

No link between BNP joining JS and Khaleda's release : Hanif

Sought no parole for party chief, says Fakhrul

STAR REPORT

The issue of Khaleda Zia's bail and the oath-taking of the BNP lawmakers-elect are not linked, Awami League acting general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said yesterday.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the party chairperson would simply get bail if the law took its course.

They made the remarks at separate programmes amid media reports that six BNP leaders, who were elected MP in the December 30 parliamentary polls, might take oath on condition that the ailing 74-year-old former prime minister is freed from jail.

The deadline for oath-taking of the MPs-elect will expire on April 29.

Speaking at a press conference at the AL president's Dhamondi office, Hanif said it was the moral responsibility for an MP-elect to go to the Jatiya Sangsad.

"People voted for them [MPs-elect] to speak in parliament about the development of their areas. People didn't vote for anybody to release any person from jail."

The issue of the BNP chief's release would be settled through a legal process. Otherwise, she should seek presidential clemency, Hanif told reporters.

'KHALEDA DESERVES BAIL'

Talking to journalists in Cumilla yesterday afternoon, Fakhrul said, "We want Khaleda Zia to be released on bail rather than on parole. Khaleda Zia deserves bail."

The BNP secretary general reiterated that his party never talked about parole, rather a section of media ran false reports in this regard.

"Awami League wants to establish one-party rule in the country once again by confining Khaleda Zia to jail deliberately," he alleged.

Fakhrul, along with some other top party leaders, went to Cumilla to visit party men who were injured in violence over the December 30 national election.

He also gave financial assistance to at least 95 people from Cumilla-10.

Khaleda has been behind bars for over 14 months in corruption cases. She landed in jail on February 8 last year after a court had handed her a five-year jail term in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

(Our Cumilla correspondent contributed to this report.)

Bangamata

FROM PAGE 16

The top two teams from each group will play in the semifinals, scheduled for April 29 and 30, before the final on May 3 at the same venue.

The Bangladesh team will look to make a positive start against the highest-ranked team of the tournament and thereby secure a semifinal berth, although the aim for the hosts is to keep the title at home.

Bangladesh, who won a number of regional tournaments at the age-group level including the SAFF Under-15 Women's Championship and SAFF U-18 Women's Championship as well as having qualified for the final round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship twice over the last three years, would look to add another trophy to their cabinet.

Three of the participating teams already arrived in Dhaka on Friday while the two other teams were scheduled to arrive last night.

Tk 23.23 lakh

FROM PAGE 16

one for not having beacon light, two for using various stickers and five for using dark-tinted glass.

Besides, cases were filed against 1,276 motorcycles for violating traffic rules and 63 other motorcycles were seized, he said.

The traffic department of the DMP was conducting special drives as part of its routine work, he said.

495 foreigners

FROM PAGE 16

Migration in Bangladesh Giorgi Gigauri has urged all the stakeholders to work together to find the causes of human trafficking.

NHRC Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque said each victim of human trafficking must have their rights preserved and brought back home immediately.

"Strong enforcement of relevant law is necessary for preventing human trafficking," he added.

The daylong event was divided into different sessions.



Students of Morgan Girls' School in Narayanganj wait behind a gate for an MP, who was scheduled to visit yesterday afternoon. Inset, an empty classroom in another school after the students were taken to join the MP's programme.

PHOTO: SANY SAHA

2 teens held

FROM PAGE 16

unable to form a regional government for more than two years -- joined together to condemn the killing.

Detectives hunting the gunman had released security camera footage of the unrest on Derry's Creggan estate, hoping that the community would help trace her killers.

The footage showed McKee standing with other reporters by a police vehicle, and the suspected gunman.

Images on social media showed a car and van ablaze and hooded individuals throwing petrol bombs and fireworks at police vehicles.

Police chief Mark Hamilton said Friday "a single gunman fired shots in a residential area of the city and as a result wounded Ms McKee".

Some officials blamed Thursday's unrest on the "New IRA", a republican paramilitary group opposed to the shift towards non-violent tactics to bring about a united Ireland.

The New IRA (Irish Republican

Army) is an amalgam of armed groups violently opposed to Northern Ireland's peace process. It claimed responsibility for parcel bombs sent to London and Glasgow in March.

Catholic priest Father Joseph Gormley, who read the last rites for McKee, told BBC radio: "This rioting was clearly orchestrated. I have no problems saying that everybody in our community knows that."

"We have a small group of people who want to play political games with our lives."

The IRA sought Northern Ireland's integration into the Republic of Ireland through violence.

The group called a final ceasefire in 1997 and announced an end to its armed campaign in 2005, stating that it would seek to achieve its aims through peaceful political means.

Dissident splinter groups have sought to continue.

The 1998 Good Friday peace deal largely brought an end to three

decades of sectarian bloodshed in Northern Ireland between republican and unionist paramilitaries, as well as British armed forces, in a period known as "the Troubles".

There have been concerns that paramilitaries could be seeking to exploit the current political turbulence over Northern Ireland and its border with the Republic of Ireland, caused by Brexit.

Michel Barnier, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, said the killing was "a reminder of how fragile peace still is in Northern Ireland. We must all work to preserve the achievements of the Good Friday Agreement."

