

CHEATING CASE

Ex-BNP lawmaker Kaikobad, his brother get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to former BNP lawmaker Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad and his brother Kazi Mojibul Haq in a cheating case filed by a proprietor of a construction firm in September 2001.

Earlier on December 28 last year, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman issued arrest warrant against three accused including Kaikobad and his brother, as they did not appear before the court for three consecutive dates.

The lawmaker and his brother along with their lawyer Advocate Masud Ahmed Talukder appeared before the same court at 12:30pm and sought bail while another accused Sirajul Islam was absent from the court yesterday.

Moving the bail petition, the defence lawyer argued that the case was filed as part of a conspiracy to harass them falsely and tarnish their image in the political arena as well as in the society.

Opposing the defence lawyer's plea, Advocate Mohammad Borhan Uddin prayed to the court to turn down their bail petition and send them to jail custody.

After hearing both the sides, the court granted them bail upon a bond of Tk 10, 000 with two guarantors.

Mohammad Ayub Khan, proprietor of the M/s Ayub Khan & Sons, filed a cheating case against Kaikobad, chairman of The Arab Contractor (BD) Limited, managing director Kazi Mojibul Haq and project manager Sirajul Islam with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka on September 6, 2001.

In his complaint, Ayub said the accused did not pay Tk 779,545 as per an agreement signed between him and the Arab Contractor (BD) Limited on June 11, 2000 for a construction work at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel even after serving a legal notice upon them.

Truck helper killed in Savar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A truck helper was slaughtered by miscreants in Savar yesterday.

Akil Ahmed, 28, son of Masud Ahmed of Norshighapur, was abducted by a gang of criminals led by Abdur Rob from his residence at 11:00pm, said the police.

The abductors took him to the nearby paddy field and cut his hand and throat, they added.

Akil was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital where the on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Family sources said he might have been killed as a sequel to previous enmity.



PHOTO: PID
Army chief Lt. Gen. Moeen U Ahmed calls on President/ Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

WB keen to support Avian Flu Programme

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) is interested to take part in Bangladesh's Avian Influenza Programme worth US\$ 38 million over a period of five years from 2007 to 2011.

Out of the total cost, US\$16 million would be allocated from the existing Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS), which is funded by the World Bank in the form of IDA credit and pooled grant resources from participating donors.

A mission of the bank recently completed the appraisal of the proposed Avian Influenza Programme as they are planning to support it, the bank's Dhaka office said yesterday.

The programme consists of two components -- Avian Influenza Preparedness and Response Project (AIPRP), a new project, and Avian Influenza Component of the HNPS, an on-going project dealing with human health. AIPRP will cost around US\$22 million.

The Department of Livestock Services under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock will be the implementing agency for AIPRP while avian influenza activities of human health will be implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The proposed AIPRP would focus on animal health component, aiming at enhancing prevention and preparedness capability and improving human pandemic and avian influenza prevention and control planning.

It will also strengthen disease surveillance, diagnostic capacity and laboratory facilities, said the bank, adding that the programme will support applied veterinary research, improve bio-security in poultry production and trade, and support surveillance of migratory birds.

The public awareness and information component of AIPRP would strengthen capacity of the national as well as regional (within Bangladesh)

mass media to accurately report on the avian influenza and provide appropriate information to various target groups.

The information and communication services would be designed to improve coordination and collaboration among all major stakeholders, including various ministries, NGOs, civil society, private sector companies and associations.

It will also develop pilot models for community-based communication.

Schoolboy dies in rooftop fall in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy boy met a tragic death after falling from the rooftop of a 14-storied building in the port city yesterday.

Moon, son of one Moslem Uddin living on the 12th floor of the VIP Tower at Kazir Dewri, was a student of class eight.

Witnesses said Moon along with some other boys went to the rooftop to play cricket at around 2.00pm.

At one stage of play he suddenly fell off the rooftop.

Moon was rushed to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

The press release pointed out that the caretaker government (CG) is pursuing the same strategy of mass arrest as adopted by previous governments to resist political programmes of the opposition.

As a result, question has arisen about the neutrality of the CG, it added.

ASK also demanded release of innocent people immediately.

Left parties call hartal on Jan 21, 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday reiterated its demand for the resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser to caretaker government and reformation of the electoral system to ensure participation of all political parties in general election.

The CPB will stage country-wide demonstration today to press for its 53-point demand including cancellation of the polls schedule, preparation of fair voter list and reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC), says a press release.

In a joint statement yesterday, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said preparing a correct voter list is the first step to uphold the constitution.

Speaking of holding the election within 90 days without a correct voter list is just a farce and tantamount to violating the constitution, they added.

The CPB leaders said those who have already misused Tk 300 crore in the name of election should be brought to book.

They also condemned the attacks on procession and meeting and expressed concern over the fertiliser crisis across the country.

Meanwhile, the CPB, 5 Left Party and Gonomukti Andolon at a joint meeting yesterday, decided to observe countrywide hartal on January 21 and 22 if the election schedule is not cancelled by that time.

