

BNP observes Khaleda's birthday today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP is celebrating Khaleda Zia's 70th "birth anniversary" today, which coincides with National Mourning Day.

After assuming power in 1991, the BNP chief had begun celebrating her birthday on this day. She drew flak from different platforms, especially from the Awami League, for observing her birthday on August 15, which is the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The BNP chairperson's marriage certificate mentions that she was born on September 5, 1945; her first passport states the date to be August 19, 1946, while the date is August 9, 1944 as per her registration for the matriculation or school final exams, allege AL leaders.

According to the bio-data submitted by former opposition leader Khaleda Zia to the parliament secretariat, she was born on August 15, 1945.

But in the bio-data published by the parliament secretariat in 2012, Khaleda did not provide any information about her parents and birth-place.

Party sources said BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam will visit Bogra today to celebrate Khaleda's birthday there.

India passes bill on judge appointment

PTI, New Delhi

The Indian Parliament yesterday cleared a Constitution amendment bill that will facilitate setting up of a commission for appointment of judges, replacing the 20-year-old collegium system which has been under severe criticism.

A day after passage in the Lok Sabha, the Constitution Amendment Bill was cleared by the Rajya Sabha with 179 votes in favour and one abstention of noted lawyer Ram Jethmalani.

The bill will make way for the setting up of National Judicial Appointments Commission which will appoint and transfer judges to the Supreme Courts and the 24 high courts.

The bill will come into force after ratification by 50 per cent of the state legislatures. The process could take up to eight months.

After ratification, the government will send it to the President for his assent.

With the passage of the bill, the collegium system of judges choosing judges is set to be changed in the coming months. The Constitution amendment bill will grant constitutional status to the NJAC and its composition.

Under the statute amendment bill, Chief Justice of India will head the NJAC. Besides the CJI, the judiciary would be represented by two senior judges of the Supreme Court. Two eminent personalities and the law minister will be the other members of the proposed body.

BNP leader

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to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court of Dhaka and also showed eight people as prosecution witnesses in it.

The former health and family welfare minister is now in jail.

On August 7, the ACC approved the charge sheet in the case, which was filed on February 6 this year.

ACC probes found Mosharraf amassed the amount through corruption during his stint as health minister from 2001 to 2006.

Later, the BNP leader told the investigation officer that he earned the money while studying in the UK between 1970 and 1975 but failed to show any document that would support his statement.

According to the charge sheet, Mosharraf and his wife Bilkis Akhter had allegedly deposited the money in a joint account--108492-- with Lloyds TSB Offshore Private Banking, St Peterport, UK.

It also found that the bank account was opened after 1994 using a diplomatic passport.

The couple violated a rule of Bangladesh Bank that says every citizen needs the bank's permission to open an account with any foreign bank, according to ACC sources.

However, Bilkis's name was not included in the charge sheet as the investigators did not find her direct involvement in the matter, added the sources.

Timeline

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fire at the president. Along with Bangabandhu, most members of his family are killed. Thus, the disgruntled army officers achieve their mission without any resistance.

- Two other groups of army men launch simultaneous attacks on the residences of Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni and Abdur Rab Serniabat and kill them along with their family members.
- Later in the morning, Major Dalim announces on the radio, "Autocrat Sheikh Mujib has been killed".
- Masterminds of the coup, Major Faruk and Major Rashid, as per their plan, prepare to install Awami League leader Khondokar Moshtaque in the presidency.
- Moshtaque is sworn in as the new president in the afternoon.
- Moshtaque addresses the nation and describes the killing and coup as a "historic necessity".
- Former president Mohammadullah is appointed vice-president.
- Martial law is declared country-wide for an indefinite period and curfew imposed in the capital.
- Chiefs of three services are forced to express loyalty to the new regime.
- Moshtaque appoints 10 ministers and six state ministers, most of whom are AL leaders, to form his cabinet.
- Curfew is relaxed for an hour and a half for Juma prayers.

Aug 16

- Bangabandhu is buried at Tungipara in Gopalganj. The other victims are laid to rest at Banani graveyard amid an unprecedented tense situation.
- The cabinet at a meeting with Moshtaque in the chair terms the overall situation of the country satisfactory.
- The situation in Dhaka cantonment remains tense.
- Saudi Arabia and Sudan recognise Bangladesh as an independent country and Moshtaque government as well.

Aug 17

- Former prime minister and senior AL leader M Monsur Ali is invited by Moshtaque to the Bangabhaban. The footage of the meeting is broadcast on state-run BTV and photographs are published in the newspapers to mislead people.

Aug 18

- Britain, Jordan, Japan and Myanmar recognise Moshtaque government.

