

Govt moves

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of its verdict that scrapped eight years' imprisonment of Sobhan, also known as Shah Alam, in the case.

The petition seeks rehearing of the appeal against his conviction on grounds that the government was not given an opportunity to place arguments during the hearing of the appeal.

The HC bench of Justice Abdul Hye and Justice Rezaul Hasan on June 20 this year allowed the appeal by the Bashundhara Group boss, and scrapped his eight years' imprisonment in the case.

A Dhaka court on September 30, 2007, handed down the jail sentence in the case filed by the National Board of Revenue on charges of evading Tk 8.48 crore in income tax between 2004 and 2007.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam yesterday told the HC bench that the government's interest is involved in the case but it was not given the chance to submit arguments.

Citing a decision of the Indian Supreme Court, Mahubey Alam said the HC can recall its unsigned verdict and rehear the appeal.

Counsels for Shah Alam, however, vehemently opposed the attorney general's submissions, saying that there is no legal scope for the HC to recall its verdict.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, advocate Anisul Huq and advocate Ahsanul Karim appeared for the Bashundhara Group chief.

The HC bench fixed July 19 for further hearing on the petition.

No hope

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and that could not be restored," Rashed quoted Rumana's father Manzur Hossain who is accompanying her abroad.

An assistant professor of Dhaka University, Rumana lost her eyesight when her husband Hasan Sayeed Sumon pushed his fingers into her eyes on June 5 at their Dhanmondi residence in the capital. He also gnawed her nose during the attack.

When doctors in Bangladesh and India expressed no hope for giving her eyesight back, she was taken to Canada on July 5 to explore further possibilities, if any. Eye-specialists of the Canadian hospital had agreed to operate on her eyes as a last resort.

Meanwhile, Rumana, also a postgraduate student of University of British Columbia in Canada, had a plastic surgery on the nose, a portion of which had been bitten off, said Maqsood.

Elna Khan, a lawyer of Rumana, said a family court has already given permission for Rumana's five-year-old daughter Anushah to be taken to Canada.

She also said the Detective Branch of police may not submit the charge-sheet against Rumana's husband until the treatment of her eyes is over.

Arrested on June 15, Sumon is now in jail.

Thai election board probes would-be premier

AP, Bangkok

Election officials began investigating would-be Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's campaign yesterday, a move that may slow Thailand's transition to a new government and risks more political unrest if she is disqualified.

The probe came a day after the Election Commission said it had certified 358 winners in the 500-seat lower house of parliament, but was deferring certifying 142, including Yingluck and her main rival former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

Thailand has been wracked by political turmoil since Yingluck's brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, was ousted in a military coup in 2006 after being accused of corruption and disrespect for the monarchy.

No caretaker

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hunger strike on the premises of Engineers Institution of Bangladesh in the capital.

In her hour-long speech, she once again said talks can be held on who will head the caretaker government and to constitute a neutral Election Commission, but not on the legitimacy of the caretaker government system.

Bitterly criticising the government for amending the constitution, the former premier said the amended constitution is nothing but an AL manifesto which will be thrown away.

The main opposition party carried out the hunger strike from 10:00am to 06:00pm protesting police assault on its Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque and other party activists during the 48-hour hartal on July 6 and 7. Khaleda joined the programme at 12:00 noon.

Several thousand leaders, workers, and supporters of the BNP-led four-party alliance joined the programme.

Leaders of like-minded parties and pro-BNP professional bodies also expressed their solidarity by attending the programme.

A delegation of Liberal Democratic Party, founded by former BNP leader Oli Ahmad, expressed solidarity to the protest, led by former minister Redwan Ahmed.

Law enforcers took strict measures to ensure law and order at and around the venue, blocking vehicular movement on the adjacent thoroughfare, causing severe traffic congestion in central city.

Though it was a hunger strike, a number of participants were seen drinking water and eating fruits outside the venue.

Khaleda said her party will announce a fresh agitation programme after Eid. "The fascist government will be ousted through a peaceful movement like the one taking place in the Middle East," she

said. Condemning police attacks on BNP leaders including Abdin, she said democracy is now being suppressed under law enforcers' boots. "I am asking all police and Rab personnel to stop repression. Remember this is not the last government. None will be spared. Stop the repression otherwise be prepared for dire consequences," she warned.

"Intelligence agencies must stop their excesses. We know the names of all those who are involved in interrogations during remand. Consequences will not be good if they don't restrain themselves," she added.

The BNP chief said it was Awami League leader Khandaker Mustaq who introduced martial law in the country, and BNP founder Ziaur Rahman reinstated multi-party democracy.

"Awami League was behind all military governments. The Awami League chief expressed happiness after Ershad grabbed power in 1982, and she also admitted that Fakhruddin-Moeen Uddin government was the outcome of her movement," Khaleda alleged.

