

Hasina sued

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location nearby. Besides, PDB had a host of complaints against Westmont which were later resolved.

CASE STATEMENT
The case statement says that the government took the initiative to fulfil the demand for power. Tajul then contacted a foreign company named Westmont Offshore and convinced them to set up a power plant in Bangladesh.

The complainant said he and the foreign company opened a company in Bangladesh named Westmont Bangladesh Ltd with its office at 54 New Eskaton. Tajul said he became the chairman of the company – which was registered with the Joint Stock Companies & Firms and the Board of Investment.

On December 15, 1996, the Power Development Board (PDB) invited international tender for setting up barge-mounted power plants in Khulna, Haripur, Shikabaha/Baghabari.

From among the bidders, the government invited four companies including Westmont Bangladesh Ltd. The complainant mentioned that on March 13, 1997, a written agreement between his company and the government was signed for setting up the power plants. He also said the project implementation was delayed due to floods in 1998.

On July 22 the same year, Sheikh Hasina's personal staff Manu Majumder told him over phone that a terrible fate awaited Tajul as the work order for setting up the barge-mounted power plants was going to be cancelled.

On July 24, 1998, Manu phoned Tajul again and asked him to meet the Netri (Sheikh Hasina). On August 8 the same year, Manu Majumder went to Tajul's Gulshan office at 7:30pm and picked him up in a Pajero to take him to the then prime minister's official residence.

On his way out, Tajul told his three office personnel – Abdul Basit, Muktar Hossain and Syed Luthfor Rahman – who were present at the office at that time that he was going to the prime minister's official residence. Tajul mentioned in the case statement, "Sheikh Hasina told me that everybody pays toll for every big work. You won a big work order, but you did not pay any toll – what is the reason? Your work order for Baghaban plant will be cancelled."

The complainant also alleged that

Kafrul OC suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officer-in-charge of Kafrul Police Station Md Abdul Khaleq has been suspended temporarily on charges of gross negligence, misconduct and incompetence.

Deputy Commissioner of Mirpur Zone Police told The Daily Star that Khaleq was suspended for sending one and a half years old infant to prison along with his mother, Hawanur Begum.

Sources said police arrested Hawanur Begum along with her infant Asif on Saturday evening following a complaint filed against her and eight other family members for allegedly taking possession of a house at Vashantek Sium-1.

Hawanur Begum tried to hand Asif over to her relatives before being arrested but failed due to police, sources alleged.

However, Kafrul Police Station sources denied the allegation and claimed that they took Asif along with others as per his mother's wish.

Fake students

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working hard to detect all fake admission cases.

The committee also found some allegations against three DU officials who might be involved in forgery, sources said.

The DU authorities launched a drive in the middle of March following the probe committee's interim report on forgery in the admission of students of 2004-2005 academic sessions.

The committee was formed in the wake of allegations of inconsistencies in admission papers of 11 students of public administration department.

The interim report found 30 fake admission cases in public administration, economics and international relations departments in 2004-2005 sessions.

Following the interim report, deans of all faculties and directors of institutions were directed to check papers of students' admission by April 15. The next meeting of the probe committee will be held on the same day.

CORRECTION

The Daily Star in a report headlined "Nexus of DU officials, coaching centres suspected" published yesterday inadvertently quoted 'the committee' as saying "an organised and powerful nexus comprising university officials at different levels, a section of teachers, student leaders and a few organisations outside the university-coaching centres and consultancy firms—is involved in the mischief." In fact, it should be read as 'the committee sources.'

he then prime minister told him that if he failed to pay Tk 3 crore in toll, his work order would be cancelled. She also threatened to send him to jail or maim him if he did not oblige.

He also alleged that he sought for a month's time to pay the tolls, but Sheikh Hasina refused to allow him any time.

The complainant said then he returned to his office and informed his colleagues of the matter.

On December 9, 1998, PDB sent separate letters to the secretaries to the Power Division and power, energy and mineral resources ministry seeking government approval to cancel the work order of the project.

Following the move, Tajul called Manu over the phone on December 12, 1998 requesting him to make arrangements for seeing the prime minister. The same day, he along with Manu in a Pajero went to Hasina's residence with a suitcase containing Tk 3 crore in 600 bundles of Tk 500 notes. His friend Baset was also present during his meeting with the prime minister.

The statement added that Tajul handed over the money to Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban at 7:45pm and the work order was not cancelled.

Tajul in the statement mentioned that Sheikh Hasina officially inaugurated the plant on August 3, 1999.

