

## Babar's litany

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political parties, contributing to the rise of recent confrontational political environment in the country, said competent sources in various law enforcement agencies. Till August 31, 2006 the police arrested as many as 1,23,566 political activists most of whom were implicated in various false cases, the sources said.

The role played by Babar changed the direction of the investigation of the fatal August 21, 2004 bomb attack on an Awami League rally in the capital, intelligence sources said.

Although the 2004 attack had been marked as one of the biggest terror attacks on a political party leaving 23 persons including senior AL leaders killed and 300 others injured, the police made no progress in the investigation. Then on August 2006, the police came up with a so-called confession of one Judge Mia stating that a group of ordinary criminals had orchestrated the attack. Since then, the investigation has died down. It was subsequently reported in the media that behind the scene the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police was subsidising the regular expenses of Judge Mia's family, the sources said.

Babar also played a questionable role in the investigation of the biggest ever incident of arms smuggling in the country, the sources added. In April 2004 10 truck loads of arms and ammunition were intercepted by law enforcers while being smuggled. The investigators never made any progress as Babar reportedly made the police file a 'simpler case'. Investigators were never asked to find out who had been involved in the smuggling and where the cache was being taken to - rather Babar directly discouraged the law enforcers from proceeding with the investigation, according to police officials involved in the case.

Babar also allegedly silenced the Bogra arms haul case. Although a huge cache of bullets and explosives was recovered from a truck in Bogra, investigation regarding the haul stalled within a few months with some significant arrests.

He also played a significant role in the rise of executed Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) leader Bangla Bhai in North Bengal in 2004, intelligence sources said. While the media was reporting about the atrocities of Bangla Bhai, Babar denied the existence of Islamist militants to the media. The then police super of Rajshahi, Masud Mia, was openly cooperating with Bangla Bhai in his killing missions. The other police officer who sheltered Bangla Bhai -- the then deputy inspector of Rajshahi police Nur Mohammad -- was promoted to the position of an superceding officer senior to him.

During his five years in the home ministry, Babar spearheaded purchase of motor vehicles worth a few thousand crores of taka for Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), police and

## 21 graft suspects

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corruption suspect list of 50 people in February, it made it mandatory for those on the list and not in jail to submit their wealth statement in person. This time, however, there is no such obligation.

In February when some top graft suspects went to the ACC Segunbagicha head office to submit their wealth statements, the joint forces arrested them after submission of their statement.

ACC sources said after completion of all procedures they served notices yesterday afternoon.

Various taskforces under the national coordination committee to combat corruption and crime submitted findings of their inquiries to the ACC on April 20.

On February 18, the anti-graft body asked 50 graft suspects to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours. The names came from 420 people who were primarily listed as graft suspects in February.

National dailies published a second list of 50 graft suspects on March 8. The latest 21 names derive from there.

The ACC chairman said on Sunday, "The list will expand further. Don't think this is the end."

the fire brigade, the ministry officials said.

In 2005, ahead of the Saarc summit in the capital, the government decided to procure 1970 cars with Tk 121 crore of government finance and some foreign funds. The police headquarters floated a tender in which 16 importers participated. But at the last moment, through a circular, the authorities changed the conditions of bidding in such a way that allowed only two importers to participate. That prompted the other bidders to lodge complaints with the government alleging corruption in the bidding process, but that did not work. Finally the vehicles were mainly procured from Pacific Motors, owned by the then foreign minister M Morshed Khan, the home ministry sources said.

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As part of his plans he influenced Rajuk to mark the house as abandoned with help from former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas. Abusing his power, Harris also influenced Rajuk to allot the house to some Fakir Mahbub Anam alias Swapani. Mirza Abbas not only allotted the house to his party man but also influenced Rajuk to devalue the price of the house. Rajuk officials evaluated the house only at Tk 5.34 crore but the task force probe committee now estimates the price at no less than Tk 40 crore.

Harris Chowdhury bought the house situated in the upscale area of Gulshan in the capital. It is the first instance of recovering such a large scale expensive property from a high profile corruption suspect since the ongoing anti-corruption drive started in February.

The house at the address of Holding #6 on Road #53 in Gulshan, had initially been allotted to Harris Chowdhury in 2002 when he had been the political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, with the rank and status of a state minister. Harris liked the house so much that he started to make plans to acquire it permanently, a source close to Harris

Chowdhury and his family had been living in the house until the current interim government took over the reins of the country. Now Harris is convicted in absentia in a graft case and sentenced to three years imprisonment for not submitting his wealth statements to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC). The authorities are now preparing to file some more graft cases against him for acquiring a large number of properties illegally at home and abroad.

When the interim government took over power, Harris Chowdhury went into hiding and his family left the house abandoned. Members of the joint forces along with forest officials seized a pair of pew fowls and an Infinity luxury sports utility vehicle which he had received as a bribe from Orion Group for awarding the company the construction contract of Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover in the capital. So far the taskforce and the ACC investigators found assets worth more than Tk 22.5 crore of Harris Chowdhury that are disproportionate to his known source income.

