



President Abdul Hamid inaugurating the National Vitamin A Campaign 2015 at Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Suu Kyi wins majority

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will run the country anyway, through a proxy chosen by her party.

Results have trickled in since the weekend, and on Friday the election commission announced the latest batch of seats that pushed the NLD over the threshold to secure an absolute majority in parliament.

PRaise FROM OBAMA

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and US President Barack Obama had already congratulated her on the victory.

In a call with Suu Kyi, Obama "commended her for her tireless efforts and sacrifice over so many years to promote a more inclusive, peaceful and democratic Burma", the White House said.

Obama and Ban also praised Thein Sein for successfully staging the historic poll, with the UN chief acknowledging this "courage and vision" to organise an election in which the ruling camp was trounced.

Obama has visited Myanmar twice

over the past three years, hoping to make its transition to democracy a foreign policy legacy of his presidency. He will meet with Thein Sein, among other regional leaders, during a trip to Asia this month.

Thein Sein, whose semi-civilian government took power when the junta stepped aside in 2011, and powerful army chief Min Aung Hlaing, have said they would respect the result and hold reconciliation talks with Suu Kyi soon.

Such unambiguous endorsements of Suu Kyi's victory could smooth the lengthy post-election transition ahead of the last session of the old parliament, which reconvenes on Monday.

"We need to prepare to hand over duties systematically and cleanly to the government that will emerge in accord with the desire of the people," Information Minister Ye Htut said in a Facebook post on Friday, a day after a cabinet meeting.

The NLD will make national reconciliation its priority, as well as putting an

end to decades of conflict between the army and rebel ethnic groups in the country, said Win Htein, a senior NLD leader.

MUCH HARD WORK

While the election and two months of campaigning in the run-up were largely peaceful, global leaders stressed that a large number of people, estimated by some rights activists at around 4 million, were unable to cast their ballots.

"He is regrettably aware that a large number of voters from minority communities, in particular the Rohingya, were denied the right to vote and some were disqualified as candidates," Ban Ki-moon's spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said in a statement.

"There is much hard work that remains ahead on Myanmar's democratic journey and towards making future elections truly inclusive."

Myanmar's government has denied Rohingya Muslims citizenship, and hundreds died in clashes with ethnic

Rakhine Buddhists in 2012. Some 140,000 Rohingyas live in squalid camps, while thousands more have fled by boat, leading to a regional migration crisis.

Suu Kyi has been criticized for not speaking out against abuses faced by the Muslim minority. The Rohingya situation is one of the most contentious issues the new government will face.

With Suu Kyi's victory confirmed, the focus is shifting to the NLD's presidential candidate and its plans for government.

Myanmar's president runs the executive, with the exception of the powerful ministries of interior, defence and border security, which are controlled by the military.

Under the indirect electoral system, the upper house, lower house, and military bloc in parliament each put forward a presidential candidate. The combined houses then vote on the three candidates, who do not have to be elected members of parliament.

They are on a killing mission

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were in power are now trying to tarnish Bangladesh's image by carrying out killings," she told the fourth conference of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (Swachip) in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said the BNP-Jamaat committed killings and destroyed property by carrying out arson attacks in 2013 and 2015 in the name of movements to foil the last general election and demanding a fresh one.

"And now they've started secret killings realising that they can't oust the government by killing local people. So they're now targeting foreigners to destroy the government's image," alleged the PM.

The AL chief said such incidents are taking place at a time when Bangladesh has become a role model in the world for development and its economy is progressing fast.

Referring to the historic 7th March speech of Bangabandhu which he had delivered at Suhrawardy Udyan, the premier said no one could suppress the Bangladesh despite the country faced manmade disasters at times.

Hasina said following in Bangabandhu's footsteps, her government also implemented many programmes to reach improved and quality healthcare service on people's doorstep.

Physicians will have to serve their patients, including the poor ones, with a service-providing attitude and good behaviour. They will also have to serve the autistic and disabled patients with special care, she added.

The premier said her daughter, Saima Hossain, an autism specialist, played a significant role in creating global awareness on autism.

