

No breach

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matter of time now," said the minister.

Meanwhile, Mashiur said if he was required to go on long leave because of any understanding between the government and the WB, he would do so.

Asked about his return to office on Thursday after a month's leave, he said, "It does not need any explanation. I took leave from the prime minister and I returned to work after the leave."

Mashiur made the comments coming out of the Anti-Corruption Commission's office where he was quizzed in connection with the corruption allegations in the Padma bridge project.

He went to the ACC office in a car without any national flag.

Muhith told reporters, "I think the problem regarding the effectuation of the Padma bridge credit has been settled and I have no doubt or confusion about this."

He said Isabel Guerrero, WB vice president for South Asia Region, will arrive in Dhaka this month to discuss the effectuation of the loan.

The minister was talking to reporters after a meeting of the cabinet committee on economic affairs at the cabinet division.

He didn't give any direct reply to queries about Mashiur's leave, and said Economic Relations Division Secretary Iqbal Mahmood, who was by his side, would give a statement later in the afternoon.

Wishing anonymity, a World Bank official said the Bank will closely monitor whether the government is

keeping its pledge.

Later, Mahmood read out a written statement issued by the finance minister at his office. The statement did not say anything about Mashiur's leave.

In the statement, Muhith said a WB implementation team will arrive in Dhaka this month and hold talks with the project's other financiers.

"We firmly believe that visible work on the Padma bridge will start in the current fiscal year," Muhith said in the statement.

When reporters wanted to know about Mashiur's leave, Mahmood said, "I have no official version of what he [Mashiur] has said."

The journalists told him that the understanding between the government and the WB was that Mashiur would not join office during the ACC probe into the corruption allegations against him. But he joined office.

In reply, Mahmood said, "It is not clear to me whether he has joined office... have you seen that he went to office?"

He said there was a condition that all officials against whom corruption allegations were raised will be on leave while the probe is on, and there has been no breach of it.

When the reporters again asked him about Mashiur's leave, he said, "It is useless if you assume something. It's clear that the government's position has not changed. You have to understand."

In the evening, Mashiur told journalists that he came to know about the WB's allegations from newspapers.

"I will request you [journalists] to publish what the World Bank has given you, as nobody else knows about it. I also don't know."

"If the World Bank gave you nothing, you [journalists] tell people the truth."

Asked about his grilling at the ACC, Mashiur said it was not to be disclosed.

In the meantime, ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman told journalists that they didn't find any evidence of corruption in the project till yesterday based on which they could file a First Information Report.

He said the ACC probe would not be affected by whether Mashiur continues office or not.

On the issue of Mashiur's leave, Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said, "What is possibly needed now is a decisive and emphatic assertion on the part of the top political leadership which will ensure consistent and coherent approach and measures towards target-oriented implementation of the work plan that has been agreed upon between the government and the concerned lenders."

He said there are factors and forces beyond economic rationale that are inhibiting the implementation of the conditions agreed between the government and the WB.

"Such hiccups in the post-revival period may in the end seriously jeopardise the actual operationalisation of the loan to the detriment of the country's national development interests," said Bhattacharya.

4 Bangladeshis shot by BSF

STAR REPORT

Four Bangladeshi cattle traders were shot by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Agrobhulat border in Benapole early yesterday.

The injured are Amir Hossain, 25, Sarif Hossain, 22, Raja Mia, 30, and Shawkat Ali, 34, of Agrobhulat village.

They were admitted to Jessore Medical College Hospital, reports our correspondent in Benapole.

Mosarraf Hossain, Agrobhulat camp commander of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), said BSF men of Jhouladanga camp in India fired at a group of Bangladeshi cattle traders around 4:30am.

The traders were entering Bangladesh from India with a large consignment of cattle, he said.

Against the backdrop of such border shooting, a four-day deputy director general (DDG)-level conference of BGB and BSF begins at a city hotel in Sylhet today.

The meeting will discuss trans-border issues, including killing incidents at the borders, smuggling of arms and contraband items, and illegal trespassing, reports our staff correspondent in Sylhet.

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER Rab quizzes fugitive guard's father

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel yesterday interrogated the father of Humayun Kabir alias Enamul, the fugitive security guard of the building in which the killing of journalist couple Sagar-Runi took place.

During interrogation, Humayun's father Moqbul Hossain alias Kala said his son had long been involved in criminal activities, including theft, said Captain M Sohail, director of the legal and media wing of the elite force.

"We summoned Kala mainly to gather information on his son's past as well as about his whereabouts," he said.

