

Falu's petition for bail turned down again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again rejected a bail petition of detained former BNP lawmaker and businessman Mosaddek Ali Falu in a criminal case filed in connection with misappropriating government relief materials.

Another detained former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed was sent to jail after being produced before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) yesterday.

First Class Magistrate Mohammad Motahar Hossain passed the order following a bail petition by Advocate Anisul Haq on behalf of Falu.

The same court on February 17 rejected the former lawmaker's earlier bail petition.

In another incident, Falu's defence lawyers withdrew a bail petition submitted to the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court in connection with the same

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Tapan says govt not helping Prof Yunus into power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday dismissed the rumour that the caretaker government is favouring Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus in order to bring him to power.

"This is absolutely baseless. We will handover power to an elected government within the shortest possible time," he said while replying to a journalist's query at his office.

"We are not here to keep any person or party in power," he added.

Speaking on Monday's fire at a high-rise building in the capital, the adviser said the government would procure more equipment that is required for fighting fires. He said the government would also

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HC stays SI recruitment for a month

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed for a month the recruitment process of police sub-inspectors (SIs) through the February 22 advertisement.

A division bench comprising Justice Syed M Dastagir Husain and Justice Mamnoon Rahman passed the order.

Earlier on Feb 19, the same court, responding to a writ petition, issued a rule upon the government to explain why its decision cancelling the recruitment of 757 police, including sub-inspectors and sergeants, should not be declared "unlawful".

According to recent media reports, the police administration, after a probe report, decided to do away with the selection of 757 sub-inspectors (SIs) and sergeants recruited through "gross irregularities" like "bribery, political influence and nepotism" during the last

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Rejoinder, our reply

Former energy adviser to the caretaker government Maj Gen (retd) Ruhul Alam Chowdhury in a statement to The Daily Star categorically denied responsibility for approving three licences for mining and minerals exploration during his term between December 12, 2006 and January 11, 2007.

Drawing attention to The Daily Star news headlined "Ex-energy adviser's hasty deals -- 4 exploration licences given to unknown firms in his brief tenure" published on January 25, he said that these three licenses were issued as "routine matter", as decisions

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Prayer Timing		
February 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Plan to double bank capital to Tk 200cr

Definition of defaulted loan to be changed

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is going to amend the Bank Company Act 1991 to bring changes in the definition of defaulted loan and double the existing amount of capital for commercial banks.

Finance ministry sources said the Bangladesh Bank (BB) sent a draft proposal of the amendment to the ministry last week.

The draft proposes increasing the capital of commercial banks to Tk 200 crore from the existing Tk 100 crore.

The new definition of defaulted loan in the proposal brings down the overdue period to three months from the current six months.

The definition has been taken in

line with suggestions from different international organisations, the draft says.

The central bank's amendment proposal also includes cutting short the tenure of the board members. It proposes a Tk 20 lakh fine against a bank for breaching the act; the highest fine for such offences is Tk 2,000 now.

Similar amendment proposals were made by the central bank during the immediate past BNP-led government's rule.

The present chief adviser was the BB governor at that time and the BB had tried to achieve the changes through a regulatory order but failed to implement it due to the court's stay order.

The legal tangle prompted the

BB to go for the legal amendment to turn its regulatory order into a law and an amendment bill was tabled in parliament in 2004. The bill was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry for scrutiny.

The bill, however, did not return to the House during the last parliament's period allegedly because of pressures from the lawmakers of both BNP and Awami League involved in the banking business, sources said.

Finance ministry sources said after taking office Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed took up the issue as "priority job" to bring discipline in the banking sector, reduce classified loans and

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Criminal case filed against ex-minister Mosharraf

UNB, Comilla

A lawyer yesterday filed a criminal case against former health minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain and 28 others accusing them of looting a business house about six years ago.

After hearing the petitioner, the court referred the case to Daudkandi police station for investigation.

Petitioner advocate Mehedi Hasan Babu submitted to the court that Mosharraf and others demanded Tk 20 lakh as toll from Abdus Sattar, a businessman at Goalambi bazaar, on April 9, 2001. But non-payment of the toll enraged them.

After three days (April 12), they assaulted Sattar and ransacked his business house and took away cash and valuables worth Tk 70,000.

HC ISSUES RULE Why detention of Babul won't be declared illegal

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain why the detention order against Jamuna Group Chairman Nurul Islam Babul should not be declared illegal.

The court order came following a habeas corpus petition filed by Babul's wife, challenging the legality of the detention order.

"The rule is returnable in 10 days", said the court order.

Babul, a listed corrupt suspect, was arrested as soon as he came out of the Anti-Corruption Commission office at Segunbagicha after submitting his wealth statement on February 22.

