

New Book On '71 MPs slam AK Khandker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandker came under fire from lawmakers of treasury and opposition benches for the controversial claims he made in this recent book "1971: Bhitore Baire". Khandker, who was the deputy chief of liberation forces in the war of independence, claimed in the book that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had mentioned "Joy Pakistan" at the end of his historic March 7 speech in 1971. During the unscheduled discussion that went on for nearly two hours, MPs from the ruling Awami League and the opposition Jatiya Party demanded that the book be banned for "distorting historic facts". Some even went on to say that Khandker might have been paid by "foreign agencies like Pakistan's ISI" for writing the book.

AL lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim demanded that the government bring sedition charges against Khandker and try him. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said, "I was present on the stage [during Bangabandhu's speech]. I did not hear Bangabandhu utter any such thing."

Quoting some lines from the book, Tofail said, "AK Khandaker in his book wrote that he did not know in details about the incidents, especially the mass upsurge, as he was in Pakistan then."

"It is not necessary to respond to his statements as the writer himself acknowledged that he was not aware of those [eventful] days," he added. Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Mia came down heavily on Khandker, saying the nation does not care about the book written by a man who had joined hands with "butcher Moshtaque Ahmed" after the assassination of Bangabandhu and his family members on August 15, 1975. "Bangabandhu means Bangladesh and Bangladesh means Bangabandhu," he said. Lawmaker Rafiqul Islam, who was a sector commander during the Liberation War, said AK Khandker might have written the book to serve the purposes of a vested quarter.

"We fought [the Liberation War] under the leadership of Bangabandhu," he asserted. Among others, Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, AL MP Abul Kalam Azad, JP lawmaker Kazi Feroz Rashid and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal MP Mayeen Uddin Khan Badal participated in the discussion.

No steps

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a decision based on their recommendations," he said.

Professor Saiful Amin, however, noted it would be unwise to procrastinate since this foot bridge is used by a huge number of people.

"The feasibility study should be aimed at finding whether retrofitting or rebuilding a new one is more cost-effective. Based on that finding, the footbridge should be re-opened to the public soon," he said.

US embassy

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officially offered the United States Coast Guard Ship (USCGS) Rush to Bangladesh on Aug 8." Rush will complement Somudra Joy transferred to Bangladesh Navy last year. "We look forward to further broadening and deepening our bilateral relations at our annual Partnership Dialogue scheduled for October in Washington," the embassy official said. Attributing to Indian intelligence officials, the news agency's India correspondent reported that West Bengal's ruling party Trinamool Congress, which was said to have been hugely funded by the US to oust the left government in the state between 2009 and 2011, has transferred millions of dollars to its fundamentalist associates in Bangladesh. The US is backing the Jamaat-BNP combine because it has promised a base in the Bay of Bengal, possibly in St Martin's Island, in case it comes to power, the report says.

Ministries

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include holding regular meetings with the bill defaulter ministries and authorities, sending demand orders to the secretaries of the ministries concerned and disconnecting electricity lines, said the state minister.

The ministry was also conducting mobile courts to this end. Besides, pre-paid meter and SMS bill payment systems had been also introduced, he added.

War tribunal warns HRW

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The prosecution brought contempt petition against HRW, its Asia Director Brad Adams and associate for HRW Asia Division Storm Tiv for allegedly demeaning the tribunal and its judges. "On scrutiny of the dossier presented by the parties concerned [prosecution and defence], the issue [HRW report] in hands is found to be contemptuous against the opposite parties", said the tribunal in its 43-page order. "Yes, in the case in hands judges have ample power to exercise their authority upon the opposite parties in accordance with law as it has been proven that the opposite parties made contemptuous remarks in their official website regarding the judges as well as authority of the tribunal in the name of freedom of speech and expression," the order read. "People like opposite parties [HRW] in a civilised society got no mandate to exceed the limit of law," the tribunal said. "We are expecting more circumspection, understanding, discretion and judgement on the part of the opposite parties [HRW] because they are strongly claiming that they speak on behalf of the distressed and oppressed people and of their fundamental rights," said tribunal member Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim reading out the rule. He said, "The instant contempt petition is disposed of with a note of desire that upon realising mistakes as narrated above the opposite parties shall be more careful, cautious and respectful in making any statement or comment with regard to the judicial

Hannan, 12 other Huji

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the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka, read out the charges to them. The court also fixed October 23 for starting trial of the case. On August 21 this year, the same court framed charges against the same accused in a murder case lodged in connection with the bomb attack carried out on the rally of the Communist Party of Bangladesh in the capital's Paltan Maidan on January 21, 2001. The trial will begin on September 14. On November 27 last year, the Criminal Investigation Department had pressed charges against them in the two cases. Of the accused, Mufti Hannan, Mufti Mainuddin Sheikh, Arif Hassan Sumon, Maulana Sabbir Ahmed,

