

He rallied for Mujib, against Yahya

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verdict in the 1970 elections, where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League won a landslide victory.

Together, Wali Khan and Sheikh Mujib formed the Democratic Action Committee to restore democracy in Ayub Khan-dictated Pakistan.

Wali Khan received the "Friends of Liberation War Honour" during the seventh phase of the award-giving ceremony on Tuesday. His son Senator Asfandiyar Wali Khan, current president of the party now known as the ANP, received the award on his behalf.

In a conversation with The Daily Star on the same day, Asfandiyar reminisced about the contributions of his father to the independence of Bangladesh.

He had arrived at the lobby of the Sonargaon Pan Pacific Hotel for the interview, after a visit to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum.

"Being here is difficult for me," he said in English. "I am here for the first time since independence, and I had to see how a man was

assassinated by the very people he had liberated. Sheikh Mujib was very close to my father. After every meeting, the two would spend the evening together." Asfandiyar told this correspondent that the ANP always thought that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had rightfully earned his place as the prime minister of Pakistan, after pulling the Awami League through the landslide victory in its first democratic elections.

"My father warned that if they opposed Sheikh Mujib, Pakistan would be divided. But the junta did not pay heed. He used to quip through quoting an Urdu saying, 'You are trying to earn love with bullets, washing the land with blood. You think you are reaching the goal, but you do not know when you lost it,'" he recalled.

Asfandiyar observed that his father had wanted to join the inaugural session of the 1971 general assembly, but Bhutto told him that he "would break his legs if he showed up at the assembly".

Right before the crack-down on March 25, 1971, Abdul Wali Khan had gone

to General Yahya Khan to negotiate with him about handing over power to Sheikh Mujib.

"Yahya told my father to get out of the country because he planned to shoot. My father replied, 'Shoot a Pakistani chest with a Pakistani bullet?' But Yahya was unmoved," said Asfandiyar.

He recollected that throughout April and May of the year, NAP workers were persecuted and its top leaders arrested. "We were enraged. I was a part of the student wing. We went and vandalised Yahya Khan's mansion. I am not proud of having done that, but when our constitutional methods of dissent are taken away, we often react unconstitutionally. Our liberties were taken away, similar to East Pakistan."

Their hostels were raided that night, and they were placed under arrest, Asfandiyar said.

"The 1970 election was the first chance for the oppressed Baloch, Pashtun and Bengalis to protest. The West Pakistani politicians did not care about us. None of them even visited East

Pakistan during the 1970 cyclone, the worst storm in the history of the land."

However, Asfandiyar believes that the bloodshed during the Liberation War of Bangladesh could have been averted if the West Pakistani top brass had paid heed to the people's verdict.

He went on: "We have a lot more in common than what we have in contrast, and a functioning democracy that protects the rights of the oppressed Bengalis and the minorities could have been formed, if only the junta gave up power. It was a flawed political decision, but the flaw did not show up until now. Now we are trying to establish cooperation among two nations that have bred nothing but hate for each other for the last 42 years."

Many people were not happy that he was coming to Bangladesh to receive the award, he noted.

"However, I believe that we would only have been eligible for gratitude from Bangladesh, if we could have persuaded the junta not to go to war against its own people."

Anti-graft crusader in a Milk Vita

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and introduced close circuit camera surveillance on milk collection and pasteurisation to check misappropriation and pilferage. The measures saved the organisation from losing more than Tk 2 crore during this short period of his service.

The MD initiated procurement of a milk analyst to prevent collection of adulterated and substandard milk. He also asked for a team of Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate institutional corruption and announced that the imminent job confirmation of around 500 officers and employees would be done as per rules and without any underhand deal.

But now, as he has refused to entertain an unfair demand by Hosne Ara, a Milk Vita management committee member who is also a leading figure in the ruling Awami League (AL) auxiliary Krishak League, that he appoint her son as a distributor, Munir has been accused of being a Hefajat man and of humiliating Hosne Ara.

On such flimsy grounds, the local government minis-

try has formed an enquiry committee, which has already launched an investigation.

The matter did not end here, said sources, adding that the government had sent a team of National Security Intelligence to Milk Vita's Tejgaon head office on September 22 and a team of Rapid Action Battalion two days later.

Munir said, "Hosne Ara turned vengeful, as I turned down her request to appoint her son Meer Sharif Hasan Lenin as the Milk Vita distributor in the capital's Rampura area where there is already a distributor."

