

Sarwar Jamal
sued for
possessing
liquor, beer

Sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Law enforcers early yesterday filed a case in connection with keeping contraband substances against former BNP lawmaker Sarwar Jamal Nizam, who was arrested early Friday in front of Chittagong Club.

Deputy Assistant Director of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) lodged the case against Sarwar with Patenga Police Station under Special Powers Act, 1974 in connection with keeping three bottles of liquor and five cans of beer.

A Chittagong court on Friday sent Sarwar, brother of Maruf Nizam, an alleged mastermind of the abduction and murder of BNP leader and businessman Jamaluddin Ahmed Chowdhury, to jail after he was produced before it.

Sources said many leaders of BNP, its front organisations and BNP sympathiser union parishad (UP) chairmen of his constituency have already gone into hiding after the current caretaker government came to power in January.

They said the former lawmaker patronised a syndicate of fertiliser smugglers, mostly BNP men loyal to him. They also influenced transfers and appointments of police and government officials in the constituency and made money out of it.

Sensational information regarding the misdeeds of Sarwar in Anwara upazila (the upazila

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BNP reformists ready plan to end dynasty

Same person cannot be chairperson or secretary general for more than two terms

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Reformist leaders of BNP prepared a draft proposal containing a 10-point set of recommendations for ensuring internal democracy and to put an end to dynastic leadership in the party.

According to the draft proposal a person cannot be elected the party chairperson or the secretary general for more than twice consecutively. A party leader also cannot be nominated for the post of the prime minister more than twice, said a reformist leader.

"We have reached a consensus but some changes might come to the proposal before it is announced," the leader said.

Earlier, Ashraf Hossain, a joint secretary general of the party and also a leader of the reformists, told The Daily Star that the party reform proposal will be made public sometime this week through a news conference or an official statement.

The reformist leaders led by the party's Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan will suggest bringing major changes to the party constitution to curtail the unlimited power of the party chairperson.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan continued his discussions with the reformist leaders in his residence yesterday while a bigger reformist meeting was held somewhere else under the direction of Mannan although he himself was not present there.

The party chairperson's adviser Maj Gen (retd) ZA Khan, former lawmaker SA Sultan Titu, and Nazir Hossain met Mannan yesterday.

Terming the stalling of the ninth parliamentary election as a disaster, ZA Khan told reporters, "The party leadership has to take the responsibility for the January 22 disaster."

When asked about the possibility of Khaleda's departure from the top post of the party he said the

party is absolutely responsible for the current debacle it is in and the captain of any team should take the responsibility if the team loses a match.

When asked about the reform proposal, Khan after his meeting with the party secretary general told the reporters that the proposal will be announced soon after it is finalised through discussions with all.

In reply to a question he said they did not come to a decision yet regarding discussing the reform proposal with party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"She gave the party many things, now she should give the new leaders a chance," BNP chairperson's adviser told a private TV channel yesterday. "It's not fair that a person, then his or her son, and then again his or her grandson will keep leading the party," he said.

The meeting was held at Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhanmondi, ending a brief cele-

Hasina, dissidents call truce

Agree to place reform proposals at working committee meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After days of bickering and public statements against each other, Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday held a meeting with party leaders who initiated a move for 'intra-party democracy', and agreed on bringing reforms in it.

A number of her party colleagues came down heavily on Hasina for what they said is her autocratic manner of leading the party for years and taking some decisions that were completely against its ideology, a meeting source said, preferring anonymity.

They also demanded curtailment of immense powers that the party chief now enjoys, and introducing a system of joint leadership.

Sources said both Hasina and the other leaders reached a consensus on refraining from any activities that might split the party or tarnish its image.

They also agreed to place all proposals regarding reforms in the party at its central working committee meeting once the government lifts ban on in-door politics.

"The central working committee will decide what is needed to make Awami League a more democratic party," said a meeting source quoting Hasina.

The meeting was held at Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhanmondi, ending a brief cele-

bration of the party's 58th founding anniversary. It was attended by AL presidium members Amir Hossain Amu, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Moti Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta and acting General Secretary Mukul Bose, among others.

A number of frontline leaders recently took a position against the party president and began informal

campaign for an end to her 26-year tenure as party chief.

