

Abe sends support message to Japan war criminals service

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sent a message to an April memorial service dedicated to World War II war criminals, organisers said yesterday, in a move that prompted a scolding from China.

In the ceremony organised by former Japanese military officers, some 220 people prayed before a cenotaph on which the names of around 1,180 suspected and convicted World War II war criminals are inscribed, organisers said.

They include 14 "Class A" war criminals, who are also enshrined at the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, a spot seen in mainland Asia as a symbol of Japan's past aggression.

The service took place on April 29 at a temple in Wakayama prefecture in western Japan, and the master of the ceremony read the message from Abe, an organiser told AFP.

In his message, Abe said: "I express my grief at the death of martyrs... who sacrificed their lives to form the foundation of peace and prosperity in Japan today," according to two participants and a report by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

"I pledge to work towards the future harmonious coexistence of human beings, and hope for eternal peace," the message said.

The ceremony has been held annually since 1994 when the cenotaph was established by Masashi Tsuno, a man arrested in the Philippines on suspicion of war crimes at the end of hostilities, but who was later acquitted.

Tsuno's supporters believe that the punishments meted out by the Tokyo Tribunals in the years after the war represented little more than victors' justice perpetrated in revenge.

Organiser Kazuaki Naka, 75, said the service has been held "to console the souls of war dead, who sacrificed their lives for their home country, whether their executions were fair or unfair."

Buddhism holds that descendants and those who outlive friends, colleagues or neighbours have a duty to care for the spirits of the dead.

The religion is practised alongside native Shintoism in Japan, an animistic belief system that also places obligations on the living to seek the repose of dead souls.

Abe's message to the ceremony could prove another thorn in the side of relations with China and South Korea, both of which have been angered by his visit to Yasukuni last December and his equivocation on Japan's wartime wrongdoing.

BCL men

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man belonging to the Moin Tushar group by the Jasim Uddin group in the morning.

The groups wanted to meet Jebunnesa, wife of deceased AL lawmaker Shawkat Hossain Hiron, at her Alekanda house around 7:45pm.

At one stage, both the groups engaged in a clash and threw brick chips at each other, leaving 10 BCL men, including former general secretary of BM College Students Union Nahid Serniabat, injured. A motorcycle was damaged during the clash.

However, Jebunnesa declined to comment in this regard.

On information, police and Rapid Action Battalion members rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Robber killed

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from the scene, the police official said.

Five policemen were hurt during the "gunfight". They have been undergoing treatment at Noakhali Police Lines Hospital, he added.

The body of Khorshed was sent to Noakhali Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Subhan abetted mass killing

Witness tells war crimes tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday testified how Jamaat leader Abdus Subhan had abetted and facilitated the Pakistani army in a mass killing at several villages in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna during the Liberation War.

Abdul Baten, 60, 25th prosecution witness in the case against the Jamaat-e-Islami naye-e-ameer, told the International Crimes Tribunal-2 that he had witnessed the killing of four people by the Pakistani occupation army at the instruction of Subhan on May 12, 1971.

The army had attacked their village at 6:00am that day and caught his father Madari Mondal and uncle Laskar Mondal, he added.

The witness said he had taken shelter at a garden behind Basu Saha's house where many people including Chetona, Ratna, Ghughori and Modon were hiding themselves.

Baten added he along with Chetona, Ratna, Ghughori and Modon had decided to go to Narohati Beel. Four army vehicles had stopped near them on the way and Subhan was in one of those vehicles, he said.

"Showing Chetona, Ratna, Ghughori and Modon, Moulana Subhan told the Pakistani army 'Those ... [used a racial and derogatory word to mean Hindus] are people of Joy Bangla'," he said.

"The Pakistani army immediately opened fire and killed them on the spot," said Baten, who witnessed the killing from behind a rain tree on the west side of the road.

The witness said he had fainted seeing the cold-blooded killing. "After some time I regained consciousness and went to my cousin late Azhar Mondal's house in Upendranagar."

He returned to his house after the Pakistani army had left the village around 2:00pm and begun searching for his father and uncle.

"Around 4:00pm I heard that about 20-25 people were killed in Kondorpur village. I went there and

found bullet-hit Afsar of Kuripara village and Obaidullah of Momrajpur village. I also found my father and uncle in a state of unconsciousness," he added.

The witness said he had rescued his father and uncle and taken them home with the help of one Naran Biswas.

"On my way home I saw many bodies on the bank of the river [Padma] near Sindurpur village," he added.

The witness said he had known Subhan from before May 12, 1971 prior to the defence completed cross-examining him.

Proceeding of the case was adjourned until September 2.

TRIBUNAL-1

The defence at the International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday began placing counter arguments in the war crimes case against Jamaat Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam.

