

BCIC corruption case

Mosharraff gets 3-year simple imprisonment

Former Industries Secretary and Former Chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) AKM Mosharraff Hossain was convicted yesterday in a corruption case for abusing official position and "usurping government money," reports BSS.

January 29, 1991 and charge sheet submitted on February 25, 1991. A total of 20 prosecution witnesses testified in this case which was initially started in a Division Court, but transferred to the Fourth Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court.

In his observation, the Judge said the accused should have been given exemplary punishment for the crime committed by him while occupying the highest position of the government.

But considering the environment under which the accused worked and the degree of crime committed, the court opted that to award him lesser punishment and asking to pay fine would be wiser.

Immediately after the announcement of the judgement, a petition was filed submitted before the Judge for division status of Hossain, who was standing on the dock. Despite vehement opposition from the prosecution the court granted the petitioner division status.

Hossain's lawyer said they would file appeal against the verdict. While making submission, defence counsel Khan Saifur Rahman pointed out the discrepancies in accounts shown in the charge and those testified by prosecution witnesses.

He said since his client as Industries Secretary had no control on BCIC fund, allegation under 409 BPC does not apply. The counsel said his client owes money to BCIC and BCIC also owes money to him, so the question of taking pecuniary benefit illegally was not justified.

Rahman further stated it was a matter of adjustment of funds and quoted P W 2 who mentioned during testimony that accounts with the accused had not been completed. There was no such condition in his client's agreement of job as Industries Secretary that if adjustment won't do, he would have to pay back the money to BCIC, the defence counsel said in a written reply.

Khan Saifur Rahman, assisted by Mokhlesur Rahman, defend Mosharraff Hossain, while Abdur Rahman Khan, Public Prosecutor, assisted by Faruque Omar, APP, appeared for the state.

Additional District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, Md Abdul Gafur, found Hossain guilty under Section 5 (2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947 and sentenced him to suffer simple imprisonment for 3 years and pay a fine of Taka six lakh, in default to suffer additional six months in jail.

The prosecution case in brief was that Hossain while serving as Industries Secretary (between April 13, 1988 and February 2, 1990) through illegal means and misusing his official position drew salary, benefits and travel allowance from BCIC (where he was chairman) and at the same time, realised government money to the tune of Taka 5,64,449.61 from the Industries Ministry aimed at grabbing the sum. Such usurpation was in violation of Section 409 of Bangladesh Penal Code and Section 5(2) of Clause 2 of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947, the prosecution stated.

The Court found Mosharraff Hossain to have violated specific directive and provision of the government in drawing a total sum of Taka 5,64,449.61 as advance from BCIC on account of pay, and other benefits when he served as Industries Secretary.

The prosecution proved that the former Industries Secretary deliberately and illegally drew the above sum from BCIC to usurp those. Hossain in doing so had committed offence under Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947, the court said.

Hossain was sentenced last month to suffer, two years in another corruption case. With yesterday's judgement, two out of five cases instituted against him so far have been disposed of. Hossain is a co-accused with former President H M Ershad in two corruption cases.

FIR in this case was filed on



Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding execution of Jamaat leader Golam Azam. — Star photo

Commemorative stamp on Sirajuddaula

Bangladesh Post Office Thursday issued a commemorative stamp of Tk 10 and a first day cover of Tk 5 to mark the 235 death anniversary of Nawab Sirajuddaulah, reports BSS.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia formally released the stamp at a simple ceremony. A special cancellor was also used on the occasion. Minister for Post and Telecommunications M Keramat Ali and Director General, Bangladesh Post Office, Muihuddin Ahmad were present on the occasion.

The stamps will be sold at all the GPOs and head post offices all over Bangladesh.

Govt warns extortionists

The government Thursday categorically said that stern measures would be taken as per the existing laws of the land against those who were engaged in extorting illegal tolls, reports UNB.

A Press Note issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, said Deputy Commissioners, Police Superintendents and Metropolitan Police Commissioners had already been directed to properly enforce relevant laws in this respect.

The Press Note said that vested quarters had been illegally realising money from transport owners and workers at different places of the country for the past several years.

