

BSC ship Gourab

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idle for one month undergoing the same repairs which were previously done at the same workshop.

The repair bill at Mongla and Chittagong stood at Tk 53 lakh but the ship could not carry jute cargo.

After the repair at Mongla, the vessel was chartered to a company to carry rice to Somalia from Kakinda in India. Just after depar-ture from Mongla, its engine mysteriously broke down once again. After necessary repair at sea, it berthed at Kakinda and loaded 8,000 tonnes of rice in early September last year.

But immediately after sailing from Kakinda, the ship had another engine breakdown and it remained afloat for three days without power. Later, the ship went to Colombo and remained there for 16 days for repair.

On October 1 last year, it sailed for Somalia. But on October 3, its power generation and supply flopped, and using an emergency generator, it went to Cochín.

The BSC officials and ship staff became fed up and decided to unload the cargo there. Undergoing repairs for a month, it sailed from Cochín and reached Chittagong on January 22 this year after a fruitless voyage. The repair cost at Kakinda, Colombo and Cochín amounted to more than one lakh dollars (equivalent to Tk 70 lakh). The ship is still under repair in Chittagong and counting Tk 23 lakh operating cost every day.

The enquiry report blamed lack of coordination among the three sections of the BSC -- ship personnel, ship repair and commercial branch -- for the 'man-made damage'. Ship repair section was interested in repeated repairs and getting commission out of the cost, according to the report.

Repair section personnel -- engineers, officers and supervisors--

- lacked proper qualification and experience.

The probe report said a general manager of finance department of the BSC was made in-charge of commercial wing, and he failed to give necessary decisions due to lack of proper knowledge.

According to sources, condition of most of the BSC ships are similar. The corporation has only 13 cargo vessels in its fleet and spent over taka eight crore just for repair purposes during Fiscal 2005-06. Another Taka four crore was spent for dry docking expenses in the year.

But the corporation however showed a net profit of Tk 30.8 crore in its balance sheet for that fiscal year. It has Tk 295.46 crore long term liabilities and equities.

In that fiscal year, all the 13 BSC vessels went for repair at the local ports and 11 ships used foreign ports for repairs. In the previous year, the expenditure for repairs was around Tk 4.50 crore.

One source pointed out that another BSC ship-- Bangler Mukh-- entered the repair berth at Chittagong on December 25. It was supposed reach Mongla on January 22 to carry raw jute to Karachi but failed due to engine trouble.

In the absence of the BSC ship, the consignment was carried by a foreign ship. On completion of repair on March 4, it was scheduled to carry another consignment from to Karachi from Mongla. But due to engine failure again, the vessel came back to Chittagong from Kutubdia on way to Mongla. And it is still under repair, the source said.

Acting Managing Director of the BSC Captain Azizul Hasan could not be reached over telephone for his comments in this regard.

Mashrafe

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Ross Taylor (11) caught by wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim and trapped Peter Fulton leg before. Fulton made only five.

His new ball partner Syed Rasel captured the prized wicket of New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming who was caught at slip by Abdur Razzak for a duck off the left-arm seamer.

Razzak then took charge to dash the Kiwis' hopes of recovering from the early damage and left a daunting task for the lower-order to put up a decent total on the board.

The left-arm spinner, who has emerged as a vital one-day bowler with his nagging line and length, got his first wicket by dismissing Scott Styris who looked to settle in the middle but was caught by Mohammad Ashraf for 26. He then took a return catch from the dashing Craig McMillan.

Each team were allowed to field thirteen players but the bad news for Bangladesh was that in-form opener Shahriar Nafees and ace left-arm spinner Mohammed Rafique had to be sidelined due to fitness worries.

Fortunately for the Kiwis, the match like the other three games played in the Caribbean as part of the build-up for the ninth World Cup, was not treated as an official ODI.

SC Bar

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The letter says an embarrassing situation has arisen in the country including the apex court due to the controversy over the embattled HC judge's certificate fiasco.

Earlier in another letter on May 30, 2005, the SCBA urged the president to act to scotch the debate over the matter.

Then on March 4 different national dailies reported that the CU Syndicate has cancelled Faizee's LLB certificate following a probe into the allegation of tampering with mark sheets, adds the letter signed by Bar Association Secretary AM Amin Uddin.

Historic March 7

FROM PAGE 1
Suhrawardy Udyan (the then Race Course Maidan) on this day in 1971.

Like a magic spell, it inspired thousands of Bangladeshis who gathered there and beyond, to brace themselves for the ultimate struggle to snatch freedom from the Pakistan junta.

Just 18 days into the speech, the Pakistani regime launched the brutal assault against the unarmed Bangladeshes, committing one of the worst genocide in history.

