

ACC eyes 8 more AL, BNP leaders in Jamalpur

Asks them to submit statements of assets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Anti-corruption Commission in Jamalpur yesterday asked eight Awami League and BNP leaders to submit statements of their assets by 72 hours. The notices have already been sent to them, ACC sources said.

The persons are senior vice-president of Jamalpur district BNP Amzad Hassain Bhola Mallik, district BNP secretary and Jamalpur municipal chairman Mohammad Wares Ali Mamun, publication secretary Mosharaf Hossain, district Awami League (AL) secretary Faruque Ahmed Chowdhury, Melandaha municipal

chairman Didar Pasha, Sarishabari upazila Jubo Dal vice-president Golam Rabbani, Aona union AL convener Belal Hossain in the same upazila and Melandaha upazila AL secretary Farhan Jahedi Sofen.

The eight are on the list of 12 'corruption suspects', published by the ACC on March 13.

ACC sources said there are allegations of abuse of power, corruption, sheltering terrorists, land grabbing and tender manipulation against them.

Of the 12 on the list, Jubo League central secretary and former lawmaker from Jamalpur-3 constituency (Melandaha-

Madarganj) Mirza Azam and Jamalpur district BNP president and former lawmaker from Jamalpur-1 (Sadar) Rashiduzzaman Millat have already been given notices by a Task Force in Dhaka to submit wealth statements, ACC sources here said.

Jamalpur ACC will send notices to former state minister for power Anwarul Kabir Talukdar's younger brothers Azizul Kabir Talukdar and Faridul Kabir Talukdar, both in jail, to submit wealth statements.

Notices will be sent through Jamalpur district jailor, the sources said.

Azizul Kabir talukder is presi-

dent of Sarishabari upazila Jubo Dal and Faridul Kabir Talukdar is Sarishabari municipal chairman and secretary of upazila BNP. Their names were also also on the ACC list.

The ACC will publish more lists of 'corruption suspects' in the districts in the second phase after investigation, the sources added.

When contacted over phone yesterday, Mahmud Hassan, deputy director (DD) of Jamalpur ACC, confirmed sending notices to the eight political leaders.

"ACC will take legal steps if they fail to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours," the DD added.

IO of Barguna JMB bomb blast case gets death threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Sub-inspector Daud Hossain, investigation officer (IO) of JMB bomb blast case in Barguna has been threatened with death.

"Our men are always near you and our women suicide squad will kill you by bombing", said a postal letter which reached him on Thursday.

It was signed by Mehedi Hasan Tanvir, a Sura (highest decision making body) member and 'military commander' of JMB (Jamiatul Mujahideen Bangladesh).

SI (Sub-Inspector) Daud, while a member of detective branch police in Barguna, investigated the August 17 JMB serial bomb blasts in 2005. He is now working at Amtali upazila magistrate court.

The charge sheet included the name of Asadul Islam Arif, a JMB Sura member. Arif, sentenced to death along with six top JMB leaders, is absconding.

Both Asadul Islam Arif and Tanvir hail from of Islampur village in Barguna Sadar upazila.

Asadul along with 32 others were arrested on June 30, 2004 when he training militants at a mosque in Barguna. They all got bail from court.

Tanvir, also accused in a bomb blast case in Khulna, is absconding.

BNP leader held in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Saturday arrested Mojibur Rahman alias VP Mojibur, a BNP leader and chairman of Chakamoiya Union Parishad (UP) in Kalapara upazila.

He was on the arrest list of joint forces, Rab sources said yesterday.

Rab arrested him from Patuakhali bridge area on Patuakhali-Barisal road when he was going to Barisal in a motor cycle.

Mojibur is accused in 15 criminal cases fled with Kalapara police station in Patuakhali and Amtali and Taltali police stations in Barguna district. Five GDs (general diaries) were also filed against him.

Earlier, on Friday night, Galachipa police arrested BNP leader Mozammel from Char Biswas for alleged crimes.