Talking to The Daily Star, Hosne Ara admitted to pursuing the MD for the distributorship for her son, who is a central committee leader of pro-AL youth wing Jubo League.

She accused Munir of humiliating her too, but declined to give further details on the matter.

Meanwhile, insiders said Md Shafiqur Rahman, vice-chairman of the management committee, had held a meeting with all the officers and employees in the last week of September and

directed an additional general manager to prepare a list of allegations so that Munir could be removed from Milk Vita.

He also directed CBA (Collective Bargaining Agent) and non-CBA employees to unite against Munir and issue the government an ultimatum for his removal.

Shafiqur, however, told The Daily Star that the meeting had not been held to demand Munir's removal, but "to discuss the grievances of officers and employees over the government move to depute two more government officers in Milk Vita".

He said, "There are several factions in Milk Vita and one spreads propaganda against the other."

Mihir Kanti Majumder, the now retired secretary of Rural Development and Cooperatives Division who posted Munir in Milk Vita, said, "Munir is an honest officer, highly committed to the public interest and bows before no political quarter."

"Ironically, his honesty and anti-corruption stance enraged the corrupt section and put him in trouble

wherever he was posted," said Mihir Kanti.

Several employees of Milk Vita, requesting anonymity, said the management committee had made an unofficial announcement that Munir would soon be removed, as Hosne Ara had used all her connections in the government.

Hasib Khan Tarun, chairman of the management committee, said corruption was everywhere and Milk Vita was no exception.

"The problem with the MD is, he has no orientation in running such an organisation," he said, adding "He raises too many questions on any procurement and recruitment delaying the whole process."

Jahangir Alam Manju, CBA president of the dairy company, said: "Milk Vita will be ruined if this honest MD is removed. He has brought discipline here and made it profitable. We will seek prime minister's intervention in this matter."

Milk Vita collects fresh milk from cooperative farmers and market packaged liquid milk, milk powder, butter, ghee, curd and ice-cream.

Death penalty not the answer

Says Amnesty Int'l on war crimes trial

STAR REPORT

The death sentence imposed against BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury by a court for committing crimes against humanity is not the way to bring justice to the many victims of the country's Liberation War, said Amnesty International.

"The many victims of horrific abuses during Bangladesh's independence war and their families have long deserved justice, but the death penalty is not the answer. One human rights abuse cannot make amends for another," said Abbas Faiz, Bangladesh researcher at AI, in a press release on Tuesday. "Bangladesh must overturn the death sentence against Chowdhury and all others. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel and inhuman punishment and can never be a way to deliver justice," he observed.

A tribunal on Tuesday found Salauddin guilty of committing crimes against humanity, including genocide and torture in 1971.

"We urge the Bangladeshi government to ensure that Chowdhury's appeal complies with international law and standards relating to fair trials, and without recourse to the death penalty," said the release.

It added: The Bangladeshi authorities must also impose a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolishing the death penalty.

Still time

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parliament, in May and September this year.

Top government sources have hinted that the bill may be tabled on the first day of the winter session of parliament in next month.

Bangladesh has approved the LBA long ago. The agreement envisages exchange of territories under the exchange of adversely-held 161 enclaves in India and Bangladesh to ratify the 1974 Indira-Mujib treaty.

Raozan calm

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Security was tightened in the area on Tuesday evening, after the main opposition party announced to enforce a daylong hartal in Chittagong yesterday, protesting the death sentence of Salauddin.

Despite the police presence in and around the area, villagers were seen guarding their homes by turns over the last two nights.

Meanwhile, the dawn-to-dusk hartal ended peacefully in Raozan and other parts of the port city and Rangamati.

Police took position in front of the house of Asish Chowdhury, an eyewitness to the mass killing of April 13, 1971. He lost his father that day and gave testimony in Salauddin's case.

A CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, who did not bring out his vehicle over the past two days, said yesterday: "Everyone was panicked, but we have to live here in our ancestral homes."

JU VC starts

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Meanwhile, some agitating teachers have confined Registrar Abu Bakar Siddique and Deputy Registrar Abu Hasan to their offices since Monday protesting appointments of three deans to the faculties of law, business administration, and biological science.

The protesters said the VC could not recruit the three as an investigation was underway against him. The confinement was aimed at barring the registrar from signing the appointment letters.

Protesting the confinement of the registrar, JU Employee's Association staged a rally yesterday and went on work abstention for an indefinite period.

Some pro-VC teachers and a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists of its JU unit under the banner of Jahangirnagar University Poribar formed a human chain and brought out a procession condemning the ongoing anti-VC movement by some teachers.

