

Ershad is relaxed after making 'best decision' in politics

HM Ershad seems to be patting himself on the back after appointing his brother GM Quader as Co-chairman and Ruhul Amin Howlader as Secretary General of Jatiya Party.

“I did not know that one announcement could cause so much excitement within the party,” said the chairman at a programme in Dhaka on Thursday.

“This might just be the best decision I took in my entire political career.”

“I had been in so much pain. There was no peace of mind... or smiles. I would be worried all the time, what would happen to Jatiya Party... my child when I’m gone.”

“But now I’m relaxed, my child will survive. I will live because of this one decision.”

Ershad was addressing a reception for the newly appointed Quader, his successor, and Howlader at a restaurant in Gulshan.

Criticising former secretary general Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, he said, “Ruhul Amin was secretary general for 14 years. But he didn’t say a word when I had removed him from the post.”

“That is loyalty... that is love. I made someone else secretary general in his place who shoved me out of my party after I made my brother (GM Quader) co-chairman. Is that even possible?”

The supporters were heard chanting, “No... no... no... Bablu is a traitor ... traitor.”

“But I’m forgetting all of this from today, I’ll listen to my brother from now on,” said Ershad as he resumed.

Four policemen withdrawn from duty over death of tea-seller

Four policemen have been withdrawn from duty over the death of a tea-seller from burns after police allegedly attacked him, causing an oil spill from a stove, in Dhaka’s Shah Ali area.

Jasim Uddin Molla, Mirpur Division Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the withdrawn policemen are two sub-inspectors, an assistant sub-inspector and a constable.

The action was taken hours after the death of tea-seller Babul Matubbor.

Matubbor was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after he was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 1:30 am on Thursday. He died there later.

The 45-year-old had suffered 90 percent burns.

Matubbor was attacked by policemen who demanded that he give them money, his family has said.

But police claimed he was a drug dealer and had caught fire while trying to flee from a police informer.

Kader Siddique cannot contest Tangail by-polls after HC scraps petition

The High Court has scrapped a petition filed by Kader Siddique, putting an end to his chances of contesting in the Tangail-4 by-polls.

Thursday's verdict also meant there were no legal hurdles to holding the election, the Election Commission's lawyer has said.

The Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) president had filed the petition against the commission's decision to cancel his nomination.

Justices Md Ashfaqu'l Islam and Zafar Ahmed announced the verdict after ruling that the writ filed by Siddique was not acceptable for the High Court.

Broadcast Law in June: Inu

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu on Thursday said the draft of a 'Broadcast Law' will be placed at the next session of Parliament in June after getting clearance from Cabinet. The minister disclosed the information while talking to reporters at the secretariat after a meeting with a UNDP official.

"We will get the draft of the law within next two weeks," Inu said.

After getting the copy of the draft, it will be opened to public for feedback and opinions, he said.

The minister also said the law would come into effect in the light of "National Broadcast Policy 2014", and an independent broadcast commission would also be installed under the new law.

Inu said his ministry was going to arrange a two-day media convention where journalists from across the country are expected to participate.

During the convention, journalists will be urged to play significant roles to save democracy and to work against militancy and terrorism, said the minister.

Earlier, Inu joined a meeting with Resident Representative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Robert D Watkins.

Inu said UNDP has proposed to train journalists to play a role to deal with earthquake.

The UNDP has also offered to increase the aptitudes of the Community Radios, Inu said.

Tea-seller burnt in 'police attack' dies in Dhaka hospital

A tea-seller in Dhaka has died from burns after police allegedly attacked him, causing an oil spill from a stove.

Babul Matubbor, of Mirpur's Shah Ali area, was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after he was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 1:30am Thursday.

The 45-year-old had suffered 90% burns, said Burn Unit doctor Partha Sankar Pal.

Babul was attacked by policemen who demanded that he give them money, his family has said.

But police claimed Babul was a drug dealer who had burnt himself while trying to run away from them.

Babul lived in a house near his tea-shop at Mirpur-1 Gudaraghat, his daughter-in-law Moni Begum told bdnews24.com.

She said two women sold marijuana in front of Babul's shop. "Police harassed us in various ways when my father-in-law complained about them."

A couple of policemen tried to take Babul away to Shah Ali Police Station at noon on Wednesday, she said.

"They came to extort money from him at night. But when he refused to pay up, several of them wearing police uniforms hit the stove in the shop with their batons."

Babul's jacket caught fire when oil splashed out of the stove, she said.

"I was there ... I saw everything with my own eyes."

Meanwhile, Shah Ali Police Station OC AKM Shahin Mondol said, "Babul is a drug dealer. He tried to run away when our source Delwar went to his shop at night. His body then caught fire from the stove."

"A police team went there after learning of the fire," he said, brushing aside allegations of extortion.

AL MP Latif sued for distorting Bangabandhu's portrait

MA Latif, the Awami League lawmaker from Chittagong-11 constituency, has been sued for distorting the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Saifuddin Ahmed Robi, a former central committee member of AL's youth front Jubo League, filed the Tk 1,000 crore defamation suit with Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate's Court today, reports the Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

Taking the case into cognisance, Judge Farid Ahmed ordered an additional deputy police commissioner to investigate the matter and submit the report by the next 15 days.

