

CA assures SAFF champions of fulfilling their demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's SAFF Women's Championship winners relayed their individual and collective demands to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus during a reception accorded at CA's official residence yesterday morning.

The 23-member team along with head coach Peter Butler and team manager Mahmuda Akter Ananya attended the reception. The team gifted the Chief Adviser their signed jerseys and footballs.

"I congratulate you on behalf of the whole nation on achieving this success. The nation is grateful to you. The people of our country want success. You have brought us the success," the Chief Adviser told the players in his opening remarks, quoted a press release from the CA Press Wing.

The Chief Adviser carefully listened to the demands of the

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PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALI RIAZ'S FACEBOOK PAGE

Members of the Constitutional Reform Commission meet Dr Kamal Hossain at his office in Motijheel yesterday. Story on page 12.

Nagorik Committee

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will form a convening committee.

Outside the cities, each upazila committee must have 21 members and in cities each thana-committee must have 31 members.

Twenty-five percent of the members must be women, 5 percent each from the family of a martyr, family of an injured, minority, worker, and local ethnic community. This condition must be met to form a convening committee.

The guidelines emphasise inclusion of teachers, lawyers, writers, doctors, engineers, journalists, homemakers, and young religious leaders.

Only local residents are eligible; no associates or beneficiaries of the Awami League will be allowed; and the committee must uphold the spirit of the mass uprising.

Spokesperson Samanta Sharmin said their mission is to dismantle the fascist system and implement a new political framework, with grassroots committees aimed at organising the forces of the recent uprising.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement has formed an 111-member convening committee in Kushtia, said a press release, signed by its Convener Hasnat Abdullah and Member Secretary Arif Sohel.

Journo killing

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also marked the release of Unesco's biannual Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists, which showed a 38 percent increase in journalist killings since the previous report.

In his message for the Day, UN Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out that Gaza has seen the highest number of killings of journalists and media workers in any war in decades. He called on governments to take urgent steps to protect journalists, investigate crimes against them, and prosecute perpetrators.

The war in Gaza inevitably dominated the 2024 UN International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East on Friday, an event that has taken place annually for the past three decades, with the aim of enhancing dialogue and understanding between media practitioners, and fostering their contributions in support of a peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In a statement to the seminar, read out by UN head of global communications, Melissa Fleming, Guterres noted that journalists in Gaza have been killed "at a level unseen in any conflict in modern times". He said that the ongoing ban preventing international journalists from Gaza "suffocates the truth even further".

Every two years, the awareness raising campaign for the commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists coincides with the findings of the Unesco report outlining the current state of global and regional impunity.

Expressing concern, Unesco said impunity damages whole societies by covering up serious human rights abuses, corruption, and crime. It asked governments, civil society, the media, and everyone concerned to uphold the rule of law to join in the global efforts to end impunity.

BNP against

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Fakhrul also said that Sabihuddin, a sports enthusiast, was full of energy. "He would be happy if he could see Bangladesh free from fascism."

Finance Adviser Salehiddin Ahmed, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, and Vice-Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoo, among others, spoke at the programme.

\$12-15b laundered every year

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But in many countries, the governments will not ask questions if a Bangladeshi wants to buy a luxurious apartment there.

"This is how a former Bangladeshi minister bought more than 300 properties abroad and it is the tip of the iceberg. There are many such cases. It proves that there is a demand side apart from the supply side ... Many countries have created opportunities for money launderers."

While it is possible to retrieve the laundered money, it is extremely difficult and nearly impossible, Iftekharuzzaman said.

Until Bangladesh makes a law and signs agreements with other countries for returning the money, it is not possible to bring back the laundered money.

"France willingly returned the laundered money to some former French colonies in Africa as it thought

French-speaking people would face financial troubles. All countries will not be proactive like France in returning the money."

Only Singapore returned \$9.3 million to Bangladesh in the Siemens case between 2007 and 2013 as the Singaporean government was cooperative.

A coordinated approach is needed among state agencies like the ACC, the Criminal Investigation Department, the National Board of Revenue, the attorney general and the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) to retrieve the laundered money.

The government has started negotiations with some countries like the US, the UK and the EU to bring back the stolen money.

"But it will be a surprise if the interim government can bring back even \$100 million during its tenure. Even a single penny returned will be

a surprise."

