

Nafis' lawyer

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Nafis was detained by the US authorities on October 17 last year for his alleged plot to blow up the Federal Reserve Bank in Manhattan.

The lawyer who stood for the 21-year-old strongly pleaded that Nafis was innocent as he had been implicated in the case in a planned way, reported BBC Bangla Service yesterday.

The court, however, fixed February 14 for the next hearing of the case.

"Nafis was looking sad and gloomy in the court," the BBC report quoted New York-based journalist Lavelu Ansar as saying.

Earlier, Nafis claimed before the court that the allegations brought against him were not true, and he was innocent.

The trial procedure will be fixed in the next hearing. The final hearing will begin on April 3.

On behalf of the Bangladesh government, Akramul Quader, Bangladesh ambassador in the US, and his representative Consular M Shamsul Haque were present at the court during Wednesday's hearing.

According to a criminal complaint, Nafis reportedly tried to detonate a fake car bomb outside the Federal Reserve building.

Just a few hours before he was arrested in an FBI sting operation, Nafis spoke via Skype with his parents back home and updated them on his studies.

Earlier, family members of Nafis claimed the allegations brought against him were totally false, and he went to the US for study.

EC to impose

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Representation of the People Order (RPO), insiders said, adding, the EC however did not draft any proposal to empower itself to monitor if the registered political parties are following the laws.

EC officials observed that only imposing new conditions on political parties for retaining registration may not yield positive result if there is no mechanism to enforce them.

They said the new conditions would just be added to the already existing criteria for having and retaining registration with no impact.

As per the current conditions, a political party may lose its registration if it does not have any provision in its constitution to elect members of the committees at all levels and fix the goal of reserving at least 33 percent posts for women in all committees and gradually achieve this goal by 2020.

The parties are also prohibited from forming any organisation or body as affiliated or associated body consisting of teachers or students of any educational institution or employees or labourers of any financial, commercial or industrial institution or establishment or members of any other profession.

The EC could not oversee whether the registered political parties are complying with the conditions thanks to lack of any mechanism.

As a result, the commission remained silent even when political parties, particularly the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP, had refrained

from holding elections to form their central committees ignoring their charters and the RPO.

Talking to The Daily Star, Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz has however recently said, "There is an ambiguity in the law. It only speaks of elections to form committees but nothing about the election process."

He blamed the last EC for the ambiguity saying the electoral reforms were done with their initiatives and during their tenure.

The major electoral reforms including political parties' registration system were brought with the initiative of the immediate past EC led by ATM Shamsul Huda.

Information available shows the Huda-led EC moved to legally empower the commission to monitor whether registered political parties were following the registration conditions in electing their leadership.

But taking part in the electoral talks with the EC twice at the end of 2007 and early 2008, the AL strongly opposed the proposal.

A split of its arch-rival BNP that took part in the talks with the EC in April 2008 made the same response.

Therefore, the EC had to drop its proposal.

In the face of opposition from the AL and BNP, the EC had to drop another proposal for introduction of a direct and secret ballot for electing party leadership to encourage intra-party democracy.

Since then both the proposals were not even discussed during the latest move to bring electoral reforms.

The dark episode

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"The situation has not yet deteriorated to the same extent that made the president to declare a state of emergency in January 2007. But recurrence of the unexpected event is not impossible as there are some signs similar to that of 2007," observed Hafizuddin Ahmed, a former adviser to a caretaker government.

Urging both Awami League and BNP to start talks to resolve the growing crisis, he said politicians have created the problems and they have to solve it.

Lt Gen (ret) Mahbub Rahman, a member of BNP standing committee, said politicians did not learn lessons from the 2007 event about how to avert recurrence of such political crisis.

"We are now at a critical juncture. The entire nation is worried about the future," Mahbub, also former chief of the army, told The Daily Star.

However, ruling party Presidium Member Obaidul Quader ruled out the possibility of recurrence of such an event.

"I don't think that same kind of incident will happen again. At least, the country is not in such a situation right now," said Quader, also the communications minister.

THE SITUATION IN 2007
The whole nation plunged into an abyss of instability, concern and uncertainty as there was no possibility of a peaceful transition of power through ballots. Both the rival camps -- BNP and the AL-led electoral alliances -- had taken extreme stance, shutting the door on resolving the crisis.

Under the leadership of Khaleda Zia, BNP-led four-party electoral alliance had been mounting pressure on the then caretaker government to anyhow hold the ninth parliamentary polls scheduled for January 22, 2007.

On the other hand, the AL-led alliance under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina had been putting pressure on the makeshift cabinet through vigorous agitations to cancel the scheduled elections. The alliance had earlier withdrawn from the electoral race.

The country at that time witnessed chaos and street violence that claimed many lives.

Donor agencies and diplomats kept their pressure on the then caretaker government and the political parties to resolve the ongoing crisis. They also warned that the elections would not be acceptable without the participation of all political parties.

Amid such a situation, the armed forces appeared in the scene and made the then president Iajuddin Ahmed, also chief adviser to the then caretaker government, to resign as the chief adviser and declare the state of emergency.

