

Falu on fresh remand

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about government relief materials that were seized from the office of a ward commissioner of Falu's constituency as well as whereabouts of his accomplices involved in misappropriating relief materials.

So, he needs to be questioned about his involvement with misusing government relief materials and the whereabouts of his accomplices, the court added.

The defence lawyers submitted a petition for cancellation of the remand prayer saying that their client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him.

On hearing both sides, the court rejected the defence plea and placed Falu on a four-day remand for further interrogation.

On March 2, security personnel had recovered 605 corrugated iron (CI) sheets and 63 blankets meant for relief only at a ward commissioner's office in Tejgaon in the capital. The law enforcers also recovered 37 CI sheets from the house of one Shaifuddin near BG Press Staff Quarters Mosque in Tejgaon.

During interrogation, Falu claimed that he purchased the sheets from Ruhal Amin Bhuiyan alias Jahangir, commissioner of ward 37 and the vice-president of Tejgaon BNP.

Acting on his information, security personnel had raided the ward commissioner's office at Begunbari of Tejgaon and found 63 blankets in gunny sacks and 605 CI sheets stacked up inside. Fifteen kilogramme of rotten rice was also found there.

The law enforcers picked up Nazir Ahmed, office assistant of the commissioner, for interrogation.

Later, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) official Abdus Samad from Rab-2 filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station against Falu, Jahangir and others.

TARIQUE DENIED BAIL

Another Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petitions of Tarique Rahman in connection with three extortion cases filed against him with Gulshan and Dhamondi police stations on different dates.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Tarique's lawyers filed criminal appeals against the rejection orders of the lower courts on different dates.

In his orders, the judge said the charges brought against Tarique were primarily proved and the cases were earlier brought under the Emergency Power Rules where there is bar to grant bail. So, the bail is rejected, the court added.

Of the cases, two were filed with Gulshan Police Station on March 27 while another case was filed with Dhamondi Police Station on April 1.

GANJON REMAND

ADhaka court yesterday placed detained forest bosh Osman Ganjon on a fresh three-day remand in a criminal case filed against him under Passport Act with Utara Police Station.

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon passed the order after the IO of the case produced him before the court on completion of his three-day remand under the Emergency Power Rules.

He was earlier taken on a nine-day remand in connection with the case.

The joint forces on May 29 recovered about 289 tolas of gold ornaments from a bank locker of Chief Conservator of Forests Osman Gani and Tk 6.95 lakh more in cash, savings certificates worth over Tk 5 lakh and ownership documents of flats and plots at his Utara residence.

The joint forces also raided and seized two sawmills on Maneswar Road in Dhamondi last night after Gani confessed to having timber worth over Tk 1 crore in those mills.

Sources in the joint forces said Gani also confessed to having 18-19 accounts with different private banks in the capital in his and his wife's names. The law enforcers raided Gani's Utara residence and recovered bank deposit books that show over Tk 60 lakh to have been deposited in banks. The sources said the amount may exceed Tk 1 crore.

Later, two separate cases against Gani, under the Emergency Power Rules and the Passport Act, were lodged after recovery of Tk 1 crore hidden inside a pillow and a rice barrel in his house.

CASE AGAINST AMAN AND WIFE
Judge Mohammad Firoz Alami of First Special Court set up at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel yesterday fixed June 21 for delivery of the verdict of a graft case filed against Aman and his wife.

After completion of arguments from the prosecution and the defence, the judge set the date for judgement of the case.

Under a tight security, police produced Aman and Sabera before the court during the hearing.

Earlier, ACC deputy directors (DDs) Abdullah Al Zahid and Jibon Krishna Roy, IOs of the case, submitted the charge sheet of the case filed with Kaful Police Station.

In the charge sheet, the IOs said Aman and his wife amassed properties valued over Tk 10 crore illegally.

They said there are discrepancies between income and expenditure of the former BNP state minister and he accumulated huge wealth through abuse of power.

The DDs accused Sabera of giving false information in her statement to the anti-graft body.

CASE AGAINST NASIM

Another special court yesterday fixed June 19 for hearing on charge framing against Nasim in connection with WorldTel graft case.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Third Special Court adjourned the hearing, as Nasim had no lawyer to defend him. Nasim yesterday told the court that he appointed AFM Abdul

BSF kills 1

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guards of Kalapota outpost opened fire on Babul when he along with cattle he purchased from India was crossing the border at about 6:00am. He died instantly.

The BSF men took away the body and did not return it as of 7:00pm yesterday.

Hasina terms

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government has set an example of rejecting cooperation. She also denied depriving the landslide victims from the help they could render them "inhuman."

