

# 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 IO 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 Ruhul 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 gunnybags 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 Abdu Samad from Rab-2 filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station against Falu, Jahangir and four 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 Dhanmondi 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 bails are rejected, the court added.

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

## GANION REMAND

ADhaka court yesterday placed detained forest boss Osman Gani on a fresh three-day remand in a criminal case filed against him under Passport Act with Uttara 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 Uttara residence.

The joint forces also raided and sealed two sawmills on Maneswar Road in Dhanmondi 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 Uttara 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 MAN AND WIFE**  
Judge Mohammad Firoz Alam of First Special Court—set up at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hotel—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 of the case.

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 Kafrul 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

# Hasina terms

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government has set an example of rejecting cooperation. She also termed 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 Sreepur pilot project, the procedure for preparing the voter list will be finalised.

Meanwhile, election commissioners Sahul Hossain and Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakawat Hossain yesterday visited Sreepur 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

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Khan of Daffodil Computers said he was never involved with illegal VoIP business.

"The published statement said to be made by former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar involving me with illegal VoIP business during the last regime has no basis at all," he said.

## OUR REPLY

We stand by our report as The Daily Star only published the statement of former state minister of home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar that he had given during the interrogation in Joint Interrogation Cell.

# Indoor politics

**FROM PAGE 1**  
made the Election Commission (EC) independent and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) active to curb corruption... we're moving forward in that direction."

He said indoor politics is not everything. It is important to implement the roadmap for salvaging democracy.

The adviser said the government is creating an environment for bringing about reform, upon which it depends when indoor politics will resume.

"We are moving a bit slow, as pro-reform politicians need some time. As we move slow, it will be easier for them to complete the reforms."

He said party politicians these days are showing courage and coming forward to bring about reforms. As a result, many undisclosed stories about big politicians are emerging. "Party workers are ashamed of learning those stories."

The adviser hoped that the roadmap of democracy would be completed within 2008.

# 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."

The project aims at promoting rural piped water supply with private sector participation, private-sector participation in water supply in municipalities, implementing arsenic mitigation measures in arsenic affected villages, supporting development of adequate regulations, monitoring, capacity building and training.

It has been about 34 months since the project started but not even one percent of the work has been implemented, said a project official.

"The future of this project is now uncertain, as the World Bank is not happy with its progress," he told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

A few DPHE officials alleged that the then secretary to local government, rural development and cooperatives ministry, Zohurul Islam, interfered in the project to serve the interest of an influential quarter.

Zohurul was the key person behind replacing Khoda Bux from the post of project director (PD) and appointing Kamal Uddin, they said,

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.

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 for me."

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 Foyjul Islam, 19, of Kuribishwa under Kolkond union and Ashikul Islam, 24, and Ibrahim Khalil, 27 of Boraibari under Alamdibitor 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 Islami Chhatra Shibir and Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

Quoting statements of the JMB men he said Shaiful Islam, a teacher of a registered non-government primary school at Changmari, had persuaded them to joining JMB with the aim to establish Islamic rule in the country.

# Financial closure

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with you, keeping Commercial Operation Date unchanged," said the PDB in the letter.

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 Belhassa group -- the consortium's other partner -- is the only visible "moneys" partner of Orion Group in the deal. But the UAE based Belhassa 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

# Nepal parliament

**FROM PAGE 20**  
King Gyanendra became increasingly unpopular since 2005 when he tried to rule the country with the help of the army but was forced to step down after a public uprising.

Since then, parliament, in a bid to prevent future coups, began axing the king's powers and privileges, finally enforcing a new constitution this year that put monarchy on hold till the election, when voters will decide if the king should remain or make way for a republic.

However, the Maoists, who joined the government in April, have 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.

But it is unlikely that the new clause would be actually used.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and his Nepali Congress, the biggest party in parliament, are opposed to deciding the king's fate through parliament and have the backing of the international community.

While two MPs of a communist party, People's Front, voted against the move, 46 legislators, including three ex-premiers, abstained.

The three were deposed prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, veteran Nepali Congress leader Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Surya Bahadur Thapa.

The marathon parliament session Wednesday also voted in a measure that will enable it to remove the prime minister through a no-trust vote.

The prime minister, who has become the most powerful figure in Nepal after last year's pro-democracy movement and now holds the powers and positions earlier enjoyed by the king, can be removed if two-third of MPs vote against him.

However, there can be only two no-trust motions in a year.

The session also put its seal of approval on the new time frame for the deferred election. Instead of mid-June, the crucial poll has now been shifted to mid-November, after the Election Commission said polls were impossible in June due to the fragile security situation and lack of election laws.

There were no immediate reactions from the palace.

However, Nepal's tabloids reported that King Gyanendra was suffering from high blood pressure and chest problems and had been advised by his physicians to go abroad for treatment.

# Proposals

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was involved in unlawful practices to run the party as well as the country.

Party sources said Khaleda is aware of her party leaders' initiative for reforms, and she expressed concern over it while discussing the matter with a standing committee member on Wednesday.

Goyeswar Chandra Ray, joint secretary general of the BNP, met Mannan Bhuiyan and urged him resolve party problems through discussion with Khaleda. Bhuiyan however kept mum, sources said.

Pro-reform BNP leaders rallying around party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan are also trying to rope in leaders loyal to Khaleda Zia, the sources pointed out.

Most of the senior leaders of the party including Mannan Bhuiyan, Jamir Uddin Sircar and Mahbubur Rahman expect a retirement announcement from Khaleda as, they believe, she would not have her son out from party. And they identified this as the main obstacle to bringing the party on the right track.

"She [Khaleda] will get no support from party leaders if she fails to accept reform proposals and tries to use the party platform to protect corrupt persons like Tarique Rahman," said a senior BNP leader.

