

Sheikh Selim, Mintoo

FROM PAGE 1
Saifur Rahman's son Naser Rahman, who is also a former BNP lawmaker, is currently in jail on graft charges. The joint forces arrested him during their first round of crackdown on high profile corruption suspects including political leaders.

Meanwhile, intelligence officials started quizzing detained AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, former state minister for home affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar, and former BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem taking them to undisclosed places. The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka sent each of them to four-day remand on Tuesday.

Gulshan police brought allegations of corruption against AL leader and former health minister Sheikh Selim saying that during AL's last stint in state power he amassed a large amount of properties and money through corruption under the shelter of the erstwhile premier Sheikh Hasina, who is also his cousin.

In the forwarding report placed before the court, Gulshan police also said Selim was involved in a conspiracy to create an anarchic situation in the country.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case, Sub-Inspector (SI) Aminur Rashid of Gulshan police station, said Selim needed to be remanded for seven days to find out vital clues of his involvement in corruption.

Moreover, the IO placed before the court a proposal for a 30-day detention for Selim, recommended by the authorities concerned.

SI Sarwar Hossain of the same police station produced Abdul Awal Mintoo before the court seeking a seven-day remand. He also placed a forwarding report where he mentioned that Mintoo acquired a large amount of wealth and properties through corruption by being affiliated with a political party while he was the president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

Mintoo was also placed before the court with a recommendation for detention of 30 days.

Our correspondent from Barisal reported that a task force of the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday started investigating in Barisal the allegations against detained Barisal City Corporation (BCC) Mayor Mujibur Rahman Sarwar.

The task force led by Maj Abdul Hye yesterday measured the BCC mayor's house at Sadhur Battala in Barisal city and estimated the value of his immovable and movable properties there. The team also examined some files of BCC in Nagar Bhaban.

The task force comprising officials from the army, ACC, tax department, police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) went to Sarwar's house yesterday and searched the place for several hours breaking open locked almirahs, drawers and cabinets. They found some clothes, gift items and documents there, sources said.

The sources also said the task force earlier interrogated BCC officials about Sarwar's alleged corruption in appointing a large number of BCC employees flouting proper procedures. The allegations against him also include amassing a large amount of money through nepotism in awarding business contracts — a practice which ended up producing low-quality work for BCC, and allotting BCC stalls, shops and markets to people in exchange for bribes.

Sources said cases against Sarwar might be filed by the task force soon.

REVELATIONS
Jalil, Mintoo, and General Secretary of the Gulshan Unit of AL Wakil Ahmed alias Wakil Commissioner gave sensational information during interroga-

tion by the joint forces about corruption of AL high-ups, and disclosed the details of what had been happening behind the much talked about April 30, 2004 deadline announced by Jalil for toppling the immediate past four-party alliance government, sources claimed.

The sources also claimed that Wakil Ahmed told the joint forces that Jalil had been involved in extortions. The three were interrogated separately first and then together.

Sources said Jalil however denied the allegation of taking bribes in exchange for AL nominations for the stalled parliamentary election.

Several businessmen paid different amounts of money to the party fund voluntarily at different times while big firms like Bashundhara Group donated large amounts, the detainees told the joint forces, according to the claims of the sources.

Sources also said quoting Jalil that the April 30 deadline for a supposed overthrow of the immediate past four-party alliance government came from Jalil by chance. Jalil was assigned to supervise the movement on the street while the inner activities of the party were looked after by party chief Sheikh Hasina.

The April 30 deadline was designed as a trump card in the movement against the erstwhile government with a view to influencing 70-lawmakers of BNP to defect, the sources said. Former BNP lawmaker Abu Hena, who finally defected, had demanded Tk 70 crore for the proposed defection of 70 BNP lawmakers, Mintoo said in his statement to the joint forces, according to the claims of the sources.

Proshika, an NGO, was tasked with the job of supplying more than 10 thousand people for a demonstration to make the four-party government step down by the deadline, the sources claimed.

CORRUPT CBAL LEADER BAKIR
The Anti-corruption Commission yesterday filed a case with Motijheel police station in the capital against Sonali Bank CBA leader BM Bakir Hossain and his wife Nazma Hossain for concealing information on their statements of wealth submitted to the commission.

ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Jahangir Alam filed the case saying the couple's undisclosed wealth worth more than Tk 1.25 crore was unaccounted following submission of their wealth statements.

Bakir is now in custody of the law enforcers on corruption charges.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 1
The government's move to revive the hearing of the Mig-29 and frigate purchase graft cases filed against Hasina is part of the design, said Latif.

