

ACC can use DGFI

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acquired properties before a case is filed, the ACC, with permission from the Special Judges Court, can freeze or 'attach' the suspect's properties.

In addition to the new ACC rules, under the current Emergency Power Rules, 2007, the government has the power to confiscate both moveable and immovable properties before a case is filed.

The new ACC rules also state that if someone sells or transfers the illegally acquired property, be it moveable or immovable, it would be considered illegal.

Meanwhile, ACC has prepared documents to file cases against seven arrested former ministers and lawmakers from the BNP or other parties belonging to the BNP-led four-party coalition, sources said.

The seven are: Satauddin Quader Chowdhury, former parliamentary affairs adviser to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, Mirza Abbas, former housing and public works minister, Mosaddak Ali Falu, former lawmaker and political secretary to the former prime minister, Nasser Rahman, former lawmaker and son of former finance minister M Saifur Rahman, Mufti Shahidul Islam, a former lawmaker and alleged militant patron, Salauddin Ahmed, former lawmaker, and Manzurul Ahsan Munshi, former lawmaker.

MEET WITH DISTRICT OFFICIALS

ACC officials would have to shed past habits of not doing work or doing 'ill-motivated' work, that made the ACC ineffective in the past, ACC Chairman Mashhud said in the first meeting with district-level anti-corruption officers since the reconstitution of ACC in late February.

There is no scope for ACC officials to indulge in corruption showing 'inadequate salaries' as excuse, he said.

"The ACC image must be kept clean and ACC officials have to be re-energised," he said, adding that the ACC officials must prove that they are efficient as well as incorruptible.

They should work remaining unaffected by the thought of their political past, who appointed them or who would come to power in future, he said.

Investigation officers would receive a highest of 30 days to finish an inquiry and a highest of 60 days to complete an investigation, according to the new rules.

The new rules also state that anyone ordered to submit their wealth statements would have to do so within seven days, but upon application for an extension, they would receive an additional seven working days.

MORE GRAFT CASES READY

Of the seven prepared files of arrested high-profile corruption suspects, only the case against

Manzurul Ahsan Munshi has so far got approval of the commission, ACC sources said.

The cases against six others are yet to be approved by the commission.

The cases against the seven high-profile corruption suspects contain charges centring mismatch between their submitted wealth statements and their legal income.

Mosaddak Ali Falu has shown seven houses in his wealth statements while investigators have already found that at least two of them are too expensive to be built/bought with the income Falu showed in his tax return at the time of purchase.

The charge against Mirza Abbas is that he cheaply sold off 18 government houses. The sources of money shown by Salauddin Quader Chowdhury to buy three cars were also found to be incorrect.

The ACC has also found that properties owned by Nasser Rahman and his wife are far beyond their known income.

The current charges against the seven will increase in the future as more cases could be filed in separate corruption charges against them, said ACC sources.

Home takes up case

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when one of his sisters told journalists that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which has been investigating the case, gives George's family Tk 2,500 per month.

The home secretary said yesterday's meeting was organised to review the present state of the 12 cases and find out ways to speed up their investigation. The meeting also discussed providing necessary directives to the investigation officers (IOs) of these cases.

"We have asked to investigate the cases as per the existing laws and submit charge sheets after investigating the cases on their merits," Home Secretary Abdul Karim told reporters.

He said the investigation into the August 21 grenade attack has been satisfactory so far, but it has not yet reached the state of submitting the charge sheet.

Asked when the charge sheet might be submitted, Karim said they have asked the IOs to complete the investigation in the shortest possible time.

The home secretary said the August 21 grenade attack case was listed with the monitoring cell last month while a few more sensational cases will also be taken to the cell.

Sources said the meeting directed the IOs concerned to prepare the charge sheets of the cases sincerely so that no one having link to the cases can escape.

The other cases selected for review at the meeting are grenade attack on the rally of AL leader Suranji Sengupta on June 21, 2004 in Sunamganj, attack on Prof Humayun Azad in February 2004, grenade attack on the Sylhet City Corporation mayor in August 2004, siphoning of Tk 488 crore from Oriental Bank, killing of college

CA for hunger-free

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and sacrificing personal comfort in greater interest of the nation, he said.

Fakhrul din was addressing the function on the occasion of distribution of the Independence Award 2007, the highest national award, on the eve of the Independence and National Day.

Bangladesh Army for its exceptional role at national level and leading NGO Brac for its pioneering role in socioeconomic development received the prestigious award.