Aug 19

- Army chief Gen Shafiullah convenes a meeting of brigade commanders at the army headquarters. The meeting ends in chaos. Chain of command in the force remains in disarray.

Aug 20

- President Moshtaque announces that the constitution remains in force subject to the president's orders and martial law regulations.
- It is also announced that two articles of the constitution on the election of the president and discharging of the president's duties by the parliament speaker are suspended. Another article on oath of the president is amended.
- Moshtaque also announces that he has assumed all powers of the state.
- Five more state ministers are

appointed.

Aug 21

- President Moshtaque visits Bangladesh Secretariat.
- "No grand reception for political leaders and government officials," says a government press note.
- Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish, former AL president, calls on Moshtaque.
- Moshtaque visits ailing Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani at hospital.

Aug 22

- Chief Justice ASM Sayem and Speaker of Parliament Abdul Malek Ukil meet Moshtaque at the Bangabhaban.
- US recognises Moshtaque government.
- Heads of diplomatic missions in Dhaka call on Moshtaque.
- President Moshtaque issues an ordinance according to article 93 of the constitution, repealing President's Order No. 9 of 1972 which empowered the government to dismiss any public servants at any time.

Aug 23

- Four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, M Mansur Ali, Tajuddin Ahmed and AHM Kamaruzzaman -- and 22 others are detained under martial law regulations on charges of corruption, anti-social activities, nepotism and abuse of state powers.
- Moshtaque issues martial law proclamation with provisions for capital punishment for corruption and possession of illegal arms, and formation of martial law tribunals to deal with these offences.

Aug 24

- In a surprise move, General Ziaur Rahman is suddenly made army chief, replacing General Shafiullah. Major Rashid and Major Faruk, staying at the Bangabhaban since the change-over, force Moshtaque to make the sudden change at the top in the Bangladesh Army.
- General MAG Osmani is appointed defence adviser to the president. Brigadier General Ershad, who was in India on training, is promoted to the rank of major general and made deputy chief of army staff.
- Deputy Speaker of Parliament Baitullah meets Moshtaque at Bangabhaban.

Aug 26

- President Moshtaque sends message to Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, expressing his desire to strengthen ties with Pakistan.

Aug 27

- India, Oman and Hungary recognise Moshtaque government.

Aug 28

- Two martial law tribunals are set up to conduct trials of those detained under martial law regulations on various charges.

Aug 30

- President Moshtaque issues ordinance imposing a ban on political activities and formation of political parties, and introducing provisions for punishment for violations of the ban.

Aug 31

- Moshtaque issues an order scrapping the declaration relating to the formation of BAKSAL.
- China recognises Bangladesh.

Compiled by Shakhawat Liton and Rashidul Hasan

Renewed Gaza

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Israel "would stop playing with words".

If observed, the latest truce should herald potentially the longest period of calm in the five-week conflict and allow more time for talks on the thorniest issues separating the two sides.

An earlier truce collapsed in a fire-storm of violence on August 8.

Egyptian mediators have proposed that talks on a seaport and airport in

Gaza be delayed until a month after a permanent ceasefire takes effect, according to documents seen by AFP.

An Israeli-imposed buffer zone inside the Gaza border would be gradually reduced, and eventually policed by forces under the command of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas.

Israel has said it will facilitate Gaza's reconstruction only if the enclave is fully disarmed, a demand rejected by the Palestinians.

City drenched

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SDM Quamrul Alam Chowdhury, deputy managing director of Wasa.

Some entry points of drains are congested with solid waste blocking the passage of rainwater.

"We have damaged the natural water drainage system as canals, and now we have to depend on the artificial ones," Chowdhury said, adding that most cities in the world had retention systems in place but not Dhaka.

However, Wasa is working to improve the existing drainage system and has set up pumps at some points of the city to help get rid of excess rainwater, he said.

Srimangal upazila in Moulvibazar

witnessed the highest rainfall in the country at 115 mm till 3:00pm yesterday.

Most parts of the country, except for some districts in Chittagong division, saw moderate to heavy rainfall, an official of the met office said.

"The heavy rainfall is the result of the active monsoon over Bangladesh and moderate elsewhere over north Bay of Bengal," he told The Daily Star.

Moderate to heavy rain accompanied by temporary squally winds are likely to occur at most places of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions today, according to the forecast of the met office.

28 police officials transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a major reshuffle in the police administration, the government yesterday transferred 28 officials, including 13 superintendents and nine deputy commissioners of police.

The rest six include an additional inspector general, an additional police super, a Dhaka range official and three Special Branch (SB) officials, according to a home ministry statement.

AIG Taptun Nasrin and Hasan Mohammad Shawkat Ali of Dhaka range have been transferred as police supers of Rajbari and Barguna districts.