Bangladesh will have to start work to stop the laundering by ushering in reforms in the institutions.

"It is expected that the next elected government will also follow the changed rules to discourage money laundering."

The ACC did not take action against the high-ups of the immediate past government but after August 5 the same people are taking action against more than 200 powerful people, Iftekharuzzaman added.

Mostafa Kamal Majumder, editor of GreenWatch Dhaka, moderated the seminar jointly organised by the ERF and Sombhabonar Bangladesh.

Jasim Uddin Ahmad, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, ERF President Mohammad Refayet Ullah Mirdha and ERF General Secretary Abul Kashem also spoke.

all were corrupt, said Paul.

"One [AL] leader made 360 houses in London, in England, and without any accountability. Even the prime minister knew about this but did not take any step.

"That's why I said that zero tolerance towards corruption is the biggest mockery of the century."

The East Asian nations invested a lot of money in research, education and health while these sectors are hugely neglected or sometimes totally politicised in Bangladesh, Paul pointed out.

"We cannot improve our educational rankings because we've put all the political people in the institutions and politicised the campuses. Now the interim government has done something like banning one party, one student front. Why not all student fronts?"

Paul hailed incumbent Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur for fighting against inflation.

To tame inflation, Paul advised the authorities to keep the supply chain mechanism friendly to the consumers, and prevent extortions at all levels.

"And a reliable data mechanism should be introduced so that producers can make decisions properly."

Paul recommended abolishing the Financial Institution Division under the finance ministry to ensure minimum influence of the government in the banking sector.

He suggested passing a fiscal responsibility law to ensure fiscal discipline, transparency, and long-term sustainability of public finances.

The economist also recommended restructuring the time of the fiscal year, starting from January instead of July.

She further said the trial process is time-consuming, and "as the saying goes, 'justice delay is justice denied'".

According to court sources, the cyber tribunal of Dhaka was only able to deliver verdicts in 213 cases out of 2,141 filed between 2014 and 2022.

Of those, the accused in 162 cases were acquitted till December 2022. At least 1,600 cases were pending trial with the Dhaka Cyber Tribunal till September this year, the sources added.

About trial delays and low conviction, Rafiqul Islam, the public prosecutor of the Cyber Tribunal of Dhaka, told this correspondent, "One of the major reasons for the delay in trial and poor conviction is that witnesses did not appear in the court. And in many cases, the victims reach out-of-court settlements."

However, he said he did not think there was a lack of expert lawyers to deal with cybercrime cases. "We've expert lawyers in court now," adding that steps are being taken to resolve all the cases soon.

UK-based lawyer files complaint against Hasina at The Hague

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A lawyer has filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court at The Hague accusing former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, the ministers of her government and its associated state actors of crimes against humanity.

Asraful Arafin, a lawyer of London's 3 Bolt Court Chambers, filed the case under Article 15 of Rome Statute on October 28, seeking an independent investigation into what he mentioned as targeted extrajudicial killings during the mass uprising, torture in secret detention centres, and other atrocities.

He requested the ICC to issue arrest warrants for key suspects to prevent further impunity, according to a media statement.

In Bangladesh, over 200 murder cases have been filed since she fled to India on August 5.

Lawyers say the ICC may take cognisance of the complaint if it deems Bangladesh courts unable to do it. Member states of the UN Security Council have veto power over the ICC.

The statement said Bangladesh witnessed a shocking tragedy when the government launched a brutal crackdown on peaceful protesters in July and August.

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Jail killing day today

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Of the other convicts, who are reportedly hiding abroad, Rashed Chowdhury is in the US and Noor Chowdhury in Canada. The government could not trace eight others despite efforts made through diplomatic channels, intelligence agencies and the Interpol.

The government also failed to bring Rashed and Noor back.

On this day in 1975, five army personnel, wearing khaki uniforms and carrying rifles, went to Dhaka

very powerful state machinery.

The apex court on April 30, 2013 upheld the verdict that gave death sentences to Muslemuddin, Marfat Ali Shah and Abdul Hashem Mridha; and life imprisonment to Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haq Dalim, Noor, Rashed, Ahmed Shariful Hossain, Abdul Majed, Kismat Hasem and Nazmul Hossain.