6 TV presenters sued

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Haruni hosts programmes at ATN Bangla, Bakshi at Rtv and Radio Today, and Mukhtar at Banglavision. Emran Husain Tushar, Dhaka city general secretary of Islami Chhatra Sena, student wing of Bangladesh Islami Front, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka. After recording the statement of the plaintiff, Metropolitan Magistrate Asaduzzaman Nur asked the officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station to register the complaint as a regular case and probe it along with the other case filed in this connection. International affairs secretary of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, Faruqi, 60, was slain at his house in the capital's East Rajabazar on August 27. The following day, his son Faisal Faruqi filed a murder and robbery case with the same police station against eight to nine unnamed persons. The case was later handed over to the Detective Branch of police. Law enforcers detained three people including a woman in this connection and later took them on remand. Emran in the case statement complained that Faruqi was killed by religious fanatics in a pre-planned way as per the conspiracy of the six accused. "Faruqi used to analyse and reanalyse Islamic laws at different discussions, seminars and on the

WHO warning over Ebola in Nigeria's Port Harcourt

AFP, Lagos

An Ebola outbreak in Nigeria's oil producing hub of Port Harcourt could spread wider and faster than in the financial capital, Lagos, the World Health Organization warned yesterday. The UN health body said the virus' arrival in Port Harcourt, 435 kilometres (270 miles) east of Lagos and home to oil and gas majors such as Shell, Total and Chevron, showed "multiple high-risk opportunities for transmission of the virus to others". Of the 255 people currently under surveillance for signs of the disease, the

proceedings or the judges of the tribunals or any other courts of Bangladesh in future."

The tribunal had served a show-cause notice upon HRW and it apologised for any inadvertent mistake it had made in its report on the verdict. The tribunal said the defendants were non-residents of Bangladesh and lacked the knowledge about the contempt law and proceedings in Bangladesh. They did not know how their comments would be perceived in Bangladesh.

The HRW, in their response to the show-cause notice, claimed that it had reported certain issues which merely compared the ingredients of a "fair trial" with international instruments and that there was no malice or criminal intent.

Justice Jahangir Hossain said in Ghulam Azam's case the tribunal had given ample opportunities to both the parties especially the defence to produce or defend their respective cases properly in order to ensure fair trial so that none of the parties could be deprived of getting redress or justice.

The tribunal further said all the prosecution witnesses were cross-examined at length by the defence with full satisfaction. More so, the tribunal, for ensuring fair justice, allowed 12 defence witnesses to depose in favour of Ghulam Azam on the basis of defence prayer but the defence willingly tendered only one witness.

To defend himself, the accused had received all the procedural benefits. It was not correct to say that the trial of Azam's case had not ended in accordance with the law, the order read.

Maulana Shawkat Osman and Md Moshir Rahman are currently behind bars, while Mufti Abdul Hai, Shafiqur Rahman, Jahangir Alam Badar, Md Nur Islam, Mohibul Mustakin, Anisur Rahman and Rafiqul Alam Miraj have been absconding ever since the incident happened.

According to the charge sheets, the accused made the attack on the pretext that the CPB members in the rally were "atheists".

Soon after the blasts, police arrested 12 people, but the CID, in its final investigation report submitted on December 17, 2003, cleared the arrestees of the charges as no "correct, impartial and reliable" evidence was found against them.

The home ministry then ordered a reinvestigation into the incident following an application submitted by the CID in 2005.

media on the basis of the holy Quran and Islamic history. As a result, a vested quarter had hurled abuses at him and also threatened him with life," mentioned the case statement.

A group of fanatics had attacked Faruqi in January 2010 and tried to kill him while he was on his way to Sunamganj to join a mahfil there. He escaped the attack with the help of local police and a journalist. Later, it was known that the attack was carried out as per a plan by Tareque Monwar, added the statement.

In 2012, Kazi Ibrahim had threatened Faruqi with life and also abused him verbally at a mahfil in Trishal, Mymensingh.

In the same year, Jafri and Ibrahim had called Faruqi and asked him to have belief in Jamaat ideology. As Faruqi refused to comply with them, the two threatened to kill him and put him on a "blacklist".

On August 22 this year, Monwar at a meeting termed Faruqi a "blasphemer" and called for unity among the attendees to go against him.

Haruni, Mukhtar and Bakshi were present at the meeting at Dhaka Trade Centre. The six accused sat in another "secret" meeting at the same venue, mentioned Emran.

Three days later, Faruqi at a mahfil in Tongi, Gazipur expressed fear that he might come under attack anytime.

The Daily Star could not reach any of the six accused for their comment.

Gunmen shoot

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Station, just across the street, said he heard around seven gunshots but could not see how many people were there.

A bullet was fired towards him and he had to run for cover.

Moksed said Israil was carrying a backpack but it went missing after the attack.