In yesterday's talks, they grilled Hasina on issues like unilateral declaration of the April 30 deadline, signing of a memorandum of understanding with Khelafat Majlis and provocative statements against the present caretaker government which, they said, prompted the government to take a hard line

against AL leaders.

Hasina tried to pacify her fellow leaders and at one stage said she would not continue in her post if the party council does not want. "If you want, I have no objection to quit but I request you to be united in such a crisis moment, and not to misguide party workers," an AL

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PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leaders led by its chief Sheikh Hasina place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban in the capital yesterday marking the party's 58th founding anniversary.



Labourers cut a hill to make a road to Sabujbagh in Khagrachhari. Former BNP legislator Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan allegedly influenced the project's initiation.

Hill cutting goes on for houses of BNP men

20-acre Khagrachhari hills plundered for 35 housing plots

JASIM MAJUMDER, from
Khagrachhari

Leaders of the immediate past ruling party BNP illegally razed two hills to make residential plots for their ward unit level leaders and activists of Sabujbagh under the sadar upazila in Khagrachhari.

Hill cutting is continuing under the shelter of the government administration officials in exchange for bribes, sources said.

Mizanur Rahman, a close aide to now detained former BNP lawmaker Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, is the kingpin of the hill cutters, who damaged at least 20 acres of hill in Sabujbagh area for making space for at least 35 new housing plots for the area's ward level BNP leaders and activists, the sources said.

President of ward no 2 unit of BNP Nurul Islam alias Nuru Mistri directly helped Mizan in cutting down the hills, said a local resident requesting anonymity.

Other local sources said Mizan is carrying out his atrocities according to the orders given by Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan.

During a visit to the area yesterday The Daily Star correspondent

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The project was designed in fiscal year 2004-05 for building a cluster of houses for the ward level leaders and activists of Sabujbagh BNP in an effort to strengthen their influence and muscle in the area by living close to each other in a BNP village, the sources said.

Wadud also forced the district council chairman to take up a project for building a road by cutting down hills, and the district council has already started a Tk 10 lakh project for building the road, the sources added.

It was Wadud Bhuiyan who came up with the idea of settling a large number of Sabujbagh's BNP operatives in a cluster village to have strong BNP presence there at all time, said the sources.

According to Wadud Bhuiyan's plan his friend and close aide Mizan is continuing to cut down hills posing a serious threat to a government rest house, other residential houses, the natural environment and the biodiversity of that area, local residents alleged.

During a visit to the area yesterday The Daily Star correspondent

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Govt nods to free EC Secretariat

Approves draft ordinance of Biman's turning into PLC

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers yesterday approved in principle a proposal for setting up an independent secretariat of the Election Commission (EC).

Chaired by Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhrudin Ahmed, the council at its regular weekly meeting also approved the draft Bangladesh Biman Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 to turn Biman Bangladesh Airlines into a public limited company (PLC).

"After thorough discussion, the meeting directed the law ministry to place a draft of the ordinance relating to establishing an independent EC secretariat," says an official communiqué.

The meeting asked the ministry concerned to place again the draft Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of "The Bangladesh Airlines Limited" before the meeting of the Council of Advisers after scrutiny.

After reform, Biman, the national flag carrier, will be running under the nomenclature of

"Bangladesh Airlines Limited".

All advisers to the caretaker government, the cabinet secretary and the secretaries of the ministries concerned were present at the meeting held at the Chief Adviser's Office in the afternoon.

Our staff correspondent adds: The Council of Advisers in its meeting on May 20 approved the measures to turn Biman Bangladesh Airlines into a public limited company (PLC) by June this year.

According to the government plan, Biman will have to undergo internal reforms before it becomes a public limited company (PLC).

On June 5, Biman Bangladesh Airlines offered the VRS in order to trim its staff to 3,400 by axing about 1,400 current employees.

As a PLC, Biman will be owned by at least seven public organisations through floating its shares.

Poor revenue growth stalls anti-poverty loan

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is not going to get the last instalment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan of \$123 million for Poverty Reduction Growth Facilities (PRGF) mainly due to its poor performances in revenue collection.

The IMF Board met in Washington on Friday where the proposal for seventh instalment loan to Bangladesh was not placed, sources said.

"The Executive Board of IMF only discussed Article IV mission report on Bangladesh, which dealt with country's latest economic situation," a finance ministry source said.

