

Naser Rahman

FROM PAGE 16 Meanwhile, the task force members got some significant information from the Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury and Moulvibazar Pourasava Chairman Foyzul Karim Moyun, also general secretary of Moulvibazar district BNP, who were taken on remand in the same case on Thursday. They may be taken on fresh remand soon, sources said.

Five bank accounts of Ariful Haque Chowdhury and his wife Shama Haque Chowdhury had been confiscated, an official source said.

One of the 50 corruption suspects Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury surrendered to the Army camp at Sylhet stadium on February 25.

He was immediately handed over to the Kotwali Police Station, wherefrom Arif was produced before the Sadar magistrate's court that ordered sending him to Sylhet Central Jail that day.

On February 17, Nuruzzaman filed the case against Naser Rahman and seven others including the Sylhet city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury, Moulvibazar Pourashava chairman and a few Roads and Highways (R & H) officials.

In the case, Nuruzzaman alleged that on October 10 of 2003, Naser demanded from him Tk 2 crore toll in connivance with the others.

Ariful Haque Chowdhury, one of the men closest to the former finance minister BNP stalwart M Saifur Rahman, went into hiding after the take over by the present caretaker government.

During the BNP-led government's rule, Arif was believed to be the most powerful man in the district as he had the blessings of Saifur Rahman. It also caused commotion among the BNP-led alliance at times.

Moulvibazar Pourashava Chairman Foyzul Karim Moyun, also close to the former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, was sent to the jail on 20 February as he

NID programme

FROM PAGE 16 the vaccines to the children.

Temporary immunisation centres at bus terminals, railway stations, airports, land ports, launch terminals, and tollbooths of bridges would also be used for vaccinating children so that no infant is left out.

The second round of the 15th NID will be held on April 8.

During the second round, children from the age of one to five years would be given a highly-potent vitamin A capsule and two- to five-year-olds would be given an anti-worm tablet along with the polio vaccine.

Bangladesh witnessed the reappearance of polio after the disease disappeared from the country for five years. In 2006, 17 polio patients were discovered across the country, four of them were in Banshkhal in Chittagong alone.

Nation builders

FROM PAGE 1 she said urging the young scholars not to judge anyone from outside. "Man looks at the outward appearance but the God looks at the heart," she said quoting a line from the Bible.

"Your education, your great success in O- and A-level exams will help to equip you for adult life," she said.

Taylor further said, "You can help to change the world, your family, friends, college, and university by being the person you make of yourself."

Referring to the assembly of young talents, British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury said, "You are a testament to the potential of this country. You've proved that given the chance you can compete with the best and that you can even beat the best."

He added, "O and A levels are a gold standard in education and you have all achieved the global best results in that standard."

The Bangladesh-born UK envoy said, "Looking at you makes me proud of my [Bangladesh] origin."

He also recalled the spirit of Ekushey February and the struggle for independence in 1971.

Termining the relations between Bangladesh and UK very strong, Choudhury said the UK is the largest bilateral donor and one of the large investors in Bangladesh. "It provides a \$200 million annual assistance for the education sector in Bangladesh so that you can get better education."

He said he hopes that another Nobel Prize winner will come out from today's achievers. He thanked The Daily Star for bringing so many young Bangladeshi scholars together.

The Daily Star Editor-Publisher Mahfuz Anam called on the students to keep firm faith in the potential of this country.

"I urge you to develop a vision in your mind, a vision of Bangladesh as a prosperous country, a democratic country, a country where everybody, the poor and the rich, has a certain standard of life that makes us all feel very proud," he said.

He asked all to dedicate them-

surrendered before the Sylhet Sadar magistrate's court in connection with Nuruzzaman's case.

The joint forces arrested contractor Md Nuruzzaman on February 22 on charge of grabbing government lands, tender looting etc. He was later handed over to the Sylhet Kotwali police.

