court. The HC order came following a petition of a rights body claiming his innocence.

On Monday, the Rab claimed that Limon and his

family had links with a local criminal gang.

This statement was based on reports of four probe committees ordered by Rab and police after the March 23 incident, said Rab officials.

The reports found that Limon was a member of Morshed Bahini, a local gang of criminals, and he suffered the bullet wound in an encounter between the miscreants and Rab personnel.

The Rab filed two cases against Limon accusing him of possessing illegal firearms, and of obstructing law enforcers from carrying out their duties and attempted murder.

Limon's mother also filed a case against the Rab personnel who went to her village to hunt the Morshed Bahini.

Legal experts also said requiring prior government permission for filing corruption cases against government officials is discriminatory, as it offers undue privileges to public servants.

The government placed the bill in parliament on February 28, and this provision in the bill drew widespread criticism.

Different non-government organisations, individuals working for good governance, and various donor agencies and countries also expressed concern over the proposed change.

ACC's letter signed by its chief Ghulam Rahman termed the proposed change inconsistent with the spirit of an independent ACC, and said for this the same proposal had not been accepted during the enactment of the anti-graft law in 2004.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, who also sent a letter to the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry, opposed the proposed provision.

He said, "Big fishes will not be caught and only small fish will be punished if the government permission is required before filing corruption cases."

The Daily Star obtained copies of both letters sent by the finance minister and ACC.

The parliamentary body on law ministry last Thursday started scrutinising the bill. Members of the committee also questioned the proposed provision of awarding blanket protection to government officials.

The committee will sit again soon to discuss the proposed changes and prepare its recommendations to be placed in the parliament.

The government came up with the bill to bring amendments to the ACC Act 2004 introducing the provision of prior government permission for filing cases against government officials, and for beginning trials of the cases.

With the inclusion of this provision no court shall take into cognisance any offence by public servants, including judges and magistrates, without prior government sanction for trying them.

Prosecutors must submit a proof of government permission to a court before it begins trial of a public servant.

The provision allows the government to determine the nature of the offences for which government officials can be prosecuted. It can also determine which court will try them.

DoE asks CCC

construct road in the port city.

The notice was sent to the CCC Chief Executive Officer seeking explanation on why the construction work would not be stopped.

The DoE, in its notice, also sought answer on why the CCC would not be fined Tk 10 lakh or other punishment would not be taken against it on charge of filling up the canal.

Jafar Alam, deputy director of DoE, Chittagong, said a DoE team sent to the spot on Monday found the canal being filled up.

He said filling up of canals is a punishable offence and any person or organisation engaged in such an offence will be fined Tk 10 lakh or given 10 years of imprisonment or both according to the Environment Conservation Act 1995.

CCC was asked to reply on the notice by coming June 9, said DoE sources.

Ukraine ex-premier taken in for questioning

BBC ONLINE

Ukrainian ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who is facing charges of abuse of office, has been taken in for questioning in Kiev yesterday.

Prosecutors announced she had been detained by district court order in order to enable investigators to pursue their inquiry.

ACC opposes

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