Meanwhile, Hasina cancelled her visit scheduled for this morning to Tungipara to offer Fatcha at the grave of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"We supported the government for its activities in the beginning but what the government is doing now cannot be supported," Latif said.

On the arrest of party leaders on charges of corruption, he said any party leader involved in corruption should be punished.

HC declares detention of Mosharraf, Abbas illegal

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday declared illegal the detention orders of former ministers Engineer Mosharraf Hossain and Mirza Abbas.

Making absolute its rule issued upon separate writ petitions, a division bench comprising Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Syed M Ziaul Karim asked the government to release the two former ministers if they are not wanted in any other criminal cases.

On February 25, the joint forces arrested Mosharraf and Abbas on the premises of the Anti-Corruption Commission office soon after they submitted their wealth statements as asked by the commission.

Later, they were sent to jail with 30 days' detention under the Special Powers Act.

Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud appeared for both Mosharraf and Abbas.

Tax evasion case against Lobi sent to special court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The case against detained former BNP lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi for evading Tk 17 crore income tax filed by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) was transferred to a special court yesterday for its quick disposal.

Senior Special Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court sent the case to the Third Special Judge Court set up at Shere-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hotel for trial after fixing June 3 for hearing on charge framing against the former lawmaker.

Under a tight security, Lobi, now in Kashipur Jail in Gazipur, was produced before the court at 11.30am.

On May 23, the court had issued an arrest warrant against Lobi after Mohammad Nurul Amin, deputy tax commissioner of Taxpayers' Service Wing, NBR, filed the case.

In his complaint, Amin mentioned that Lobi, also former president of Bangladesh Cricket Board, had evaded around Tk 17.24 crore income tax since 1984-85 fiscal year. Lobi repeatedly gave false information on his real income and expenditure to the Income Tax Department and did not show his return of income tax. He also used his position to conceal information about his real income, the complainant said.

On February 6, the joint forces arrested Lobi from his Gulshan-1 residence and seized Tk 9.75 crore.

Later, Central Intelligence Cell of NBR collected information on his different bank accounts, where they found Tk 22.25 crore. Lobi did not submit statement of the money to the NBR for the fiscal year 2005-2006, the complainant said.

He also did not submit statement about the income from his Dhanmondi M/S Rupashi Energy Filling Station to the NBR, Amin added.

Khelafat leader Maulana Habib given 1-month detention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The controversial madrasa principal Maulana Habibur Rahman has been given a month's detention.

An official letter in this regard from the home ministry reached the jail two days back, the Sylhet Central Jail authorities said yesterday.

Joint forces held Habib, also the Naye-e-Amir of a faction of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, on May 16 from a house in the city's Jherheri para. The Kotwali police produced him before the Sylhet sadar cognizance magistrate court the same day, where he was sent to jail.

He had been held on charge of having links with the militant groups, a police official said adding that he was shown arrested under the Emergency Power regulations.

Principal of Jamea Madania Islamiya Madrasa at the city's Kajipara, Habib first came to lime-light in 1994 when he declared Tk 50,000 reward for author Taslima Nasrin's head.

Besides, he used to talk about his experience of joining training programmes in Afghanistan. However, after the emergence of JMB and other militant groups, he started denying any links with the Afghan wars.

Although Habib had been with the four-party alliance during the immediate past BNP-led rule, he moved to Awami League (AL) camp ahead of the now cancelled January 22 polls and even managed AL ticket to contest Sylhet-6 constituency, that sparked widespread criticisms among AL leaders and workers at that time.

Ershad's graft case

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Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Special Court for Dhaka Division recorded statement of the complainant Golam Mortuza, an official of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, of the case and fixed June 18 for next hearing.

The proceeding of the case was stayed for a long time due to a High Court order though charges were framed on July 7, 1992.

Ershad and AKM Mosharraf Hossain, former chairman of Bangladesh Shilpa Bank, abusing power and through corruption, directed the authorities concerned to remit Tk 35 lakh loan taken by M/S Three Star Poultry Farm Limited on September 4, 1979.

Later, a graft case was filed with Motijheel Police Station against Ershad, Mosharraf, Managing Director Jahangir Kabir, Directors Firoz Kabir and Borhan Uddin and Jahangir's wife Nurunnahar Shelly.

Of them, Jahangir and his wife Shelly are still at large while others are now on bail.

The investigation officer pressed charges against Ershad and five others on November 6, 1991.

Ershad along with party leaders and activists were present at the court during the hearing.

