

Image lost after Bangabandhu killing restored: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party had restored the dignity and image of the country that it had lost after the assassination of Father of the Nation and the most of his family members.

"The people of Bangladesh achieved dignity through independence, but it was lost after the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975. We've gained the lost dignity back, and this is our biggest achievement. There could be no achievement bigger than this", she said.

The prime minister said this as Awami League leaders met her at her official residence of Gono Bhaban to greet her on the occasion of her 31st homecoming day yesterday.

On this day in 1981, Sheikh Hasina, now president of the AL, returned home after six years in exile following the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by some ambitious and disgruntled army men on August 15, 1975.

Both Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana could escape the August 15 onslaught as they were abroad when the assassination was carried out. Sheikh Hasina was elected president of AL at its three-day national council held on February 14-16, 1981.

The prime minister said her government restored the spirit of the Liberation War in the constitution through the 15th amendment. The constitution was mutilated by the successive military govern-



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also president of the Awami League, was offered flowers by party high-ups on the occasion of her 31st homecoming day at Gono Bhaban yesterday. PHOTO: PMO

ments after the Bangabandhu's assassination, she said.

Sheikh Hasina said after the assassination, she and Sheikh Rehana came to Delhi from Germany, where she had stayed for six years. AL leaders, including Dr Kamal Hossain, requested her to take the responsibility of the party to strengthen it and to mobilise public opinion worldwide against the killing of Bangabandhu, she said.

She recalled that Sajeda Chowdhury, also an AL leader, used to ask her to come to politics for ensuring the overall development of the country's people. Sheikh Hasina said she had no intention to be the chief of the party. Rather she wanted to work as

an activist, she added.

But, due to repeated request of the party leaders, she agreed to serve the party with a condition that if a single leader opposed her leadership she would quit, Sheikh Hasina said.

She mentioned that Awami League was such an organisation, which could not be destroyed, as the party was born in the hands of the Father of the Nation.

Sheikh Hasina also said she always gave her all-out efforts so that the party remained united and there was no factionalisation.

In an emotion-choked voice, the prime minister said her target was how to serve the people of the country and to change the fate of its people.

"My father, mother and brothers sacrificed their lives for the people of the country".

Since her return to home, she has been trying to ensure socio-economic development of the country though the path was not so smooth, she said.

The prime minister said she always had the intention to fulfill the desires and aspirations of the common people of Bangladesh, and she had met many of those.

She said many had cautioned her not to go for the trial of the killers of Bangabandhu. "If I was scared of death, I would never return to Bangladesh".

Mentioning that her government was working relentlessly to deliver a better and

prosperous life for the country's people, the Awami League chief also asked its party workers to work in the light of the ideology of Bangabandhu.

The prime minister also recalled the memories of her exiled life and the memories of those days when she returned home 31 years ago.

Deputy Leader in Parliament Sayeda Sajeda Chowdhury, AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam, AL presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Selim, Kazi Jafarullah, AL advisory council member Amir Hossain Amu, Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui, and other central leaders were present, among others, on the occasion.

Govt interfering in judiciary

Says SCBA president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Zainul Abedin yesterday said the country's judiciary cannot function properly and independently due to interference of the government.

The interference has created a bad notion in the mind of the people about the judiciary, Zainul, also a pro-BNP lawyer, told a press conference at the South Hall of the bar association.

"A judge has sent 33 top leaders to jail and left the courtroom in a hurry after passing a two-line order on Wednesday, although the state counsel agreed with many points placed by their lawyer Moudud Ahmed. It seems that the court cannot function independently due to the government interference, which is regrettable for the litigants," he said.

The SCBA president urged the chief justice to take steps so that the judiciary can work independently.

He hoped that the chief justice would play a special role through his activities to protect image of the judiciary.

The SCBA president also demanded release of the detained opposition leaders, including BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, and withdrawal of the cases filed against them.

Pro-BNP lawyers--Nital Roy Chowdhury, Shahjahan Omar, Helal Uddin Mollah, Ruhul Quddus Kazal and Kaiser Kamal--also were present at the press conference.

