

RELIEF MATERIALS
Falu to be shown held today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained former BNP lawmaker and businessman Mosaddak Ali Falu will be shown arrested today in a case filed against him for embezzling government property.

The army-led joint forces seized government relief materials from a factory site in Savar owned by Falu on February 9.

Following the seizure, Ashulia police filed the case against Falu and several other officials and employees of the factory but their names were not mentioned.

Sub-Inspector Mohammad Ismail Hossain of Ashulia Police

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7 POLITICIANS

Why detainees not to be brought before court: HC

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued rules on the government to explain why seven of the recent detainees, including ex-state minister Salahuddin Ahmed, ex-BNP lawmakers Ali Asgar Lobi and Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, should not be produced before it to be convinced that they are not being held illegally.

The rules came following separate habeas corpus petitions filed on behalf of their close relatives challenging the legality of their detention orders under the Special Powers Act, 1974 and the Emergency Rules, 2007.

The other detainees are BTTB CBA leader Firoz Miah, Sharishahbari BNP leader Shaheen Talukder, and Jhenidah Jubo Dal leaders Khairul Islam and Shahinuzzaman.

They were sent to jail with 30-day detention orders after the army-led joint forces rounded them up during the ongoing crackdown on 'corrupt' politicians.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed, advocate Nizamul Huq Nasim, Barrister Ruhul Quddus Kajal and advocate BM Illias Kochi appeared for the detainees.

Automatic pricing for petroleum on the cards

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is mulling a proposal to start an automatic pricing mechanism for petroleum products, to meet donors' conditions and to reduce the losses consistently incurred by the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), which currently stands at Tk 12,000 crore.

The mechanism would open up the domestic petroleum prices to movements in the international market and end state protection of domestic consumers from international price fluctuations.

The proposal is likely to be discussed at today's meeting of the council of advisers at the Chief Adviser's Office, energy and finance ministry sources said,

adding that the discussions will emphasise strategies to reduce BPC losses, especially on specific steps to repay loans from the state-owned banks.

The meeting would also discuss possible ways to formulate an automatic pricing method for petroleum goods, so that domestic prices more closely correspond with global market prices.

Over and above the cumulative loss of Tk 12,000 crore, the BPC owes Tk 10,000 crore in outstanding loans to three state-owned banks, energy ministry sources said.

The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been urging the government to initiate the automatic pricing mechanism so that domestic

prices more closely reflect the world market prices.

The release of both the 7th instalment of the IMF's Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) loan to Bangladesh and the WB's fourth instalment of Development Support Credit (DSC) require the government to start automatic pricing mechanism for petroleum.

Last year, the former BNP-led coalition government made a commitment to the IMF that they would initiate automatic pricing mechanism by the next fiscal year.

Under the present pricing mechanism, the government pays in subsidy Tk 10 per litre of diesel, and Tk 12 per litre of kerosene. However, for other petroleum products, the government makes a

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EC Secretary Rashid Sarkar transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Secretary to the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat Abdur Rashid Sarkar was transferred yesterday to the Ministry of Textile and Jute in a bid to recast the EC.

Abdur Rashid Sarkar, who joined the EC Secretariat in last July from the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, left the EC premises yesterday afternoon and Managing Director of Sadharan Bima Corporation M Humayun Kabir joined as the acting secretary to the EC Secretariat.

Election Commissioner Sohel Hossain, hinting more changes in the EC Secretariat to create a clean image of the EC, yesterday said a joint secretary was assigned to investigate the allegation of financial irregularities in printing the updated voter list.

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PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court led by Magistrate Rokonud-Doula raids a noodles factory at Kazipara in the capital's Mirpur area yesterday. The court fined the factory authorities Tk 4 lakh for having unhygienic environment in the factory.

Govt trying hard to hold credible polls

CA assures UK delegates

Bss, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the caretaker government is working relentlessly to hold a free, fair and credible election aimed at bringing about qualitative changes in the governance.

"We want to hold a meaningful election which will help strengthen democracy and take the nation

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Govt plans action against loan defaulters

30-32 cases sent to law ministry

Bss, Dhaka

Finance Adviser AB Mirza Mohammad Azizul Islam yesterday said 30-32 cases of bank defaulters have been sent to the law ministry for taking immediate actions.

