

Amartya refutes Muhith

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Thursday.
In a written reply to a query from The Daily Star, Sen hoped that Muhith would withdraw his wrong attribution to him about Yunus.

Quoting Sen Muhith told reporters in Dhaka, "Professor Sen told me that so many good things are happening in this country but they are not highlighted anywhere in the world only because of Professor Yunus." But Sen yesterday said: "I am particularly surprised -- indeed astonished -- to see his attributing to me a view that is not mine. Indeed, the alleged utterance is not close to anything I told Muhith when we met briefly at the VIP lounge in the Bangkok Airport last month."

The India-born Bangalee economist added that he was not at all accusing Yunus of preventing the recognition and praise that Bangladesh deserves.

"Rather, I was pointing to the fact that the treatment of Yunus -- and its interpretation in the outside world -- have been strongly inhibiting factors working against the justified acclaim that Bangladesh's stellar achievements could otherwise be expected to get in the world," Sen said in his emailed statement.

Prof Yunus, who is now in Austria for a global social business summit, when approached by The Daily Star, said he would not comment on the issue.

SEN'S FULL STATEMENT
I have known Mr Muhith for a long time and like him a lot (and I also think he is an excellent finance minister), and in view of all this, I am particularly surprised -- indeed astonished -- to see his attributing to me a view that is not mine. Indeed, the alleged utterance is not close to anything I told Muhith when we met briefly at the VIP lounge in the Bangkok Airport last month.

What I told him included the following:

1) Bangladesh has made extraordinary progress on

economic and social matters at a very rapid pace in recent years -- a subject on which I have written in American and Indian newspapers and periodicals (I have also commented on the fact that Bangladesh has overtaken India in most of the standard indicators of living standards);

2) Prime Minister Hasina, whom I much admire, can certainly claim great credit for her leadership in the transformation of Bangladesh into a powerfully progressive modern society, and this does deserve hugely more global recognition;

3) The constructive roles of Bangladeshi NGOs, including the positive parts played by BRAC and Grameen Bank in the progress of Bangladesh, deserve emphatic recognition;

4) I am saddened by the fact that Bangladesh's achievements get far less acknowledgement and praise in the world media than they should get;

5) Among the principal factors behind this widespread global reluctance to say good things about Bangladesh's progress is a shared resentment by a large section of influential intellectuals across the world of the harsh official treatment of Dr Yunus in Bangladesh.

I was not at all accusing Yunus of preventing the recognition and praise that Bangladesh deserves (as Mr Muhith seems to be saying). Rather, I was pointing to the fact that the treatment of Yunus -- and its interpretation in the outside world -- have been strongly inhibiting factors working against the justified acclaim that Bangladesh's stellar achievements could otherwise be expected to get in the world.

I hope Mr Muhith will withdraw his wrong attribution to me, in the light of my reminding him of exactly what I told him.

WHAT MUHITH SAID ON THURSDAY
The finance minister

claimed Amartya Sen viewed Prof Yunus as the single major reason behind Bangladesh's failure to project its positive image on the world stage.

Asked how an individual like Yunus could do so, Muhith told reporters in the capital: "He has wonderful publicity machinery."

The minister also questioned the honesty of Prof Yunus, whose microcredit model won him and Grameen Bank Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

Muggers

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Monir Chairman Lane in Kamrangirchar around 2:30am while they were returning home on a bicycle.

The muggers stabbed them indiscriminately with knives leaving Ajoy dead on the spot.

Family of the deceased said the duo worked as video cameramen in the area and they were returning home after working at a programme in Lalbagh Shahid Nagar area.

The muggers took away their two mobile phones and the bicycle, they added.

The family also said that the deceased had no enmity with anyone. He got married only one month and four days back.

Kutubur Rahman, sub-inspector of Kamrangirchar Police Station, said they detained five persons in this connection. The bicycle, a cleaver and a knife was recovered from their possession.

Meanwhile in another incident at Bangshal, snatchers stabbed Moinuddin while he and his wife were riding on a rickshaw to Siddique Bazar around 6:30am.

The muggers took away money and two mobile phones from their possession. Moinuddin was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

No one was arrested in this connection, said Officer-in-Charge Abdul Quddus Fakir of Bangshal Police Station.

Democrats

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"On behalf of Florida Democrats, I wish President Barack Obama congratulations on his re-election and on winning Florida's 29 electoral college votes," Florida Democrats chair Rod Smith said in a statement Thursday.

