

Nizami protested

FROM PAGE 20
never reported in the newspapers because of the censorship regulations then in effect," the defence counsel added.

Tajul Islam read out the petition filed by Nizami with the tribunal, seeking his discharge from the charges brought against him by the prosecution in December last year.

The tribunal -- the first of two courts formed to deal with crimes committed during the Liberation War -- adjourned the hearing till today while the defence will place their argument supporting the discharge petition.

The prosecution submitted formal war crimes charges against the former minister of the BNP-led alliance government and brought 20 specific charges against him on December 11, 2011.

The charges include genocide, rape, torture, abduction and confinement of Bangalee people in greater Pabna, Jessore, Chittagong and Dhaka, and abetment of and attempt or conspiracy to perform such acts during the War.

The prosecutor finished reading out 73-page formal charges on March 15 after the three-member tribunal headed by Justice Md Nizamul Huq took the charges into cognisance on January 9.

During yesterday's proceedings, Tajul Islam said no proceedings have ever been instituted against Nizami in the last 40 years. Neither an FIR nor any petition has ever been filed against him with any police station or court in Bangladesh.

The current charges against his client cannot be framed as the prosecution

provide and rely on both an insufficient legal basis and contain insufficient factual information, said Tajul.

He added if the charges are framed on such grounds, it would result in an unfair trial by both domestic and international standards.

In the 33-page petition, the counsel said throughout its proposed indictment, the prosecution has failed to specify which crime as a crime against humanity has been committed.

The tribunal yesterday allowed two of Nizami's counsels to visit him in jail on April 21 to prepare the case. It also exempted the Jamaat chief from personal appearance today as he has to appear before a Chittagong court tomorrow.

Nizami, who was produced before the tribunal yesterday, is among six Jamaat and two BNP leaders facing crimes against humanity charges at the tribunal.

REVIEW PETITION OF SQ CHOWDHURY

The defence counsel of BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury yesterday placed argument on a review petition filed against an order by the tribunal rejecting his discharge petition on March 13.

The three-member tribunal adjourned the hearing till today while defence counsel Fakrul Islam is supposed to place his argument on another petition seeking recall of the BNP leader's indictment order.

The tribunal framed 23 specific charges against the detained BNP lawmaker in connection with genocide and crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War on April 4.

He was produced before the tribunal yesterday.

Suranjit should go on his own

FROM PAGE 1
desperate attempt to deflect public attention from the story proper.

Likewise, his bid at an interview with a foreign media organisation suggesting that he had nothing to do with the men detained by the BGB with all that money undermines the concept of democratic government as we understand it.

There are at this point of time too many facts as well as factors around what has swiftly come to be known as the railwaygate scandal that cannot be ignored.

In the first place, it is the amount of money that disturbs public sensibilities. In the second, it is the fact of three individuals in the vehicle travelling toward Jigatola on the night in question with clear and precise knowledge about the source of the money and where it was headed that now raises legitimate questions about the affair. In the third, it is the driver of the vehicle who, despite his sheer pique at being denied what he thought was his share of the money, now becomes a principal point of reference in the scandal.

In the fourth, the vehicle, prior to its being rushed into the BGB headquarters, was on its way to Jigatola. And Jigatola is the area where Suranjit resides.

The minister has till now been unable to explain why the vehicle carrying the four men (including the driver) and the bagload of clearly questionable money was

headed toward the locality where his residence happens to be. There is as yet no concrete evidence that the money would have passed into the hands of Suranjit. The benefit of doubt, let us assume, works, for now.

But the road trajectory the vehicle took was without question one that led to his home. It is another matter, of course, that an offended driver changed course midway through the journey and simply drove the vehicle into the unlikely places, in this case the BGB premises.

The move by the driver can be observed in one of two ways. Firstly, it was anger at being told off that he could not expect a share of the money which led him into committing that act of desperation. And, secondly, despite the emotion behind his act, the driver did the country some service by letting it into the news that huge corruption was at work in the railway on the watch of the minister.

Suranjit should have resigned, on plain moral and ethical grounds, within minutes of the scandal coming to light. That is what public representatives in a democratic dispensation are expected to do and indeed, in countries other than Bangladesh, actually do.

Months ago, when graft allegations first began to surface about then communications minister Syed Abul Hossain, the proper step for him ought to have been

resignation. But since he did not quit on his own, it should have been for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to remove him from the council of ministers. That neither happened was a sign that the government was, in cavalier fashion, unconcerned at the depths to which it was sliding in public esteem.

