

Jt forces arrest Nuruzzaman of Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The joint forces yesterday arrested contractor Md Nuruzzaman, who had recently filed a case against former BNP lawmaker from Moulvibazar Naser Rahman, on charges of grabbing government lands and looting tenders.

He was later handed over to the Sylhet Kotwali police.

Sylhet Sadar Cognizance magistrate court sent him to jail with a month's detention after the police produced him before it in the afternoon bringing charges against him under the Special Powers Act.

Contractor Nuruzzaman first came to limelight four years ago when he accused Naser Rahman, also the son of BNP's former finance minister Saifur Rahman, of demanding tolls from him and threatening him. Naser asked for the toll as Nuruzzaman was awarded some construction jobs by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) at that time, the latter said. He was also arrested in some cases lodged by BNP and

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Relief looted at fag end of last govt

Energy adviser says

UNB, Dhaka

Relief, Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday said the government will file criminal cases against those found involved in plundering and misappropriating the relief goods.

Briefing reporters at the energy ministry's conference room, he alleged that relief goods were plundered in the name of special allocations during the immediate past BNP-led alliance government.

"No need to mention, definitely there was 'hariloot' (plundering) at the fag end of the last government and we are now investigating and also recovering those goods..." Tapan Chowdhury said.

He did not give any figure or quantity of relief goods misappropriated, but said the relief ministry has the figure. Most of the relief goods misappropriated were rice, wheat,

oil sheets and biscuits.

It is not important to the caretaker government as to when those were misappropriated - in last five years or 10 years, he said, adding that the joint forces, being ordered by the government, are now recovering those relief goods.

The adviser said the relief ministry has changed the process of relief distribution, as now the deputy commissioners (DCs) will directly receive relief goods from the ministry and distribute those among the destitute.

Earlier, relief goods were not sent directly to the DCs, he added.

He said it is quite unfortunate that Tk 100 was spent against per piece of oil sheet transportation and those were used for personal comfort and pleasure of some corrupt people instead of distributing among the destitute.

The power and energy adviser

said the government is strongly considering enhancing fuel price, as there was no price adjustment with international market in last few years.

"But as yet there is no decision by the government," he said urging the media not to dish out any speculative news on fuel price hike.

Increase of fuel price is essential to reduce the loss of state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and also to make an adjustment with international market price, he said, adding that in course of time, price of natural gas for consumers will have to be enhanced.

Replying to a question, Tapan Chowdhury said the caretaker government will not take any decision about Asia Energy. "I don't say yes or no... we'll not go against the interest of the people, it (Asia Energy) is not on our priority list."



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A pair of Purple Moorhen being hawked in front of the Anti-corruption Commission in the capital yesterday even though there is a ban on the trade of such animals under the Wildlife Preservation Act 1974.

Bail petition of Nazmul Huda rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda in a case filed for illegal possession of local and foreign currencies.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza passed the order following a petition filed by Huda's lawyers.

The joint forces arrested the BNP big shot at his Dhanmondi residence on February 4. During the raid, they seized 18,68,470 takas, 1,796 Singapore dollars, 1,350 pounds, 300 euros, 18 Kuwaiti dinars, 14 revolver bullets, four passports and a mobile phone set.

Later on February 14, a case was filed against him under the Special Powers Act, Money Laundering Act and Excise Act. The following day he was shown arrested in the case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station.

A day after his arrest, Huda was sent to detention on charges of anti-state activities, sabotage and corruption. He had been in Dhaka Central Jail before being taken to

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ORIENTAL BANK SCAM

BB cancels Litu's shares

Most of these bought under fictitious names

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday cancelled 16.47 percent of Oriental Bank's shares bought by Abul Khair Litu of Bengal Group against fictitious names of individuals and some of his companies in breach of the banking company laws.

In another directive, the central bank asked different commercial banks to submit reports by February 28 on financial transactions of 24 accused in the Oriental Bank scam who include Obaidul Karim, chief of Orion Group, ex-managing director of the bank Koyes Sami and its 22 other present and former officials.

In a letter to the managing director of Oriental Bank yesterday, the central bank ordered cancellation and forfeiture of the shares with immediate effect and asked the scam-tainted private bank to inform its current shareholders accord-

ingly.

A BB probe found that Abul Khair Litu held 16.47 percent shares listed against 11 fictitious names and some companies owned.

The BB has asked Oriental Bank authorities to issue fresh shares in its [central bank's] favour to replace the forfeited ones and send those to it forthwith.

It has also directed Oriental Bank to immediately inform the registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms and the Securities and Exchange Commission of the actions against the benami shares [the ones held by proxy].

The BB letter said the directive has been issued under Section 45 of the Banking Companies Act, 1991 to advance the monetary and banking policy and also to ensure

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Honest businessmen to get all help: CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) fakhruddin Ahmed has said the government will cooperate with honest businessmen and sought cooperation from the business community to keep the wheel of economy moving.

He made the remarks when a 15-member delegation of Chittagong Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), led by its President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, called on him at his office yesterday.

The chief adviser said the main objective of the present government is to create a congenial atmosphere for holding a free, fair and credible election and sought support of the businesspeople to the government initiatives and actions. In this context, he mentioned various ongoing cleansing drives for better environment for business.

He said another objective of his government is to accelerate economic growth through maintaining normal flow of trade.

About prices of essential commodities, Ahmed said it is the

responsibility of both the government and private sector to maintain stability of prices.

Referring to his series of meetings with business organisations, he said such dialogues will continue for improving the business environment.

The chief adviser also referred to the ongoing consultations at local levels between business community, joint forces and local administration for strengthening coordination and avoiding unnecessary harassment.

This already is yielding good results at various places of the country, he added.

The CCCI leaders gave a number suggestions which included handing over operation and services of Chittagong port to the private sector for improving performance, making Sunday weekly holiday, Expansion of Pre-shipment inspection (PSI), installation of captive power plant, checking middlemen interest, enacting anti-hoarding law and reducing 30 steps during setting up new industry.

They also urged the Ca to take

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Passenger held at ZIA with huge foreign currencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials held a Singapore-bound passenger at Zia International Airport on Wednesday night and seized local and foreign currencies worth over Tk 25 lakh from his possession.

The arrested person is Abdullah, 45, of Chhale Shahar village at Bianibazar in Sylhet.

Customs officials arrested him at a checkpoint at around 11:00pm and recovered the currencies that include 60,000 Singaporean dollars, 125 UAE Dirham and Tk 1,440.

Abdullah was handed over to police yesterday morning and a case was filed against him under the Money Laundering Act.

Police suspected that he was smuggling out the money.

BNP, AL both for early polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of country's major political parties BNP and Awami League during their separate meetings with visiting US Congressman Steve Chabot yesterday urged holding of the election at an early date.

Demanding election within six months of the interim government's taking office, BNP leaders said the caretaker government system might be in question if a non-elected government runs the country for too long.

"There is no logical grounds to take more than six months for

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CA tells US congressman govt working for fair polls

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday informed a visiting US congressman that his government is working relentlessly to hold a free, fair and credible election.

"Our main focus is on election," he told Congressman Steve Chabot who called on the chief adviser at his office.

Chabot, on behalf of the US Congress, congratulated and appreciated the chief adviser for his government's steps and efforts

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Prayer Timing		
February 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		