

Plea against Maya's holding posts rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rejected a writ petition challenging the legality of Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya as a minister and a lawmaker after the Supreme Court scrapped his acquittal in a corruption case.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed passed the order hearing the plea filed by Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond on July 7.

Deputy Attorney General Motaher Hossain Sazu told The Daily Star that the court rejected the petition as an appeal of the relief and disaster management minister challenging a lower court verdict that had sentenced him to 13 years in prison was pending with it.

He said that the HC passed the order also considering that the parliament and the Election

Commission could take decision over Maya's parliamentary membership.

With the order, there is now no more bar to Maya to continue serving as a minister and a lawmaker, claimed the DAG.

On August 17, a two-judge HC bench came up with split orders on the writ petition by Eunus.

Senior judge of the bench Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury issued a rule asking Maya to explain under what authority he was holding the posts after the SC scrapped his acquittal in the graft case.

Justice Md Ashraf Kamal of the same bench summarily rejected the petition on the ground that as per the constitution the Jatiya Sangsad Speaker and the Election Commission could decide on any dispute in this regard.

The bench then forwarded the petition along with the split orders to the chief justice (CJ) for a decision.

On November 10, Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, a senior judge of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division, who was functioning as the CJ in the absence of Surendra Kumar Sinha, assigned the bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed for hearing and disposal of the petition.

On February 14, 2008, a special court sentenced Maya to 13 years in prison and Tk 5 crore in fine for amassing illegal property in the case filed the previous year.

In October 2010, the HC cleared the AL leader of the charges following an appeal by him. But on June 14 this year, the apex court scrapped the HC judgment and directed it to hold further hearing, and dispose of Maya's appeal challenging the lower court verdict.

Abdul Baset Majumder appeared for Maya while Eunus moved the petition during yesterday's hearing.

Khaleda

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Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital around 4:55pm the next day.

Facing several graft cases, former premier Khaleda had so far postponed her departure from the UK at least eight times. But reasons of the postponement were not clear as the BNP high-ups were kept in the dark on this, several party leaders told The Daily Star.

Some Awami League top leaders were being alleging that staying at her elder son Tarique Rahman's house in London, Khaleda is hatching conspiracy against the present government and involved in the recent killings of foreign nationals.

They also say Khaleda may not come back to the country, fearing punishment by the court in corruption cases.

Most BNP leaders know nothing of their party chief's schedule in the UK, according to the party sources.

Sources close to Tarique told this correspondent that one of the reasons of Khaleda's staying longer in London was to repair and renew relations with neighbouring India and some western countries without the Bangladesh's government listening in.

The Daily Star, however, could not confirm this independently.

On September 15, Khaleda left for the UK for treatment of her eyes and knee and to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with her family members.

Before leaving London, Khaleda will celebrate the 51st birth anniversary of Tarique, also senior vice-chairman of the BNP, in the wee hours of today, family sources told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, three more prosecution witnesses yesterday gave their statements before the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka in Zia Charitable Trust graft case, court sources said.

The next hearing on the case will be held on November 26.



Family members entering Dhaka Central Jail to meet Salaudiddin Quader Chowdhury around 12:30pm yesterday. Right, Ali Ahsan Mojaheed's family leaving after visiting him at the jail around 2:40pm.



PHOTO: STAR

It's now prison authorities' call

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onlookers had been crowding since morning.

In line with the precedence in previous executions of war crimes convicts, an executive magistrate is to ask them if they would seek presidential clemency within a "reasonable time".

"The date and time of their execution will depend on their decision about the mercy petition," Law Minister Anisul Huq told reporters.

The apex court dismissed their review petitions on Wednesday, paving the way for the government to execute Mojaheed, general secretary of the Jamaat-e-Islami, and Salaudiddin, a member of the BNP standing committee.

Yesterday, family members of both the convicts met them inside the prison.

Twenty two family members of Salaudiddin went to the Dhaka Central Jail in Old Dhaka around 12:30pm. The jail authorities, however, allowed 15, including

Salaudiddin's wife Farhad Quader Chowdhury, sons Fazlul Quader and Hummam Quader, daughter Farzin Quader and sisters Jubaida Monwar and Hasina Quader.

After about an hour's meeting, they came out of the jail but refused to talk to the media.

Twelve family members of Mojaheed went inside the jail around 1:50pm and remained there for about 30 minutes. Mojaheed's family members included his wife Tamanna-E-Jahan and son Ali Ahmed Mabur.

After the visit, Mabur said his father did not say anything about seeking presidential mercy. His father, however, believes that the president is the constitutional guardian of the country and he, upon consultation with his lawyers, will send "an application to the president on a special issue," Mabur said.

Mabur said his father did not say what he meant by "special issue".

Meanwhile, five lawyers for



Mojaheed yesterday sought permission from the jail authorities to meet their client in prison today.

Gazi MH Tamim, one of the counsels, told The Daily Star that they filed the application at 5:30pm. "We are yet to get a response as of 10:00pm [yesterday]."

He added that Mojaheed expressed his desire to meet his lawyers before making his decision on seeking presidential mercy. "That's why we sought the permission to meet him."