Sadharon Shikshak Forum has been staging demonstrations intermittently since April 27 accusing Prof Anwar of failing to expel a BCL leader for assaulting a teacher, committing irregularities in teachers' recruitment, and misusing university funds.

At least 20 had access to draft verdict

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parts of the verdict, and two computer operators composed them, he added.

The two other judges are Justice Jahangir Hossain and Justice Anwarul Haque.

According to the official, the tribunal chairman and one of its members, Justice Jahangir, have two computer operators -- a male and a female.

Once the compiling was done, the three judges collectively finalised the verdict, he added, requesting anonymity given the sensitivity of the matter.

The two computers on which the draft judgment had been composed have now been seized as detectives opened an investigation into the incident yesterday, said sources in the police.

The tribunal authorities have already "unofficially" interrogated the computer operators and several staff, the official said, adding that it was too early to name a suspect.

The official has strictly maintained that there is no possibility of leaking the draft judgment from the judges' computers by any outsider other than the staff of the well-secured premises.

The building is secured by 24-hour police surveillance and no one can enter the building without a pass issued by the tribunal registrar's office, he added.

The leak came as an embarrassment for the tribunal, he said, adding that the culprit(s) might have done it for money.

Meanwhile, ICT-2 Chairman Justice Obaidul Hassan and its members Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahinur Islam met the judges of ICT-1 at Justice Fazle Kabir's office to discuss the incident.

Tribunal sources said the judges had taken the incident seriously and spoke of taking stern action against those involved in the theft.

AKM Nasiruddin Mahmud, registrar of the tribunal, told this correspondent that law enforcers were working to identify the perpetrator(s).

The whole thing was done to discredit the trial process and mislead people about the war crimes trial, he added.

Soon after the verdict, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury's wife, Farhat Quader Chowdhury, claimed to newsmen that she had already had the copy of the judgment, saying it had been retrieved from the computer of the law secretary and that it had been written by the law ministry.

During the pronouncement of the judgment, Salauddin himself made similar claims. Certain quarters had been making identical claims on the social media since the night before the verdict.

The law minister, the state minister and the law

secretary have all dismissed the claims as baseless.

Asked if the law ministry would also investigate the leak, its Secretary ASSM Zahirul Haque replied in the negative yesterday.

He also ruled out again the possibility of the verdict being leaked from the ministry, and said the ministry had no scope for involvement with the verdict.

A 164-page document, which did not contain observations or the pronouncing of the sentence, was found on different websites on Monday night with claims that it was the leaked verdict.

The original judgment is a 172-page document.

The ICT-1 on Tuesday sentenced Salauddin Quader Chowdhury to death for committing crimes against humanity and genocide during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

SC clears release

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Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, chamber judge of the apex court, stayed a High Court order that barred the release of the brinjal for eight weeks.

Following a writ petition, an HC bench on September 29 ordered the government not to free the crop until an independent research, based on the standards of Codex

Alimentarius Commission, is conducted.

In 1963, the commission was constituted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation to determine standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations relating to foods and food production and safety.

Bt Brinjal is infused with pest-resistant genes that will see a drastic fall in the use of

harmful pesticides, said scientists who have developed the crop at BARI.

Additional Attorney General Momtajuddin Fakir said there is no legal bar to freeing the variety.

On July 15, BARI applied to the National Technical Committee for Crop Biotechnology (NTCCB), asking to release the brinjal commercially, and the NTCCB referred it to its expert committee for review.

Barguna

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Tulu in a road accident on July 26.

The total voters of the constituency, which consists of three upazilas, is 2,31,173. Barisal regional election officer Mostafa Faruk will act as the returning officer of the election.

Voting will start at 8:00am and continue till 4:00pm without any break. Today is a public holiday in the constituency.

অগ্রনির্দেশ

সাউথ সাউথ পুরস্কার গ্রহণ

জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধুর সুযোগ্য কন্যা গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনা কর্তৃক দারিদ্র্য বিমোচনে বাংলাদেশের অসামান্য অবদান এবং তাঁর সরকারের সফলতার স্বীকৃতি হিসেবে "দি ইন্টারন্যাশনাল অর্গানাইজেশন ফর সাউথ সাউথ কো-অপারেশন" পুরস্কার গ্রহণ করায় অগ্রণী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড-এর পরিচালনা পর্ষদ, ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্তৃপক্ষ ও সকল কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের পক্ষ থেকে আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

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