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BPSA statement a threat to media

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday expressed concern over the Bangladesh Police Service Association's statement regarding media reports on corruption allegations against its former and current officials, calling it a threat to the media uncovering the truth.

"You have seen the corruption stories of several police officers (exposed by the media). The stories regarding corruption allegations against some other police officers are also surfacing," he said.

"But I am surprised to notice that the police association sent a statement to journalists, threatening them not to publish the truth, fearing it might tarnish their image," Fakhrul said.

He was speaking at a doa and milad mahfil at BNP's Nayapaltna headquarters.

Earlier on June 21, the BPSA issued a statement condemning what it termed a "smear campaign" orchestrated by certain media outlets against current and former members of the police force.

It claimed that recent reports against police members were exaggerated, partial, and intentionally misleading.



Newly-appointed Chief of Army Staff Waker-Uz-Zaman being adorned with the rank badge of "general" in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan and Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan adorned the army chief with the rank badge.

PHOTO: BSS

Picking up the pieces

With flood situation in Sylhet improving, many started rebuilding damaged homes

DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

With water levels receding, hundreds of people in Sylhet are returning to their homes from shelter centres. Many have begun rebuilding their damaged houses.

Sitara Begum, 60, of Jamura village in Sunamganj's Chhatak, returned from the shelter centre yesterday, only to find her house badly damaged.

"The 2022 flood destroyed my old house completely. I then took a small loan to rebuild it and am still paying for that loan. Now that my home is damaged again, I don't know what to do," she said.

Khosru Uddin, who was in the Maizpara shelter centre on the banks of the Manu river, said their house has been damaged by floods twice. It is now too dangerous to stay in that house, he added.

Shayesta Mia, a resident of Shamshanghat area, said water levels in the river started falling since Friday (June 21).

On Friday night, the mayor of Moulvibazar municipality gave 10kg of rice per household. Government and private food assistance is much lower than the demand, said locals.

Sajjad Hossain of Bhukshimol area of Kulaura upazila said his area is still waterlogged.

The situation in Kulaura, Juri, and Barlekha upazilas has also not normalised yet.

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Such media coverage of Matiur 'unexpected'

Says Hasan Mahmud

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

It is not right to accumulate wealth through corruption in the administration, said Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

"Our government has zero tolerance for corruption. Therefore, the issues of corruption are coming out during our government," he said.

He made the remarks when he was asked how corrupt officials remain in the administration, referring to the case of Matiur Rahman, who has come to spotlight for alleged corruption.

Matiur, president of the National Board of Revenue's Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal, has been transferred to

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'AL lost its pro-people image'

Activists express concerns over party's deviation from core ideals

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Leaders and activists from various levels of the ruling Awami League have voiced concerns that the party has strayed from its founding principles, urging a focus on devoted activists rather than infiltrators.

"The ideology that inspired us to do Awami League's politics no longer exists. Here, the opportunists are getting more importance than the dedicated activists. Division within the party has become more acute due to personal interests," said Ajar Hossain, former information and research affairs secretary of Pallabi thana unit AL, at a rally.

Hossain, a 70-year-old AL politician, expressed his frustration over the lack of disciplinary action against leaders who prioritise self-interest. He emphasised that activists who stood by the party during its darkest times are the true loyalists.

"If they are not given due importance and respect, who would protect the party and its ideology? The devotion that the activists of the 80s or 90s had is now missing," he added.

Amid such concerns, thousands of activists and leaders from AL and its affiliated organisations gathered at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital yesterday to celebrate the party's platinum jubilee.

Carrying party and national flags, they arrived in buses, cars, trucks, and on foot, wearing colourful



T-shirts and caps, creating a festive atmosphere as the ruling party marked 75 years.

Rajibul Islam, an activist from Ashulia upazila AL, believes the party has become its own worst enemy.

"Awami League is gradually drifting from its ideology and principles. The core activists of the party have been cornered by the hybrid ones. Businessmen are dominating the party politics. The party lawmakers have created their own circle in their areas, intensifying feud at the grassroots," he said, calling for steps to resolve these conflicts.

An anonymous AL activist from Gazipur said, "There has been a trend that doing Awami League's politics means acquiring huge wealth. It is an ominous sign. If this trend continues, dedicated leaders will be hard to find."

