

GS, 5 other top BCL leaders held

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front organisations were also arrested, apart from run of the mill criminals.

Meanwhile, the home ministry said members of the armed forces arrested 43 people on charge of different crimes and recovered eight firearms, 638 bullets and three magazines of bullets in the 24 hours preceding 6.00am yesterday.

During the same time, police and Rab arrested 1,816 people including 24 who had already been convicted of crimes and sentenced in trials, and 1,020 who had arrest warrants issued against them. The law enforcers recovered 27 firearms, 13 other weapons and 724 bullets.

THE CAPITAL
The army picked up BCL GS Roton and its vice-presidents Lavlu Mollah Shishir and Mizanur Rahman, Joint Secretary Abul Kalam, Organising Secretary (OS) Khairul Hasan Jewel, and Assistant Secretary Tahmidur Rahman Kajoil while they were going towards Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University (DU) around 2:00am yesterday.

When the troops signalled the microbuses they were in to halt at Dowel Chhatter, they sped up defying the signal, prompting the army personnel to chase and detain them.

They were first taken to an army camp at DU Gymnasium and later to Shahbagh police station (PS). However, the six were later shifted to Ramna PS for security reasons.

Meantime, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Anwar Afzal, elder brother of Monwar Hossain Dipjol, who had been arrested on Tuesday on charge of possessing illegal firearms and ammunition, on a one-day remand for interrogation, turning down his bail prayer. The order was issued after Mirpur police sought a five-day remand.

Two separate cases were also filed under the Arms Act against his brothers Dipjol and Shahadat Nassir against with Mirpur PS.

NARSINGHDI
The army raided the residence of late Shamsuddin Ahmed Eshaq, and Rokeya Ahmed Lucky, Eshaq's wife, both of whom had been BNP lawmakers, in Bouakar area in the town around 2:00am yesterday. The troops recovered an unlicensed revolver, 25 shotgun bullets and two machetes from the house.

They arrested four sons of Eshaq - Harunur Rashid, Kabir Hossain, Mohammad Ali and Kennedy. Kabir and Ali are leaders of local Jubo Dal while Kennedy of the local JCD.

Police said all the four sons of the former BNP lawmaker couple have cases against them in connection with criminal offences including possessing illegal firearms, and extortion.

After the troops handed them over to police, a case was filed against them under the Arms Act and police

sent them to court.

Meantime, the army personnel arrested Narsingdi Municipality Chairman Lokman Hossain, who is also the general secretary of the town unit of AL, from his house in Bashail around 2:00am.

The troops later handed him over to police. Police said he was sent to jail to be in detention for one month.

An accused in the murder case of former municipality commissioner Manik Mia, Lokman had secured bail earlier in all the five cases he is facing, said his relatives.

CHITTAGONG

The army picked up eight persons including a Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh-backed union parishad (UP) chairman Mezbah Uddin, an AL-backed dockworkers' leader, and a BCL leader.

The troops arrested Mezbah of Mirer Sarai apazila from his house while Chittagong Port Dock Workers Union GS Abdul Ahad was arrested from the port area in the afternoon.

They also picked up Ahmudul Ullah, GS of Chandanailsh apazila, from his house at Hazipara under the apazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The other arrestees are Moazzemul Haq Manik, Abul Basher, Md Tanjil, Nurul Islam alias Ledu Dakat, and Nurul Amin. Ledu is accused in eight different criminal cases while Tanjil is accused in five.

GAZIPUR

The army arrested AL-backed chairman of Baria UP Akhtaruzzaman Sukkur from near Muktiyoddha Sangsad office in the town yesterday afternoon.

Akhtaruzzaman had been removed from the post of the UP chairman on allegation of corruption and he appealed with higher court against the removal.

The troops also arrested one Abu Mia, alabourer in Gazipur food depot.

Rab arrested an alleged criminal named Masud from Harinal area.

KHULNA

A joint force arrested Rampal apazila unit BNP Vice-president Khwaja Moimuddin Akhtar, who is also the chairman of Ujalpur UP, yesterday noon.

In another raid, the forces arrested Rupsha apazila AL Vice-president Shahjahan Kabir alias Paris, who is also the chairman of Bahirdia UP, from Kalibari Road. They also arrested an armed cadre of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (Janajuddha), Obaidur Rahman, from Shannashi Bazar.

Fertiliser trader, Sirajul Islam, was also arrested from his shop at Boro Bazar in the city, on charge of illegally hoarding fertiliser.

RAJSHAHI

Police, Rab, and the army arrested at least 50 people including political leaders and listed criminals and other

suspects in separate drives in Rajshahij yesterday.