Many big general and specialised hospitals have been set up in the country during the last couple of years while 10,662 new beds have been added to different hospitals, she mentioned.

Besides, the number of beds in the district and upazila hospitals has been increased manifold, patients are being offered free healthcare services through cellphones and telemedicine system has been introduced at different hospitals, said Hasina.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University was set up by a previous Awami league-led government. Steps have been taken to develop it as a centre of excellence, she noted.

The PM said an announcement has already been made to establish two more medical universities in Chittagong and Rajshahi to further improve the health sector by prioritising research.

She said 16,000 community clinics and healthcare centres are currently operating across the country from where 32 types of medicines are provided to poor patients free of cost.

She regretted that the then BNP-Jamaat government (2001-2006) had closed community clinics and healthcare centres as these had been introduced by an AL-led government.

She said her government would formulate a law to introduce a system like formation of a trust fund so that community clinics could never be closed even if there is a change in power.

She asserted that Bangladesh would become a high middle-income country by 2021 and a rich and developed one by 2041.

Health Minister Mohammad Nasim and Public Administration Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam addressed the function, chaired by Swachip President and former minister AFM Ruhul Haque.

China vows support for Pak economic zone

AFP, Islamabad

Beijing will back Pakistan to ensure the security of a new special economic corridor providing access to the port of Gwadar that aims to create direct links between China and the Arabian Sea, a top Chinese general has pledged.

Fan Changlong, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, told Pakistan army head Raheel Sharif on Thursday that Beijing looked forward to close cooperation "to ensure proper management and security of CPEC," according to a Pakistan military statement.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor is an ambitious \$46 billion project giving Beijing greater access to the Middle East, Africa and Europe through Pakistan, via a new highway to Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea.

Fan's visit, the first by a Chinese general of his seniority in 11 years, came two days after Pakistan handed hundreds of hectares of land over to China for development of a free trade zone in Gwadar as part of the project.

The development is part of China's ambition to expand its trade and transport footprint across Central and South Asia while countering US and Indian influence.

India has expressed wariness about the project in the past, though analysts told AFP recently that concerns would only arise if there are "defence related matters".



A large crowd surround the microbus carrying Nur Hossain to a jail in Narayanganj yesterday. Many chanted slogans demanding exemplary punishment for him. Right, families of the seven-murder victims gathering on Narayanganj court premises when Nur was brought there.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Call for justice gets louder

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remand and that the Chief Judicial Magistrate Shahidul Islam sent him to jail over the sensational murders.

A ward councillor of Narayanganj city when the murders happened, Nur Hossain was shown arrested in 11 cases, including two for the seven-murder incident, filed with Siddhirganj and Fatullah police stations.

After a brief hearing that began around 2:30pm, he was taken to Narayanganj jail first and then to Dhaka Central Jail.

Family members of the victims, lawyers and several hundred locals, who were waiting outside the court since morning, were unhappy with the Narayanganj police for not seeking his remand in any of the 11 cases.

Asked about this, Narayanganj police said there was no scope to place him on remand in the seven-murder cases as investigators already submitted the charge sheets in those cases following investigation. On why he was not taken on remand in other cases, they said there was no need for that at the moment.

WHY IN RAB CUSTODY?

Yesterday, the Rab took Nur to its headquarters in Uttara around 7:00am. From there, he was taken to Narayanganj and handed over to the

police around 8:15am.

Families of the victims reacted sharply to this.

"Rab officials could influence Nur Hossain as some of their colleagues are accused in the case," said Shahidul Islam, the father-in-law of Nazrul Islam.

The matter also upset some police officials of Narayanganj who said the Rab should not have taken Nur Hossain in its custody as some of its members are accused in the case.

"In one way or other, they [Rab] tried to get the credit for bringing him back," said one police official, seeking anonymity.

Contacted, Rab's Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Mufti Mahmud Hasan said members of Border Guard Bangladesh, police and Rab were present during the handover of Nur at Benapole by the Indian authorities.

"Later, we brought him to Rab-1 office at 6:50am from Benapole. A medical test was performed on him as per the procedure since he came from another country," he told The Daily Star.

