



Scared children try to take cover after Jamaat-Shibir men went on the rampage on Sylhet-Sunamganj highway yesterday protesting the Supreme Court verdict that sentenced Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee to jail until death for crimes against humanity. Inset, Jamaat-Shibir activists vandalised a three-wheeler used by police.

PHOTO: STAR



Bangladesh envoy to Greece called back

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has finally called home Bangladesh Ambassador to Greece Golam Mohammad as he has been found guilty of sexually harassing a female official of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) recently.

According to a highly placed source, the foreign ministry yesterday asked him to return to Dhaka and report to the ministry by next one month.

Following an investigation into the incident in Athens, a three-member inquiry team, headed by Maritime Affairs Unit Secretary Khurshid Alam, recommended taking punitive action against the envoy for the offence.

The IOM official and her office lodged a complaint with the foreign ministry after she had been sexually harassed by the envoy during an invitation to the ambassador's residence.

The ministry received complaints and intelligence agencies reported against Golam Mohammad a number of times even when he was posted in Indonesia, but no step was taken against him.

But this time the ministry was compelled to take action against the envoy following the complaint lodged by an international organisation.

Another haul

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said Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of legal and media wing of Rab.

Around 5:00am, during the drive to recover arms in the forest, members of Rab-9 found the arms and ammunition in a trench inside Ajit Barman's goat-shed at Tripura Palli in the forest, said Mahmud while addressing a press conference at the spot.

The reserve forest is about three kilometres away from the Indian state of Tripura.

The Rab team is yet to confirm the owners of the firearms and ammunition.

The team began its operation to recover firearms on June 3 this year.

On September 2, Rab members recovered two light machine guns, one sub-machine gun, six self-loading rifles, one automatic rifle, one sniper telescope, five rifles and 2,400 bullets of 7.62mm bore from the forest.

The elite force recovered 633 7.62 mm bullets, 54 12.54 mm bullets and a 37-inch long barrel of a machine gun from the forest on June 9.

On June 3, the force got 184 rocket shells (40mm) and 153 chargers abandoned in a bunker at a hillock of the reserve forest.

Brickfield

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they added.

Firoz Talukder, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police Station, said on information, a police team was dispatched to the site.

"The workers there told us what happened, but the woman was distraught and refused to talk," he said.

No case was filed, but police is investigating the incident, he added.

Rural women

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affairs ministry, emphasised more public awareness about women's contribution to household work.

Farzana Ahmad, national programme officer of UN Women, Bangladesh; and Farah Kabir, country director, ActionAid Bangladesh, among others spoke.

Review or not?

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has also decided to seek a review of the apex court verdict.

"The confusion and controversy over acceptance of such petitions are still not over, as the Supreme Court is yet to release its full judgment on Mollah's petitions," said Khurshid Alam Khan, an SC lawyer and editor of Dhaka Law Reports, a regular publication on the apex court judgments.

The full judgment on Mollah's petitions will clear all confusions, as the judges are expected to come up with interpretations in details, he told The Daily Star last night.

The state and the defence counsels in Sayedee's case have expressed differing views over the matter.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday told reporters that the war crimes cases were being tried under a special law, which does not allow any of the parties to seek a review of SC verdict.

Asked if the government will file any review petition against the SC verdict on Sayedee, the attorney general again said, "There is no scope for filing such a petition as the trial was run under a special law."

He, however, said he feels bad, as he did not get the judgment he had expected from the SC in the trial of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Sayedee.

"I expected the Supreme Court would award death penalty to Sayedee." Yet, due to the legal bar, his office will not move a review petition seeking capital punishment, he added.

On the other hand, Sayedee's lawyers Tajul Islam and Imran Siddiq told this correspondent that their client has the right to move the review petition.

The SC had rejected the review petitions from Quader Mollah after "hearing on merit", which means that the SC has accepted his review petitions for hearing, they argued.