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation bulldozes illegal structures built along Raishaheb Bazar Road in Narinda in the capital yesterday.

Cheney unhurt after Afghan suicide blast

14 killed in the Taliban attack

AP, Bagram

A suicide bomber attacked the entrance to the main US military base in Afghanistan yesterday during a visit by Vice President Dick Cheney, killing at least 14 people and wounding a dozen more. The Taliban claimed responsibility and said Cheney was the target.

Cheney's spokeswoman said he was fine, and the vice president later met with President Hamid Karzai in the capital, Kabul, before leaving the country.

There were conflicting reports on the death toll. Provincial Gov. Abdul Jabar Taqwa said 20 people were killed, while NATO said initial

reports indicated three fatalities, including a US soldier, a South Korean coalition soldier and a US government contractor whose nationality wasn't immediately known. NATO said 27 people also were wounded.

It was unclear why there was such a large discrepancy in the reports.

Associated Press reporters at the scene said they had seen the bodies of at least 12 people carried in black body bags and wooden coffins from near the base into a market area where hundreds of Afghans had gathered to mourn.

Maj William Mitchell said it did not appear the explosion was

intended as a threat to the vice president. "He wasn't near the site of the explosion," Mitchell said. "He was safely within the base at the time of the explosion."

However, a purported Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, said Cheney was the target of the attack.

"We knew that Dick Cheney would be staying inside the base," Ahmadi told AP telephone from an undisclosed location. "The attacker was trying to reach Cheney."

Ahmadi said the attack was carried out by an Afghan called Mullah Abdul Rahim from Logar province.

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MEGHNAGHAT 3 POWER PLANT Govt finally cancels unsolicited project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government officially cancelled the unsolicited and Hawa Bhaban-backed bid for Meghnaghat phase three 450 megawatt power project that the alliance government had tried to award to an unknown US-Irish joint venture, Cadogan Manning (CMG).

On February 19, the power ministry asked the Power Cell to take up measures for an open tender for this power project under the private sector power generation policy. The ministry also asked the Power Cell to inform Cadogan Manning of the government decision to cancel the unsolicited bid. The cell was negotiating with this company since 2004.

"The Hawa Bhaban's insistence to have this unsolicited deal by any means basically wasted a lot of

time. If the country floated an open tender, this project would have been on the way to implementation by now," said a power ministry source.

Sources said that a large business group involved in real estates headed by a businessman who has been named in the list of 50 corruption suspects was holding the main stake in the Cadogan Manning proposal that grossly violated the country's power policy and other related government rules.

After Cadogan Manning submitted its proposal, the Power Cell could not accommodate it despite pressure from the then prime minister's office and Hawa Bhaban. As a result, a number of top officials including a very competent technical expert were removed from the Cell.

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Diplomats hurt in Lanka attack

REUTERS, Colombo

The Italian and US Ambassadors to Sri Lanka were slightly injured yesterday when Tamil Tiger rebels shelled a delegation of diplomats led by the island's human rights minister, officials said.

Hospital officials in the eastern district of Batticaloa said Italian Ambassador Pio Mariani had a small piece of shrapnel lodged in his head outside his skull, but that it was a minor wound. German envoy Jurgen Weerth, initially reported injured, was unharmed, they said.

US Ambassador Robert Blake's arm was grazed either by shrapnel or a stone, the military said, but he was not taken to hospital and his embassy said he was fine.

It is believed to be the first attack on Western envoys since the rebels began fighting for a separate state in 1983.

The Tigers said they were sorry the envoys were injured by their fire, but blamed the army for putting them in harm's way.

The attack came as helicopters carrying Disaster Management and Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe as well as ambassadors from the United States, European Union, Germany and France landed in Batticaloa on a goodwill mission.

"Due to Tiger shelling, the two helicopters were slightly damaged. They took off, but the US, Italian and German ambassadors had already got off and received minor injuries," Lieutenant-Colonel Upali Rajapaksa of the Media Centre for National Security said earlier.

"The act of shelling this delegation is a very serious thing by the

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PHOTO: STAR

The danger of serious personal injuries and short circuits looms as electric, telephone, cable TV and internet cables are tangled on poles close to the buildings on Nawabpur Road in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

Army chief for continued campaign against graft

UNB, Panchagarh

Army Chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday called for carrying on the current campaign against terrors, corrupt people and relief plunderers.

Addressing government officials, army and BDR officers at an army camp in the district town, he asked all concerned to take effective steps to stop the smuggling of

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Like every year The Daily Star will bring out a special supplement on our Independence Day, the 26th of March 2007. The theme of the supplement is: "State of our politics: Views of the young generation."

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