The leader of the opposition alleged that the government made the parliament ineffective.

Mentioning Gopalganj, the home district of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Khaleda said Bangladesh is now a prisoner of that district as "all of the police department and the civil administration are from there".

Referring to the deals which are expected to be signed with India soon, she said the government must inform the people what Bangladesh will get from India. "India is planning to set up a power plant at Bagerhat but we won't allow it. A special EPZ is being built in Sylhet, which also will not be acceptable to us," she said.

Terror strikes

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Indian Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram said the timing of the blasts showed that it was a "coordinated attack by terrorists."

"It is a terror act. Quite obvious that some terror element is involved in the attack. The blast at Zaveri Bazar was triggered by improvised explosive device kept in an abandoned umbrella," Chavan said.

All the explosions were triggered by improvised explosive devices, a home ministry official said.

Maharashtra PWD Minister Chhagan Bhujbal said, "It is clear that the attackers wanted to hurt as many people as possible. Many people are injured."

Following the blasts in Mumbai, a high security alert was issued across India, including Delhi and Kolkata, and security enhanced at all sensitive installations.

Splattered blood, glass shrapnels, damaged vehicles, dazed and bleeding people were seen at the blast sites.

Police swamped the areas with their bomb and vapour detection gadgets, and armoured vehicles within minutes of the explosions.

A car with shattered windscreen and damaged boot, which reportedly had three people in it, was parked close to the bus stop.

The blast site, a stone's throw from the Plaza, a big shopping area of central Mumbai, saw a big commotion as the explosion was followed by sparks in an electric meter box at the bus stand.

Last night's was the first terror strike in Mumbai since November 26, 2008, when 10 terrorists belonging to Lashkar-e-Taiba attacked multiple targets in Mumbai, including five-star hotels, in a deadly assault that killed 166 people.

The last major bombing incident in India was in February last year in the western city of Pune, when a blast at a packed restaurant killed nine people including a foreigner.

In 2006, a series of seven high-intensity blasts in suburban trains in Mumbai killed 187 commuters.

it is for the police and other security agencies to investigate and find out.

AFP reported that Islamabad condemned yesterday's attacks in a statement issued by the Pakistani foreign ministry.

Chidambaram said the elite National Security Guard hub in Mumbai was put on standby and that the elite force's "post-blast" team was sent to the financial capital of the country to ascertain the nature of explosives used in the blasts.

The Central Forensic Science Laboratory teams were sent to Mumbai, he said.

The targets last night included a predominantly middle class residential area, a wholesale gold market, and a building housing diamond traders and jewellery shops.

The entire political leadership of India, including President Pratibha Patil, Vice-president Md Hamid Ansari, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh condemned the terror attacks and said such acts are aimed at destabilising the nation.

The prime minister appealed to the people of the megapolis to remain calm and show a united front.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi condemned the dastardly act and said such acts of cowardice will be dealt with appropriately.

BJP President Nitin Gadkari condemned the blasts in the strongest possible terms and asked the government to take a clear stand in setting up an effective anti-terror infrastructure.

A shop owner, Sadashiv Kamble, said he saw three people sitting in the car. "Everything came upon me. I immediately ran for my life," he said.

"I heard a loud explosion. I saw people having serious injuries lying in a pool of blood," another eyewitness said.

No terror group has so far claimed responsibility for last night's attacks, but Mumbai police suspect the hand of Indian Mujahideen.

Chavan declined to speculate who is or are behind the blasts, and said



It is surprising when an elephant halts a car, salutes and asks for money for its upkeep. Surprised and amused by the giant's gentle nature, many choose to give generously. The photo was taken from Iqbal Road at Mohammadpur in the capital yesterday.

KL to regularise

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that all [legal] foreign workers employed by them are registered through the biometric system. No fee will be imposed," Malaysia's home ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

Through biometric registration of legal foreign workers, Malaysia wants to identify those who ran away from their employers. Those identified as such would not be allowed to participate in the regularisation process but would be advised to return to their original employers or be deported, The Star said quoting the statement.

Earlier on July 7, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the cabinet felt the need for getting the legal workers registered first, especially when there was information that unscrupulous people were trying to make quick cash from the government's intention to have the irregular foreign workers registered.

On July 11, Malaysian Home Minister Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said, "...I hope that before we start the exercise, all involved, including the illegal workers, employers and third countries [to receive deported workers] are in place so that there are no hiccups later."

Power-cut alert

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"We urge the urban devotees to offer their Tarabi prayers without running air-conditioners at mosques. If they abstain from keeping on the air conditioners, it would provide a great scope to get electricity at mosques in rural areas," said the prime minister's Adviser Dr Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury after a meeting at the ministry.