With Suranjit, indeed with his refusal to go, with the reluctance of the prime minister to sack him, those depths of growing unpopularity are only getting deeper. The minister's -- and the government's -- case only worsens through the formation of two committees to probe the scandal because those committees are headed by the very people and powered by the very machinery who and which have now become tainted through the discovery of the Tk 70 lakh and the emergence of questions relating to the corruption taking place in railway.

The early clear signs of bribery and other elements of wrongdoing regarding employment in railway are already out in the sun. Add to all this the whispers increasingly making the rounds about Suranjit's son making an entry into the telecoms industry. And do not forget the market, all new and fresh and shining and owned by the railway minister, which has just opened in Sunamganj.

Suranjit's case is clearly and palpably dwindling. His defence of himself over these

past few days has grown progressively weak, to a point where he blames his enemies for trying to damage his reputation. He first told the country he would resign if his involvement was found in the scandal. Now he thinks the blame can be transferred to his APS, to the railway officials accompanying the APS on that night and to the driver of the vehicle. None of this helps him at all. It only leads to more haemorrhaging of governmental authority, more loss of faith on the part of the nation in the ability of this government to climb out of the rut it has been slipping into over the past many months.

Suranjit is a diminished politician today. Because he refuses to take responsibility for the scandal, because he appears to be desperately clinging to office despite the moral ground shifting away from under him, he sends out a bad message to a country already embarrassed about this government's inability to investigate cases of murder, of disappearances of citizens, of "crossfire" deaths, of donor nations' and agencies' questions about a blurring of transparency in an upholding of the national interest.

He should go -- and go fast. Or the prime minister, whose own authority has in these many months become shaky, should move to show him the door. And then let a proper, impartial judicial inquiry begin into the scandal.

Touts out to fleeced

FROM PAGE 1
The returnees and new jobseekers have started their efforts to find jobs in Libya again.

Brokers are wooing many jobseekers and charging Tk 2 lakh to Tk 3 lakh each for a job, said some jobseekers who already submitted money and passports to some brokers and recruiting agencies.

Earlier, manpower syndicates became engaged in visa trading and sent more than the required number of workers. For example, a company required 10 workers, but they "managed" 20 visas.

The idea is to make more money by recruiting more workers, some recruiting agencies alleged.

Such malpractice almost stopped the Bangladeshi workers' recruitment to Libya in 2010. It, however, seems to have started again, they said.

According to sources, fraudsters were trying to send jobseekers to Libya's neighbouring countries -- Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia with tourist visas, and then push them into Libya.

The number of Bangladeshis, who are entering Libya in this way, would be around 7,000, sources in Libya said adding that these workers will face trouble in future.

"I submitted Tk 2.8 lakh to a broker who said my flight would be on March 25," said Ilias Ali, a jobseeker from Meherpur, a south-western district of the country.

Ilias, however, does not know the name of the recruiting agency. He only said that the broker is from his village and knows everything.

Anisur Rahman Khan, a migrants' rights activist, alleged that either a broker or an official of a recruiting agency at Banani in the capital sent messages to the mobile phones of the Libya returnees asking them to contact immediately for going to Libya.

As he dialled the number posing as a Libya returnee and enquired the person on the other end whether the message sender has job visas or any advertisement in this connection had been published, the person informed him that they have representatives in Libya and they

were trying to collect visas.

Migrant rights activists Joyal Abedin and Al Amin Nayan said they have information that many were submitting money to recruiting agencies to go to Libya.

Ahsan Kibria, labour counsellor of Bangladesh embassy in Libya, said only a few foreign companies that employ foreign workers have returned to Libya, and so many jobs have not been created there yet.

"I, therefore, check out a person whether the employers, who are getting approval for recruiting foreign workers, have the ability to pay wages, provide accommodation and others," he told The Daily Star recently.

M Taneem Hasan, owner of the recruiting agency Bluestar Services that recruited 76 jobseekers after the civil war, said Libya's National Transitional Committee (NTC)-backed government allowed some foreign companies to recruit workers, who had earlier worked there.

The NTC even issued on-arrival visas to these workers, he said.

Hasan, however, could not confirm whether any group was trying to exploit these visas.

"I will therefore suggest that the authorities concerned do not allow any recruitment procedure in Libya without the attestation of job demand letters by the Bangladesh mission in Tripoli," he said.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies has requested the jobseekers to go to Libya only through the licensed recruiting agents, subject to approval by the manpower bureau or expatriates' welfare ministry.