In the 2000 presidential election, the close Florida race led to a weeks-long standoff that was eventually decided by the Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of George W Bush despite his losing the nationwide popular vote.

Mitt Romney's senior campaign adviser in Florida hinted earlier that the Republican presidential challenger lost the state, where the result has yet to be announced more than two days after the election.

Electoral officials have said all vote returns must be completed no later than today, but the statement from Romney's campaign published in the Miami Herald suggested his team had already accepted defeat.

Obama campaign manager Jim Messina said he was confident the president would be declared the victor.

The campaign's voter model continues to show that Obama "will hold that lead and end with 332 electoral votes," Messina said.

In the state-by-state electoral college system, 270 votes are needed for victory, and Obama already has 303, with Florida's 29 still outstanding.

Votes are still being counted in three of Florida's 67 counties, said Chris Cate, a spokesman for the state government. "Counties are required to report their results to us by Saturday at noon," he told AFP.

In 2000 Democratic Vice President Al Gore, who won the US popular vote, lost the election to Bush, who triumphed under the electoral college system when a divided US Supreme Court stopped a ballot recount in Florida.

Republicans control both houses in Florida's state legislature and the governor's mansion, but a growing Hispanic and more liberal population are pushing the electorate toward Obama's Democrats.

Myanmar

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hurt in the accident, which happened at about 10:00 am in Kanbalu in Sagaing Region, bordering India, it said.

"While some people from nearby villages were collecting the oil, the fire spread and 25 of them were killed and 62 injured, according to initial information," the website said.

The authorities were investigating the accident and the casualties had been rushed to hospitals in the area, it added.

Safety standards are generally poor in Myanmar, which is emerging from decades of military rule under a new quasi-civilian government, and the decrepit rail system has suffered from years of under-investment.

Malala

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The teenager was transferred on October 15 to the central England hospital, which specialises in the treating British soldiers wounded in Afghanistan.

Gunmen shot Malala on October 9 for standing up against the Taliban and openly advocating education for women.

The attack has drawn widespread international condemnation and Malala has become a powerful symbol of resistance to the Taliban's attempts to suppress women's rights.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Britons, led by a Pakistani-British woman, yesterday called on Prime Minister David Cameron and other senior government officials to nominate Malala for the Nobel Peace Prize.

More than 30,000 people have signed the petition in Britain as part of a global push by women's rights advocates to nominate her for the prize. Similar campaigns have sprung up in Canada, France and Spain.

Under the Nobel Committee's rules, only prominent figures such as members of national assemblies and governments are able to make nominations.

Prove it, please!

FROM PAGE 1
Muhith comes as a great shock to millions of Bangladeshis, especially the young who feel proud of Prof Yunus and consider him to be a role model.

Those of us who support his cause, like this writer; those who think that he has brought tremendous honour and prestige for the country by his activities; those who think that his pioneering idea of micro credit -- that has been emulated in more than a hundred countries spanning all the continents, all economies (capitalist and socialist), all political systems (democratic, communist, monarchy, one-party, multi-party) and among both rich and poor nations; those who think that with all its weaknesses micro credit has so far been the most effective and self-sustainable system of fighting poverty; those who think that Yunus is an excellent institution builder who set up the first ever bank solely for the poor women serving 8 million borrowers and built nearly fifty other separate companies aimed at solving specific problems faced by the poor -- like housing, energy, health, education -- and those who consider him to be one of the greatest and most successful image builders of Bangladesh MUST know the TRUTH about this man.

It is the DUTY of the finance minister to tell the people how Yunus is damaging the image and harming the interest of the very country he spent his whole life working to improve.

So the least Mr. Muhith can do is to PROVE what he said. We would like to know when, where and how Prof Yunus hurt Bangladesh's interest. We would like to know which foreign invest-

ments were deterred by Yunus and when. As the finance minister he has all the resources and the staff to gather facts. So he must give the nation FACTS, not claims, surmises and innuendos and implied meanings. We want the plain truth so that we stop admiring Yunus as we do.

Minister Muhith also said that because of Yunus Bangladesh's good work is not being publicised and appreciated. When journalists asked why, Muhith said because of his "wonderful publicity machinery".

