

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 Ashraful 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

FROM PAGE 1
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 have been 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 Salauddin Quader Chowdhury around 12:30pm yesterday. Right, Ali Ahsan Mojahed's family leaving after visiting him at the jail around 2:40pm.



PHOTO: STAR

It's now prison authorities' call

FROM PAGE 1
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 Mojahed, general secretary of the Jamaat-e-Islami, and Salauddin, a member of the BNP standing committee.

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

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

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

After the visit, Mabru 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," Mabru said.

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

Meanwhile, five lawyers for

Mojahed 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 Mojahed 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."

Mojahed, who was the chief of infamous Al-Badr Bahini in 1971, was handed down death penalty in July 2013 for planning and instigating the killing of intellectuals and professionals at the fag end of the Liberation War.

He was given life sentence on two other charges, and five years' imprisonment on another.

Salauddin, a self-proclaimed brigadier in 1971, was sentenced to death in October 2013 for committing crimes against humanity and acts of genocide in Chittagong in 1971.

He was given the death penalty on four charges -- the killing of philanthropist Natun Chandra Sinha, murders of Awami League leader Mozaffar Ahmed and his son, and two acts of genocide in Sultanpur Banikpara and Unasattarpura in Rangpur of Chittagong.

The BNP leader was given 20 years in jail each on two charges and five years' imprisonment each on two other charges.

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 nationwide 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 Mojahed.

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 Senthil 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 Munisur 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 driving as usual.

Most of the educational institutions, however, remained closed.

Rejecting the hartal, a faction of Gonjagor 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 BRTC 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.

Members close ranks against terrorism

FROM PAGE 1

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

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.

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