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and different socio-political organisations have taken different programmes to commemorate the historic mass gathering at the Ramna Race Course ground.

The AL programmes include hoisting of national and party flags at Bangabandhu Bhavan and at AL headquarters at 6:00am, placing of wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu at 7:00am and a discussion at Institute of Diploma Engineers at 3:00pm in the afternoon.

Marking the day, Jatir Janak (father of the nation) Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust yesterday organised a seminar on Bangabandhu's speech at Institution of Engineers' Bangladesh in the capital.

AL President Sheikh Hasina attended the programme as chief guest.

"It is very regretful that the children have not been able to know the accurate history of Liberation War as those who killed people on March 25, 1971 have become the pro-claimer of independence and those who fought for the freedom of the people have been made foes," the AL chief noted.

She also dwelt on the key role of the swaying speech played to rouse the Bangladeshes to fight for freedom.

Hasina severely criticised BNP and its founder Ziaur Rahman for what she said distorting history of War of Liberation.

Dr Moïnul Islam, professor of Economics Department of Chittagong University, presented a keynote titled 'Directive to advance the liberation struggle to liberation war: March 7 speech of Bangabandhu' at the discussion.

Former director general of Bangladesh Institute of International Studies and Strategies (BISS) Brig Gen (retd) M Abdul Hafiz, Dr Sadeka Halim, professor of Sociology Department of Dhaka University and columnist AZM Abdul Ali took part in the discussion. Trust's Member Secretary Sheikh Hafizur Rahman delivered the inaugural address.

Detention

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The joint forces arrested Alamgir, also Awami League presidium member, and Lotus Kamal on February 4. Later, they were sent to jail with a 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act.

Barrister M Amir-UI Islam appeared for the petitioners.

ntv MD held

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front of the UTC building on Panthapath Monday night and they asked the ntv MD to appear in person at Rab camp in Mohammadpur with documents in support of the vehicle.

They also asked Harunur Rashid -- a former lawmaker from Chapainawabganj -- to appear at the same time as they suspected that the vehicle was imported tax-free using Harun's privilege as a lawmaker.

When the men presented themselves at the camp yesterday afternoon, joint forces arrested them. They were being quizzed at the Rab camp till the filing of this report at 8:00pm.

The Hummer H2 (Dhaka Metro Gha 11-6795), which retails at between \$54,850 and \$64,625 in the US, was taken to Rab 2 office at Moghbazar.

Commanding officer of Rab 2 Akbar Hossain confirmed Enayet and Harun's arrests and the vehicle seizure.

In Rajshahi, joint forces arrested Shahadat Hossain Sahu, Awami League-backed Rajshahi City Corporation commissioner of ward 17, from his office at Nawdapara on Monday night on charges of grabbing public lands and patronising terrorism.

The forces also raided his house and seized land deeds, bank account books, and cellular phone sets.

Sahu is said to own three buildings in the city, a hotel, a community centre and 12 shops.

3 ex-state ministers

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former state ministers, the ACC officials said that their properties -- moveables and immovables--do not match their legal incomes.

They did not even make any mention of those in the wealth statements submitted to the ACC recently.

Deputy Director (DD) of the ACC Sharmin Ferdous filed a case with Gulshan Police Station against immediate past state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Nasir and his son barrister Mir Helal Uddin.

In the FIR, she mentioned that the father and son had accumulated assets worth over Tk 24.39 crore through illegal means and abuse of power.

The case was filed under sections 26 (1), 26 (2) and 27 of the ACC Act 2004, sections 409 and 109 of the Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC), section 5 (2) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1947 and section 15 (Kha) of the Emergency Ordinance 2007.

Another ACC DD Abdullah Al Zahid filed the graft case against ex-state minister for labour and employment Aman with Kafrul Police Station yesterday afternoon.

According to the FIR, Aman had acquired properties including house and vehicles valued at over Tk 8.28 crore.

It also mentioned that there is a wide discrepancy between incomes and expenditures of the former BNP lawmaker from Keraniganj. He had made vast sums by misusing power and bribery.

Besides, the DD accused

In Noakhali, the joint forces arrested Abu Sayed Chowdhury, local BNP leader and chairman of Mohammadpur U.P., and Mohammad Ali Tofadar, Chatkhil municipality BNP president, for corruption, misappropriation of public funds and land.

In Khagrachhari, police arrested district Jubo Dal president Saidul Islam Babul, municipality BNP secretary Joynal Patwari and organising secretary Ahsan Ullah Milon from their houses.

The joint forces also arrested four BNP activists from Rampur upazila and recovered 36 CI sheets from Matiranga TNO office staff Zakir's house.