"I hope about Tk 700 to 800 crore would be recovered after disposal of these cases," he said while inaugurating the annual

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AKM Mosharraf, ex-MP Abbasi sent on detention

STAR REPORT

A Mymensingh court yesterday placed former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain under a month's detention while another court in Netrakona sent LDP presidium member and former lawmaker MA Karim Abbasi to the district jail.

The joint forces picked up Mosharraf from his Mymensingh residence on February 8, while Abbasi was arrested at his house in Durgapur upazila under Netrakona on Saturday night on charges of corruption and nepotism.

Meanwhile, the army-led joint forces, police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 1,718 people on various charges in 24 hours in the countrywide drive until 6:00am yesterday. They also seized 18 firearms, four bombs and 39 bullets during the drive.

Barisal City Corporation commissioner and also district unit joint secretary of Jatiya Party (Ershad)

Murtaza Abedin, Moulvibazar municipality commissioner Masud Ahmed, Bashurhat municipality commissioner ABM Siddiq, a union parishad chairman and organising secretary of Gangachara (Rangpur) upazila BNP Mokarram Hossain Sujon, an NGO chief and a journalist were among the arrestees.

Our Mymensingh correspondent reports: First Class Magistrate Roksana Tarannum rejected the bail petition of Mosharraf and ordered to send him to Mymensingh jail on a month's detention when he was produced before the court yesterday.

The defence lawyers appealed to the court for sending him to Dhaka Central Jail, but the court rejected that plea as well. The court, however, ordered the prison authorities to provide the ex-lawmaker and the president of the district (south) BNP with division

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30 DAYS INTO EMERGENCY

29 killed by law enforcers, over 52,000 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-nine people were killed by law enforcement agencies while 52,027 were arrested during the first 30 days of the state of emergency, says Odhikar, a human rights watchdog.

Eleven people were killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), nine by the police, six by army and three by the joint forces from January 12 to February 10, says a report of Odhikar prepared on the basis of reports of 11 national dailies and the organisation's own findings.

Odhikar demanded independent inquiries into all the above-mentioned extra judicial killings or deaths adding that the results of the inquiries should be made public.

The human rights body also expressed its concern over the

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757 cops' selection finally cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police authorities yesterday cancelled the selection of 757 sub-inspectors (SIs) and sergeants made towards the end of the immediate past BNP-led four-party rule allegedly through gross irregularities including bribery, political influence and nepotism.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad signed an order last evening terminating the controversial selection, Assistant Inspector General (AIG) Matiur Rahman Sheikh, who is in charge of media cell at the police headquarters, told The Daily Star last night.

Asked whether any investigation will be carried out to find out the culprits who took bribes and influ-

enced the recruitment process, the AIG said that no decision has been taken in this regard.

Though the result was published last October, the authorities did not hand the candidates appointment letters or start their training.

Meanwhile, the selected SIs and sergeants have decided to submit memorandums to the chief adviser of the caretaker government and the IGP requesting not to deprive them of their jobs. Many of them assembled at the Ramna Park from 1:30pm to 3:30pm yesterday and took the decision.

Besides, 71 people selected as SIs and sergeants at a press conference in Khulna yesterday threatened self-immolation if they are deprived of their jobs.

Govt gives nod to Tk 1,080cr projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved seven purchase proposals involving Tk 1,079.87 crore for projects in different sectors including energy, power and fertiliser.

The advisory committee on public procurement at a meeting at the secretariat took the decision.

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam who chaired the meeting told reporters that the purchase proposals go in line with the caretaker government's priorities in the sectors.

The first priority, he said, is to improve functioning in the power sector while the second is to ensure there is no shortage of fertiliser or

diesel for the farmers. The finance adviser said the caretaker government has also prioritised a number of projects on health and development.

The committee approved the import of 1.2 lakh metric tons diesel from India to meet the high domestic demand for petroleum products in 2007. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) would supply the diesel at Tk 462.33 crore.