Begum Shamsunnahar, director general at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, said they are not issuing emigration clearances to the jobseekers unless their documents are attested by the Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli.

Meanwhile, a taskforce of the expatriates' welfare ministry instructed the immigration authorities at the airport to be careful in allowing the Libya or Africa-bound passengers from Bangladesh.

BCB shrugs off security worry

FROM PAGE 1
It will be the first time in just over three years that international cricket has been scheduled in Pakistan after the attack on the Sri Lankan players less than a mile away from the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

The March 2009 terrorist attack left eight people dead and seven visiting players and their assistant coach wounded. Pakistan had been a "no go" zone for international teams as they fear for the security of the players in a country where the national army is fighting militancy.

"The public of Pakistan have been deprived of cricket and we felt that we needed to support them.

The reception we received when we toured Lahore and Karachi on our security visit was overwhelming," said Kamal in a press release.

"This tour is taking place after 2009 and this short tour will hopefully demonstrate to the world that cricket should start taking place in Pakistan," added Kamal, who is a joint nominee of Pakistan-Bangladesh for the ICC vice president's post from June 2012.

It is understood that Kamal has got the permission from the government to tour Pakistan.

The ICC board requested the PCB to provide a comprehensive security plan for consideration after which its

anti-corruption and security unit will commission a localised risk assessment to determine whether its officials and staff are appropriately protected by the proposed security plan, before any further decision is taken in relation to their appointment.

Early in March, Kamal led a security team to assess the situation in Pakistan and upon his return (and with regards to the ICC stance on match officials), said that Bangladesh would not tour if the ICC did not take the standard practice into consideration. It drew flak from the PCB, which threatened to review relations if the tour doesn't take place.

But PCB chairman Ashraf,

who visited Bangladesh twice since December to lobby for the tour yesterday said, "I want to thank the BCB and the Bangladesh government for their support for this tour."

Last month, the ICC had announced a "special dispensation" to be made only in exceptional circumstances in order to ensure that a bilateral series take place even if the ruling body has determined it "unsafe" to appoint its officials for such series. This would allow such series to be manned by "non-neutral match officials."

Pakistan government had promised foolproof security for the Bangladesh team after their security delegation assessed the situation there last month.

Arrest of 9 BCL

FROM PAGE 1
Chhatra League of Jahangir Nagar University, in the case murder of Zubair Ahmed in January this year.

They are Khan Mohammad Rais of zoology department, Rashidul Islam and Ishiaq Mehbub (Arup) and Kamruzzaman Sohag of philosophy, Majharul Islam and Mahamudul Hasan Masud of history, Najmul Hossein Plabon of public administration, and Shafiq Alam Setu and Abhinandan Kundu of statistics department.

Judicial Magistrate Washim Sheikh passed the order after Sub-Inspector Mir Shahin Shah Parvez of Ashulia Police Station, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, appealed to the court seeking arrest warrants against them as they have been absconding.

The IO on April 8 pressed charges against 13 BCL activists, including the nine fugitives, for their alleged involvement in the killing. They are all honours final year students.

Four other students -- Khandaker Ashikul Islam alias Ashik and Zahid Hasan of zoology department, Mahabub Akram of government and politics, and Najmus

Sakib Topu of biochemistry and molecular biology department -- were arrested earlier and are now in jail.

The university Syndicate on January 30 expelled for life seven of the 13 accused and six others for two years after a probe committee found their involvement in the killing. The students expelled for life are Ashik, Rais, Zahid, Rashidul Islam, Arup, Akram and Topu.

Zubair, an honours final year student of English department of the university, was brutally tortured and stabbed by the accused and some others on January 8 over previous enmity. He succumbed to his injuries at a city hospital the next day.

The court yesterday also asked officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station to submit by May 7 reports on execution of the arrest warrants against the fugitives.

Zubair's friends said he was killed because of old enmity with the opponent faction of Chhatra League -- allegedly patronised by the university's vice chancellor. Zubair was loyal to Shafiq-Sammo group who were ousted from the campus in August 2010 following a fierce clash between the two factions.

Scrap power

FROM PAGE 20
Because of saline water in the area, the per unit production cost at the thermal plant will be high, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, the chief executive of Bela, said at the press conference.

Despite this fact, the government is very keen on setting up the plant in Rampal, which raises questions, she added.

