

## Charges pressed

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Huda and his men of beating him severely that risked his life on October 28 last year.

As per direction of Huda, the two others also took Tk 17,700 from the complainant and asked him not to disclose it to anyone.

## NASIM CASE

Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Special Court for Dhaka Division fixed June for hearing on charge framing against Nasim and AHF Rahman, director of Consosites Limited, in connection with a graft case filed five years back.

Under a security witness, Nasim was produced before the court at 11:30am while Rahman was absent due to his illness.

Mohammad Abdul Hai, an official of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, pressed charges against them on June 13, 2002.

Following the submission of charge sheet, Nasim and Rahman submitted separate criminal miscellaneous petitions to the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the proceedings of the case. The higher court had earlier rejected their petitions saying that the charges brought against them would be proceeded with.

In the case filed with Ramna Police Station, the complainant said in order to 'illegally award' a contract to the WorldTel, the lone bidder of the project, to 'make its financial proposal look lucrative'.

"In reality, the project was awarded to the WorldTel without any competition."

"Accordingly, the consultancy made 'fictitious' recommendations for the WorldTel, the lone bidder of the project, to 'make its financial proposal look lucrative'.

"In reality, the project was awarded to the WorldTel without any competition."

The matter has harmed the country's interest, the FIR said.

## MANUM CASE

A special court could not begin the trial of the graft case against controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, as he was not produced before the court due to illness yesterday.

Judge Mohammad Ashraf Hossain of the Fifth Special Court, set up at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel, fixed May 22 for next hearing of the case.

Two prosecution witnesses including the complainant of the case appeared before the court yesterday to give their deposition.

Earlier on May 14, the same court framed charges against Mamun, a close friend of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Assistant Director SMM Akther Hamid Bhuiyan filed the case on April 5 with the sessions judge's court seeking an arrest warrant

## Banks asked

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On April 25, the BB asked the banks to submit information of the bank accounts of two former premiers -- Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina. The banks have already met the central bank directive and the BB has sent the banking information to the coordination committee, sources said.

On the same day, the NBR handed over a list of 83 former politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and their relatives to all banks and asked them to submit their bank account information.

On April 30, the BB also verbally asked for the information of former law minister Moudud Ahmed and Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan.

On April 15, the government had asked for the bank account information of 71 corruption suspects and their relatives.

## Bangladesh, India

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his 31 appearances with the ability to steady the innings.

There is another uncapped player in opener Mehrab Hossain who is included in the 12-member squad but the left-hander has a very slim chance to play his first Test as middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh has been considered as the best option because of him being more experienced.

The match will start at 10am with state-run Bangladesh Television and NEO Sport beaming the live coverage from the port city venue where the Tigers played their last game against Australia in April 2006.

There is a huge gap in strength between the sides as India, already having won the one-day series 2-0, have a number of big names in highest run-getter Sachin Tendulkar, former captain Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman and captain Anil Kumble, acclaimed as 'The Wall'.

The visitors also have leg-spinner Anil Kumble who can make the difference in a pitch likely to help the spinners.

Habibul Bashar's men have so far played three Tests including the historic inaugural Test match against India, all at the home where they lost all of them badly.

They suffered innings defeats in both the matches in 2004 but there was only silver lining as the batting of now Bangladesh vice-captain

## ACC reacts

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'concerned stakeholders' that harassment and intimidation of Sobhan has taken place during search of his home.

Crowley is known to be a lobbyist in the US for important individuals and business groups. Sobhan, an alleged close associate of the Hawa Bhaban and Tarique Rahman, is a controversial figure for his group's land development deals. The anti-graft body is now scrutinising his sources of money.

The congressman said he is concerned that 'any disruption of this large employer has the potential to create economic instability within a nation' and added that he 'plans on closely following the developments of this case as it progresses.'

He also sought flexible dealing with Sobhan who is recovering from a recent heart surgery in London.

In his reply, the ACC chief said Crowley's contention of people being harassed or intimidated is absolutely unfounded and misleading.

"Your protégé, Mr Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, was required to submit a statement of his assets and satisfy the authorities as regards the means through which he has accumulated wealth worth millions of dollars," Hasan Mashhud wrote to the congressman. "Till now he has failed to do so which reinforces the allegation against him. As such further legal actions are being contemplated to proceed with the case."

