

Mahbub

FROM PAGE 20  
2004, he held no military office and was just a retired soldier.

In the rejoinder he said "Country knows it well, I am an ardent believer of democracy and throughout my career in the army or retired life afterwards, I always held the ideals and spirit of democracy and championed its cause. I may cite an event, it was on 20th May, 1996, the country was in a serious military crisis which threatened the very national security and the future of democracy. It was then the caretaker government headed by former chief justice, Justice Habibur Rahman and the country was already poised for the 7th national parliament election. Due to serious contradictions between the president and the chief of army staff and defiance of the latter, a grave situation of indiscipline and disorder developed its election responsibility. I responded to the call and with the total support of the patriotic, democratic and constitution abiding officers and men, brought back discipline and order in the army and helped carry out government to conduct a free, fair, impartial and successful election."

The former army chief claimed to have played a key role in restoring discipline in the army in May 1996 before the elections when the president and the chief of army developed contradiction and created a grave situation.

He also said, "I may also mention that immediately on assumption of my office as chief of staff on 21st May, 1996, the first two visitors I received at Army HQs were Ambassador David Merrill of United States and Ambassador Zhang Xujuang of China who expressed their happiness and appreciation. I may also mention that during my period as chief of army staff (CAS), I was invited to United States once by my counterpart, General Dannis Reimer, CAS, US Army and once by Secretary, Defense, Bill Cohen. They both extended their cooperation and assistance and highly praised our army's role for upholding democracy and UN Peace keeping operation."

Govt official

FROM PAGE 20  
Mostafa is the first government official fined under the RTI Act.

**THE COMPLAINT**  
Ali in the complaint said Mohammad Golam Mostafa, health and family planning officer at Arahazar upazila in Narayanganj, refused to give information when he enquired whether Mamun, a murder accused, was taking treatment in the upazila health complex between April 7 and 11, 2009.

Mamun is one of the five accused in a case filed for killing Ali's younger brother Sheikh Abu Ahammad on April 9 the same year. District Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been investigating the case.

Ali said Mamun's father gave a fake medical certificate to the investigation team and CID dropped Mamun's name from the charge-sheet submitted to a district court in April this year.

Mamun went into hiding just after filing of the case. "He [Mamun] was cleared of all the charges as I did not get the information at that time," said Ali.

Tin Bigha

FROM PAGE 1  
It was kept open for six hours a day from 1992 to 1996 following an agreement between Bangladesh and India.

Later, the time period was extended by another six hours during the previous Awami League government's tenure resulting in the corridor being kept open from 6:30am to 6:30pm.

Lt Col Aslam Hossain, commanding officer of Lalmonirhat 31 BGB Battalion headquarters, at a press conference yesterday said "BSF had sent a letter to us at 5:00pm mentioning that the corridor gate will remain open for 24 hours from 6:30pm today."

"Soon after getting the letter, BGB jawans of Dahagram camp circulated the message via loudspeakers among the inhabitants of Dahagram-Angorpota," he added.

Saying that he was widely considered one of the most corrupt individuals in Bangladesh, Geeta Pasi said Tarique, who used a crutch to walk, said he still took painkillers and was unlikely to ever return to normal health.

"I fall far behind when I walk with my wife and daughter. They stop and let me catch up. Just the reverse of what I used to do for them when I was in normal health."

Duly consulted

FROM PAGE 1  
the high-profile visit. This is because the Teesta deal was the most coveted trophy Bangladesh had wanted, according to analysts.

Manmohan said Mamata's last-minute opposition to the deal took him by surprise.

"I was told all the technicalities were settled but in the meantime something obviously happened, and Mamataji disagreed with it," the prime minister told Indian journalists accompanying him aboard a special plane taking him back to New Delhi on Wednesday.

He also provided some details of his steps to finalise the draft of the deal.

"I sent National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon to talk to Mamataji a long time ago. He met her in Kolkata and then he also undertook a mission to Dhaka," Manmohan said.

"But some other factors came into play, and she [Mamata] said she won't come. It is only then, I realised about disagreement with regard to the Teesta," he said.

He further said when the Teesta treaty issue had come up before the cabinet committee on political affairs a few days prior to his trip to Dhaka, Railway Minister and Mamata's party colleague Dinesh Trivedi raised objections to it.

Manmohan sent his national security adviser to Mamata again, he said, explaining his efforts to get Mamata's nod to the deal.

He admitted he may have made a mistake.

"One learns from one's mistake. I'm not claiming that I'm infallible," said Manmohan who will turn 79 on Sept. 26.

He said he will continue to work with Mamata and will take into account the interests of West Bengal.