In Moulvibazar, joint forces arrested Muhaddis Bakht Choudhury, office assistant at Civil Surgeon's office of Moulvibazar, for taking bribes.

In Satkhira, police on Monday night recovered 24 CI sheets from a local club owned by Mehedi Hasan, Nagarghata UP Jamaat Ameer, at village Nagarghata in Tala Upazila.

In another drive, police recovered 13 CI sheets from the house of a listed top gangster Nazrul Islam, also a close associate of former BNP MP Habibul Islam Habib, at Kazirhat village in Kalaroa upazila.

In Bogra, police recovered 49 CI sheets from a warehouse belonging to BNP Shibanj thana unit president ATM Kamal Selim at Amtoli area on Tuesday noon.

Aman's wife Sabera Aman of giving false information in her statement to the anti-graft body.

The ACC filed the case under sections 26 (2) and 27 of ACC Act 2004, section 109 of the Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC), section 5 (2) of Anti-Corruption Act 1947.

Meanwhile, DD Jibon Krishna Roy in a complaint filed against former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir with Tejgaon Police Station alleged that he has Tk 1.17 crore in six fixed deposits with the IFIC Bank Karwan Bazar branch.

But the AL leader concealed the information to the National Board of Revenue (NBR). He hid the information also in his statement to the ACC, the complainant said.

The case was filed under sections 26 and 27 of the ACC Act 2004, section 409 of the BPC, section 5 (2) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1947 and section 15 (Gha) 5 of the Emergency Ordinance 2007.

The ACC suspects the amount of illegal assets of those persons might be more as the investigation to find out that is still on.

If necessary, fresh cases might be filed against them, added the anti-corruption officials.

The three state ministers were among the 50 graft suspects asked by the ACC to submit wealth statements.

Unplanned buildings

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However, sources in the fire department denied the allegation and attributed the delay to the narrow roads and delay in getting the information.

"It usually takes us about ten minutes to cover the distance but yesterday we could not reach the spot before half an hour as the fire trucks could not enter the narrow roads that lead to the spot," said Shariful Islam, who is in charge of Chandanpura fire station.

"Besides, we were also informed of the fire half an hour late," he claimed.

The fire fighters also failed to start their operations immediately as they had to keep their vehicles some 1200 feet away from the blaze, the sources said.

"We had to join twelve pieces of 100 feet hoses and drag them over five buildings since there was no direct access to the spot," Shariful said.

Another problem the fire fighters faced was the lack of adequate water supply.

They used water from nearby Chaktai canal. Although the canal was only 300 yards off the spot the flow of water in it was very low at the time, the sources said.

The fire broke out around 1:45am and the fire fighters managed to extinguish the blaze around 6:30am.

The fire fighters defended themselves saying that they took a longer time to extinguish the fire because ten warehouses all full of rags also caught fire fuelling the blaze.

A fire fighter said he could not believe that a fire at such a small compound could bring about casualties of such an extent.

Huda denied bail

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seized Huda's luxurious Cadillac Escalade bearing registration number Dhaka Metro Gha 11-9999 and filed a case against him with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 1.

SALAHUDDIN SHOWN HELD IN CAR REGISTRATION CASE
Meanwhile, detained former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed of Demra was shown arrested yesterday in a case for using one single registration number for two automobiles.

Investigation officer (IO) Sub-Inspector Sabur Khan of Shyampur Police Station submitted a petition for showing Salahuddin arrested in the criminal case along with a seven-day remand prayer.

The court granted the petition for showing the former lawmaker arrested in the case and fixed March 11 for hearing on the remand prayer.

The joint forces on February 22 impounded five automobiles including two luxury sport utility vehicles (SUV) -- a Lincoln Navigator and a Pajero V6, five computers, and a 42-inch plasma television from Salahuddin's Kadamtala, Shyampur residence in the capital.

The estimated value of the two SUVs and the three other cars -- a Toyota Corolla, a Toyota HiLux and a Toyota HiAce -- is several crore taka.

The Navigator and the Corolla had the same registration number.

Following the seizure, Shyampur police filed a fraud case against him on Sunday.

In the yesterday's forwarding report placed before the court, the IO mentioned that Salahuddin had been fraudulently using the same registration number for two vehicles and further quizzing is required to find out the source of his income that enabled him to acquire such expensive possessions.

Nine other criminal cases were filed earlier against him with Shyampur, Jatrabari and Demra police stations on different dates. Later, he was taken on a five-day remand in three cases for interrogation.

Gold smuggling case

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Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of eight prosecution witnesses including the complainant and investigation officer (IO) of the case.