"I wanted to visit the affected people on moral and humanitarian grounds and there was no politics in it as it is the long tradition of Awami League to stand beside suffering humanity," Hasina said adding that her party had joined the rescue and relief operations during the destructive cyclone in 1991 and devastating floods in 1997-1998.

She also mentioned her government's success in dealing with the flood situation in 1998.

The AL chief observed that it is the responsibility of a government to seek cooperation from all to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of a natural calamity adding that it is tough to overcome such devastating situation without integrated efforts.

"As elected mayor of Chittagong as well as leaders of Awami League there are in jail, my visit to Chittagong in this situation would have been really helpful for the government's relief and rescue operations," Hasina said.

The former prime minister urged her party leaders, workers and supporters to help the survivors of Monday's landslides.

She called for taking strict actions so that such disaster caused by cutting hills by influential people does not occur again and immediate implementation of the environment law for punishing the culprits.

Hasina also demanded that the government take steps to rehabilitate the victims right away and ensure treatment and jobs for them.

EC to recruit

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Students of colleges and universities can be hired for the task of data entry of the voters and they will be paid Tk 5 per entry.

The chief election commissioner (CEC) on Wednesday announced that the field level task of preparing the voter list with photographs will begin from mid July at Rajshahi City Corporation.

On completion of the ongoing Sreeup pilot project, the procedure for preparing the voter list will be finalised.

Meanwhile, election commissioners Sahul Hossain and Brig Gen (retd) Sakhawat Hossain yesterday visited Sreeup municipality area of Gazipur where the pilot project is being implemented and exchanged views with the locals about the project.

The pilot project began on June 10 and is scheduled to end on June 30.

During the view exchange meeting, locals alleged that they found mistakes in the preparation of national identity cards. "Not all names were correctly spelled in the cards," a local told the election commissioners.

Another local said that there is no column in the voter registration forms for husbands of married women.

The election commissioners assured them of correcting the mistakes.

They also urged people to enrol as voters to ensure their rights as citizens.

Sources said that the enumerators distributed 7,292 voter registration forms among the prospective voters by visiting door to door and a total of 742 national identity cards were distributed since the beginning of the pilot project.

Only 2,812 people visited the voter registration centres to register their names as of Wednesday.

Rejoinder

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Khan of Daffodil Computers said he was never involved with illegal VoIP business.

Officials with Nasa and the Russian space agency still don't know why the computers were sent down. They had never seen that type of failure on the space station before, and they believe it may be related to electrical power rather than computer software.

A new solar array had been unfolded outside the station Tuesday to help provide power for the orbiting outpost, and astronauts spent Wednesday hooking up a joint that will let the solar arrays track the sun.

The crew got a scare early Thursday while the computers were being reconnected: A false fire alarm went off on the Russian Zarya module, but Ridings said there was no indication of any fire or smoke.

Atlantis is still docked at the space station, so the astronauts periodically fired in thrusters to help maintain the space station's position while the computers were down. Nasa said it might have to extend the shuttle's mission because of the problem; the mission already had been extended from 11 to 13 days to repair a thermal blanket that peeled up during launch.

In a worst-case scenario, Nasa said, the space station's three crew members might have to return to Earth early if the computers aren't fixed. Without the Russian oxygen-machine running, the space station has a 56-day supply of oxygen left.

The space station is operated primarily by the Russian and U.S. space agencies, with contributions from the Canadian, European and Japanese space agencies.

WB may withdraw

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non-piped water supply scheme, said the report.

"Our main concern is that the project's midterm review is due in the coming months and the project has only disbursed 1% of the total grant while half of the project period has lapsed," Zhu said in his letter.

"My colleagues have informed me that the situation may lead to a loss of confidence in the process and in the project... Our serious concern remains the lack of a proactive role of the project management unit (PMU)."

"Such slow and reactive project management is thus starting to have a consequence on the implementation capacity of the DPHE and the programme's overall performance," Zhu observed.

On the progress of the project, the WB country director wrote to the secretary, "We do not necessarily correlate project progress directly with the disbursement; you would agree that 1% is excessively low given the time under implementation."

Zohurul, now an officer on special duty (OSD), however, denied the allegation of his intervention in the project. "What I did regarding the water supply project was routine work, not intervention," he told The Daily Star.

Blasting the former PD, he said, "Khoda Bux gave wrong information about the project to the World Bank and that is why they [the WB] got angry with me... Khoda Bux was an inefficient PD—he approved many projects without taking consent of the chief engineer."

