

PM moves

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conveyed the directives to the deputy commissioner of Khulna, PM's Deputy Press Secretary Ashraf Alam Khokan told BSS yesterday.

Miraz and his father Jalal Uddin, a taxi driver, expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the PM for her initiative, the news agency added.

"I'm very much delighted and I express my gratitude to the prime minister for her generosity," Miraz said.

In his instant reaction after hearing the news, Miraz broke into tears of joy.

Miraz, whose 19 wickets in the two Test series against England saw him become the player of the series, left Khulna yesterday to check in with the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

Pigeon lovers

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Shahnewaz who has some 450 pigeons on his rooftop farm said his birds had flown back from as far as Teknaf.

The two friends share wisdom you won't usually get to hear: female pigeons are stronger and it is difficult to catch them. That's why female pigeons are costlier.

Out of the world's 310 kinds of pigeons, Bangladeshi markets sell around a couple of dozen varieties. Rock pigeon is considered to be the world's oldest domesticated bird.

The Kaptan Bazar pigeon market brings together thousands of buyers and sellers every Friday. If you go there, you will be surprised that they don't just sell food, nests and pigeons, but also accessories like "jhumka" for pigeons so that they make rhythmic sounds when they walk.

Jonny, a vendor, said he sells pigeons at prices from Tk 200 up to Tk 5,000 depending on the breed.

The price of a pigeon depends on the species and its colour. Fancy pigeons have high demand now and their prices can go up to Tk 10,000 to 15,000, he added.

A few years back, fancy pigeons were even costlier.

"The pigeon we sold for Tk 60,000-70,000 two to three years back now sells at only Tk 15,000," said another vendor Abdul Bari.

A large number of pigeons were exported to the Indian market at the time, but that demand has fallen, he said.

Besides, pigeon breeding has become very popular in the country, resulting in an increase in production, and fall of prices.

The most common and cheapest breed in Bangladesh is Gola. Other breeds that are very popular include Chila, Lalchila, Giribaz, Garra, Fency, Pankhi and Racer.



What to do with poop terrorism?

ROBIN GAZI

He was standing beside the auto-rickshaw on the left to ours at the set of lights at Sonargaon intersection between Sonargaon and Bangla Motor crossroads. The half-naked man wearing just a pair of shorts and a bag in his hands was yelling at someone inside the auto-rickshaw.

Being from Dhaka city I have learnt to ignore a lot of things happening all around while travelling. I hugged my six-days-short four-month-old daughter tighter and looked out the cage of the auto-rickshaw.

But my wife to my left began saying, "Oh Allah, oh Allah, oh Allah, save us." I looked at her but could not figure out what was wrong. She looked at me, grabbed my left arm and again said, "Oh Allah, oh Allah, oh Allah, save us."

I was still clueless as to what was wrong.

I looked at the auto-rickshaw driver who just spat in his own vehicle.

Then it hit me. Rather it hit

my nose. The vehicle was overwhelmed by the stench of faeces. So strong was the stench that my stomach wanted to come out through my mouth.

I finally realised what was



going on. The man yelling at the passengers next to our auto-rickshaw was holding faeces in his hands and threatening to hurl it inside unless they gave him everything they had on them.

I hugged my daughter even tighter and tried not to puke and prayed, "God help me today... I have nothing to protect my family with... have mercy."

I knew if the man turned around and threatened us, I would be helpless. I would not be able to protect my family, a job nature probably bestowed on me.

Eventually, the half-naked man took everything from the passengers in the auto-rickshaw to our left and ran, leaving us with a sigh of relief and the strong stench of faecal matter.

We the people of Dhaka endure a lot of things. We put ourselves in auto-rickshaw cages when we travel because the law enforcers can't put the muggers and snatchers inside cages. We line the ceiling of auto-rickshaw hoods so that our phones can't be taken away by snatchers cutting through the fabric.

The question now is what do we do with poop terrorism?

A lot goes on around us. In this new news project, we started running feature contents based on personal experience. We also invite our readers to send similar write-ups for publishing, subject to editing and verification. Please send your pieces and also comments and feedback to reporting@thedailystar.net.

