

News Analysis

One graft case against Rafiq framed on wrong premises

SHARIER KHAN

Out of the four corruption cases filed against former state minister for power Rafiqul Islam, at least one was framed on wrong premises, according to official documents and newspaper reports in the past.

The reports and documents show that Rafiqul Islam has been wrongly accused of misappropriating funds making the state incur a loss of 4.5 million US dollars in implementing land site development for the 450 MW AES Meghnaghat power project.

It was the leadership of Power Development Board (PDB), contradictory role of the project's consultant and the site developer's politically strong agent which had actually put the government in a situation compelling it to pay an additional 4.5 million dollars to AES in late May, 2000.

Soon after this, the government removed the then PDB chairman Qamrul Islam Siddique, who openly launched a war of words against US power company

AES putting the government in an embarrassing situation.

Rafiqul Islam has been implicated in maximum number of corruption cases filed by the present government so far. Eighteen corruption cases have been lodged against former AL ministers, leaders and bureaucrats. Rafiqul is followed by former home minister Mohammad Nasim with three cases against him and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina with two cases.

Two of the four cases against Rafiqul dealt with Meghnaghat land site development-- a controversial deal from the very beginning as the Awami League government favoured a Chinese company backed by the then minister Syed Abul Hossain.

The former state minister for power was accused in a graft case on December 11 that he ignored the views of high officials for personal benefits in awarding a site development contract for the Meghnaghat Phase-I 450

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4 abducted in CHT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Four people, including a Karbari (local leader) and a Union Parishad member, were abducted in the last two days by the members of the rival hill organisations at Sadar upazila in Khagrachhari.

On Wednesday evening, supporters of Janasanghati Samity (JSS) abducted Kamala Mohon Chakma, 55, the Karbari, who is also a UPDF supporter, from Krishna Mohan

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Appellate Division expansion gazetted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decision to restructure the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court by adding two more judges in the existing five-member body has been notified through government gazette yesterday.

The appointments of the two judges are likely to be made soon, sources said.

Earlier Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and President Badruddoza Chowdhury approved a proposal in this regard.

According to Law Minister

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Tk 7 lakh snatched in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed muggers snatched Tk 7 lakh from the employees of a fruit godown in BRTC bus station area in the city yesterday morning.

One of the employees, identified as Md. Shahid, received bullet injury as the muggers opened fire and exploded cocktails during the attack.

Following the incident, the employees of the local wholesale fruit market clashed with the transport workers suspecting their involvement in the incident.

Several vehicles were damaged

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Jan 18		5-35 pm
Jan 19	6-43 am	

Prayer Timings		
Jan 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-10
Juma	12-15	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-39	5-45
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan's Younis Khan sweeps one for one of his 20 boundaries against Bangladesh on the second day of the Chittagong Test on Thursday. He scored 119.

5 cops sued for swoop on Motia, Nasim

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A complaint case against five police personnel including an additional deputy commissioner of police was filed with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday.

The accused are Kohinoor Miah, ADC of police (DMP), Dhaka; Golam Mohiuddin, OC of Motijheel thana; Saiful Islam Babul, OC of Ramna thana, SI Mohammad Mainur Rahman of

Motijheel thana and Constable Humayun Kabir of Riot Control Department (North), Dhaka.

Six people including former home minister Mohammad Nasim and former agriculture minister Motia Chowdhury have been shown witnesses in the case.

Advocate Montazuddin Ahmed Mehedi, complainant of the case, along with about 200 lawyers including Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Advocate SS Haider, Syed

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Rejoinder & our reply

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has issued a rejoinder to a news item published in The Daily Star on January 7.

The rejoinder said: Our attention has been drawn to a news item headlined "Govt keeps pvt operators off international routes while dollars drain out" published in your esteemed daily on January 7, which needs to be clarified to dispel any misgivings that may arise in the public minds out of publication of the said report.

It is true that during the period from 1991 to 1999, passenger carriage of the foreign carriers increased by 2.65 times compared to Biman's growth of 1.38 times during the same period. Nonetheless, it seems that it has been conveniently not mentioned that about six new Airlines started their multiple frequency operation to Dhaka with

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PHOTO: STAR

A Kushtia Awami League leader shows party chief Sheikh Hasina at BIRDEM yesterday the wounds he had sustained in an attack allegedly by BNP men.