According to Tajul, the Appellate Division's short verdict on Mollah's review petitions has set a precedence that any convict in a war crimes case

has the right to move a review petition.

He added Sayedee will file a petition seeking acquittal after getting the full judgment of the apex court.

Jamaat leader Quader Mollah, who was hanged on December 12 last year, had filed two petitions with the SC on December 10 and 11 seeking review of his death penalty and life imprisonment handed down for war crimes.

On December 12, a five-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain dismissed the petitions after hearing arguments from the defence and the prosecution.

According to SC sources, the full judgment on Mollah's is expected to be released within a few weeks.

During the hearing on Mollah's review petitions, his lawyer Abdur Razzaq told the court that his client had the right to move the petitions to the apex court "as per the constitution".

He also argued that the SC had inherent powers to review its verdict.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam opposed it saying that the petitions were not acceptable as per the constitution, since Mollah had been tried and convicted under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

Appeals in the war crimes cases against three others -- former Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam; its leaders Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury -- are now pending with the apex court.

Meanwhile, the SC will deliver a verdict any day on the appeal of another Jamaat leader, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.

Two international crimes tribunals have awarded capital punishment to Mojaheed, Kamaruzzaman and Salauddin and handed down 90 years' imprisonment to Ghulam Azam for genocide and crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

Judgment any day

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statements of prosecution witnesses, although they were not reliable and did not corroborate, he argued.

At one stage of the hearing, SM Shahjahan told the court that the proceedings of the case had ended well, although Kamaruzzaman did not get a better lawyer than him.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam vehemently opposed the appeal of Kamaruzzaman and prayed to the Appellate Division to affirm the Tribunal-2 verdict that sentenced him to death, saying all the charges against the Jamaat leader were proved beyond reasonable doubt.

The Tribunal-2 had handed down the death sentence to Kamaruzzaman in two criminal charges.

One of the charges reads Kamaruzzaman on July 25, 1971, advised members of Al-Badr and Razakar forces to commit a large-scale massacre in association with the Pakistan army troops in Sohagpur village of Nalitabari upazila in Sherpur. The collaborators murdered 164 unarmed civilians, 44 of whom have been named, and raped many women.

So many men had been killed that Sohagpur later became known as Bidhoba Palli, village of widows.

On August 23, 1971, on Kamaruzzaman's instructions, collaborators took Golam Mostafa of Gridda Narayanpur village in Sherpur to an Al-Badr camp. The Jamaat leader and his accomplices brought Mostafa and

Abul Kasem to Serih Bridge and gunned them down.

Kasem survived as he jumped into the river but suffered injuries to his fingers. Mostafa died on the spot, according to another charge.

The Tribunal had also given life imprisonment to Kamaruzzaman in two charges and 10 years' imprisonment in one charge and acquitted him of any wrongdoing in two charges.

Qaeda's S Asia

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Afghanistan and boost its influence in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region as well as India.

It also comes against the backdrop of a full-scale operation launched by Pakistan's military against Taliban militants in the lawless region of North Waziristan following a deadly attack on the airport in the city of Karachi in June.

AK Khandker

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controversial claims he made in his recent book "1971: Bhitore Baire".

In the book, he claimed that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had mentioned "Joy Pakistan" at the end of his historic March 7 speech in 1971.

A minister of the immediate past Awami League-led government, Khandker also raised questions about the announcement of independence by Bangabandhu on March 26, 1971.

On September 6, 21 SCF leaders in a joint statement criticised Khandker, saying the contents of his book were "misleading" and lacked objectivity.

However, Haroon told The Daily Star that Khandker did not mention anything about his book in the resignation letter.

Allow UN to play a greater role

PM urges world leaders

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the world leaders to take more effective steps for stopping wars and conflicts in different parts of the world and allow the UN to play a greater role in establishing global peace.

