

KSA keen to invest in Bangladesh

Saudi crown prince tells PM

UNB, Riyadh

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has said his country is keen to be Bangladesh's development partner by investing in different sectors.

Mohammed bin Salman, also the deputy prime minister and defence minister of Saudi Arabia, said this during a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Royal Palace here on Wednesday evening.

Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque briefed reporters about the meeting.

Mentioning that a very good collaboration in defence sector was continuing between the two countries, the Saudi crown prince hoped it would be strengthened further.

He instructed the Saudi authorities concerned to visit Bangladesh to identify the prospective sectors for investment.

"Saudi Arabia now invests in different countries of the world. We will do so in Bangladesh as well," Shahidul quoted the Saudi crown prince as saying.

Hasina hoped a large Saudi

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz at the Royal Palace in Riyadh yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

EU for free, inclusive polls in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union wants a free, fair and inclusive election in the country scheduled to be held at the end of this year.

"European Union wants a credible, participatory and transparent election in Bangladesh," said EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Rensje Teerink after a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda and other commissioners at the EC secretariat yesterday.

"We hope that all parties will join the polls as participation of all parties in the election is important for the credibility of the election."

An EU delegation went to the EC secretariat around noon.

After the meeting, Teerink said they informed the EC that they would send a small election expert team in November.

They will stay here for few weeks and observe the electoral process, political situation of the country and election preparation, she said.

EC Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed told journalists that the schedule for the next parliamentary polls would be announced in the first week of November.

In the meeting, the CEC informed

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Transcom Group chairman at ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite being sick, Transcom Group Chairman and CEO Latifur Rahman went to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday to give a statement over allegations brought against him.

He arrived at the ACC's Segunbagicha headquarters with his personal physician and legal adviser to Transcom Group around 3:00pm.

For about two hours, Latifur explained his stance to ACC Deputy Director Nasir Uddin, who is also the enquiry officer (EO), over the allegations. He also responded to questions of the EO.

On October 11, the ACC served a notice on the Transcom Group chairman requesting him to appear before it on Thursday (yesterday) for recording his statement.

According to the notice, the allegations are dodging gas and electricity bills and Value Added Tax (VAT), accumulating wealth illegally, grabbing government land, and laundering money abroad.

On May 13, 2015, the ACC had served similar notices on Latifur, his brother Saifur Rahman, and Prothom Alo Editor Matuier Rahman requesting them to give their statements.

After carrying out lengthy investigations, the ACC on August 2 that year sent letters to them saying that the probe could not prove the allegations and the commission archived and resolved the matter.

Of strange shootouts

FROM PAGE 1

And justice remains elusive.

"I know the police officers very well as they visited our home several times before taking my husband," she claimed.

The killing of Anisur in so-called infightings after being picked up by men in plainclothes is no one-off incident.

Police came up with almost similar narratives after deaths of at least 50 out of the 241 suspected drug traders killed since the anti-narcotics drive began on May 4.

Seventeen of them were killed in Jashore alone while four each were killed in Magura, Satkhira, Cox's Bazar, and Mymensingh.

Family members of most of those deceased point fingers at law enforcers as their near ones were killed hours or days after plainclothes men, claiming to be cops, picked them up.

Rights activists said "infighting" is a new narrative for extra judicial killings as law enforcers' narratives of "shoot-outs", "crossfires" or "gunfights" have become clichés over the years.

However, the so-called shootouts are still going on.

According to Nazma, assistant sub-inspectors Ezaz Mahmud and Torikul Islam of Khurdo Police Outpost and some others handcuffed and blindfolded her husband.

The next day, his bullet-riddled body was found near his village.

Police claimed that Anisur was a drug dealer and was killed in a gun

fight between two groups of drug traders. Both the ASIs denied picking him up.

Sub-inspector Biplob Roy of Kolaroa Police Station, also the investigation officer of the consequently filed murder case, could not arrest anyone. He, however, concluded even before completing the probe that no police officers were involved in the killing.

"The allegation of the family is not true," he told The Daily Star recently.

In all the "infighting" incidents like Anisur, police claimed that they went to the spot hearing gunshots and recovered bodies, drugs, and firearms from the scene.

This correspondent talked to at least 10 investigation or supervising police officers of such cases. All of them said they could not arrest any suspects.

Some families of those killed expressed doubt about ever getting justice.

"Whom do I ask for justice when people from the administrations killed my husband? I could have gone to the police station had other people killed him," said Parul Begum, wife of Liton of Benapole, Jashore.

Her husband was found dead two days after plainclothes men picked him up from in front of Jashore jail after he came out on bail on May 28.

Liton was a drug dealer and was killed in infighting, claimed Benapole police who had arrested him just a week before in connection with possession of cannabis.

Liton being in jail had relived Parul

and the family. They decided not to seek his bail as people were being killed in the districts in "shootouts", Parul said.

Interestingly, a lawyer hired by Liton's friend Tuhin moved his bail petition with the family unaware, just days after his arrest, the family claimed.

The family was in dark until the lawyer informed Parul about the bail.

