

Arafat 'picked up' in late night raid

Police raid Harris Chowdhury's residence, confiscate household items

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces in a late night raid reportedly detained Arafat Rahman, younger son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, intelligence sources said.

They went to the BNP chairperson's Moinul Road residence in Dhaka cantonment at around 10:00pm and came out with Arafat at 1:10am.

In another raid yesterday, police confiscated some household items from the Gulshan residence of



Arafat Rahman

Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia.

At the time of filing this report at 3:00am, it could not be known on what charges Arafat was picked up and where he was taken as the joint forces as well as the intelligence agencies remained tight-lipped, declining even to confirm the raid.

A couple of hours before Arafat was taken away, top officials of the joint forces reportedly had gone to Khaleda's residence and had a

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Nation celebrates Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from all strata of the society in their most colourful festival welcomed the first day of Bangla year 1414 on Saturday amid lively pageants pledging to uphold the nation's cultural heritage.

The nation expressed its determination to move forward with a

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JUDICIARY SEPARATION Govt seeks 8 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government again sought eight weeks time from the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday to complete the process of judiciary separation.

Following a time extension prayer, the SC fixed today for the

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Mohammad Ashraful (R) square-drives for four as Ireland wicketkeeper Niall O'Brien (L) looks on during the World Cup Super Eights match at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown yesterday.

Food items go pricier

Govt rushes to import soyabean oil

RASHIDUL HASAN

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), the only state-run trading organisation, yesterday floated a tender for importing 3,000 tonne refined soyabean oil to lessen the upward trend of the edible oil's price.

The prices of rice, different types of vegetables, green chilli, potato and coarse flour increased in the last week while the prices of all kinds of edible oil also increased by Tk 4-5 per litre.

A TCB high official said the TCB will launch open market sale (OMS) of the imported soyabean oil through its dealers.

Oil traders said the increase in oil prices on the international market is one of the main reasons for the hike here. They said supply of edible oil to the local market has also been less than the demand because of decreased oil import.

They feared that the prices of edible oil will further increase if the government does not reduce the tax on oil import.

Soyabean oil, which sold at Tk 70 per litre a week ago, is now selling at Tk 75. The price of palm oil also increased by Tk 5 per litre, according to Hatirpool kitchen market sources.

"Today we have floated tender

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EC goes all out for polls by 2008

Wants to approach US, UK, Canada for funds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said the Election Commission (EC) is going all out to hold the national election by 2008 and will complete necessary preparations within the next 18 months.

The commission at an inter-ministerial meeting yesterday asked the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to approach the US, UK, Canada and Japan immedi-

ately for funds needed to prepare a voter list with photographs and national identity cards (ID).

"There's no time to waste. The ERD will write to the four countries tomorrow [today] seeking financial assistance," the CEC told reporters after the meeting at the EC Secretariat conference room.

The mega project might cost around Tk 400 crore, he said adding that the task of preparing the voter roll would have to be wrapped up

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NBR seeks bank statement of 71

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday directed all commercial banks to furnish by this month transaction information of 71 individuals including political leaders, businessmen, top government officials and their relations.

In a letter, NBR, the central authority for tax administration, asked the banks for the account statements since July 2001 till the last printout of the audit trail.

As per the directives, banks will have to come up with detailed information about transactions made through personal account,

joint account, current account, foreign currency account, savings account, credit account, and credit card of these persons.

Sources said the revenue board would match the tax returns against the transaction reports. They would do so to know about the sources of income and see if they have been involved in tax evasion.

Earlier, banks and non-banking financial institutions froze accounts of 53 individuals and their relatives on instructions from the NBR as Tk 120 crore was found to have been undisclosed.

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Ireland crush Tigers

AL MUSABBIR SADI

The bubble finally burst for Bangladesh in the Cricket World Cup when they crashed to a stunning 74-run defeat to ICC associate members Ireland in their Super Eights match at Kensington Oval yesterday.

Chasing a challenging 244-run target, Mohammad Ashraful's 35 off 36 balls including five fours and a six was the only signs of resistance for the Tigers who skittled out for 169 in 41.2 overs.

Ireland's first victory in the second stage was shaped by their military medium pace bowling, which not only stopped the flow of runs but also produced wickets at regular intervals. Boyd Rankin, Dave Langford Smith, Trent Johnston and Kyle McCallan each chipped in with two wickets to

ensure their overall second win after ousting Pakistan in the group stage.

But the credit must go to opener William Porterfield's sedate but effective 85 off 136 balls that inspired Ireland to post 243-7 in 50 overs after captain Johnston's brave decision to bat first on a bouncy Barbados pitch.

After eliminating India from the tournament and defeating World No. 1 South Africa, the defeat came as a shock for Bangladesh, who suffered early blows to slump to 48-3. Tamim, who scored an unusually slow 29 off 59 balls, was the fourth man out after adding 45 runs with Ashraful. He played on Johnston while trying to make room and hit on the off-side.

