NEWSNOTES

Imams to the Rescue

Langaljhhara, a remote village in Kalaroa upazila was quite the talk of the town when Imams of local mosques took part in a rally, hand-in-hand with the locals in an effort to resist acid violence. The rally was organised by Sodesh, a local NGO, and Action Aid Bangladesh and took place last Friday. There were discussions on public motivation to resist acid violence and the speakers strongly urged all to come to the victim's aid and punish the culprits. Recently, there has been an alarming increase of acid related violence across Bangladesh as most of the culprits manage to skip prosecution through legal loopholes. Speakers at the rally emphasised the need for Imams, as religious leaders, to spread awareness among people as they are in a good position to do so. The speakers also called upon the authorities concerned to impose tougher sentences for the culprits, while giving proper treatment and rehabilitation of acid survivors.

The Fall of the Titans

Nothing could make the suffering public of this nation more happy than to see corrupt politicians and their cronies be rounded up and taken away to jail. The apparent 'cleansing' operation carried out by the joint forces recently has given the message that the glory days of these unbelievably corrupt individuals, are finally coming to an end. The collection of political Mafiosi arrested includes corrupt bigwigs of BNP and Awami League (AL). The high profile detainees include Nazmul Huda, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Mohammad Nasim.

The arrests came three weeks into former central bank governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed led caretaker government's declaration of war against corrupt individuals and criminal godfathers

Preparations are on to bring graft charges against the detainees.

The joint forces also have the names of 41 other top politicians and businessmen on their wanted list and will soon make an announcement for them to surrender.

Apart from former communications minister Huda, and former prime minister Khaleda Zia's parliamentary affairs adviser SQ Chowdhury, other detainees from the BNP fold are former state minister for civil aviation Mir Nasir Uddin, former Dhaka-10 lawmaker and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's political secretary Mosaddak Ali Falu, former state minister for power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, former state minister for labour and employment Amanullah Aman, former deputy minister for land Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, former lawmaker from Khagrachhari Abdul Wadood Bhuiyan, former lawmaker from Sylhet Naser Rahman who is also former finance minister Saifur Rahman's son, and former lawmaker from Comilla Manjurul Ahsan Munshi.

Arrestees from AL are former home minister Mohammad Nasim, Adviser to AL and Beximco Vice-chairman Salman F Rahman, former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, former member of parliament (MP) Lotus Kamal, and Swechhasebak League General Secretary Pankaj Devnath.

Most of the arrests took place after midnight. Newspapers flashed photographs of these bigwigs looking dishevelled and nervous as they were being taken into custody.

The security forces also raided the houses of Ali Asgar Lobi, a former BNP MP, Hasnat Abudullah, former chief whip and cousin of AL President Sheikh Hasina, Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak, and its Secretary Mirza Azam, but did not find any of them.

The joint forces arrested Falu from his house at 10:45pm in Old DOHS after he had returned from Biswa Ijtema. Before his arrest, Falu met Khaleda in Hawa Bhaban.

Falu surrendered to the joint forces after calling them asking whether they had been looking for him as they had raided his house the night before. He asked the forces to come and pick him up from his DOHS residence if they wanted to arrest him.

Falu had gone under the shelter of immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia since the start of the current anti-crime drive. The joint forces were in communication with him over the last few days warning him that the consequences would be dire if he did not surrender, which led to his surrender last night.

Falu has amassed a huge amount of wealth during the five years of four-party regime and was also one of the main conspirators behind the scam of siphoning crores of taka from Oriental Bank.

The detainees are apparently being interrogated in army custody although the government did not make