

Pasha nabbed

FROM PAGE 12
brothers Syed Ashraf Jewel and Syed Mohammad Rivel in Mohammad-pur area on May 5, 2000.

They were the sons of Amjad Hossain, a senior journalist and former editor of a monthly magazine, Detective.

Pasha had gone to the residence of Hossain in a hijacked private car and called his son Jewel by name. As Rivel, an HSC student, came out, Pasha asked him to get into the car, took him to a nearby solitary place and shot him dead.

After about 15 minutes, he came back to the house and again called Jewel, a field worker of Proshika, for an 'urgent work'. He took Jewel to a place at Lalmatia and gunned him down.

Hossain filed a murder case with Mohammadpur police accusing Pasha for the killings. Police arrested Mahub, driver of the car but failed to arrest Pasha in the last two years. The driver was jailed.

After the killings, Pasha, a relative of Mookbul Hossain, former AL lawmaker from Dhanmondi-Mohammadpur area in the city, went into hiding.

The victims' family on many occasions had alleged that instead of arresting, police helped Pasha to leave the country. He returned to the country recently and fortified his position allegedly with the help of some ruling party leaders, sources said.

It was earlier alleged that despite repeated appeals by the victims' family, police did not arrest Pasha, who had been moving freely in Mohammadpur area since his return. The sources claimed that police could not arrest him because of his 'close links' with some local BNP leaders.

Pasha is also a FIR-listed accused in the Shamim-Masud murder case. They were killed at the PWD office at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city in April 1997.

He is accused in the Ashique murder case. Ashique, a contractor, was gunned down in Shabbagh area in the city in April 1997. Police arrested Pasha with firearms from near Sonargaon Hotel while he was fleeing after the killing. He was later released on bail. A case under the Arms Act against him is pending with Teigaon police.

Police sources said Pasha might be involved in the double-murder at Kazi Nazrul Islam Road in Mohammadpur on Sunday night.

The sources also claimed that Pasha recently met BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu to save himself.

While talking to newsmen at Mohamadpur thana, Pasha said, "I went to Kolkata after killing the two brothers and stayed there for about five months. I also stayed at Ajmeer Sharif for six months and returned to the capital seven months back. Since then I had been staying at my village home in Tangail."

He said he came to Dhaka seven days back and was staying at different places. He denied his involve-

ment in criminal activities and claimed that he was implicated in the cases conspiratorially.

Asked about his involvement in killings, Pasha said he was a victim of politics. Claiming himself to be a member of Mohammadpur thana unit of ruling BNP, Pasha said he was never involved with Mookbul Hossain.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna reports: Four notorious criminals including Kala Jahangir of Dhaka escaped a police raid on Sunday on a fish farm at Baraipara under Rampal thana in Bagerhat.

Acting on a tip-off, detective police of KMP raided the fish farm in the morning, but they escaped sensing arrival of police.

The four criminals include Shamim of Khulna city. He is an armed cadre of Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) and wanted in several murder cases including that of Dainik Purbachal journalist Shaikh Harun-or-Rashid.

Shamim is a close associate of Kala Jahangir, one of the most wanted listed criminals in Dhaka city.

Transfer order on Hasina's aids stayed

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday stayed the transfer order on three official aids to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and issued a *rule nisi* upon the government to explain why this order would not be declared illegal.

The High Court bench comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice Mazrul-Huq stayed the government order terming it illegal.

After hearing both sides, the court asked the government to give its reply by four weeks.

On May 2, Sheikh Hasina's PS-2 RAM Obaidul Mukhtar Chowdhury, DPS Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan and APS-1 Ibrahim Hossain Khan were transferred by the local government ministry as secretaries to district councils of Borguna, Jhenidah and Kurigram.

On May 19, the order was challenged at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court that issued the *rule nisi* on the government.

Barrister Amirul Islam, Barrister Tania Amir, Advocate Monzil Morshed and Barrister Moksedul Islam moved for the petitioners, while Attorney General Hasan Arif and some other deputy and assistant AGs stood for the government.

These officials were transferred for several times in the last few months. Some departmental cases were filed against them in addition to sedition cases against Obaidul Mukhtar and Abu Alam.

ence, and different customs," Akiyama said.

The city had decided to review the mental wellbeing of all its staff, he added.

Fujieda Mayor Teruhiro Matsuno expressed his regrets at a press conference.

"We thought we were being careful in all aspects of our work as a (training) camp site, but I sincerely regret that it has come to this (Okamura's suicide)," Matsuno said.