In the statement, Tajul also said, "With the help of Manu and by abusing the power of the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina harmed me both physically and mentally by forcefully realising Tk 3 crore in extortion from me. She tarnished my image with my foreign partner – who is also aware of the matter."

The statement said that in fear of death he did not dare to file any case at that time against the accused as they have ties with armed criminals.

No plan to extradite airline suspect to UK

Says Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's foreign ministry yesterday denied reports that a Briton held over a plot to bomb transatlantic jets would be extradited to Britain in exchange for six separatist leaders.

The arrest of British national Rashid Rauf in August by Pakistan sparked a worldwide security alert and arrests in Britain amid fears of a conspiracy to blow up airliners flying from London to the United States.

Rauf's family last week filed a legal petition alleging that Islamabad was negotiating with London to extradite him in return for six wanted Baluch nationalists who are based in Britain, and seeking to stop such a move.

"No," Pakistan foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam replied when asked if Pakistan had any such plan, which was first reported by Britain's Guardian newspaper in March.

Hasina terms

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After the news of the filing of the case spread last night, hardly any leaders of AL or its allies in the 14-party alliance made any comments about it.

AL leaders mostly remained tight-lipped about the case. A number of them kept their cellphones switched off, sources said. Top AL leaders including AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, a cousin of Hasina, did not receive phone calls yesterday despite repeated efforts to call them.

Talking to The Daily Star, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, "We are trying to find out the reasons behind the filing of the case now as the complainant did not file the case in last five years when a government was in power." Jalil refused to comment any further on the issue.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed would not comment since he claimed he was not informed about the filing of the case.

AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta told The Daily Star that he would comment on the issue after the news was published in newspapers. "Let the news be published in the newspapers, then I will comment. Otherwise my comments will be premature," Suranjit said.

Another AL presidium member Kazi Zafarullah told The Daily Star that it was definitely a conspiracy. "The filing of the case at this time is very suspicious and the allegation will not be believable to anyone at home or abroad as the complainant did not file the case when an elected government was in power during the last five years," said Zafarullah, a close aide to Hasina.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu told The Daily Star that the caretaker government would look into the context of the filing of the case and take necessary steps.

Asked whether there was any political motive or conspiracy behind the filing of the case, Inu, also a key leader of the AL-led 14-party alliance, said first let the government unearth the facts through investigation and then he would comment on it.

EXTORTION CHARGE

Arrested Sylhet journalists sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The two local journalists, arrested Saturday on extortion charge, have been sent to jail custody yesterday by Sylhet Sadar Cognizance Court-1. Earlier on Sunday, upon completion of interrogation of the two arrestees, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) handed them over to Sylhet Kotwali Police at around 10:45pm.

The arrested journalists are Ahmed Noor, editor of daily Sylhet Protdin and general secretary of Sylhet Press Club and Apurba Sharma, chief reporter of local daily Jugabheri and reporter of the national daily Aiker Kago.

Noor and Apurba were shown arrested after another arrested journalist Sajal Das, bureau chief of daily Khabar, in his confessional statement stated that the two were involved in illegal toll collection from stone quarries at Companiganj.

Sajal was picked up by law enforcers on Saturday afternoon while taking Tk 10,000 bribe from a stone trader.

ACC chief

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against corruption from their respective positions.

"The countrymen have seen the devastating scenario of corruption which is a malignant on the fair face of Bangladesh," he told a view-exchange meeting.

Gen Mashhud urged all to take various programmes to prevent corruption, giving up all illusions.

Thakurgaon DC Shafayet Hossain, Police Superintendent Masudul Hasan and Press Club President Enamul Huq were, among others, present at the meeting.

BAF pilot dies

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while the body of its pilot was mutilated.

No one on the ground however was injured though it all happened very near to a house.

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) department said the aircraft that was on a regular training mission took off from Jessore airport at 12:02pm and crashed at 1:40pm.

A rescue chopper flew to the spot immediately after receiving the news. Besides, members of the army, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police rushed to the scene.

Later, air force Chief Air Vice-Marshal Shah M Ziaur Rahman flew to Jessore from Dhaka and directed all concerned to take necessary measures.

Hailing from Kathalia upazila of Jhalakathi, Faisal was born on November 28, 1986. He joined the air force as a flight cadet on January 11, 2005. He was nearing completion of his training at the BAF Academy, the ISPR release said.

The then chief of the air staff Air Vice-Marshal Fakhru Azam on August 19, 2003 informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence that a total of 43 pilots have been killed in training plane crashes.

Since then, two more have died. Causes of almost half of the accidents could not be known due mainly to lack of adequate evidence.