"Mannan Bhuiyan might run the party but he may lose interest if arrest of field level leaders continues," he added.

Reformist leaders held a series of meetings in the last few days to finalise reform proposals, and they agreed that it is tough to implement those under the leadership of Khaleda. But they wanted to give her a last chance by placing the proposals to her for implementation, the leader pointed out.

"If Khaleda Zia fails to understand the reality, then we may go for a new party or we may run BNP without her. The decision would be finalised once the ban on politics is lifted," said another BNP leader.

Sources said a section of reformists have already contacted former finance minister Saifur Rahman and Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar to take charge of the party if Khaleda retires.

# Bomb planted

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On May 24, police recovered two more bombs and found an aluminium sheet carrying a message that Jadid 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 departure for USA, Sheikh Hasina will obviously go to airport to fly. But if the caretaker government hinders her journey, it is a matter of the government," Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, a personal staff of Hasina, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, sources said the government has also planned to impose restrictions on Hasina's movement.

Asked if there has been any restriction on the AL chief's movement, Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain did not say anything yesterday.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is also reportedly facing restrictions on her movements. Earlier Khaleda cancelled a Singapore tour as the government did not allow her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko to go with her. An extortion case was filed against Koko just prior to Khaleda's departure from Dhaka on May 16.

Sources said pro-AL lawyers have been directed to make preparations for a legal battle.

Following yesterday's court orders, Hasina's counsel Advocate Qamrul Islam said legal steps would be taken in consultation with senior lawyers.

In the two cases, two businessmen accused Hasina of extorting Tk 8 crore from them.

In separate appeals, IOs from Gulshan and Tejgaon police stations—where the cases were filed—said they came to learn that Hasina would flee the country soon. But as investigations have been underway, Hasina's absence might hamper the investigation, they said.

They also expressed their suspicion that Hasina may not come back home once she goes out of country.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam said, "The investigators may take necessary action as the cases were filed on cognisable charges."

In April, the caretaker government imposed ban on Hasina's return from an earlier visit to the US and the AL chief was stranded in London for about two weeks before local and international pressure forced the government to lift the restriction.

Hasina returned to a warm welcome from thousands of members and supporters of her party,

who thronged the airport gates and roads leading to her home defying a ban on gatherings under the state of emergency in force since January 11.

## HASINA'S CTG VISIT BARRED

The police blocked Hasina's planned visit to Chittagong to be by the side of the survivors of the landslides that have killed at least 122 people and injured about 100. Hasina was scheduled to leave Dhaka by road at 7:00am.

The police said Hasina could not go following instructions from the higher authorities and on security grounds.

The AL president branded the government action as "inhuman, undemocratic, unconstitutional and contrary to individual freedom".

The law enforcers posted near Sudha Sadan put barbed wire fences on the way out of the house and kept them for around a couple of hours, sources said.

Senior AL leaders including Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Matia Chowdhury, Maj Gen (ret'd) Shubid Ali Bhuiyan and Col (ret'd) Farook Khan went to Sudha Sadan to accompany Hasina on the Chittagong visit.

# Hamim Group

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of about 8.82 crore in shares while his wife Saima Azad has about Tk 90.79 lakh.

Azad in the wealth statement showed Tk 12.4 crore against his other investments, bank balance and cash as well as money received from his wife.

Total wealth in Azad's name amounts to over Tk 29.32 crore while that of his wife worth over Tk 1.1 crore.

In the statement, Azad claimed that he and his wife have liability of Tk 9 crore and Tk 17 lakh respectively. So, net wealth possessed by him and his wife comes to about Tk 20.32 crore and Tk 93 lakh respectively.

Azad and 20 other corruption suspects, including Tarique Rahman, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Anwar Hossain Monju and Obaidul Karim, were asked by the ACC on May 29 to submit their wealth statements within seven working days.

But eight individuals, including Azad, did not comply with the ACC directive within the stipulated time. Rather, they applied for the extension of time limit and as per the ACC Rules 2007, they were given another seven working days to come up with their statements.

# Hamas poised to seize

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of the building with their hands in the air as black-clad masked Hamas gunmen stood watch, they said.

Some Islamic militants prayed on the sidewalk while on the rooftop others fired automatic weapons into the air to celebrate their latest victory in what one Hamas leader described as "a battle between Islam and heresy."

It is largest stronghold of pro-Fatah security services to fall to Hamas -- considered a terror outfit by the EU, Israel and the United States -- whose disciplined fighters had already overrun positions in the south and the north.

Hamas demanded the surrender of the overall Fatah-controlled Palestinian security headquarters as its militiamen besieged the complex in Gaza City, as well as a satellite in southern Rafah.

"What is happening in Gaza is the second liberation of the Gaza Strip from the band of (Israeli) collaborators after the first liberation from the bands of settlers" in 2005, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told AFP.

As Gaza gradually fell to Hamas, the PLO executive committee recommended that Abbas sack the unity government and declare a state of emergency in Gaza and the West Bank, members said.

It also urged him to call for international protection to declare Hamas's armed wing and paramilitary force outlaws and to organise early elections.

Abbas, who has warned of collapse and civil war if the Gaza "madness" continued, will "make his decision known in the coming hours," his aide Nabil Amr, told reporters in Ramallah.

An increasingly alarmed international community warned that the no-holds-barred power struggle between Hamas and the secular Fatah endangered prospects of a future Palestinian state and peace with Israel.

At least 98 people have died in the increasingly vicious gunbattles that flared a week ago between the rivals separated by ideology and at loggerheads for years.

For a second day in a row, the power struggle spilled over into the occupied West Bank, where Fatah loyalists torched the offices of a Hamas lawmaker in Nablus a day after a gunbattle in the city that left several people wounded.

Pro-Fatah security services were