Storekeeper turns CBA leader, earns millions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Trade union leadership came as a magic lamp for storekeeper Nasiruddin Ahmed of Sonali Bank. He became a millionaire in five years allegedly by virtue of being the CBA (collective bargaining agent) secretary at Kishoreganj Sonali Bank.



PHOTO: STAR

A house built by Sonali Bank CBA leader Nasir Uddin in Kishoreganj town.

Nasir became secretary of Kishoreganj Sonali Bank in 2002 allegedly with blessings of its central CBA president BM Bakir Hossain.

Soon after, Nasir passed a verbal order to all the 17 branches of the bank in the district in the name of Bakir Hossain that employees in loan sections would realise Tk 10 to 12 per cent from any loan amount, some loanes and sources in bank branches said. Moreover, loanes had to pay Tk 4000 to Tk 5000 for each loan to prepare files.

Nasir also compelled bank authorities to sanction loans to some 'fake' business firms in Kishoreganj town, bank sources said.

The sources claimed that Nasir would send Tk 50,000 every month in last five years of four-party rule to Bakir who was arrested from Khilgaon in Dhaka on graft case soon after proclamation of emergency.

Businessman Abdul Aziz of Harua area in the town lodged a complaint to the Managing Director (MD) of Sonali Bank in Dhaka in October last year alleging that Nasir took Tk 50,000 as 10 per cent bribe on Tk 5

in haor (water body) areas who took agriculture loan. The amounts were collected on behalf of Nasir, the complaint said.

A branch manager of the bank also complained to the MD that his staff were virtually hostage to Nasir's desire. Branch manager of Hossainpur upazila, GM Shafiqul Hasan, in his complaint stated that Nasir's men realised money from loan seekers and sent the amounts to him (Nasir).

GM Shafiqul Hasan also wrote to the MD that complaints to local authorities of the bank in this regard did not yield any result.

A slip prepared by Nasir on June 20 last year showed that Tk 46,500 was realized from loan seekers from Itna, Nikli and Hossainpur upazilas. From the amount, Tk 2000 was deducted and given to two employees at the AGM office of Sonali Bank at Kharampatti in the town.

In another slip prepared by Nasir on June 22 last year, it was found that Tk 28,000 was realised from two loanes from Hossainpur upazila, one from Kishoreganj Sadar and a

Sonali Bank employee who took a house building loan. An amount of Tk 7,000 was deducted from the amount and given to two employees at the bank's AGM office.

Sonali Bank sources said, harassment in the name of transfer was another way of making money by Nasir, who, with the help of Bakir transferred 175 employees in six months last year. Transfer of so many bank staff in a year in Kishoreganj was also reported in national dailies earlier.

Many Sonali Bank employees in the district had to pay Nasir monthly amount to avoid transfer.

Sources said Nasir compelled the officials at the bank's main branch to sanction Tk 5 lakh loan in the name of a shoe store at Terapatti in Kishoreganj town, which did not exist. The loan was later classified as bad loan.

An AGM of the bank from Dhaka investigated the loan and found it irregular. The bank's AGM in Kishoreganj had to face departmental action for such irregularities, the sources said.

Later the bank authorities tried to recover the loan by auctioning the mortgaged property but no buyer showed interest as it was a disputed property.

Contacted, Kishoreganj Sonali Bank AGM AKM Belal said all the complaints were addressed to the bank MD and so he had nothing to do in this regard.

He however said investigation on allegations against Nasir was going on.

There are also allegations of cheque forgery by Nasir. One Md. Tara Miah of Puranthana area of the town filed a cheque forgery case with a court in Kishoreganj against four persons including Nasir on November 26 last year.

Nasir now owns an optics shop in a posh area in Moghbazar in Dhaka, constructed a house in Bajitpur municipal area at a cost of about Tk 10 lakh and another at Harua in Kishoreganj town involving at least Tk 20 lakh, sources claimed.

Besides, he invested huge amounts of money in different businesses run by his close relatives, sources close to him said.