THREE CASES
Proceedings of three other graft cases against Ershad were adjourned yesterday following time petitions by the prosecution lawyers.

According to a case, filed with Tejgaon Police Station in 1992,

Ershad, while in power, allegedly directed the authorities concerned to purchase ENG (electronic news-gathering) equipment worth about Tk 2.93 crore to be used by him and his wife though all broadcasting facilities were available in his secretariat.

The case was adjourned till June 18.

The same court also adjourned the proceeding of another graft case until June 25 following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers.

According to the case, filed with the same police station, it was alleged that Ershad, defying the authorities' decision, directed to accept donation from France instead of Finland for setting up 'microwave telephone lines' in 49 upazilas.

Due to Ershad's unilateral decision, the government had to pay Tk 28 crore to France in interest, as the plan was not implemented finally, sources said.

The same court adjourned proceeding of a graft case against Ershad and three others until 25 following the same reason.

In the case filed with Cantonment Police Station on May 4, 1992, it was alleged that Ershad, while in power, directed the authorities concerned to purchase two high-power Radars (Radio Detection and Ranging) for Bangladesh Air Forces violating the recommendation of the radar evaluation team.

It caused a loss of Tk 64 crore to the government.

Zia's grave

FROM PAGE 1

chief, after her departure many supporters were also allowed to visit the grave.

Ziaur Rahman was also the commander of the 'Z' force and a sector of the freedom fighters during the liberation war. He was assassinated on the day in 1981 by some disgruntled army officers in Chittagong Circuit House, while on a visit there as the president of the country.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser to the Interim Government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar, Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddique and the chiefs of three armed forces paid tributes to the former president amid tight security by placing wreaths on his grave and by observing a moment of silence.

Former prime minister Khaleda Zia went to her late husband's mausoleum around 10:40am but no other family member was present there. She placed a wreath on her husband's grave and offered prayers.

Among others BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Standing Committee Member M Saifur Rahman, Dr RA Gani, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, M Shamsul Islam, Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, BNP Vice-president MK Anwar, Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Adviser to the BNP Chairperson Mofazzal Karim, Maj Gen (ret'd) ZA Khan, Joint Secretary General Ghoyeshar Chimeria Ray, Selima Rahman, Office Secretary Mofiqul Islam Tripti, Assistant Office Secretary Emran Saleh Prince, Sheehiwasheeb Dal President Rizvi Ahmed, Krishok Dal General Secretary Shamsuzzaman Dudu, Jubo Dal General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alai, Jatiyatabad Chhatra Dal President Azizul Bari Helal, its General Secretary Shaiful Bari Babu, former state minister Sarwar Rahman, former lawmaker Mohammad Shahjahan, Zia Parishad leader Kabir Murad, Mohila Dal leader Shirin Sultana, Nurjahan Yasmin, Sultana Ahmed, and Rehana Akhtar Ranu also accompanied the BNP chairperson.

Ali Ahsan Mujahid, secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, a key partner of BNP in the four-party alliance was also present.

A milad and doa mehfil was held at the mausoleum as part of BNP's programmes marking the day. A special munajat was also offered.

Police however arrested Mowla Nurul Islam and Mowla Jasim, two men affiliated with BNP, as they were trying to carry a banner to the mausoleum. Police also charged batons on a group of young supporters leaving at least ten injured as they were allegedly trying to chant slogans near the mausoleum.

After Khaleda's departure from the area a large number of BNP leaders, activists, and supporters were also allowed to visit the grave of

the former president to pay tributes. They were allowed in, after thorough checks, one by one from a queue.

After the milad and doa mehfil, former finance minister and BNP Standing Committee Member M Saifur Rahman said, "This is a melancholy day for me as president Ziaur Rahman was killed on this day."

He laid a strong foundation for the country's economy, established a national philosophy, and gave us a strategy for running the country," Saifur Rahman told journalists, adding that he is a follower of Zia's philosophy and his party is now operating on the basis of that philosophy.

Zia worked to make the country self-reliant and to establish a multi-party democracy," he said adding, "I hope democracy will be restored in the country soon again."

Earlier the interim government allowed only 150 leaders of the party to accompany Khaleda Zia during her visit to the grave of the founder of BNP.

BNP leaders, activists, and supporters had no permission to give political speeches or statements, to chant slogans, or to carry banners. Law enforcers did not even allow the supporters to bring flowers to the mausoleum.

Jatrabari flyover
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"They (DCC) are not paying our fees for the last one year," Dr Alamgir said adding "We could not play effective role regarding the modification design and layout of the flyover, which contains major flaws."