Earlier, the home ministry had announced a bounty of Tk 10 lakh for Humayun.

Sagar Sarowar, news editor at the private TV station Maasranga, and his wife Meherun Runi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the small hours of February 11 at their rented apartment in the capital's West Rajabazar.

Hailing from Moulvibazar, Kala, 56, arrived at the Rab headquarters around 10:30am and left the office around 12:45pm.

Jamaat told

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Jamaat, however, still remains a registered political party due to inaction of the EC.

The commission has the authority to cancel the registration of Jamaat if it fails to amend the constitution as required.

Several clauses in the Jamaat charter of call for establishing the rule of Islam in the country through organised efforts. The party also refuses to accept parliament's plenary powers to formulate laws, saying people must not accept anyone except Allah as the maker of laws.

Like other political parties, Jamaat got registered with the EC before the December 29, 2008, parliamentary polls after bringing some provisional changes in its constitution.

Just as the 38 other registered parties, Jamaat was supposed to submit its amended constitution to the EC by January 24, 2010.

On expiry of the deadline, the commission asked Jamaat twice -- in January and April, 2010 -- to amend the charter. But Jamaat did not respond.

EC officials said they would send letters to seven other political parties including Islami Oikya Jote and Bikalpadhara Bangladesh asking them to bring some minor changes in their constitutions.

Undisclosed luggage bogs

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Bangladesh Airlines said pilots many times conveyed to the authorities their concern over the undisclosed weight on flights.

A few months ago, a pilot of a DC-10 aircraft told a meeting that he had faced a near-crash situation.

"It was supposed to take six minutes to climb to cruising altitude after take-off but it took me around 12 minutes due to the hidden weight," said a Biman official, quoting a pilot, who spoke at such a meeting.

In the first week of August, a Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on a London-Dhaka flight had to carry an undisclosed weight of around 5,000 kg.

A Biman source said the captain of that flight informed the authorities that 3,800 kilograms of extra fuel had to be used owing to either undeclared luggage or cargo.

Referring to the pilot's complaint, the source said that had the pilot not taken on extra fuel as precaution before take-off, he would have to make an unscheduled stop for refuelling.

Extra fuel means higher operation costs.

Wishing anonymity, a top

Biman official said the national flag carrier would have made profits had it been able to stop such practices.

"We incurred a loss of Tk 195 crore last year but had we stopped this illegal practice of carrying extra luggage and cargo, we would have earned more than Tk 200 crore additionally every year."

For example, Biman would be deprived of around Tk 30 lakh a flight if staff at its UK station loaded 5,000 kg of undisclosed cargo, said the official.

Moreover, Biman would have had to count the cost of additional fuel -- Tk 3.67 lakh per flight -- taking the jet fuel price at Tk 87 a kg.

The official said Biman allows passengers on its Dhaka-London route 30 kg of luggage and charges 28 British pounds (GBP) for each kg of extra baggage. It charges 1.09 GBP for each kg of cargo while cargo agents charge 4.5 GBP from customers.

Biman sources said officials allow carrying cargo on cash payments. In many cases, cargo officials give customers fake receipts and pocket a major portion instead of depositing those

with the Biman's account.

An official said such corruption could be stopped if the authorities collected the charges for carrying cargo through banks. And a booth for banks could be opened at the Cargo Village at airports to facilitate customers.

Biman sources said this corrupt practice had been going on unabated at almost 18 foreign stations of Biman.

Wishing anonymity, a top Biman official said a section of influential people also play a part in it.

The official said influential people, including political leaders, compelled Biman staff to accept extra luggage. The total amount of such extra luggage is more than that the unscrupulous employees allow in exchange for money.

Acting Biman managing director AM Mosaddique Ahmed claimed that there had been only one or two incidents of carrying undisclosed cargo and luggage.

"We are identifying those responsible, and taking punitive action against them."

The punishment for such corruption is suspension, transfer or demotion, Biman sources said.

Abul Kalam indicted

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The prosecution witnesses would be examined on that day too.

Before framing the charges, Justice Kabir said, "Accused Moulana Abul Kalam Azad alias Bachchu has been absconding or has concealed himself and thus he is not present before the tribunal. The trial is being held in absentia."

Azad, 65, also a former leader of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami in 1971, went into hiding around seven hours before Tribunal-2 issued an arrest warrant against him on April 3.

On October 7, the tribunal decided to hold Azad's trial in his absence as even after publication of newspaper ads asking him to appear before the tribunal he failed to show up.

The court appointed a state defence counsel to defend Azad, also known as Bachchu Razakar.