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury said the diesel would be imported from the Indian state of Assam in oil tankers and stored in depots at Baghbari. Previously, the import used to be unloaded at

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Case against Dr Kamal, others sent for trial

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The criminal case filed against prominent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, barristers M Amir-Ul Islam, Rokonuddin Mahmud and 10 others in connection with vandalism on the Supreme Court (SC) premises on November 30 last year was transferred to a metropolitan

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Farmers block Bogra highway for fertiliser

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Over two thousand farmers yesterday demonstrated against fertiliser crisis and blockaded Dhaka-Bogra highway for three hours at Ghurka Beltola in Raiganj upazila.

The agitating farmers also damaged four vehicles including a truck loaded with fertiliser.

Police and locals said the farmers from several villages of the upazila gathered at Ghurka Beltola market to purchase fertiliser from fertiliser stores owned by local dealers Rafik and Rauf. Earlier, both the dealers had made announcements that they would sell fertiliser to the farmers that day (yesterday).

The farmers became enraged when the dealers refused to sell any

fertiliser and fled their stores. They brought out a procession and barricaded the highway near the market from 9:00am to 12:00noon causing a five km-long traffic snarlup.

Solonga thana police brought the situation under control at around 12:00noon and they later oversaw fertiliser sale among the farmers.

Farmers told the Daily Star that the unscrupulous cartel of dealers have long been depriving them of fertilisers by fixing high prices for the commodity and also selling it on the black market. They urged the government to start selling fertiliser on the open market immediately to ensure its smooth supply. Otherwise, the target of IRRI-Boro cultivation will not be achieved this year.

30 killed in suicide blast near Tikrit

8 Iraqi border recruits among 18 others killed in attacks

AGENCIES, Baghdad

A suicide truck bomber slammed into a crowd of police lining up for duty yesterday near Tikrit, collapsing the station and killing at least 30 people and wounding 50, police said.

Minutes later, a roadside bomb struck a car on a highway on the western outskirts of Tikrit, 130km north of Baghdad, killing two civilians and wounding two others, police said.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said Iraqi security forces would deploy in force this week as part of a US-backed security sweep aimed at stopping the violence in the capital.

The Shia prime minister stressed that the operation would be comprehensive.

"The new security plan will not start from a specific area, but it will start from all areas and at the same time and those who will take part in it are from all formations of the army

and police," he said, facing criticism that delays in starting the operation have allowed attacks that have killed hundreds over the past few weeks.

"The operation will continue to escalate and very soon, during this week, we will witness a big start and the intensive deployment of army, police and other security forces in different areas in Baghdad."

The first blast near Tikrit occurred about 8 am as police were arriving for work at the Adwar police station, provincial police Capt Abdel-Samad Mohammed said, giving the casualty toll. He said 21 of the 30 killed were policemen.

The bomber drove a small truck that was packed with explosives covered by hay and the force of the blast flattened the building and heavily damaged three houses close to the station, along with municipal offices and the post office.

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Arrest of Phulbari movement hero condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different social and political organisations yesterday condemned the arrest of a local leader of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Electricity-port who had led people of Phulbari, Dinajpur during their movement against Asia Energy Corporation last year.

Joint forces arrested M Nuruzzaman, member secretary of the committee's Phulbari branch, around 11:00pm Saturday.

Expressing their concern over the activities of Asia Energy after the caretaker government took over, the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources and Electricity-port in a press release said Asia Energy is trying make their way into mining in Phulbari by intimidating the locals. They demanded his immediate release.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan (Bapa) in a press release also expressed their concern over Asia Energy's activities and demanded Nuruzzaman's release. They said the arrest of such people damages the image of the present caretaker government.

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Workers employed by the Uttara Lake Bachao Committee, an organisation campaigning for the protection of Uttara Lake in the capital, start cleaning the lake yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A leader of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Haque Group) was killed in 'crossfire' between the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his cohorts here on Saturday night.

The dead was identified as Harun-or-Rashid, 35, of Kapashatia village under Harinakunda upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, Jhenidah Rab-6 members went to Berbeni village of Harinakunda and surrounded Harun and his associates when they were holding a secret meeting.

Sensing Rab's presence, the PBCP men fired on Rab personnel prompting the elite force members to retaliate.

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Prayer Timing		
February 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-57	6-01
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		