On changing the project director without taking prior consent of the WB, he said, "This is not true."

Kamal Uddin, the present PD appointed in July last year, said, "The progress the project has achieved so far has been possible form."

On the audit objection raised against him when he was the PD of the Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project, he said, "The audit report was not based on fact."

7 JMB cadres

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under section 54 before a magistrate's court in Rangpur. The arrestees were sent to Rangpur Central Jail yesterday afternoon.

The JMB militants are Azizul Islam, 22, Azaharul Islam, 22, Johurul Islam, 23, Abdul Baten, 20, and Foyul Islam, 19, of Kuribishwa under Kolkond union and Ahsiqul Islam, 24, and Ibrahim Khalil, 27 of Boraiabari under Alambidabari union.

Sources said the guardians of the JMB men accompanied them to Gangachara Police Station around 9:00am along with union parishad chairmen of their area.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Gangachara Police Station Bazlur Rashid said during primary interrogation they revealed how they were involved with the militant outfit and why they surrendered.

The OC told The Daily Star that they confessed to their earlier involvement with Islam Chhata Shibir and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

Quoting statements of the JMB men he said Shafiqul Islam, a teacher of registered non-government primary school at Changmari, had persuaded them to join JMB with the aim to establish Islamic rule in the September 22, 2005.

He is serving a 17-year imprisonment in Kishoreganj Central Jail in an explosives case.

Financial closure

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BON fails to meet the COD, it would have to pay a penalty of \$ 45,000 daily for a maximum of \$ 30 million.

The letter added that the existing Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and Implementation Agreement (IA) with BON would be amended in line with the revised financial closure deadline.

The PDB has taken this decision based on BON's May 27 letter, accompanied by another letter of Bahrain based Capital Management House (CMH) – that is apparently arranging the financing for the inexperienced consortium.

Officials and power industry players strongly doubt whether BON would ever be able to carry out this project as Obaidul Karim and the consortium's "official" leader Steag from Germany is nowhere to be seen. To make matters worse, they say the global cost of setting up of a power plant has significantly gone up and that will make it even more difficult for BON to set up this plant without incurring huge loss.

Apparently Belhsa group – the consortium's other partner – is the only visible "moneyed" partner of Orion Group in the deal. But the UAE based Belhsa group is not a power plant developer and its website does not even mention any project in Bangladesh.

Following the May 27 letter and legal homework, the PDB on July 4 concluded that as per the contract, the deadline can be extended for some time as long as the Commercial Operation Date (COD) of the power plant remains unchanged and that BON submits the Performance Security Deposit.

It added that the financial closure of Meghnaghat 1 was signed after a delay of 20 months, instead of seven and a half months, in April 2001.

The PDB further observed that if

adding that this annoyed the WB as prior permission of the WB is needed to bring any change in the post.

"The then minister for local government inquired Zohurul if the World Bank had given consent to the change in the post of project director but Zohurul lied to the LGRD minister that the World Bank had consent in this regard," a source said.

"Kamal Uddin got the blessings of the former BNP government as he was a relative of a former BNP lawmaker," the source added.

The WB already had bitter experience of Kamal's performance as the PD of another WB project entitled "Arsenic Mitigation Water Supply Project" as its progress was also not satisfactory, said the source.

Some 14 objections came up during the audit of the project showing violation of financial discipline, loss of project money and other irregularities.

Zohurul, now an officer on special duty (OSD), however, denied the allegation of his intervention in the project. "What I did regarding the water supply project was routine work, not intervention," he told The Daily Star.

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Bomb planted

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On May 24, police recovered two more bombs and found an aluminium sheet carrying a message that Jadi Al Qaeda would plant a total of six bombs on the Ruet campus.

On June 2, the joint forces found another bomb at a Ruet dormitory.

Yesterday's bomb was kept in a plastic container that bore an inscribed message threatening all police stations in the city with bomb attacks if any of the outfit's members is arrested.

Senior RMP officials termed the incidents a ploy to create panic.

Hasina's going abroad

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Hasina's departure for the sake of proper investigation into the cases.

The court asked the police to take necessary steps in this regard consulting with the immigration authorities.

Hasina, who was earlier in the morning barred from visiting the landslide victims in Chittagong on security grounds, has however kept her schedule to fly for the US today by an Emirates Airlines flight at 9:30pm.

"As the court has not issued any orders imposing restrictions on her movements, earlier, the court has been expressing fears that King Gyanendra would not sit idle while his throne is abolished and would try to sabotage the election, already postponed once."

An alliance of communist parties spearheaded by the Maoists finally managed to put the new provision in the constitution.