That day police brought charges against him under the Special Powers Act and produced him before the Sylhet Sadar magistrate's court, which sent him to jail with one month's detention.

Nuruzzaman first came to limelight four years ago after he had brought charges of demanding toll against the then finance minister's son and lawmaker from Moulvibazar Sadar Naser Rahman.

Naser asked for the toll as Nuruzzaman was awarded some road construction and reconstruction jobs by the R & H department that time, the latter alleged. He was then caught in some cases lodged by BNP and JCD men, allegedly orchestrated by Naser and his men.

Full of passion

FROM PAGE 1 "We can only repay by serving the country and by making it prosperous," Ahsan said.

"I want to be an aerospace engineer or an economist," said Raqeeb Islam of International Turkish Hope who secured five A's in the A-level examinations.

Expressing his feelings to The Daily Star he paid high respect to his father Foyzul Islam and to his mother who, in his words, contributed the most in his achieving brilliant results. "I must come back home and serve the nation after finishing my studies abroad," Raqeeb said.

Mehnaz Mannan secured ten A's in the O level examinations from Scholastica. She wants to go abroad to become an engineer and come back home to dedicate herself to nation building activities.

Another holder of ten A's, Wasifa Zamal of Sunbeams, wishes to become a pilot like her father. "I am impressed by the honour accorded to us by the premier English daily The Daily Star."

"I obtained outstanding marks because I worked hard," said Russell Mahmood who wishes to become a pharmacist. Mahmood of Oxford International School observed that only hard work can make a person successful.

Promit Barua of Chittagong Grammar School was very excited about his nine A's in the O level examinations. He dreams of a good career in psychology and film making.

Talking to The Daily Star, Fahad Ibn Azam said he wants to study biotechnology. Azam got the highest marks in human biology and biology.

3 get world

FROM PAGE 1 formal ceremony in China-Bangladesh Friendship Conference Centre in the capital yesterday.

There were also many students who had secured the highest marks in more than half a dozen subjects among the examinees in Bangladesh. Ahsan Mosharraf Barkatullah of Scholastica secured the highest marks among Bangladeshi examinees in as many as seven subjects in the O level examinations held in June 2006. The subjects are physics, pure mathematics, economics, chemistry, human biology, biology and accounting.

The highest scorer in six subjects among the male examinees is Tasdik Mahmud of Green Herald School and the highest scorer in the same number of subjects among the females is Tonima Tasnim Anannya of Manarat Dhaka International.

Reezwan Ahmed of Oxford International School secured the highest marks in three subjects - English language, mathematics, and additional mathematics. Tanima Alam of Chittagong Grammar School obtained the highest marks in two subjects - biology and Bangladesh studies.

Among the A level examinees of January 2006 batch, Adnanul Haque Ahmed of Academia scored the highest mark in biology, Alina Amatullah of European Standard School scored the highest in chemistry, Humair Bin Md Omer of Mastermind in economics, and Mushfiqu Junayed Khurshid of Academia in physics.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1 regarding the violation of rules to the attention of the director general of shipping and the appropriate authority but they remained silent, the rejoinder claimed.

Our Reply The angle of The Daily Star story was that the country's export is being hampered due to tussles between foreign and local ship owners. Karachi bound exportable raw jute amounting to 21,000 metric tons had been stockpiled at Mongla seaport for over two months due to the tussle between the groups of ship owners.

The business community demanded bringing of changes to the existing Flag Vessel (Protection) Ordinance 1982, which is one of the major causes of the stockpiling of export goods. The HRC in the rejoinder did not provide any explanation for the stockpiling of export goods at the port. We stand by our report.

Karwan Bazar fire

FROM PAGE 1 11-storey building left the area yesterday. Policemen are now guarding it.

The staffs of several offices located on the building shifted valuables and documents that were not damaged by the fire.

Relief materials

FROM PAGE 1 An associate of former lawmaker Master Shahidul Islam, Faruk was arrested on charges of extortion, tender manipulation and sheltering extremists.