Police yesterday evening arrested Charchat Municipality BNP President Kaimuddin, who is accused in several criminal cases filed by local people and the authority of Sarda Police Academy.

In a block raid in Bagmara apazila, police picked up 36 persons for their suspected involvement in underground politics. However, 21 of them were released after interrogation.

The arrestees include Convener of Tahipur Municipality BCL Delbar Hossain, and Shahidul Islam, a teacher of Baruipara High School.

In Durgapur apazila, police and the army picked up 25 persons including Jubo Dal supporters Mahub and Enamul.

They raided the houses of Durgapur apazila BNP President Ashrafur Kabir Bulu, GS of the same unit of BNP and municipal chairman Saldur Rahman Montu, and Jubo dal leader Enamul Haque, but failed to arrest any one.

CHANDPUR

Ten people including district Shechhasebak Dal Organising Secretary Alam Khan, Algi UP Chairman Harunur Rashid, who is also the joint secretary of Hainchar apazila BNP, were arrested during a joint drive by the army and police in the early hours of yesterday.

COMILLA

At least 10 leaders and activists of both AL and BNP were arrested during an army-led drive in Comilla in the early hours of yesterday.

The arrestees include AL activists Lutfur Rahman and Masud, BCL leader Kayum, Moniruzzaman Monir and Md Jashimuddin, local Jatiya Party leader Masum, and Jubo Dal cadres Shahin and Akhter Hossain.

SATKHIRA

Army personnel arrested Mohammad Ali and Masum Billah Shahin, president and organising secretary of the district Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal respectively, from Matiadanga area Tuesday night.

They also arrested Abdul Gaffar, an associate of Mohammad Ali.

RANGPUR

Rab arrested district BCL Office Secretary Nayan around 11:00am from a house at Khalipatari under Gangachara apazila and recovered a US-made revolver and two bullets.

During primary interrogation, Nayan disclosed the names of his two associates - Yusuf and Mintu of the town. Rab recovered a revolver from Yusuf's possession.

MANIKGANJ

The army arrested Alamgir Hossain, BNP apazila unit president of Jubo League, and Sheikh Kabir Ahmed, apazila unit organising secretary of Jubo Dal, Tuesday night.

They also arrested four drug peddlers.

TANGAIL

Raiding the Thana Para residence of Sohul Khan, commissioner of ward no 13 of Tangail municipality, around 3:00am the army arrested him.

Earlier, the troops arrested Hatem Ali Shikdar, commissioner of ward no 8 in Sakhipur municipality on Tuesday.

COX'S BAZAR

Navy personnel raided Teknaf Sadar union parishad office in Cox's Bazar and arrested the UP Chairman and local pourashada BNP President Jafar Alam on Tuesday, reports UNB.

India wants

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Chakraborty also served the Indian mission in Dhaka as deputy high commissioner prior to his present assignment.

Asked about the topic of discussion with Hasina, he said they discussed bilateral issues including business and trade. "We want the bilateral relations develop more."

Briefing the reporters on the meeting, Kazi Zafarullah, AL presidium member, said the AL chief and the Indian envoy discussed a range of issues including the economy, land ports, the Ganges water treaty and Chittagong Hill Tracts peace treaty. He hoped the bilateral relations between the two countries would be strengthened further through discussion.

"An election with the participation of all parties would be acceptable to them (India)," Zafarullah said, adding that AL informed the envoy that it wants the election to be held as early as possible after overhauling the Election Commission and preparing an accurate voter list.

Obaidul Quader, acting general secretary and Syed Abul Hossain, international affairs secretary of AL were also present at the meeting.

North faces

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informed The Daily Star that in February vessels might not be able to move if the water level continues to drop at the current rate. Currently the water level is dropping an inch a day on an average, BIWTA sources said adding that a minimum required level is being maintained through dredging of the river bed on Bagabari-Kazirhat route.

But still oil tankers are not being able to navigate through the area with full capacity load instead they are carrying only 60 percent of capacities.

Dredging is not sufficient for maintaining the required water level in February due to a shortage of modern dredgers, said an official of BIWTA.

BPC officials said the corporation decided to supply 2,84,00,000 litres of diesel less than the actual estimated requirement of 7,70,90,000 litres for the month of January.

If the supply shortage continues at the current rate then the cumulative shortage will stand at staggering 3 crore litres in 16 northern districts.

BPC officials said a total of 4,97,15,934 litres of diesel was supplied for 4,60,913 irrigation equipment in 2003, and almost the same quantity of diesel will be supplied to capacity load during the current Boro season although the number of irrigation equipment rose to 5,50,100 this year.

