

## BNP bigwigs

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day following Mamun's arrest, gave rise to questions among the leaders and workers, sources said.

A source close to him said he was down with a viral fever and that is why he could not go there. He is however in contact with leaders and activists across the country.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption Commission's decision to be tough on the corrupt ones has only added to the worries among the BNP rank and file as they fear many of the influential leaders who held different portfolios in the last five years might have to face the music as corruption allegations against them are rife.

"Not only then their opposition parties but quite a few number of the BNP lawmakers had specifically accused several former ministers of corruption at standing committee meetings and in parliament. But the then government took no heed," said an ex-lawmaker, adding that caretaker government could now act on the basis of those allegations.

Sources said who to be blamed for the party ending up in troubled waters has been the question crowding the minds of the workers most. They think the BNP is paying the price for a few senior leaders' role in the last five years.

They alleged those are the ones responsible for mess things up. Besides coaxing the Election Commission into having a flawed voter list, they had created complexity surrounding the caretaker government chief by increasing the age limit of the Supreme Court judges.

## Tk 1100cr in 5 years

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the strength of a concrete pole, according to different reports of the REB.

The REB has 70 pali bidyut samities (PBS), most of which run on losses. Only a small number of them make enough profit to keep the REB system look functional. The REB's annual earning stands at Tk 2,240 crore.

**Beneficiaries of poles business**  
The major chunk of the Tk 1,100 crore poles sale money went to an ex-defence official and tycoon, who owns five out of these 13 pole manufacturers and who imposed the idea of concrete poles on the REB in the mid-nineties. Before that, the REB used only wooden poles. According to REB sources, this tycoon alone claims 30 to 35 percent share of the pole business through his firms.

He is followed by another company owned by Hawa Bhaban leaders along with a former state minister and their associates. This company claimed 20 to 25 percent share of this business.

The other seven companies take the remaining market share.

Before this syndicate was born in 2002, the ex-defence official was enjoying a monopoly in the REB by staging bids with his five companies from 1996. The REB knew that the owner of these five companies was a single person but it did not oppose such corruption saying that these companies have separate boards and tax identification number.

But soon after the BNP-led four-party alliance government came to power, the other competitors arrived, and the ex-defence official had to strike a compromise with them since Hawa Bhaban was backing them.

## Mamun yet to be

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She also said Mamun had gone to the flat only three days before he was arrested, the flat owner told The Daily Star.

### RISE OF MAMUN

Mamun became involved in business by establishing Rahman Shippers with two ships in 1991 during the tenure of the BNP government.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman was the managing director of the company while his younger brother Arafat Rahman and Mamun were the directors.

Mamun came to limelight for his involvement in all election related activities-controlled from Hawa Bhaban-prior to and during the 2001 general elections.

He set up One Group soon after the BNP-led four-party coalition government came to power. He also set up a yarn dying factory, One Textile, in Gazipur. The factory has been in production for the last two and a half years. Later, Mamun set up the electric pole manufacturing factory Khamba Ltd in Panchagarh.

Mamun's quick rise as a business tycoon through establishing businesses one after another during the five years of the immediate past BNP-led government's rule surprised many businessmen and politicians.

In that short span of time he set up businesses of textiles, laundries, electric pole manufacturing, and a private satellite television channel. Besides owning One Textile, Khamba Ltd, One Composite, Precrust Concrete Industries Ltd, One Spinning, One Denim, One Consumer Product Ltd, and Channel One, Mamun is also the director of Silver Line Composite Mill and Rahman Navigation.

A few former BNP ministers and lawmakers with close link to Hawa

And all these necessitated the state of the emergency, meaning for the BNP losing its control over the interim government, they added.

Party insiders said the senior and mid-level leaders are blaming each other for the situation. When the liberals think that the hard-liners had misled the party leadership, the hard-liners believe the 'so-called liberals' had all together failed to control the situation.

Referring to the party chairperson's absence in the oath-taking ceremony of the present chief adviser, a former lawmaker said, "It was a wrong decision as it gave the field-level administration the idea that the BNP has distanced itself from the interim government."

After handing over power to Iajuddin-led caretaker government, the BNP had tasked three of its senior leaders including Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan with keeping in touch with the president. But later some other leaders began interfering in the matters without the party consent.

Some senior leaders think that a group of junior leaders led by its senior joint secretary general is responsible for the situation.

Allegations of corruption and backing the militants against them point in that direction.

But the young leaders consider the allegations as a conspiracy to damage Tarique's image so that he cannot rise to the top position within the BNP.

## Grand alliance

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possible, especially before the budget session in June.

AL high-ups have endorsed some of its top leaders to discuss holding of the elections within April-May with different foreign diplomats and donor agencies.

Sources said the leaders have been asked to follow a "go slow" policy in this regard and observe closely the initiatives and activities of the caretaker government before commenting on them.

"We want election as soon as possible and we are ready for the election. As the present government took oath as per clause 58(C) of the constitution, we hope they will hold the election within the stipulated 90 days," AL Presidium member Kazi Zafarullah said recently.

He was talking to reporters after a meeting with 14 foreign diplomats at a dinner at his residence in honour of new Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty on January 31 night.

The Indian high commissioner yesterday met AL President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence and discussed the prevailing situation of the country, especially holding of the next polls.

Talking to reporters, Chakravarty said he hopes an election will be held soon.

Many top AL leaders believe that the AL has the possibility to come to power if the election is held early.

However, all the top leaders of the AL and 14-party alliance want the election to be held after preparing of an accurate voter roll, bringing drastic changes through the top to bottom levels in both police and civil administration and other constitutional bodies.