After the press conference, a group of pro-BNP lawyers brought out a procession at the SCBA premises in support of the yesterday's hartal.

'Biosafety rules soon'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would finalise the biosafety rules within a few weeks restricting use of genetically modified organism to protect environment and human health, said Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday.

The rules would be framed under The Environment Conservation Act, 1995 to prevent adverse affect on the agricultural and natural environment, he said.

The minister was talking to reporters at his office in the Secretariat yesterday afternoon after an inter-ministerial meeting on formulation of The Bangladesh Biosafety Rules 2012.

Shafique said no person or organisation can use, import, export, purchase and sell the genetically modified organism or substance without licence or permission from the Biosafety Core Committee.

Highest punishment for committing offence under the proposed rules is two years' jail and fine of Tk 10 lakh, he said.

Mizanur Rahman, senior information officer of the law ministry, told The Daily Star that Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury at the meeting said the government is committed to ensure biosafety and protect environment from the damage caused due to abrupt use of chemicals in agriculture.

Secretary Shahidul Haque said the fisheries and livestock ministry would give its opinion on the rules within seven days and the law ministry would then issue a gazette notification on the rules to make it effective.

The meeting was held at the conference room of the Chittagong hill tracts affairs ministry with the law minister in the chair.

IRREGULARITIES IN RECRUITMENT RU VC, pro-VC sued

RU CORRESPONDENT

A case was filed with a Rajshahi court on Wednesday accusing the vice chancellor, pro-vice chancellor and seven other officials of Rajshahi University of being involved in recruitment irregularities over two sports officer posts.

The Rajshahi District Senior Assistant Judge Court served a show cause notice asking RU authorities to explain in 24 hours why a third job advert was issued for the posts without holding vivas after the first two.

The recruitment process of sports officers requires holding viva of applicants whose qualifications meet the criteria mentioned in the adverts.

It also asked them to explain why they should not be directed to cancel the viva relating to the third advert, scheduled to be held tomorrow.

The case, filed by a candidate for the posts, Nazmul Haque, stated that the first two adverts for the vacancies in Physical Education Department and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall were published in 2005 and 2006.

But without holding any viva, RU issued a third advert for the same posts on 2011 and was going to hold the viva for it.

The remaining seven accused are Registrar Prof MA Bari, deputy registrars Ajit Kumar Chakravarti and Nazrul Islam, Student Adviser Prof Golam Sabbir Sattar, Physical Education Department Director Mir Sharif Hasan, Prof Shamsuddin Ilias of psychology department and Prof Abu Sadek Mohammad Kamruzzaman of finance and banking department.

RU Legal Cell Administrator Dr Anisur Rahman said they received the notice yesterday at around 11:00am and were preparing to comply with it.

Kuwait keen to raise investment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Terming Bangladesh a country of immense strength and opportunities, a visiting three-member Kuwaiti delegation, arriving on a three-day visit yesterday, expressed the desire to invest more in the coming days.

The assurance came at a meeting between the delegation, led by Kuwait Foreign Ministry Director General for Asian Countries Mohammad Ahmad Al-Mejren Al-Rumi, and officials of Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the ministry.

Kuwait currently invests in a number of projects in Bangladesh, said the Kuwaiti delegation while holding talks on labour and manpower, investment in infrastructure projects, dredging, refinery establishment, roads and bridges and social welfare.

The director general proposed to hold more exhibitions and fairs on trade and investment in Dhaka and Kuwait to showcase Bangladesh's capabilities and attract Kuwaiti investors.

Foreign ministry Director General (West and Central Asia) Nazrul Islam led the Bangladesh delegation, comprising representatives from the ministries of expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, home affairs, water resources, shipping, energy and mineral resources division and Board of Investment.

The Kuwaiti delegation called on Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain where the latter urged Kuwait to recruit more manpower from Bangladesh.

Assuring full cooperation in this regard, the director general said Kuwait would encourage recruitment, especially of skilled and semi-skilled personnel of technical fields.

The director general also called on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at the ministry and the prime minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi at the Prime Minister's Office, says a press release.