The speakers also suggested that the deal signed with the NTPC should be made public and the gov-

ernment should ensure protection of valuable natural resources of the Sundarbans.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, Bapa representative Ashraf Mridha, Bela Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan, ActionAid representative Shomsher Ali and Save the Sundarbans key coordinator SK Faridul Islam were present at the press conference.

A joint statement was read out, which was signed by Sultana Kamal, Prof Abdullah

Abu Sayeed, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Rasheda K Chowdhury, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, MA Matin, Abu Naser, Sara Hossain, Khushi Kabir, Badiul Alam Majumder, Farah Kabir and Iftekharuzzaman.

Earlier, on January 27, 12 renowned personalities of the country demanded immediate withdrawal of the government's decision to set up the power plant near the Sundarbans for the sake of protecting its environment and biodiversity.

The Sundarbans covers 41 percent of the total protected forest area in Bangladesh and is home to 453 wildlife species. It has been declared a "Ramsar site", a world heritage site by Unesco. Besides, the government in February announced that some river areas of the Sundarbans are sanctuaries for globally endangered dolphins.



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Notice Inviting Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Extension & Up Gradation of Physical Infrastructure of Data Centre

Sealed RFP are hereby invited by Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited from reputed /distinguished Companies for the Extension & up gradation of Physical Infrastructure of Data Centre (Raised Floor, Power, Security, PAC etc.) of Islami Bank Bangladesh limited under the terms and conditions stated in the RFP documents.

The intending Bidders have to apply in their letter head pad for purchasing RFP document. The RFP document will be available from 16-04-2012 to 28-04-2012 during office hours upon payment of Tk.3000.00 in cash (non refundable). The Bids (Technical & Financial) will be received at the office of the undersigned during office hours up to 3:00 PM on 29-04-2012. Only the Technical offer will be opened on 29-04-2012 at 03:10 PM at the Mohammad Younus Auditorium, 5th floor of Islami Bank Tower, 40 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka. A pre-bid meeting will also be held on 24-04-2012 at 11:00 A.M. at OTOBI Building, 14 Dilkusha C/A, 8th floor (Knowledge Centre), Dhaka. Detailed information regarding purchasing of RFP document is available in the Tender notice at Bank's website: www.islamibankbd.com or in the form of hard copy at the office of the undersigned.

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TENDER NOTICE

For Lightning Protection of IUB Campus at Bashundhara

- Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the bonafide contractors/suppliers for supply & installation of Lightning Protection system of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) campus at Bashundhara, Dhaka. The bidders shall be required to submit a complete offer including the cost with detail design and drawings.
- The interested bidder must have minimum 5 years of relevant experience in Lightning Protection works. The bidder must have proven experienced graduate engineer(s) in the field of Lightning Protection works and also must have enough experience to produce design and drawings for the same work.
- The bidder shall apply in their official letterheads to the undersigned along with the following documents:
 - The experience certificate from the employer(s) for the similar type of works to any reputed educational institutions/universities and multi-storied buildings.
 - Copies of the latest Trade License, Income Tax and VAT Registration Certificates.
- The bidder shall furnish as part of the bid, an earnest money of 2.5% of the bid amount in favour of Independent University, Bangladesh in the form of a bank draft/pay order from a schedule bank located in the country.
- Interested bidders are requested to collect the Tender Schedule from the office of the undersigned between 9:30 am to 4:00 pm from 16 April 2012 to 22 April 2012 on payment of Taka 500/- only in cash (non-refundable) for each schedule.
- The tenders will be received at the office of the undersigned up to 2:00 pm of 7 May 2012 and shall be opened at 2:30 pm on the same day at the same place in presence of the bidders who may like to attend the tender opening.
- IUB reserves the right to accept only the technically responsive tender without any consideration of the lowest bid and shall have the right to reject any tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Deputy Director, Planning & Development
Plot # 16, Block-B, Bashundhara, Dhaka
Tel: 8401645-53

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Procurement of Earthquake Equipment

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh hereby invites sealed quotations from interested bidders for procurement of 06 units Seismometer, 06 units Digitizer and 06 units Sensor Cable with Connectors.

Submission of Quotation : The envelopes should state "Procurement of Earthquake Equipment" and marked as 'Confidential'. The selection of Bids will be done based on the UNDP procurement rules and regulations.

All interested firms may collect the bidding Documents (RFQ) from the below e-mail address: **parvin.akther@undp.org**. Bid must be dropped to the Procurement Cluster of UNDP, IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka before 12.30 hrs on 02 May 2012.