

MAJ SINHA MURDER Army chief promises full cooperation to ensure justice

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN,
from Cox's Bazar

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman has promised full cooperation to ensure swift justice for the murder of Major (ret'd) Sinha Mohammad Rashed Khan.

Speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of the Sinha Memorial Plaque in Baharchhara, Teknaf, the army chief extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

A monument was constructed under the supervision of the Border Guard Bangladesh, said a press release from the Inter Services Public Relation Directorate.

Sinha was shot dead at a police checkpoint in Baharchhara on July 31, 2020. The unarmed ex-army officer, who had served in the Special Security Force and as a UN peacekeeper in Ivory Coast, was killed in what was later determined to be an unlawful act by law enforcement personnel.

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Army chief Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman being inducted as the "Colonel of the Regiment" of the Bangladesh Infantry Regiment at Rajshahi Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: ISPR

ACC sues ex-fisheries minister for Tk 3,891cr suspicious transactions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) has found 19 bank accounts linked to former fisheries and livestock minister Md Abdur Rahman, revealing approximately Tk 3,891 crore in questionable transactions, according to a top ACC official.



Md Abdur Rahman

The anti-graft body also alleged that Abdur Rahman amassed Tk 1.73 crore in assets beyond his known source of income.

On these grounds, he was sued in a money laundering case yesterday, ACC Director General, Md Akhtar Hossain, told journalists yesterday.

Abdur Rahman's wife, Dr Mirza Nahida Hossain, has also been accused of acquiring assets worth Tk 6.31 crore beyond her known income, while her 16 bank accounts reportedly recorded suspicious transactions amounting to Tk 26.56 crore.

Abdur Rahman has also been named as an accused in the case filed against his wife for allegedly aiding in the accumulation of illicit wealth.

ACC DG said, "The accused have been charged under Section 27(1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004; Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947; and Sections 4(2) and 4(3) of the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012."

From movement to mainstream politics

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Akhter and Nahid were convened and member secretary respectively of Gonotantrik Chhatra Shakti, a platform launched on October 4, 2023, and dissolved on September 14 last year, two months after the uprising.

Additionally, Nasiruddin Patwary,

the initiative to form the party amid a discord over leadership positions.

Sources in the Nagorik Committee said the top leadership of the party will be announced at the launch while the full-fledged committee is likely to be announced through a press release later.

Both SAD and the Nagorik Committee



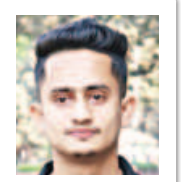
Samanta



Patwary



Hasnat



Sarjis



Hannan



Saleh Uddin

convenor of the Nagorik Committee, will hold the chief coordinator's post in the new party while Hasnat Abdullah will be designated as the chief organiser (south) and Sarjis Alam as chief organiser (north).

Hasnat is the convenor of SAD and Sarjis is the chief organiser of the Nagorik Committee.

At least three Nagorik Committee leaders involved in the formation of the party confirmed the key leadership positions to The Daily Star.

Samanta Shermeen, spokesperson for the Nagorik Committee, is almost certain to become senior joint convenor of the new party.

Also, Abdul Hannan Masud, chief organiser of SAD, will be named joint coordinator of NCP.

Saleh Uddin Silat, a co-spokesperson for the Nagorik Committee, is nearly confirmed as NCP's office secretary.

These decisions were made during a joint meeting of the Nagorik Committee and SAD at the former's central office in the capital's Bangla Motor yesterday afternoon.

According to meeting sources, the position of senior joint member secretary was not finalised as multiple contenders were being considered.

The names of Nagorik Committee members Nahida Sarver Niva, Monira Sharmin and Dr Tasnim Zara; and SAD executive committee member Nusrat Tabassum are being discussed.

The central convening committee is likely to be a 151-member body divided equally between the Nagorik Committee and SAD.

Former Islami Chhatra Shibir leaders in the Nagorik Committee withdrew from

will remain active after the launch of the party. The two platforms will continue to operate from their existing offices at Rupayan Trade Center in Bangla Motor.

NCP will have a separate office at a different location.

The uprising activists are planning to hold a mammoth rally to mark the launch. Leaders of the two platforms said they are aiming for a massive turnout of 3 lakh people.

Yesterday, workers were preparing the stage on the road in front of the south gate of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan.

Leaders and activists of all the units of SAD and the Nagorik Committee will attend the event.

Those from outside Dhaka have been asked to park their buses at the old Trade Fair ground in Agargaon.

Nagorik Committee insiders said leaders from various political parties, diplomats, families of the martyrs of the mass uprising, injured activists, and representatives of expatriates who played significant roles in the movement have been invited to the event.