Cash-strapped mine

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is the main customer of the mine. Both projects were built under Chinese supplier's credit.

One of the two units of this power plant has remained shut for several months due to coal crisis. The other unit is currently operating using coal in its stock and may be shut down in a month or so due to coal shortage.

The authorities claim that the mine may resume operation from mid-February.

But already the PDB last month floated a tender for importing coal in the face of such uncertainty.

"The PDB is now set to import 25,000 tonnes of coal worth Tk 12 crore from India. This coal is good enough to run one of the two units of the plant for only 25 days," said a PDB source.

The Indian coal is costing the PDB about \$68 per tonne as against Barapukuria's \$60 a tonne. Ironically, the PDB remains unable to pay the mining authorities about Tk 50 crore for purchasing coal.

Quality of the Indian coal however is much lower than Barapukuria's, and may not serve its purpose efficiently, the source pointed out.

The coal mine stopped production following a series of tussles between the developer of the mine and the government over various payments, Petrobangla sources said.

Both the mine and the plant, built by Chinese companies led by CMC, contain hundreds of flaws due to corrupt handling by the past three governments, especially the two led by BNP.

The highly unfavourable supplier's credit was pushed by the Hosaf group, led by Moazzem Hossain, in the early nineties, and the then energy minister Mosharraf Hossain (immediate past health minister) made the deal happen. Hosaf has been representing the builder of the mine and power plant, and consultants of both the projects, making it impossible for the government to ensure their proper implementation.

As a result of this deal, the mine and the power projects turned out to be perennial loss making ventures and white elephants for the nation. Bangladesh is facing difficulties in paying instalments and other costs of this project.

The Petrobangla through the Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd (BCMCL) makes payments for the mine, and the PDB is responsible for payment for the power plant.

Petrobangla paid the CMC Tk 600 crore in four instalments between 1995 and 2004. It paid the fifth instalment of Tk 62 crore in October last year, a year behind the schedule.

Petrobangla is supposed to pay the sixth instalment of Tk 100 crore in March.

In addition to timely payment of instalments, Petrobangla also owes the CMC annual charge for the service contract, plus a huge amount for procuring mine development equipment.

Despite strong diplomatic and political influence of CMC and Hosaf, profit-making entity Petrobangla did not have cash in its hand, and the situation turned into a hotch-potch.

Petrobangla annually earns nearly Tk 3,000 crore, which is almost entirely

Gang leader

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The law enforcers retaliated triggering a half an hour-long gunfight, Rab said.

Rokibul got caught in the shootout while trying to escape and died on the spot. His accomplices managed to flee the scene, Rab claimed.

One rifle and 12 bullets were recovered from the spot.

According to police, Rokibul was accused in seven cases including three for murder, filed with Mirpur and Daulatpur police stations.

Eight cadres of the gang have been killed in the past two and half years during shootouts between the criminals and the law enforcers.

ACC yet to make

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involved in legal complexities, turning the institution ultimately into a totally dysfunctional body.

The ACC sent the draft of a set of rules needed for its functioning to the present caretaker government for approval, but it is yet to get any response.

A few ACC officials said they cannot move ahead with the commission's work as those rules are yet to be approved. "Since the rules for filing cases have not been approved, filing of new corruption cases has become difficult," said an official.

Many other officials, however, opposed this observation. "If non-approval of rules blocks the way of inquiry and investigation, how could the commission file over 100 corruption cases after inquiry?" an ACC official argued.

Many at the ACC think that the top three officials themselves are not interested in making the commission active as they were appointed on consideration of their political affiliations.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of the board of trustees of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), expressed strong disappointment at the performance of the ACC. "It is their job to combat corruption. But they remained dysfunctional over the last two years," he said.

Referring to a recent television programme where the ACC chairman predicted that 50-60 percent votes would be cast in the January 22 elections and the BNP-led alliance would come to power again, Prof Muzaffer said, "If he [Justice Sultan] believes so, it becomes clear that he dares not investigate the corruption of the

taken by the finance ministry.

Secondly, the PDB owes Petrobangla nearly Tk 50 crore as arrears for purchase of coal from the mine. Despite repeated reminders, the PDB could not pay that money, sources mentioned.

Again, the PDB is suffering from an acute fund shortage due to wrong government policies, and while it is absorbing an annual loss of over Tk 8,50 crore a year, it is not getting hundreds of crores of taka in arrears from Desa and other bulk consumers. The immediate past government did not even try to address this financial indiscipline.

After the CMC stopped coal production in October last, Petrobangla arranged funds for the fifth instalment and paid it. But the CMC still did not resume production as it asked for money for procurement of mining equipment on behalf of the BCMCL, and other extra costs related to the mine's development.