These anti-social elements were blocking the vehicles by erecting bamboo barricades on roads for extorting tolls. Moreover, the passengers were also being harassed, the Press Note said.

These sort of activities are not only illegal in the eyes of law, but also cause immense sufferings to the transport workers, owners and passengers. These have also created an adverse impact on the transport sector, the Press Note added.

TCB operations

From Page 1 Col 7 In Barisal, Sayedpur and Ishurdi. In addition, the corporation also maintains 6 foreign offices in London, New York, Cairo, Hong Kong, Singapore and Antwerp.

Set up in 1972 under a Presidential Order, according to official figures, TCB's share of the national import business declined from a high of 24.84 per cent in 1972-73 to only 0.53 per cent in 1990-91.

The corporation imported Taka 134.59 crore worth of goods out of a total national import of Taka 541.7 crore in its first year of operation while the imports for 1990-91 stood at Taka 65.06 crore out of a total national import of Taka 11228.2 crore worth of goods in that year.

The state-owned trading house imported Taka 84.2 crore worth of goods in 1989-90 or 0.68 per cent of the total national import of Taka 12374.2 crore.

Although set up primarily as an import house with an authorised capital of Taka 3.66 crore, which was later increased by Taka 1.34 crore, in excess of the assets and liabilities of the erstwhile Trading Corporation of Pakistan, TCB is also involved in the export business in a limited way.

However, the corporation's share of the national export business also declined from a peak of 5.88 per cent in 1988-89 to 2.13 per cent in 1990-91.

The TCB exported Taka 240.73 crore worth of goods out of a national export of Taka 4096.84 crore in 1988-89 while the amount declined to Taka 129.32 crore out of the national export of Taka 6056.09 crore during 1990-91.

But unlike many other public sector corporations, the official pointed out, the corporation never made an operating loss in its 20 years of existence.

According to official figures up to 1990-91, the corporation had a total revenue income of about Taka 2941 crore and revenue expenditure of about Taka 2790 crore making a pre-tax profit of Taka 151 crore and an after-tax profit of

Taka 34.51 crore since 1972. The total contribution to the national exchequer by the corporation during that period stood at Taka 14 crore and the total amount deposited with the exchequer in the form of duty, sales tax and development tax stood at Taka 923.77 crore.

During the fiscal year 1990-91, TCB's revenue income stood at Taka 131.9 crore while the expenditure was Taka 130.4 crore making a pre-tax profit of about Taka 1.5 crore.

According to the 1990-91 figures, TCB has a fixed asset totalling Taka 12.5 crore, current assets of Taka 105.6 crore while the current liabilities stood at Taka 62.4 crore.

During its heyday in the 70s TCB was allowed to import about 90 items into the country, out of which, the corporation was granted a monopoly in 16 to 17 items.

But the corporation's share of the import business gradually declined since the early 80s as the private sector increasingly grabbed a larger share of the import trade. The only item on which the corporation presently enjoys a monopoly, along with the Rifle Association, is in the import of arms and ammunition, noted the TCB official.

TCB continues to import some basic commodities, such as powdered milk, cement, sugar, salt and some industrial raw materials, as and when requested by the government.

The primary role of the corporation has now become, the official said, one of "market intervention geared to stabilise the prices." The TCB sells the imported items through its wide network of dealers around the country. Observers feel that the market intervention role of TCB is extremely important to stabilise the prices specially when there is a scarcity of a certain commodity in the internal market.

"The market intervention role of TCB will remain until the private sector is more able and the distribution system improves and import is generalised," the TCB official noted.

Rima murder case: Final judgement on Sunday

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court will deliver its final judgement on the appeal of Sharmin Rima murder case on July 5 (Sunday), reports BSS.

The division bench comprising Justice Muhammad Badruzzaman and Justice Muhammad Ruhul Amin heard the appeal petitions separately filed by M Munir Hossain and Hosne Ara Khuku.

Munir was sentenced to death by Strajul Islam, the then District and Sessions Judge of Dhaka on May 21, 1990 for murdering his wife Sharmin Rima, daughter of Shaheed journalist Nizamuddin Ahmed.