Prosecutor Tureen Afroz yesterday expressed regret if anyone was hurt by the use of her "indecent" word to address the Jamaat leader during their arguments on Tuesday. However, she said she had "used the word believing what Azharul is, with the evidence she had, and the word described him perfectly".

Earlier, the defence drew the attention of the tribunal to the prosecutor's remark and protested against it. The tribunal sought explanation from Tureen.

The tribunal said they had also felt embarrassed when the prosecutor used the term. The tribunal asked her to be cautious about using language in future.

The defence yesterday placed arguments on synopsis of charges brought against their client.

Azharul faces six charges for alleged involvement in crimes against humanity and genocide. The prosecution examined 19 witnesses to prove the charges.

Proceeding of the case was adjourned until September 1.

20-party slams govt

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amend the constitution.

"You can easily understand the country's present situation through the recent deal under which our border guards will receive training from the BSF, the force from whom we will save our borders," BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told the rally at the Jatiya Press Club.

On the empowerment of parliament to impeach judges, the BNP leader said the government through this initiative has moved to "control judiciary so that the judges cannot deliver well thought-out verdicts."

Terming the present Jatiya Sangsad illegal, Fakhrul said as this parliament has no elected representative, it cannot be empowered to impeach judges.

He asked the ruling party leaders to take to the streets against the BNP without the help of the Rab, police and BGB to prove their might. He added that though he did not believe in terrorism, he had to say this as he has no other option.

Mostafa Jalal Haidari, secretary general of the Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), lambasted the government as it did not permit the alliance to hold yesterday's protest programme at 15 points in the capital. The government, he said, has forced them to organise the protest rally at the press club.

Convenor of Dhaka city BNP Mirza Abbas alleged that the govern-

ment has been formulating different policies to restrict politics.

BNP leaders Selima Rahman, Abdul Awal Mintoo, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Dr Redwan and Khelafat Mojlish Secretary General Mujibar Rahman also spoke.

The opposition alliance had fixed yesterday for holding rallies and bringing out processions at 15 points in the capital. But the Dhaka city unit BNP on Tuesday announced that there will be no processions, but a rally at the Jatiya Press Club.

Yesterday's rally at the press club auditorium was rather held like a discussion.

Talking to this newspaper, several BNP leaders and activists expressed frustration over the low profile of the programme.

"We came from Tongi hoping that it would be a big rally. But the programme rather turned out to be an indoor discussion like the ones held almost everyday at the Jatiya Press Club," said Jubo Dal leader Monir Hossain.

On Saturday, the alliance leaders and activists will form human chains in cities and district headquarters on the same issue.

Addressing a press briefing at his office in the capital on Tuesday, BGB Director General Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed said his force has agreed to receive border management training from the BSF.

Floods spread

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north-east districts -- Netrakona, Sunamganj and Sylhet -- could improve in the next 48 hours, he said, adding that the water levels of the Surma and the Kushiara had fallen.

The Buriganga, Balu, Turag and the Tongi canal could swell in next 72 hours but stay under the danger level, he said.

Even though the FFWC says 16 districts had been affected by the floods, Mohammad Abdul Wazed, director general of the Department of Disaster Management, said 11 districts had been "affected seriously" and five-six more could be affected soon.

"We are yet to get detailed report [about the flood] and we expect to have it on Sunday," Wazed told The Daily Star last night.

He said 5,150 tonnes of rice had been allocated for the 11 districts and 2,486.86 tonnes had been distributed. Apart from rice, Tk 1.6 crore had been allocated for the flood affected and Tk 41.15 lakh of it was disbursed.

Officials are distributing relief but they, in some cases, are facing problems as people, who were not actually affected, demand relief, he added.

JAMALPUR

Flood situation in Jamalpur deteriorated yesterday with the water level of the Jamuna rising, sources in Bangladesh Water Development Board said.

A total of 407.47 square kilometres area of Islampur, Dewanganj, Madaganj and Sharishabari upazilas had been inundated for last nine days, local administration sources said.

Classes in 113 primary schools, out of 137, remained suspended for about a week while a total of 16,311 hectares of cropland went under water, they said.

KURIGRAM

The overall flood situation worsened in Kurigram as water levels of 16 rivers including the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, Dharla and the Teesta rose yesterday.

At least three lakh people in 270 villages have been marooned. Abul Hossen, chairman of Hatia union in Ulipur upazila, said 12 new villages got flooded yesterday.

Strong current and high water level wiped away 30 metres of a flood-control embankment in Rohodoha Bazar area of Shariakandi upazila early Wednesday.

Flood affected people alleged that they had been passing hard times without food, medicine, drinking water and food for their livestock.