Hasina asks govt to stop attack on AL men, arrest 'BNP terrorists'

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the government of launching attacks on and arresting her party leaders and workers by filing 'false' cases.

"They are trying to eliminate AL", the Leader of the Opposition said while visiting a seriously injured Awami League leader from Kushtia at BIRDEM Hospital.

She said Kushtia AL Joint Secretary Syed Nizam Uddin is fighting for life after being attacked by BNP terrorists.

Referring to the government's 100-day programme to root out terrorism, she said instead of taking action against terrorists it is busy attacking and arresting Awami League leaders without any cause.

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2 pc dip in GDP forecast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's GDP growth for the current fiscal (FY 2002) is expected to come down between 4 and 4.5 per cent against a 6 per cent growth in the previous fiscal.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its Quarterly Economic Update for December 2001 speculated on the growth figure.

The economic update was formally released at a press conference in the city yesterday. The expected decline in the GDP growth has been put down to "subdued external sector performance and lower agriculture sector growth".

Omkar Shrestha, deputy resident representative of the ADB, read out the summary of the update at the press conference.

The ADB suggested that steps be initiated for comprehensive short- and medium-term reforms. It said that addressing growing pressures on the balance of payment (BoP), the fiscal balance and the financial sector should be the utmost priority of the government over the short to medium terms.

It also suggested diversification of the export base and avoidance of costly suppliers' credit.

"Currently, remittances are higher than the combined flows of foreign aid disbursements and foreign directive investments," observed the report. It also expressed its fear that the on-going recession in the world economy will have adverse impact on labour exporting countries, including Bangladesh. It also suggested steps to improve inflow of remittance.

According to the quarterly ADB report, the increase in agricultural sector is expected to be only 1.3 per cent while the manufacturing sector is likely to suffer during this fiscal on account of dislocation in export-oriented product

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2 BNP men shot dead in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two BNP activists were gunned down by armed cadres of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) at Matamdanga under Khanjahan Ali thana Wednesday night.

The victims were identified as Moazzem Hossain, 28, and Golam Martuza, 33, president and general secretary respectively of Matamdanga Smriti Sanga Club.

According to police and witnesses, a gang of six armed cadres

of PBCP stormed into the club at about 11 pm and shot Moazzem and Martuza point blank while they were playing cards.

Moazzem and Martuza died on the spot.

The killers left the scene exploding crackers and firing blank shots. They also chanted slogans in favour of PBCP.

Being informed, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. They sent the bodies to general

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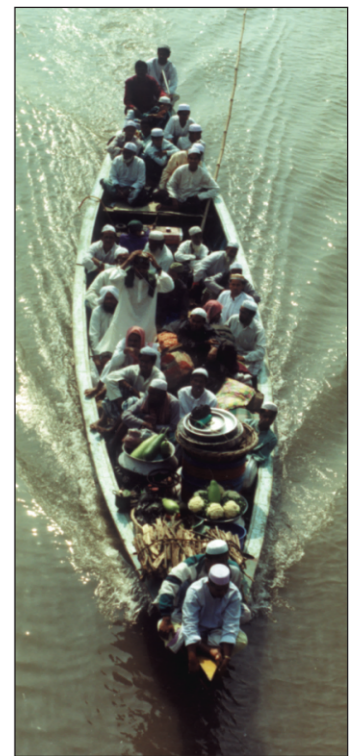


PHOTO: STAR

A boat carries devotees to the venue of Biswa Ijtema starting at Tongi tomorrow.

Biswa Ijtema from tomorrow

UNB, Gazipur

Devotees from home and abroad have started arriving at Tongi to attend Biswa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of Muslims after Hajj, beginning tomorrow Saturday.

Like previous years, Tablig Jamaat is organising the 37th Biswa Ijtema (world congregation) at its traditional venue on the bank of the Turag river on the outskirts of the capital city.

Although the three-day ijtema will formally begin tomorrow, sermons by religious scholars will begin

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