She came up with the call while addressing a commemorative event marking the 40th anniversary of Bangladesh's historic admission to the United Nations held at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Hasina also stated that Bangladesh is "in the frontline of a movement to ensure the trial of crimes against humanity and remove the culture of impunity."

On this day in 1974, Bangladesh earned its membership at the UN as an independent and sovereign state.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UN Country Team Bangladesh jointly organised the programme.

The prime minister reaffirmed Bangladesh's strong commitment towards international peace and security and said Bangladesh, as a peace loving country, wants to play its due role and work together with the international community.

Hasina also strongly condemned the recent Israeli barbaric attacks on Palestinians and indiscriminate killing of women and children in Gaza and expressed her full solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, UN Resident Coordinator Neal Walker and eminent academician and former President of the UN Association of Bangladesh Prof Salauddin Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, the PM distributed prizes among the winners in the art competition that was organised for the physically challenged children.

She unveiled the stamp and commemorative first day cover marking the 40th anniversary of Bangladesh's entry into the UN.

Later, she enjoyed a colourful cultural programme performed by the children of Bangladesh Shishu Academy.

King of Sweden escapes unhurt in car accident

AFP, Stockholm

King Carl Gustav XVI of Sweden escaped unhurt from a car accident in Stockholm yesterday, according to the Swedish Royal Court.

"The car that the King was travelling in had a minor collision at Nockeby bridge just outside the Drottningholm Palace," the court said in a statement, adding that the monarch was unhurt and continued on a journey to the north of Sweden after the accident.

Sweden is one of world's safest countries to drive in -- according to traffic accident statistics -- but the country's royal family have had some notable mishaps on the road.

A district known as "The Kings Bend" (Kungens Kurva), southwest of the capital -- home to the world's largest Ikea store -- was named after the current monarch's grandfather, Gustaf V, whose car wound up in a ditch there in 1946 when his driver took the turn too fast.

The King's Roundabout in the southern town of Norrkoeping, was named after Carl Gustav XVI who collided with another car there in 2005 when driving his BMW.

178-member team

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Moreover, she is scheduled to hold bilateral meetings on the sidelines with the heads of state/government of different countries including Nepal, Chile, Qatar and Belarus.

However, no appointment has yet been fixed with any US dignitaries for a bilateral meeting.

Asked if there would be any meeting between the Bangladesh premier and US President Barack Obama, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali yesterday said, "Let's see. Now it'll have to be checked [out]. You'll have to wait. It's difficult to say now. It's a continuous process."

The entourage includes the ministers for finance, foreign affairs, health, expatriate welfare and overseas employment, environment, and food and the state minister for foreign affairs.

Moreover, several MPs, officials from different ministries, eminent citizens, journalists and leading businesspersons are set to go with the prime minister.

Addressing a press briefing, Foreign Minister Ali said, "I think an opportunity will be created to let the world know Bangladesh's h's multifaceted successes achieved in national and international arena through high-level participation in the UNGA this time."

Hasina in her speech at the UNGA on September 27 would focus on international peace and security, democracy and good governance, Bangladesh's leading role in women empowerment, rights of migrant workers, government's steps in poverty alleviation and progress in millennium development goals, he added.

The premier would also highlight her government's activities to combat adverse impacts of climate change, protect interests of LDCs, progress in achieving MDGs and Bangladesh's position in post-2015 sustainable development goals.

She would also highlight Bangladesh's position on the theme of the general debate of the 69th UNGA -- "Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative

Post-2015 Development Agenda".

The UNGA started its 69th session at the UN Headquarters in New York on Tuesday and the high-level meetings would begin on September 22.

Hasina would co-chair the US-sponsored Peacekeeping Summit on September 26 along with US Vice-president Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

Besides, she would attend Climate Summit 2014 hosted by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on September 23 and Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) on September 24.

On September 27, the premier would attend the Global Citizen Festival-2014 at New York Central Park to be organised by Global Poverty Project. She would speak briefly inviting the international community to get involved in Bangladesh's efforts to build a hunger, illiteracy and poverty free country.

