

## Corruption charge

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Minister Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui on January 30 served a show-cause notice to APS-1 to the PM Shamsul Alam for abusing power for personal benefit, buying a house under false name etc.

According to the show cause, the APS tarnished the image of the prime minister by first taking allotment of a house meant for a secretary-level officer.

The second allegation says that the APS purchased a house for Tk 2.77 crore in the name of his brother-in-law from an auction of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), on false pretense.

The principal secretary's notice published in most national dailies on February 9 generated widespread discussion in all levels. Many felt that it was only the tip of the iceberg as many other officials of PMO indulged in corruption.

The APS in his reply of the show-cause denied all the allegations put against him.

Officials said that the APS in a very brief reply of the show-cause denied the charges brought against him by the principal secretary.

The APS concerned is of the rank and status of a senior assistant secretary of the administration. He served as protocol officer to the PM during Khaleda Zia's previous tenure and was later appointed as APS to the Leader of the Opposition from 1996 to 2001.

Shamsul Alam's wife Khadiza Khanam, who was a major in the nursing department of Bangladesh Army and attached to the PMO during BNP's previous regime, is now serving as protocol officer-2 at the PMO on contract.

Sources said officials at the PMO, who made huge amount of money through corruption and abuse of power in the last three and a half years panicked at the principal secretary's move and worked as a group to convince higher authorities to drop any investigation against Shamsul Alam, fearing greater revelation of corruption.

A section of officials at the PMO made all efforts to convince the prime minister and other policymakers of BNP to drop the APS issue as investigating the allegations might embarrass the government further.

According to highly placed sources the principal secretary has been asked by his higher authority at the PMO not to proceed further and bury the issue permanently.

Since then, the principal secretary

has kept silent and the issue has been sent to the deep freeze. Meanwhile the accused is continuing his service as APS to the PM and not a minimum action has been taken against him.

Sources said government agencies have been instructed not to investigate the corruption issue of the APS fearing that digging of the incident might reveal other names who committed similar or bigger corruption.

"The APS is a hardcore man of the Hawa Bhaban and other corrupt and influential section of BNP. He is so influential and well connected that nobody can touch him," said a cabinet minister on condition of anonymity.

According to PMO insiders, a section of influential officials at the PMO, some BNP leaders and their relatives, including the APS purchased 14 government abandoned houses in city's posh Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani areas at much lower price secretly. It has been learnt that similar house at a throwaway price was bought by some very senior person at PMO.

Though the RAJUK floated tender in May last year to sell the abandoned houses, eligible buyers could not get tender copies from banks as they mysteriously disappeared. Prospective buyers were told not to try as the matter was 'settled'. As a result, the 14 government men purchased the houses easily, as others could not participate in the tender.

Reliable sources said 13 other BNP men, who purchased the abandoned houses, became united immediately after the show-cause notice was served against APS Shamsul Alam and they launched a combined move against the principal secretary and charged him with "sabotaging and destroying the image of the government".

All the buyers of the abandoned houses have now joined in a campaign against the principal secretary and they are attempting to remove him from the PMO, arguing that he may start corruption proceeding against others, thereby further embarrass the government.

## IO moves

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Wednesday night without any preliminary investigation.

According to Jessore Court Inspector Dinabandhu Das, Khalil in his petition mentioned that investigations have found Imon a minor boy and innocent, and cannot be implicated in the case. But his age was not mentioned in the FIR lodged by the plaintiff, Jessore BNP leader Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, Khalil added in his submission.

All family members of Jessore Krishak League leader SM Abdur Rob including his son Imon and a college-going daughter were accused in the FIR recorded with the consent of Kotwali PS Officer-in-Charge Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal. The implication of a six-year-old in a rape case triggered widespread indignation among the masses and even the senior police officials.

The prime accused in the case, Abdur Rob, went to court on Thursday noon with Imon in his lap to seek bail. But the bail petition could not be moved that day as office hours had already expired and it was not moved yesterday, too, as the accused did not come to court, Inspector Dinabandhu said.

According to a source, an inquiry has been initiated into why OC Mostafa Kamal gave permitted recording the FIR without any preliminary investigation, while a Kotwali SI said on condition of anonymity that Kamal has been asked to show cause his role in this regard.