Bank sources said, Nasir took a house building loan of Tk 7 lakh.

When contacted Nasir denied all the allegations. He said he established businesses with money from his brother living abroad.

He declined to comment when the slips were shown to him.



PHOTO: STAR

A storm-hit family trying to erect a shed at Nasir Nagar village in Brahmanbaria.

Extortion case filed against arrested Tapan

A CORRESPONDENT Narayanganj

Two transport businessmen in the district yesterday filed two extortion cases against 'listed criminal' Mahbubullah Tapan, arrested by Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on April 13.

Tapan is the younger brother of alleged extortionist Moninullah David.

Mahmudul Kadir, manager of Bismillah Paribahan and Altaf Hossain, a transport businessman and resident of Alam Khan in the town, filed the cases with Narayanganj police station under Speedy Trial Tribunal Act.

Mahmudul Kadir alleged that Tapan used to extort Tk 240 from each of his bus regularly. He realised Tk 4 lakh from his buses in the last five years of BNP-Jamaat alliance government. Tapan and his cohorts used to threaten him to stop his transport business if their demand was not met, the allegations said.

Rafiqul Islam, acting officer-in-charge of Narayanganj police station, said Tapan was produced before a magistrate court yesterday with a prayer for 5 days' remand.

Municipal commissioner held in Godagari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police arrested Godagari municipal ward commissioner Salaudhin Biswas from in front of municipal office Saturday afternoon.

Police yesterday produced Salaudhin before a court, which sent him to jail.

Police said, Salaudhin was wanted for sheltering smugglers and terrorists during last several years.

He was arrested a few months back but was released on bail following political pressures, police said.

Salaudhin was accused in two cases, one for murder and the other for misappropriating relief CI sheets.

Over 10 general diaries (GDs) were lodged against Salaudhin with Godagari police station, police said.

1,500 storm-hit families still under open sky

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B,baria

Over 15,00 families affected by Tuesday's nor'wester are still under the open sky in Nasir Nagar upazila in Brahmanbaria district.

The District Relief and Rehabilitation office (DRRO) has distributed 15 metric tonnes of rice among the victims. The Red Crescent Society and some local organisations also distributed food items, but the relief is too inadequate to the needs, the victims told this correspondent during a visit.

Sources at DRRO said they sought 100 tonnes of rice, Tk two lakh, 1500 bundles of CI sheet and 1000 pieces of saris. But they received only 15 tonnes of rice.

A woman was killed and at least 50 people were injured in the storm that leveled over 3000 houses, uprooted 18 electric poles and over 100 trees in Nasir Nagar upazila. The worst affected were Canda, Bhakut, Gualnagar, Chatalpar and Gukarana unions.

Victim Iqbal Ahmed of Nasir Nagar village said most of the

affected people are living under the open sky and have almost nothing to eat. Boro crops have also been damaged in many areas, he said.

Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Sayed Ahmed Safa, Nasir Nagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md. Sawkat Ali and Officer-in-charge (OC) Uttam Kumar Chakrabarti visited the affected areas.

The DC told this correspondent that more relief including CI sheets will be distributed among the affected people soon.

A different Pahela Baishakh gift from Abdul Aziz

MIRZA SHAKIL Tangail

Every Pahela Baishakh (Bangla new year day), a large number of people including women and children come to the house of Abdul Aziz for fruit saplings.

He gives away those while exchanging New Year greetings.

This year, on Saturday, he distributed 10,000 fruit saplings for free from his nurseries at Saliabaha village in Ghatail upazila in Tangail. These include 5,000 lemon, 2,000 guava, 1,000 litchi, and 1,000 kamranga (star fruit) saplings. He also entertained all with panta bhat (fermented rice) and hotchpotch prepared with vegetables in his orchard. "I have has more 5,000 saplings for distribution", a smiling Aziz said while talking to this correspondent.

On Pahela Baishakh last year, Aziz distributed 5,250 saplings.

Besides, he distributed over 50,000 fruit saplings and 20,000 banana plants among local people, educational institutions and students for free in last five years.