Hosne Ara Khuku, a housewife and paramour of Munir was also sentenced to death by the same court on charges of conspiring and instigating the murder.

Police action on newsmen raised in JS

Police atrocities on newsmen at the National Press Club on June 21 was raised again in parliament Thursday when Awami League leader Abdur Razzak asked the Home Minister to let the House know about the government's action on the incident, reports UNB.

A number of Opposition MPs including Shajahan Siraj stood in support of Razzak's query. Rising on a point of order Razzak said on June 21 police resorted to unprovoked action on people on observing spontaneous hartal and launched attack on journalists at the Press Club.

He demanded a statement from the Home Minister explaining measures taken against the police.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni said the Home Minister had already made a statement in the House on the incident and gave the assurance that he would request the minister to make a statement again.

62,048 govt posts lying vacant

A total of 62,048 posts of various grades are lying vacant in the government offices.

State Minister for Establishment Nural Huda disclosed this while replying to a question by a Member of the Parliament. Of the vacant posts, 9,241 posts are for the grade one officers, 2,335 posts for the grade two officers, 36,349 posts for the grade three employees and 14,123 posts for the employees of grade four.

There were also 119 vacant posts for the magistrates, the minister said replying to another question.

He said that the government had appointed 933 persons in various cadres services of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) in the year 1991-92. Of them, 290 persons are from Dhaka division, 223 from Chittagong, 206 from Rajshahi and 204 from Khulna division.

Besides, the government had taken up punitive measures against 12 cadre service officers of the country on charge of corruption and negligence of duty.

Tinbigha

He said it was further agreed between the two countries that Thana Nirbahi Officer and Officer-in-charge of Patgram thana would be free to move through the corridor along with their "helping hands" from 6 am to 6 pm daily.

He said, the corridor will remain open daily from 7 am to 8 am, 9 am to 10 am, 3 pm to 4 pm and 5 pm to 6 pm.

He said issues like erection of boundary pillars between Lalmonirhat and Coochbehar also came up for discussion. There are now 57 pillars as against the requirement of 102. Both the sides agreed to refer the issue of exchange of the remaining enclaves to their respective higher authorities.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh authorities will undertake construction of one km link road connecting Tinbigha corridor with Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves today (Friday).

Privileges of MPs

From Page 1 Col 8 cleared the bill and referred it to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on private members bill.

Incidentally, the parliament passed the remuneration and privilege bill last March providing for pension of Taka one thousand for MPs and a monthly salary of Taka ten thousand for them.

The provision allowing MPs to import duty free cars was made by parliament during the Ershad regime but it is now suspended.

The Midnight File

Bhatia succeeds Solanki

NEW DELHI, July 2: Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao appointed a new Foreign Minister on Thursday and brought five other new faces into his year-old government. Rao appointed Raghunandan Lal Bhatia, a lower house member from the north Indian state of Punjab, as Minister of State for External Affairs. Bhatia, sworn in by President Ramaswamy Venkataraman, succeeds Madhavsinh Solanki, who resigned in disgrace when the opposition alleged he had tried to hush up an inquiry into a major arms deal scandal, reports Reuter.

Talks on Cambodia fail

PHNOM PENH, July 2: Talks between the Khmer Rouge, UN officials and other Cambodian faction leaders failed today to break the deadlock over the radical group's refusal to lay down its arms and cooperate with UN peacekeepers, diplomats at the meeting said. Khmer Rouge nominal leader Kheun Samphan maintained a rather cryptic position on his faction's demands for an enlarged role for the Supreme National Council (SNC), and more talks with UN leaders will be necessary in the coming days, they said, reports AFP.

Erosion makes 1600 families homeless

About 1600 families were rendered homeless in Jamalpur and Pabna over the last three days following erosion by the rivers Padma, Jamuna and Brahmaputra, reports UNB.

Some 600 families were rendered homeless in five thanas of greater Pabna yesterday as erosion by the Padma and the Jamuna intensified, officials said.