In Mymensingh, joint forces seized 69 CI sheets from the house of Sulekha Begum, president of Islampur upazila Mohila Dai, also a teacher of JJK Pilot High School in Islampur upazila, at Golkibari in the town.

Sulekha brought the sheets from former BNP MP Sultan Mohammad Babu for distribution among poor people.

In Barisal, joint forces on Thursday demolished the pleasure resort of BNP leader AKM Shahidullah alias Letku Shahid, who is also commissioner of ward No 12 of Barisal City Corporation.

During the previous BNP-led coalition government's rule, Shahidullah, who allegedly indulged in crimes and corruption, illegally occupied public land on the bank of Kirtankhola River on Bandh Road of the city, which was a part of the mass killing ground during the Liberation War, and built the resort on 2.69 acres of land worth around Tk 2.5 crore.

Locals felt aggrieved as he arranged a party there on December 16 night.

In Munshiganj, the joint forces yesterday demolished about 200 illegally built shops, houses and other business enterprises in areas stretching from Maliranka to Bhogdia and Boltali to Nawpara in Lauhajang upazila.

Criminal case

FROM PAGE 1 had been seized by the authorities on Wednesday, was handed over to Dhanmondi police on Thursday. Harris' name is on the list of 50 corruption suspects published by the Anti-corruption Commission.

Police are interrogating a brother-in-law and the chauffeur of Harris, who were also arrested during the confiscation. A Dhaka court sent them to a three-day remand on Thursday.

The luxury Range Rover, imported by former state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed and confiscated from Mohakhali on Sunday by the authorities, is being kept at Shilpanchal PS in Tejgaon in the capital.

Five years of four-party rule

FROM PAGE 1 pursue such credits following pressures from a section of government high-ups.

The interest rate for soft loans is less than 1 percent and the loans are repayable within up to 50 years whereas in suppliers' credit, the interest rate ranges from 3.5 to 12 percent and the repayment schedule stretches up to 12 years only.

Moreover, goods supplied against a suppliers' credit are all too often overpriced. For instance, if the original cost of goods is Tk 100, it is priced at Tk 500 in a suppliers' credit scheme, a source said.

Saifur and other BNP policymakers strongly opposed the AL government's policy at the end of its tenure when it financed projects through suppliers' credit.

"The BNP-Jamaat-led government even formulated a guideline to discourage suppliers' credit," said an ERD official.

He said there were a number of instances during the immediate past government's regime when the purchase committee headed by the finance minister was compelled to accept a number of projects financed by suppliers' credits due to

pressures from a section of government high-ups. "Those projects had earlier been rejected by the same purchase committee," the official said.

The practice was so rampant that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cautioned the government in FY'06 that it would not provide any aid if the government did not stop taking suppliers' credit.

"Governments take suppliers' credit when donors are not interested to fund projects which have no viability or have low quality," economist Zaid Bakht told The Daily Star. "Failing to get donors' funding, vested quarters of governments finance projects through suppliers' credit with motives for corruption," he said.

He said although the Bangladesh Bank is authorised to oversee such matters, it could not work properly due to government pressure.

A source cited a case by saying when the BNP-led alliance government came to power in 2001, it suspended two Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser plant projects on grounds of corruption by the previous AL government. But

later, it completed the projects by financing them through suppliers' credits. "Corruption was the main motive for such a policy," the source said.

The ERD statistics show that the total volume of soft loans taken by the BNP-Jamaat-led government was \$7.11 billion and the figure had been \$ 7.22 billion during the AL regime.

However, during the BNP-Jamaat regime soft loans from multi-lateral donors increased by 13.96 percent, and 60 percent of it was from the World Bank. During the same period, bi-lateral loans decreased by 19.39 percent compared to the corresponding period of the AL regime.

"The BNP-Jamaat government failed to get more soft loans as it was not successful in curbing corruption and at the same time its performances in bringing reforms to different sectors were not satisfactory," an ERD official said.

