

No hope?

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rivalry between them.

But the hope disappeared in the darkness of Saturday night. Hasina had to return from the gate of Khaleda's Gulshan office as it was locked from the inside. The prime minister's desire to visit Khaleda and console the grieving mother gave people hope. They believed that a meeting between the two leaders was going to be held finally. Nobody expected that such a meeting alone will be able to bring an end to the ongoing political impasse. Yet, they expected that the ice might start to melt through it. Their expectation was based on solid grounds. They know it well that a solution to the current political turmoil is possible only if the two leaders wish to make the game-changing move. This also testifies to their influence on national politics. But people got disappointed again. What happened on Saturday's night is a manifestation of the long confrontational culture in politics. This also made our politicians' tit-for-tat saga longer. The Sheikh Hasina-led government had confined Khaleda to her office since January 3. On directives of the government, the law enforcement agencies even had locked the main gate of Khaleda's office from the outside.

Interestingly, when Hasina went there on Saturday night she found the gate locked from the inside. This time she did not get access to the office as the gate appeared as the main barrier to her way to meet Khaleda.

It is unfortunate that none of the BNP leaders or any staff of Khaleda's office came to receive the country's premier in a gesture of courtesy. Should people feel ashamed amid such a situation if the politicians themselves do not feel so? Nineteen days of nationwide blockade costing 30 lives in associated violence could not earn the nation a social meeting between two of its top leaders, even to express sympathy and grief.

The story of Saturday went on. Interestingly, the premier's good gesture of visiting her political foe that night was preceded by a police move believed to be under government diktat. The same afternoon police filed a case accusing 68 BNP and Jamaat leaders and a number of unnamed people for the arson attack on a bus on Jatrabari Friday night. And Khaleda's name was included in the first information report filed with the Jatrabari Police Station.

Police claimed in the FIR that the accused in the case carried out the attack following Khaleda's instructions to enforce the ongoing blockade. By including her name in the FIR, an important document which sets the process of criminal justice in motion, police opened the window to implicate Khaleda in the arson attack on charge of instigation. This move is not free from being questioned.

Earlier, during the rule of the caretaker government in 2007, Hasina was charged with instigation of murder and other serious offences committed during street demonstrations on October 28, 2006. The Hasina-led government withdrew the case in August 2009 terming it "politically motivated".

Yet, the prime minister's failed attempt to visit Khaleda Saturday night made Khaleda to lose people's sympathy for her.

Hasina and her party AL got a clear political mileage from the event. Regardless of her intention, mass people appreciated her move. People, however, got nothing. Instead, there is an obvious reason for them to feel more insecure and anxious about the ongoing political impasse as both rival sides keep flexing their muscles to defeat each other. People's interest do not seem to matter to either.

Their dream

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Meanwhile, Prof Sazzad Khondoker of the burn unit at a press briefing on hospital premises yesterday, said 86 blockade victims had taken treatment at the hospital so far. Of them, 50 were still admitted and five died. The hospital has formed a multi-disciplinary board to look after various problems of the burn patients. Specialist doctors from different disciplines including ophthalmology, orthopaedics, pulmonology and neurology comprise the board and they will check on the victims each day, said Prof Sazzad. Earlier, burn victims with injuries to different body parts and organs needed to go to related departments for taking treatment. The hospital authority formed another body to take notes from attendees to quicken their recovery. On Saturday, the DMCH authorities restricted visitors' entry to the burn unit to check infection of patients. Meanwhile, after a visit at the DMCH burn unit, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday urged the well-off people to come forward and stand by the burn patients.

BNP response

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"denying" the PM's entry to the BNP chief's political office in Gulshan. At the same time, the lawmakers expressed deep shock at the sudden death of Koko, younger son of Khaleda, and prayed for the salvation of his departed soul. Sheikh Hasina on Saturday night went to the Gulshan office to meet her archrival and offer her condolences. But she returned from the gate as it was locked from inside and nobody from the office was there to receive her.

Earlier in the evening, the Prime Minister's Office reportedly informed Khaleda's special assistant Shimul Biswas about the PM's willingness to see the BNP chief. While Hasina was on her way to Gulshan from the Gono Bhaban, Shimul told the media that Khaleda was sedated by doctors as she felt unwell and thus won't be able to meet the PM.

Yesterday in parliament, Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad said the PM's visit had offered a ray of hope for the people. But the nation was shocked when Hasina had to return from the gate.

Senior BNP leaders and Khaleda's relatives could have received the PM, she added.

Senior AL lawmaker Tofail Ahmed, who accompanied Hasina during her visit to Khaleda's office, said he was not surprised that the PM could not see Khaleda. But he was surprised when Khaleda intensified the ongoing blockade through announcing hartal even after the death of her son.

