

**Egypt's military ruler commits to democracy**

AFP, Cairo

Egypt's military ruler yesterday stressed the army's commitment to democracy, as protesters kept up pressure on the general over the slow pace of reforms since a revolt ousted Hosni Mubarak.

Field Marshall Hussein Tantawi, the head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and Mubarak's longtime defence minister, pledged to work for a free system through fair elections and a constitution.

He vowed to "pave the way for the pillars of a democratic state, which promotes freedom, the rights of citizens through free and fair parliamentary elections, a new constitution and the election of a president chosen by the people."

Tantawi delivered the television address to mark the anniversary of the 1952 revolution -- a military coup that overthrew the monarchy, which came six months after the January 25 uprising that ended Mubarak's 30-year grip on power.

Hours earlier, the military council had accused the April 6 pro-democracy movement of sowing strife after hundreds tried to march to the defence ministry.

**North, South Korean foreign ministers meet**

AFP, Seoul

The foreign ministers of North and South Korea held an unofficial meeting yesterday on the sidelines of a regional security dialogue in Indonesia, the South's Yonhap news agency reported.

In the first such encounter since 2008, South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-Hwan and his North Korean counterpart Pak Ui-Chun chatted on their way to a conference hall at the Asean security forum in Nusa Dua, Yonhap said.

"Before entering a session of the Asean Regional Forum this morning, Minister Kim had a brief talk with Pak," the agency quoted an unnamed South Korean official as saying.

The encounter came a day after the two countries' nuclear envoys held an unexpected, rare meeting and agreed to resume multi-lateral talks on curbing the North's nuclear programme at the earliest possible date.

**Country**

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chief adviser to caretaker government, said, "We have thrown socialism, secularism and many other good elements out of the constitution. It seems we are in a competition to throw away."

He regretted that the country could not establish an effective local government in the last 40 years.

"It is intriguing that we do not even trust our own people," he added.

Educationalist Zillur Rahman Siddique said the country is now like a "derailed train."

Referring to the 15th amendment, he said people's opinions have not been reflected in it.

"When the committee on constitution amendment sought our opinion, almost all of us said it would be harmful for the country to retain Islam as state religion and Bismillah. But they did not heed," he said.

Noted jurist Dr Kamal Hossain too likened the country to a train derailed, and said the government has "put up many obstacles on the railway line."

"Instead of getting the train back on track, we are creating diversion lines and leading the train into a ditch," he observed.

Prof Anisuzzaman presided over the function. M Amir-Ul Islam and Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, among others, were present.

Of the two books, one is a compilation of Tajuddin's quotes and the other is on his political ideology.

**Stop celebrating**

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a meeting with Khaleda, also leader of the opposition, at her Gulshan residence. He highly appreciated the BNP chairperson for her warm attitude towards him during the meeting that continued from 6:00pm to 7:20pm. BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir, Krishak Sramik Janata League General Secretary Habibur Rahman Talukder and Siddiqui's wife Nasrin Kader Siddiqui was present in the meeting. This was the first political meeting Khaleda had in her new home in Gulshan.

"I told her that I have problems to work jointly with those who were against our independence. I requested her not to make any derogatory comments about Bangabandhu so that we don't get hurt," Siddiqui said after a post-meeting joint briefing at Khaleda's political office in Gulshan with BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakrul Islam Alamgir.

"Bangabandhu was assassinated on August 15, 1975. I urged her not to observe her birthday the way it is being observed. However, I saw her 1972's passport where it was mentioned as her birthday," Siddiqui added.

Asked what Khaleda's reaction to his requests was, he replied, "I was assured and convinced over the discussion with her. But it's true she is the leader of a big party. They will inform me about their decision later."

"I agree with BNP's stance on the caretaker government issue. People want this system. The government should reinstate the system in the next parliament session and restore 'faith on almighty Allah' in the constitution," he

said, adding, it is Khaleda Zia's statesmanship to take steps against the fifteenth amendment.

Asked about the unity with BNP, he said, "I will inform the media about my decision in consultation with my party leaders after holding a meeting with the prime minister."