He said there was a total of \$7 billion aid from different development partners in the pipeline, but the BNP-Jamaat-led government failed to get the money.

Chandpur power project

FROM PAGE 1 companies at Tk 190 crore and Tk 181 crore, Mohraghat Kalurghat Water Treatment Plant at Tk 82 crore, and Atomic Treatment Centre extension at Tk 45 crore.

More projects include: Tk 31 crore infrastructure development for Military Institute for Science and Technology at Mirpur Cantonment, Tk 116 crore fund for infrastructure development in greater Rajshahi, Tk 214 crore phase three Barind Development Project in northern region, Tk 90 crore Debagram-Protogi Saranik link road, Tk 69 crore first phase project for solving water logging problem in Bhabadaha of Jessore, Tk 65 crore project for developing support services of Bangladesh Police, Tk 34 crore project for improvement of the brake system of Bangladesh Railway, and Tk 32 crore Paglapir Tista Barrage road development project.

Sources said the meeting will also be informed of 45 other projects approved by former finance and planning minister M Saifur Rahman during the immediate past BNP-led coalition government's rule.

The finance minister can approve projects involving under Tk 25 crore without the approval of the Ecneec.

CHANDPUR PROJECT CONTROVERSY Placing of the revised budget proposal for the Chandpur power project indicates that the corrupt axis that had created power crisis in the country is still in control of the PDB. On January 25, the PDB framed its revised budget proposal seeking to increase the project cost so that the blacklisted Chinese company can get \$16 million as additional payment.

To award the project to Harbin, the BNP-led alliance government brushed aside a review panel's decision declaring Harbin's bid null and void and asking the PDB to negotiate the project with CMEC.

Blacklisted last year by the Eastern Refinery Ltd (ERL) for failing to install a small power unit, Harbin is known for its gross bid manipulation hiding the cost of plant spare parts to show a low price offer.

"After the ERL blacklisted the company how can any government agency even want to use this company for installing a new power plant?" said a PDB official.

Following a report in The Daily Star last month, the CMEC wrote a letter to the chief adviser describing the wrongdoings of this project.

The CMEC said on September 29, 2005 it lodged a written complaint with the chairman of the Review Panel formed by IMED, Ministry of Planning, to investigate illegal practices and corruption of the PDB in the bid evaluation process of Chandpur 150MW Project.

On October 18, 2005 the panel gave its decision declaring Harbin's bid null and void and asking the PDB to negotiate with the CMEC.

The CMEC added that although the decision of the panel was supposed to be final as per the Public Procurement Regulation 2003, more than 16 months have passed and the PDB in connivance with the Power Division disregarded the decision.

"The PDB and Power Division rather managed to convince the Cabinet Purchase Committee in its meeting on January 2, 2006 to award the project in favour of the bidder that was disqualified by the Review Panel on October 18, 2005," the letter said.

Anti-money laundering law

FROM PAGE 16 used to repatriate wages from Bangladeshi workers abroad.

The report said hundi, however, would probably never be completely eradicated as it is used to avoid taxes, customs duties and currency controls. The non-convertibility of the local currency taka coupled with intense scrutiny on foreign currency transactions in formal financial institutions also contribute to the popularity of both hundi and black market money exchanges.

The report said hundi primarily uses trade goods to provide counter valuation or a method of balancing the books in transactions. It is part of trade-based money laundering and a compensation mechanism for the significant amount of goods smuggled into Bangladesh.

An estimated \$1 billion worth of dutiable goods are smuggled every year from India into Bangladesh. A comparatively small amount of goods are smuggled out of the country into India.

The report said currently Bangladesh is working to formalise operations for an FIU. Under the 2002 Money Laundering Prevention Act (MLPA), the Anti-Money Laundering Unit (AMLU) of the central bank acts as a de facto FIU and has authority to freeze assets without a court order and seize them with a court order.