Additionally, oppressed individuals from various classes and professions who contributed to the backdrop of the mass uprising, as well as students and the public who actively participated in the July 2024 movement, will also attend the ceremony.

The event will begin with recitations from the Holy Quran and other religious scriptures.

Representatives from the families of the July uprising martyrs and injured individuals will deliver speeches afterwards.

A documentary on the uprising will also be screened at the event.

In December last year, student leaders of the uprising announced their plan to form a new political party and contest the next general election.

Later, the BNP stated that it would not accept any attempt to form a political party while remaining in power. It urged advisers involved in the formation of the new party to resign from the cabinet if they intended to enter politics.

Govt to clear Beximco payroll

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The government will start providing service benefits to workers and officers on March 9 and the payment includes the employees' salary up to February.

The 14 units are Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited (Head Office), International Knitwear and Apparels Limited, Crescent Fashion and Design Limited, Esses Fashions Limited, New Dacca Industries Limited, Escorp Apparels Limited, Bextex Garments Limited, Yellow Apparels Limited, ShinePukur Garments Limited, Beximco Fashions Limited, Prefix Fashions Limited, Crescent Accessories Limited, Urban Fashions Limited and RR Washing.

The four currently active Beximco units are Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited (Factory), Beximco PPE Limited, Escorp Apparels Limited (Yellow Local Brand) and RR Washing (Partially Running), according to Beximco Group.

The adviser said his government would take action against the responsible persons and officials of the banks and other departments and agencies of the government involved in giving loans by violating rules between 2008 and 2024.

Legal action will be taken through the ACC against them including Janata officials, Beximco board members, the Bangladesh Bank and the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

The labour and employment ministry will ask the home affairs ministry to impose a travel ban on the persons and officials of the banks, companies and boards of directors of different companies, he said.

Those who are already abroad will have to return to Bangladesh at some point or they will be declared persona non grata through seizure of their passports.

The government formed a high-powered committee headed by Lutfe Siddiqui, the chief adviser's special envoy for international affairs, to determine the next course of action for the industrial units inside of Beximco Industrial Park.

Representatives from the BSEC, BB, a representative from the office of the attorney general, Beximco Group's receiver and chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority are also included in the committee.

A total of 13 banks, including the BB, provided more than Tk 40,000 crore in loans to Beximco Group.

Beximco owes Janata Tk 23,285 crore, Sonali Tk 1,424 crore, Agrani Tk 420 crore, Rupali Tk 987 crore, National Bank Tk 315 crore and United Commercial Tk 333 crore.

It also owes AB Bank Tk 938 crore, Exim Tk 497 crore, Global Islami Tk 61 crore, Dutch Bangla Tk 94 crore, IFC Tk 78 crore and the Bangladesh Infrastructure Finance Fund about Tk 87 crore.

Helal Uddin, member secretary of Phulpur Upazila BNP in Mymensingh, said, "We struggled for 16 years. The party must take a firm stance... so that the national polls can be held by December."

Atiqur Rahman Saju from Jamalpur said BNP's student and youth organisations must be strengthened, as these groups were at the forefront of the July and August anti-government protests.

He called for the formation of new BNP committees in areas where the party currently lacks an active presence.

Throughout the meeting, BNP leaders repeatedly stressed the need for unity and discipline. Many urged immediate action against those who "secretly support the Awami League".

Zahirul Islam Pintu from Jamalpur criticised "new" BNP members for disorder, and urged his colleagues to stay away from conflicts over mosque and madrasa committees.

Sirajul Islam from Habiganj said if the party put its tested activists on the sidelines in favour of the opportunists, the result will be disastrous.

Many grassroots leaders said individuals with no history of

Shun vengeance, unite to rebuild Bangladesh

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"People from all walks of life in Bangladesh, especially the youth, are eager for a positive democratic change. We must work for the greater interest of the country by rising above pettiness," she said while addressing an extended party meeting virtually from London, where she is currently

minister, appeared on the big screen at exactly 12:23pm yesterday, the party leaders and activists stood up, applauded, and chanted slogans in her name.

She called upon her party activists to unite and re-organise the BNP with greater determination, incorporating the people, so that the party can once



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia reading out a statement before the party's extended meeting at the ground adjacent to LD Hall of the parliament yesterday. Khaleda addressed the event virtually and a chair was left empty on the stage out of respect for her.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

undergoing treatment.

Calling upon the youth, students, and the people, Khaleda said, "Let us build our beloved Bangladesh truly a livable, developed, and democratic state, not through revenge or vengeance, but with mutual love and brotherhood."

Speaking as the chief guest, she said the cohorts of fascists and enemies of Bangladesh are plotting to undermine the achievements of the mass uprising. "Through unity, we can thwart the conspiracy."