According to the case statement, Latif has made a poster in which he has put his head on the

portrait of Bangabandhu.

“The AL lawmaker has mocked the father of the nation by this act. I have lodged the case as a conscious citizen of the country,” Robi said.

Transport owners to be punished for road crashes: Quader

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader today held transport owners responsible for road crashes and indiscipline in the sector.

“They (owners) too are responsible for road crashes. That’s why we are going to bring them under purview of punishment,” he told reporters while visiting a mobile court at Dhaka’s Agargaon.

“We have drafted a new road transport law. There, transport owners will be brought to book for road crashes and indiscipline in the sector,” Quader told reporters.

As per the existing Road Transport Act, only drivers are held responsible and punished also for road accidents and indiscipline in public transport sector, he said.

Loss of lives in road crashes has become a nightmare for Bangladesh. Last year alone, more than 8,500 people were killed in road crashes throughout the country.

On the note of jam in the Dhaka, Quader underscored the need for collective efforts of city corporations, public works ministry and police department to reduce the plight of commuters.

Central Hospital fire brought under control

A fire that broke out at the basement of Central



Firefighters working to douse a fire that broke out at the basement of Central Hospital on Green Road in the capital. Photo: The Daily Star

The fire at Central Hospital on Dhaka's Green Road this afternoon was brought under control within an hour.

No injury was reported as all the patients were evacuated, said an official of the hospital.

The fire originated inside the basement around 1:30pm, Polash Chandra Morol, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

On information, seven firefighting units reached the spot and brought the fire under control around 2:30pm, he said. The reason for the fire could not be ascertained immediately.

Bangabandhu's image 'distorted' on Chittagong Awami League MP MA Latif's billboards

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's image on billboards installed in Chittagong by ruling Awami League MP MA Latif set up during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to the port city appear to be a gross distortion of reality.

Bangladesh Chhatra League activists took out a procession and organised a rally protesting against the distortion following criticism of the billboards on social media.

The billboards display a photo of the nation's founding father, but the posture, attire, and shoes do not match those which marked him out in his lifetime.

In response to the criticism, Latif has defended himself by saying that since he was busy with the prime minister's visit, he had assigned the job of preparing and putting up the billboards to others.

"If it's true, it has been wrongly done. I am in Dhaka now. I'll take steps after checking when I return," he told southnews24.com.

Poet Kamrul Hassan Badal posted photos of the billboards on Facebook and wrote, "I can't believe these are Bangabandhu's images. The dress and the posture are not his."

Chittagong City BCL General Secretary Nurul Azam Rony wrote, "MP Latif has not only distorted Bangabandhu's image by super-imposing the image of the Father of the Nation on his own body, but has also dragged the nation down."

Since getting the Awami League's parliamentary nomination in 2008, Latif has waded repeatedly into controversies by his actions.

He is on record as having taken part in a programme attended by the alleged war criminal, Islami Samaj Kalyan Parishad chief Maulana Shamsuddin, and the then Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Amir Afsar Uddin Chowdhury on Jan 31, 2009.

The three men were caught on camera sharing the same stage.

Latif, a former president of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, had also been at loggerheads with former mayor and Chittagong Awami League chief ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Chowdhury's followers allege Latif has links with the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Two more sentenced to death for Bangladesh war crimes

A Bangladeshi tribunal sentenced two former pro-Pakistan militia fighters to death Tuesday for war crimes during the country's 1971 independence conflict.

Lawyers for 66-year-old Obaidul Haque and Ataur Rahman, 62, immediately announced that they would seek to overturn the ruling by the International Crimes Tribunal.

It has so far convicted two dozen people of atrocities in the brutal conflict, in which what was then East Pakistan broke away from the rest of the country to become Bangladesh.

Both men were convicted of killing seven people and raping a woman in the northern district of Netrokona and of torturing six others to death after abducting them.

A total of 23 prosecution witnesses had testified against the pair since charges were laid against them last year.

Prosecutors had told the tribunal that Haque was not only one of the leaders of a pro-Pakistani

political party in 1971 but also a head of a militia group behind a series of brutal attacks on civilians.

Rahman was accused by witnesses of being a member of the same militia.

“We will challenge the verdict with the Supreme Court and hope our clients will be proved not guilty and be acquitted,” defence lawyer Gazi Tamim told reporters after the sentence was handed down.

Twenty-four people have so far been convicted of war crimes by the tribunal, a domestic court which lacks international oversight.

Most of them were senior figures in Jamaat-e-Islami, the country`s largest Islamist party. Three of the Jamaat leaders have so far been executed, along with a senior leader of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

Previous convictions and sentences from the tribunal have triggered deadly violence, with some 500 people killed, mainly in clashes between opposition activists and police over the last three years.

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina maintains the trials are needed to heal the wounds of the conflict. But the opposition say they are an attempt to eradicate its leadership.