Despite various reforms in different sectors, the IMF is not satisfied with the revenue growth in the last few years.

Oftentimes herds of wild elephants march from across the border and attack the villages.

to achieve the target.

Although the IMF Board earlier gave waiver two times despite missing the revenue target, this time the board did not consider the loan, sources said.

The revised budget of the current fiscal year set a growth of 11 percent of tax revenue, which was 19 percent in the original budget. The finance ministry sources believe that even the revised target will not be achieved.

The agreement for PRGF was signed in June 2003 and so far in six instalments the IMF gave \$467 million to Bangladesh under strict conditions by controlling the country's economic sovereignty.

A mission of the IMF visited Dhaka in April and submitted an evaluation report on the PRGF, which said, "All revenue targets under the PRGF-supported programme were consistently missed, and this remains one of the main reasons (along with other missed performance criteria) pre-

venting completion of the sixth and final PRGF review."

"The major failure during the PRGF period was the inability to improve government revenue," the report read.

It said that the government revenue in FY03 was 10.3 percent of GDP while it is projected to be 10.4 percent of GDP in FY07. "While a welcome shift away from taxes on international trade underlie these numbers, no overall progress in raising total revenue has been made despite a PRGF objective to improve revenue by 1.5 percentage points," it observed.

The evaluation report, however, lauded progress in structural reforms that included strengthening central bank operations and monitoring the financial sector, privatising one of the Nationalised Commercial Banks (NCBs) and corporatising others.

Indian foreign secy due today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon arrives in Dhaka today to hold the first secretary-level talks between the two countries in two years with both Dhaka and New Delhi hoping to build on the recent goodwill of the two neighbours.

During his three-day trip, Dhaka and New Delhi are expected to sign at least one Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and discuss preliminary steps to resolve long-standing irritants of the relationship between the two countries.

A foreign ministry press statement yesterday said, "The government is of the view that the visit of the Indian foreign secretary will be yet another important opportunity to carry on the process of constructive and forward-looking engagement between the two countries."

Menon is scheduled to hold official talks with Acting Foreign Secretary M Touhid Hossain tomorrow and call on Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury.

3 DCC commissioners ran terminal illegally

Lessee driven away 3 years back; Mayor Khoka knew it all; govt's Tk 1cr revenue embezzled

SHEIKH SABIHA ALAM

Three BNP-backed ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) illegally operated the Mirpur Bus Terminal for more than three years in the name of original leaseholder Diba Enterprise by preventing its owner from coming to the terminal.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka allegedly knew everything but did not take any step.

The ward commissioners—MA Kayum of ward-21, Abdul Latif of ward-51, and Monowar Hossain Dipol of ward-9—cheated the government out of over Tk 1 crore revenue from the lease. They also illegally built shops at the terminal violating DCC rules.

They even opened an account with the Baghbari branch of Agrani Bank for transactions of Diba

Enterprise.

Abul Bashar, owner of Diba Enterprise that won the DCC tender for leasing the terminal in October 2003, said he could not enter the terminal premises even once.

The irony of the whole affair is that if the DCC now goes for any legal action, Abul Bashar will be found guilty as all activities at the bus terminal took place in the name of him and his company.

Diba Enterprise officials alleged that Kayum, Latif and Dipol used to collect tolls from the bus terminal in its name but did not deposit the money with the DCC. Dipol would collect his share through one Nurul Haque alias Hokka.

The three ward commissioners have thus gobbled up revenues of Tk 1,75,68,393.

Kayum was arrested in February this year while Latif and Dipol have

Wild elephants trample two indigenous boys to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Wild elephants killed two indigenous boys at Panihati village under Nalitabari upazila of Sherpur district early yesterday.

The victims were identified as Faruque Sangma, 7, and his three-year-old brother Bipul Sangma.

Locals said a herd of eight wild elephants attacked the house of Ilias Sangma at the village at around 4:00 am when the family members were asleep.

The elephants damaged the house and trampled Ilias' two sons—Faruque and Bipul—to death.

The elephant also damaged three other adjacent houses and uprooted a number of trees.

Oftentimes herds of wild elephants march from across the border and attack the villages. The evaluation report for the IMF loan was increase of 0.5 percent against the GDP growth, but Bangladesh failed