With these, the number of homeless families rose to 1,700 during this monsoon. Standing crops on about 500 acres of land have been damaged by flood, the sources said.

The affected thanas are: Bera, Sujanager, Chouhall, Belkuchi and Kazipur. The Jamuna rose 20 cm during the last 24 hours and was flowing 65 cm below the danger level while the Padma swelled 15 cm and was flowing

only 3 metre below its danger level. Another report from Jamalpur adds: Overall flood situation in the district has aggravated due to the rise in the water level of the Brahmaputra. Meanwhile, Water Development Board sources said, the Jamuna devoured village Kutubcherar in Islampur thana of the district with 5,000 acres of cropland in last three days.

Erosion of two other rivers, Brahmaputra and Dashedi, rendered about 1,000 families homeless in 12 villages of Bakshiganj thana. Several thousand acres of croplands were submerged under water.

According to Flood Forecasting Centre mighty Jamuna and Padma continued to swell in last 24 hours till 6 am yesterday but were flowing below the danger mark.

Sick industries

From Page 1 Col 6 against the entrepreneurs of the sick industries unless the process of rehabilitation is over.

The cll in its meeting also formed a sub-committee headed by the industries secretary to review the draft of the proposed law for protecting the sick industries by both preventive and curative measures. President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries Mahbubur Rahman was made the vice-chairman of the sub-committee.

The sub-committee was, however, assigned to submit its report on the law, which provides for formation of an institution to deal with the ailing industries by two weeks. The body estimated that about Taka 500 crore would be required to rehabilitate the sick industries and suggested to the government that the Economic Relations Division (ERD) take initiative to raise the fund.

Meanwhile, a sharp difference between the finance ministry and industries ministry has come to surface on the question of rehabilitating the sick industries.

The finance ministry was reluctant to take measures to stop taking legal action by the banks and financial institutions against the sick enterprises despite an earlier request by the Ministry of Industries.

High official of the finance ministry, when asked to comment on the matter, told The Daily Star that the ministry found three types of sick enterprises — the project which is not viable, the project which is viable but the management is inefficient and the project which is viable but became sick because of reasons beyond control.

The finance ministry agreed in principle to rehabilitate the third type of sick enterprises, not the first two types of industries, the official said.

The official, however, failed to comment on how the projects not viable were approved of by the financial institutions for allocation of loans to them.

Rathajatra

From Page 1 Col 5 Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid-ul Haq attended the chariot festival in Dhamrai as the chief guest.

Ziaur Rahman Khan MP was present on the occasion as the special guest while Shihshankar Chakrabarti presided. The festival in Dhamrai attracted a large number of people.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof M A Mannan inaugurated the Rathajatra festival in Gazipur.

"Bangladesh Jatiya Rathajatra Uddjapan Committee" and "International Society for Krishna Consciousness" were among others, who organised the festival in the capital city.

Rathajatra Utsab Uddjapan Parishad arranged its central programme in the port city of Chittagong. 'Uttorath' festival will be celebrated after seven days, on July 10.

After Dr Kamal's argument, Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed submitted that with the passage of 12th Amendment, the people's participation in the administration of the state affairs at all levels was restored, and the Amendment also restored Article 59 and 60 which spelled that effective participation of the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured, he said.

Hearing will resume on July 7. Barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed, Dr Kamal Hossain, Barrister Amirul-Islam and Advocate Zakir Ahmed appeared for the petitioners. Attorney General Aminul Haq, Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan and Assistant Attorney General Obaidur Rahman Mostafa appeared for the government.

Chinese Embassy

From Page 1 Col 5 fused to elaborate.

The extent of damage could not be ascertained immediately in financial terms.

Talking to The Daily Star after the incident, an embittered Chinese Ambassador said, "It is very unfortunate that such an incident could take place".

"We never dreamt of such incident in an embassy on friendly soil... this should have never happened."

"We hope that Bangladesh government would start full-scale enquiry into the incident," the Ambassador added. When contacted, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that proper measures had been taken to ensure the security of the embassy premises and its officials.