The ministry officials also informed the meeting about evolving a strategy to manage power and gas supply during Ramadan.

State Minister for Power and Energy Mohammad Enamul Haque said shop owners were asked to observe austerity in consuming electricity by switching off air-conditioners and shutting down shops by 8:00pm.

"They will not even be allowed to go for any lighting of their shops during Ramadan," he said.

He, however, said the closing time of shops will be relaxed after 15th of Ramadan.

Power Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said about 886 million cubic feet of gas will be supplied to power plants for raising their generation capacity.

The power generation is expected to cross 5,000 MW during the Ramadan, he said adding that some industries will be asked to suspend their operation during the peak hours between Magrib to Tarabi prayers so that others can get more gas and electricity.

PDB Chairman ASM Alamgir Kabir said about 300-MW electricity will be added to the national grid within this month.

If air-conditioners remain off across the country, there will be no load shedding, he added.

State Minister Mohammad Enamul Haque presided over the meeting, attended by senior officials of power and gas sectors and also by representatives of Bangladesh Shop Owners Association.

Viqarunnisa in crisis

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the governing body Dilip Roy echoed the principal.

The school seems to be getting involved into the country's political conflict after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia welcomed the so-called action against Husne Ara.

"The principal of the school has been sacked today [yesterday]. But, it is not enough. The persons involved in the incident should be sacked and given severe punishment," said Khaleda while addressing her party's hunger strike programme in the capital yesterday.

The controversy has caused worries among students and their guardians as the institution is preparing to hold important examinations for both its school and college sections from July 23.

The 59-year-old school plunged into trouble after a class-X female student of its Bashundhara branch accused Porimol Joydhor, a Bangla teacher of the branch, of sexually attacking her at his coaching centre in Badda.

The news sparked protests among students and guardians who took to the streets to demand Porimol's arrest and his exemplary punishment.

The protests continued even after Porimol's arrest on July 6 and his confession later to a magistrate that he committed the offence. He is now in Dhaka Central Jail.

The student's family filed a case with Badda Police Station accusing Porimol of violating her. It also accused Principal Husne Ara and Bashundhara branch-in-charge Lutfur Rahman of suppressing the allegations against him.

The principal denied the allegations saying the school authorities took prompt action against Porimol and dismissed him. In a statement this week, she also demanded that Porimol be punished for his alleged assault on the student.

Husne Ara, also member secretary of the governing body, alleged that some members of the governing body were targeting her with a political motive.

She was the principal of Azimpur Girls School before getting appointed as principal of the Viqarunnisa Noon School and College last year.

The students bear the brunt of the crisis, as the two factions feeding to the controversies cause disruption to academic activities.

The trouble has hit the country's premier educational institution of nearly 12,000 students ahead of half-yearly examinations for the school students and pre-tests for the college section.

Even though the problem originated at Bashundhara branch, its fallout has hit the main campus at Bailey Road. Principal Husne Ara has not been attending office on the main campus for about a week. She claimed that she is running the administration from her home over the phone.

"We are worried about our children's education," said Sharmin Aktar, a guardian of a class-VIII student of

the school. "We don't want our children's future to be destroyed by a controversy over the principal," she said.

Wishing anonymity, another guardian said, "We have sent our children to this prestigious school to get better education. We want this renowned school to take care of our children's education and nothing else."

Jakirul Islam, a member of the governing body, yesterday convened a meeting of the governing body on the school's Bailey road campus. Four other members attended the meeting.

The meeting was held in the absence of the governing body chairman and lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, who is on a visit to the USA. Acting Chairman Dilip Roy was also absent.

In a hurriedly called press conference at the school, Jakirul, also former assistant personal secretary to BNP Chief Khaleda Zia, said Husne Ara has been sacked as the principal for "protecting the accused teacher and suppressing the allegations."

He named Ambia Khatun, a senior teacher, as the acting principal. Jakirul said Principal Husne Ara is being backed by Menon and Roy.

He claimed his faction acted lawfully. "We have taken this decision to save the institution considering the current situation," he said. Besides, the principal's absence from school largely disrupted the administrative activities, he added.

Dozens of students, teachers and guardians were also present at the news conference.

Roksana Shamim, a teacher of the school on its main campus, told the news conference that Principal Husne Ara first ignored their demand that accused teacher Porimol be fired and punished.

A student who did not identify herself alleged that the principal did not stand by the assaulted girl and those who demanded justice for her.

"We consider the principal as our mother. But she failed to live up to our expectations," the girl said.

Meanwhile, Dilip Roy said the meeting, convened in absence of the chairman and the acting chairman, does not have legality.

"Without the chairman, the members cannot remove or appoint the principal. We are not in favour of Husne Ara. If she is guilty she would be punished. But the members did not follow the due process and rules."

Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman of Dhaka Education Board that controls the governing body, said the faction's meeting was not held in line with the rules, as none but the chairman and the member secretary can convene a meeting. The faction's decision was not proper, she added.

"We dissolved the governing body because we think the body failed to handle the situation properly," she said, adding that the tenure of the governing body has already expired and that it failed to hold a new election.

new four-member ad hoc committee will take proper steps.

School sources said a section of teachers was unhappy about the appointment of the principal as she played a major role in introducing lottery system for grade-I admission which curbed the admission business to a great extent.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, however, said neither he nor his ministry knew anything about the sudden change at the helm announced by the school's governing body.

"The ministry was not informed about the decision of the removal [of Husne Ara]. I know nothing about it. But it's clear that there is chaos," he told reporters at his secretariat office.

He, however, said the crisis would be resolved by yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka Education Board yesterday formed a three-member committee headed by College Inspector Srikanta Chandra Chondo to look into the matter.

No confusion

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and proceedings in the name of expressing reaction.

Everyone has the right to give reaction on the amendments to the tribunal's rules. But it is not expected that the reaction is made in an aggressive manner which exceeds established norms and civil conducts, said tribunal's registrar and spokesman Shahinur Islam.

He was presenting a written statement at a press briefing at his office in the Old High Court Building yesterday afternoon.

The statement came after chief of defence Barrister Abdur Razzaq at a press conference at the Supreme Bar Association auditorium on July 12 criticised the tribunal's rules and proceedings.

Razzaq said the tribunal has failed to ensure international standard in its functions and also accused the tribunal's registrar of making contradictory remarks over its functions.

Shahinur in the statement said the tribunal, which was formed to adjudicate internationally recognised crimes, is an independent judicial institution.

"Its objectives are to ensure transparent, impartial, open and speedy trial of crimes," he said.

He added the tribunal strongly believes that the changes brought to the rules of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 were necessary and justified.

The tribunal is aware of the rights of both the accused and the people who were victimised by those crimes under the 1973 Act, he observed.

"Being instructed, I humbly request everyone to have a clear understanding of the adjudication process, a constructive mindset and sense of rationality while giving reaction," the spokesman added.

Egypt delays scheduled polls

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's military rulers have decided to hold parliamentary elections scheduled for September up to two months later, a military official told state media yesterday.

"It has been decided to hold elections for the People's Assembly and the Shura Council next October or November," MENA state news agency quoted the official as saying, in reference to the lower and upper houses of parliament.

The official said the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces -- which took power when president Hosni Mubarak was ousted in February -- "is committed to its previous announcement that the electoral process would start six months from the constitutional declaration" of March.

Khaleda

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punishment of everyone involved," said Khaleda, also leader of the opposition, while addressing a mass hunger strike programme staged by BNP at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

"The principal of the school has been sacked today [yesterday]. But that's not enough. The persons involved in the incident should be sacked and handed down strong punishment," said Khaleda.

Porimol Joydhor, a Bangla teacher of the school, sexually assaulted a class-X student of the institution's Bashundhara branch on May 28 and June 17 when she went to the coaching centre at his house in Badda, according to a written complaint submitted by the victim to the school authorities.

Porimol who confessed to sexually assaulting the student is now behind bars.

Claiming that incidents of repression against women increase whenever Awami League forms the government, Khaleda urged the women community to hold street agitation if proper actions are not taken regarding the Viqarunnisa incident.

"I urge the girls and women community to take to the streets. I will stand beside them," the former prime minister said.

Referring to the incidents of violence and harassment against women occurred in different educational institutions since the AL came to power in 2009, Khaleda said an education-friendly atmosphere needs to be established in the educational institutions after ousting the government.

Mobile courts

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the wheel has become a key reason for fatal road crashes, the minister told reporters after the 8th inter-ministerial meeting on law and order held at her ministry.

Faulty construction of roads and roadside markets are also behind traffic fatalities, mentioned Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikdar.

Usually a highway should have rumble stripes, with white marks and steel barriers at its edges, he pointed out adding, even our traffic signals are often blurred by advertising hoardings making the roads riskier for drivers.

The secretary noted removing bazaars on highways will start with five such markets around the capital. The rest will be removed in phases across the country.

Trucks are not meant for passengers to ride on and the law enforcers are on alert to check everybody follows the rule, added Sobhan.

According to the motor vehicle ordinance, an offender has to pay a nominal fine of Tk 500 or serve one month in jail or both for talking on the phone while driving.

The meeting observed a minute's silence in memory of the deceased victims of the Mirsarai accident.

Chiefs of law enforcement agencies and intelligence wings and high-ranking army officers attended the meeting.