The declaration of the state of emergency had paved the way for cancellation of the parliamentary polls scheduled for January 22 the same year.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

According to the current constitutional provision, the country will go to parliamentary elections anytime between October 27 this year and January 24, 2014.

Unfortunately, when the largest battle of ballots is near, politics once again is moving towards the path of confrontation. The cancellation of the caretaker government system by the

AL-led government triggered fear that it will give rise to political unrest ahead of the next polls.

The BNP-led opposition parties have unequivocally announced that they will not participate in the next parliamentary election if the caretaker government system is not restored. They even announced that they would resist the holding of the next polls if held under the AL-led government.

The opposition parties will make efforts to strengthen the anti-government agitations in the coming days to have the demand met, while the government and ruling party policymakers keep rejecting the opposition's demand.

Given the situation, the possibility of any consensus between the ruling party and the opposition still remains a distant cry as both sides remain rigid on their stances.

MAID EXECUTION Sri Lanka recalls Saudi ambassador

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka yesterday recalled its ambassador to Saudi Arabia to protest the beheading of a maid in the kingdom as her family pressed for her remains to be flown home.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary Karunatilake Amunugama said they asked ambassador Ahmed A Jawad to return home immediately to register Colombo's protest over Wednesday's execution of Rizana Nafeek at a prison near Riyadh.

"We are recalling him to show our displeasure," Amunugama told reporters in Colombo. He said Sri Lanka had made repeated appeals to spare her life.

The move came as President Mahinda Rajapakse deplored the execution which was carried out despite his latest clemency appeal over the weekend.

Rizana had travelled to Saudi Arabia in 2005 to work as a housemaid when she was barely 17.

Strike continues

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unwilling to increase their [workers'] wages right now."

Asked about the demands of the workers, State Minister for Labour and Employment Begum Monnujan Sufian said if the launch owners do not hike the wages, the government cannot do anything as it has no fund for the sector.

However, the launch owners blamed the government for not acting promptly to end the strike.

A vessel owner, seeking anonymity, accused the government of being indifferent to the problem.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNSF General Secretary Chowdhury Ashiquil Alam said it is the responsibility of both the government and the launch owners to consider and fulfil the workers' demands.

Meanwhile, the water transport workers yesterday brought out a procession from Banglabazar in Old Dhaka and paraded different streets. They demonstrated in front of the Directorate of Labour in the capital's Motijheel.

Their other demands include ensuring workers' security on waterways, maintaining navigability

of rivers, proper fitness certification of all vessels, and immediate disposal of cases pending with the marine court.

PASSENGERS SUFFER
The indefinite work abstention by the workers disrupted countrywide river communications, causing immense sufferings to passengers.

Around 55 launches were scheduled to leave Dhaka for the South-western districts on 36 routes, but only 10 left until 7:00 pm, Saiful Haque, senior deputy director of BIWTA, told The Daily Star.

Visiting the Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday noon, this correspondent saw thousands of passengers waiting for vessels for hours. Some passengers, who bought advance tickets, were seen returning their tickets.

In the evening, furniture in a cabin of MV Suresor-1 was gutted. But the reason of the fire incident could not be known.

Our Chittagong correspondent reports: Twelve mother vessels with imported commodities remained stranded at the outer anchorage of Chittagong port yesterday as there was no load-

ing and unloading of goods.

Mostafa Kamal Hayat, senior vice-president of Shipping Agents Association, said if any vessel overstays at the outer anchorage, it would have to bear a loss of \$10,000-\$15,000.

Contacted, Commodore Mahbub Rashid, executive director of Water Transport Cell (WTC), told The Daily Star that 40 lighter vessels laden with 53,720 tonnes of goods like wheat, lentils, gypsum were staying idle in 16 private and CPA (Chittagong Port Authority) ghats.

Besides, 364 lighter vessels with 3,88,351 tonnes of urea and TSP fertilisers, sugar and other essential commodities remained stranded in other parts of the country due to the strike, he added.

In Barisal yesterday, BIWTA rocket steamers PS Ostrich and PS Lepcha plied their routes with huge number of passengers, reports our correspondent.

Taking undue advantage of the situation, engine boats and trawlers charged passengers higher fares on different river routes in the southern region.

bengal windsor thermoplastics ltd.
has acquired Credit Rating of



	Long term	Short term
Surveillance Rating - 2012	AA3	ST - 2
Outlook	Stable	
Date of Rating	29 December 2012	

On the basis of which


- Long Track record and experience of the Management
- Long Term relationship with board range of buyers
- Affiliation with globally recognized hanger brands
- Strong Group profile
- High profitability and strong equity base

Meaning of AA3: Companies rated in this category have very strong capacity to meet financial commitments. These companies are judged to be of very high quality, subject to very low credit risk.

Meaning of ST-2: "High Grade" This rating indicates that the degree of safety regarding timely payment on the loans/facilities is strong.