Mirza Alamgir thanked Siddiqui, also a former Awami League leader, for meeting the BNP chairperson at her residence and said the process for unity will continue. Siddiqui quit AL in 1999 and formed his own party.

Earlier on July 19, Mirza Alamgir met Siddiqui at his Mohammadpur residence and conveyed the invitation on behalf of the chairperson to meet her.

The meeting was held as part of BNP's initiative to bring highest number of political parties under a common platform to forge a tougher movement to compel the government to restore the caretaker government system.

Khaleda will also hold meetings with the chiefs of those parties who want to see continuation of the system to oversee the next parliamentary elections.

**Seven killed**

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recovered seven bodies.

The injured were rushed to Kushtia General Hospital. Among the injured, five were in a critical condition, doctors said.

The bus driver and helper went into hiding just after the accident, said police.

Rescue teams along with locals were searching for more victims at the spot until filing of this report around 8:40pm.

**Norway toll now 92**

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massacre stood at 85 while seven people died in the Oslo bombing, reports AFP.

Police said they were questioning a right-wing Christian on Saturday over the massacre that Norway's prime minister said had turned an island paradise into hell on earth.

While there was no official confirmation of the suspect's identity, he was widely named by the local media as Anders Behring Breivik.

The attacks on Friday afternoon were western Europe's deadliest since the 2004 Madrid bombings, carried out by al-Qaeda.

While there had been initial fears they might have been an act of revenge over Norway's participation in the campaigns in Afghanistan and Libya, the focus shifted when it emerged the suspect was a native Norwegian.

Seven of the victims were killed in a massive explosion which ripped through government buildings, including Stoltenberg's office and the finance ministry, in downtown Oslo.

It is thought that the bomber then caught a ferry to nearby Utoeya wearing a police sweater.

On arrival, he claimed to be investigating the bomb attack and began opening fire with an automatic weapon.

Stoltenberg, as he visited some of the survivors, spoke of his own anguish at the massacre on an island to which he was a frequent visitor. He had been due to give a speech on Saturday to the camp, organised by his Labour party.

"Many of those who have died were friends. I know their parents and it happened at a place where I spent a long time as a young person... It was a paradise of my youth that has now been turned into hell," he said.

The prime minister said he had been deeply moved by speaking to youngsters who had told him how they swam to shore under a hail of gunfire, in some cases helping friends who had been shot.

Norwegian police said they feared there could also be explosives on the island.

There was widespread international condemnation with US President Barack Obama saying the attacks were "a reminder that the entire international community has a stake in

**Govt spurred**

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said at least 72 people were beaten to death by mobs from January to June this year.

The ASK at yesterday's press conference demanded that the government direct police and the administration to prevent people from taking the law into their own hands.

If anyone indulges in such acts, the person should be punished for the sake of rule of law, democracy and human rights, it said.

The organisation expressed concern over people's tendency to take the law into their own hands, and said they do it because the law enforcers fail to maintain law and order.

ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal read out the keynote paper and said the Amin Bazar incident is a blot on the human values of a civilised society.

People are taking the law into their own hands in front of law enforcers, which reflects their disrespect for the country's judicial system, said Sultana Kamal.

It is unexpected and regrettable that extra-judicial killings have become acceptable in our society, she said.

ASK Chairperson Hamida Hossain, its Director Noor Khan, and Senior Deputy Director Nina Goswami were also present at the press conference.

**Amini**

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directives on the government to take action against Amini for his comment.

Amini at a meeting on July 14 said the amended constitution will be thrown into the bin. Different newspapers published that statement the following day.

Eminent writer Shahriar Kabir on Wednesday filed the writ petition against Amini. The court summoned the IOJ leader to appear before it on July 27 to explain why he had made the contemptuous remark.

IOJ yesterday arranged a press conference at the party's Lalbagh office in the capital where Amini said in his defence that his comments on the country's constitution were totally political.

He also said political leaders often make statements figuratively but those are not always meant.

