

White paper released

Hasina, most ex-ministers linked to 40 cases of graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday released a white paper on some 40 cases of graft, irregularities and abuse of power allegedly committed during the rule of the past Awami League government.

This is the first ever official release of such white paper on graft and other irregularities allegedly committed by a government in Bangladesh.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and almost all senior ministers of her cabinet were found involved in 'irregularities and financial mismanagement' allegedly committed between 1996 and 2001.

Mohammad Nasim, Amir Hossain Amu, Shah AMS Kibria, ASHK Sadique, Anwar Hossain Manju, Abdur Razzak, Prof. Rafiqul Islam, Mosharraf Hossain, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Moulana Nurul Islam are among those linked to alleged graft and irregularities.

Many government officials as well as different local and international private organisations have also been implicated in the white paper.

The government may engage international investigators to probe the foreign links to the grafts, a government spokesman hinted yesterday.

The cases of financial irregularities, abuse of power and graft placed in the paper include the purchase of eight Russian Mig-29 fighter bombers, installation of over two lakh telephone lines across the country and two lakh personal handy phones in the city, construction projects of Bangladesh-Singapore submarine cable, set-up of power plants at different places, food imports from India and recruitment in the Ministry of Food, and purchase of dredging rigs by the Bangladesh Water Development Board. Allotment of plots by Rajuk in the city's Gulshan and Uttara areas, printing and distribution of textbooks, the 1996 share market scam, purchase of Volvo buses for BRTC, purchase of diesel generators for Dhaka WASA under suppliers' credit, Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge project and population census project

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Allegations baseless, says Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury has expressed concern at the arrest of five Bangladeshi nationals in West Bengal for their alleged involvement in Tuesday's terrorist attack on US Cultural Centre in Kolkata.

"Such baseless allegations are

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Attack on Kolkata American cultural centre 8 including 5 Bangladeshis held for suspected links

AP, Kolkata

Police arrested five Bangladeshis and detained three Indian teachers at an Islamic school for suspected involvement with Tuesday's attack on policemen guarding the US cultural center here, a top govern-

ment official said yesterday.

"We are verifying their links with Pakistan's spy agency and a Dubai-based mafia don, but we can't disclose details at this stage," Sourin Roy, chief secretary of the West Bengal state government, told reporters in Kolkata.

The arrests were made in Basirhat, a town close to the India-Bangladesh border on Tuesday night, said Roy. They were to be produced in a court later yesterday.

Five Indian policemen were killed and 20 were wounded when motorcycle-riding assailants fired from automatic weapons as they drove by the American Center at 6:30 am Tuesday. One of the contract guards on duty at the center was hurt.

Police said they arrested the five Bangladeshis and detained the three Indian religious teachers on the outskirts of Basirhat, 65 kilometers north of Kolkata for suspected links with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence spy agency.

Meanwhile, the US cultural center reopened yesterday but the bloodshed and new heavily armed police commandos in front of the building were expected to dissuade visitors.

"We're open for business," said Rex Moser, director of the American Center. The day began with a meeting of all the staff, he said, causing the library to open a bit later.

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Graft case against Hasina Permission sought to seize papers, freeze BEPZA accounts

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Investigation Officer (IO) of a graft case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and three others filed a petition with the metropolitan sessions Judges Court, Dhaka, yesterday, seeking permission to seize necessary documents and freeze accounts of Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authorities (BEPZA) with the Agrani Bank's Eskaton Branch in the city.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa did not pass any order in this regard yesterday.

Mohammad Jahangir Alam, Inspector of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC), submitted the petition as the bank authorities refused to give the documents without court permission.

In the case filed with Tejgaon police station on December 11 last, BAC alleged that Hasina in conniv-

ance with former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former principal secretary Dr S A Samad and BEPZA Executive Chairman Brigadier General MAB Siddiq Talukder embezzled Tk 2.1 crore from BEPZA funds. They employed a US lobbyist for garment industries in the BEPZA although there was no need to do so, causing the nation a Tk 2.1 crore

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Try all graft cases without state interference, vendetta: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday released a list of corruption cases against BNP leaders including some present and former ministers and said it wants trial of all corruption charges 'without state interference and political vendetta'.

The government is trying to 'suspend or withdraw' cases filed against leaders of the previous BNP government (1991-96) and repressing AL leaders and workers in the name of corruption charges, top leaders of the party alleged at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

The press conference was held about an hour before the government released a 'white paper' on alleged corruption during 1996-2001 AL rule.

Publication of the 'white paper' is a "manifestation of politics of vengeance", AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman said.

Zillur bitterly criticised the BNP government's "double standard" in a "sharp departure from its pre-polls pledge of stamping out corruption from the country".

This has taken the people by surprise, he said.

He said AL did not believe in politics of vengeance and refrained from publishing 'white paper' on 'corruption' during BNP's previous rule. The Bureau of Anti-Corruption had proceeded with corruption cases on its own and their trial continued as per normal legal procedures, he claimed.

AL leader and economist AMA Muhiit placed a four-point demand at the press conference. These are continuation of the cases against BNP leaders and former ministers as per law, probe into corruption cases by an independent anti-corruption commission, an end to political propaganda in the

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Dripping down...almost incessant drizzles, overcast sky and chilly wind yesterday made the city life gloomy. Here, an elderly man takes a sip of tea to warm himself up at the roadside.

Second ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER

The second one-day international between a spirited Bangladesh and an unmatched Pakistan takes place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the afternoon with the prospect of it being an over-curtained match due to ominous-looking clouds.

Drizzle on Tuesday night and murky sky on Wednesday may have a bearing on the duration of the day-night encounter that is to commence at 2 pm.

Met office however forecast a bright afternoon, as the depression, according to it, will shift gradually

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JCD's tit-for-tat attitude may trigger fresh clashes at DU

ABUL KALAM AZAD

Conflict between the two 'traditional foes' -- Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) -- has again surfaced on the Dhaka University campus due to the ruling party's alleged 'tit-for-tat' attitude towards the Opposition.

As BCL activists attacked those of JCD on the campus in presence of police soon after AL came to power in 1996, JCD activists on Tuesday unleashed an attack on their arch-

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