He urged the BNP chief to think about the mothers who lost their sons during the blockade.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League yesterday through a press conference offered condolences, expressing hope that the BNP-led opposition will call off the ongoing blockade.

Arafat Rahman Koko died of a heart attack at his rented house in Malaysia on Saturday. His body will be flown to Dhaka around 11:30am tomorrow, according to the Bangladesh mission in Kuala Lumpur and relatives.

The BNP in a release last night said Koko's namaz-e-janaza will be held in front of the BNP's Naya Paltan central office after Asr prayers. Relatives said he will be laid to rest at the Banani graveyard. The party will observe three days' mourning from today and a country-

wide janaza will also be held on Wednesday. Talking about the prime minister's initiative, AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta in parliament said it was her graciousness. His party colleague Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim said, "The entire nation has been humiliated when the daughter of Bangabandhu was barred."

Dipu Moni questioned what a nation could expect from a party like BNP that can indulge in dirty politics even over the death of Koko. Also yesterday, a number of BNP men said it was wrong not to show due respect to Hasina when she went to meet Khaleda.

The Daily Star talked to at least 13 leaders and activists of the party and its different front organisations. Most of them said senior BNP leaders should have been consulted after the PMO informed Khaleda's special assistant Shimul Biswas over Hasina's willingness to visit.

Gulshan office sources said BNP standing committee members Moudud Ahmed, Nazrul Islam Khan, Jamir Uddin Sircar, Moyeen Khan, among other senior leaders, were there when the PMO contacted Shimul. "We are yet to know following whose direction Shimul on his own communicated with the Prime Minister's Office. I can tell you that we were not informed at all," said a standing committee member, who was present at Gulshan office at that time.

Party insiders said following directives from Khaleda's elder son Tarique Rahman, Shimul announced that the BNP chief was too ill to meet the PM. Tarique, also senior vice-chairman of BNP, has been staying in London since late 2008 and only a select few can contact him over telephone or through email.

Moudud Ahmed, another standing committee member of BNP, said the party chief was unaware about the visit as she was almost unconscious. "We could not contact her [Khaleda] as her door was closed from inside," Moudud said, adding senior leaders were unaware that the main gate of the building was locked.

A Mohila Dal leader said: "Sheikh Hasina might have any other intention behind the visit; she might have wanted to gain political mileage. But madam [Khaleda] could have turned the tables if she had called on Hasina."

Dinajpur Santal

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attackers had either torn the title deeds or taken those away.

The upazila administration last night installed two new tube-wells in the village as there were no sources of clean water left.

Maria Hembram, 40, said the attackers had entered her home and torn up her land documents. She alleged that they had around five acres of land, but more than one acres had been grabbed by the Bangalees.

Monika Hasda, 55, said the attackers ransacked her home and damaged the land documents. "The attackers have taken away two cows, five goats, a tube-well," she added.

Police arrested her son Jewel Tudu, while her husband Gudu Tudu has left the village to avoid arrest.

During a visit to the village yesterday, it was found that none of the houses had the necessary kitchen utensils or grain to cook.

The attackers took at least 200 cows, nearly 100 goats, pigs and all the tube-wells of the village of 60 families. Police have recovered only three cows later.

The Santal inhabitants said people from Borodal, Shahbajpur, Kamlapur, Kasipur, Lalmati and Salaipur villages had launched the attack.

Mahmud Alam, officer-in-charge of Parbatipur Police Station, said they had set up a camp at the village to restore law and order.

Rabindranath Soren, president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, visited the spot yesterday. He said the attack had reminded the Adivasi people of the atrocities of 1971.

2 'criminals' killed

FROM PAGE 1
"What is judicial killing?" Benazir questioned whilst responding to a reporter's query at a press briefing in Rab-6 Headquarters in Khulna. The Rab boss was visiting the southern district as its new chief.

"There is no extra-judicial killing in the country," he said.

On the violence during the nationwide blockade, he said criminals were spreading anarchy in the country and that it was not a political movement.

It is the duty of Rab to ensure peace and people's security, said Benazir, adding that the elite force would show zero tolerance towards criminals involved in anarchy.

On January 16, Benazir in Rangpur had said the next election would be held as per schedule (in 2019) and people would exercise their right to vote. The comment by a law enforcement agency chief was criticised by the BNP-led alliance.

THE "SHOOTOUT"
Two alleged criminals were killed in a "shootout" between Rab and reported criminals at Banasree in the wee hours of yesterday.

The identities of the deceased, aged between 35 and 40, could not be known immediately.