Are we to understand that all these leaders -- from the USA, France, Germany, China, Saudi Arabia, India, Indonesia, Japan -- to name just a few, known the world over for their leadership and wisdom and who respect Yunus and grant him audience whenever occasions call for, are basically fools who have been duped by Yunus' "publicity machinery"?

Are we to understand that hardnosed investors who search the world for a place to invest and brave the harshest of circumstances to make a profit forego Bangladesh as a profit making destination because Yunus said so?

Who are we fooling?

On the contrary, can the fact be refuted that possible FDI from French and German companies like Adidas for cheap but durable shoes for villagers, malaria preventing mosquito repellent nets by BASF, vital nutrition providing yoghurt by Danone and cheap pure rural water supply by Viola were either not allowed in or made to suffer various obstacles just because they were linked with Yunus' projects dealing with the poor?

And what about KEPZ? The deal was signed 17 years ago. And yet, land ownership

Beijing mulls

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their wealth and that in the future public disclosure of assets will be required of all officials.

"I believe Chinese officials, in accordance with central rules, will gradually make public their assets," Wang said after a meeting with congress delegates from Guangdong. He did not give a time frame.

Wang's comments highlight the handwriting at many levels of the party over its inability to tamp down on the corruption by officials and their family members that has deepened public disgust.

At the congress' opening Thursday, President Hu Jintao warned that unrestrained graft threatened to topple the party's continued rule.

He called on the party's 82 million members to be ethical and to stop their family members from trading on their connections to amass fortunes.

The congress itself had no public agenda yesterday. Delegations met separately to discuss the lengthy report Hu delivered.

But in fact, most of the delegates have little say over the main agenda. The selection of younger leaders to

replace Hu and his colleagues is done behind the scenes by the departing leadership, retired party elders and other power brokers.

Wang's views matter. An ally of Hu's from their days 30 years ago in the Communist Youth League, Wang has gone on to forge credentials as a reformer.

He has been considered a candidate for the new leadership, the Politburo Standing Committee, though party-connected scholars say his policies and popularity have brought a pushback from conservatives, diminishing his chances.

"All party members are reformers," Wang told reporters yesterday, brushing off a question about his prospects. "The report clearly states the goal of the party congress is to liberate thoughts, reform and open up, rally efforts and overcome obstacles. This will not change."

On corruption, however, the party has been in need of new thinking. The party, which controls courts, police and prosecutors, has proved feeble in policing itself yet does not want to undermine its control by empowering an independ-

ent body to do so. Some officials have been required to report income, real estate holdings and other wealth to their superiors since 2010, but the measure has done little to staunch the graft.

A Politburo member, Bo Xilai, was cashiered after his wife murdered a British businessman, and he is accused of corruption and other misdeeds over two decades.

An aide to President Hu was demoted this summer after his son crashed a Ferrari he should not have been able to afford. Foreign media have also reported that family members of Hu's successor, Xi Jinping, and his prime minister, Wen Jiabao, have assembled vast fortunes.

Even so, a senior personnel officer for the party said yesterday that improving its internal controls and punishing transgressors remained at the top of the party's agenda.

The party is "confronted with growing dangers of lacking in drive and in competence and with detachment from the people and corruption," said Wang Jingqing, a vice minister of the Organisation Department.

EMBEZZLEMENT

Blitz editor sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on Thursday sent to jail Salauddin Shoeb Chowdhury, editor of local English weekly Blitz, in connection with an embezzlement case filed by his business partner Sajjad Hossain.

Dakkhinkhan police had arrested Shoeb at his house in Uttara on Wednesday night for allegedly embezzling Tk 79 lakh, said sources.

In September, Blitz created a sensational commotion across the sub-continent by publishing a relationship scandal between Hina Rabbani Khar, foreign minister of Pakistan, and Bilawal Bhutto, son of Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari.

Shoeb's arrest was made a day before the Dhaka visit of Hina Rabbani.

Man killed by thief in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was killed and his wife injured as an alleged drug-addict burglar stabbed them in the port city early yesterday.

The deceased is Nurul Islam, 45, from Feni and the burglar Kamrul Islam, 22, from Munshiganj.

"Kamrul may have entered Nurul's house [in Shantibagh] sometime on Thursday afternoon to steal valuables but lay hidden under Nurul's bed," said Dulal Chandra Banik, sub-inspector of Halishahar Police Station.