But neither Jessore Police Super Shahidul Islam nor OC Kamal could be reached over phone for their comments and confirmation yesterday.

## Kibria's murder

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elimination design, they said.

Senior Awami League leaders including Zillur Rahman, Suranjit Sengupta, Abdul Motin Khosru, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, poet Syed Shamsul Haq and advocate Tarana Halim among others took part in the memorial discussion.

The meeting also registered protest against the killings one after another in grenade and bomb attacks.

"Although Kibria was a sitting lawmaker, there was not a single police personnel at his meeting venue in Habiganj," said Abdul Motin Khosru, adding that it was "a designed killing in connivance with the government."

The spree of grenade attacks began since the biggest ever Chittagong arms haul with which frontline leaders of ruling BNP were found involved, Khosru said.

"The killers of Bangabandhu and Kibria are interlinked by the same ideals," said Suranjit Sengupta, "So, it is futile to demand justice from the ruling coalition."

All the incidents since 1975 are interlinked in a well-designed blueprint against Awami League, said Zillur Rahman, whose wife Ivy Rahman was killed in the August 21 grenade attack last year.

"These incidents should not be considered in isolation," said poet Syed Shamsul Haq.

Jote activist advocate Tarana Halim, who spoke as one of Kibria's family members, said that if the killers of Kibria go unpunished, "none of us will remain safe in the society."

As to sending helicopter to bring Kibria from the spot of grenade attack, she said that the government claim is a blatant lie.

Film director Alamgir Kumkum, actor ATM Shamsuzzaman and Kibria's daughter-in-law Rina Sultana Kibria also spoke.

## PVT CAR REQUISITION SC stays HC order on DMP

**BDNEWS, Dhaka**

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed until March 31 a High Court order by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Earlier on February 12, the HC stayed the DMP functioning on requisition of private cars plying in the city. The HC order came following a writ petition filed by Kafil Uddin, a leader of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association.

The government yesterday filed an appeal against the HC order, seeking a stay on it.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury sent the matter to the full court of the Appellate Division for hearing.

Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal moved for the government.

## Withdraw Rajshahi SP Left parties asks govt

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Left-leaning 11-party combine yesterday demanded immediate withdrawal of the superintendent of police (SP) of Rajshahi for 'not carrying out the government order to arrest militant kingpin Bangla Bhai.

The alliance also urged the government to ensure security of opposition leaders including 11-party's Fazle Hossain Badsha.

In a letter to State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar, the 11-party said SP of Rajshahi Masud Mia made no efforts to arrest the Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMMB) leader even after the prime minister's directive in the wake of newspaper reports on JMMB's militant activities in the northern region.

The SP seems to ignore the government press note banning the militant groups, a press release of the alliance said yesterday.

The civil society of Rajshahi also submitted a memorandum to the district administration to stop such inaction of the SP but nothing was done as yet, it mentioned.

Meanwhile, a JMMB letter to different newspapers threatened to kill leaders of Awami League, Jatitya Party and other opposition parties, including Fazle Hossain Badsha, unless alleged militant leader Galib and others arrested are not freed by March 24.

About the Anti-Corruption Commission formed in November 2004 with a mandate to investigate corruption and file cases against government officials, it said serious questions remain about the commission's ability and commitment to operate effectively and independently.

The report however said the Bangladesh government does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of drugs.

DNC's counter-narcotics initiatives and program activities are seriously hampered by the ineffectiveness of the National Narcotics Control Board (NCCB), the highest governmental body, to fulfill the objectives of the Narcotics Control Act (NCA).

The 19-member NCCB, made of up 12 ministers, six elected members, and the DNC director general, is charged to meet quarterly, but no meetings have been held since a single meeting was conducted in 2003. There is no master plan for combating drug trafficking and abuse in Bangladesh, the report said.

"Regular police and the BDR are viewed as so corrupt and inept at combating everyday crime that a new 'Rapid Action Battalion' (Rab) force was recently set up by the central government."

Customs, the navy, the coast guard and the DNC suffer from under-funding, under-equipping, understaffing and lack of training, it added.

There is no DNC presence at the country's second largest airport, in Chittagong, which has direct flights to Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand.