As part of their continuous movement till January 22, a red flag procession will be brought out on Thursday, black flag procession on Saturday and demonstration will be held on January 20.

5 Left Party leader Tipu Biswas presided over the meeting attended by Mujahidul Islam Selim, Ruhin Hossain Prince, Kazi Sazzad Zahir and Shudhangshu Chakrabarti.

Concern over use of children in political programmes

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association yesterday expressed concern over using children in political programmes and urged all political parties not to use them this way.

Citing that children are victims of police harassments and mass arrests, it also urged law-enforcement agencies to stop harassing children, says a press release.

"Violent political incidents hurt children's psychology severely that have strong impacts on their lives and normal growth," the release added.

CG urged to hold polls on time

DU CORRESPONDENT

Some 1101 pro-BNP doctors in a joint statement yesterday urged the caretaker government (CG) to hold the ninth general elections on time in a fair and peaceful manner to continue country's democratic and constitutional processes.

Against the backdrop of country's volatile political situation, they also demanded that the government take firm actions to protect lives and property of people.

The statement said people got a relief with all political parties' decision to participate in the elections, but a sudden announcement of 'a quarter' to boycott the elections and cancellation of nominations led democratic and constitutional flows into uncertainty.

Country's democratic and continuous development processes are being hampered due to undemocratic political programmes like blockade, which is not acceptable to peace-loving people, it said.

The statement was signed, among others, by Prof MA Mazed, Prof Md Abdul Hadi, Prof M Nurun Nabi, Prof AB Bhuiyan, Prof Mizanur Rahman, Prof Md Mozammel Haque, Prof A Rashid, Prof MA Mannan Miah, Prof Sultana Jahan, Prof AKM Azizul Haque, Prof Syed Mahbulul Alam, Prof AZM Zahid Hossain, Prof Md Abdullah and Prof ANM Ata-e-Rabbi.

SRDI STUDY

Balanced use of fertilisers boosts crop yields

MAMUN AL MOSTOFA

Balanced use of fertilisers based on soil tests increases crop yields by 10 to 30 percent and brings greater profits to farmers, according to a study of Soil Research Development Institute (SRDI).

Such practices also help maintain the fertility status of land by slowing the rate of fertility loss, prevent environmental degradation and reduce production cost.

The institute has been conducting the study at the grassroots level since 1998.

Balanced use of fertiliser means applying plant or crop-specific fertilisers in the field after identifying nutrient deficiencies in the soil.

"Quality of soil varies from region to region and even from field to field in a particular locality. The degree and nature of deficiencies

in different minerals also varies and that is why all fields should not be treated the same way," Mainul Ahsan, principal scientific officer of SRDI, said.

Indiscriminate use of fertilisers often lead to nutrient imbalance, yield loss and poor fertility status of the soil, he said.

Alongside the study, the SRDI is also delivering its services to the farmers in remote areas.

Sub-assistant agricultural officers of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) who work directly with the farmers at the union level send soil samples to SRDI laboratories, which examines the samples and then send back the report with recommendations.

Although soil test costs Tk 250, the SRDI charges the farmers only Tk 25 for the test while the government provides 90 percent subsidy considering the importance of soil

test in increasing yields, said DAE sources.

SRDI has its central laboratory at Dhaka and branch offices in Comilla, Khulna, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Faridpur, Barisal, Kushtia, Chittagong, Sylhet, Noakhali, Bogra and Dinajpur.

Besides, during Rabi (October-November) and Kharif (April-May) seasons its mobile laboratories go to the countryside and conduct tests, SRDI sources said.

Farmers have a tendency to use chemical fertilisers indiscriminately, Mainul said, adding that such practices cause environmental hazards, reduce the fertility of the soil and push up the production cost.

The final report of the study on balanced use of fertilisers would be published soon, he said.



PHOTO: STAR
Relatives, well-wishers and students of dance artiste Ishrat Jahan Tabassum stage a demonstration in front of the Indian High Commission in the city on Sunday with a call to help bring back her daughter Avantika from India.



PHOTO: STAR
Vendors occupy a portion of a road near Bangladesh Bank at Motijheel in the city to sell vegetables, but the number of customers was very little during the blockade programme yesterday.

'Resolve current crisis politically'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) at a meeting in the city yesterday said the current political crisis must be resolved politically.

The crisis centring the election has not been created suddenly but is the result of corruption, plundering and politicisation during the last 35 years, they said.

They urged the caretaker government (CG) to stop the unilateral election of January 22 and demanded immediate resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed as chief adviser.

Presided over by BSD Convener

Comrade Khalequzzaman, the meeting was also addressed by Comrade Mubinal Haider Chowdhury and Bazlur Rashid.

PSTU tests postponed

BSS, Dhaka

The tests for selecting teachers under different faculties of the Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) scheduled to be held on January 10 and 11 have been postponed due to unavoidable circumstances.

The fresh dates of the tests will be announced soon, says a press release.