



With the Eid-ul-Fitr just over a week away, hundreds of beggars are in the capital, hoping to get zakat and fitra from the city dwellers. At this time of the year, people tend to be generous with bonuses in pockets and their businesses doing well. In these photos taken yesterday, some hijras (hermaphrodites) are seen asking rickshaw passengers for money near the Mouchak Market.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Tarique tried to block Tulip's win Accuses PM at Sangshad

UNB, Sangsab Bhaban

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman of trying his best to block Tulip Siddiq's victory in the UK polls.

"You know, Khaleda Zia's son [Tarique], who is under political asylum [in the UK], tried his best to block Tulip's win," she said.

The PM was speaking in parliament during a general discussion on a thanksgiving motion on three Bangladeshi-origin women -- Rushanara Ali, Rupa Huq and Tulip Siddiq -- for being elected as members of the British House of Commons.

Awami League lawmaker Dipu Moni moved the proposal in the House. A total of 22 MPs took part in the discussion.

"There were various types of negative propaganda and various negative talks just to block her [Tulip] win," said the premier.

Tulip, however, won the election by overcoming hundreds of hurdles, she added.

PAHELA BAISHAKH SEXUAL ASSAULT Home boss claims of arrest again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said police arrested and produced three people before the court for their alleged links in the sexual assault of some women during the Pahela Baishakh celebrations.

He made the comment while clarifying his Monday's statement where he claimed that law enforcers arrested several identified culprits who had molested some women on the Dhaka University campus.

"We arrested and interrogated some suspects after the incident. We are trying to reveal the truth. The process is underway. Under the process, three people were arrested and produced before the court under Section 54 [of the Code of Criminal Procedure]," he told reporters at his secretariat office.

On April 14, the first day of the Bengali New Year, several women were molested by a group of youths near the TSC.

More than a month after the assault, Inspector General of Police on May 17 released photographs of eight alleged

The three British-Bangladeshis won the elections with Labour Party tickets. Tulip is a granddaughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina thanked the people who voted for Tulip, worked for her and stood beside her with their support in the election.

She said Tulip became a British MP as Sheikh Rehana stayed there taking asylum after the assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Recalling those days, the emotionally-choked PM said Rehana was totally alone in Britain at that time. "My father's principal secretary Ruhul Quddus was there. Jahurul Islam and Saiful Islam were also there and stood beside her along with many other Bangladeshis."

The proposal was passed unanimously through a voice vote.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury and AL MPs Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Mahbubul Alam Hanif took part in the discussion.

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In Rajshahi, Mokhlesur Rahman, organising secretary of Jatiyatabdali Krishak Dal, joined the AL on July 2 along with some 200 local BNP men. He is accused in three cases, including two for setting a police station on fire on the eve of last year's January 5 polls.

Earlier in May, BNP leader Habibur Rahman, also ward-3 councillor of Rajshahi City Corporation, signed up with the AL a few days after his release from prison.

Salamat Ali, joint secretary of Chittagong's Rauzan upazila BNP, is the latest to take shelter in the AL. He joined the ruling party ranks on Monday, hours after his release from police custody. Salamat, an accused in the Juba League activist Mobarak Hossain murder case, was detained on Sunday.

Many of these BNP and Jamaat men stand accused in cases, mostly over violence. And those who have no cases

against them face harassment by law enforcement agencies just because of their political identities, sources said.

Take local Jamaat leader Afzal Hossain Pintu, also councillor of ward-9 of Chapainawabganj municipality. An accused in about a dozen cases, he joined the AL on May 12.

Contacted yesterday, he claimed, "I am not into criminal activities. But I have been implicated as I was involved in Jamaat politics."

More than a thousand leaders and activists of BNP and Jamaat in the district followed in his footsteps.

According to media reports, hundreds of BNP and Jamaat men joined the AL also in Natore, Sirajganj, Jamalpur, Gazipur, Munshiganj, Noakhali, Chandpur, Moulvibazar, Patuakhali and Bhola.

Another reason for this mass exodus is the poor state of the BNP and Jamaat, particularly at the grassroots.

"There is no democracy in the BNP and the party has no future plan. So I

joined [on July 2] the Awami League," said Mokhlesur Rahman Bacchu, organising secretary of Rajshahi's Charchhat thana unit Jatiyatabdali Krishak Dal.

Many grassroots AL leaders, meanwhile, are not liking this.

"They're joining our party for their protection and I don't support this. The Awami League will have to pay for this," said Chapainawabganj district AL president Moinuddin Mondal.

Atkhira-4 MP Jaglul Haider said most of the BNP-Jamaat men who joined the AL were accused in criminal cases.

"The party should not take in any BNP men linked with criminal activities Our party is setting a bad example by receiving BNP-Jamaat men. They will create trouble for the party in future," said Jaglul, also president of Shyamnagar upazila Awami League.

Asked about Salamat joining the AL, MA Salam, general secretary of

Chittagong north AL, said, "I don't support this."

Contacted, AL Presidium Member Nuh-Ul-Alam Lenin said, "If any good organiser of the BNP comes to the Awami League, it will strengthen our organisation. But we have to be alert so that no one can do wrong things using the name of our party."

But he added he was against Jamaat men joining the AL.

Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, AL organising secretary, said, "Those who uphold the spirit of liberation and are not involved in war crimes can join the Awami League. I don't see any problem here."

BNP leader Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman candidly confessed that the BNP men's joining the AL was strategic. "The opposition men who have joined the ruling party, I believe, have done it for strategic reasons ... for their survival."

He, however, alleged the government was using the law enforcement

SC verdict on July 29

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date after hearing the appeal for 13 days.