On behalf of Bangladesh Army, its chief Lt Gen Moin U Ahmed and Corporal Md Md Hiduzzaman Molla Bir Protik while on behalf Brac its founder and Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed received the Independence Award from the chief adviser.

"This time around, our struggle is the struggle for realising people's aspirations and dreams. The struggle is for materialising the ideals of the Liberation War and freedom fighters."

This struggle is a struggle for building a real public welfare-oriented democratic modern Bangladesh," he told the function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Terming the year 2007 significant for Bangladesh, the chief adviser said good beginning of the present caretaker government with mass support to bring about real democracy and keep the nation free from corruption and the administration free from greed and evil political influence is an epoch-making event.

However, there is no mention in the rules in case there are allegations against the ACC chairman and his two commissioners.

The rules mention rewards for outstanding performances against corruption by an official.

The new rules also empower the ACC to set up 'trap cases' to catch people involved with corruption red-handed.

ACC officers involved with inquiries and investigations are also to submit a monthly report on the progress of each case.

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Security beefed

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capital to strengthen security.

Additional police forces have been deployed to protect important buildings and sensitive places, the DMP chief added.

DB sources said five teams of the DB conducted several raids in 20 different slums in the capital from dawn till dusk yesterday and arrested 20 suspected militants.

2,800 kg Jatka

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seized the jatka after searching six anchored launches that had arrived from Barisal, Chandpur, Potaikhal and Bholha.

Out of the 21 arrested, four people were fish traders while the rest were crew of the vessels.

The court in a spot trial handed down one year's imprisonment and Tk 5,000 in fine to each of the 21 arrestees.

The court also issued arrest warrants against the ten jatka suppliers and put the seized fish on sale under Fish Conservation and Protection Act 1950 (amendment 2002). A total of Tk 27,900 was collected from the sale.

Later in the evening, the same mobile court unearthed a fake drink mix manufacturing factory at Mir Hazirbag under Shyampur thana in the city.

Copycats of renowned drink mix Tang was being produced at the factory under the name of 'Ting' using low grade raw materials, artificial colour and harmful chemicals.

The court arrested three of the four owners of the factory. They are Abu Bakar, Siddique and Mizanur Rahman.

The court sentenced the three to 18 months' imprisonment along with Tk 50,000 fines each under BSTI Ordinance. The court also jailed the same three accused for another 20 months and fined another Tk 2,000, each under Food Ordinance.

The court also issued arrest warrant against the factory's absconding co-owner Lalu Mia. The meeting was also told that three Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants have been found involved in attempting to kill eminent writer and former professor of Dhaka University Humayun Azad.

The progress of the investigations will be followed up at the next meeting, sources said.

Chaired by the home secretary, the chiefs of CID and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the IOs concerned were present at the meeting.

A friend of a nation

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role in the war of independence for Bangladesh turning the place of worship into a shelter and hospital for the freedom fighters.

He used to device ways to dissuade the invading Pakistani military from attacking the villages.

Soon after the war had descended on the people of the erstwhile East Pakistan, most of the foreign Christian missionaries went back to their homelands but Father Rigon refused to budge from his place of work and engaged himself in the fight against the Pakistani military for the independence of Bangladesh.

As The Daily Star was interviewing Father Rigon in Dhaka on the eve of his departure for Italy for a surgery on the anniversary of Victory Day on December 16, 2006, he suddenly took a long pause and said, "So much blood and repression... I don't want to remember!"

Father Mariano Rigon was born in Italy on February 5, 1925. The eldest among the eight children of a farmer and actor Richard and Italia Monica, he decided to become a priest quite early in his childhood.

With the mission of preaching religion, he arrived in the erstwhile East Pakistan on January 7, 1953. Since then he has been serving as a Catholic priest for the last 54 years in different dioceses in Bangladesh.

During the liberation war, Rigon founded a hospital on his Baniarchar church ground where a sympathetic doctor treated many wounded freedom fighters during those uncertain nights.

He also used to organise the villagers in secret for resisting the attacks of the Pakistani military.

"The Pakistani military used to target a different village each day and used to ransack the village in the dark of night," he murmured during his interview adding, "The children were usually so horrified that they could not even cry, they might have had perceived that the

time was not right for crying."

The military attempted several times to attack the church but every time Father Rigon stopped them by pleading with them and by offering cigarettes and food as bribe.

However, in the dark of night the ambience inside the church used to take a 180-degree turn morphing the place of worship into a hospital for wounded freedom fighters.