Worried Parul rushed to the jail gate and met her husband to tell him about it. "He was afraid and asked me to receive him at the jail gate on his release," Parul said.

Parul went to the jail gate to receive him but four plainclothes men took him away before her own eyes minutes after Liton stepped out of the jail.

Tuhin was not at Liton's funeral, which made the family suspicious, Parul said.

Human rights activist Nur Khan termed the "infighting" incidents a new trend of extra judicial killing.

"A new pattern has emerged mainly in Jashore and some other districts where bullet-hit bodies are being found and police are saying those were killed in infighting. But their families claimed that they were picked up or were in police custody," he said.

Nur Khan said in the other narratives for extra judicial killings, law enforcers have some responsibility since they are involved in "gunfights" with "criminals". But many believe that this narrative allows law enforcers to be the least liable.

AL to step up

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The electioneering can be resumed after the finalisation of candidacies, and allocation of electoral symbol to the candidates by returning officers. The electioneering may continue amid various restrictions for maximum three weeks before the election.

As there is no restriction on the electioneering now, the AL wants to ensure maximum utilisation of this opportunity.

Grassroots leaders and activists from the party have already launched extensive campaigns in their areas with the use of posters, placards and billboards highlighting development activities of the government, according to field reports sent by our correspondents in different districts. The leaders were doing those on their own.

They are also holding indoor and outdoor meetings and mass contact programmes to persuade voters, the reports say.

According to its current plan, the ruling party wants to start distributing around 30 lakh colourful posters to grassroots leaders from this week. Those posters would be hanged in electoral areas in upazilas and districts. On an average, each of the 300 parliamentary constituencies would get 10,000 posters.

The party also directed its grassroots leaders to carry out mass contact programmes highlighting the government's successes, a number of AL leaders said.

"Six to eight types of posters highlighting the successes of the government in carrying out development activities are being printed. The posters will also mention negative politics, including subversive activities, by the BNP-led alliance," Hassan Mahmud, AL publicity and publication secretary, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We want our grassroots leaders to put up the posters in their areas within this month," he said.

Besides, the AL-led 14-party alliance has decided to hold public meetings in Chuadanga on October 26 and Dhaka's Motijheel on

October 29, said Dilip Barua, general secretary of Samayabadi Dal, a component of the alliance.

The combine would hold another meeting in Jashore. The date of that programme, however, has not been finalised yet, he added.

Asked about the police permissions for the programme, Barua said the local leaders of the 14-party would obtain them.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, AL presidium member Abdur Razzak said the party was taking election preparation in full swing.

"We have held a meeting on October 10 for drafting the election manifesto. A team is working under the leadership of HT Imam to finalise the manifesto," he said.

He said the AL was taking opinions and suggestions from different professionals, experts, economists and development partners to prepare the electoral manifesto.

The AL also wants to ensure appointment of skilled grassroots leaders and activists as polling agents for its candidates.

Democracy International (DI) has already trained 94 AL leaders in this regard, said a source in the US-based NGO.

DI also trained 114 leaders from the BNP. It has a plan to train up 128 leaders from each political party within this month.

Those receiving the training are called master trainers. They were given three days' training on election procedures. They will be training the polling agents in future.

Sources in the AL said the party initially has ensured training on polls procedures for 10 leaders from each of its 78 organisational districts.

A message was sent from the central AL that the polling agents would be finalised in coordination with district and upazila AL leaders.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to invite the master trainers this month to the Gono Bhaban and give some specific directives to them as part of the party's election preparation, sources in the AL added.

Strings fall silent

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The morning, Bachchu was found unconscious at his Moghbazar residence.

Ask someone growing up in the 1990s to name three Bangladeshi musicians who defined that era musically, and Ayub Bachchu will most certainly make that list. The 90s were a pivotal period of time, as the first half of the decade saw some major changes in urban taste in music. It was a booming time for pop and rock bands. Bangladeshis were finally getting a taste of concerts that included phenomenal live performances by bands.

Ayub Bachchu rose to national stardom in the 90s and never descended.

Bachchu was born on August 16, 1962, to Haji Mohammad Ishque Chowdhury and Nurjahan Parvin. Considering the social setting of Chattogram in the mid-1970s, unsurprisingly, his family resisted the teenager's decision to pursue music professionally. Bachchu left the port city, moved to Dhaka, and like many aspiring artistes endured struggling times. He stayed in a hotel on Elephant Road and performed small gigs to make ends meet.

In his early days, Bachchu was a member of Souls, a band which kick-started the careers of several musicians who would later go on to make their indelible marks in the Bangladeshi music industry.

When Bachchu formed LRB in the early 90s, rock music was still not considered "mainstream" in the country. LRB's music became a bridge between two worlds -- the young, hardcore rock listeners and the old, uninitiated generation. Case in point: "Ferari Mon (Unplugged)" released in 1996 which featured mellow versions of "Ekhon onek raat", "Cholo

bodley jai", "Madhobi" and "Rupali guitar". The silver guitar would forever be associated with the musician, widely considered one of the most gifted guitarists the country has ever produced.