A team of customs officials held four people including two foreign nationals from Zia International Airport on July 17, 1990 when they were attempting to smuggle around 3.6 kg of gold worth around Tk 2.5 crore into Bangladesh, the prosecution said.

A smuggling case was filed with the Cantonment Police Station the same day against the four -- Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, David Anthony Chalmers Chaker of England, then manager of Zia International Airport Major (retd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and Abu Taher, an airport security guard.

During the investigation, the IO found evidence of Ershad's involvement in the smuggling and his name was included in the charge sheet on August 31, 1991.

Another Dhaka court on January 17 freed Ershad from serving out the sentence given by the HC on December 14 last year in connection with a case concerning Japanese boat purchase.

He was also acquitted and discharged of four graft cases in August and September last year after his announcement to join the four-party alliance.

Yunus

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The Nobel laureate proposed for announcing a Saarc day and celebrating it annually through cultural festivals across the region.

He also reiterated his call to introduce Saarc scholarships for students of the region, which, he believes, will help understand each other's problems and address those through collective efforts.

The audience listened to Prof Yunus with great interest about his early experience in establishing the Grammen Bank and its success in alleviating poverty in rural areas in Bangladesh.

They sought advice and technical help from the Nobel laureate in addressing the problems that the micro-finance institutions in Pakistan have been facing.

Pakistan has about six micro-finance institutions (MFIs) established a few years ago with support from the Grameen Bank.

The audience also supported the Nobel laureate's call for introducing Saarc passport and Saarc scholarships.

He urged the Pakistani bankers to gear up micro-finance movement and prioritise their focus on women so that they can have easy access to micro-credit.

He said it is imperative to give attention to women as they have been proved to be good entrepreneurs and they are more careful to utilise the fund.

Before the interactive session, Pakistan State Bank acting governor and top officials held separate meetings to discuss the micro-finance operation in Pakistan.

Indo-Pak panel talks

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people, both Indians and Pakistanis, in an attack both sides said was aimed at sabotaging peace efforts.

The heads of both delegations are foreign ministry additional secretaries, with Tariq Usman Hyder leading the Pakistani side, and KC Singh heading the Indian delegation, officials said.

Not much is expected from the one-day talks, given the history of suspicion between neighbours that have fought three wars since independence, when Pakistan was carved out of the partition of India 60 years ago.

Only time will tell whether the panel develops a meaningful mechanism for the exchange of information between two governments that face more than their fair share of problems from militants fighting for religious or separatist causes.

Presently, both sides hold the other at arms length whenever requests for a joint investigation, or timely sharing of information and evidence, are made.

Most recently, Pakistan asked to participate in a probe into last month's attack on the Samjhauta Express train travelling between New Delhi and the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore.

India declined the request,

though the Pakistani side still expects evidence will be shared at the talks in Islamabad.

"The Indian leadership had assured us that whatever information they have by the time the meeting takes place, they would share it with us and we expect to hear from them," Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said on Monday.

India has long blamed Pakistan for fuelling an insurgency raging since 1989 in Kashmir, the only Muslim majority state in mainly Hindu India, and the cause of two of the wars fought.

Violence in Kashmir has tailed off in the last four years, as Islamabad responded to India's demand to rein in militants based in Pakistan.

While there is still some infiltration across the ceasefire line dividing the Himalayan region, Indian officials say the number of militants sneaking across from Pakistan has fallen.

The peace process begun in January 2004 has brought an improvement in diplomatic, transport and sporting links, but has yet to achieve significant progress on the core dispute over Kashmir.

2 Iraq bombers

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the deadliest single day for US troops in Iraq in nearly a month.

Six soldiers died when a bomb exploded Monday near their vehicles during a combat operation in Salahuddin province, the military said. Three others were wounded in the blast.

Another three soldiers died the same day in a roadside bomb attack in Diyala province northeast of Baghdad.

In Baghdad, US forces continued their push into Sadr City, home to 2.5 million of the city's poorest residents as well as fighters loyal to anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Some 600 American soldiers searched the neighborhood's northwest quadrant, knocking on doors and searching homes, according to an Associated Press reporter traveling with them.

The US forces are seeking a "reconciliatory approach" to avoid sparking a backlash on the streets, said Col. Richard Kim. One small gesture seemed to offer appreciation: a child offering soldiers ice cream bars.

Monday was "a very traumatic day" for US troops in Iraq, said Lt. Col. Michael Donnelly, a spokesman for US forces in northern Iraq.

"Our hearts and prayers are with the families right now in their time of loss, and our resolve is stronger to accomplish our mission here," Donnelly said.

It was the deadliest day for Americans in Iraq since Feb. 7, when 11 troops were killed seven when their helicopter was shot down north of Fallujah and four others in combat operations.

The highest daily US death toll since the Iraq war began was Jan. 26, 2005, when 37 Americans died in attacks.

Both provinces where Monday's deaths occurred are Sunni-dominated. Saddam Hussein's clan hails from Salahuddin, and the late al-Qaida in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was hiding out in Diyala when he was killed by a US airstrike there last summer.

Violence has fallen in Baghdad, where a joint US-Iraq security crackdown was in its third week. But US military officials say insurgents have fled the capital for outlying areas, where attacks are on the rise. Direct attacks on US forces in Diyala are up 70 percent since last July, according to figures provided by the US military.

A suicide car bomber shattered the capital's relative calm Monday, striking a famous book market in the city's oldest quarter and killing at least 38 shoppers.

The bombing was seen as an effort by Sunni insurgents to bring major bloodshed back into the capital and into the lap of its Shiite-dominated government. The provocation could also erase US plans for stability during a surge of more than 20,000 additional troops into Baghdad.

At least 20 Shia Muslims were killed on their trek southward Tuesday toward Karbala, where they would mark the end of a 40-day mourning period after the death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson.

The deadliest attack was in the south Baghdad neighborhood of Dora, where gunmen pumped bullets into a minibus, killing all eight passengers

82 killed

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activity, part of what is called the "Pacific Ring of Fire."

In March 2005, a powerful earthquake devastated Nias island, off the west coast of northern Sumatra, killing hundreds of people and leaving tens of thousands homeless.

A Reuters witness said Padang residents tried to reach higher places and their vehicles crowded main streets, triggering congested traffic across the city.

Callers told a Jakarta-based radio station that residents in several West Sumatra towns ran out of their houses when the quake was first felt.

Tall buildings in Singapore's business district swayed slightly, occupants said, and the tremor was also felt in other parts of the island.

Traders said there was little or no impact on financial markets trading. The tremor was also felt in west coast areas of Malaysia, the meteorological office in that country said. (Reuters, AFP)

inside, police said. A car bomb nearby killed two others hours later, they said.

All the areas where the Shiites were killed Tuesday were Sunni. Last year, Sadr's Mahdi Army militia provided security to some pilgrims during the commemorations known as Arbaeen.

In past years, militiamen "played a role in protecting the pilgrims and the attacks were fewer and less effective, but this year things are different," said Bahaa al-Araji, a Shiite parliament member.

"The government bears some responsibility for this because it has not provided enough security forces to protect the pilgrims," al-Araji said. "This indicates some shortcomings in the Baghdad security plan."

Meanwhile, Iraqi army units were preparing to deploy along major routes to ensure pilgrims' safety, according to a Defense Ministry statement issued Tuesday.

"The Defense Ministry hopes that the citizens will continue the rituals of the pilgrimage safely under efficient security protection," the statement said.

The nine US deaths Monday brought to 20 the number of Americans killed in Iraq this month. At least 3,184 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. The figure includes seven military civilians. At least 2,561 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

5 JMB men

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Rahman, Mahfuzur, Nuruzzaman, Ishaque Ali and Afzal Hossain.

Monsur, Mahfuz and Nuruzzaman were arrested at Uttar Moheshpur village while Isaahque Ali and Afzal Hossain at Telabadul Mridhapara village.

Acting on a tip-off, the law enforcers from Khetlat Police Station raided the two villages and arrested the militants who were wanted in various cases.

Rab men murder

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group's secretly cached firearms, names and whereabouts of its members, especially those in the killing squad of the two Rab personnel.

A special team of Rab-4 took Mamun to Baradeshi area beside the Dhaka-Aricha Highway at 3:45am yesterday to recover illegal firearms of Gangchil group, according to a Rab press release. When the Rab men reached an open space behind Chistia Filling Station, members of the gang opened fire on the Rab team, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate.

Mamun fell in the line of fire and was found lying on the ground bullet-hit when the firing came to a stop.

The Rab press release said doctors at Upazila Health Complex declared him dead when he was taken there.

The Rab claimed they recovered a .22 bore revolver and five bullets from the spot.

Talking about the investigation, an investigator said they have all information necessary to track down the killers.

"The whole mystery is now resolved and we will make public everything after capturing the killers," he said, declining to disclose the names of the killers and their mastermind for the sake of investigation.

Unknown killers took Rab intelligence wing personnel DAD Humayun and constable Phool Mia to a hut at Tara Mia's brickfield at Salehpur of Aminbazar in the outskirts of the capital and shot in their heads around 3:30pm Saturday.