AL lawmaker Bodi jailed

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Commission Act 2004 by deliberately concealing his and his dependants' moveable and immovable properties, and by giving false information in his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission with an ill motive," said the judgment.

Reading out the summary of the 73-page verdict, the judge said the prosecution failed to prove the charge against the lawmaker of amassing wealth illegally, and he was acquitted of the charge.

But the charge of concealing wealth was "undoubtedly proved", and he was convicted and sentenced for committing the offence.

The judge said Bodi on June 30, 2013 submitted his income tax return to the National Board of Revenue for fiscal 2013-2014, saying his net wealth was Tk 9,19,67,565.

In his wealth statement to the Election Commission on December 2, 2013 before the national polls, Bodi declared that he had wealth of Tk 10,98,92,723.

On March 20, 2014, he submitted a wealth statement to the ACC, mentioning that he had wealth of Tk 5,35,58,278 in moveable and immovable assets.

In this way, Bodi concealed wealth of Tk 5,63,34,444, and thus the charge of submitting a false wealth statement was found true, said the court.

Mahboob Ahmed, a counsel for the AL lawmaker, told The Daily Star that his client would challenge the judgment at the HC.

Mahmud Hossain Jahangir, public prosecutor of the Dhaka court, said he was not fully satisfied with the verdict, as the court acquitted Bodi of one of the charges.

"I have informed the ACC about the matter, and it will decide on filing an appeal against the verdict."

The judgment, however, didn't mention any timeframe for filing appeal. Usually, a convict has to lodge it within a month after getting a certified copy of the verdict.

Asked, ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmud declined to comment on the judgment.

"It doesn't matter how influential a

corrupt person is. None will be spared," he said at a press briefing on the ACC's Annual Report 2015 at the ACC office in the capital.

DEBATE OVER PARLIAMENT MEMBERSHIP

Referring to article 66(2)(d) of the constitution, Khurshid Alam Khan, a lawyer for the ACC, said, "He [Bodi] is no longer a lawmaker, as he has been convicted and is in custody now."

The article says, "A person shall be disqualified for election as, or for being, a member of parliament who has been, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release."

Khurshid pointed out that Bodi's parliament membership would be restored if the High Court stays or suspends his conviction and sentence.

However, defence counsel Mahboob Ahmed said if the AL lawmaker files an appeal with the HC in due time, his parliament membership would not be cancelled.

But if Bodi doesn't do so, it would be deemed that he accepted the verdict, and he will lose parliament membership, said the lawyer.

BODI'S RHETORIC

After probing the charges against Bodi for around seven months, the ACC filed the case with the capital's Ramna Police Station on August 21, 2014, accusing him of amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement.

Following this, Bodi hit out at the ACC and claimed that he was not involved in corruption.

At a programme on September 15, 2014, Bodi said he would reveal "all secrets" of the ACC and its then Chairman Mohammad Badiuzzaman if it tried to prove him corrupt.

"I am making a request at this meeting... respected Mr. Badiuzzaman, the ACC chairman, your name is Badi and mine is Bodi too. If one Bodi wants to drive out another Bodi, every secret will be disclosed," Bodi said at a discussion organised to mark the National Income Tax Day in Chittagong.

Bodi said he would step down as a lawmaker if anyone could prove his involvement in corruption.

On October 12, 2014, Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court sent Bodi to jail upon his surrender in connection with the corruption case. But he later secured bail from the HC.

On September 8 last year, the Special Judge's Court-3 framed charges against Bodi and started trial in the case on October 6. Bodi pleaded not guilty before the court, while 13 prosecution witnesses gave testimony to prove the charges.

A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE

Since his previous term as MP, Bodi has been mired in controversy.

He hogged newspaper headlines several times for assaulting school teachers, forest and bank officials, an engineer of the Department of Roads and Highways, a freedom fighter, and a lawyer, among many others.

On August 12 last year, Bodi beat up Mostofa Minhaz, Ukhia upazila engineer, allegedly for not attending an Upazila Parishad meeting.

His name was on a list of suspected yaba smugglers, prepared by the Department of Narcotics Control in 2014. His three brothers, brother-in-laws and some other relatives have also been listed as traders of the contraband drug.