The victims were coming from Motijheel and was carrying the money in the backpack, Simon's cousin SM Sayeed Suki told The Daily Star.

"They brought the money home as they ran out of time to deposit it in the bank," he said.

He speculated that an organised gang of muggers were involved.

Simon was the only son of Israil. He has been helping his father with his business for several years. He got married last year.

Asharafuzzaman, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), told The Daily Star that they had information about three suspects riding a motorbike and that they were investigating.

Abe's visit

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next year's election to a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC).

A highly placed source said PM Abe will discuss Japan's candidacy for the UNSC seat for 2016-17 with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Only one UN member state from the Asia-Pacific region can win each election.

Bangladesh's support is crucial for Japan as Dhaka has also expressed its interest in contesting the election and has been campaigning since 2002.

Japan wants Bangladesh to withdraw its candidacy in favour of it, but Dhaka is yet to make any such commitment, mentioned sources.

After arriving in Dhaka tomorrow noon, Abe will hold the meeting with Hasina, after which a joint communiqué will be issued.

The foreign minister hoped that the Japanese investors would be encouraged to invest in Bangladesh in energy, electricity generation, infrastructure development, IT, textiles, RMG, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and other prospective sectors.

Bangladesh will seek Japanese support for boosting its export to the East Asian country, he noted.

The Japanese leader will meet President Abdul Hamid and Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad. Abe will also meet BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at Sonargaon Hotel tomorrow.

28kg gold

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The seized gold bars would be deposited with Bangladesh Bank. A departmental case would be filed in this connection under the customs act, said Mosear.

Creating music

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poser Kyteman to create a song designed specifically to help people who have a limited range of hearing experience a live musical performance.

The concert was then performed to 19-year-old Vera van Dijk who was born deaf, and wears a cochlear implant to boost the sounds she can hear.

The concert for 400 people was created as part of the Vodafone Firsts scheme.

To ensure the sounds were audible to Vera, the concert was composed from scratch using the limited combination of frequencies the cochlear implant enables her to hear.

Vera started to hear a small number of musical notes when she received the implant two years ago.

Because she had limited awareness of the type of music she may like, she asked the public to help her choose the song, via social media.

They chose Stay With Me by Sam Smith.

Vera was also able to lip-read and communicate on her phone, to encourage friends and followers to listen to sample scores of music.

This was another first for the teenager, who previously was only able to use a mobile phone to communicate by text.

Egypt jihadist group claims deadly Sinai bombing

AFP, Cairo

An Egyptian jihadist group behind some of the deadliest attacks on security forces said it carried out a bombing that killed 11 police in the Sinai Peninsula this week.

Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (Partisans of Jerusalem), an Al-Qaeda-inspired group based in the Sinai, uploaded video on YouTube late Wednesday purporting to show Tuesday's ambush, the deadliest attack on the security forces in months.

The footage shows an armoured personnel carrier driving down a road before it is engulfed in a powerful explosion that sends pieces of the vehicle flying into the air.

No scope for militancy

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He ruled out the possibility of Islamist militancy spreading its tentacles in Bangladesh but said agencies will check out whether any local organisation has links to al-Qaeda.

Kamal Uddin Ahmed, additional secretary (political) to the ministry, said, "Whenever there is such a release, we try to verify the authenticity before taking measures."

In February, an audiovisual message, purported to be from Zawahri, urged the Muslims in Bangladesh to wage an intifada (popular uprising) to confront the "crusader onslaught against Islam".

Titled "Bangladesh: A Massacre behind a Wall of Silence", the statement alleged people were being killed for protesting the "collusion of the anti-Islam secular government with a bunch of transgressing secularists".

The government is yet to say whether it was authentic or not.

Some intelligence officials yesterday said there were some al-Qaeda followers in Bangladesh despite the government crackdown on terrorist outfits and arrest of several top militant leaders.

The followers received militancy training in Afghanistan and fought for al-Qaeda abroad. They were involved in militancy in the country as well, the officials added.

A senior police officer, who has expertise in counterterrorism, said, "We have taken it seriously but we are yet to get an English translation of the message."

New Delhi, however, regards Zawahri's statement as authentic and put several states of India on heightened alert, reports Reuters.

SNAB TO ISLAMIC STATE?

According to experts, al-Qaeda's ageing leaders are struggling to compete for recruits with Islamic State (IS), previously known as ISIS, which has galvanised young followers around the world by carving out tracts of territory across the Iraq-Syria border.

One al-Qaeda strategy to counter its decline appears to be an effort to build support among the nearly half a billion Muslims who live in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, writes The Guardian.

Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi calls himself a "caliph" has demanded the loyalty of Muslims. Its efforts at state-building is something never attempted by al-Qaeda's central leaders.