That means Mamata and her Paschimbanga have now emerged as a deciding factor in the water sharing deal. The Indian leaders are now indicating that a fresh beginning

will be needed in reaching a consensus on the Teesta pact. It is now more important to get Mamata to agree to any deal struck by Dhaka and New Delhi on sharing the Teesta water.

Manmohan is in no mood to upset Mamata, whose Trinamool Congress is a powerful partner in the Congress-led United Democratic Front central government.

Asked if Mamata was responsible for India's diplomatic embarrassment over the Teesta, Manmohan evaded a direct reply, saying, "Mamataji is one of our key political leaders."

Meanwhile, officials in Dhaka are trying hard to keep their cool despite a general public disappointment over the Teesta failure. A further delay in resolving the Teesta dispute will mean further loss in the multi-million taka Teesta irrigation project.

At a media briefing about the Indian PM's visit, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes said New Delhi is committed to signing the Teesta agreement. "We are hopeful of an agreement within next few months," he said on Wednesday, echoing the optimism expressed a day earlier by Finance Minister AMAMuhith.

The Teesta debacle prompted Dhaka to pull out from the hoped-for deals on the Feni river, and allowing India to use Chittagong and Mongla ports and transport goods through Bangladesh territory.

In spite of the failures, Manmohan described his maiden bilateral visit to Bangladesh as "very satisfying" and said it would have been more successful had the Teesta agreement been signed.

Meanwhile, Manmohan said he returned from his visit to Bangladesh with the impression that all political parties in that country are willing to work with New Delhi to strengthen bilateral relations.

India to give

FROM PAGE 20  
said it would be over Rs 200 crore (around Tk 320 crore).

The grant will also be used for the construction of state-of-the-art India-Bangladesh Culture Centre in Dhaka; undertaking a feasibility study for upgradation of Dhaka-Chittagong railway line; new Indian scholarship to 100 students at graduate, post graduate and doctoral/ research levels; setting up of an IT lab in a model school in each of the 64 districts in Bangladesh; setting up of IT centres at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, Military Institute of Science and Technology and Bangladesh Police Academy; and provision of solar lanterns to 2800 families affected by the cyclone Sidr.

Earlier India approved a credit line of \$1 billion for Bangladesh, of which \$750 million is ready for disbursement.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina discussed the utilisation of the loan with her Indian counterpart. They expressed satisfaction with the utilisation, noted the statement.

The two premiers directed the officials concerned to complete all necessary formalities for speedy implementation of projects taken under the credit line to ensure people can gain benefit at an early date.

After Huji

FROM PAGE 20  
no formal arrests had been made.

A separate email sent to media organisations yesterday said the bomb was the work of the home-grown Indian Mujahideen outfit and threatened another attack on a shopping mall next week.

Neither claim was confirmed by police as genuine, but Internal Security Secretary UK Bansal said intelligence agencies were "seriously examining" both mails.

Wednesday's powerful blast ripped through a crowd of litigants queuing to enter the court complex in the heart of the Indian capital, killing 12 people and injuring nearly 80.

It was the latest in a long list of bombings in Indian cities and prompted searching questions in the national media about the authorities' inability to prevent such attacks and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Police separately released sketches of two suspects seen at the site of the blast.

"We have some leads but it is too early to say which group is behind it," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told reporters on his plane as he returned late Wednesday from an official visit to Bangladesh.

"There are obviously unresolved problems and weaknesses in our system and the terrorists are taking advantage of that," Singh said. "We must work hard to plug those weaknesses," he added.

With some experts suggesting the May attack had been a dry run for Wednesday's blast, a number of editorials in the national press questioned why security at the court had not been effectively tightened.

"With cars spilling out of the car park and no security check worth its name installed, it was a veritable invitation for anyone seeking to perpetrate violence," said the Hindustan Times.

Highlighting the fact that no blast case in the last two years has been solved, The Times of India said it was "truly shocking" that the court could have been successfully targeted twice in such a brief space of time.

"This speaks of an extraordinarily lax security culture," the Times said.

Home Minister P Chidambaram held a high-level meeting yesterday at which National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon was also present to take stock of the situation.

The United States, France, Britain and Pakistan all condemned the bombing, with Washington describing it as "cowardly".

Cop found 'guilty'

FROM PAGE 1  
Kanto and Ibrahim Khalil of Mirpur Bangla College; Shams Rahim Shamam of Maple Leaf International School; and Sitaf Jabi Munif of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology.

The sources said the probe report states that the villagers beat the students to death on suspicion that they were robbers, and police on duty there did not try to stop the villagers.