The Senegal team arrived in the city last Thursday and is due to stay until Wednesday. The team will then fly to South Korea to play in the World Cup opening match against France in Seoul on May 31.

Japan and South Korea are to host the month-long tournament until June 30.

Senegal is in Group A against Denmark, France, and Uruguay.

Body recovered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of an unidentified man wrapped in a sack from Adarshanagar area of Badda thana in the city yesterday.

Quoting the inquest report, police sources said there were marks of injury in the victim's throat and he might have been strangled. He was in his thirties.

On information, police went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Badda thana in this regard.

DCC to fight mosquito

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka City Mayor and Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadek Hossain Khoka yesterday directed the officials concerned to prepare within next seven days a 15-day plan for mosquito control in the capital.

The city mayor, at a meeting with the health officials of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday morning, asked them to deploy all the health officials and employees in the anti-mosquito drive.

He also advised them to involve the elected ward commissioners, women ward commissioners, experts, representatives of socio-cultural organisations, local leaders, elderly people of the concerned areas, members of non-government organisations in the mosquito control activities.

Observations

FROM PAGE 12

The Bench expressed the view that appointment of judges should follow a transparent and fair system. It is not enough to appoint a judge just by consulting the Chief Justice. Judges must be appointed through the full court reference of the High Court, it stressed.

Heat horror

FROM PAGE 1

fall, there was no sign of it. The people's miseries were accentuated by frequent power outages in Dhaka city, contributing further to a shortage of water.

BSS adds: The heat wave currently sweeping the country is likely to continue for another four to five days, as the amount of rainfall would not increase before May 24, Met office sources said yesterday.

A Met official said that during the last two days there was occasional relief because of gusty wind following rainfall in the Chittagong division.

He, however, said the people would not get complete respite from the heat before the setting of monsoon in the first week of June.

The official pointed out that the less amount of rainfall amid low flow southern breeze was causing the increase in the heat.

Moreover, he said people were feeling the scorching heat as they were in a cooler weather during March and April when the rainfall was higher and the sky remained cloudy.

He said the wind activity in the southern hemisphere prompted the increased rainfall in the country during the month of March and April and kept the temperature much cooler.

The Met office while forecasting weather for the next 24 hours said light to moderate rain or thunder shower accompanied by gusty or squally wind is likely to occur in a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and in one of two places over Barisal and Khulna divisions. Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country.

It also forecast no appreciable change in the weather during the next 72 hours.

5 PWs in Shihab murder case cross-examined

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Five prosecution witnesses, including complainant in the schoolboy Khondakar Shihab Ahmed abduction and killing case, were cross-examined in the Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday.

After four hours of cross-examination by the defence lawyers, Judge Hossain Shahid Ahmed adjourned the hearing till 10:30 am today.

During the cross-examination, Khondakar Dildar Ahmed, father of Shihab as well as a prosecution witness in the case, told the court that on February 7 his son Shihab was abducted from in front of his (Shihab) school at about 5:15 pm.

After the incident, Dildar Ahmed informed his relatives about the missing of Shihab over telephone. In the meantime, at about 8:45 pm on the same day

Dildar received a telephone regarding Shihab's whereabouts the complainant told the court.

"I wanted to know why they telephoned me. They replied that they abducted Shihab and they now want to meet me at Sreepur in Gazipur," the witness said.

The witness then informed the Sabujbagh thana of the incident but the authorities concerned at Sabujbagh thana requested him (Dildar) to go to Motijheel thana as the school of Shihab was under Motijheel thana.

Dildar Ahmed filed a General Diary (GD) with Motijheel thana in this connection. Later, he tried to locate the whereabouts of Shihab but failed.

Moreover, the abductors made several calls to the family of the victim from different card phone booths and demanded Tk 20 lakh as ransom, the witness added.

Dildar later filed a written petition to the Detective Branch (DB)

office about the missing of his 13-year-old son and the DB police arrested two of the abductors on April 1 and recovered the decomposed parts of Shihab's body from three places in Bashabo and North Goran areas in the city as per statements of the culprits, the witness alleged.

Shihab, a student of class seven of Motijheel Model School and College, was abducted from in front of his school on February 7. Later, he was killed as he allegedly recognised one of the abductors.

Accused Monir Hossain Liton and Abu Syed were present in the court during the hearing. The four other accused Raju, Sabuj, Nasim and Rubel have been absconding since the incident.

Advocate Syeda Abida Sultana, Suja-Al-Faruq, Helal Uddin Ahmed and Sadequ-ur-Rahman appeared in the court on behalf of the court.