Abdul Aziz, a former truck driver, introduces himself as 'Chasha (farmer) Aziz'. Local people call him 'Aziz Company'.

One day, about 21 years ago, Aziz had brought a ripe mango from Sadarghat in Dhaka. He sliced it and was surprised. The mellow mango was not ripe inside and tasted sour. He later came to know that traders ripen fruits by using harmful chemicals.

This small incident changed his life. He left truck driving and started raising a banana garden on his five acres land. He used organic fertiliser and gradually discarded use of DDT that keeps plants free of insects. He did not use chemicals for ripening banana. Within few years, many other farmers in nearby Muraid, Mohishmara, Singherchala, and Dulalia villages in Ghatail followed him.

Now Aziz owns a big orchard of different fruits on 18 bigas of land. He produces different kinds of mango, jackfruit, pineapple, litchi, banana, lemon, olive, orange, coconut, blackberry (a kind of berry), kamranga (star fruit), guava, hog-plum, sofeda (a variety of apple), cherry and many other fruits in his orchard.

Last year, Aziz earned about Tk 4,50,000 from his orchards and nursery. Of the amount, he earned Tk 1,30,000 from lemon during the Ramadan.

He has also planted over 1,500 palm trees around the orchards. These would give fruit and juice and also protect the plants from cyclone, he told this correspondent during a visit on Saturday.

Aziz said insecticides and hormones worth about Tk one crore is sold annually at 32 insecticide shops in Ghatail upazila alone. This enormous amount, if spent to produce organic fertiliser, could doubly benefit us by increasing yield and protecting human health, soil and environment, he said.

Now, over one crore pineapples are produced in Ghatail, where about 1,600 hectares of land are also under banana cultivation.

Garobazar, the biggest market of banana and pineapple in the area, was organised by Aziz.

Responding to his call, over 300 pineapple farmers in the area have given up use of insecticide in their orchards and chemicals for ripening. They include Abdur Razzak of Singherchala village, Jamal Miah of Ashrabazar, Hassan Master of Lakkhinda and Shaiful Islam of Kahalgaoon village.



PHOTO: STAR

Children with saplings of fruit trees distributed for free by Abdul Aziz.

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Teenaged girl, 7 children rescued from traffickers

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapol

BDR and immigration officials in separate incidents yesterday rescued seven children and a teenaged girl from traffickers at Benapole check post and Dhannokhola border area nearby.

Acting on a tip-off, BDR personnel rescue the seven children and arrest two alleged traffickers.

The children are Ramzan, 7, Parveen, 8, Sheuli, 12, Abu Saleh, 13, Amir, 8, Jarina, 10, and Taslima, 16. They all hail from Bohilapota village in Benapol.

The arrested alleged traffickers are Ali Hossain and Mamtaz, both

from Shibchar upazila in Madaripur district.

BDR said, the two, alleged members of an international traffickers' gang, were trying to traffic the children to India by promising them jobs.

In the other incident, immigration officials rescued a teenaged girl while she was being trafficked to India through Benapol check post and arrested a person—Alamgir Hossain.

The rescued girl was identified as Rubina Akhtar Shilpi, 13, of Nalta village in Tala upazila in Shakhira district.

Immigration officials said they became suspicious when Alamgir

brought Shilpi to the check post. During interrogation, Shilpi admitted that Alamgir was taking him to India promising her a job.

Alamgir was handed over to police. He hails from Madhabpara village in Kalia upazila in Narail district.

Immigration official Qutubur Rahman Chowdhury also said that arrested Alamgir confessed that he had been trafficking women and children to India through a syndicate for long.

Separate cases have been filed with Benapol port police station and the rescued persons handed over to police.



PHOTO: STAR

COLOURS OF PAHELA BAIOSHAKH: (Clockwise) Marma girls dance in Khagrachhari town, children at rally in Rajshahi, a rally at Moulvibazar and a candle-lighting programme at Patuakhali Club.