To date, no random searches of crews, ships, boats, vehicles, or containers are being performed at the country's largest seaport in Chittagong.

Bangladesh is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention. It has a memorandum of understanding on narcotics cooperation with Iran, an extradition treaty with Thailand, and it participates in information sharing with the government of Myanmar, it

"But we have been facing brutal attacks by the government-backed gangs wherever we want to work," he said, adding, "Soon we will expand our organisational network in the whole country and the BDB will be able to build a positive image in less than a year."

"BDB wants to learn from the development process of countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore and implement that in our country," he said.

BDB General Secretary Abdul Mannan was also present at the press conference.

## Attacks

**FROM PAGE 1**  
prevailing hostile situation of their locality and sought ways to get rid of it. They urged the government to take stern action against all kinds of terrorist activities to keep the ongoing development activities running.

The FNB leaders in a resolution also decided to go ahead with preventive activities with the help of local administration.

FNB Vice-chair Rasheda K Chowdhury, members Shah-e-Mobin Jinnah, Zakir Hossain, Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, M Azharul Islam and Sheikh Asaduzzaman Khokon among others spoke at the meeting organised at the auditorium of WVA.

## CNG graft probe

**FROM PAGE 1**  
the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"I did not dissolve the subcommittees today as I should give a chance to them to explain their positions," he said. "I will ask them to submit their probe reports at the next meeting. If they fail again, then I will execute my decision."

The parliamentary standing committee formed a sub-committee to probe alleged irregularities in the import of CNG-run autorickshaws on January 7 last year comprising BNP lawmakers. The subcommittee was asked to submit its probe report in a month, but it could not complete the report even after getting time extension on four occasions.

Another sub-committee to probe irregularities in the allocation of land to set up CNG refuelling stations was formed on February 14 comprising BNP lawmakers. It was also asked to submit its probe report in a month, but it took time extension twice.

The subcommittees had earlier alleged that the communications ministry did not cooperate with the investigation. "But the ministry said

it has submitted all necessary documents to the probe bodies," said the committee chairman.

The chairman said he had personally contacted the convenors and members of the subcommittees requesting them to attend the meeting. But they are busy with political programmes at their constituencies, he added.

The parliamentary standing committee, which is supposed to sit once in a month in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad, held its meeting yesterday after a five-month break.

Committee Member and Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim at yesterday's meeting wanted to know the probe reports on CNG (compressed natural gas) autorickshaws and demanded discussion on the issue.

The parliamentary body however discussed the activities of railway and asked the ministry to submit a detailed report on railway lands at the next meeting. It also discussed the activities of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC).

## Grafts fail Dhaka

**FROM PAGE 1**  
district along the Burmese (Myanmar) border and cannabis production in the southern char (silt-land) regions, it added.

However Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) of Bangladesh has strongly denied the allegations of opium production in Bandarban.

Porous borders made Bangladesh an 'attractive transfer point' for drugs transiting in the region, the report said, adding that Bangladesh government officials charged with controlling and preventing illegal substance trafficking lack training, equipment, continuity of leadership, coordination and other resources to detect and interdict the flow of drugs.

"Corruption is a major problem at all levels of society and government in Bangladesh. Authorities involved in jobs that have an effect on the drug trade facilitate the smuggling of narcotics," the report said.

If caught, prosecuted and convicted, officials receive a reprimand at best and termination from government service at worst, it said, adding adjudicating authorities did not take these cases seriously.

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## Dhabi team

**FROM PAGE 1**  
kinds of telecommunications."

The delegation earlier held talks with the Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque and discussed issues relating to telecoms, sources in the ministry said.

The group has also submitted a proposal to build a five-star hotel in Cox's Bazar in joint venture with the government.

Earlier on Wednesday, after a meeting with the delegation, Board of Investment (BoI) Executive Chair Mahmudul Rahman told the media that if all of its projects get government approval the total investment required would be to the tune of \$2 billion.

Other BoI officials also confirmed that Dhabi Group's investment package would be the second largest one by any single investor, surpassed only by Tata, which is now carrying out the preliminary work to implement its \$2 billion investment in steel, power and fertiliser sectors.