He added senior police officials were investigating into the incident and 15 people had already been arrested.

Following is the telephonic message received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs late last night:

At about 7.30 pm an unruly mob attacked the just completed Chinese Embassy complex at Baridhara on the pretext of a completely unfounded, baseless rumour. They broke down the embassy gates and damaged glass panes and electric lamps of the complex.

Police on duty took immediate steps to disperse the mob and brought the situation under control.

Immediately on receiving the information about the incident, A H Mahmud Ali, Additional Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and high police officials visited the Chinese Embassy complex.

They met with the Chinese Ambassador and other Chinese diplomats and went down the complex with them.

They conveyed the regrets of the Bangladesh government to the Chinese Ambassador and assured him of all necessary

Mostafiz

From Page 1 Col 5 either on July 6 or July 7, the sources said.

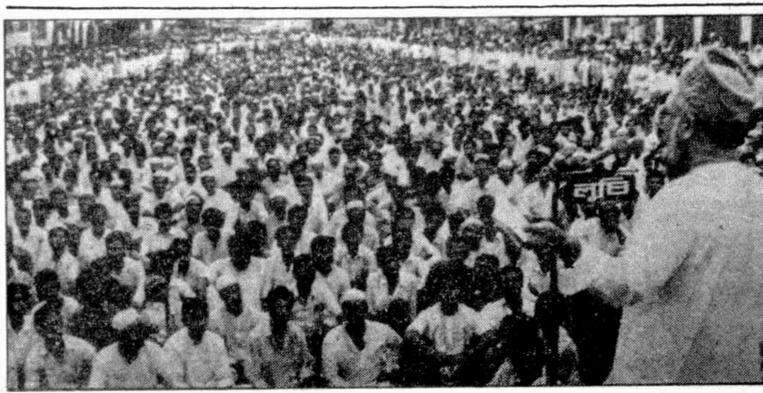
Begum Zia's proposed Islamabad visit, her first to Pakistan since becoming Bangladesh's first woman Prime Minister more than a year ago, is expected to achieve a breakthrough in repatriation of about 2 lakh 50 thousand Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh since the 1971 Liberation War.

The two countries are likely to work out a timeframe for the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis now living in about 70 camps across Bangladesh.

The expansion of trade and economic cooperation between Dhaka and Islamabad will also be discussed by the two prime ministers.

According to diplomatic sources Pakistan is likely to propose resumption of talks on a bilateral agreement under which Bangladesh is to purchase two container vessels from Pakistan. Dhaka suspended the deal following allegations of inflated costs quoted for the vessels which were under construction at Karachi Dockyard.

Bangladesh agreed to purchase the vessels under a 50-million-dollar loan provided by Pakistan. The vessels were priced at more than 48 million dollars.



Jamaat Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami addressing a rally in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Nizami tells rally 'BNP arrested Golam Azam to please evil force'

By Staff Correspondent

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Matur Rahman Nizami Thursday announced that the workers of his party would not quit street demonstrations until Golam Azam was released. "We will free Golam Azam through movement... our workers are ready to sacrifice their lives and property for his release," he told a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram in the capital.

Nizami resented the accord between the government and the opposition MPs last week and said that BNP had bowed down to the extra-parliamentary pressure of the 'evil power'. "BNP has arrested our leader only to please the evil force," he said.

Accusing the ruling party of power-mongering, the Jamaat Secretary-General warned that

Buses, trucks return to road

Buses, trucks and tank lorries returned to the road Thursday after a 10-day nationwide strike, restoring normalcy in the sector.

Transporters started plying on all routes, including the inter-district ones in the country's northern and southern regions. Secretary of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association Shaharuzzaman Muratza told UNB.

The strike, which began June 22 at the call of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation to press home its 11-point demand, was called off Wednesday night

The minister had given the assurance in parliament to consider the demands, including amendment of the 1969 Industrial Relations Ordinance, construction of city stop-over terminals, auto-rickshaw stands, prosecution of drivers guilty of killings in road accidents under Section 304 Kha instead of 302 of the concerned law and fuel price reduction by paisa 30 per litre.

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