Hero of Bangladesh's 67-run victory against South Africa,

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POSSESSING ILLEGAL LIQUORS

Moudud remanded



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on Saturday placed detained BNP leader and former law minister Moudud Ahmed on a four-day remand in connection with the case filed for smuggling in contraband foreign liquors and

possessing those.

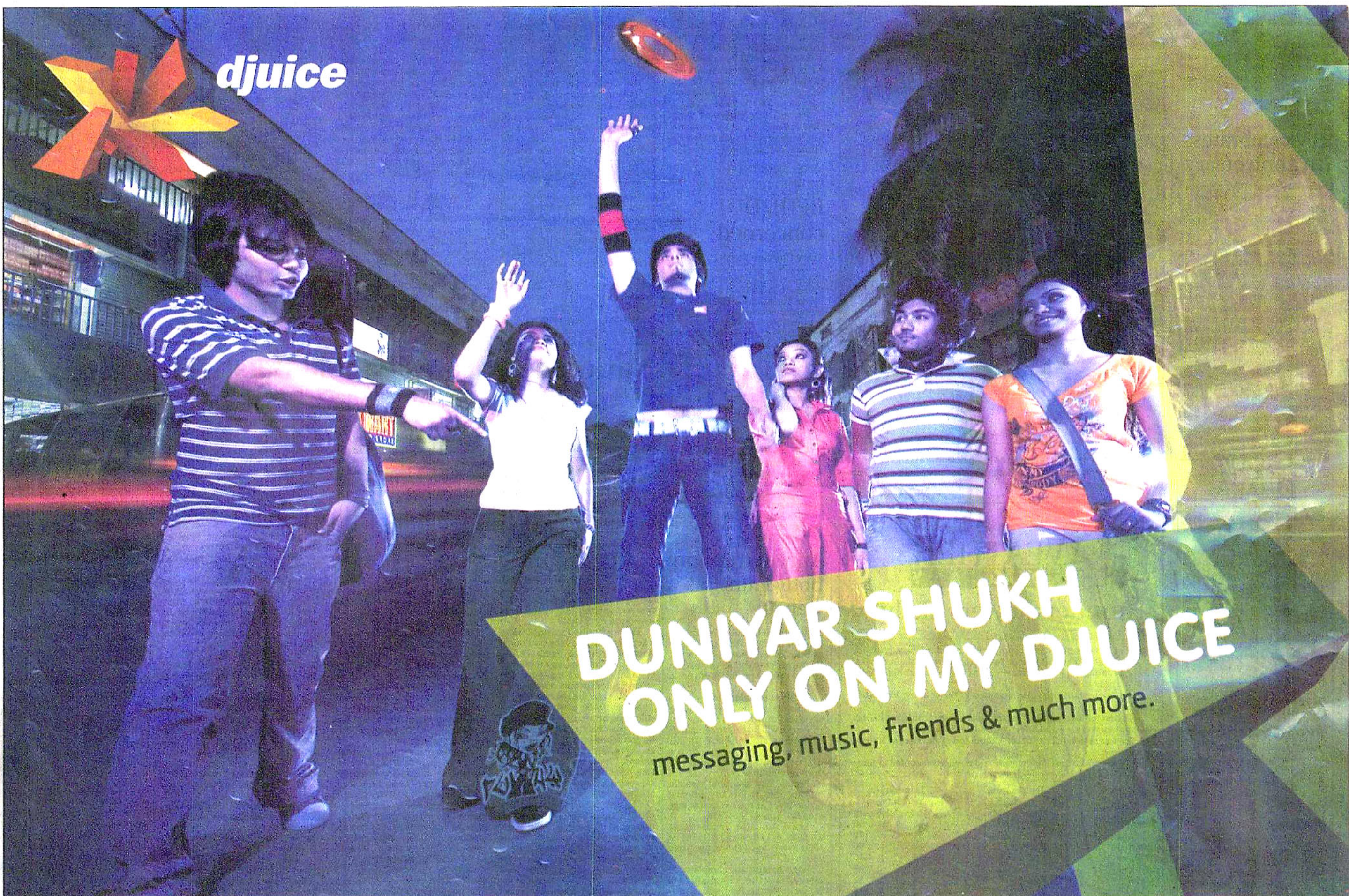
Moudud, arrested by the army-led joint forces from his Gulshan residence on Friday, was sued under Section 25 (B) of the Special Powers Act, 1974 for bringing the foreign liquors, evading government tax.

Police produced Moudud, who is also a member of the BNP Standing Committee, before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate MA Salam at around 3:00pm with a petition for a seven-day remand.

If the charges against Moudud are proved, he will have to face a term of minimum seven years and maximum life term imprisonment or death penalty, legal experts said.

Law enforcers are now quizzing

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