The other judges of the bench are Justice Nazmunn Ara Sultana, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

This is the fifth appeal regarding crimes against humanity in which the apex court is set to announce a judgement.

After the SC fixed the date, both the state and the defence counsels expressed the hope of getting a verdict in their favour.

During hearing of the appeal, Attorney General Mahbubul Alam prayed to the Appellate Division to uphold the verdict delivered by the International Crimes Tribunal-1. He argued that the ICT-1 had rightly sentenced Salauddin to death for his wartime offences after properly examining the documents, evidence and statements of the witnesses.

The defence could not produce any credible evidence in support of their claim that Salauddin was not in

Bangladesh during the war and was not involved in the crimes against humanity committed in Raiganj of Chittagong, he added.

The attorney general also said several eyewitnesses had given statements before the tribunal-1 confirming Salauddin's involvement in atrocities, genocide and killing of Hindus in different areas of Raiganj and sufficient documents and evidence were produced as well.

Salauddin's principal lawyer Khandker Mahbub Hossain has meanwhile told the SC that the prosecution have miserably "failed" to produce credible and trustworthy evidence and witnesses before the court against his client. Salauddin was liable to be acquitted of all the charges brought against him, he argued.

The tribunal-1 had sentenced Salauddin on the basis of hearsay statements given by the prosecution witnesses and their statements were not credible since they did not corroborate with each other, he claimed.

He also claimed Salauddin was not

in Bangladesh during the war, as he left the country for Pakistan on March 29, 1971 for studying at Punjab University and returned home in 1974.

At one stage of hearing, the lawyer requested the apex court to commute the death sentence of Salauddin to life imprisonment considering his arguments and documents and evidence submitted by the defence.

The appeal of Salauddin has meanwhile been enlisted in today's hearing list of the SC for a decision.

Contacted, the attorney general told The Daily Star the matter had been enlisted on the cause list as he wanted to submit a document yesterday about the convict being attacked in Bangladesh in 1971.

"I got the document around 1:00am today and will submit it tomorrow to the Appellate Division," he added.

Earlier on October 1, 2013, the tribunal-1 found Salauddin, now 66, guilty of nine of the 23 charges brought against him of committing the crimes against humanity.

The tribunal handed him death

penalty on each of four charges -- involvement in the killing of Natun Chandra Singha, Awami League leader Mozaffar Ahmed and his son Sheikh Alamgir, and genocide at Sylhet and Unosattur Para in Raiganj.

The tribunal sentenced Salauddin to 20 years in jail for each of three charges -- acts of genocide at Madhya Gohira Hindu Para, and acts of genocide, persecution and deportation at Jagatmallo Para, and the killing of Sat Chandra Palit in Raiganj.

He was found guilty and sentenced to five years' imprisonment on each of two charges of abducting, confining and torturing Saleh Uddin, who later became vice-chancellor of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, and Nizamuddin Ahmed, who later became a journalist, at his [Salauddin's] father's Goods Hill Torture Centre in Chittagong.

The BNP leader on October 29, 2013 appealed to the SC against the verdict seeking acquittal of all charges.

Law enforcers arrested Salauddin on December 16, 2010.

PM 'annoyed'

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had a one-to-one meeting with her, party sources said.

Later, Ashraf left for Kishoreganj to attend an iftar party organised by the district AL.

At the Ecne meeting, officials placed project proposals involving Tk 6,076 crore under which every lawmaker would get Tk 20 crore for five

years for development work in their constituencies.

As neither the LGRD minister nor State Minister Moshirur Rahman Ranga was there to explain the projects, Finance Minister AMA Muhiith proposed postponing discussion on the topic, said meeting sources.

Muhiith also expressed annoyance at the absence of both the ministers.

The PM, who chaired the meeting, appeared annoyed at that moment. She asked why Ashraf wasn't there, and said she would remove him from the post of the LGRD minister yesterday, said the sources.

Hasina then asked Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed to take charge of the LGRD ministry in addition to his current portfolio.

But Tofail said he was already burdened with workload and was unable to take on additional responsibility. He suggested giving the charge to Expatriates' Welfare Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain.

The PM asked Mosharraf to prepare for taking additional charge, added the sources.

War crimes suspect held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A war crimes suspect was arrested yesterday hours after the International Crimes Tribunal-2 issued arrest warrant against two "Kishoreganj Razakars" for their alleged involvement in crimes against humanity and genocide committed in the district during the Liberation War in 1971.

Police arrested Moslem Prodhan, 66, from his house at Kamarhati village in Nikli upazila of Kishoreganj yesterday afternoon, Mahabubul Alam, officer-in-charge of Nikli Police Station, told The Daily Star over the phone.

Moslem would be produced before the tribunal today, the OC added.

Earlier in the day, the three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan issued arrest warrant against Syed Mohammad Hossain, 64, and Moslem following a petition of the prosecution. Hossain is the younger brother of convicted war criminal Syed Hasan Ali, who was also tried in absentia.

Prosecutor Tureen Afroz, who moved the petition, told The Daily Star that the arrest warrant against Hossain would be sent to Khilkhet Police Station, under which his current residence is located. Arrest warrant would also be sent to Brahmanbaria Police Station, under which his permanent residence is situated, through the Police Headquarters, she added.

Tureen Afroz, before the tribunal, said that the suspects' involvement in several incidents of crime had been found during the investigation that began on November 13 last year.

Now the accused need to be arrested for a proper investigation, as the witnesses and victims are reported to be threatened by the alleged Razakars and their associates, Tureen added.

Hari Debnath, the investigation officer of the case, said Hossain was originally from Machihata village (Pir Bari) in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila but he along with his family had been living in Kishoreganj Sadar upazila since 1936, as his father worked there.

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