Asking the party activists to remain united to ensure success in the upcoming national election, Khaleda said, "Don't take any action that would render your long struggle and sacrifices useless."

The BNP's extended meeting started at 11:00am at the ground adjacent to LD Hall of the parliament, with around 4,000 leaders and activists from across the country joining the event. The theme of the meeting was "Shudiro Oikya Rukhe Dite Pare Shorojontro" (Strong unity can foil conspiracies).

The party's last extended meeting was held on February 4, 2018, at a city hotel. Khaleda presided over that programme.

As Khaleda, also a former prime

again lead movements and govern the state like it did in the past.

"Let us use our full strength in the coming days to realise Shaheed Ziaur Rahman's dream of a modern, prosperous, and democratic Bangladesh."

Thanking the party leaders and activists for their sacrifices for democracy and her release, the BNP chief said, "We must always remember the words of Shaheed president Ziaur Rahman – the party is greater than the individual, and the country is greater than the party."

Presiding over the party's meeting, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman called on the interim government to exercise greater caution in maintaining neutrality, as public doubt over its impartiality continues to grow.

"Neutrality is the interim government's greatest asset in ensuring a free and fair election. Doubts over its impartiality have already emerged among the people. I urge the government to be more vigilant in upholding neutrality," he said during his inaugural speech.

Tarique demanded an immediate announcement of a clear roadmap for the polls.

He said, "While the chief adviser's

statements on various occasions have fostered positive expectations, misleading remarks from some advisers have frustrated pro-democracy and freedom-loving citizens."

Despite unconditional support from BNP and other pro-democracy parties, the interim government has yet to set clear priorities in its action plan, he claimed.

"When the government is failing to control price hike of essentials and ensure law and order, the public does not understand why it is complicating matters further by prioritising local elections over national polls," Tarique said.

He said that holding local polls before the national election would "rehabilitate allies of the fugitive autocrat".

"BNP will not fall into the trap of rehabilitating mass murderers, money launderers, and corrupt mafia groups."

Tarique said those, who once sought to turn Bangladesh into a failed state, did not cease their conspiracies. A deliberate confusion is being created over issues such as reforms and local elections.

"Through you, I would like to call upon the farmers, workers, ordinary people, Alem-Ulema, Pir-Mashayekh (Islamic scholars and spiritual leaders) and all sections of society to stay vigilant against this conspiracy to destroy the national unity and environment of the national election."

In his welcome speech, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said after Hasina fled to India on August 5, people hoped for a change in the country. They expected their voting rights to be restored quickly so that they could elect their representatives.

"But unfortunately, we still don't see any clear direction in this regard."

"...A group has started plotting in various ways. Attempts are also being made from outside. At the same time, some individuals and groups are trying to mislead the people by giving wrong explanations about the situation inside the country."

The inaugural session featured a screening of the documentary "Prothom Bangladesh, Amar Shesh Bangladesh".

BNP Standing Committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Nazrul Islam Khan, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Salahuddin Ahmed, Selima Rahman, and Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin, were also present at the meeting.

Amendments must not serve

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reflects the aspirations of the people of the country. It must also be ensured that the constitution is not manipulated for the benefit of any individual or group."

"No initiative to amend the constitution should be driven by narrow interests. Any amendment should be pursued through extensive consultation and national consensus. Otherwise, these changes will fail to bring about national welfare," he said.

Kamal Hossain, one of the framers of Bangladesh's constitution, was speaking as the chief guest at a discussion titled The 1972 Constitution and Proposed Reforms, organised by the Bangladesh Gonotantrik Ainjibi Samity at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) auditorium yesterday afternoon.

Bangladesh's constitution reflects the nation's struggle, he said.

"It is not merely a legal document but a reflection of our dreams, aspirations, and struggles. Discussions on reviewing and reforming the constitution as per the needs of the time are not new, but the question remains – how much these changes will reflect the will of the people?"

He said if the amendments truly reflect the people's aspirations, this would be the appropriate way to move forward.

"We have witnessed the events of 2024. In particular, the experience of August 5 reminded us that people's aspirations can never be ignored. The student movement is part of our historical continuity, where a generation has taken to the streets for its just demands – just as we saw in 1952, 1969, and 1971. This movement is not limited to a specific time frame; it is an integral part of our national consciousness."

He added, "The Liberation War of 1971 gave us the dream of an exploitation-free, just, and democratic state. The 1972 constitution was promulgated to realise that dream."

The event, presided over by Senior Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Ainjibi Samity, was also addressed by former state minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, Bangla Academy President Prof Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fouzia Moslem, senior journalist Sohrab Hasan, and Bangladesh Gonotantrik Ainjibi Samity General Secretary Senior Advocate Zahidul Bari, among others.