"There is no contract with the CMC for procurement of mining equipment. The CMC brought these tools on request from the BCMCL. In addition, the CMC that was awarded the service contract in 2005 has not actually completed the initial development of the mine. Yet, service contract should follow the development phase.

Besides, there are many other contractual defects," said a competent source describing the hotch-potch in the project.

"But at this stage, we have no option but to resume coal and coal-power production," he added.

Recently, Petrobangla arranged and paid the CMC arrears for purchase of production materials worth about Tk 20-25 crore.

Sources said Petrobangla is now arranging the fee of CMC's service contract worth about \$1.5 million.

On January 14, BCMCL Managing Director Aziz Khan, who has been appointed from Petrobangla recently to resolve this crisis, held a meeting with the caretaker government's energy adviser Tapan Chowdhury.

"We hope to resume coal production from the mine by mid-February," said Aziz Khan, when contacted over phone. "The deadlock over this project will hopefully be over soon."

When the mine's activity resumes, it will produce 2,000 tonnes of coal a day, he added.

Nepali Maoists

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the rebels are to place all weapons in the containers that will be monitored by the UN.

Under the peace deal reached late last year, the Nepal Army is due to be confined to its barracks and put the same number of weapons as the Maoists under UN supervision.

Once bitter foes, the Maoists formally entered a new parliament with the seven main political parties late Monday after a new temporary constitution was approved.

King Gyanendra was stripped of his status as head of state and lost control of the army.

Eighty-three Maoist members of parliament were sworn in to the 330-seat house nearly nine months after the Maoists and the government struck a ceasefire deal.

Nepal's previous parliament was dissolved Monday. King Gyanendra restored the legislature after weeks of bloody mass protests forced him to abandon direct rule in April 2006.

In 2002, the king sacked the prime minister and replaced him with a series of royally-appointed premiers. He sacked the whole government in February 2005 and took direct control, saying politicians had failed to defeat the Maoists.

The interim constitution sets out a plan to hold elections to a constituent assembly that will rewrite Nepal's constitution permanently and decide the monarch's fate.

The Maoists want the monarchy abolished, but some parties want it to have a ceremonial role.

Army arrests editor of a Kushtia daily

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The army last night held Monjur Ahsan Chowdhury, the editor of *Dainik Andoloner Bazar* and the district correspondent for Channel-I, from his Madanpur residence in the town.

The army men who searched Monjur's residence failed to get anything but they asked him to go with them when they were leaving, his family sources said.

Police said Monjur is accused in around seven cases including theft and extortion while local journalists said the supporters of a former BNP lawmaker filed most of the cases.

Army custody

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1:00pm, said his relatives. The army later released the other three.

Ripon's family said he was in good health when the army picked him up.

However, when Ripon's body was handed over to his family, the body bore marks of injury on his legs, hands, chest and head.

The morgue sources at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) said Ripon's body was covered in bruises with the skin on his left leg removed and his fingers showing signs of heavy swelling.

The DMCH sources said a soldier of the 14th Engineers Brigade named Habib brought Ripon to DMCH at 3:15am yesterday where doctors declared him dead.

"We searched for him in different police stations and tried to inquire about his whereabouts in army camps, but failed to get any information" said a relative of Ripon.

Sergeant Abdul Majid filed an unnatural death case with Paltan Police Station, stating Ripon died falling from a six-storey under-construction building while trying to escape during an arms recovery drive.

Police said Ripon was accused in several criminal cases including murder.

EC reconstitution

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they will resign voluntarily... How long we could keep them on leave. This is really a crisis".

Urging the political parties to sit across the table, he said they should say as to how the job could be done in a proper manner.

"It is unfortunate that some of the political parties are not interested to discuss the matter with the EC although they have been pressing the matter."

The adviser feels that the caretaker government should not go for holding election before the proposed voter-ID cards are prepared.

Terming ID card a national issue, he said the issue will be discussed with the political parties.

"Until getting their opinion, we cannot proceed with the voter-ID card project," he said, adding there could be national ID card instead of voter ID card if the political parties agreed.

The adviser said the caretaker government has to work within its limitations.

Judiciary

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expedite the process.

When this was mentioned at a press conference on October 10 last year, Moudud made an angry reaction and told reporters, "You go and remove the dust."

Meanwhile, the government published a gazette notification of four rules relevant to the separation of the judiciary.

The rules are Judicial Service Commission Rule 2002, Bangladesh Judicial Service Pay Commission Rule 2002, Bangladesh Judicial Service (Service Constitution, Composition, Recruitment, Suspension, Dismissal and Removal) Rules 2002, and Bangladesh Judicial Service (Posting, Promotion, Leave, Control, Discipline and other Service Condition) Rules 2001.