Delivering the indictment order after lunch, Justice Kabir said Azad, son of Abdus Salam Mia of Barakhardia village under Saltha Police Station of Faridpur, was born on March 5, 1947, and was a student of Rajendra College in Faridpur.

"He was a close associate of Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, the then president of East Pakistan Islami Chhatra Sangha [also a war-crimes accused] and till the formation of the Razakar force, he actively aided the Pakistani army in committing criminal acts," said Justice Kabir.

The tribunal chairman said, "He, during the war of liberation in 1971, assisted the Pakistani occupation force initially in the capacity of Razakar and subsequently as the chief of Al-Badr force in Faridpur."

"He could speak Urdu well as he studied in a madrasa and he was a close associate of the Pakistani army and actively participated and substantially assisted them in committing atrocities on the civilians, the Hindu community and pro-liberation Bangalee people."

About his political identity, the tribunal said once Azad was a "rokan" (member) of Jamaat-e-Islami and now he is not affiliated with any political party.

After rejecting the discharge petition the state defence counsel had filed for Azad, the tribunal said, "We have perused the formal charge, statement of witnesses along with other documents submitted by the prosecution and we are of the view that there are sufficient and substantial materials before this tribunal to presume that accused Abul Kalam Azad had committed offences during the

War of Liberation."

After the indictment order was delivered, the tribunal directed the defence counsel to submit a list of witnesses, if any, along with defence documents within November 14.

THE CHARGES

During the first week of June, 1971, Azad and his accomplices apprehended Ranjit Nath alias Babu Nath from Khabashpur in Faridpur town and took him to the Pakistani army camp at Faridpur Circuit House.

Ranjit was taken before Major Akram Koraishi and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed was also there.

After a discussion, Ranjit was taken to the house of Rashid Mia at Bihari Colony and kept confined to a room there and tortured with the intent to kill.

Ranjit, somehow, managed to escape by breaking a window around midnight.

On July 26, 1971, some local Razakars apprehended Abu Yusuf Pakhi and handed him over to the Pakistani army at Faridpur Stadium.

After consulting with Pakistani army Major Koraishi, Azad and Mojaheed kept Yusuf detained and tortured him inhumanly at a camp.

"Abu Yusuf Pakhi, during his confinement there [camp at the Faridpur Stadium] for one month and 13 days, also witnessed torture and atrocities on young girls kidnapped and brought to that camp by you [Azad] and your accomplices," said the tribunal chairman.

At about 3:00pm on May 14, 1971, Azad accompanied by 10-12 armed Razakars, with the intention to commit crimes on the unarmed Hindu community, attacked the village of Kolaran of Boalmari in Faridpur.

Entering the house of Sudhangshu Mohan Roy, they dragged Sudhangshu and his son Monimoy Roy out to the road.

The charges said, "You [Azad], after having talked with Sudhangshu and Monimoy, ordered them to go back to their home and on their way back you with the rifle in your hand shot them causing death of Sudhangshu and grievous injury to his son."

On May 16, 1971, Azad, accompanied by 10-12 armed Razakars, in a planned way, captured Madhab Chandra Biswas of Purura Namapara village of Nagarkanda in Faridpur.

Dragging Madhab, who used to provide assistance to freedom fighters during the war, about 300 yards from his house, Azad shot Madhab to death.

Around 12:00noon on June 8, 1971, Azad along with 10-12 armed Razakars

attacked the house of Sudhir Biswas alias Gosai Pada Biswas of Natibodia village in Boalmari of Faridpur.

They took away two females from the house and Azad along with four-five of his accomplices raped them.

On May 17, 1971, Azad accompanied by 30-35 armed Razakars launched a planned attack on the Hindu-dominated Hasamdia village of Boalmari in Faridpur.

They looted and burnt houses of Hindu civilians and shot seven Hindus to death.

The charges said, "...You [Azad] and your accomplices abducted Haripada Saha and Prabir Kumar Saha alias Puitta from there and took them to the river bank of Maindia Bazar and then you shot them dead."

Around 10:00am on May 18, 1971, Azad along with seven-eight armed Razakars attacked the house of Guru Das of Ujirpur Bazarpara of Saltha in Faridpur and abducted his daughter and tortured her keeping her locked up for seven-eight days.

She was, however, released later.

On June 3, 1971, Azad along with 10-12 armed Razakars launched a planned attack on the Hindu dominated village Fulbaria of Nagarkanda in Faridpur and looted the houses there.