"The election should be held soon to avoid confusion among people," Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon told The Daily Star. Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu echoed the view.

"Let the caretaker government disclose its policy and plan for holding the elections," Jatiya Party (Ershad) Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawladar told The Daily Star.

## Bus stands open

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around 100 illegal structures on Monday and started developing the bus stand the next day, sources said.

The stand with space for 100 buses will be opened for inter-district buses of Dhaka-Chittagong on Saturday, CDA Chairman Shah Mohammad Akhteruddin said.

"We are also trying to extend the stand on the adjoining land of Roads and Highways Department," he said, adding that after the extension the bus stand would have parking space for over 300 buses.

Only in this fiscal year, the REB has decided to utilise the WB and DFID funds to purchase poles. Both the WB and DFID gave condition in December 2005 that from now on, at least 20 percent of the poles to be purchased by the REB should be wooden poles. Yet, under the influence of the syndicate, ex-power secretary ANH Akhtar Hossain asked for restricting this condition to the WB and DFID tenders only.

This contradictory stance delayed the tender process and only recently the REB has finalised the tender.

**Buses reportedly Mamun's business partners.**

Of his businesses, electric pole manufacturing Khamba Ltd became the most talked about one in recent times. The organisation was built on around 99 acres of land at Goalpara of Garinabari union of Panchagarh Sadar upazila and started production in 2003.

Mamun also owns another electric pole making factory-Precrust Concrete Industries at Bhalku in Mymensingh.

Mamun's syndicate reportedly earned thousands of crores of taka by selling concrete electric poles to the Rural Electrification Board. His close aide and business partner Babul Kazi alias Bappi looked after the Khamba Ltd, but he went in hiding soon after the declaration of the state of emergency.

### MAMUN'S RITZY HOUSE

Mamun's palatial house—"Khawab" meaning "dream" in Urdu—at South Chhayabithi, about 2km southeast of Gazipur town, is estimated to have taken about Tk 8 crore to build.

Its walls are decorated with specially made terracotta tiles and a large part of the first and second floors rest on two large steel-plate beams. The duplex house is centrally air-conditioned and equipped with foreign fittings.

Mamun used to visit the house once or twice a month and throw parties.

Locals vandalised and set fire to the house following the killing of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master on May 7, 2004.

The house, built on eight katha land, still stands out in the posh area, outshining other modern buildings in the neighbourhood.

## ill-prepared

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dying along our shores. But we don't know why."

Bangladesh, with more than 140 million people, is one of the world's most densely populated nations. It is also one of the most ill-prepared to face global warming and also likely to be among the nations worst affected, officials and experts said on Friday.

Millions of people live along the largely flat delta bound by the Bay of Bengal to the south. As sea levels rise and storms increase in number and severity, vast areas of land will be swallowed by the sea, experts say.

### MILLIONS AFFECTED

"Millions of Bangladeshis will lose their land and homes, adding to the South Asian country's plight of poverty and over-crowding," said Ainun Nishat, Bangladesh country representative of the World Conservation Union.

More than 11 percent of Bangladesh's land area would be lost if sea levels rose by 1 metre over the next 50 or 100 years, he said.

"The impacts on Bangladesh would include increased levels of drought, flooding and storms, especially in coastal belts, salinity and loss of land," he added.

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**Dense fog**

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The Met office sources said it will take a couple of days to improve the situation.

Our Manikganj correspondent reported that ferry and launch services on Daulatdia-Paturia-Nagarbari routes were suspended for nine hours from 1:00am yesterday due to dense fog.

Getting the work orders from the forest department the contactors started constructing the wall right after the state of emergency had been declared.

Leaders of the community held a virtual secret meeting on last Tuesday at Sadhpurana in Madhupur since they are not allowed to hold any public meeting criticising any government move during the state of emergency.

Panic gripped the indigenous leaders since the warning from the law enforcers, they said.

Sanjeeb Drong, secretary of Indigenous People's Forum Bangladesh, said, "Even the immediate past government did not try to implement the project because it is not a conservation project, rather it is a recreational project which will end up doing more harm to the ecosystem than saving it and also it will destroy the indigenous way of living."

The current CG should have scrapped the project instead of resuming it, he added.

## ACC may

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"Under the existing system it takes a long time to take action against the corrupt people after completing ACC investigation and legal process," the member observed adding that as a result, the corrupt individuals find room to lengthen the legal proceedings on various pretexts.

It is the ardent need to incorporate a provision authorising the authorities to temporarily seize property of accused on filing cases, the member said. The property can always be returned if the court finds him innocent.

"It will help to ensure speedy disposal of corruption cases while the accused will have no opportunity to drag out their cases," he added.

The ACC chairman said the two provisions if introduced will make a huge difference in the fight against graft.

Presently, the government can send a public servant into forced retirement or the person can willingly retire on completing 25 years in job. But the ACC plans to propose cutting the time limit by 15 years so that corrupt officials in the administration can be sent into forced retirement earlier.

The anti-graft body will also ask for authority to probe cases under Anti-Money Laundering Act 2002, Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1947, Passport Ordinance and Offence Under section 156 of the Customs Act 1969 and some others those who were in schedule of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption Act.

The advisory council committee might seek extension of the time limit for submitting the recommendations as it is meeting for the first time only tomorrow. The two-week time limit will expire on February 07.

## Case against

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edged the incident and said the police visited and raided Binodpur area to catch the criminals last night.

None was, however, arrested as of filing of this report at 7:00pm.

On February 1, 2006, armed

Shibir

activists killed

geology

and

mining

department

senior

teacher