

For one year, Dhaka mum on new Pakistan high commissioner

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has apparently not accepted the nomination of the new high commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh by not responding to the proposed nomination in the last 11 months.

Highly placed diplomatic sources said the Pakistan foreign ministry sent the proposed nomination of its envoy to Bangladesh, Saqlain Syed, in early March but Bangladesh was yet to respond to the appointment.

Dhaka has neither accepted nor rejected the nomination, foreign ministry officials said here yesterday.

"We have not received any intimation so far from the Bangladesh Foreign Office...its [been] a very long time since we sent the proposal for the new high commissioner," a Pakistani diplomat in Dhaka told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked whether the Pakistan government was going to propose a new name, the diplomat replied, "How

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BURDWAN BLAST India arrests 2 JMB members

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's National Investigation Agency arrested two key members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) involved in the Burdwon blast of October 2014 from West Bengal on Monday.

In a statement, the NIA said Kader Kazi alias Mijanur Rahman alias Harun Mandal, 32, and Sajjad Ali, 21, were arrested from an under-construction building in Hooghly district. They had pretended to be construction workers, the NIA added.

Kader was charge-sheeted in the case for his direct involvement in the militant outfit's conspiracy to wage war against the governments of India and Bangladesh in 2015. He had a reward of Rs 5 lakh on his head, the agency said.

During primary interrogation, Sajjad said he was an associate of Kader and was in touch with other accused JMB members through encrypted messaging apps, the NIA said, adding that materials for making improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were also seized from his possession.

Kader, known to be an explosive expert, and Sajjad, who is part of JMB's recruitment cell, were produced before a Kolkata court and it placed them on a 14-day remand.

Kader is the brother-in-law of

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Rajshahi

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paving the way for Rajshahi to clinch an easy win.

Evans top-scored with a 36-ball 76 with 10 fours and two sixes while ten Doschate blitzed 42 off 18 balls.

Earlier, Sylhet posted 189 for five riding on Nicholas Pooran's 31-ball 76, which was studded with six sixes and as many fours, while Sabbir Rahman scored 45.

In the day's first game, Chittagong Vikings finally broke their three-match losing streak on home soil and clinched an 11-run win over Dhaka Dynamites, ensuring a play-off spot as the third team in the points table.

With seven wins from eleven games, Chittagong are now behind Rangpur Riders and Comilla Victorians on run rate, with all three teams on 14 points.

Electing to bat first, Chittagong posted 174 for five in 20 overs with Cameron Delport hitting four sixes and five fours in the innings' top score of 71 off 57 balls. Skipper Mushfiqur Rahim added 43 off 24 balls as the pair contributed 79 for the third wicket.

In reply, Dhaka ended on 163 for nine after 20 overs, falling to their fourth consecutive defeat in the tournament.

Dhaka's Andre Russell registered the third hattrick of the ongoing sixth edition of the BPL and ended with figures of three for 38 from four overs, while Sunil Narine bagged two wickets.

Russell removed both Mushfiqur and Delport with the first two balls of the 20th over before the right-arm seamer completed his hattrick by dismissing Dasun Shanaka.

Chasing the target, Dhaka were struggling on 23 for three inside four overs. Skipper Shakib Al Hasan top-scored with 53 off 42 balls with six fours, while Russell added 39 off 23.

Pacer Abu Jayed was the pick of the bowlers for Chittagong with figures of three for 25 from his four overs.

It was the last day of matches in the Chattogram leg and the BPL will resume tomorrow in the third and final Dhaka leg, which will end with a champion crowned on February 8.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and lawmakers begin the first session of the newly formed parliament yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Force Myanmar to take back Rohingyas

Hasina renews call on
int'l community

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her call to the international community to force Myanmar to take back its over one million Rohingya nationals from Bangladesh.

"Myanmar must take back its nationals and the international community should help Bangladesh send back the Rohingyas," she said.

The PM made the comments when visiting Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Quoc Dzung, also special envoy to the Vietnam prime minister, met her at the Gono Bhavan.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

He said the PM mentioned that Bangladesh has prepared a temporary shelter for the Rohingyas at Bhashan Char to provide them with a better living place.