The video message, however, did not mention IS or Baghdadi. But Zawahri's renewed vow of loyalty to Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar could be seen as an apparent snub to the IS.

"This new group has not come into formation in a single day, but attempts to unite the jihadi groups of subcontinent were going on for nearly past two years. This group will work under the central al-Qaida, which is an army among the armies ... led by Mullah Omar," Zawahri said.

The allegiance is also a sign that "al-Qaeda central", as it is known to specialists, remains focused on south and west Asia.

Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician, took the helm of the global militant

Flood affects cattle

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our Munshiganj correspondent.

Lack of fodder and grass for cattle has only aggravated the suffering of the people. Besides, they have been infected with different diseases.

Firoza Begum, a widow of Mandra village yesterday told The Daily Star that others could hardly imagine how they survived the last few days.

"We hardly get food. But to manage fodder for my cows is even harder," said Firoza.

The flood has affected 25 unions of Singair and four unions of Daulatpur upazila in Manikganj. People of these affected areas complained that they did not get any relief materials.

However, Rashida Ferdous, deputy commissioner of Manikganj, said she had directed the officials to make a list of the affected people and would distribute relief once the list was complete, reports our Manikganj corre-

Doubt grows over Thai power handover plan

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand's new military-stacked cabinet met King Bhumibol Adulyadej in Bangkok yesterday, marking the formal start of an administration that will spend at least a year overhauling the political system before calling an election.

The leader of a May 22 coup, army chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha, who is now prime minister, has said he wants a year of reforms to culminate in a late 2015 election. But observers say there are signs a power transfer could be delayed.

"Prayuth has given himself several tasks to attend to while he is appointed prime minister," said Paul Chambers,

organisation after US Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011.

He called for unity among militants and criticised "discord", thus echoing a common al-Qaeda complaint against IS group's record of clashing with rival Islamist groups in Syria.

In the video, Zawahiri was seen focussing on a map of the Indian peninsula.

"A new branch of al-Qaeda was established called Qaedat al-Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent, seeking to raise the flag of jihad, return the Islamic rule, and empowering the Shariah of Allah across the Indian subcontinent," he said in his opening remarks in Arabic.

In the statement, the al-Qaeda chief said its Indian branch had been two years in the making, and announced its chief would be Taliban commander Asim Umar.

Umar, about whom little is known, has featured in two previous statements, one aimed at Indian Muslims in which he incited them to join the global jihadi movement and a second focused on Kashmir, the disputed Muslim-majority Himalayan region.

According to Bill Roggio of news website Long War Journal, "The creation of al-Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent and the promotion of Asim Umar highlight the close ties between al-Qaeda and the Taliban groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

Meanwhile, India has asked agencies to take possible precautionary steps, our New Delhi correspondent reported.

Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh met top security officials to discuss new security measures, while an initial assessment of the Intelligence Bureau found the video to be genuine.

The home ministry has directed state police forces to formulate action plans to guard against "recruitment" for the international group.

India has suffered several large-scale attacks by Islamist militants, most recently the 2008 Mumbai rampage by Pakistani fighters that left 166 people dead.

At one of the world's most influential Islamic seminaries, Darul Uloom Deoband, in northern India, an official said that extremist groups routinely try to recruit young, uneducated and poor Muslim boys as militants.

"We inform our students about the dangers faced by Islam, and rising militancy is one of the key subjects discussed in the seminary," said Ashraf Usmani from the seminary, which is known for its conservative Muslim thought.

"I can say this with confidence that no student from Deoband can be recruited by al-Qaeda or any other terror groups."

The video message also could pose a challenge to India's new Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a hate figure for Islamist groups because of religious riots on his watch as Gujarat chief minister in 2002.

Zawahri made two references to the Indian state.

spondent.

The 17-day long flood has damaged at least 32,395 hectares of T-aman, aush, vegetable fields and seedbeds in Kurigram, reports our correspondent quoting local agriculture officials.

Shafi Uddin of Char Parbatipur of Kurigram sadar upazila had planted Aman on seven bighas of land all of which was damaged.

"My seven bighas of T-aman paddy field and 16 decimals of seedbed have been totally damaged. It would be hard to recover the loss if I do not get any help," he said.

Afsar Ali, acting deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Kurigram, said, "Farmers are advised to plant the late varieties of paddy on their flood-hit lands. We are also advising them to grow vegetables and robi crops like mustard, wheat and maize early to recover their loss."

director of research at the Institute of South East Asian Affairs affiliated with Chiang Mai University.

"These could likely legitimize a reason for him to extend his term as prime minister and thus consolidate the power of his military faction and himself."

Dressed in a crisp, white military uniform, Prayuth, 60, led his cabinet to Bangkok's Siriraj hospital, where King Bhumibol, 86, has been staying while he undergoes a health check-up, the palace says.

The army seized power after months of protests in Bangkok by supporters of the royalist establishment against Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.