The gazette notification for Bangladesh Judicial Service Pay Commission Rule 2002 was placed before the court during yesterday's hearing of the judiciary separation case at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Attorney General (AG) AJ Mohammad Ali told the court that the three other rules are being printed in the press for publication and that he will receive them soon.

When asked by the court about the CrPC amendment, the AG sought for another 10 days for the task, but the court did not respond to his request.

The seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice JR Syed Muddasir Hosain directed the AG to place the gazette notifications of the rules by next Sunday through an affidavit.

The bench also asked him to inform the court of the progress on the CrPC amendment.

Counsel for the judiciary separation case Barrister Amir-Ul-Islam, who was present in the court, later told reporters, "We will come to know how much deviation has taken place from the Supreme Court guidelines once all the four rules and the CrPC amendment are placed before the court."

Nine bureaucrats who have been facing contempt charges for distorting the SC directives also appeared before the court.

The SC directed them to appear before the court at the next hearing on Sunday.

Ershad won't

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Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, had asked the former president, who was on bail, to surrender by yesterday for serving out this sentence.

The defence lawyers on January 10 submitted a petition seeking withdrawal of the January 4 order.

But in his yesterday's order, Judge Amirul said Ershad has 'already served out his sentence in full' and he may remain 'as it is till for further order'.

Ershad, his party leaders and lawyers appeared before the court at 10:15am, and the court started the hearing at 11:30am.

Additional police force and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were deployed on and outside the court premises to avoid any untoward incident.

Moving the petition, defence counsel Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud argued that Ershad had been in custody for three years, one month and 23 days before his conviction on July 6, 1995.

A bail petition for the former president in this case was also submitted yesterday but no order on it was issued.

Mentioning a provision of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Rokonuddin told the court that if the total period of one's custody is longer than the period of imprisonment, he or she shall be deemed to have served out the sentence of imprisonment. So, Ershad need not be in custody to serve out the sentence, as he has been in custody for over three years', the lawyer added.

Opposing the defence lawyers' arguments on the January 10 petition, Public Prosecutor (PP) Mohammad Mohsin Miah said the trial court and the HC had had earlier handed down the sentence after considering his (Ershad) old age and period of custody. So, he must be in custody now, and must file a leave to appeal with the Supreme Court (SC) against the sentence, the PP said.

After an hour-long hearing of the both sides, the judge took an hour to prepare his order and passed it at 1:30pm in a packed courtroom.

Later, Rokonuddin told reporters that they were happy with the court verdict but the PP said he was displeased, and he would file an appeal with the higher court against it.

But Ershad and his party leaders Kazi Zafar Ahmed, ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader and Kazi Firoz Rashid declined to comment on the order.

Section 35(A) of the CrPC says: Where a person is in custody at the time of conviction and the offence for which he is convicted is not punishable with death or in prison for life, the court may, in passing the sentence of imprisonment, take into consideration the continuous period of his custody immediately preceding his conviction.

The court in its order mentioned that Section 35 (A) is applicable in this case.

Ershad was found guilty of misappropriating Tk 33 crore in a shady deal for purchasing 520 Japanese boats and 10 water purifying machines for relief operation in 1989.

On July 6, 1995, Judge Jinnat Ara of the trial court sentenced Ershad to three years' imprisonment. The court also fined him Tk 10,000 and in default, he was to be in jail for four more months.

Board defends

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a textbook? I didn't find any error in any book," said a teacher of 50 no.

Dairy Farm Govt Primary School, declining to mention her name without permission of the upazila education officer.

Books published for primary level students also contain hazy conception about several issues including AIDS and independence, sources said.

Errors in punctuation uses in Bangla books and wrong meanings of the words in English textbooks of primary students are also found very often, the sources added.

Faiz Khan

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government and others involved in the adviser selection process were unaware of Faiz Khan's background when they picked him, acting on the recommendation of an adviser at the present government, added the sources.

The caretaker government contacted Faiz in USA, where he lives, and asked him to come to Bangladesh to take oath as an adviser. The government announced Tuesday that he would soon take his oath.

However, yesterday, the government changed its decision and dropped his name from the council of advisers following a report in The Daily Star over his dual citizenship and his controversial job with the immediate past 4-party alliance government.

Faiz Khan was appointed as senior IT consultant to the home ministry for one year from June 2005 till July 2006 at a total maximum fee of Tk 51 lakh which includes Tk 15 lakh as per diem allowance to cover his air travel and other expenses.

In his