Hasina said Bangladesh and Myanmar have already signed

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Oikyafront fully united

Says Dr Kamal

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Oikyafront Convener Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the alliance is fully united.

He, however, did not say whether his party's (Gonoforum's) two MPs-elect will join parliament.

"Our Jatiya Oikyafront is cent percent united. Our unity is forged with the country's 16 crore people," he said.

He came up with the remarks while addressing a preparatory meeting of the Gonoforum for its 5th national council at the party's Arambagh central office.

"I visited many places and found our alliance's unity intact and it'll be consolidated in the days to come."

The Oikyafront chief said people now believe they are the owners of the country and its resources.

He called upon all to organise and remain alert so that no one can embezzle or waste the country's resources.

"We must remain aware of evil and anti-people forces who want to misappropriate our assets."

Dr Kamal said a national unity can protect people's interests and their ownership of the state.

Asked about the maiden session of the 11th parliament, the Oikyafront convener said they will come up with their statement on the issue later.

Asked whether Gonoforum's two MPs-elect will take oath, he said, "It's not the right issue to discuss here. We'll talk about the issue later at a press conference. Now we're talking about giving the national unity an institutional shape."

Dr Kamal called upon people to get organised across the country so that Oikyafront can play an effective role in protecting the national interests.

Gonoforum's fifth council will be held on March 23 and 24 in the capital.

Ex-MP's son

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had given judicial statements before magistrates.

Witnesses said rickshaw-puller Abdul Hakim and three-wheeler driver Yakub were shot by him.

Moreover, ballistics test confirmed that the bullet found in the body of auto-rickshaw driver Yakub was fired from Rony's gun.

The licence of the firearm was not submitted before the court and how many bullets were in the pistol was not mentioned. But police recovered 21 bullets from the convict, the judge said.

The verdict came after the court examined 24 prosecution witnesses. Rony remained calm after hearing the verdict and did not comment about it.

The complainant or family members of the victims were not present on the court premises.

Additional Prosecutor SM Zahid Hossain expressed his satisfaction over the verdict as the defence lawyer said they would appeal against the verdict with the High Court.

According to the charges pressed against him, Rony fired random shots from his vehicle "being frustrated over post-midnight traffic" leaving two people dead.

Victim Abdul Hakim's mother Monowara Begum filed the murder case on April 15, 2015.

The incident didn't draw much attention at first. But as the media ran reports, it created a huge public outcry.

Ramna police started a probe and collected CCTV footage installed at the nearby Janakantha office. In the footage, they found suspicious movement of a black SUV in the area.

Later, police identified the vehicle owner with the help of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

Rony was remanded thrice. But he didn't confess to his crimes.

The case was then transferred to the Detective Branch of police on May 25. Rony was arrested on May 31.

President calls for nat'l unity

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"The government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was formed for the fourth time. The people's verdict is the reflection of an unwavering support to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's popular election manifesto -- Samiddhik Agrajatrai Bangladesh [Bangladesh in pursuit of prosperity]. The government is determined to implement the pledges made in the election manifesto. Everyone will have to work together to face the challenges in the implementation of these commitments," he said.

The government's all-out efforts continued to strengthen and uphold the rule of law, Hamid told parliament.

"The Anti-Corruption Commission has been strengthened

to establish good governance while the National Human Rights Commission and the Information Commission have been set up. The rule of law has been established by abolishing the infamous indemnity law. Verdicts in the Bangabandhu murder and war crimes cases have been executed."

He said the government has been able to maintain a sustainable growth in all economic indexes. "A GDP growth rate of above 7 percent has been achieved since the 2015-16 fiscal year. According to the final estimate, the GDP rate in 2017-18 fiscal year was 7.78 percent. Bangladesh's economy is the 33rd in the world in terms of purchasing power parity while 41st on the basis of GDP size."

Hamid said the per capita income

now stood at \$1,751; foreign reserve crossed \$32 billion mark and the inflation rate dropped to 5.4 percent.