"...You [Azad] and your seven-eight accomplices entering the house of Chitta Ranjan Das, dragged him out and then you, with the rifle with you, shot him dead," said the charges.

Vested quarters

FROM PAGE 1
general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said a vested quarter was spreading propaganda to divert attention from the "success" of the BNP chairperson's visit.

Khaleda, also the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, returned to the country on Saturday concluding her one-week visit to India. It was her first-ever visit to the country as the leader of opposition.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam on Saturday claimed that the government knew everything Khaleda promised to Indian leaders. "We will let the people know all this information when the time comes."

Yesterday, talking to journalists in front of BNP's Naya Paltan office in the capital, Fakhrul Islam said his party chief's India visit was aimed at resolving some disputed issues between the two peoples. "But the ruling party men are talking in various ways to divert the issue."

Akhtaruzzaman

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in Singapore at 4:10am (Bangladesh time) yesterday.

Akhtaruzzaman was suffering from kidney diseases for long and went to Singapore for treatment on October 8, said family members.

He left behind his wife, three sons, three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

The body of Akhtaruzzaman will be brought from Singapore to Dhaka around 6:00pm on Monday, family sources said. He will be buried on Wednesday at his family graveyard in village Hyle Dhor of Anwara after five namaz-e-janazas.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Speaker of Parliament Abdul Hamid, among others, expressed their deep shock at the death of the veteran AL leader.

Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the jute and textile ministry, Akhtaruzzaman was elected Member of the Provincial Assembly in 1970 and was later elected MP in 1986, 1991 and 2008 from Chittagong-12 (Anwara) constituency.

One of the organisers of the 1971 Liberation War, he had a key role in setting up Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra at Kalurghat in Chittagong.

After the war, he served as industry and commerce secretary of the Awami League.

He was president of Chittagong South district unit from 1978 till last year, when he became a presidium member of the party. Before independence, he was general secretary of Chittagong south Mahakuma unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, the pro-Awami League student body.

A leading business figure of the country, Akhtaruzzaman served as president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI).

He founded United Commercial Bank Limited (UCBL) and served as its chairman. He was also founder chairman of Aramit Group.

Hearing of his death, leaders and activists of the Awami League and its associate organisations gathered at his home in the port city. Former city mayor and President of Chittagong City unit of Awami League ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury and engineer Mosharraf Hossain MP, among others, went to his home yesterday morning to sympathise his family members.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held at the South Plaza of parliament at 11:00am tomorrow.

The body will be brought to Chittagong by helicopter tomorrow and the second janaza will be held on the compound of Jamiatul Falah Mosque after Asr prayers.

The third janaza will be held at the ground of Paschim Patiya AJ Chowdhury College at 11:00am on Wednesday and the fourth on the ground of Anwara High School at 2:00pm the same day.

The fifth and last janaza will be held on Hyle Dhor School ground at 4:00pm on Wednesday.

Khalaf murder

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were later cross-examined by the defendant's lawyer.

Judge Mohammad Motahar Hossain of Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 recorded the statements and fixed tomorrow for the next hearing.

SI Azhar in his statement said he recorded it as a regular murder case, on March 7, as instructed by the officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station.

Baset and Shafiuzzaman said they saw SI Mosharraf Hossain, also the complainant of the case, collect evidence from the crime scene.

Four of the accused Mohammad Al Amin, Saiful Islam Mamun, Rafiqul Islam Khokon, Akbar Ali Lulu are in police custody while Selim Chowdhury, the fifth accused, is on the run.

Khalaf, 45, an official at the consular section of the Saudi embassy in Dhaka, was shot dead near his Gulshan house in the capital's diplomatic enclave on March 6 this year.

Dhaka, Hanoi

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ministries to expand cooperation in specific fields.

Besides, Bangladesh and Vietnam agreed to work together in tackling climate change through adaptation, mitigation, financing and technology transfer.

Both the countries emphasised that the developed countries must take the lead in making ambitious commitment to emission cuts, climate finance and technology transfer. But the developing countries also must play their role

in dealing with climate change issues.

Vietnam recognised Bangladesh's desire to build a partnership and extend cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to join the East-West Economic Corridor and Mekong-Ganges Cooperation (MGC), and assured Bangladesh of pursuing the matter with other members.

Both the sides highly valued cooperation and close coordination between the two countries

in regional and international forums. They assured each other of supporting Vietnam's candidature in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for 2014-2016 term and Bangladesh's candidature for 2015-2017 term.

Vietnamese PM Nguyen congratulated the government and people of Bangladesh on their great achievement in the country's growing role and position in the region and the world.