Tajul said the report also found that Al Amin, the only living victim of the beating, had pleaded with police to allow him to talk to his parents over the cellphone, but police did not allow him, instead they treated the already severely wounded young man roughly.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) of Dhaka AKM Enamul Haque and Metropolitan Magistrate Utpal Chowdhury submitted the report to SC Registrar AKM Shamsul Haque yesterday morning.

More details of the report could not be known instantly since the SC registrar and the magistrates did not disclose the contents of the sealed document to the media.

The sources, however, said the committee did not make

any recommendation in the report.

CMM Enamul Haque on August 10 formed a one-member judicial committee with Utpal Chowdhury to investigate the tragic incident.

Earlier on August 3, in response to the writ petition filed by Tajul Islam on behalf of the National Forum for Protection of Human Rights (NFPHR), the HC asked the CMM to form a committee with a magistrate to investigate the incident.

Utpal Chowdhury said he recorded statements of 54 people including 11 police personnel, family members of the six slain students, and the sole living victim Al Amin during the investigation, and took one month to write the report.

"I feel the real picture of the incident have been rightly presented in the investigation report," he said.

He declined to disclose the findings and observations of the report, terming it a sub-judice matter.

SC Registrar Shamsul Haque last evening said he received the sealed report, and had yet to open it.

"We will place the report to the chief justice next week for his approval to place it before

the High Court bench concerned," he said.

Tajul Islam, who is also the secretary general of NFPHR, said they did not get a copy of the report yet.

He also said the HC will hear the writ petition for further order on the issue after the court reopens in the second week of October on completion of its ongoing autumn vacation.

Two other committees were formed by the Police Headquarters and the Criminal Investigation Department in July to investigate the incident, but none of those could complete the task till date.

Family members of the victims said yesterday evening that they saw television reports claiming the probe report found the victims innocent. They said the probe finding is now their only consolation.

Abdul Kader, father of Kanto, and Al Amin's father Khabir Bapari said they feel relieved as their sons will now be cleared of the fake allegation of attempted robbery.

They demanded arrest and punishment of those who killed the innocent students, and who tried to mislead the case to save the killers.

Bomb alerts force Pakistan jets to land

AFP, Istanbul

Bomb alerts forced two Pakistan International Airlines planes Wednesday to land at Istanbul's Ataturk airport and in Kuala Lumpur, but no bombs were found, officials and news agency reports said.

Security officials in Istanbul with sniffer dogs searched the Boeing 777-300EA, which had 378 passengers on board, as well as passengers' luggage for three hours, Anatolia news agency said.

No explosives were found and the bomb threat was declared a hoax, CNN-Turk and NTV news channels reported, quoting airport authorities.

The plane had departed from Lahore in Pakistan bound for the British city of Manchester, when it was diverted to Istanbul, a spokesman at Manchester airport told AFP.

Kidney trade

FROM PAGE 20  
requirements. During interrogation, Saiful named eight such doctors.

Police, however, expressed unwillingness to disclose their names.

Saiful claimed that nine people in the capital keep contact with the crooked doctors. He made the mention of a mafia that has agents in every district and upazila.

Saiful told police that they go on the hunt for "donors" after the doctors tell them what they need. He said he has helped in the sale of 35 kidneys since 2005 including six from Kalai upazila of Joypurhat.

When he sold his own kidney, the operation was done in Chennai, India.

Arrestee Abdus Sattar said he has close ties with the mafia. He sold one of his kidneys for Tk 4 lakh. The operation was done in Singapore in 2005.

Sattar and Saiful said they got involved after they sold their own kidneys.

Sattar used to visit villages in Kalai upazila to convince people in hardship to sell their kidneys, police said. The mafia looked at Kalai upazila as its organ warehouse, they claimed.

Police said about 42 people of Kalai upazila alone sold their kidneys to wealthy recipients at home and abroad.

Mozammel Haque, police superintendent of Joypurhat, said they are continuing their efforts to apprehend key people behind the illegal kidney trade while Officer-in-Charge of Kalai Police Station F Karim said, "We are looking for five more suspects."

Police officials in Joypurhat said in Kalai most "donors" did not get the money they were promised. They say that the sellers got around Tk 1.5 lakh on an average.

They said the poor people who sold their organs did not come forward earlier fearing prosecution.

4 'pushed off'

FROM PAGE 20  
Bigonebari area in Mymensingh sadar.

Of the three bodies recovered by the Jamalpur police, two were identified as Reza, 22, son of Nabab Ali, and Pritom Kumar Biswas Soubhik, 23, son of late Prodig Kumar Biswas of Mymensingh.