It said the central bank has approved the purchase of hardware for the nascent FIU, which will be coupled with link analysis software provided by the US Department of Justice.

The report said the Bangladesh Bank has received approximately 236 suspicious transaction reports since the MLPA was enacted in 2002. To date, there have been no successful prosecutions in part due to procedural problems in adjusting to inter-agency cooperation. A major setback occurred in December 2005 when the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) advised the bank that it would not investigate these cases and returned them.

It said the Criminal Investigation

It added, on October 18, 2006, the Ecneec decided not to approve the project and recommended further examination. During this time, the CMEC sought justice from every possible quarter including the offices of the then prime minister, finance minister, secretary of Power Division, and PDB chairman.

"Due to the corruption and disregard for law, the CMEC has been denied the execution of the verdict issued by the 1st such Independent Review Panel," the letter said.

"This case is an example as to how even with PPR 2003, procuring entities can continue to practise illegal acts disregarding the decision of the Review Panel formed by none other than the [Government of Bangladesh] itself and GPDB is an entity owned by the GOB," it said.

The CMEC requested the chief adviser's intervention in this regard and ensure that the decision of the 1st Review Panel on the Chandpur 150MW CCPP Project is implemented at a time when the country is suffering from acute power shortage largely attributable to the rampant corruption that has seen a number of foreign companies withdraw from the power sector of Bangladesh.

"The assumption of power by the current [caretaker] government has raised hopes in the minds of all that the misdeeds and corruption of the past will finally be brought into account and those unfairly deprived will finally get justice. All we seek is access to justice and protection from corrupt and illegal practices," it added.

Deadly tornadoes strike southern US

20 people killed

AFP, New Orleans

A string of tornadoes that struck the southern United States left at least 20 dead, including eight teenagers killed when the roof of their school collapsed, reports said yesterday.

The storm system covering a large swath of the south-east was moving in a north-easterly direction, according to the National Weather Service.

The service had issued a tornado watch until 1500 GMT for the eastern coastline from northern Florida through Virginia and eastern Maryland. Parts of those states were also under a severe thunderstorm warning.

In the southern state of Alabama, eight teenagers were killed when a tornado struck a high school in the town of Enterprise, CNN reported, citing the town's mayor.

US television showed footage from Enterprise of roofless homes with blown-out windows, uprooted and shredded trees, dangling power lines and cars overturned and crushed.

High school student Brooke Shroades survived the tornado by hunkering down in a cubbyhole.

"I felt like I was on a rollercoaster. It was the scariest thing ever," she told the Enterprise Ledger newspaper.

"When I heard the train sound, I started screaming," she said.

Her father, Mike Shroades, who had hoped to pick up his daughter before the storm hit, took shelter in a school hallway with other parents, teachers and students.

"You could feel your body moving from the wind and suction," he told the Enterprise Ledger.

Alabama authorities revised downward an earlier toll of up to 19 dead, US media reported.

"It is complete devastation," Sheriff Russell Thomas told WWSA television as he assisted in rescue efforts in Enterprise. "It's very tragic."

There is a "possibility" that more bodies will be found as the sun rises, John Tallas, the county's top emergency official, told CNN.

The authorities also said the storm killed two other people in other parts of the state.

A higher, incorrect toll for Alabama was earlier repeated by the White House. Alabama state authorities blamed the problem on miscommunication.

In the pre-dawn hours of Friday a tornado spawned by the same storm delivered a direct hit on the Murray Sumter Regional Hospital in the town of Americus, Georgia, destroying the ambulance fleet and forcing 55 patients to evacuate, CNN reported.

Two people not linked to the hospital were killed in Americus, according to CNN.

At least seven other people were killed across southern Georgia, and one girl was reported dead after an apparent tornado touchdown earlier in Missouri, US television reported.

News of the children killed in Alabama came Thursday as President George W Bush - widely criticised for a slow response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 - visited New Orleans to tell the storm victims he had not forgotten about them.