"Fortunately we had a doctor, a dispensary, an X-ray machine and a generator in the hospital on the church ground, enabling us to carry out critical surgeries successfully like the one on the face of Hemayet Uddin Bir Bikram, who was wounded during a battle with the Pakistani in Faridpur."

Father Rigon also used to send food to the camps of the freedom fighters and provided shelter and food to the villagers irrespective of their class and religion.

When he visited his home village in Venice, Italy two or three years after the liberation, he asked his mother, "How would you feel if I came back during the war?" His mother replied, "A thorn would pierce my heart for good!"

Father Rigon currently works as a priest in Shilabonia Mission Palli in Mongolia.

In addition to his duties as a Catholic priest, his days consist of supervising the activities of several schools and a cottage industry founded by him for development of education in the area and for improving the situation of economically disadvantaged women.

Father Rigon will return to Bangladesh from Italy soon and continue his mission for the mankind.

He expressed to The Daily Star his feelings for Bangladesh, before leaving the country for treatment, reciting the following lines from a poem by Jibonananda Das, "I will come back again on the banks of Bangla..."

Koyes Sami

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and some other present and former officials of the bank for embezzling Tk 504 crore.

Moving the bail petitions, advocate Habibul Islam Bhuiyan argued that his client was not in service during the period when the amount was embezzled while another accused Obaidul Karim had misappropriated the amount of money and gone to Malaysia with his family members.

Moreover, his client had earlier on February 6 surrendered the High Court seeking anticipatory bail. But turning down the bail petition the court directed his client to surrender to the Sessions Judge's Court within seven weeks. As per direction, his client appeared before the court, the lawyer added.

Opposing the bail petitions, Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmud Hassan prayed for order to send the accused to jail.

After hearing both the sides, the judge turned down the bail petitions and sent Koyes to jail.

Koyes was taken to jail on a prison van at 5:00pm.

According to the FIR (first information report), Tk 488.50 crore was misappropriated through unauthorised issuance of 369 inter-branch debit advices with the assistance of several officials at the Oriental Bank head office, and Bangshal, Nawabpur, Mirpur Road, Karwan Bazar, and Principal branches between 2003 and June 2006.

"Obaidul Karim, who is a close relative of some members of the bank's then board of directors, is the chief beneficiary of the misappropriated money," said the FIR.

In the second case filed with Kotwali Police Station, it was alleged that Koyes and nine others embezzled Tk 15.24 crore from a client's account by copying the client's signature.

SALMAN'S BAIL REJECTED

The same court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Salman F Rahman, vice chairman of Beximco Group, arrested under Section 16 (2) of Emergency Ordinance 2007.

The judge passed the order after his lawyers had earlier filed a criminal appeal to the court against the rejection order of the lower court on February 16.

HUDA'S REMAND HEARING

The hearing on the seven-day remand prayer to interrogate former minister Nazmul Huda in connection with the money laundering case filed against him will be held on March 29.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court had earlier directed the authorities concerned to produce Huda on that day, as the hearing will be held in his presence.

The case was filed with Dhamondi Police Station on February 14 on the basis of seizure of a huge amount of local and foreign currencies on February 5.

Meanwhile, owners of Bhai Bhai Poultry Farm and Dusal Poultry Farm applied to the district livestock office for compensations. The owner of Bhai Bhai Farm claimed Tk 23,89,000 for his 39,030 chickens while the owner of Dusal claimed Tk 2,52,000 for his 1,874 chickens that had been culled on Saturday.

Livestock Adviser CS Karim yesterday in an interview with the Bangla Service of BBC Radio said, "At 4:00pm today, we received information regarding apprehension of Bird Flu in Jamalpur. But it has not been confirmed yet."

"A team will visit the farms in Jamalpur. The team will confirm us about the apprehension and if the virus is detected there, it will initiate measures for culling," the adviser added.

The adviser also said the government will seek cooperation from the international community if the situation spins out of control.

A special meeting of the council of advisers to the caretaker government on March 22 disclosed that Avian Influenza virus, popularly known as Bird Flu, had been detected in a poultry farm in Savar on the outskirts of the district.

Since the detection of Bird Flu virus in the state-run Biman Poultry Complex, a huge number of chickens of six poultry farms in Savar and Gazipur have been culled.

Owners of three poultry farms are going to be punished in the district as they hid information of their chickens' deaths. They also hid some chickens in a sugarcane field near the farms.

Our Narayanganj correspondent reported that another farm was found in the district where chickens died due to 'undetected reasons' in Kalyandpur village under Bandar police station.

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