**Warns BNP rally**

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ongoing anti-government movement in front of party headquarters in Naya Paltan.

"The government will be forced to hold the general elections under the caretaker government. A people's government would be formed through that election," he said.

The BNP leader criticised the government for bringing "false" charges against Tarique Rahman, police activist on opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Faroque and the law and order slide in the country.

He alleged the government is favouring criminals by offering presidential clemency to convicted killers and having a police force that stood aside as six students were killed.

The main opposition on July 19 announced a country-wide demonstration protesting against scrapping of the caretaker government system and deleting of the phrase "absolute trust and faith in Allah" from the constitution.

The procession started from in front of the party office in Naya Paltan and ended in Moghbazar. Hundreds of BNP workers joined the procession with banners, placards and portraits of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia.

In Moghbazar after the procession ended, some excited party workers rushed towards the law enforcers with bamboos and sticks. The police however chased them away.

A police official was injured in the commotion, while long tailbacks were seen on the roads in and around Moghbazar after the incident.

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain was scheduled to address the rally in Moghbazar but had left the procession earlier.

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor and city unit BNP convener Sadeque Hossain Khoka later delivered the closing address.

**Mirror too into phone-hacking**

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James Murdoch, the chairman of News International, has been challenged by two of his former employees over evidence he gave before parliament's media scrutiny committee.

A lawmaker has referred James Murdoch's testimony to the police. The junior Murdoch is standing by his evidence.

Meanwhile, the BBC quoted an unidentified former Sunday Mirror journalist who worked on the paper in the past decade who claimed to have witnessed routine phone hacking in the newsroom.

The allegations about the Sunday Mirror were detailed by a source who told BBC's Newsnight: "One afternoon in the newsroom I saw Liz Hurley's phone being hacked and a reporter listen to her mobile phone messages and take a note of what was said."

"It was a Thursday and I

was told that there wasn't much on there - just something about lunch from another woman, so they would keep trying before the weekend to see what they could find."

The programme's source said the technique of phone hacking was used on a daily basis.

"Designated reporters would be doing it pretty much every day," they said.

"One reporter who was very good at it was called the 'master of the dark arts'."

"At one point in 2004 it seemed like it was the only way people were getting scoops."

The source even claimed the Sunday Mirror hired a voiceover artist to imitate famous people in order to get information about them.

"He was such a god of a voiceover artist that he could pretend to be famous people or failing that he'd pretend to be their lawyer or someone related to them."

Separately, James Hipwell, a former Daily

Mirror financial journalist jailed in 2005 for buying shares before tipping them in the paper, said he heard hacking was being used at the paper as he worked next to the showbusiness desk where it was rife. Hipwell worked at the Mirror for two years until 2000.

Trinity Mirror, the group which publishes both papers, said its journalists work within the law and the code of conduct of Britain's self-regulatory Press Complaints Commission. It said Hipwell's allegations were "totally unsubstantiated."

Also it has emerged that Lord Leveson, the judge who will lead the hacking inquiry has said he had attended functions with Rupert Murdoch's son-in-law - but that he had informed Prime Minister David Cameron of this before the appointment was announced.

The senior judge met with Matthew Freud, who is married to Rupert Murdoch's daughter Elisabeth, at func-

tions while he was chairman of the sentencing council, which advises the government on sentencing policy.

The scandal has rocked the British police and even given Prime Minister David Cameron a rough ride, but has so far largely been limited to the News of the World, which Murdoch shut on July 7 amid public outrage.

In a further twist, the New York Times reported that Kroll, a firm of corporate investigators hired by Britain's Daily Telegraph to probe the leak of a story, said they suspected the involvement of senior News International executive Will Lewis, the former editor of the Telegraph.

The Telegraph had obtained a recording of Business Secretary Vince Cable saying he had "declared war" on Murdoch in December, but it was leaked to BBC reporter Robert Peston, a friend of Lewis, before the paper could run the story.

