

# Govt faced hurdles in war crimes trial

Says PM on return from London

UNB, Sylhet

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government had been facing various impediments as it was holding the trial of war criminals.

"The Awami League government is facing various obstacles since assuming power for the second time in a row as we've completed the trial of Bangabandhu's killers and are holding the trial of war criminals," she said.

The PM made the comments while exchanging views with the leaders of Sylhet district and city unit AL during her stopover at Osmani International Airport upon her return from London. A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying her landed at the airport around 10:05am.

"Strengthening the party at every tier is necessary. We've already formed teams to this end," Hasina said, adding that her government's aim was to free the nation from stigma by finishing the trial of war criminals who committed genocide in 1971.

She also asked her party leaders and activists to work hard to make the party stronger at all levels.

The PM also said Bangladesh is moving fast economically and there is a significant contribution of expatriate

Bangladeshis to this end.

Referring to her government's steps taken for Sylhet region's development, she mentioned the upgradation of Sylhet MAG Osmani Airport to an international one, modernisation of Sylhet Railway Station, establishment of a cantonment and development of the Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

About the current flash floods in some areas of Sylhet region, Hasina assured that the government would take necessary steps to help the flood victims, and asked the party leaders and workers to stand beside them.

She also expressed her heartfelt thanks to the people of Sylhet for extending their support to her niece Tulip Siddiq during the British parliamentary elections.

Referring to the landmark four-country deal regarding seamless movement of cargo and passenger vehicles in South Asia, Hasina said now it would be possible to go to Bhutan and Nepal from Bangladesh through vehicles. She also said the regional and sub-regional connectivity would contribute towards strengthening the Bangladesh economy.

The AL chief also emphasised on holding the councils of the associate bodies of Sylhet AL.

# AL men demonstrate before NCC Bhaban for mayor's removal

Ivy claims a lawmaker's men agitated for stopping development projects

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Leaders and activists of Awami League and pro-AL organisations yesterday laid siege to the Nagar Bhaban of Narayanganj City Corporation during the visit of a delegation of DFID demanding removal of NCC Mayor Salina Hayat Ivy.

The two-and-a-half-hour long agitation under the banner of conscientious citizens started at 11:00am chanting some "objectionable" slogans against the mayor.

Mayor Ivy told journalists at her office that the agitators loyal to a lawmaker arranged the programme to stop development projects being

implemented with local and foreign funds.

City Awami League general secretary Khokan Saha, district unit of Jubo League general secretary Abul Hasnat Shahid Md Badal, city Jubo League president Shahadat Shajnu, district unit of BCL president Safayet Alam Sony and city AL president Israth Jahan Sritee, among others, spoke there.

During the agitation, Counsellor for Political Affairs at the US embassy in Dhaka Pushpinder Dhillion also met Ivy in the Nagar Bhaban. Later, the embassy official also called on AL lawmaker Shamim Osman in Narayanganj Club.

# Niko trial gets go-ahead

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was PM between 2001 and 2006.

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former state minister for energy AKM Mosharrar Hossain, former acting energy secretary Khandaker Shahidul Islam and Kashem Sharif, vice-president (South Asia) of Niko Resources Bangladesh Ltd, were also sued in the case.

Following a petition, the HC in July 2008 stayed the case and issued a rule on the ACC and the government to explain why the initiation and proceeding of the case should not be declared illegal.

In its yesterday's verdict, the HC said there were elements of "committing misconducts and abetting offences" in the case, and the lower court would examine the allegations against her.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that the commission approved and filed the case in accordance with the law and that the trial court would resume proceedings after receiving the HC verdict.

Proceedings against other accused in the case also remain halted following stay orders by the High Court. The ACC will take steps for vacating those orders as well, he added.

Khaleda's counsel Mahub Uddin Khokon told reporters that his client may challenge the HC verdict with the Supreme Court.

HEARING AT SPECIAL COURT-3

Khaleda entered the courtroom at Bakshibazar around 10:35am for hearing in the Zia Orphanage Trust and Zia Charitable Trust cases, involving misappropriation of over Tk 5 crore from the two trusts.

Her lawyers told the court that they had moved the High Court for scrapping of the plaintiff's deposition in the Zia Orphanage case and requested the court to stop the case proceedings.

The judge then asked them to grill the plaintiff of the Zia Charitable Trust case, but they told the judge they were not prepared as some senior members of Khaleda's defence team were outside Dhaka.

claimed that the judge became adamant and was in a hurry to continue proceedings. They also pressed him to defer the date of hearing, claiming that the judge had political bias.

But the judge ordered them to question ACC Director Harun-Ur-Rashid, the plaintiff and investigation officer of the two graft cases.

Khandker Mahub Hossain, Khaleda's chief counsel, then started questioning him.

It was the first cross-examination of the plaintiff by the defence.