4 shipping men guilty

FROM PAGE 1

including deviation from the original structure plan and lack of watertight hatches. The watertight bunk-head the vessel was supposed to have been fitted with as per the original plan was practically non-existent. The report also recommended that from now on all vessels must be built with watertight hatches to prevent such siphage.

The shaky vessel hit by the storm blowing at over 60 kilometres an hour was further destabilised when passengers from the lower deck climbed on the upper decks to escape the water flooding into the lower deck. Inspection of the salvaged vessel also revealed several large holes in the steel plates that were also eroded at many places thereby reducing the plate thickness. It also said surveyors of vessels did not have the Ultrasonic Thickness Gauge necessary for measuring plate thickness.

The report said the on-duty inspector of DG-Shipping, Mohammad Shafiqur Rahman was grossly negligent in his duty for failing to lodge any case against MV

Salauddin on charge of overloading as the vessel left the Sadarghat Terminal for Rangabali with over 400 passengers.

Moreover, the Engineer and Ship Surveyor AKM Fakhru Islam stationed at the Sadarghat Terminal in a recently issued survey report on MV Salauddin-2 totally failed to point out the many structural deviations of the vessel.

Also, the Chief Engineer and Surveyor of the Department of Shipping, Mohammad Matiuur Rahman who is the head of all government surveyors in the country and the only official responsible for issuing survey certificates to vessels, failed to conduct random surveys to check certified vessels.

The report also blames the owners of the vessel, Messrs Alam and Brothers for deviating from the original structure plan of the vessel and the master of the vessel Abu Zafar Howladar, a 3rd category master, for overloading.

The committee came up with 36 recommendations in disciplining the water transport sector. They include through amendment of the Inland

Shipping Ordinance of 1976, empowerment of the BIWTA officials to seize any vessel appearing to be unsafe, setting up of marine courts, giving specific responsibilities to the BIWTA officials and activating and empowering the inspectors of the Department of Shipping. The chief inspector should work independently and be accountable to the director general only.

The report maintained that 250 people perished in the Meghna waters in the evening of May 3 although unofficial count puts the casualty at over 400.

The report highly praised the role of the staff of MV Muladi, another passenger vessel present near MV Salauddin-2 when it sank. It said the staff and other passengers of the Muladi rescued 67 passengers from the river by throwing all their life-buoys into the river. Many staff of the MV Muladi also dived into the river and saved valuable lives, it said.

Channel ban goes

FROM PAGE 1

made the people question the government's sagacity and motives. Despite repeated attempts last night, neither information Minister Tariqul Islam nor the information secretary could be contacted for comments.

Cable operators said four channels -- TV6, TV4, MCM and Fashion TV -- were banned by the previous government in 2000.

"It is surprising as well as suspicious that the government changed its mind so quickly," said a member of the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB).

M/S Nationwide distributes 27 out of 30 channels, while M/S Translink distributes the rest.

An official of the Nationwide told The Daily Star yesterday that the channels the government banned on Sunday broadcast their programmes in Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Middle East as well.

Translink proprietor Humayun Majid has said the government should ban the Indian channels if it wants to insulate the people from the "negative impact of alien culture". The government should ban some BTV-aired programmes like 'Chhayachhanda'.

Those who attended Sunday's meeting were surprised at such a 'quick change of mind'. The whole thing may be reconsidered at the

next round of talks with the ministry early next week, they said.

Despite repeated attempts last night, neither information Minister Tariqul Islam nor the information secretary could be contacted for comments.

Cable operators said four channels -- TV6, TV4, MCM and Fashion TV -- were banned by the previous government in 2000.

"It is surprising as well as suspicious that the government changed its mind so quickly," said a member of the Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB).

M/S Nationwide distributes 27 out of 30 channels, while M/S Translink distributes the rest. An official of the Nationwide told The Daily Star yesterday that the channels the government banned on Sunday broadcast their programmes in Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Middle East as well.

Translink proprietor Humayun Majid has said the government should ban the Indian channels if it wants to insulate the people from the "negative impact of alien culture". The government should ban some BTV-aired programmes like 'Chhayachhanda'.

Badal's death

FROM PAGE 12

about their inability to pay the money. Hearing this, the detectives got furious and started beating Badal. They also tortured him with electric shock in the presence of family members.

He was produced before the court in a critical condition and sent to the Narayanganj Jail.

In jail, his condition deteriorated and he was shifted to the Dhaka Central Jail on May 13. Badal was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital the same day and succumbed to his injuries at about 9:15 pm.

Jalal Ahmed, a police informant and driver of the DB of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), was beaten to death. His body was found in the water tank on the rooftop of the DB office at Mintu Road in the city on March 25, 1999. He was reportedly killed over sharing of money.