"The administration stands ready

BDR, BSF

FROM PAGE 16 the trade of gunfire. The BDR and BSF traded 62 bullets.

Source said the BSF strengthened its patrol along the Indian border with Benapole and BDR is reported to have been put on high alert.

Prior to this incident, 60 bullets were traded between BDR and BSF at this very place on Wednesday. Cattle traders Jamal Hossain, 33, and Khokon, 28, were bullet hit during that firefight and are currently in a critical condition at a local hospital.

Domestic helps

FROM PAGE 16 Bangladesh Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon.

Alpona, 14, who had been working as domestic help to Dr Mostak Raja Chowdhury's house on Road-10/A in Dhanmondi, had committed suicide by hanging herself from a plumbing pipe inside a toilet with her scarf, Mostak's family sources claimed.

They said she locked herself inside a toilet of the house and did not come out for a long time. The family members claimed they broke into the toilet around 1:45pm and found her hanging. They rushed her to Bangladesh Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

The bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. Two unnatural death (UD) cases were filed with Uttara and Dhanmondi police stations.

Hafizuddin

FROM PAGE 1 its proceedings could not be held during the BNP-led four-party alliance rule.

The victim's father-in-law, Manik Mia, on Thursday filed the case with the cognisance court demanding re-investigation into the killing.

According to the case, Khorsheed was killed when Hafizuddin snatched a gun from police and opened fire as the deceased resisted vote rigging at Dr Azhar Uddin Secondary School polling centre in Lalmona upazila on the day of voting in 2001.

to help," Bush spokesman Scott Stanzel.

Federal authorities announced they were sending emergency aid to storm-stricken Alabama and Missouri.

Stanzel added that Bush was "deeply saddened" by news of the teens' deaths.

The single biggest tornado strike was to Enterprise, a town of 22,000 that Alabama Governor Bob Riley said suffered "major and widespread damage." Riley announced he was deploying about 100 National Guard soldiers to assist in recovery efforts.

Local hospitals asked for blood donations and utility Alabama Power said about 15,000 homes across the state were without electricity.

In Enterprise, school official Bob Ferris said the extent of the tragedy was not immediately clear. "We need your prayers," he said at a news conference.

Dozens of people were taken to hospitals in Enterprise and other parts of the southern state, where numerous homes were reported destroyed.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said that 19 tornadoes touched down in Alabama, Missouri and Georgia on Thursday.

"Tornadoes, large hail and destructive thunderstorm winds will remain a threat in parts of the Southeast and possibly even the mid-Atlantic" through early Friday, NOAA said in a statement.

North, South Korea

FROM PAGE 16 North Korea over uranium enrichment despite toning down its allegations that Pyongyang was running a secret programme.

The United States made the explosive allegations in 2002 that North Korea was running a covert uranium programme in addition to its declared plutonium operations, triggering the collapse of a 1994 disarmament deal.

"I think that the judgement as I understand of the intelligence community is that they are very confident that North Korea has had an enrichment programme in the past and they are moderately confident that this programme still continues," said Negropponte, the deputy secretary of state, on a visit to Tokyo.

After exhaustive negotiations, the United States and North Korea signed a new six-nation deal last month under which Pyongyang will shut a key nuclear reactor in exchange for fuel aid.

Body recovered

FROM PAGE 16 body was rotten beyond recognition. The wallet also contained a credit card, three cell phone sims, a telephone index and money.

The man might have been killed three or four days ago but there was no sign of torture or bruise on the body, police said.

It seems somebody dumped the decomposed body there sometime on Thursday night, said police and students.

JU campus that has no boundary walls, especially along the Dhaka-Aricha highway, witnessed several incidents of dumping of dead bodies before.

Incidents of mugging by outsiders allegedly aided by the leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Bangladesh Chhatra League also take place frequently there.

Another decomposed body was recovered from a bushy area near Dhaka-Aricha highway on August 1, 200