"Ten percent of the crashes occurred due to fault of the pilots, 40 percent for mechanical glitches while the reasons behind the rest 50 percent have yet to be unearthed," Fakhru was quoted as saying in a standing committee report placed in parliament in 2003.

Incumbent air chief Air Vice-Marshal Khademul Bashar was killed in an aircraft accident in 1977, he added.

In one of the deadliest crashes, Flight Lt Adnan and three civilians were killed and 10 others injured at Banskhal upazila of Chittagong on July 30, 2002.

EC to talk reforms

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government to withdraw the embargo on indoor politics so that the EC can hold dialogues with the political parties.

"We are ready to start dialogues with political parties and civil society bodies as soon as the government withdraws the embargo on indoor politics," the CEC said after making the proposal to the government.

On March 7, the government imposed the embargo in addition to the restriction on political activities following the proclamation of emergency on January 11.

At the planned dialogue this month, the EC will seek opinion from the civil society groups on the time limit for the implementation of the voter list project.

The CEC on Thursday disclosed a set of electoral reform proposals and said no elections would be held in next 18 months that is the 'minimum time' required to implement the voter list project.

Civil society personalities and politicians have welcomed the electoral reforms proposals but they suggested reducing the time limit for implementing the voter list scheme. The time limit was fixed considering all aspects to implement the project, Election Commissioner Sahul Hossain said.

He however said they are ready to consider any practical proposal for completing the task in a shorter time.

Burning away

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tracts, including Khagrachhari, is dominated by anticline structure, where finding presence of hydrocarbon reserve is very likely.

Yet, the authorities are not aware of this phenomenon and never showed any interest to conduct any scientific study there, the locals say.

Doilla is an almost inaccessible village of Taikathan Mouza though it lies about 17 or 18 kilometres off Khagrachhari district headquarters. Because of the dense hilly forest surrounding the area, many parts of the village remain dark even during the day.

"Our forefathers said this gas is burning for more than 200 years," claimed 52-year-old Chiranjit Tripura of nearby Takurchhara village.

Pankaj Tripura, 23, of Dailla village says, "During my childhood I used to think that this is a well of kerosene. As I grew up and visited the fire many times, I now realise it is gas leaking from the ground."

According to them, the fire becomes intense during the rainy seasons.

"Indigenous people coming from other parts of this region on picnic often use this fire to cook their food," says Devasis Roaza, 25, of the same village.

Pulok Narayan Tripura, 28, said the villagers understand that gas is a precious resource of the country. "We have it, but none is paying attention to it. We can solve many problems with this gas," Pulok pointed out.

Naba Chandra Tripura, 45, noted that there are more than four places where gas bubbles are leaking along with the fire.

They say that there had been occasional visits by outsiders to this area since the British period. In the sixties, two oil companies conducted surveys in the area.

"Foreigners, who came here on aircrafts that landed in Rajamoni Para under the Sadar upazila, visited the place," says the oldest

man of the village—Chitta Ranjan Tripura, 86. A Russian company built a camp on Rajjamoni Para and conducted surveys. But then there had been no follow-ups, he said.

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shahadat Hossen says, "I have no idea about such a well. None from the administration has informed the government about this matter and there are no documents about it in my office. If this is true, the government will of course take necessary steps."

Mamun

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Mamun told the magistrate that he along with others extorted the money from a construction firm owner in June 2005, sources said.

In the case he filed with Kafrul police on March 27, Khan Mohammad Aftab Uddin, managing director of Reza Construction Ltd, complained that Mamun, former BNP lawmaker Khairul Kabir Khokon and the five other accused extorted Tk 16 lakh from him in 2005.

After his confessional statement was recorded, the law enforcers produced Mamun before two other courts seeking a total of 14 days' remand in the cases filed with Gulshan and Dhamondi police stations on March 27 and April 1.

The court granted a five-day remand in the case lodged with the Gulshan police for extorting Tk 81 lakh, and another four-day remand in the case filed with the Dhanmondi police for extorting Tk 53 lakh.

Earlier on April 5, Mamun gave a confessional statement to Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah in connection with the extortion of Tk 1.32 crore.

On March 26, Mamun was arrested from his house at Banani DOHS. Police seized a Spain-made .22 bore pistol and eight bullets from his house. Later, police filed an arms case against him and he was taken on a five-day remand in connection with the arms case.

Dulu sued again over JMB

FROM PAGE 1
Commissioner Sadrul Islam Dumbell were arrested a few weeks ago.