Three DB personnel, including inspector Ziaul Ahsan and canteen manager of the DB office, were accused of torturing Jalal to death. The trial of the case began at the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka on March 12 last year. Earlier, two prosecution witnesses, one of them the complainant of the case, were cross-examined.

Shamim Reza Rubel, 24, a BBA student of the Independent University, was arrested by a DB team at his Shiddheswar residence under Ramna Police Station on July 23, 1998 and was tortured to death in custody the same day.

Of the 14 accused, 11 including assistant commissioner of DB Akram Hussain and Mukul Begum, a local Awami League leader, are now detained in the Dhaka Central Jail.

Earlier, 35 out of 62 prosecution witnesses were cross-examined and the hearing is at the final stage.

Life term

FROM PAGE 12

Kishorgonj, Parvin, 26, of Pataukhali, Fatema, 30, and Shefal, 20, of Bogra, Ramiza Khatun, 23, of Mymensingh, Fatema, 23, of Gazipur into going with them to India. As the women were being trafficked across the border, they were rescued by the BDR who also arrested the traffickers from Gobindapur village in Kaligonj upazila near the Indian border.

A case had been filed with the Kaligonj Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Act following which police submitted chargesheet against the accused after investigation.

Cassette scam case

FROM PAGE 1

Dainik Sangbad and Daily Janakantha -- and former Justice of the High Court Division Naimuddin Ahmed from the contempt charge.

The court observed that Ershad had tried to influence the judiciary. In case of the Manavzamin editor, it observed that an editor or a journalist has the freedom to publish authentic information and the whole truth, not partial truth. But the Manavzamin editor failed to do this.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Ershad said he had done nothing to influence the judges. "I talked with the judge after one month of the Janata Tower graft case verdict," he said.

Matiur Rahman told newsmen that he had done no wrong, as Ershad had confessed to his conversation and the judge concerned had resigned.

A High Court division bench sentenced Ershad to five years in jail and fined him Tk 3 crore in the Janata Tower case in August 2000. He talked to a judge of the same bench, Latifur Rahman, during the course of the trial. Manavzamin published a report on the basis of the taped conversation in September the same year.

The High Court bench after going through the cassette yesterday observed that the allegation of monetary transaction between Ershad and the judge was not proved. However, the court was sure that he tried to influence the trial process.

About Justice Latifur Rahman, the bench said the conduct of the judge may be considered dishonest and the supreme judicial council could have probed it. Latifur Rahman resigned after the cassette scam case started.

After the Manavzamin report was published, it created quite a sensation and the then attorney general, Mahmudul Islam, brought the issue to the notice of the court. The court then issued a rule against Ershad and the tabloid for contempt of court. It also issued rules against three other newspapers -- Ittefaq, Sangbad and Janakantha -- and a retired judge Naimuddin Ahmed for making comments on the issue.

Earlier, the High Court summoned Ershad and played the audiocassette before him and the former president confessed that it was he who was talking on the phone.

Attorney General AF Hassan Arif told The Daily Star yesterday that the verdict was a milestone in the country's judicial history.

He couldn't take it!

FROM PAGE 1

"Section chief Okamura ... was in charge of events to welcome the Senegalese team as well as accommodation, security and other matters related to the training camp," Matsumoto said.

Fujieda police said his family found Okamura Saturday morning shortly after he killed himself.

"He left a brief note for his family, expressing his apologies and saying that he was exhausted," a police spokesman said, adding that the note made no specific mention of Okamura's World Cup workload.

But Okamura's job had been difficult because it was a new experience for Fujieda city staff to handle the logistics of hosting a World Cup team, said another city spokesman Kazuhisa Akiyama.

"The work has been tough because we have had to deal with the language barrier, time differ-

NCB branch

FROM PAGE 1

years. As per the plan, the banks will close 500 loss-making branches in three phases by December. The banks are Sonali, Janata, Agrani, Rupali and two specialised banks Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) and Rajshahi Krishi Unayan Bank (RAKUB).

While giving the branch closure plans, the banks brushed aside any possibility of any of the staff becoming redundant and said the staff will be absorbed in the nearest branches and will be given special task to recover defaulted loans.

Shanu surrenders

FROM PAGE 12

Industries. Shanu turned up at the court at 11.00 am. "I don't want to lose the post of ward commissioner. I want to take oath on parole, if my petition for bail is rejected again," Shanu said on his way to the Khulna Jail.

Shanu is one of the five listed criminals who won the post of ward commissioner in the May 25 KCC election. Sources said Shanu's surrender was in consultation with a top leader of the BNP, who assured him of his release on bail.