From Dhaka Metropolitan Police, deputy commissioners Shah Abid Hossain, Harun-ur-Rashid, Joydev Kumar Bhadra and Abu Kalam Siddique have been posted as police supers to Pirojpur, Gazipur, Habiganj and Joypurhat.

Mollah Jahangir Hossain and Mollah Nazrul Islam of the DMP have been moved to Khulna and Barisal metropolitan polices.

Of the 13 police supers, AKM Nahidul Islam of Meherpur will join Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP), Sanjay Kumar Kundu of Kurigram has been transferred to Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), Mofizuddin Ahmed of Kushtia to the DMP as deputy commissioners.

Hamidul Islam has been transferred from Joypurhat to Meherpur, Azad Miah from Cox's Bazar to the SB, Faisal Mahmud from Takurgaon to Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP), Mohammad Tabarak Ullah from Industrial Police to Kurigram, Rezaul Haq from Rajbari to Feni, Poritosh Ghosh from Feni to the CMP, Abdul Baten from Gazipur to the DMP, Kamrul Amin from Habiganj to the CMP, SM Aktaruzzman from Pirojpur to the DMP and Shyamol Kumar Nath from Barguna to Cox's Bazar.

Three SB officials -- Biplab Bijoy Talukder, Mohammad Abdul Quader and Abdur Rahim Shah Chowdhury - were transferred as police supers to Munshiganj, Narail and Thakurgaon districts.

DC Mahmudur Rahman of the CMP has been made commandant (police super) of the RRF in Sylhet and SMP DC Ezaz Ahmed the special police super of the SB in Dhaka.

DC Proloy Chisim of the RMP and ASP Syed Mushfiquir Rahman of Rangpur PTC have been made superintendents of Kushtia and Patuakhali district police.

BNP spent

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Political Parties Registration Rule, 2008.

The Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party, three major political parties, failed to submit their reports within the deadline while 26 parties out of 40 succeeded in complying with the rule, said Rowshan Ara, senior assistant secretary to the EC Secretariat.

Having failed to submit their reports in time, the AL sought extension of the deadline till September 1, Jatiya Party till August 30 and BNP till August 14.

The registration of a party will be cancelled if it fails to submit the audit report for three consecutive years, according to the Representation of People Order (RPO).

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami has been left out of the EC's list of registered political parties as the High Court on August 1 last year declared the party's registration illegal. An appeal against the verdict remains pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Plane nosedives

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(DGCA) of India which is investigating the incident.

The flight from Mumbai to Newark via Brussels descended from 34,000 feet to 29,000 feet when the plane was over the Turkish airspace. Air traffic controllers noted the descent and sent an emergency message to the aircraft, ordering it to climb back. The co-pilot then woke up the captain.

Both the pilots were summoned by the DGCA yesterday for questioning. While the commander said he was on "controlled rest", a short nap inside the cockpit which is allowed by flight operation procedures, the co-pilot testified that she was working on her iPad which had aircraft documents loaded on to it, Press Trust of India quoted unidentified sources as saying.

A spokesperson of Jet Airways said the airline has initiated an internal inquiry into the matter.

"The airline is also providing necessary assistance to the DGCA for the inquiry," the spokesperson said.

STRIFE-TORN LIBYA

43 Bangladeshi workers return

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty-three Bangladeshi workers returned home from Libya yesterday after being evacuated from the strife-torn country by their South Korean employer.

The Bangladeshis reached Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by an Emirates Airlines flight around 2:00pm.

All the Bangladeshis worked under a housing project of Hyundai Construction and Engineering, a South Korean company, in Benghazi, said Ramzan Ali Khan, one of the returnees, yesterday.

The 35-year-old electrical engineer had gone to Libya in November last year. He had been working there on a three-year contract.

The project was running smoothly but the authorities suddenly suspended it last month because of security concerns, he said, adding that 194 Bangladeshis had been working under the same project.

The company did not pay them the salary for July but promised to do that by August 20.

The company also promised the workers to resume the project and reappoint them as soon as the situation became normal there, said Ramzan.

Another 26 Bangladeshis working

under the same project returned home on Monday and Tuesday, said Ahsan Kibria Siddiqui, first secretary (labour) at the Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli.

But many of them are still staying in the North African country and looking for new jobs.

The Bangladeshis are returning home as they feel unsafe to stay in Libya, said the embassy official, adding that the authorities had stopped the project in Benghazi temporarily.

More than 30,000 Bangladeshis are currently working in various sectors in Libya. But they are working in constant fear of insecurity as internal conflicts involving different forces rage on in the country.

At least 13 Bangladeshis have been killed after being caught up in clashes between the rebels and the Libyan government forces till August 6 this year.