It was around 3:00am when Nurul saw the burglar trying to leave the house. Kamrul stabbed Nurul in the stomach when he prevented Kamrul from making a getaway, the SI quoted Nurul's neighbours as saying.

Nurul's wife Tahmina Arzu was hit in the arm when she was trying to help her husband.

The neighbours, hearing screams, came out of their homes and nabbed Kamrul and handed him over to police.

Neighbours rushed Nurul, who was bleeding profusely, and his wife to Chittagong Medical College Hospital around 4:15am when the on-duty doctor declared him dead, said Jahirul Islam, SI of the police outpost at the hospital.

Arzu is undergoing treatment at the hospital and the body has been sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy, Jahirul added.

A case has been filed with Halishahar Police Station.

Cox's Bazar

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from project aid. But the authorities initially failed to obtain any aid.

Later, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) agreed to fund the scheme. The donor would release any fund only after it completes the new feasibility study initiated last month.

The first feasibility study, though, for the project was completed in 2001. Using it as a guideline, the ADB is now carrying out the new study.

Contacted, project director Khairul Alam declined to comment on the delay in the project.

The BR would prepare the detailed design of the project after completion of the feasibility study by the ADB, he mentioned.

Tafazzal Hossain, general manager of the BR (east zone), said the cost of the project would increase significantly as the prices of land and construction materials have gone up.

Under the scheme, there will be two meter gauge lines -- one 100km line will link Dohazari with Ramu and the other 28km track will run from Ramu to Gundum in Myanmar. At present, there is a railway link up to Dohazari from Chittagong.

The route will also include four bridges on the rivers of Sangu, Matamuhuri, Shankha and Bakkhali and new stations at Satkania, Dulahazra, Chakoria, Eidgaon, Ramu, Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya and Gundum.

PM to visit Pakistan

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Abul Kalam Azad last night confirmed to The Daily Star that Hasina was going to Islamabad at the invitation of Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari. The invitation was delivered to her by Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar yesterday.

Azad said the Pakistani foreign minister handed over the formal invitation letter to Hasina at her Gono Bhaban residence yesterday afternoon.

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka consider Hasina's decision to visit Pakistan very significant as Dhaka and Islamabad have had strained relations for the last four years.

Official sources said her visit to Pakistan became uncertain after Khar postponed her scheduled visit to Bangladesh on October 25.

Following hectic diplomatic efforts, Khar arrived in Dhaka yesterday to hand over the invitation letter.

A special flight carrying the Pakistani minister landed at Shahjalal International Airport at 10:15am. Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes received her at the airport.

Before meeting Hasina, Hina Rabbani Khar met Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at the foreign ministry for 20 minutes.

During the meeting, Dipu asked Islamabad to settle pending post-independence issues, emphasising especially an unconditional apology from Pakistan for the genocide it had carried out during the Liberation War.

She said Pakistan should come forward in this regard.

Bangladesh sees an appointment of pre-independence assets and liabilities and repatriation of stranded Pakistanis as pending issues with Pakistan.

During the meeting, Hina Khar reiterated that Pakistan had regretted its actions of 1971 on different occasions since 1974 and called for the two countries to move ahead together by turning back to

the past, said Quayes quoting Hina Khar after the meeting.

The Pakistani foreign minister said Islamabad valued its relations with Dhaka and wanted to advance existing cooperation in the economic, political and cultural arena and through people-to-people contact.

She also spoke about her "personal commitment" to promoting bilateral ties and cooperation with Bangladesh.

Dipu Moni expressed similar views on expanding bilateral relations by settling unresolved issues.

Dipu presented Khar with a copy of "The Unfinished Memoirs of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

Hina Khar also invited Dipu Moni to attend the meeting of council of ministers to be held prior to the D-8 summit.

The summit will be preceded by senior-official-level and foreign-minister-level meetings from November 19 to November 21.

After the meeting, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes told reporters that the Pakistan foreign minister had appeared "sensitive" to the Bangladesh's legitimate concerns.

Quayes termed the visit of the Pakistan foreign minister important but not one too concerned with bilateral issues as she had come to hand over the invitation letter.

The meeting was not comprehensive but Bangladesh raised all pending issues, including the matter of an apology on the part of Pakistan for genocide in 1971, and other matters related to bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern, he said.

The foreign secretary said Bangladesh had stressed the need for settling the issues through regular holding of joint economic commission meetings and the establishment of a joint commission for foreign minister-level