BSS adds: The court has scheduled the hearing on his bail petition for May 27.

A case of programming illusion, again

FROM PAGE 1

across the fact that never in the last one decade or so revenue earnings had registered a matching growth. Exception is FY92 when resource mobilisation witnessed a big jump of 21.7 per cent thanks to the introduction of VAT.

But since then the result is mostly double-digit growths on the lower range barring some years when it even dipped to single digits. Revenue collection was especially poor since FY96 when it clocked a 9.2 per cent growth. In FY97 it was 10.5 per cent, in FY98 it was 9.5 per cent, in FY99 it was even as low as 4.9 per cent. During the recent years, revenue growth rates were 8.4 per cent and 13.2 per cent in FY00 and FY01 respectively.

"Revenue receipt has not been able to keep pace with public expenditure growth," said Dr Debapriya. "Notwithstanding, public expenditure-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in Bangladesh compared to other developing countries and the binding constraint is low growth in revenue flow. This has been accentuated by a low foreign assistance flow in tandem with stagnation in non-tax revenue collection. And all these have landed the country in a structural problem in the area of

public finance."

Revenue budget has however always remained quite expansionary. From FY96 to FY02, current expenditure expanded on a double-digit growth barring in FY97 and FY02. In FY96 it grew by 14.7 per cent, in FY97 by 6.1 per cent, in FY98 by 15.7 per cent and in FY99 by 15.6 per cent. During the last two fiscals (FY00 and FY01) revenue expenditures increased by 10 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. And who knows where it will end up in FY03 with 25,000 staff from different projects being absorbed in the revenue budget.

"The absorption of staff from projects into revenue budget is a paradoxical stance since there is a hold on recruitment of competent manpower through the competitive BCS examinations. In the long run, this will have a bearing on the quality of governance," warned Dr Debapriya.

"There is a demand for infusing creativity in the design of public expenditure portfolio," continues Dr Debapriya. "Opportunities could be created for the private sector and the NGOs to chip resources for infrastructure development and poverty alleviation projects. Revenue expenditure should be put

under a de facto moratorium so that it does not increase in real terms."

"The tendency to increase development expenditure without a proper and credible project screening process due to political reasons also overrides whatever rudiments of system are there. The moot issue continues to be enhancing quality, determining priorities and ensuring effectiveness of public expenditure."

And so, when one sees that the next year's ADP is also going to include projects to support the much-vaunted goat-breeding programme, many an eyebrow are raised. In India in the 1960s, a similar goat breeding project was launched amidst a lot of fan fare. And the result was a sheer wastage of money as people cheated on the government and took credit just by showing the same goats again and again.

But the government may always think that the size of the ADP does not matter as long as project implementation remains as low as this year's. According to third quarter implementation figures of the IMED, the July-March implementation rate of the ADP was only 42 per cent, down from last year's 54 per cent for the same period.

Of the total Tk 9410 crore spending of the ADP during the period, Tk 5671 crore was local currency component and Tk 3739 crore was in project aid. Now, if the government thinks the same will happen with next year's ADP, it might not have to worry much about the revenue implications. But then, low quality projects and their protracted implementation are equally damaging.

"If the budget is framed under demand side pressure, it will have the tendency to result in an over-ambitious revenue target which will undercut the credibility of the fiscal programming. Alternately, a higher level of borrowing from the banking system or savings mop-up will become inevitable," the CPD executive director pointed out.

There are apprehensions that continuation of the post-flood fiscal trend underwritten by moderately expansionary monetary policy will snowball into increased public debt. And, it will consequently result in an increase in already high domestic debt service liability, which is now equivalent to about 16 per cent of total revenue expenditure.

"FY2003 should be a year of fiscal consolidation. If we cannot revert the trend immediately, we

should at least hold it back. Reducing the Tk 19,000 crore ADP to Tk 16,000 crore was a nudge towards that end. But if the ADP at stake again goes as high as Tk 19,000 crore-plus then it will be a signal missed," noted Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya.

The other logic for bigger public expenditure could have been the relatively low off-take of private investment to generate domestic demand. But experience of last couple of years shows that the impact of public expenditure in crowding-in private investment has been limited due to the absence of structural and institutional reforms. Even the low wage good prices could not do the trick.

"I trust that the policymakers are aware of the situation. They are possibly being compelled to accommodate competing investment demands coming from various interested quarters. Taking cue from past experience they are possibly assuming that Tk 19,000 crore will not be spent and so, there will be no need to generate additional resources