After partial questioning, the judge set the new date and asked the defence to appear before the court with full preparations for hearing.

On the defence plea for time, the judge said: "You have been asking for time for the last six months and I have been entertaining your appeal. Let's now start working instead of talking."

The judge added, "I will not be able to say whether the cases are false or have been filed on political considerations until taking deposition of the persons involved in the cases."

"Those words -- adamant and harsh -- that you have used against me have hurt me. You have also alleged that I am in a hurry. This too is not right.... A judge of a court never becomes adamant."

About the allegation of political bias, he said, "I have been in the service for 32 years and I got the job on the basis of my merit, not because of political or government links."

He said he joined this special court six months ago and took up the job of continuing the trial. During the time, while these cases have seen hardly any progress, he delivered judgment on about 100 cases.

"All the accused will be acquitted if the cases are found politically motivated and the charges are not proved. But why won't the trial process move on?" he said.

On the defence claim that it did not get all the documents needed for its preparations for argument, the judge said he arranged 1,200 certified copies of the case documents so that everyone on the defence side got



Worshippers comfort each other across the street from a historic African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina, where a white man walked into and shot dead nine during a Bible class on Wednesday night. Police believe the attack is a hate crime.

PHOTO: AP

# Tigers truly terrific

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popular Indian advertisement during the World Cup, well before the first of the three-match ODI series was done and dusted. They had reason to celebrate because the vaunted Indian batting was reeling at 195-8 by that time, chasing a commanding Bangladesh total of 307. India were eventually bowled out for 228 in 46 overs to concede only their fourth and perhaps their most demoralising defeat in 30 games against a team thriving to get out of the bottom of the ICC ODI rankings. And this win provided Bangladesh exactly that as the Tigers moved into the seventh place pushing West Indies behind.

Mustafizur had only one previous international outing -- a T20I against Pakistan -- before yesterday's match. But by the time he completed his ODI debut with a magnificent five-for, his off-cutters that doomed the likes of Rohit Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane, Suresh Raina, Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin have certainly earned a place in Bangladesh's cricket folklore.

Bangladesh were staring down the barrel over wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim dropped two catches early in the Indian innings, but an inspired performance from Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur, coupled with an outstanding Nasir Hossain catch at cover, led to an amazing comeback for the hosts as they toppled India's top order.

If India's pacers were sent into hiding earlier in the day courtesy of some brilliant batting from Bangladesh at the top, the home side revelled in the glory of their new-found pace attack.

After the Tigers were bowled out for 307 in 49.4 overs, the home fans

packed to the rafters in Mirpur expecting something special when India came out to bat against a four-pronged pace attack, something not associated with an otherwise spin-heavy Tigers.

After the left-right combination of Mustafizur and Taskin had troubled India openers Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit with the new ball, Rubel Hossain and skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza created opportunities to dismiss Dhawan in successive overs, only for them to be spilled by wicketkeeper Mushfiqur.

Mushfiqur, who has been going through a torrid time both with the bat and behind the wicket, first dropped the left-hander off Rubel while he was on 13. It was a healthy edge that Mushfiqur tried to grab with one hand in vain.

The next one off Mashrafe sparked a real comedy in the middle with umpire Rod Tucker ruling Dhawan out caught behind without noticing that Mushfiqur had dropped a sitter. He however quickly reverted his decision to avoid further embarrassment.

Mushfiqur finally grabbed one, but by that time the opening pair had clobbered 95 runs in 15.5 overs.

Taskin returned for his second spell and removed Dhawan and India's batting sensation Virat Kohli in successive overs and, much to the relief of the home fans, Mushfiqur obliged and smartly got hold of those nicks.

Kohli was out in the same fashion as in the World Cup quarterfinal against Bangladesh. This time he chased Taskin outside the off-stump after scoring one run. He had scored 3 in the World Cup game.

India were suddenly reduced to 101-

3 after Rohit, who guided India against Bangladesh in the World Cup quarterfinal with an imperious yet controversial 137, was dismissed by Mustafizur for 63. He top-edged an attempted flick straight to the throat of Mashrafe at mid-off. And unfortunately for Rohit, that was not a high full toss and neither umpire called a no-ball.

The pace continued to baffle the Indian juggernauts and this time, the lack of it, an off-cutter from Mustafizur had Rahane caught magnificently at cover by an airborne Nasir, who timed his jump perfectly to pluck the ball out of the thin air.

On strode Dhoni with India tottering at 115-4. But the giant right-hander's only contribution to the match was an interesting shove that grounded the bony Mustafizur. The Indian captain might have done the right thing by executing what appeared to be a firm push on the bowler, who was standing in the way while Dhoni ran for a single. However, his act was greeted with disdain from the stands.