In 2003, charges were pressed against Hasina and others in the two cases and charge sheets were submitted before the court.

The HC on May 16 set July 25 to hear the AL chief's petition for cancelling the proceedings in the four-and-a-half-year old Meghnaghat Power plant graft case against her.

The joint forces members also seized two residences of former Air Force chief Altaf Hossain in Patuakhali and seized a shotgun and a rifle, 99 bullets, and 970 pieces of saree and 160 pieces of lungi of the government relief materials. Altaf was held from his Gulshan residence around 3:40am.

Barisal Mayor Majibor Rahman Sarwar was picked up from his Gulshan residence at about 9:30am. The crack forces raided his residence in Gulshan and Barisal and the city corporation office and seized four bullets, Tk 4 lakh, gold ornaments weighing 50 tola and some documents.

Sarwar and his wife Nasima Sarwar were taken to the Gulshan branch of Dutch Bangla Bank and seized documents kept in their reserved lockers in the bank. The joint forces sealed the lockers. Nasima was later released while Sarwar was taken to Rab-3 camp.

He was released on May 8 after obtaining a two-month ad interim bail from a High Court bench on April 30.

A case was filed against Kamran with the Sylhet Kotwali Police Station yesterday following the recovery of alcoholic beverage from his house.

Motijheel police produced AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar at 8:15pm with a prayer for seven-day remand.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case and Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Motijheel Police Station Nasirul Alam mentioned in the forwarding report that Jalil accumulated a huge amount of wealth and money through corruption being the party general secretary. He had also been delivering provocative statements over the last few days to destabilise the country's political situation. So, he needs to be interrogated in remand.

The defence lawyers argued for cancellation of the remand prayer.

After hearing both the sides, the court granted a four-day remand for Jalil.

The same court also remanded Babar for four days after IO of the case and Gulshan Police Station OC Obaidul Haque produced him before it with a prayer for seven-day remand.

Hosas said, "People who are truly corrupt need to be arrested. Why are they not being arrested? They are freely roaming around...arrest them, not the politicians who have spent days in the streets fighting for the people."

"The time for an emergency has ended. We want democracy; we want people's right to vote because it is the people who have the power. They can never suppress people's wishes, but it seems like that is what they want to do," Hasina said.

"They have not been able to bring down the prices of essentials. Nothing is being done about that. Instead, arrests, tortures... as if they are trying to distract people by creating a state of fear," she said, adding, "This game will not last long."

"They want not clear what they want to do. The country cannot continue under this suffocating environment," the AL chief said.

She said, "Those of us who have struggled in the streets in rain and storms and endured police beatings; it seems those are the people who are suffering the greatest repression."

Referring to the arrest of her cousin Selim, Hasina said that Selim's mother is sick and she was surprised at the manner the house was being searched under the circumstances.

Hasina visited her aunt, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's sister, Asma Khatun at the Sikder Medical College later last night.

During the day yesterday, Matia Chowdhury, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Syed Ashraf Islam and Prof Abdul Mannan paid visits to Hasina.

Hasina was scheduled to visit Tungipara, Gopalganj to commemorate her grand mother's death anniversary this morning but her trip was deferred to a later date, AL sources said.

**Naem Mostafa**

other demanded Tk 1 lakh in toll from Maria Union Chairman Molla Hasan Faruk on the election day of the union council on July 14, 2003.

As Faruk refused to oblige, Naem's accomplices prevented Faruk's followers from going to the polling centres. They also launched an attack on the villagers, leaving many of them injured.

Of the injured, two villagers - Sekandar Ali and Zamal - filed the case with police station on April 24, accusing 20 people.

On May 18, police pressed charges against 18 people, dropping names of three for lack of evidence.

Earlier, Naem Mostafa did not respond to the similar notices issued by two other courts in separate cases for abetting militants of the outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh. The courts began trial on May 10.

Shamim Iskandar used to be a technical officer of the state-run Bangladesh Biman. He emigrated to Canada with his family in January. Later, when he returned to Dhaka to submit his resignation, he was not allowed to leave the country.

ACC on Sunday in its meeting decided to serve notices on the 21

fire brigade, the ministry officials said.

In 2005, ahead of the Saarc summit in the capital, the government decided to procure 1970 cars with Tk 121 crore of government finance and some foreign funds. The police headquarters floated a tender in which 16 importers participated. But at the last moment, through a circular, the authorities changed the conditions of bidding in such a way that allowed only two importers to participate. That prompted the other bidders to lodge complaints with the government alleging corruption in the bidding process, but that did not work. Finally the vehicles were mainly procured from Pacific Motors, owned by the then foreign minister M Morshed Khan, the home ministry sources said.

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