Some activists acknowledged public dissatisfaction over corruption and price hikes, expecting the party to address these issues.

"People have discomfort and complaints with the party over the failure to control price hikes of commodities and corruption. I expect the party would handle these issues with firm hands and prove it as a true pro-people party," said Murad Hossain, president of ward 19 unit of Dhaka north.

Pannu Mia, an AL leader from Nababganj upazila, remarked that the party had lost its "pro-people" image due to some "wrong decisions". He expressed hope that the party would consider public sentiments and re-establish itself as a party of the masses once again.

Action if any Rab member involves in misdeeds

Says new DG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed director general of Rab Md Harun Ar-Rashid yesterday issued a warning that if members of the force are found to be involved in misdeeds or illegal activities, they will face the legal action.

At a media briefing, he also emphasised that the trend of Rab members' involvement in criminal activities has decreased.

Harun announced five-point directives and work plans, prioritising controlling extremism and terrorism, recovering illegal firearms and drugs, and curbing teen gangs' activities.



55.57pc of RMG workers are women

State minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There are over 50.17 lakh workers in Bangladesh's garment factories, with women comprising 55.57 percent of the workforce, according to Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, state minister for labour and employment.

Addressing parliament in response to a question from Awami League MP Nurunnabi Chowdhury, he cited data from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

BGMEA data shows there are 3.3 million workers in garment factories, with 52.28 percent being women. BKMEA data indicates 1.7 million workers in the knit sector, of which 62 percent are women.

However, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the 2022 labour force survey records 43.16 lakh workers in the sector, with 37.51 percent being women.

In response to another question, State Minister for Commerce Ahsanul Islam Titu said the 2022-23 fiscal year experienced the highest inflation in 12 years at 9.02 percent, attributing it to the Russia-Ukraine war. He also said the total trade deficit for 2022-23 fiscal year was \$15,239.55 million.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare Shafiqul Islam Chowdhury said 1.1 million women workers have gone abroad for employment since 2009, mainly to Saudi Arabia.

BLOGGER OYASIQUR MURDER

Trial yet to see closure in 9 years

Complainant still 'unavailable'

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Nine years into the murder of blogger Oyasiqur Rahman Babu, the trial of the case is yet to see any closure as the complainant and other witnesses are not appearing before a Dhaka court for statements.

A gang of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ATB) hacked Oyasiqur, known for his secularist views and write-ups against fundamentalists, in broad daylight at the Tejgaon industrial area on March 30, 2015.

Locals caught two of the attackers on the spot and handed them over to the police.

The prosecution said 24 witnesses out of 40 testified in the case, but the complainant, Monir Hossain Masud, did not appear before the court in the last eight years to testify.

Till May 16 this year, the court summoned Masud, a cousin and also the brother-in-law of Oyasiqur, 77 times and even ordered



his arrest, only to get his testimony, but the prosecution and the police could not produce him before the court.

"One year ago, we received the case for disposal. No witnesses appeared in this court [since they received the case] till May 16 this year," Khondaker Mohibul Hasan Appe, assistant public prosecutor of the Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court-12 of Dhaka, told The Daily Star recently.

On the day of the attack, Masud filed a murder case against four named and some unknown persons with the Tejgaon Industrial Police Station.

In July 2022, The Daily Star caught up with the complainant, Masud, at the capital's Arambagh, where he used to run a grocery shop.

At that time, he showed his reluctance to testify before the court. "Actually, I have no interest in the case now," he had said without any elaboration.

Now, he is not available there and he cannot even be reached over the phone.

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With the Eid vacation ending, many people have already returned to the capital, which can be seen in the gridlock formed on this road at Mohakhali yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Chinese Minister Liu Jianchao in Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Liu Jianchao is visiting Bangladesh to discuss issues of mutual interest between Bangladesh and China.

He arrived in Dhaka on Saturday on a four-day official visit, a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told UNB.

The Chinese minister will meet President Mohammed Shahabuddin on Tuesday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud today, said the official.

The trip is seen as part of regular exchanges of high-level visits, but the forthcoming visit of Hasina to China is likely to be discussed, said ministry sources.