**Border haats trade hopes**

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The buyers on the first day were mainly the security and administrative staffs who came to the haat accompanying the VVIPs.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister of Meghalaya Mukul M Sangma said he grew up in the region and as a child he witnessed how people of the two countries traded with one another without fear. The main trade activity of the tribal people in Meghalaya strip was with their Bangalee neighbours.

He spoke of great potential of trade between the two countries in this region and said, "I am grateful to the leaderships of Bangladesh and India for restarting the haat."

"The port of Chittagong is only a seven-hour drive from Meghalaya border. In future, people of this region could have access to international trade through good relationship with Bangladesh."

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan termed the occasion a historic moment.

"This haat is a symbol of our friendship. It will not only boost economic growth but also strengthen our relationship," he added.

"We have sea ports and I believe all the people in the region [who need access to sea ports] will be able to use our ports for economic development," said Faruk.

The minister thanked India for its help during the Liberation War.

Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry Anand Sharma said trading along the borders has been part of the tradition and heritage of the two countries.

"Access to Chittagong port will open up huge possibilities for the people of this region," he observed.

Sharma added: "With our huge population we have to

remember that our countries will have to sustain high growth potentials.

"India has the largest middle class and a big number of poor people. For historical reasons they remained deprived and marginalised. It will be a mistake if we do not mobilise and redistribute resources now for the generations to come."

The Baliahari-Kalaichar border haat will sit on Wednesdays. The summer timing for the haat will be 9:30am to 3:30pm while in winter from 9:30am to 2:30pm.

The commodities sold here will be free of duty, while traders can use Bangladeshi Taka and Indian Rupees and/or barter system for the transaction. The estimated value of such purchases shall not exceed respective local currency equivalent of \$50 for any particular day.

**Law ministry**

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convicted in BNP leader Nurul Islam murder case. He is now serving life sentences at Laxmipur District Jail in two other murder cases.

Meanwhile, Suranjit, senior AL lawmaker and chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry, said he had made the comment after talking to Law Minister Shafique Ahmed.

"I talked to the law minister earlier. He told me he knew nothing about it, and that is why I made the comment. But later I heard that opinion was received from the law ministry," he said.

The standing committee at its next meeting will look into the basis of the law ministry's recommendation for the clemency, added Suranjit.

Qamrul maintained that the president pardoned Biplob after receiving the law ministry's opinion. The ministry opined in favour of Biplob's reprieve, as he "had been convicted under the influence of the then BNP government".

The state minister also claimed the president acted as per the constitutional provisions and the home and law ministries did not do anything wrong.

Nobody was named in the first information report of the murder case. Police at first submitted a final report, but the then law minister Moudud Ahmed and some other BNP lawmakers put pressure on the victim's wife to implicate Biplob and his family members as they support AL continued Qamrul.

Later, the law enforcers pressed charges against 24 people on instructions of Moudud.

The law ministry has found this all after examining the relevant documents and evidence.

The Daily Star could not reach Law Minister Shafique Ahmed for comments as he was abroad.

**Cheers for partisan traders**

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well-known activists of the ruling party.

Noor E Shahi (Ful), chairman of Rajibpur union, admitted that anomalies took place during the selection. He said all the 25 people selected to trade in the haat are partisans and established businessmen.

"I am also the president of Rajibpur market committee. It (the selection) has surprised me as none consulted me before finalising the list of beneficiaries."

Mojibur Rahman Bangavashi, chairman of Jadurchar union that shares a portion of the haat, said the very concept of the border haat has been tarnished by allocating trade rights to established businessmen from Rajibpur only.

The villagers of Baliahari, mostly farmers and day labourers, also have the same story to tell. Baliahari is the

nearest village from the haat.

Korimon Begum, a widow and mother of three, said although her house overlooks the haat she never got the chance to work for it.

"I wanted to work as a day labourer when they built the road. But they hired all the labourers from Rajibpur," said Korimon, adding that, "I also tried to obtain an identity card for a stall in the haat but no one was interested."

Like Korimon, Mohammad Nazrul Islam of Beparipara said most of the people in his village survive on fishing. "We wanted to sell fish in the haat but could not prove our allegiance to the ruling party. We are too poor to do politics," said Nazrul.