The DCC hired the team on a three-year contract signed on March 19, 2006, seven months after the Belhassa-Accom Associates Ltd was awarded the contract for the construction of the flyover. The team comprises of seven experts from Buet (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology).

DCC, the implementing agency and the coordination body of the flyover who accepted the modified design and layout prepared by Buet team, has been keeping mum so far regarding the termination letter. No DCC official was available for comments in this regard when contacted.

"We appointed supporting staffs and engineers to perform our task and that's why we need money to cover their expenses," Dr Alamgir said adding, "We could have gone forward with our work even if they (DCC) had assured us that we would be paid later."

The Buet team suggested bringing significant changes in the present design and layout of the flyover including cutting the number of ramps through which vehicles will enter and exit the flyover. It also criticised the way in which traffic was being artificially forced onto the flyover apparently to increase revenue.

The joint venture of the UAE-based construction firm Belhassa International LLC and Accom Engineering Company Ltd is chaired by Orion Group owner M Obaidul Karim, who is in hiding after being implicated as the key man in the case of embezzlement of Tk 596.44 crore from the Oriental Bank.

The Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover is an 8-km stretch of mainly elevated highway aimed at easing Dhaka's heavily congested traffic. It is a build-own-operate-and-transfer (BOOT) scheme in which the contractor finances the building in return for the right to collect tolls for a set period of time.

BSF guns down cattle trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sakthira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader at Tarali village near Kakkanga border under Swarnapnagar Police Station of 24 Parganas district early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Nazrul Islam, 35, son of Hamjar Ali of Kakkanga village in Kalaroa upazila.

According to a report received from across the border, Nazrul went to India on Tuesday and was returning home with cattle he bought from there.

When he reached the frontier Tarali village at around 4:30am, the BSF men opened fire on him. He died instantly.

Major Kamrul Hasan, operation commander of 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident.

BDR sources said they sent a letter to the BSF authorities protesting the killing and asked them to return the body.

WB hails

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The government specifically requested the World Bank to fast-track the proposed DSC-IV, a budget-support operation, the PID report said.

The World Bank also said that it has contacts with the pro-reform leaders of the two major political parties to ensure broader political support for the DSC-supported reforms.

Both the parties agreed on the broad reform priorities supported by the DSC operation and pledged for sustainability of the reforms, it said.

The World Bank report also analysed possible economic risks of Bangladesh and said the main economic risk stems from the weak financial condition of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), especially those in the energy sector.

Sustained large losses at the energy sector SOEs have led to a build-up of outstanding liabilities and exacerbated the financial fragilities of the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) that are directed to financial losses, it said.

It said the BPC is still unable to pay its large outstanding debt, mostly to the NCBs, which would need to be resolved.

The press release quoted Xian Zhu, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh, as saying, "The DSC supports key aspects of the government's reform agenda aimed at strengthening prospects for stronger economic growth, improved governance, and faster poverty reduction in Bangladesh."

Tales

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(RIB) organised the seminar at the CIRDP Auditorium yesterday.

Members of the lower caste like Harjion, Bishi, Kaora, Buno, Rabidas, Manta, Bede, Munda, Nagarchi, Shabdakar and Bashfor from Sakthira, Kushiya, Moulvibazar, Syedpur and Rangpur came to the seminar to describe their everyday experience.

These people provide services to people by making and repairing shoes and baskets, making and playing musical instruments, cleaning streets and human excreta, and working as midwives.

RIB Chairman Dr Shamsul Bari, who coordinated the first session of the seminar, told the story of advocate Panna Lal Das, the first graduate from Kushiya's Harijion community-sweepers of the Kushiya Municipality.

With the help of the community people Panna Lal became a lawyer and joined a local NGO. But the NGO authority sacked him when it came to know that Panna belongs to the Harijion community, Bari said.

With the help of the RIB, Panna is now working to improve the fate of his community.

Renowned writer Selima Hossain delivered the keynote speech at the seminar. She said both the public and private sectors should come forward to help these people improve their fate.

She recommended considering the views of these deprived people while making policies for them. "We should not let them remind us again that we should consider them as human beings," Selima said.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan said the problem of caste discrimination is based in South Asia. He said poverty of these people will become severe when general people will enter their professions.

Dr Hamida Hossain, vice-chairperson of RIB, suggested forming specific policies for the improvement of these people. "We should stand by their side not in our ways but by the ways they suggest," she said.