Rab-3 operation officer Saiful Islam, also an assistant superintendent of police, said a Rab team set up a check-post near Ideal School and College in Banashree Saturday night.

Around 2:00am, the team signalled a passing silver car to stop. Two to three passengers of the car got down and opened fire on the Rab team, the Rab officer claimed.

The law enforcers retaliated with gunfire. Later, the Rab personnel found two

bullet-hit bodies lying on the ground and took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared them dead around 4:00am, the Rab official said.

They claimed that one of the "criminals" fled the scene.

Rab seized the car and recovered two foreign pistols, two magazines, six bullets, a pistol cover and two coats inscribed with "Detective Branch (DB) of police" from the vehicle.

"We suspect that the criminals used to commit crimes in the city and elsewhere by impersonating DB members," the Rab officer said, adding that the car they were travelling had been stolen.

The body of one of the deceased, which had a shirt, a jacket and a pair of jeans on, was riddled with six bullet holes. The other body had 15 bullet holes, according to the police inquest report.

Including these two deaths, six people, including three Jatiyatbadi Chhatra Dal leaders and a Jamaat leader, were killed in "shootouts" with law enforcers since the BNP-led 20-party alliance enforced a countrywide blockade on January 6.

Ershad

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to my proposal, I can arrange a convention at a time and place convenient for you all," he added.

"I will be waiting for your response," mentioned the former dictator.

JP insiders said Ershad wrote the letters as he wanted to improve his "political image". Jewel said the letter would be sent to all political parties eventually.

Syria UN envoy to head govt delegation in Moscow talks

AFP, Damascus

The Syrian ambassador to the United Nations, Bashar Jaafari, will head the government team in peace talks due to open in Moscow today, a pro-government newspaper reported.

But the delegation will not join the talks until Wednesday, after two days of preliminary discussions among opposition participants, the Al-Watan newspaper reported.

Ahmed Arnus, a top adviser of Foreign Minister Walid Muallem, will be among six other members of the delegation.

Gadget allows

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YouTube shows 29-year-old Kathy Beitz seeing her newborn boy with the aid of a bulky black headset.

"For the first baby that I get to actually look at, being my own is very overwhelming," Beitz said in the popular video.

Beitz has genetic macular degeneration known as Stargardt disease.

She was able to see her new son with the aid of eSight glasses that enhance video in real time. The enhanced images allow people who are not totally blind to see the world around them.

"She gave birth and she instantly wanted to see him," said Yvonne Felix, Beitz's sister who posted the video about the moment.

Felix, who has the same disease, is raising money so more people can access the expensive glasses at makeblindnesshistory.com.

Confiscate

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Ten people were accused in the first charge sheet of former finance minister Kibria murder case submitted to the court in 2005.

In the second charge sheet in 2011, Lutfozzaman Babar, state minister for home of the BNP government at the time of the murder, and Mufti Abdul Hannan, chief of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji), and 12 others were named. Babar and Hannan were shown arrested in the case.

On January 27 in 2005, Awami League leader Kibria, then an opposition lawmaker, was killed along with four others, including his nephew, in a grenade attack at Baidderbazar of Habiganj Sadar upazila. Kibria was coming out after addressing a rally.

Mymensingh division

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hard to run the administration from here.

The common people would get more services with the splitting of the division alongside the expansion of the administration, she said.

The PM underscored the need for ensuring necessary public infrastructures in Rangpur, Sylhet and Barisal divisions.

Hasina asked the ministry officials to be prompt in dealing with the files of other ministries and divisions so that their proposals do not face any unnecessary delay.

She instructed them to take steps for filling vacancies in various ministries to bring more dynamism into the civil administration.

She also directed the ministry to look into matters like quick creation of posts and laying out organograms, and implement decisions with a team work to yield better outcomes.

"Keep in mind the needs and demands of next 20-25 years before formulating any development programmes, especially that of infrastructural development," the PM said.

About the recommendations of the Pay and Service Commission-2013, Hasina said her government has already received the recommendations

while a committee has been formed to review the recommendations.

The implementation of new pay scale would start after getting the report of the review committee, she said.

The PM mentioned that some 17,846 officials have so far been appointed through six BCS exams from 28th to 33rd while a process is underway to appoint some 2,557 officials through 34th BCS and some 1,803 officials through 35th BCS.

In this connection, Hasina suggested the Bangladesh Public Service Commission to speed up the recruitment process and set up some wings at the PSC in such disciplines where people are needed in large numbers.

The PM said her government in its previous term decided to appoint some 50,000 police personnel and asked the authorities concerned to speed up the recruitment process.