During the inauguration ceremony of the haat yesterday, the two correspondents personally spoke to 20 card holders who admitted that they had shops in Rajibpur

market. Interestingly, many of these traders brought readymade garments, melamine items and brand items to trade in the haat.

Thana Nirbahi Officer Abdul Kader, the person responsible for enlisting the beneficiaries, said that the selection was made based on merit.

"The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the governments prescribes listing of genuine businessmen for trading. We have done accordingly," he said.

However, the MoU did not define the vendors of the haat as "genuine businessmen". It rather says, "Vendors who are allowed to sell their products in the Border Haats shall be the residents of the area within five (5) km radius from the location of Border Haat."

**2 arrested**

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detailed duo are drug peddlers.

But locals say Sanwar is the owner of a tea stall on Dhaka-Aricha highway while Selim is a druggie. Earlier Selim was a transport worker.

During a visit, The Daily Star correspondent found Sanwar's brother-in-law Zahir Hossain running the tea stall in absence of his brother.

"Policemen had searched Sanwar's house earlier but he was not there," he said. "They later came to the shop around 5:00am (yesterday), when Sanwar was asleep, and picked him up."

According to locals and police officers, around 300 law enforcers, including Rapid Action Battalion members, in 37 vehicles cordoned around Baradeshi village from 1:00am to 7:00am yesterday. They raided around 50 houses.

"Although people of different villages took part in the incident, now police are only raiding the houses of Baradeshi and also arresting its inhabitants," said Mohammad Takiuddin, a villager.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Savar Police Station, however, said they could catch only Sanwar and

Selim as all other suspects are on the run.

A mob of several hundred villagers bludgeoned the six to death on Keblarchar of Baradeshi village early Monday on the Shab-e-Barat, suspecting them as robbers.

The law enforcers have prepared a list of around 80 suspects who allegedly took part in the beating.

During the visit in the village yesterday, this correspondent found doors and windows of a large number of houses shut and locked. Besides, most of the shops were closed and very few people were seen.

Locals said most of the villagers, mainly the males, of Baradeshi went into hiding sensing harassment by police. Several men were also found leaving the village with their luggage.

Carpenter Hemayet Uddin, 25, was leaving for his Jamalpur village home. But some of his neighbours said he was departing to avoid any hassle.

Members of Savar police and some detectives from different law enforcement agencies were in the area.

The four-member committee formed by the Police Headquarters on Thursday to

probe the incident is yet to visit the spot, said OCMahbubur.

Meanwhile, several hundred students of Teigaon College formed a human chain in front of the college around 11:00am yesterday demanding punishment to the killers of their fellow student Tipu Sultan, who was among the ill-fated six.

Of the other five, Towhidur Rahman Palash, Kamruzzaman Kanto and Ibrahim Khalil were of Mirpur Bangla College, Shams Rahim Shamam of Maple Leaf International School and Sifat Jabi Munif was of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology.

Another youth, Al Amin, survived but suffered serious injuries.

Two cases were filed -- one by local sand trader Abdul Malek and the other by police -- following the incident.

In the case statement, Malek identifying the mob attack victims as robbers said four of the youths had extorted Tk 5,000 from him earlier on the Shab-e-Barat.

Sub-Inspector Anwar Hossain of Savar police filed the other case accusing five to six hundred unidentified villagers of killing the students.

**2 boys found**

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victims were last seen playing with an abandoned tire near their house around 11:00am on Friday. After then they remained missing, he added.

Relatives searched the whole day but couldn't find them. The locals noticed their bodies floating in the pond water near Renaissance School yesterday morning. On information, police rushed the spot and recovered the bodies from the pond, the OCSaid.

Police suspect they drowned while swimming in the pond with the tire.

**Correction**

FROM PAGE 1

was in fact the prime minister of Mujibnagar government, the Bangladesh government in exile during the Liberation War. After independence, he took over as finance minister. We apologise for the mistake.