Bodi, however, all along denied the allegations.

Four cases were filed against him on charges of murder, rape and repression on women while he was the mayor of Teknaf municipality during the tenure of the last BNP-led alliance government.

But during the previous term of the AL-led government, all those lawsuits were withdrawn as "politically motivated cases" after Bodi became a ruling party lawmaker.

Taha Yahya, an independent candidate from Cox's Bazar-4 constituency in the January 2014 election, filed a case against Bodi with an election tribunal for vote rigging and other charges. The case is now pending with the tribunal.

Our Cox's Bazar Correspondent contributed to the report.

Solma waits for repatriation

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communication with Shampa Basu, an activist of Socialist Party of Bangladesh, contacted him early February this year to say that Solma was at a shelter home in Hooghly, of West Bengal.

Shampa got to know about Solma through an Indian friend working at the home, Janasiksha Prochar Kendra.

According to Hooghly police, in the evening of April 4 last year, police found Solma wandering around in Sarati village. They could not ascertain her identity as she did not speak.

Police then had her medically examined and her mental disorder was confirmed.

Hooghly police then sent her to Janasiksha Prochar Kendra for temporary shelter where she was provided with regular counselling and treatment. After six months, she partially recovered and was able to remember that she was from Bangladesh.

Solma remembered that she was very excited and young when she got married and that she lost her parents. She also told people there that she was suffering from a mental illness in Bangladesh and she was having medicine there, according to the communication between two NGOs in the two countries.

Solma mentioned a woman who was either her co-passenger or who facilitated her travel to India from Bangladesh.

"She said she was dropped off at the border on a bike," according to the email correspondence between the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), an international NGO based in New Delhi, and the Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) in Dhaka.

Solma maintains that she went straight to the Hooghly shelter home after crossing the border into India and has no recollection of being anywhere else since leaving home.

"The conversation with her did not indicate towards sex trafficking, but one cannot be sure whether she was a victim of organ trafficking," said Mrinal Sharma, an official of India's CHRI.

REPATRIATION TAKING LONG!
Shampa Basu said Solma's brother Asgar Ali submitted all the documents about Solma to BLAST in Dhaka and sought help for her repatriation.

Failing to make any headway, she said she gave the documents to the Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Gawher Rizvi's office early April this year.

"We don't know what happened

41 yrs on

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national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad, AHM Qamaruzzaman and M Mansur Ali -- on the 41st anniversary of the Jail Killing Day today.

The four leaders were shot dead following repeated bayonet charges at the jail on this day in 1975. They were sent to jail soon after the August 15, 1975 bloodbath that claimed the lives of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members.

The four leaders led the country's Liberation War in 1971 after Bangabandhu had been detained by the Pakistan army.

Talking to The Daily Star, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, one of the taskforce members, said the government has taken necessary steps to bring the killers back.

He, however, did not elaborate on the matter.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq repeated his previous statement that the government was trying its best to bring back the fugitive killers through diplomatic channels.

"I will not reveal the progress of bringing the fugitive killers back to the country until they are brought back," said the minister who heads the taskforce.

All the convicts are reportedly at large in the USA, Canada and some other countries.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat in August last year officially informed Dhaka that fugitive Rashed Chowdhury was staying in her country after securing political asylum there.

The government taskforce that has been looking for the fugitives' whereabouts since 2010 learned about another convicted killer Noor Chowdhury's stay in Canada. During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to Canada, the issue was discussed at the highest level.

However, Canada has declined to deport him as its policy does not approve sending back a person where there is a provision of death sentence. The country, however, reportedly did not accept Noor's application for political asylum.

The Supreme Court in its judgement in the jail killing case observed that the assassinations of the four national leaders were the result of a criminal conspiracy.

"The accused couldn't have executed the killings unless very high-handed powerful state machineries were involved in the conspiracy,"

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha said in the verdict.

The government, however, has no plan to take any step to unearth "the criminal conspiracy" behind the assassination of the four liberation movement heroes due to "change in overall situation."