Khusi Kabir of Nijera Kori and RIB Executive Director Meghna Gubhakarurata also spoke at the seminar.

The speakers also discussed gender issues of these deprived people and ways to provide them legal aid.

Children of the Harijion community from Kushiya staged a play portraying the discrimination they face in their everyday life. A documentary film was screened in the second session of the seminar.

Bush, Putin to meet in July

AP, Washington

With US-Russian relations under heavy strain, President Bush and President Vladimir Putin will meet July 1 and 2 in Kennebunkport, Maine, administration officials said yesterday.

"It's an opportunity for him and President Putin to continue what is always, for the two of them, candid and very honest conversations about things that matter," Bush spokesman Tony Snow said.

Bush's father, former President George H.W. Bush, has an oceanfront compound in Kennebunkport, and the two leaders will meet there.

The session comes at a time when many experts say relations between the two nations are at their lowest point since the Soviet era.

On Tuesday, Putin warned that the planned US missile shield for Europe would turn the region into a "powder keg."

Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates have all tried to reassure the Russians that the

Forest chief

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certificates worth Tk 1.11 lakh, postal savings certificates worth Tk 4 lakh and several travellers' cheques of different countries.

"During interrogation at the police station last night Gani confessed to having more money and papers in his house," said Syed Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Uttara Police Station.

Police sources said they took Gani's wife to the Dhammondi branch of Standard Chartered Bank early yesterday and recovered the gold ornaments in the bank's locker. The law enforcers sealed the locker.

Two jewellers

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board then threw the sack and the drum in the dustbin," Shafiq and Lokman, on-duty night guards in the area said, who later informed the police on suspicion.

The bodies were sent to Mirford Hospital morgue for autopsy. The family members of the dead identified the bodies at morgue in the afternoon.

Of the dead, Ashish was slaughtered and dumped inside the drum, while the body of Sumon was found inside the sack with the hands and legs tied. He was strangled to death and there were stab injuries on his cheek and hand, sources said.

Police suspect that the double murder might have taken place sometime before 10 on Tuesday night.

"We suspected something bad had happened when we found the jewellery shop was robbed at about 7:00am. Sumon's cellphone was also found switched off since 11 the previous night," Nitai Das, father of Sumon, said.

Family members of Sumon suspect that the murder might have links with Kamal, a gold businessman in the area, with whom Sumon had financial dealings. Kamal also visited Sumon's jewellery shop at about 8:30pm on Monday, they added.

"Ashish left the shop at about 9:00pm," Ranjan Sutradhar, an employee of Ashish's jewellery shop, said.

A case has been filed with Lalbagh Police Station.

WB chief

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Wolfowitz to resign.
"I am pleased to announce that I will nominate Bob Zoellick to be the 11th president of the World Bank," Bush said in a formal announcement at the White House.

"Bob Zoellick has had a long and distinguished career in diplomacy and development economics. It has prepared him well for this new assignment," said the US president.

By nominating Zoellick, a consensus-builder on issues ranging from global trade to strife in Darfur, Bush is seeking to put an end to the favoritism scandal that forced Paul Wolfowitz to resign and roiled the World Bank for weeks.

Asked what priorities Zoellick would bring to the post, White House spokesman Tony Snow said: "The priorities are continuing to work in the developing world."

"Paul Wolfowitz also made it clear that one of the priorities is to concentrate on the poorest countries, giving them the capacity to develop, to develop in a way that's going to make it possible to provide better lives and longer lives for the people who live there," said Snow.

The World Bank's 24-member board of governors must approve the nomination of Zoellick, a vice chairman at Wall Street investment bank Goldman Sachs.

Wolfowitz agreed on May 17 to step down on June 30 to end a scandal over a generous pay-and-promotion package he arranged for his companion, a bank employee.

missile system is aimed at preventing attack by a rogue state against the United States or Europe.

Washington and Moscow are also at odds over Kosovo, a province of Serbia that is under UN and Nato administration. Russia has called a Western-backed draft UN resolution that would endorse supervised independence for the Serbian province unacceptable.

Bush and Putin will discuss Iran, civil nuclear cooperation, missile defense and other issues, Snow said.

"Cooperation between the United States and Russia is important in solving regional conflicts, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction and combating terrorism and extremism," Snow explained in announcing the visit.

The two leaders also will see each other next week in Helligendamm, Germany, during the annual summit of industrialized nations.

Asked why Bush chose to hold the meeting at his father's house in Maine, Snow said, "Why not? It's a good place to have it."

Bush also has met with Putin at the presidential retreat at Camp David in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains. And, Putin