Nezarat Deputy Collector of Bogra Arifuzzaman said around 17,000 families in 94 villages of the district were affected.

LALMONIRHAT

Due to onrush of water from upstream, the overall flood situation in Lalmonirhat deteriorated yesterday, leaving one lakh people in the 80 affected villages of the district to suffer more.

Mofazzal Hossain, chairman of Rajpur union council, and Idris Ali of Kulaghat Union Council of Lalmonirhat sadar, alleged that the district administration's relief allocation was insufficient.

Hasina

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BDR mutiny, said Hasina. "Let me ask a question to the BNP chief and her son. Who could be involved in the [BDR] killings? The person who had left her home can be involved in the incident. Otherwise, why she would have to leave the house?"

About the BNP's movement to foil the January 5 national election, she said some vested quarters are in agony as the people have been passing their days peacefully.

The PM termed "wrong" the decision of BNP not to contest the January 5 election. "If any political party takes a wrong decision, it has to pay for that. They cannot take revenge on the people for their wrong decision," she mentioned.

Brutal murder

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The motive behind the murder was unclear.

Faruki's wife Lubna, his mother-in-law, nephew Maruf Hossain and a domestic help were tied up.

Of them, Maruf was in Faruki's room while the others were in another room on the first-floor of the four-storey building.

Two of the assailants first entered the house to talk about hajj-related matters, while eight to 10 others soon followed, Maruf said.

Three more persons who had come earlier were already talking to Faruki about hajj-related matters.

The assailants first tied Maruf and the three persons in Faruki's room and then stormed the other room and tied the other members of the family with cloths that they had brought along.

Then they pointed a firearm at Faruki's forehead and held a machete against his throat, demanding Tk 50 lakh. He offered them Tk 1 lakh which he had in his home, but the killers forced him into the dining room, where his body was later found with his throat slit, Maruf said.

As the news spread, about 200 of his followers demonstrated in front of his house around 9:30pm.

Outside the capital, activists of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat and Bangladesh Islami Front blocked roads in several areas in Chittagong and Narayanganj protesting the murder.

Faruki was a presidium member of the Front.

Islami Chhatra Sena, a student

wing of Bangladesh Islami Front, will bring out a protest procession from Jatiya Press Club today. It will also block roads in Chittagong and Comilla from 8:00am to 10:00am, said Nurul Haque Chisty, president of the organisation.

The organisation will call a dawn-to-dusk hartal on Sunday if the killers are not arrested by this evening, he told The Daily Star.

Besides, Islami Front will demonstrate across the country at 3:00pm today.

Col Ziaul Hossain, additional director general of Rapid Action Battalion, who visited the house, told reporters later that it seemed to be a planned murder.

State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan also visited the house. He later told journalists that the culprits would be caught through proper investigation.

For several years, Faruki presented two programmes -- "Shantir Pothe" and "Kafela" -- on Channel i.

Faruki's son Faisal Faruki discovered his father's body in a pool of blood after returning home around 9:30pm. He then untied the others.

Maruf said the two men who first entered the house had also come on Monday afternoon to talk to Faruki about hajj, but Faruki was not home.

Syed Naim Uddin Ahmed, a presidium member of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, said Faruki was always in favour of majars (shrines) and "milads". "But some people do not believe these and were against our organisation. They might be involved in the killing."

Five more Rab men

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The Rab men were arrested at different places, said Khandker Mahid Uddin, Narayanganj superintendent of police, but Rab in a press statement claimed that they were handed over to Narayanganj police.

Rab-11 had found their involvement in the murders in a "shadow investigation" that the elite force was conducting, claimed Capt Maqsudul Alam, assistant director of the legal and media wing of Rab.

With the five, investigators have so far arrested eight Rab-11 personnel in connection with the gruesome murder.

Narayanganj city panel mayor Nazrul Islam, his driver and three associates, and senior lawyer Chandan Sarker and his driver were abducted separately but around the same time on April 27 from Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road.

Their bodies were found floating in the Shitalakkhya a few days later.

Yesterday, the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Chandni Rupam passed the remand order in the case filed by Selina Islam, wife of Nazrul,

after investigation officer Mamunur Rashid Mandol of the Detective Branch of police in Narayanganj produced the five before the court.

From the court the arrestees were taken to the police lines in Masdair area for quizzing, said a source inside the district police.

Rab men's involvement in the killings came to light when Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam alleged that some Rab personnel had abducted and killed Nazrul in exchange for Tk 6 crore from ward councillor Nur Hossain and his associates.

Amid an uproar over the allegation, the High Court on May 5 ordered the government to keep the elite force away from the probe.