He disagreed that 'concern for potential disruption in business should override the moral obligation of the government to deal ruthlessly with any corrupt practices indulged in by the nouveau riche in a country like Bangladesh'.

As Crowley insisted that 'intimidation of anyone whether they are head of a company or a rickshaw driver does not benefit anyone during this time of difficulty for Bangladesh', Mashhud said Sobhan or his associates will be provided with the opportunity to clear themselves of any wrongdoing and the 'due process' will be adhered to at all times.

"I would expect you to measure things up in their correct perspective and base your judgment on facts. I can assure you there will be no farce, no farade and no kangaroo courts," the ACC boss asserted.

## CA

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the benefit of the people of two countries, according to Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munain.

The CA urged the envoy to encourage his country's investors to invest more in Bangladesh taking the advantages of business-friendly climate.

Regarding Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) in Chittagong, the CA called for early operation of the KEPZ for the benefit of Koreans and a Bangladeshi.

The envoy thanked the CA for providing licence to South Korea for the EPZ, which he said will create a lot of employment for Bangladeshis.

On arrival, Koko asked Rabbi to appoint his two brothers-in-law as directors of Rabbi's company. As Rabbi declined to appoint them as directors, Koko threatened him with dire consequences. He being frightened sought three days to deliberate, the complainant said in the FIR.

He said three days later

Mustaqin Reza and Muktaqin Reza were appointed as directors to the firm without any investment and since then they withdrew Tk 50,000 each as their monthly salaries from the firm.

Koko also received Tk 1 lakh every month from the firm, the complainant said accusing Koko, Mustaqin and Muktaqin of extorting him.

Rabbi mentioned in the case that there was a clear indication that if he did not comply with Koko's proposal his life would be in danger.

In the FIR Rabbi also said apart from the amount taken from his firm as salaries, Koko took Tk 2 lakh on May 1, 2003, Tk 6 lakh on August 10, 2004, Tk 3 lakh on October 31, 2005, and Tk 2 lakh on January 9, 2006 from him.

## Four die at RMCH

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Sima's husband Shahabul Islam, a prison guard at Chapainawabganj district jail, along with another guard from the same jail, Ibrahim, approached Dr Sharmin and demanded urgent medical attention for Sima as her condition was deteriorating with profuse bleeding through her nose, added the sources.

A mob of interns and nurses suspended their duties, rushed to the scene and locked in heated arguments with Sima's attendants. At one stage, the interns started to beat up Shahabul, his mother Rizia Khatun, mother-in-law Noor Jahan Begum and a relative Rina. Police later rescued Shahabul and his relatives from the fury of the interns.

Preparations for filing two other cases were underway, added police.

RMCH interns lodged a general diary with the same PS for assault on Dr Matuara Sarmin.

## Shahriar Kabir

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In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that the charges brought against them were not primarily proved and he prayed for discharge from the charge of sedition.

The court will decide on May 22 whether the final report will be accepted or not, courts said.

On November 25, 2002, police arrested the two Channel 4 journalists on sedition charges while they were crossing into India from Bangladesh through Benapole border.

The two foreign journalists came to Bangladesh to film a current affairs programme for Channel 4 about the reported al-Qaeda presence in Bangladesh. During their arrest at the Benapole border, customs authorities seized films and other documents from them, which were "intended for tarnishing the image of Bangladesh".

Shahriar Kabir, Priscilla Raj, Saleem Samad and others were arrested on charge of assisting the Channel 4 journalists. They were later granted bail from different court on different dates.

A sedition case was filed with Motijheel Police Station on November 15, 2002 against the two foreign journalists, Priscilla and Saleem.

On December 11, 2002, the government had deported two journalists -- Zabba Naz Malik and Leopold Bruno Sorrentino -- following their undertaking that they would not broadcast any of the material collected from the country.

RMCH Director Bazle Quader

## EC differs

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the method proposed by the army for preparing the electoral register with photographs.

On several occasions since February, experts from the armed forces have showed the council of advisers and the EC how they would go about the job. The EC on May 14 decided to have a complete digital electoral roll prepared at voter registration centres across the country.

The decision followed careful consideration of the options and proposals submitted by the army and the commission's consultants, the secretary said.

He added that the EC decided in favour of preparing the voter roll from camps after discussion with its consultants who have started working early this month.