The government has taken steps to formulate the Civil Service Act for the public servants, and the law should have to be enacted speedily. Once the law is passed in parliament, it could be upgraded from time to time, she said.

State Minister of the ministry Ismat Ara Sadique and its Senior Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Blackout in Pakistan

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blackout, though flights were not affected.

"The fault in the system was caused by a main transmission line being blown up in Baluchistan," Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali said.

Ali apologised for the outage, and blamed rebels in Baluchistan's Naseerabad district, in the country's southwest.

Baluchistan, Pakistan's largest but least developed and most sparsely populated province, has been wracked for decades by a separatist insurgency that was revived in 2004.

The separatists believe that locals do not receive a fair share of the province's energy and mineral wealth, while rights groups accuse the government of extra-judicial detentions and killings of activists.

Electricity was later restored across the country, a spokesman for the national power company said, with all power grids online except for two nuclear power plants which would be fully operational by the end of the day.

"The blowing up of two power pylons in Naseerabad last night created a backward surge which affected the system," the spokesman said. "It was an act of sabotage."

Pakistan's electricity distribution system is a complex -- and delicate -- web and a major fault at one section

often leads to chain reactions and breakdowns of power generation and transmission.

In addition to chronic infrastructure problems, the energy sector is also trapped into a vicious cycle of "circular debt" brought on by the dual effect of the government setting low electricity prices and customers failing to pay for it.

State utilities therefore lose money, and cannot pay private power generating companies, which in turn cannot pay the oil and gas suppliers, who cut off the supply.

The fuel crisis began last week when Pakistan State Oil was forced to slash imports because banks refused to extend any more credit to the government-owned company, which supplies 80 percent of the country's oil.

Solving Pakistan's energy crisis was a key campaign pledge for Sharif in the run-up to the 2013 general election, and the shortage is heaping fresh pressure on his government.

Islamabad signed agreements with long-term ally Beijing last year to pave the way for Chinese state-owned companies to help build at least four new power stations in Pakistan, but US sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear programme and Pakistan's own lack of cash have hampered the completion of a multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline from neighbouring Iran.

Leveraging ICT for Growth, Employment & Governance Project
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No. 56.109.007.00.00.049.2015-1064 Date: 22 January 2015

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

For

Information Security Management System (ISMS) ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Certification For National Data Center

Date: 22 January 2015
Contract Identification No: NS9
World Bank Credit No: 5025-BD

1. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association towards the cost of Leveraging ICT for Growth, Employment & Governance Project (LICG) and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for Information Security Management System (ISMS) ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Certification for National Data Center (Contract Package # NS8). Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works, and Non-consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants, January 2011.

2. Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) represented by the Project Director, Leveraging ICT for Growth, Employment & Governance Project invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for carrying out the Information Security Management System (ISMS) ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Certification for National Data Center.

3. The bidder shall be a firm/company or joint venture of firms/companies from eligible source countries. The bidder must have business experience as a service provider as a prime bidder in providing implementation and certification of ISO/IEC 27001 for Data Center and/or IT department of different organizations for five years with minimum average annual volume of Services of US\$ 1 million or equivalent amount during the last five years.

4. (i) The bidder shall have experience as a prime contractor in the provision of at least 2 (two) service contracts of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Services over the last 5 years with minimum amount of each contract value US\$ 0.2 million or equivalent amount. (ii) The bidder shall have experience of successfully completing minimum two ISO/IEC 27001 Implementation and Certification assignments, one of them must be done outside the firm's own country.

5. A complete set of bidding document may be purchased from the address below for a non-refundable fee of Bangladesh Taka (BDT) 3,000 or US\$ 40 (Postal charge extra) in the form of Pay Order or Demand Draft in favor of Project Director, Leveraging ICT for Growth, Employment and Governance Project. Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect bidding document at same address from 9:00 hours to 16:00 hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST= GMT + 6:00 hours), Sunday through Thursday (except public holidays). Bidding document can also be viewed at website www.bcc.gov.bd & www.lict.gov.bd (for inspection purpose only).

6. A pre-bid meeting will be held at 11:00 hours BST on 17 February 2015 at a venue of Conference Room (1st Floor), Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC), BCC Bhaban, Plot # E-14/X, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka - 1207.

7. Bids shall be valid for a period of 150 days after bid closing and must be accompanied by security of US\$ 4,000 (Four Thousand Only) or equivalent amount in any freely convertible currency. Bids shall be submitted to the address below on or before 16 March 2015 up to BST 15:00 hours and which will be opened on same day at BST 15:30 hours in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives who wish to attend.

8. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
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