It also directed the government to form a seven-member committee led by an additional secretary of the public administration ministry to investigate the brutal murders.

Nur Hossain, the prime accused in the case, was arrested in Kolkata, India, on June 14 for intruding into the country. He is now in an Indian jail and is facing trial for illegal entry.

'Natural disasters caused \$41b losses in first half'

AFP, Zurich

Natural disasters caused total economic losses of \$41 billion in the first six months of this year, much less than usual, reinsurance group Swiss Re estimated yesterday.

The figure released by the Zurich-based group -- which combines both insured and uninsured losses -- was down from \$59 billion (45 billion euros) in the first half of 2013.

It was also about half the average first-half loss of the previous 10 years, which was \$94 billion.

The insurance industry took a hit of \$21 billion from disasters in the January to June period.

That was down from the \$25 billion in payouts over the same period in 2013, and also below the \$27 billion ten-year average.

The costliest disaster for the insurance sector was the thunderstorms and

hail which hit the United States in mid-May, causing \$3.2 billion in damage, of which \$2.6 billion was insured.

Next came June's storms in France, Germany and Belgium, where losses reached \$2.7 billion, with \$2.5 billion of that covered by insurers.

February's snowstorm in Japan inflicted \$5.0 billion in economic losses, but only half of that figured was insured.

The January snowstorm in the United States led to economic losses of \$2.5 billion, of which \$1.7 billion was insured.

And May's thunderstorms and tornadoes in the United States generated losses of \$1.7 billion, with \$1.1 billion of that covered.

Rich countries traditionally see the most expensive single disasters in terms of insurance claims, given their wealthier economies and extensive insurance penetration.

Beximco in severe cash crunch

FROM PAGE 1

The group also came up with a restructuring plan of all its debt. It wants to reschedule the loans up to 2026 with a moratorium period for 2.5 years. The group wants to pay only 10 percent interest against these loans, much lower than the market rates of 13-14 percent.

Beximco Ltd (Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited) operates in multiple industrial areas, including textiles, real estate, hospitality, marine food, commodities trading, ICT, ceramics and aviation. The company's largest division is Beximco Textiles, which was amalgamated with Beximco Ltd in 2011. The company's paid-up capital is Tk 601 crore and the public own more than 65 percent stakes in the company.

In the letter, Salman claimed Beximco's textile division is a pioneer in the country's backward linkage industry, which has paved the way for increased exports of value-added garments.

Over the last 10 years, Beximco Group exported goods worth \$1.5 billion (Tk 11,625 crore on yesterday's exchange rate).

"Because of politically motivated credit restric-

tions on the group from 2001 to 2008 as well as other forms of harassment in the past, the group has been facing insufficiency of working capital for some time," Salman told The Daily Star.

Despite the challenges, different companies of the group rescheduled their loans since 2009 till date to avoid becoming defaulters though the cash flow and ability to pay did not match, he said.

"Unfortunately, this resulted in long-term structural mismatch between cash generation and repayment schedule as well as mismatch between tenure of the loan and the underlying income generating capacity of assets to repay those," the letter said.

"We would be extremely grateful if you kindly advise the banks concerned to help us by restructuring in a manner that will meet our cash flows," Salman urged the governor.

"We may mention that we are not requesting any additional credit lines, but amendment in terms only," he said.

A top BB official admitted yesterday that the central bank has written to the managing direc-

tors of the seven banks seeking their opinion about the Beximco's proposal.

"This is not a blanket [proposal]...we have sought the banks' opinion. Let them do it," the official said, asking not to be named.

But the official said the BB would not allow any breach of its rules and regulations to meet Beximco's demand.

Salman said he wanted to restructure the debt at the group level. He also said he came up with the loan restructuring plan based on the assessment of a private audit firm.

Four companies of Beximco Group -- Beximco Ltd, Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Shinepukur Ceramics and Beximco Synthetics -- are listed on the stockmarket.

Share prices of Beximco Group's companies have been rising for the past two weeks.

Beximco Ltd's share price jumped to Tk 44 on August 24 from Tk 34 on August 13 on the Dhaka Stock Exchange, while Beximco Pharma's price rose to nearly Tk 58 yesterday from Tk 43 on August 18.



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The intending bidders have to apply in their letter-head pad for purchasing tender document which will be sold from August 28, 2014 to September 14, 2014 during office hours upon payment of Tk.3,000.00 in cash(non refundable) for every package. Tender will be received at the office of the undersigned during office hours up to 3.00 p.m on September 15, 2014 and will be opened at 3:10 p.m on the same date and office of the undersigned in presence of the bidders who may like to attend the opening. Detail information regarding tender is available in the Bank's website: www.islambankbd.com or in the form of hard copy at the office of the undersigned.

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