The delegation told the BoI they would consider its proposal to develop a tourism facility centre in Cox's Bazar.

BoI sources said Group Chairman Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan, a member of the UAE royal family, might come to Bangladesh next month, if negotiations on investment proposals in telecoms and acquisition of Samil Bank of Bahrain by Bank Alfalah, a concern of the group, make any notable progress.

Earlier on Thursday, some delegation members went to Chittagong to conduct a preliminary feasibility study on opening a branch of Bank Alfalah in the port city. That day the rest of the delegation met State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmood, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and Bangladesh Bank Governor Fakhruddin Ahmed.

The groups proposed project portfolio also include upgrading of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway into an expressway and setting up of a 500MW power plant.

Besides Tahir, the other delegation members are Bank Alfalah CEO Parvez A Shahid, Warid International-Abu Dhabi CEO Ali Al Awais, Adviser to the Dhabi Group Board of Directors Marwan Zawaydah and Bank Alfalah Corporate Architect Ahmed Muktar.

## Govt mulls

**FROM PAGE 1**  
abroad have become ineffective and failed to speak on behalf of the government to the international communities in dispelling the ongoing anti-Bangladesh propaganda.

The missions also missed the export targets set for the last financial year, sources said.

The recent donors' meeting in Washington indicated that the international communities are not happy with the government. A number of powerful countries like UK, Japan, Germany and Denmark were critical of Bangladesh and suggested economic sanctions on Bangladesh, but the United States did not respond to their proposal.

After assuming office, the four-party alliance government adopted the 'look east' foreign policy, but the move did not succeed. Bangladesh-China relations had faced strains over the opening of Taiwanese office in Dhaka, drawing widespread criticism.

The parliamentary standing committee on foreign ministry has recently observed that the 'look east' policy has been on paper, not in reality.

Relations with India also deteriorated in recent times. A number of government policymakers have partially blamed the foreign minister for his failure to maintain good relationship with the biggest neighbour.

They believe the Saarc Summit was postponed due to the strained relations with India.

## 61 promoted

**FROM PAGE 12**  
(PMO), Ministry of Establishment or served as private secretary to influential ministers or deputy commissioners dominated the promotion list.

The Ministry of Establishment had prepared a list of 275 deputy secretaries from BCS different batches, who fulfilled the promotion criteria, but finally approved 71 of them for promotion. This has created resentment among the rest, sources mentioned.

When contacted, a top official at the PMO said there will be more promotions to posts of joint secretary by the end of this year. The government cannot promote at a time all officials who fulfilled promotion criteria for lack of vacancies.

The official rejected allegations of politicisation saying that promotions were given on the basis of merit and efficiency of the officers.

(Full list on page 2)

## Tamabil port

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Meanwhile, operation at the Sutarkandi Land Custom Station remained suspended for the third consecutive day yesterday. The snap at the land port started after a coal-laden Indian truck plunged into a canal damaging an already run-down steel bridge on the way to Sutarkandi on Thursday. Since then some 100 trucks have remained stranded near the LC station.

## Time to think

**FROM PAGE 12**  
(blueprint of an undeclared war).

Earlier on February 18, Detective Branch (DB) of police confiscated a number of copies of his two newly published books -- Aghoshito Juddher Blueprint and Brutal Crime Documents -- for suspected seditious contents. The first one reportedly portrays the rise of extreme communalism and Islamist militants in the country while the other depicts the alleged brutalities on the opposition activists since the 2001 general elections.

Abu Sayeed at yesterday's press briefing alleged that some unknown people have been threatening [over telephone] to kill him since Aghoshito Juddher Blueprint came on the market. He has filed a general diary (GD) with the Dhanmondi Police Station and requested necessary measures in this regard.

He alleged that Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh leader Asadullah Al Galib and Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMMB) chief Maulana Abdur Rahman are in fact the creation of Jamaat-e-Islami. Galib has recently been arrested for suspected involvement in subversive acts.

Sayed said that Jamaat, a component of the ruling four-party alliance, had funnelled Tk 1 crore 20 lakh to Talibans after the US attacked Afghanistan in 2001.

He said al Qaeda had engaged many Bangladeshi militants in the Afghan war against the US. "They did it through Pakistan's Inter Services-Intelligence (ISI), and Jamaat was involved in the process all along."