Former US president Bill Clinton tweeted: "Heartbroken by the murder of Lyra McKee and the violence in Derry."

"The challenges in NI today are real-but we cannot let go of the last 21 years of hard-won peace and progress. This tragedy is a reminder of how much everyone has to lose if we do."

Two N'ganj schools line up students to welcome Salim Osman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Authorities of Kalagasia Union High School in Narayanganj yesterday kept their students lined up on the campus stopping exams to welcome local lawmaker AKM Salim Osman.

Authorities of another institution, Morgan Girls School and College, kept their students waiting for about four hours after the exam for attending a programme of the lawmaker at the school, students and guardians said.

Two government orders issued in 2009 and 2014 asked all educational institutions across the country not to line up their students to welcome any public representatives or other dignitaries. The circulars also warned school headmasters and governing bodies of legal action for violation of the order.

Salim Osman, Jatiya Party lawmaker from Narayanganj-5, went to the Kalagasia Union High School to handover a donation cheque for the development of the school around 11:00am.

For the programme, the school authorities brought about 300 students from their exam halls and kept them lined up for about 45 minutes to welcome the lawmaker, said a guardian, requesting anonymity.

Headteacher Rafiqul Islam said the students were taking their first terminal exam, which is of little importance. He then hung up the phone.

At Morgan Girls School and College, students took a three-hour exam beginning at 10:00am. After the exam, some 2,000 students were made to wait for another four hours for the lawmaker's programme.

The lawmaker reached the school around 3:50pm to handover annual prizes and to inaugurate a school building, and left the premises around 5:00pm.

A guardian alleged that the school authorities kept the main gate of the school locked so that no student can go home after the first terminal exam.

Principal Ashok Taru said they prepared lunch for the students for the prize giving ceremony, which was distributed among them. "Students needed to wait for some time for the programme."

Contacted, Salim Osman said, "There were no important exams at Kalagasia school. And students of Morgan school waited for the programme willingly. No students were kept waiting for any programme."

Blind

FROM PAGE 16

This was his second attempt after his initial voyage was cut short six years ago when his yacht hit a whale and sank.

"I'm home. Thank you," Iwamoto told the welcoming party after his yacht sailed into Fukushima, ending a journey of some 14,000 kilometres (8,700 miles).

"I didn't give up and I made a dream come true," Iwamoto was quoted by Japan's Kyodo News as saying.

It was the first Pacific crossing by a blind sailor, Kyodo News said.

Iwamoto, who lost his sight at the age of 16, made the voyage to raise funds for charity, including efforts to prevent blinding diseases, according to his website.

Won't resign if indicted over EU fraud: Czech PM

AFP, Prague

Czech billionaire Prime Minister Andrej Babis yesterday said he would not resign if indicted for his alleged role in a two-million-euro EU subsidy fraud.

Police this week recommended that Babis be indicted over the case which could see him and several others, including family members, spending five to ten years in prison.

"I would not resign because I have been saying from the beginning that this is a political process," Babis told the DNEs broadsheet which he owns.

The 64-year-old agro-chemicals mogul pegged by Forbes as the second-wealthiest Czech is suspected of abusing EU funds to build the luxury Stork Nest resort and farm near Prague in 2007.

He allegedly took the farm out of his sprawling Agrofert food, chemicals and media holding to make it eligible for a subsidy awarded to small companies before eventually putting it back.

Charged by police in 2017, Babis and several others -- including his wife, brother-in-law and daughter -- are suspected of subsidy fraud and harming the EU's financial interests.

"If I weren't in politics, nobody would have heard about the Stork Nest," Babis told DNEs.

"People keep plotting affairs against me, delving into the past. This affair is 12 years old," he said, calling charges

against his family "incredible filth".

President Milos Zeman, who could remove the embattled prime minister, said Thursday he would not do so.

"An indicted prime minister is not a sentenced prime minister," said the 74-year-old pro-Russian, pro-Chinese veteran leftwinger and a staunch Babis ally.

The prime minister's populist ANO movement leads a minority coalition government with leftwing Social Democrats.

It also has tacit backing from the Communists -- a first in the post-Communist country's history.

Late last year, the government survived a confidence vote after media reported that Babis aides had taken his son Andrej Babis Jr. to Russian-occupied Crimea against the son's wishes to hinder the fraud probe.

ANO currently has the highest backing by far of any Czech party, despite the Stork Nest affair and allegations that Babis was a Communist secret police agent in the 1980s.

3-year-old

FROM PAGE 16

Sheikh, the OC there.

The accused was detained later that night.

The OC also said the child underwent medical examination yesterday and was later sent to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital.

FROM PAGE 16

one for not having beacon light, two for using various stickers and five for using dark-tinted glass.

Besides, cases were filed against 1,276 motorcycles for violating traffic rules and 63 other motorcycles were seized, he said.

The traffic department of the DMP was conducting special drives as part of its routine work, he said.

495 foreigners

FROM PAGE 16

Migration in Bangladesh Giorgi Gigauri has urged all the stakeholders to work together to find the causes of human trafficking.

NHRC Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque said each victim of human trafficking must have their rights preserved and brought back home immediately.

"Strong enforcement of relevant law is necessary for preventing human trafficking," he added.

The daylong event was divided into different sessions.