In another development, former state minister for home Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj, son of Bangladesh's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad, is



Syed Nazrul Islam



Tajuddin Ahmad



Mansur Ali



Quamruzzaman

Central Jail around 4:00am.

One of them introduced himself as Captain Muslemuddin, who was attached to the Bangabhaban, entered the jail and shot the four leaders to death, says the complaint.

The slain leaders led the Liberation War 1971 after Bangabandhu's detention by the Pakistan army. They were put behind bars soon after Bangabandhu and most of his family members were assassinated on August 15, 1975.

On November 4, Kazi Abdul Awal, the then deputy inspector general (prisons), filed the FIR with Lalbagh Police Station.

ABM Fazlul Karim, the then officer-in-charge of the station, was tasked with the investigation. He collected evidence from the scene after a magistrate made an inquest report of the bodies.

The Indemnity Ordinance, however, kept the investigation and trial halted for about 21 years until the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) resumed the probe on August 18, 1996.

In 2004, a trial court in Dhaka handed punishments to 11 perpetrators.

In the verdict by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, the then chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha observed that the assassination of the four national leaders was part of a criminal conspiracy that involved

scheduled to submit a memorandum to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus today to press home his demand for observance of the Jail Killing Day by the state as the 'National Mourning Day'.

Sohel Taj wrote on his verified Facebook page, "November 3 is the disgraceful Jail Killing Day. It's been 49 years, yet the four national heroes who successfully led the Liberation War and under whose leadership Bangladesh emerged as an independent sovereign state have not received any state recognition. This cannot be accepted!"

He also demands that the government declare April 10, the day the first Bangladesh government was formed, as the 'Republic Day' and include names, contributions and biographies of all civil and military organisers, directors, martyrs and freedom fighters in the textbooks.

"I believe these three demands are just and logical and reflect the heartfelt desires of everyone who supports independence and the Liberation War. In line with this, my next program will be to stage a sit-in in front of Hotel InterContinental on November 3 at 3:30 PM, followed by a march to submit the memorandum to the Chief Adviser," he wrote yesterday.

Harris, Trump

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off even slivers of support from each other's camps.

Harris, currently President Joe Biden's vice president, is doing that by appealing to centrist voters and propelling her base to the polls with a robust ground game and get-out-the-vote effort.

Thousands of women were expected to demonstrate yesterday, under the theme "We Won't Go Back," in cities across the country in support of Harris and abortion rights.

But as she has worked to appeal to women voters across party lines, using issues like abortion and health care, Trump lashed out at a Democratic TV ad depicting wives of his supporters secretly voting for Harris.

"Can you imagine a wife not telling her husband who she's voting for?" he asked on Fox News yesterday morning.

Harris, who earlier rebuked Trump for saying he would protect women whether they "like it or not," has encouraged voters to "finally turn the page" on the former president.

"He is someone who is increasingly unstable, obsessed with revenge, consumed with grievance -- and the man is out for unchecked power," she told supporters in Little Chute, Wisconsin on Friday.

'THRILL OF A LIFETIME'

Trump, meanwhile, has doubled down on his already extreme rhetoric in hopes of firing up his loyal base to

turn out in massive numbers.

"Kamala's closing message to America is that she hates you," Trump fumed on Friday night in Warren, Michigan, where he trashed the economy under Biden and Harris as a disaster -- despite experts saying the overall economy is strong.

He also warned that "a 1929-style economic depression" would ensue if Harris were elected. Speaking on Fox yesterday, Trump described the weak employment data released Friday as "the worst job numbers," though analysts said the figures were a temporary blip.

Citing her hawkish foreign policy views, Trump earlier had conjured the image of Liz Cheney, a former Republican representative turned Harris supporter, being shot.

"She's a radical war hawk. Let's put her with a rifle standing there with nine barrels shooting at her, OK? Let's see how she feels about it, you know, when the guns are trained on her face," Trump said.

Harris, the nation's first Black and first Asian-American vice president, meanwhile has sought to harness celebrity star power like Beyonce and Bruce Springsteen in the campaign's waning days.

Jennifer Lopez, a pop icon of Puerto Rican heritage, joined Harris onstage Thursday, amid a firestorm triggered by a Trump rally warm-up speaker branding the US territory a "floating island of garbage."