Libya is facing its worst violence since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi three years ago.

Rival militias have been fighting for control of its two biggest cities for more than a month, turning the capital Tripoli and the eastern city of Benghazi into battlegrounds in which more than 200 people have been killed recently.

The UN and most Western countries have pulled out their diplomats stationed in Libya to protect them.

Owner of Pinak-6

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Agrabad Housing area in Chittagong city early Wednesday. He went into hiding after the launch tragedy.

Abu Bakar is one of the six accused in the case filed with Louhajang Police Station after the vessel capsized in the choppy waters of the Padma on August 4. Bodies of 48 passengers were recovered while 62 passengers are still missing.

Tofazzel Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, said Rab handed over Abu Bakarto them on Wednesday night.

The Pinak-6, which was on its way to Mawa from Kawrakandi, was carrying more than 200 passengers against a capacity of 85.

After an eight-day search, the rescuers could not trace the vessel, and it salvage operation was abandoned.

3 cases gather dust

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The minister said his office had nothing to do about the Sheikh Moni murder case as the police had already given the final report in the case.

However, according to legal experts, the government can revive this case by conducting further investigation, if it wants.

The home ministry can take steps for running a fresh probe into the case upon the court's permission, Supreme Court lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan, who is also editor of Dhaka Law Reports, told The Daily Star.

He said the ministry can take permission from the court concerned through the prosecution if it has sufficient documents and evidence to back their claim.

The prosecution has to move a no-confidence petition before the court against the final report by police exempting the accused from Sheikh Moni murder case, he said.

Attorney General (AG) Mahbubey Alam had earlier told The Daily Star several times that he would take steps for disposal of the cases, but his office is yet to make any move in this regard.

The AG could not be reached for his comments as he is in the US.

In January 2009, five condemned killers of the Father of the Nation were executed following an SC verdict in the Bangabandhu murder case filed in October 1996.

SHEIKH MONI KILLING

Sheikh Moni, his wife Arzu and their son Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash were killed by wayward army personnel on August 15, 1975.

On August 22, 2002, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of

police submitted the final report in the case filed in this connection.

The Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on December 30, 2002 accepted the report and acquitted all the accused without even notifying the complainant.

Contacted, Sheikh Moni's son Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, MP, declined to make any comment about the case.

The Daily Star could not reach Mohammad Shahabuddin, who had filed the case on November 20, 1996, for his remarks.

SERNIABAT MURDER

Eight people, including Abdur Rab Serniabat, were killed after a group of army members stormed his residence on Minto Road around 5:00am.

Eighteen people were charged with murder in the case filed in this connection.

However, proceedings of the case were stayed by the HC in November 1999 following a petition filed by Bazlul Huda, one of the accused who has already been executed in the Bangabandhu assassination case.

MOHAMMADPUR MORTAR ATTACK

Fourteen people were killed by mortar shells fired by a group of military personnel in Mohammadpur area the same night.

The CID pressed charges against the same accused as in the Serniabat case on July 30, 1997 for the incident.

The case now is pending with the Court of Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Dhaka.

So far 15 prosecution witnesses have testified in court.

It goes against

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rights groups and political parties.

Referring to a provision in the policy, which restricts broadcast of any anti-state and anti-public interest statement, TIB said that in the absence of a clear explanation the government or any special quarter might misuse it. They would be able to take action against any media outlet, on various pretexts.

The provision that the information ministry will make final decisions on contents to be aired until a broadcast law and commission are formed has raised enormous concerns, it added.

Though the policy has positive suggestions, such as the stress on women, children and education policies being pursued, TIB Chairperson Sultana Kamal said, some sections were there which posed serious challenges for the media.

Self-censorship tendency will grow among media people, thus giving rise to a culture of impunity among government officials and so people's distrust of government institutions will get stronger.

"The policy is unfit for the 21st century," said the TIB chairperson, terming it repressive.

Such a policy should have been formed through a broader consultative process, said Sultana Kamal, a former

adviser to the caretaker government.

Presenting his keynote paper, TIB Director (Outreach and Communication) Rezwana-Ul-Alam said the formation and activities of the independent commission would have to be specified by a broadcast law. The commission should be free of political as well as business and commercial interference or influence.

Public servants, politicians, elected representatives, government officials having retired less than three years ago, and people having conflict of interest should not be members of the commission, he added.

To make the commission accountable to people, public participation in the commission must be ensured, TIB says, suggesting that the commission must be economically independent.

The anti-graft watchdog also said advertisements should be kept out of the broadcasting policy and a separate advertisement policy could be formed in consultation with the stakeholders concerned.

The cabinet approved the policy on August 4, giving much scope to the government to misuse it in the name of maintaining standards in news, programmes and advertisements in the electronic media.