He also alleged that Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) have links also with Myanmar-based Rohingya Solidarity Organisation. He said the Myanmarese group operates a number of camps in various parts of Myanmar to provide ICS cadres with guerrilla training.

Jamaat shelters at least 16 radical groups in the country, said the AL leader, adding: "Its goal is to establish a Taliban-style Islamist

regime in Bangladesh."

On March 2 legal notice that called for a note of apology, he said, "Why should I make an apology, rather they [Jamaat] should ask for pardon for the crimes they committed during the Liberation War."

"Whatever measures Jamaat takes to harass me and my party, I will not allow any single action go unchallenged to uphold the values we earned through our Liberation War."

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party should remember that their ideals and those of Jamaat are not the same, and should act on that basis, he observed.

## Judge Dhaka

**FROM PAGE 12**  
is far ahead of its neighbours in South Asia in regard to its achievements in different social sectors. He recalled that Bangladesh has achieved significant progress defying all man-made and natural disasters. The country deserves appreciation and accolades, he noted.

He said it is astonishing that with a vast population of over 14 crore people the country has achieved self-sufficiency in food sector. The country has also earned marked development in the human development index (HDI). It also made progress towards meeting the objectives of the millennium development goals (MDG) set by the United Nations. Significant progress has been made in the fields of immunisation, supply of drinking water, women education and health care.

Saifur Rahman observed that continuous dialogues between the members of the global civil society will help create a positive image of the country abroad.

Stephen Tim gave assurance that Britain would continue its development assistance and cooperation towards Bangladesh.

He also lauded the contributions of the Bangladeshi diaspora in the UK in different spheres of economy and culture in Britain.

## Borders remain tense

**FROM PAGE 1**  
general-level meeting in Dhaka on April 12-17.

**RAMGARH MEETING**  
BDR 33 Battalion Commander Lt Col Sharif Haider led the Bangladesh delegation at the five-hour meeting that began at 1:00am.

A meeting source said that BSF at the meeting accused BDR personnel of launching an unprovoked attack on their men who were fencing the border. In reply, BDR said that for the last seven days they had requested their Indian counterparts to stop fencing in violation of the 1974 treaty. But as the BSF members did not pay any heed to the request, they had to open fire to protect the border.

The BDR officials also said that the fencing if continued would disturb peace in the bordering areas and that they are resolved to resist any acts that breach the treaty.

**TENSION IN LALMONIRHAT**  
Our Lalmonirhat Correspondent adds: Fearing a bloody face-off between BDR and BSF, more than 2,000 families have already fled their houses while others prepare to follow at bordering Singimari and Burosrodubi of Lalmonirhat yesterday.

Both the sides continued to mobilise troops along the border over Indian attempt to fence. The tension mounted since February 15 when BSF tried to fence the border 90 yards off the zero point near Singimari.

Meanwhile, though BSF has expressed intent to sit in a flag meeting, no meeting was held till yesterday evening, sources said.

UNB adds from Chapainawabganj: BDR personnel were on alert yesterday for an Indian attempt to push in through Chakpara frontier in Shibganj upazila. Sources said that locals on Friday informed BDR that some six unidentified women were found on the no man's land. Later following

CONGO TRAGEDY

**Rice condos**

**death**

**UNB, Dhaka**

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has expressed deep condolences at the death of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers in an ambush in Congo.

In a message to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Rice said, "I wish to extend my condolences to the Government of Bangladesh and the families and friends of the Bangladeshi soldiers who were killed on February 25 while serving with the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo."

She said this "tragic loss underscores the risks braved by Bangladeshi peacekeepers as they perform their important service. The contribution by Bangladesh to UN peacekeeping operations worldwide is deeply appreciated".

the leads. BDR officials issued a red alert in the area.

BDR 6 Battalion Commander Lt Col Sharif said BSF could not push in anyone as they [BDR] were alerted to such possibility.

According to local sources, the BSF herded a group of people into a camp at Naodapara across the border.

BD NEWS reports from Chuadanga: A battalion commander-level flag meeting between BDR and BSF was held at Chuadanga border point yesterday.