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How Benazir 'sneaked off to Singapore'?

Questions Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka
B N P Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir

yesterday questioned how former IGP Benazir Ahmed and his family members "left the country without obstruction" despite the allegations of amassing assets illegally.

Speaking at a discussion, he also said this exposes the ruling party leaders' claims of not sparing wrongdoers as "mere eyewash and deception."

"I saw a media report that Benazir and his family went to Singapore, leaving the country on May 4. Before leaving, he emptied all his bank accounts and withdrew around Tk 60 crore. I don't know whether the amount is much bigger," Fakhrul said.

"My question is, how

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As Eid-ul-Azha draws closer, such cattle farms are seeing more visitors by the day, as people prepare to purchase their sacrificial animal ahead of the joyous occasion. The photo was taken in the Mohammadpur area near Beribadh yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN Bangladesh needs US \$876b for implementation

Says environment minister

BSS, Dhaka

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury yesterday said Bangladesh needs US \$876 billion to implement its ambitious climate action plans.

He said the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) of the country estimates an investment of US \$230 billion is required for adaptation till 2050.

The remarks came during an inaugural function of a three-day workshop organised by the Economic Relations Division (ERD) at BRAC CDM, Savar.

Additionally, he said, implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) requires US \$175 billion.

"The Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP) and the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 estimate US \$471.72 billion to implement the identified priority projects. Partnership is fundamental. To coordinate among the development partners, the government formed Bangladesh Climate Development Partnership," he said.

"Mobilising climate finance is essential to support our transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. We must leverage private sector investments, international climate funds, and innovative financing mechanisms," said the minister.

"We need to build robust institutional frameworks and enhance our technical capacities to effectively

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Coordinated action needed for Rohingya repatriation

Foreign minister tells UN, partners

UNB, Dhaka
Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud

has urged the United Nations organisations and other partners to take coordinated action for the repatriation of about 1.3 million Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh on humanitarian grounds.

He also sought effective steps to resolve the ongoing conflict in Rakhine state and for the betterment of the Rohingya population.

The foreign minister, who is now in the United States on a three-day official visit, made the appeal during four

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BANGABANDHU BRIDGE

Largest maintenance since opening to start this year

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangabandhu Bridge, the second largest bridge in the country, later this year will undergo the biggest maintenance work since its opening 26 years ago.

Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) will replace all the pot bearings, a vital element for load transmission, on the 4.8km bridge.

It has already selected a joint-venture firm in China to carry out the work, which is considered very critical and time-consuming, at a cost of Tk 128.47 crores, said sources.

"The bridge authority wants to carry out the job while keeping the crucial bridge fully functional. But it may have to suspend vehicle movement for some time," an official said.

The move came around three years after BBA decided to replace the bearings after it was found that 45 percent of pot bearings had problems.

The bridge on the Jamuna River, which was opened to traffic in June 1998, is a vital strategic economic road, rail, energy, and telecommunication link between the northern and southern parts of the country.



The Bangladesh Bridge Authority will replace all pot bearings on the 4.8km Bangabandhu Bridge at a cost of Tk 128.47 crores, marking the largest maintenance effort since its opening 26 years ago.

Pot bearings are a special type of bridge bearing used for transmission of loads from superstructures to piers and to absorb vibration caused by vehicle movement,

experts said.

Italian company FIP Industrial supplied the pot bearings and as per the bridge maintenance manual, the service life of the bearings is between 20 and 30 years, shows BBA documents.

China Communications Construction Company Limited (CCCC) -- BBA's operator for maintenance and operation of Bangabandhu Bridge -- in a report to BBA in 2021 said around 45 percent of 112 bearings' pads on the bridge had problems.

A BBA board discussed the issue in September 2021 and decided to replace the bearings, shows the document.

Quazi Muhammad Ferdous, chief engineer of BBA, said the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP) last week approved a proposal to hire a joint venture firm to replace pot bearings.

The companies are CCCC, Second Harbor Engineering Company Ltd and China Road and Bridge Corporation, according to document.

The firm will get Tk 128.47 crore for supply,

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RMG workers demand wages, Eid bonus by June 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, an RMG workers' platform, demonstrated in Dhaka yesterday, demanding full salaries with overtime and Eid bonuses by June 10.

They also demanded that the government stop excessive bus fares and ensure safe travel arrangements for garment workers during the Eid journey.

To press home their demands, they brought out a procession from Purana Paltan and later held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Speaking at the event, Taslima Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, said nearly 80 percent of Bangladesh's foreign exchange earnings come from the hard work of garment workers, but they face various

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Political goodwill, accountability necessary

Say speakers on ensuring safety of coastal areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government officials lacked the necessary experience and dedication to build embankments in the country, speakers told a programme yesterday.

As a result, damage to embankments by Cyclone Remal in the coastal areas left people homeless and caused the inundation of villages, croplands, and low-lying areas adjacent to the embankments by saline water, they added.

A group of environmentalists, rights activists, and teachers spoke at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon in the capital's Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Addressing the event, BAPA president Nur Mohammad Talukder said, "To build embankments in the coastal areas, the concerned government officials lack experience and patriotism. Those [embankments] are built based on foreign instructions, and are not fit to provide safety to the coastal people."

"To address this issue, political goodwill

and accountability are needed," he added.

Reading out a written statement, Gauhar Naem Wara, a member of BAPA's national committee, said, "The cyclone damaged 61 kilometres of embankments across three districts in Khulna region."

"In Barishal region, embankments have been damaged in at least 400 places. Embankments were also breached in many places across Noakhali and Chattogram regions, allowing saline water to enter villages and damage freshwater sources," he also said.

Gauhar stressed the need to change current policies and strategies.

"Environmental damage is being done under political influence in the name of unplanned development. It needs to stop," said BAPA vice-president Mohidul Hoque Khan.

BAPA's joint secretary Ahmed Kamruzzaman Majumder alleged that the government did not properly account for the damage caused by the cyclone, while BAPA member Rafiqul Alam recommended using simpler warning signals to inform common people ahead of natural disasters.

Environmental damage is being done under political influence in the name of unplanned development. It needs to stop.

MOHIDUL HOQUE KHAN
Vice president of Bapa



The Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) yesterday honoured six member newspapers -- Daily Sangbad, Daily Ittefaq, Daily Azadi, Daily Purbanchal, Daily Manab Zamin, and Daily Prothom Alo -- which have been publishing for more than 25 and 50 years. Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad A Arafat were among those present at the event at the capital's Gulshan Club.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS