

VANDALISM AT SC
Kamal, Amir,
Rokan asked
to appear in
court April 19
COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed lawyers Dr Kamal Hossain, barrister Amir-Ul Islam, barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud and 10 others to appear before it on April 19 in connection with a case filed for vandalism on the Supreme Court (SC) premises on November 30 last year.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shamsul Alam set the date for next hearing of the case.

Advocates Syed Rezaur Rahman and Kamruzzaman Mahboob submitted two petitions seeking time for Kamal and 11 others, as they could not appear before it on personal grounds.

Earlier on December 22 last year, Detective Branch Inspector Naimur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, pressed charges against 13 including Kamal, Amir and Rokan, showing 28 people as prosecution witnesses.

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Detention of SQ
Chy declared
illegal
Monju, Aminul denied
anticipatory bail
UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday declared illegal the detention of former lawmaker Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury under the Special Powers Act, 1974.

Passing the verdict upon a habeas corpus petition, a division bench comprising Justice MA Wahhab Mian and Justice M Emdadul Huq directed the government to release SQ Chowdhury if he is not wanted in any other case.

Army-led joint forces arrested SQ Chowdhury on February 4 in its crackdown on suspected corrupt politicians, businessmen and influential persons.

Later, he was sent to jail on a 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act.

AD-INTERIM ANTICIPATORY BAIL OF MONJU, AMINUL REJECTED

The High Court yesterday turned down the plea for ad-interim anticipatory bail for former ministers Anwar Hossain Monju and Barrister Aminul Huq but restrained law-enforcers from arresting the two former ministers

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Correction
There was an inadvertent mistake in the headline of our yesterday's report "2 journos arrested in Barisal." It should read "2 journos arrested in Moulvibazar." We regret the mistake.

Prayer Timing		
March 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-05	5-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-12	6-15
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Loss on environmental damage 4pc of GDP

Says World Bank report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental damage accounts for economic losses equivalent to more than 4 percent of Bangladesh's GDP, says a World Bank (WB) report.

The report titled 'Bangladesh Country Environment Analysis' also estimates that environmental factors cause as much as 22 percent of deaths and diseases that cost high in terms of the nation's health.

Launched at a city hotel yesterday, the report was jointly prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forest and WB.

It also said that the largest share of the economic losses is attributed to a lack of basic infrastructure

services, such as water, sanitation and energy.

The report identified three sources of environmental degradation that need priority attention, which are indoor and urban air pollution, degradation of water quality in Dhaka and over-fishing.

Bangladesh's achievement of steady economic growth of more than 5 percent over the last decade has been key to reducing poverty, but at the same time it created many environmental challenges, particularly in the urban and industrialised areas, it noted.

"The challenge, therefore, is to identify policies and interventions that foster economic growth without damaging the environment and

people's lives," the country environment analysis suggested.

Linking air pollution to health, the WB Senior Environment Specialist Paul Jonathan Martin in the presentation said the respiratory infections and diseases caused by poor air quality, both indoor and urban, contribute up to 10 percent of the nation's total burden of diseases.

Inhaling smokes generated from cooking with biomass fuel can cause both temporary and permanent damage to human health, he said suggesting public education campaigns as short-term measures and promotion and commercialisation of cleaner fuels

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PHOTO: STAR

Osmani Udyan in the capital has become a hang-out of vagabonds and drug addicts, exposing Dhaka City Corporation's utter negligence to maintain its decency.

Nazmul Huda, Falu denied bail

Aman shown held in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda in connection with the case filed against him for extorting Tk 2 lakh in 2004.

First Class Magistrate Khadiza Nazneen passed the order after Huda's lawyers submitted a bail petition.

On March 6, Ayub Ali of Dohar filed the case with Dohar Police Station against five persons including Huda and his brother Kamrul Huda for extortion.

FALU'S BAIL REJECTED

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

Judge Mohammad Rafiqul Islam

of the District and Sessions Judge's Court passed the order following a criminal appeal filed against the rejection order of the lower court on February 27.

On February 9, the army-led joint forces had seized government relief materials from a factory in Savar owned by Falu.

Following the seizure, Ashulia police filed the case against Falu and several other unnamed officials and employees of the factory.

On February 12, Falu was shown arrested in the case.

Falu, also owner of private satellite television channels ntv and Rtv and Bangla daily Amar Desh, is now in jail on a 30-day detention. He was charged with activities against the state, obstructing public safety, and illegally erecting hoardings.

AMAN CASE

Detained former state minister

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South Asian University to be set up in India

BSS, Dhaka

The South Asian University under the auspices of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) will be set up in India.

This was decided at an expert group meeting held in Dhaka on March 8 and 9, attended by the heads of university grants commission (UGC) and equivalent bodies of Saarc countries.

The meeting was presided over by Indian UGC Chairman Professor Sukhadeo Thorat and attended by the Bangladesh UGC Chairman Prof Dr M Asaduzzaman among others.

Prof Asaduzzaman said that the South Asian University would be located at the best possible place of India where a congenial academic atmosphere will prevail. The admission and jobs will be on the basis of merit, he said.

The university will be a unique world-class university like Harvard

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UN watchdog chief leaves for N Korea to underpin atom pact

REUTERS, Vienna

The UN nuclear watchdog chief left for North Korea yesterday to broker a return of inspectors to the secretive Stalinist state under a precarious six-party pact to dismantle its atomic bomb program.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director Mohamed ElBaradei said he wanted to look at how to put the agreement into effect and bring North Korea back closer to the agency some four years after it expelled IAEA inspectors and quit the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"I'd like ... to discuss the broad framework of how to implement the new agreement which foresees that the agency will monitor and verify

the freeze of the Yongbyon nuclear facility including the reprocessing facility," ElBaradei told reporters before he flew off.

A shutdown of Yongbyon by mid-April is the centerpiece of the February 13 accord.

North Korea announced in 2005 it had nuclear arms and in 2006 it test-detonated its first nuclear device, drawing on itself U.N. financial and arms sanctions.

Diplomats said there was no assurance ElBaradei, who will make stopovers in Beijing before and after his March 13-14 stay in Pyongyang, would finalize details of fresh inspections.

They cited Pyongyang's wariness toward outsiders, unpredictability

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Two UPDF men held for 'killing' of army captain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The joint forces arrested two listed criminals, who are also accused of Captain Gazi killing, with arms and ammunition from remote Maischhari area under the Sadar upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The arrestees, Bimol Bikash Chakma and Milon Bihari Chakma, were held with a foreign made revolver, 10 bullets, some one thousand Indian rupee, leaflets and books for collecting subscription, police said, adding that they are members of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) and confessed to extorting ransom in Chittagong Hill Tracts.

They are accused of killing army Captain Nurul Azam Gazi who fell victim to the gunfight between Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity and UPDF at Gilachhari in Rangamati district on December 17, 2006, sources said.

Contacted over telephone, UPDF Central Committee Member Samari Chakma said the two arrestees, who belong to their organisation, are innocent but the army branded them as terrorists after handing over arms to them.

JMB member held with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A member of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was arrested and a firearm along with six rounds of cartridges was seized from his possession by police in the city on Saturday night.

The arrestee was identified as listed JMB activist Dulal alias Dulaia alias Dula Mia, 32, son of late Shafuil Islam of West Baraikara village of Baralia union in Potiya upazila.

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Govt drafts policy on stocking essentials

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

An inter-ministerial meeting arranged by the commerce ministry yesterday drafted a proposal defining the amount and period for hoarding of nine essential items including paddy, rice, wheat, lentil, sugar, edible oil, onion, milk powder and baby food, sources said.

Following the meeting chaired by the additional secretary of commerce ministry, the draft proposals were sent to different business bodies for opinion by March 14, sources said.

Meanwhile, the central bank holds a meeting with the commercial banks today to discuss import situation of essential commodities.

The commerce ministry draft divided hoarding into three

levels -- import, wholesale and retail -- and proposed highest one month for storage of each item at every level. A trader will be allowed to store 5,000 tonne imported paddy and rice for highest one month, but the wholesale traders will be allowed to hoard highest 500 tonne paddy and rice and retailers 10 tonne same items for highest one month.

A trader will be authorised to hoard highest 6,000 tonne imported wheat while at other levels, the period and amount for hoarding will be the same as that of paddy and rice.

The draft says that traders will be authorised to store highest 1,000 tonne sugar and edible oil at import level while the amount will

be 100 tonne and five tonne at wholesale and retail levels.

In case of onion and lentil, the importers will be allowed to hoard highest 100 tonne which will be highest 30 tonne and five tonne for the wholesale traders and retailers.

The importers will be allowed to store highest 50 tonne milk power and baby food, wholesale traders highest 20 tonne and retailers two tonne.

Yesterday's meeting reviewed the Special Powers Act 1974, East Bengal Food Stuffs, Price Control and Anti-hoarding Order 1953 and the Essential Commodities Control Order 1982 before defining hoarding in view of the 'present context'.

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Bombers kill 29 in Iraq after talks

REUTERS, Baghdad

Suicide bombers killed 29 people in Baghdad yesterday, after a meeting of officials of world powers, Iraq and neighbouring states agreed it was vital to all to stop sectarian violence spreading across the region.

A car bomber attacked a truck carrying Shia pilgrims in central Baghdad, killing 19 people and wounding 25, police said.

The pilgrims had been returning from the holy city of Kerbala, south of Baghdad, where millions gathered over the weekend for a major

Shia ritual despite attacks by suspected Sunni Arab insurgents that have killed scores.

A suicide bomber blew himself up on a minibus, killing 10 people and wounding eight, in northeastern Baghdad near the Shia militia stronghold Sadr City police said.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki urged regional and world powers at a conference in Baghdad on Saturday to do all they could to help end sectarian violence which threatens to plunge Iraq into all-out civil war and spread over the region.

Saturday's meeting was a rare

opportunity for Washington and its adversaries Tehran and Damascus to sit together at the same table. Washington accuses Syria and Shia, non-Arab Iran of supporting militants in Iraq, a charge they deny.

Iran said on Sunday it backed any efforts to quell violence in Iraq and described the regional meeting as a "good step".

"We support any efforts that will bring Iraq out of its current problems ... and help the Iraqi security.

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