She would also address a meeting jointly organised by the US chambers and US business council.

The prime minister would stay in New York from September 22 to 28 and is expected to return on September 29.

The Daily Star on Wednesday ran a story headlined "No room for Ban's message in government supplement".

The report said the government dropped Ban's message from the supplement on the 40th anniversary of Bangladesh's membership in the UN as he had said "political dialogue is essential for solving differences peacefully and reaching a broad based agreement on the future of the country".

When asked why the message was dropped, Director General (External Publicity) Noor-E Helal Saifur Rahman told the press briefing that the ministry could not publish the message due to its late arrival.

However, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said there was lots of good words and appreciation in the message and he finds nothing wrong in it.

Antarctic sea ice

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19.7 million sq km (7.6m sq m) and continuing to increase," the centre, considered one of the world's top authorities on sea ice data, said in a statement on Tuesday.

Jan Lieser, of the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Co-operative Research Centre (CRC), told Australia's ABC News that: "This is an area covered by sea ice which we've never seen from space before."

The conundrum of why Antarctic sea ice appears to be expanding as the Arctic decreases had puzzled polar observers, but scientists have suggested that the reason Antarctic ice extent appears to be increasing is due to changing wind patterns.

Figures released by the National Snow and Ice Data Centre in Boulder, Colorado, show that the so-called Arctic sea ice minimum --

the point where the extent of sea ice there is at its lowest after the summer, before it begins to refreeze for winter -- is expected to be confirmed imminently and would be millions of square kilometres below the long-term average.

At 5.09m sq km, the extent of Arctic sea ice this year would be the sixth lowest on record, slightly worse than last year, though not as extreme as the record set in 2012 when it plunged to less than 3.5 million square kilometres.

However, the centre noted that there had been a particularly strong retreat of sea ice in the Laptev Sea and although the reasons for that were not yet clear, sea temperatures there had been up to 5C higher than average.

The amount of sea ice cover in the Arctic has been showing a long-term decline as climate change takes hold, with temperatures rising more rapidly in the Arctic than the rest of the planet.

JS regains power

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All the proposals were rejected in voice vote (327 to 0) as the ruling AL refused to accept any.

With the passage, the existing constitutional provision for the chief justice-led Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) introduced in 1978 to remove SC judges is now abolished.

Upon recommendation of a parliamentary committee, the House in an unprecedented move scrapped the original preamble of the bill as it had distorted facts.

It replaced the seven-paragraph long preamble with a one-paragraph preamble as recommended by the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry.

It also rejected the law minister's statement attached to the copies of the bill on the same ground, and incorporated the modified statement prepared by the committee.

The House got back this power after around four decades. However, it will not be able to exercise it until a separate law is enacted outlining the procedure for investigating alleged misbehavior or incapacity of the SC judges.

The law minister earlier said the law would be enacted in three months of the passage of the bill.

The 1972 constitution empowered parliament with this authority. But the House was unable to exercise the power as the then government did

not formulate any law. Rather, the then AL-led government curtailed the power through the fourth amendment to the constitution in January 1975.

Then military ruler Gen Ziaur Rahman introduced the SJC, amending the constitution through a martial law order which was ratified by the fifth amendment to the constitution in 1979.

The High Court in 2005 declared the fifth amendment illegal and void. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 2010 upheld the HC verdict, but condoned the introduction of the SJC until December 2012.

The AL-led government, however, introduced afresh the SJC through the 15th amendment to the charter in 2011.

But the government changed its mind within three years. Its move to empower parliament to remove SC judges has drawn huge criticism from different quarters. Many jurists and opposition political parties fear the latest amendment will pose a threat to the independence of the judiciary.

Defending the amendment, Law Minister Anisul Hoque yesterday said the judiciary's independence would not be undermined in any way. He also criticised those opposing the amendment.

Placed in parliament on September 7, the bill was passed in around three and a half hours.