His Midas touch as a singer and composer was not limited to rock music. Bachchu's foray into film music (starting in the late 90s) gave the audiences some gems like "Anonto prem", "Ami toh prem-e porini" and "Ammajaan". In fact, the song "Ammajaan" became one of the most popular film songs of 1999 and gave Bachchu's identity as an artiste a new dimension.

As the frontman of LRB, Bachchu performed at over a thousand concerts at home and abroad, including at the iconic Madison Square Garden in New York.

Bachchu and LRB were particularly popular in West Bengal, India, and had performed extensively in the neighbouring country.

While LRB's sound was predominantly rock, as a solo musician Bachchu went into more melodious numbers and experimented with blues, jazz and funk in albums like "Shomoy" and "Eka". He even recorded folk songs including "Majhi baiya jao re", "Porer jaiga porer jomi" and "Shob lokey koi".

In the late 2000s, he started a musical project called "AB Blues Club" through which he focused particularly on blues music.

LRB and Bachchu's notable albums include: "Shukh" (1993), "Ghumonto Shohore" (1995), "Amader Bishshoy" (1998), "Mon Chaile Mon Paabe" (2000), "Pother Gaan" (2004), instrumental album "Sound of Silence" (2007), "Bolini Kokhono" (2009), "Juddho" (2012) and "Jiboner Golpo" (2015).

Bachchu's strength was his sus-

tained musical prowess. Till his very untimely and shocking demise yesterday, he remained a ubiquitous frontman of Bangla rock music.

The namaz-e-janaza of Ayub Bachchu will be held at the Eidgah Maidan after Jumma prayers today. Before the janaza, his body will be kept at Central Shaheed Minar between 10:30am and 12:30pm so that fans and people from all walks of life can pay their last respects, according to sources at Somnilito Sangskritik Jote.

Bachchu will be buried next to his mother at their family graveyard in Chattogram on Saturday, family sources said. He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter, alongside a huge number of relatives, disciples and admirers to mourn his death.

CONDOLENCES POUR IN

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of the popular singer.

In his message, the president prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members, reports UNB.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor also expressed profound shock at the death, the report added.

In his message, Asaduzzaman Noor said Ayub Bachchu took the band music of Bangladesh to a higher level. His contributions to popularising band music among the young people were immense. "The people of the country, especially the young generation, will remember him forever."

Bachchu's fans flooded social media platforms expressing their deepest condolence.

Meanwhile, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury also expressed deep shock and sorrow.

In a condolence message, the

Speaker recalled with profound respect his contribution to music.

Besides, Deputy Speaker Md Fazle Rabbi Miah and Chief Whip ASM Feroz also expressed profound shock at his death.

In separate messages, several ministers expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family members and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

The cabinet members are: Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Social Welfare Minister Rashed Khan Menon, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor, Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Nurul Islam, Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Minister Mustafa Jabbar, State Minister for Public Administration Ismat Ara Sadek and Minister for Finance AMA Muhith.

They said Ayub Bachchu was a legend in the country's band music arena whose contributions to the music field will be remembered forever.

[Photo collected from Facebook page 'Ayub Bachchu AB']

Bijoya

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and Maha Nabami Puja yesterday.

As many as 31,272 permanent and temporary pandals of Durga Puja have been erected across the country. This year puja pandals have been increased by 1195 compared to last year.

Security measures have been beefed up at temples and pandals with deployment of additional squads of Ansar, police, RAB and other law enforcement agencies.

According to government directives, the immersion of Durga's idol should be done between 3:00pm and 8:00pm.

Dhaka-Delhi

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Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the deal to take effect.

"The two countries have started preparing the SOP," he added.

Earlier at a press meet on October 7, the shipping secretary said the fees and other charges would be mentioned in the SOP.

India will have to use local transports for transporting goods through Bangladesh territory.

Chittagong and Mongla ports will not face any problems in handling Indian goods as their capacities have increased greatly, he added.

The cabinet on September 17 approved a draft agreement on the use of the two ports.

The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on the use of the two ports during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka in June 2015.

In the upcoming secretary-level meeting, another agreement will be signed to allow passengers to travel between the two countries by cruise ships.

The two sides will sign an SOP for introducing the cruise service, said a shipping ministry official wishing

anonymity.

An MoU in this regard was signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's India visit in April last year.

The shipping secretary said tourists and passengers from Bangladesh will be able to travel to Kolkata, Visakhapatnam and Chennai by cruise ships, while Indian tourists and passengers could cruise to Mongla, Dhaka, Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

The cruise service will be run by private companies, which will decide on the fares and other related issues.

Seeking anonymity, one of the shipping ministry officials said the SOP will determine the routes and the levies to be slapped by the two countries.

Besides, a deal will be signed to bring changes to the existing "Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT)" for determining two new ports of call in India and Bangladesh.

The new port of call in India will be Assam's Dhubri while one of the three ports in Pangoan, Nagabari and Sirajganj is likely to be chosen as the new port of call in Bangladesh, said the shipping secretary.