Dulu's goons Dalim, Dollar, Lion, Saiful, Tutul, W, Minu, Malek, Babu, Golap, Dewan Shahin, Babul Chowdhury, Mostafizur Rahman Shahin, Sohul and alleged militants Abdur Razzak Shah, Amzad, Kawsar, Hazraat Ali, Makbul Master and Ataur Rahman were also accused in the case.

The plaintiff alleged in his case that Dulu's nephew Sabbir Ahmed Gama was killed on February 7, 2004 and in retaliation Dulu let loose the militants of JMB along with his own squad of goons to torture and harass his own and his family's political and social rivals.

In the morning of April 18, 2004 about 70 to 80 militants equipped with firearms and sharp weapons, and led by recently executed second in command of JMB Siddikul Islam alias Bangla Bhai entered Natore town via Station Bazar on motorcycles, micro-buses and trucks.

They gathered at Dulu's Alaipur home where the former BNP lawmaker had a meeting with Bangla Bhai. Local BNP leaders and senior police officials were also present there during the 30 to 40 minutes meeting, the plaintiff alleged.

In the meeting, Bangla Bhai promised Dulu that he would avenge the murder of Gama.

Later Dulu and Bangla Bhai openly addressed the militants in front of Dulu's home and told them that they would start from that day operations against 'outlaws', for which Dulu would provide all types of support.

Then Bangla Bhai and his men went to Naldanga in Natore and

started the torture operation setting up a camp for the purpose at Akkelpur Bot Tola of Ramsa Kajipur.

Several hundred people including Mohidul Khan, Saiful, Shahidul, Dula, Abdus Sattar and Abdul Mazid were abducted and tortured there with pepper mixed hot water and pins, Selim alleged.

Armed goons of Dulu allegedly kidnapped Selim from the old bus stand in Natore town on April 16, 2006 and took him to a field behind the local PDB office.

They beat him up and continued torturing him by shoving burning cigarettes into his nostrils. They also inquired about Selim's father Jahirul Haq Shah and his brothers Sazzad and Sohag who had been 'intentionally' accused in Gama murder case, the plaintiff alleged.

At one stage of the torture, Dewan Shahin made a phone call to Dulu sitting on Selim's chest and asked for his instructions about the prisoner.

After the phone call, the alleged torturers demanded Tk 1 lakh toll from Selim for training JMB militants. Selim paid Tk 32,000 to save his life.

Selim was later handed over to police and implicated in Gama murder case.

Selim went to his sister Sathi after being freed on bail following a 7-day stay in jail.

Sathi told Selim that she had phoned Dulu after his arrest and the former deputy minister from BNP told her that his men had tortured her brother and handed him over to police.

Pricey fuel hurts

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more than 15 lakh hectares of land have been cultivated in the region, including Naogaon, Joypurhat, Bogra and three districts of greater Dinajpur where food production saw a surplus.

Although the target amount of land for boro cultivation in the 16 northern districts was estimated at 14,00,261 hectares, DAE sources said an additional 74,914 hectares of land have been cultivated. Ibrahim, a farmer of Kawatiki village under Shingra upazila of Natore, said he will need additional Tk 5,460 to operate two shallow pumps during April-May to irrigate his 17 hectares of boro land.

S M Abdul Mannan of Mahadevpur upazila in Naogaon said he will have to spend Tk 4,550 more for irrigating 11 hectares of land.

Mohammad Ayub Ali of Hariharpur village under Sadar upazila of Thakurgaon said he will need Tk 5,400 more to smoothly operate his only shallow pump for irrigating his boro field. He needs 10 litres of diesel a day for the purpose.

Ayub said he used to purchase diesel for Tk 33.60 per litre from the district headquarters, but now it costs him Tk 42.60.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reported that about five lakh farmers

in the district are frustrated as they are not being able to buy diesel for the increased price.

Many of their boro fields have already developed cracks due to lack of irrigation as most shallow pumps have been remaining idle, they said.

Zillur Rahman, a farmer and owner of three shallow pumps in Muradpur village of the district, said he needs at least 45 litres of diesel to run the pumps. The amount of the fuel will now cost him Tk 1,800 whereas the cost was Tk 1,485 earlier.

With his daily irrigation expenditure increasing by Tk 315, Zillur is now apprehending losses fearing that the harvest will not be enough to recover the production cost.

Sirajganj DAE sources said a total of 1,26,780 hectares of land were brought under IRRI-Boro cultivation this year and 56,000 pumps including 45,800 run by diesel were installed in nine upazilas.

The sources said a total of 2.5 lakh litres of diesel is required to keep the pumps in the region running for a whole day. The fuel was bought at Tk 82.50,000 earlier, but now it will cost about Tk 1 crore.