Asked if there would be any demonstration of the consultants' voter-listing method, Kabir said he would convey the message to the EC.

Referring to the army's time frame, he argued that perhaps they (army) have estimated only the time for gathering particulars of the prospective voters, whereas many things will still have to be done after that.

However, the army experts showed journalists the full procedure of preparing the voter list with

photographs and national ID cards. They said in their method, enumeration can be done through door-to-door visits as well, but in that case more time would be required.

They said the voter registration centres should be set up in the middle of neighbourhoods meaning closer to the people.

When his attention was drawn to the details of the army's model, the secretary said it's not possible to say anything until the field level work begins. He said a pilot project will begin soon.

The EC will be happy if the job could be done in less than 18 months, he observed adding, "But I don't buy that the voter list can be prepared in six months."

He said a tender for purchase of equipment will be floated by this month.

CEC ATM Shamsul Huda on April 5 said it would take at least 18 months to prepare the voter list with photographs. Announcing the time frame, he said it was the minimum time needed for the task and there is no room for winding it back.

In accordance with the time limit, the field level task was supposed to begin in late September, but lately the EC has announced that it will begin in August.

## 5 importers

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of Revenue data and handed it over to Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam.

The study recommended that the government should encourage the commercial banks to facilitate groups of small-scale importers to import essential commodities so that they may take the benefits of economies of scale (bulk import).

"If a significant number of small-scale importers enter the market, the popular speculation of syndication may be removed."

The government should monitor international prices of imported essential products on a regular basis through its global mechanism and disseminate it to the concerned authorities to prevent price fixing and supply manipulation through syndication, it suggested.

According to the study, up to March of the current fiscal year, onion worth \$18.67million was imported by 156 importers while the share of the top five importers was 31.33 per cent and 28.85 per cent respectively in terms of customs import value (CIF) and CIF value in 2006-07FFY.

The study also found some differences between CIF import value and the assessed value.

Citing an example, it said

assessed value of crude palm oil was \$20.7million (or 4.25%) higher than the CIF value and for wheat the assessed value was \$15.3million (or 5.74%) higher than the CIF value in 2006-07FFY.

These differences indicate the presence of mis-invoicing, in most cases under-invoicing, the study said.

The assessed value of onion

## Trade licence

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providing agencies were also asked to submit their annual requirements of road digging.

Adviser to the LGRD Ministry Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal presided over the meeting where representatives of the ministries of power and energy, environment, and representatives of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartrippakha (Rajuk), the DCC, and managing directors of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd and Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) were present.

The DCC was also asked to monitor the street digging activities closely and take punitive actions against any officials found neglecting their duties in this regard. It was asked to check the plans of a building and its location before issuing trade licences against an applicant's address.

Meeting sources said the final decision regarding the utility service commission would be made after further negotiations with the ministries concerned and service providing agencies.

It was decided in the meeting that the maintenance responsibility of all drainage system in the capital would be given to Wasa. Currently some drainage systems are under the DCC, the meeting was told.

The Power Development Board was requested to ensure uninterrupted power supply to all traffic signals in the city. The meeting also asked the DCC to continue the Dhaka city beautification process.

## EC

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not facing any problem now in discharging its functions," Humayun said at a weekly press briefing yesterday.

Referring to the recent meeting between the chief adviser and the EC, he said the chief adviser assured the EC of initiating all-out measures to ensure independence of the EC Secretariat.

The EC Secretariat, however, said examining the constitution it appears that an amendment to the constitution is required to separate the EC Secretariat from the PMO, now the office of the chief adviser.

It is not possible to establish an EC Secretariat like the secretariat of the Jatiya Sangsad without amending the constitution and changing the existing laws, a written statement of the EC Secretariat said.

Humayun said the EC will consult with legal experts to see if it is possible to strengthen the secretariat through changing existing laws and rules in case it is not possible to separate its secretariat from the PMO.

The EC Secretariat statement said the secretariat is working under the directives of the EC, which is now discharging its functions independently.

On the dialogue on draft proposals for electoral reforms, Humayun said the EC will hold talks with the editors of different national dailies and senior journalists next Saturday.

Earlier on April 26, the EC held talks with eminent citizens. It, however, cannot hold talks with the political parties because of restrictions on indoor politics.

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