Members close ranks against terrorism

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Obama said many nations have already been working together to defeat Islamic State, but it will be a multi-year task and only a political settlement in civil war-torn Syria will eliminate the group's safe havens there.

He said that a solution to Syria's turmoil could not include President Bashar al-Assad remaining in power "because the overwhelming majority of people in Syria consider him to be a brutal, murderous dictator", and he again took Russia to task for propping up the country's leader.

Russia began air strikes in Syria at the end of September. It has always said its main target is Islamic State militants, but most of its bombs in the

past hit territory held by other groups opposed to its ally Assad.

However, Russia has unleashed intensified air strikes against Islamic State positions in Syria after investigators concluded that a terrorist bomb brought down a Russian airliner over Egypt last month. Islamic State has claimed the attack.

SOUTH CHINA SEA TENSION

Summit host, the Philippines, deliberately sought to keep at bay tensions between Beijing and Washington over the South China Sea even though it is one of the claimants to a strategic waterway where China has been building artificial islands.

But Obama kept the dispute in focus by pointedly visiting the Philippines' main warship in Manila,

and one of his advisers said the United States and others would bring the issue up at an East Asia summit that will follow this weekend in Malaysia.

"We do want the East Asian summit to address maritime security issues," Asia policy adviser Daniel Kritenbrink said.

"When we see instances of powers that behave in ways that contravene those international rules and norms in the region we expect our partners and allies to stand with us and call out that behaviour," he told reporters.

Obama will also "very directly" raise concerns with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak in Kuala Lumpur about the status of the country's

opposition, including the imprisonment of some, US Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes said.

The summit discussed efforts to promote trade across their countries, spurred by a sag in economic growth across much of their region, which is home to 3 billion people and accounts for 60 percent of global output.

It was an opportunity for leaders of the 12-member Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) to meet for the first time since they sealed a deal to eliminate trade barriers and enable free trade.

However, the main concern among these 12 was whether the US Congress would ratify the pact before Obama leaves office in just over a year from now.

PM's trips to France, Malta cancelled

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from November 30 to December 1.

Despite security concerns after the November 13 terror attacks in Paris that killed 129 people, the host countries of the two summits are going ahead as per the schedules but with enhanced security measures.

Earlier this week, the PM cancelled another official visit to Paris to attend the two-day Leaders' Forum of the General Conference of the Unesco slated for November 16-18 in view of evolving situation in France.

Though the government has not shown any reason behind the cancellation of the trips, diplomatic

sources said the government in consultation with the Commonwealth Headquarters and the French government decided not to go following the terror attacks in France.

Officials at both the Prime Minister's Office and the foreign ministry gave no specific reason behind the cancellation of the PM's participations in these two highly-important summits where over 100 heads of state and government are expected to assemble.

Meantime, the foreign minister's yesterday's press briefing on the Bangladesh delegation's participation in the CHOGM has been cancelled due to "unavoidable cir-

cumstances".

Diplomatic sources said over 30 heads of government have confirmed their attendance for the CHOGM.

Around 5,000 delegates and 1,000 journalists are going to Malta, an island state in the Mediterranean Sea, to attend the Commonwealth meet. Malta is hosting the meeting for a second time, having successfully done so in 2005.

Foreign ministry sources said Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali is likely to lead the Bangladesh delegation in the CHOGM on behalf of the prime minister.

French President Francois Hollande on Monday announced

that the climate conference would go ahead to "show that the world must stay united against terrorism".

But the UN climate summit will be "reduced to the negotiation" and that "sideline" cultural events such as a scheduled concert might be cancelled in order to prioritise security for "negotiators, scientists and journalists".

More than 100 world leaders are due to open the COP21 negotiations on November 30.

Close to 50,000 participants are expected to travel to Paris for the COP21, which some view as the last chance to strike a global agreement on combating climate change. It would be one of the largest interna-

'Mastermind' confirmed

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of "one of the masterminds" of the attacks.

Prosecutor Francois Molins said Wednesday that the raid in Saint-Denis had stopped a "new team of terrorists" who were ready to launch another attack in a city still mourning 129 dead.

At least two bodies were found after the ferocious shootout, including what is thought to be a woman who detonated an explosives vest.

Valls warned of the dangers still faced by France as lawmakers voted on extending an extraordinary package of security measures for three months.

"We must not rule anything out. There is also the risk from chemical or biological weapons," Valls said.

He called on France's European Union partners to urgently adopt measures to share airline passenger information.

The decision by lawmakers Thursday means the state of emergency will be in place for three months from November 26.

The measures include allowing police to carry weapons when they are

off duty and use them in the event of an attack -- providing they wear a police armband to avoid "any confusion", according to a directive seen by AFP.

French MPs also voted to allow the government to block websites and social media under the state of emergency.

RAIDS IN BELGIUM

At least 129 people were killed in the shootings and suicide bombings that targeted a concert hall, bars and restaurants and the Stade de France national stadium, Europe's second deadliest terror attack in history after the 2004 Madrid bombings.

As the Paris probe widened to countries across Europe, Belgian police staged six raids in the Brussels area linked to a suicide bomber who blew himself up outside the French stadium, prosecutors said.