Language martyrs

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discharging mayoral duties in absence of an elected mayor, erect permanent shades for BDR-run markets of essentials and set up three open markets for farmers.

As per the meeting decision, the zila parishad concerned would establish the libraries-cum-museums at the houses of each national hero within the next four months spending Tk 30 lakh.

They are – language martyrs Rafiq, Salam and Jabbar – and Birshresthas Matur Rahman, Ruhul Amin, Mohiuddin Jahangir, Hamidur Rahman, Mostafa Kamal, Munshi Abdur Rouf and Noor Mohammad Sheikh.

The meeting decided to bring amendments to the existing City Corporation Act to nominate a three-member panel of ward commissioners, including one female ward commissioner, to carry out the mayoral duties in absence of an elected mayor.

The ministry also formed a committee headed by Joint Secretary Mizanur Rahman to check out the lands of Bangladesh Railways and Roads and Highways Department (RHD) freed from grabbers in recent drives where the permanent shades can be erected. The committee was asked to select the locations and submit a report within two weeks.

The decision for setting up permanent shades for the BDR open markets was taken keeping the convenience of the customers in mind in the upcoming rainy season.

In addition, the government would set up three markets in the open spaces at Ashulia, Amin Bazar and Tongi where the farmers can sell their products directly to the consumers.

Prothom Alo

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controversial Mollah" on March 10 and 13 respectively.

The news items were false, fabricated and concocted and were published to defame his fame and reputation, the complainant added.

Septuagenarian

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my two sons when we requested to stop the beating," said sixty-two-year-old Rokeya Begum, wife of Abdur Rahman, at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) yesterday.

She said Emdad became angry and beat them more when they refused to pay him Tk 10,000 bribe.

"Besides, Mashiur Rahman along with Emdad filed a false fraud case against my husband and threatened with death," she said adding that her family members were compelled to leave Gopalganj and take refuge in Dhaka due to fears of further attacks from the police and Mashiur.

She said the SI was putting pressure on them to withdraw a case they had filed earlier against Mashiur Rahman and his cohorts. Among others Rokeya's sons Jakir Hossain and Hasibul Hasan were present at the press conference.

Deportation

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again. And if the panel of judges turns down the petition, there will be no bar to resume the deportation process," the spokesman said.

Bangladesh embassy in Washington and the consulate in Los Angeles are keeping contact with the authorities concerned in the United States.

Mohiuddin, 60, was arrested in Southern California in the United States on March 13. He became fugitive after a judge in the 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco rejected his petition to review the immigration case, allowing the deportation order to stand.

Palli Bidyut

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Presenting a comparison of income, expenditure and standard of living between electrified and non-electrified villages, the study added that development is unlikely unless power supply is ensured everywhere and the sector is given due attention.

The study, financed by World Bank, was conducted on 27,994 users and non-users of electricity in electrified and non-electrified villages examining their power usage for domestic and industrial purposes. The power crisis deepened during the last few years as the supply network was expanded without increasing power generation. Moreover, there were no evaluation on the electrification programmes implemented during that time to assess any shortcomings in the sector, the speakers observed.

The speakers also stressed the need for formulating a comprehensive and integrated energy policy to achieve sustainable development in the sector. "In addition to adopting a number of institutional reforms and forming a sustainable financial structure, we are working on a master plan and hoping to ease the power crisis considerably within a year if individuals come forward with contributions," said chief guest AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, secretary to the Power Division.

'Fatwa' issued against Pak female minister

AFP, Islamabad

A Taliban-style Islamic court in the Pakistani capital has issued a Fatwa against a female minister for posing in an "obscene manner" with French paraglider pilots, a top cleric said yesterday.

The religious decree against Tourism Minister Nilofar Bakhtiar was the first to be made by the self-styled court at the hardline Red Mosque in Islamabad since mullahs announced its formation on Friday.

The Fatwa, combined with threats by the mosque's leader to unleash a wave of suicide bombers if the government tries to shut down the court, have fuelled concern over the creeping "Talibanisation" of Pakistan.

"The muftis (judges) issued a decree against Tourism Minister Nilofar Bakhtiar when their attention was drawn towards some pictures in which she appeared in an obscene and objectionable manner with paraglider pilots in Paris," the mosque's deputy leader Abdul Rashid Ghazi told AFP.

"They have called on the government to punish and sack her from the cabinet," he said.

The pictures, published in a local Urdu-language newspaper, show Bakhtiar in brightly-coloured paragliding gear