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Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

Call for Expression of Interest (EOI)

for
'District Facilitation and Service Delivery' Component
of the
"Strengthening District health and Key Service Delivery Systems in Bangladesh (DHSS)"

Ref: EOI/SC/MCHIP/2013/01 Date of issue: 10.01.2013

Save the Children in Bangladesh is implementing the project under USAID funded Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP) titled 'Strengthening District health and Key Service Delivery Systems in Bangladesh (DHSS)' (Cooperative Agreement No HGS-A-00-08-00002-00). The goal of the program is to assist the MOH&FW in scaling up evidence-based, high-impact maternal, newborn, family planning and nutrition interventions to contribute towards significant reductions in maternal and child mortality and progress towards achieving MDG 4 and 5 goals in Bangladesh with the following four objectives -

- To ensure that, a conducive national environment at policy and strategic level is advocated to ensure effective implementation of evidence based MNHFPN interventions.
- To ensure that, all essential components of district, upazilla, union and ward level health systems are efficient to support MNHFPN service delivery in an integrated and sustainable manner and programs are implemented and monitored under a customized comprehensive district plan and leadership.
- To ensure that critical and life saving MNHFPN interventions are available and delivered at optimal quality of care at the community based service delivery points and from the strategically located facilities.
- To ensure that, through systems strengthening, meaningful community and local government engagement is engendered at the upazilla, union and ward levels to improve demand and supply for MNHFPN care.

The Phase 1 of the grant will be completed approximately on December 31, 2013 and Phase 2 is expected to follow thereafter.

Save the Children is looking for interested and capable Bangladeshi non-governmental organizations (NGO) for providing the following services in Noakhali, Laxmipur and Bhola districts. The NGOs are expected to foster community engagement and, deliver and facilitate community level services, critical gap management, strengthening key MOH&FW and local government systems including capacity building at district level and below. MaMoni project implemented in Habiganj district is an exemplary model of such type of role for local NGOs. (Send mail to all.khan@savethechildren.org only to get a detailed description of type of deliverables).

Eligibility for application and content:

Save the Children Bangladesh Country Office invites eligible NGOs to indicate their interest in providing services mentioned above. The interested organization(s) has to apply for the whole package of interventions in any one or more of the three districts. Interested organizations must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. The EOI must be limited within ten (10) pages and font size 11 in Times New Roman and focus on relevant experience, governance and management structure and institutional strength. Organization(s) will be short listed in accordance with the procedures set out in the Save the Children guidelines and tools. This is to be noted that we are not asking for any technical or financial proposals. Only short listed organizations will be subject to next level of evaluation. If shortlisted, organization(s) will be asked to provide documentary evidences to establish that they have:

- Legal establishment for a minimum of five years; NGOAB registered.
- Minimum 5 years of overall experience in working on Maternal Newborn Health Family Planning, and Nutrition interventions.
- Required to have more than BDT: 5 crore annual turnover in the last 3 years.
- Organizational clear management and governance structures with organogram.
- Audit report of past three financial years of the organization is mandatory.
- Annual reports for the past three years.
- Any litigation/arbitration history (both pending and closed) or any audit findings related to fraud, embezzlement/misappropriation of funds to be submitted for the last five (5) years.
- History of geographical presence of the organization(s) in the said districts will be added qualification.

Submission:
Please write "EOI for DHSS Project- District Facilitation and Service Delivery" on the top of the envelop which should be dropped in the EOI Submission Box at the reception desk before 3.00 pm of January 17, 2013 attention to the following:

Kamruzzaman, Sr. Manager, Procurement and Supply Chain,
Save the Children
House # CWN (A) 35, Road#43, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh, Tel: 88-02-9861690,
Fax: 88-02-9886372, E-mail: info.bangladesh@savethechildren.org,
Web: www.savethechildren.net

An acknowledgement receipt will be issued by the reception desk of the Save the Children.



सत्यमेव जयते

High Commission of India Dhaka

State Bank of India, on behalf of the High Commission of India, Dhaka is operating six Indian Visa Application Centres (IVAC) in Bangladesh, namely:

- ★ IVAC, Gulshan, Dhaka
- ★ IVAC, Sylhet
- ★ IVAC, Motijheel, Dhaka
- ★ IVAC, Khulna
- ★ IVAC, Chittagong
- ★ IVAC, Rajshahi

These centres accept Indian visa applications from 0800 hrs to 1300 hrs on all working days. Complete details of the application procedure and required formalities can be accessed at the following websites:

www.ivacbd.com
www.hcidhaka.org

IVAC, Gulshan, Dhaka has special facilities to cater to emergency needs. A dedicated counter is available to accept medical and other family emergency visa applications. Such applications are given special priority over other applications.

In addition, a Visa Helpline Desk is available which can be accessed at:
Email - visahelp@hcidhaka.org
or
visahelp@ivacbd.com
Telephone - 9888792 (English/Hindi), 8833632, 9893006 (Bengali)
(from 0900 hrs to 1730 hrs -Monday to Thursday)