He also mentioned that the size of the national budget and revenue collection has increased manifold over the years. "We are successfully implementing many large projects, including construction of the Padma Bridge and flyovers, with our own fund by increasing revenue collection."

Employment opportunities have been created at home and abroad over the last 10 years. During this period, some 1.34 crore people were employed in the country while around 80 lakh abroad, said the president.

He said 34.82 lakh Bangladeshis went aboard with jobs in last five

years.

The government has been implementing a five-year health, population and nutrition development programme at a cost of Tk 115,486 crore to ensure healthcare, said Hamid.

The government's "zero tolerance" policy against drug abuse, militancy and extremism has been praised worldwide, he mentioned.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present during the president's speech at the House, with newly-elected Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

Though Leader of the Opposition Md Ershad was absent as he was undergoing treatment abroad, Opposition Deputy Leader GM Quader was present.

Hossain Bhuiyan at a briefing at his office yesterday.

He made the comments after a meeting of a taskforce formed to prevent smuggling.

Apart from MA Kader, the CIID filed cases under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012 against 16 others -- including Managing Director of Crescent Leather and Crescent Tanneries Sultana Begum, Rimex Footwear Chairman Abdul Aziz, its managing director Litul Jahan Mira and 13 present and former officials of Janata Bank -- with Chawkbazar Police Station.

The 13 bank officials against whom the cases were filed includes Mohammad Fakhrul Alam, who was general manager of Janata Bank during the time of the scam and is now deputy managing director of Bangladesh Krishi Bank; Md Zahir Hossain, who was also general manager of Janata at that time, and is now deputy managing director of Sonali Bank; Rezaul Karim, the general manager of Janata Bank, and its deputy general managers -- Kazi Rois Uddin Ahmed, AKM Asaduzzaman and Md

Iqbal; currently suspended assistant general manager Ataur Rahman Sarkar, suspended senior principal officers Khairul Amin and Mogreb Ali; suspended principal officer Muhammad Ruhul Amin; and suspended senior officers Saiduzzaman, Abdulla Al Mamun and Moniruzzaman.

NBR Chairman Mosharraf said the CIID found evidence of money laundering by the firms in an inquiry. He said the NBR would be careful so that no innocent persons are charged.

"I have given instruction to give charge sheet against those who are directly involved in the laundering," he said.

Citing reports of Washington based firm Global Financial Integrity about the illicit transfer of US\$ 5.9 billion through trade misinvoicing, Mosharraf said the money laundering cases filed against the firms are "trade-based".

"There is no doubt that money laundering is taking place," he said, adding that the NBR has information on 10-12 money laundering related cases and it would take legal action after holding a meeting expected to

take place in the first week of next month.

"They are going out of the country by being siphoned off and sometimes it is found that money in the banks are looted. So we want to send them a strong message."

Apart from the CIID, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) also found proof of embezzlement of Tk 1,303.69 crore by the Crescent Group from the Janata bank branch, according to the findings of an ongoing ACC inquiry initiated in October last year.

However, ACC is yet to file any cases in this regard.

The developments came after a Bangladesh Bank report revealed last year that the business entity "skimmed" at least Tk 765 crore in the name of exports from the JB and the Bangladesh Bank (BB) between January 2017 and February 2018.

The total amount of loans taken by the Crescent Group from the JB stood at Tk 3,443 crore in October last year, and the borrower defaulted on the loan, forcing the state-owned bank to call for an auction to recover the money.

Responding to a question on inquiry by several agencies and filing of cases on the same incident, Mosharraf said any agency related to prevention of money-laundering could file cases.

For now, it would be determined whether further investigation would be conducted individually or jointly, he added.

"But I think a joint probe is better," he said.

Mosharraf, responding to a question on the NBR's previous move on hiring an international firm to gather information on siphoned off money, said discussions had been conducted with several firms but they were exploring ways on how an international firm would be hired.

Five held

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charges of raping a seventh grader.

Sub-inspector Jahangir Alam of Sreepur Police Station said a girl filed the case with Sreepur Police Station on Tuesday.

The arrestees were sent to jail yesterday.