"The Supreme Court observation in its verdict of the jail killing case is very good, but it is difficult to implement the observation in today's reality. The killings of four national leaders took place in 1975 and the Appellate Division has delivered the verdict in 2013," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star.

He said some of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the four national leaders were the same and a few of them have already been executed.

The SC on April 30, 2013 upheld the death penalty of three former army personnel and life term imprisonment of eight others for killing the four national leaders.

The three convicts, who were awarded death penalty, are Risalder (retired) Muslemuddin, Dafadar (dismissed) Marfat Ali Shah and Dafadar (dismissed) Abdul Hashem Mridha.

The eight convicts, who were handed down life term imprisonment, are Lt Col (dismissed) Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Haq Dalim, Lt Col (retired) SHMB Noor Chowdhury, Lt Col (retired) AM Rashed Chowdhury, Maj (relieved) Ahmed Shariful Hossain, Capt (retired) Abdul Majed, Capt (relieved) Kismat Hasem and Capt (relieved) Nazmul Hossain.

The apex court affirmed the judgement of a Dhaka court that convicted and sentenced Muslemuddin, Marfat Ali Shah and Abdul Hashem Mridha to death and handed down life term imprisonment to 12 others, including the eight, in 2004.

Four others -- Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farooq-ur Rahman, Lt Col (retired) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj (retired) Bazlul Huda and Maj (retired) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed -- were executed in the Bangabandhu assassination case.

In 2011, the SC exempted Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazlul Huda from the charges as they had already been executed.

Earlier in August 2008, the High Court upheld the capital punishment for Muslemuddin and acquitted Marfat and Hashem. It also acquitted Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazlul Huda.



Shakil



Shima

afterwards," Shampa said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, officials of Indian CHRI learnt about Solma's case and emailed the national ID card details of Solma, her husband Shawkat Ali, a certificate from Shorbananda Union Parishad, and photographs of her family members they got from BLAST and the Hooghly police report to the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata on May 25 this year.

Contacted on Monday, BM Jamal Hossain, counsellor (political) of Bangladesh mission in Kolkata, told this correspondent that he instantly sent Solma's documents to the South Asian desk of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Dhaka.

According to officials concerned, if any Bangladeshi is stranded abroad and seeks repatriation, the Bangladesh mission overseas writes to the ministry, which then forwards the letter to the home ministry.

The home ministry then sends a letter to the Special Branch of Police asking it to verify the person's identity through its district offices and local police stations. Similar paper work is needed once the person has been identified as a Bangladeshi and the mission abroad is informed of the matter.

The mission then issues travel documents for repatriation.

"We are yet to receive any verification report from Dhaka," counsellor Jamal said over phone.

"It is taking longer than usual," he said, adding that he even reminded the ministry about the case.

Enquired on Monday, a foreign ministry official in Dhaka told our diplomatic correspondent that the ministry immediately forwards files like that of Solma to the home ministry.

Asked on the specific file of Solma, the

official said they would try to find the file, but could not do it as of yesterday.

Contacted, Delwar Hossain Sarkar, MIS Officer of Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Integration (RRRI) Taskforce Cell of the home ministry, could not say the status of Solma's case. "Please give me the memo number to know Solma's file status," he said.

Our Gaibandha correspondent Rezaul Haque contacted Gaibandha's Superintendent of Police Ashrafal Islam, Special Branch Officer-in-Charge Mahbubul Alam and Sundarganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Israil Hossain on Tuesday.

All of them said they had no idea about Solma's case.

Asgar Ali, however, said two police officials visited him around a month ago and took photocopies of the national ID cards of Solma and her husband.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), which was approached by the CHRI recently with Solma's case, said it asked the home ministry, but its officials responsible could not say for sure if there was any case of Solma at all.

BNWLA Executive Director Salma Ali said there must be missing links and a sheer lack of coordination among government actors dealing with Solma's case.

"There must be digital mechanism to immediately trace any file and learn their status in the cases of repatriation," she said.

Solma's children don't understand such bureaucracy. Asgar Ali said Hooghly's shelter home officials arranged phone calls between Solma and her children several times. "Whenever they talk, they started crying. I try to calm the children down saying she would come home soon."