Dhoni departed soon after that unwanted episode, edging Shakib Al Hasan behind the wicket to Mushfiqur. For someone who has hardly seen Shakib showing much emotion after taking a wicket, it was a sight to behold as the bowler ran as if he had taken his 300th wicket.

Earlier in the day Bangladesh, after opting to bat, began in the best possible way as openers Soumya and Tamim shared a century stand for the first time against India. Both openers scored half-centuries.

The 102-run stand was brought to an abrupt end after Soumya was run out. Bangladesh then lost Litton Das

and Mushfiqur in quick succession. In a bit of trouble, the Tigers roared back in the form of Shakib and Sabbir Rahman, who shared a half-century stand. While Sabbir hammered 41, Shakib hit 52.

The second ODI will take place at the same venue on Sunday.

# Rebel fire kills 8 in Syria's Aleppo

AFP, Beirut

Rebel fire killed eight people in Syria's second city Aleppo yesterday, the latest in a spate of civilian deaths in government-held districts this week, a monitoring group said.

"A large rocket knocked down a three-floor building in Sharea Tishreen and killed eight people," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Rebel groups control the east of the city and have repeatedly fired rockets into western neighbourhoods controlled by the government.

Since Monday, at least 63 civilians have been killed in government-held areas, Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman said.

"It's scary -- the rocket fire is happening daily and it's increasing," he told AFP.

On Monday alone, at least 36 civilians were killed in one of the bloodiest days for west Aleppo since the start of the civil war in 2011.

Rebel-held areas too come under frequent bombardment.

The military often uses barrel bombs -- large containers packed with explosives and scrap metal, that are usually dropped from helicopters and can cause heavy civilian casualties.

# Arrest order for Zafrullah

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Imam said they had the certified copy of the SC order.

The SC registrar would send the order to the tribunal in due course, she said adding that the stay order of the Appellate Division was widely covered by the media, and the attorney general himself was present when the order was passed.

If police show up to arrest Zafrullah, the certified copy of the order would be produced before cops. Since it is an order of the country's highest court, it must be complied with, said Rashna.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam said it was the responsibility of Zafrullah's lawyers to inform the tribunal about the SC order. As the copy of the order was not sent to the tribunal, it rightly issued the arrest warrant against the convict upon expiry of the fine payment deadline.

Syed Aminul Islam, registrar general

of the SC, said he was outside the city and could not comment on the matter.

Mohammad Nur-e-Azam Miah, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, said they did not receive the arrest warrant till 7:45pm yesterday. Zafrullah is a resident of Dhanmondi.

On December 2 last year, the tribunal found Bergman, editor (special reports) of English daily the New Age, guilty of contempt for writing two blog posts in January 2013 on the verdict in the case against Abul Kalam Azad. The journalist was sentenced to imprisonment till rising of the court that day and fined Tk 5,000.

The daily Prothom Alo on December 20 last year ran a report under the headline "50 people express concern over Bergman's punishment". The signatories of a statement said the order would curb freedom of expression, according to the report. One of

the signatories Khushi Kabir later parted from the statement.

When the tribunal asked 49 people to explain their statement, 26 signatories apologised unconditionally. The court exonerated them from the charge, but initiated contempt proceedings against 23 as it was not convinced with their replies.

On June 10, the tribunal pardoned 22 signatories as they regretted their action and "were not well aware of the consequences of the action." But the court punished Zafrullah as he committed the same offence twice.

Earlier, the International Crimes Tribunal-1 had found his comment on the war crimes trail contemptuous, but pardoned him with a serious caution.

Under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973, a contempt convict cannot challenge the order of a tribunal. But the High Court recently observed that a convict can do so.

# Myanmar ambassador summoned

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along with his firearm and left sepoy Biplob Kumar with a bullet injury to his arm.

After summoning the ambassador, the foreign ministry officials expressed deep concern as the Myanmar authorities had not responded to the BGB's call for holding a flag meeting.

BGB offered to hold the meeting at Teknaf at 10:00am yesterday. But there has been no response from the Myanmar side so far, an official of the paramilitary force told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

In his response, Myo Myint Than informed the additional foreign secretary that the Myanmar border guards were busy holding a ceremony and for that reason, the meeting might get delayed.

The ministry officials then asked the envoy to convey the message to the authorities concerned in Myanmar for holding the flag meeting immediately and returning the BGB man without any delay.

The officials also asked the ambassador not to link up the issue of flag meeting with that of the BGB's ceremony.

They also demanded the Myanmar authorities conduct a thorough investigation into Wednesday's incident.

On June 5, Myo Myint Than was summoned before the foreign ministry officials in connection with a Rakhine state minister's comment on Bangladesh illegal migration issue at a Naypyidaw diplomatic briefing.

Myanmar border guards on May 28, 2014, shot and killed BGB Nayek Md Mizanur Rahman at Naikkhanchhari on the Bangladesh Myanmar border without any provocation.