Asked whether they quizzed him, he answered in the negative.

Meanwhile, in a Facebook post yesterday afternoon, Rab Additional

Director General Col Ziaul Ahsan took credit for Nur Hossain's deportation.

"It was the great achievement by the RAB forces to get Noor Hossain back from Indian authority."

"Though this force was involved with this murder but this elite organisation could find out the fact within 12 hrs after the incident. Most of the accused was arrested by RAB and handed over to Enquiry officer of Narayanganj police."

'REAL CULPRITS GETTING AWAY'

Selina Islam, widow of Nazrul Islam, said, "We hoped that he [Nur] would be placed on remand to unearth the motive behind the murder. But now the real culprits are getting away."

According to the charge sheet, Nur Hossain was just used here, she said. "My question is did he [Nur] plan and kill the seven people alone? And why did he kill them? ... There must be someone behind it all."

Selina, also a ward councillor, said her husband had no feud with Rab. "If he were a bad guy, the Rab could have killed him in crossfire. Why did Rab kill him and the others so brutally? And who ordered the Rab to kill?"

The answers to all these questions can only be known through interrogation in remand, she said, adding that the charge sheet was submitted without quizzing

the prime accused.

"I would appeal to the prime minister to take steps to identify the masterminds," said a weeping Selina.

Selina had filed a no-confidence petition against the charge sheet, as it had dropped the names of some suspects. The court, however, rejected her petition.

She said she would move the High Court in this regard.

Shakhawat Hossain Khan, a prosecution lawyer, referred to a case where police began a fresh investigation even after starting deposition of witness. He said police could take him on remand and then submit a supplementary charge sheet based on the information found during the interrogation.

"Moreover, we need to know how Nur fled to India and who helped him. We believe it would be possible to know who planned and financed the killing if he is quizzed," he added.

SMILING NUR

With a bullet-proof vest and a helmet, Nur Hossain was produced to the court, handcuffed. Clean-shaven, he was seen smirking as policemen took him to the courtroom.

Inside the courtroom, he tried to talk to some lawyers, but could not do so.

No lawyer represented him in the court.

Next hearing of the seven-murder cases is expected to be held on November 30.

BACKGROUND

Nur allegedly bribed the Rab men for murdering Nazrul with whom he reportedly had a longstanding political feud. Lawyer Chandan and his driver were killed as they happened to witness the abduction of Nazrul and his associates.

Soon after the murder, Nazrul's father-in-law alleged that the Rab men had taken Tk 6 crore from Nur to kill Nazrul.

Three Rab officials -- Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana -- were sacked for their alleged involvement in the abduction and killing.

In April this year, police pressed charges against 35 people, including Nur Hossain and the three fired Rab officials.

Of them, 22, including 17 Rab members, are in jail while 13 are on the run, sources said.

Nur Hossain was arrested for trespass and possessing an illegal firearm after he entered into India and was in prison there since.

A West Bengal court on October 16 ordered the Indian authorities to deport him by December 16 to face trial in Bangladesh.

Criminals hack

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names) after Maghrib prayers when some three assailants stabbed him in the back of his neck with knives and fled, said locals.

Locals added they entered the mazar after seeing some people flee and found the victim lying on the floor in a pool of blood.

Rushed to a Saidpur hospital, Hasnayan was immediately referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The mazar secretary, Abdul Halim, filed a case with Saidpur Police Station accusing unnamed persons yesterday morning. Police detained Pappu, 28, a resident of the area, as a suspect.

Locals say the victim appeared to have no enmity with anybody.

Officer-in-Charge Amirul Islam of the police station said they have started investigation and yet to know the motive.

In a similar attack on Tuesday night, Rahamat Ali, 55, a khadem of a mazar in Rangpur was hacked to death by unidentified criminals.

Last month, a pir (spiritual leader) and former PDB chairman was murdered at his residence in the capital's Madhya Badda area. Also, a pastor escaped an attempt on his life when three unidentified youths tried to slit his throat at his house in Pabna.