Italy was also hunting five suspects after an FBI tip-off about possible jihadist attacks on landmark sites including St Peter's cathedral in the Vatican, the foreign minister said.

Eight suspects were arrested in the massive Saint-Denis raid which killed

Abaaoud, but another key suspect, Salah Abdeslam, remains unaccounted for.

Abdeslam is thought to be one of the only surviving members of the Paris attacks gang. His suicide-bomber brother Ibrahim Abdeslam blew himself up in a cafe but did not kill anyone else.

As international efforts to fight the Islamic State group stepped up, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Russia was "sincere" in wanting to cooperate against IS, despite deep divisions on whether Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should stay in power.

"There is an opening, so to speak, with the Russians. We think they are sincere and we must bring together all our forces," he told France Inter radio.

US WARNING

US intelligence meanwhile published a report showing it warned in May that IS was capable of carrying out the kind of large-scale coordinated attacks seen in Paris.

The assessment from the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, in coordination with the FBI, specifically refers to Abaaoud as a ringleader of Belgian

plotters and warned Europe was more at risk of attack than the United States.

Abaaoud was previously thought to be in Syria after fleeing raids in his native Belgium earlier this year.

IS released a new video threatening New York, and specifically Times Square, although police said there was no "current and specific" threat.

Hours after President Francois Hollande had urged the nation not to resort to anti-Muslim or anti-Semitic reprisals in the wake of the attacks, a Jewish teacher was stabbed and wounded in Marseille by three people shouting anti-Semitic obscenities and expressing support for IS.

France is coming to terms with being attacked for a second time in less than a year. In January, jihadist gunmen killed 17 people at Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine, on the streets and in a Jewish supermarket.

Citing security fears, the government has cancelled two mass rallies scheduled for November 29 and December 12 -- the days before and after a key UN climate summit to be held outside Paris.

Jubo League, BCL men clash in anti-hartal procession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an otherwise calm hartal yesterday, at least 10 people were injured in a clash between Jubo League and Chhatra League members during an anti-hartal procession in the capital's Rampura area.

Two of the injured from each rival group suffered bullet injuries.

The clash sparked around 11:00am when a group of pro-ruling Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists allegedly led by Mozammel Haq Topu attacked an anti-hartal procession brought out by Rampura unit of Awami League's youth wing Jubo League, police sources said.

The injured Jubo League activists are Nipun, Arif, Jahir Uddin, Jahangir and Shoaib Ahmed, said Rafikul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station. The groups clashed over gaining control in the area, he added.

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal was called by the Jamaat-e-Islami in protest against the Supreme Court's verdict that upheld the death penalty for its Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed.

After the clash, alleged Jubo League men shot BCL activist Selim at Rampura.

However, when Selim's associates Saimon and Babul took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, some 30 Jubo League activists beat them up at the emergency unit of the DMCH around 1:30pm, witnesses said.

Additional policemen were deployed at the emergency unit of the hospital to prevent further untoward incident, said Sentu Chandra Das, assistant sub-inspector at DMCH police camp.

Detectives later held Selim and Saimon for questioning.

Mozammel Haq Topu, who allegedly led the attack on the procession, was named in a confessional statement of an accused in the murder case of retired additional superintendent of police Fazlul Karim. He was shot dead at his Rampura house in August 2013, said police.

Police on several occasions claimed that they were looking for Topu in connection with the case.

"Police had conducted multiple raids to catch him in the past. We are making an all-out effort to nab him. But he appeared suddenly and then disappeared. Maybe the police could not recognise him," said Muntasirul Islam, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Apart from this incident, the city life remained almost unaffected during yesterday's hartal. Traffic on the city streets was light and only a few private cars plied. Public buses were seen plying as usual.

Most of the educational institutions, however, remained closed.

Rejecting the hartal, a faction of Gonojagoron Mancha, led by Imran H Sarker, brought out a protest procession from Shahbagh yesterday. BCL members also brought out a procession and staged a rally on Dhaka University campus.

In Chittagong, the hartal was peaceful without any untoward incident.

Educational institutions remained closed. A good number of public vehicles were seen plying the city streets while most of the private vehicles remained off the streets. Rickshaws were seen occupying all the streets and lanes and by lanes.

EU condemns attack on Dinajpur pastor

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Condemning Wednesday's attack on an Italian national in Dinajpur, the European Union has called upon the Bangladesh government to take adequate measures in an expeditious manner to bring both instigators and perpetrators to justice.

Piero Parolari, 57, an Italian doctor and pastor, was shot in the back of his head near the BRIC bus terminal in Dinajpur town.

"This is the third incident in less than two months when a foreign national has come under brutal aggression and the second targeting a European citizen," said Pierre Mayaudon, ambassador and head of the EU delegation to Bangladesh.

In a statement yesterday, Mayaudon said, "The repetition of such acts of violence is obviously a matter of concern for all."

The EU envoy wished a prompt and full recovery to Parolari.

Another Italian citizen, Cesare Tavella, was killed in the capital on September 28 and a Japanese national, Kunio Hoshi, was shot dead in Rangpur on October 3, raising the alarm among the country's foreign community.