Reza was a second-year BBA student at Daffodil University and Soubhik was a second-year student of Fashion and Merchandising at Shanto-Mariam University in the capital, said Shaker Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Jamalpur railway police.

They were travelling on Mymensingh-bound Agnibina Intercity that left Jamalpur around 7:15pm on Wednesday, police said.

However, the third body recovered by the Jamalpur police and the lone body recovered by the Mymensingh police could not be immediately identified. It was also uncertain which train they were travelling on.

But Jamalpur and Mymensingh police told The Daily Star that they suspect all the four were pushed off trains after mugging.

Tarique symbol

FROM PAGE 1  
into the US.

The decision in this regard, however, could not be known. Tarique has been staying in London since September 2008.

About six months after Moriarty's recommendation, Geeta Pasi, charg  d' affaires of US embassy in Dhaka, sent another cable to Washington on Tarique. It said the State Department was considering a determination for visa revocation for him under the Presidential Proclamation.

Tarique's corrupt practices have had deleterious effects on the US interests, Moriarty wrote, adding "His antics have weakened public confidence in government and eroded the stability of democratic institutions."

"Tarique's well-established reputation for flouting the rule of law directly threatens US financial assistance goals directed toward reforming legal codes, strengthening good governance and halting judicial abuses."

The bribery, embezzlement, and culture of corruption that the BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's elder son has helped create and maintain in Bangladesh has directly and irreparably undermined US businesses, resulting in many lost opportunities, Moriarty wrote.

"His theft of millions of dollars in public money has undermined political stability in this moderate, Muslim-majority nation and subverted US attempts to foster a stable democratic government, a key objective in this strategically important region," reads the cable.

Tarique's flagrant corruption has also seriously threatened specific US Mission goals, it said.

The US embassy in Dhaka has three key priorities for Bangladesh: democratisation, development, and denial of space to terrorists. "Tarique's audaciously corrupt activities jeopardize all three."

"His history of embezzlement, extortion, and interference in the judicial process undermines the rule of law and threatens to upend the US goal of a stable, democratic Bangladesh. The climate of corrupt business practices and bribe solicitation that Tarique fostered derailed US efforts to promote economic development by discouraging much needed foreign investment and complicating the international operations of US companies."

Tarique's "flagrant disregard" for the rule of law had provided potent ground for terrorists to gain a foothold in Bangladesh while also exacerbating poverty and weakening democratic institutions, the cables said.

"In short, much of what is wrong in Bangladesh can be blamed on Tarique and his cronies," Moriarty wrote.

The US ambassador recommended that Tarique could be subject to Presidential Proclamation

7750 that can block one's entry into the US for the aforementioned reasons.

The cable, however, said the embassy was not seeking to apply the proclamation for Tarique's wife Zubaida Rahman, their daughter Zaima Rahman or his mother Khaleda Zia.

The elder son of Khaleda Zia, who led the government in 1991-1996 and later 2001-2006, became an all influential party leader during BNP's second term in office.

During the period, he established an alternative centre of power at Hawa Bhaban, the then political office of the chairperson. It was open secret that Tarique and his cronies used to interfere in the government activities and control all major business deals.

He, however, became powerless after his arrest during the tenure of immediate past army-backed caretaker government.

Terming him "the notorious and widely feared" son of former premier Khaleda Zia, the US ambassador mentioned that Tarique, arrested in an anti-corruption crackdown in March 2007, was released on bail on September 3 the next year. He flew to the UK on September 11 for medical treatment.

As a condition for his release, Tarique had to quit the post of BNP's senior joint secretary general, after enjoying the position for about five years.

But still abroad, he was made all-powerful senior vice chairman in December 2009 with a clear mandate to lead BNP in absence of his mother.

The cable termed Tarique "notorious for flagrantly and frequently demanding bribes in connection with government procurement actions and appointments to political office".

Saying that Tarique's release occurred despite multiple pending cases against him on charges of corruption, extortion, bribery, embezzlement and tax evasion, Moriarty wrote: "With deep political ties that reach the highest court in the land, Tarique managed to manipulate the judicial process and overcome a concerted effort by the Caretaker Government to block his bail."

"We believe Tarique has several passports, including a new one in which the UK issued him a visa in September. Another passport contains a five year multiple-entry B1/B2 visa (issued May 11, 2005). We suspect that passport is being held by the government."

Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) levelled serious charges against Tarique, the cable said, adding he reportedly had accumulated hundreds of millions of dollars in illicit wealth. There are multiple extortion cases pending against him, founded on the testimony of numerous prominent business owners who he victimised and exploited, the cable said.