

Charges pressed

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remand in connection with possessing illegal firearms and ammunition.

FALU ON REMAND
ADhaka court yesterday placed Falu, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, on a five-day fresh remand in a case filed in connection with misappropriating government relief materials. The case was filed with Ashulia Police Station.

Magistrate Salma Siddiqua Mahtab passed the order after the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) produced Falu before the court on completion of his four-day remand in a case filed in connection with misappropriating government property with Tejgaon Police Station.

The IO Sheikh Abdus Salam of the case filed with Ashulia Police Station produced the accused before the court and sought a seven-day remand yesterday.

In the forwarding report, the IO said Falu needs to be quizzed about the seized materials from his factory at Savar.

The army-led joint forces seized government relief materials from the Savar site of a factory owned by Falu on February 9.

Following the seizure, Ashulia police filed the case against Falu and several other unnamed officials and employees of the factory.

According to the prosecution, the army-led joint forces on special duty came to know on January 9 that Falu, owner and chairman of the Dhaka Shanghai Ceramics Factory at Gohalbari of Savar, built 40 feet by 50 feet houses for his workers.

The forces dismantled six such houses constructed on the factory premises with corrugated iron (CI) sheets, which are government relief materials.

Six hundred and fifty pieces of CI sheets worth around Tk 4 lakh bear the inscriptions, "Relief materials of Relief and Rehabilitation Department: Not for sale".

Falu, also the owner of private satellite television channels ntv and Rtv and daily newspaper Amar Desh, was arrested at his Cantonment home on February 6.

Earlier, the IO of the case filed with Tejgaon Police Station brought Falu before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon on completion of his four-day remand.

The IO in his forwarding report said Falu gave important information about the seized government materials from the office of a ward commissioner of his constituency. So, he needs to be confined to jail until the investigation of the case completes.

After the hearing, Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon ordered him to be sent to jail. Falu was placed on seven days' remand in two phases in connection with the same case earlier.

On March 2, security personnel had recovered 605 corrugated iron (CI) sheets and 63 blankets meant for government relief only at a ward commissioner's office in Tejgaon in the capital.

CASE AGAINST MOUDUD
Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday adjourned the hearing, for the second time, of the case against Moudud until June 28 following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

The complainant of the case had appeared before the court to record his statement.

In the yesterday's petition, Moudud's lawyers mentioned that they had filed a petition with the High Court (HC) seeking quashing of the case and the matter is pending for hearing.

So, the recording of statements of the witnesses should be adjourned until the HC decides, said the lawyers.

The prosecution told the court that the law has given a specific time limit to dispose the case.

On hearing both sides, the court fixed the next date and transferred the case to another court for quick

Thunderstorms

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Torrential rain and gale-force winds uprooted trees, power pylons and huge steel billboards causing damage to buildings and vehicles.

Sporadic incidents of rioting were reported from different parts of Karachi where people complained of a night-long power outage.

Work on restoring electricity supply has started and municipal workers are clearing storm-toppled trees, billboards and other debris from streets in the city on the Arabian Sea coast, Kamal said.

Officials said the power supply was restored to most parts of the city Sunday.

The meteorological office has forecast more rain this week.

A relief camp was set up to provide food, medicine and shelter to people whose homes were destroyed or damaged in the eastern outskirts, said Murtaza Baluch, mayor of the neighborhood of mainly farm and factory workers.

Dozens of people died in storms in Karachi last year and choked drains left many streets flooded with rain water, but Kamal said new drains were built, preventing massive flooding this year.

disposal.

Mohammad Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka on May 28 showing 10 people as prosecution witnesses.

The joint forces apprehended Moudud, also an influential BNP leader, on April 13 raiding his Gulshan home in the capital. The forces also seized various documents and 220 saris meant for government relief to the poor.

Later, a case was filed against Moudud, a member of BNP standing committee, under Section 25 (B) of the Special Powers Act, 1974 for obtaining foreign liquors evading government tax.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that the charges brought against Moudud were preliminarily proved and he should be brought to justice.

Following his arrest, Moudud was taken on a four-day remand for interrogation. On March 25, the National Board of Revenue directed banks to freeze the accounts of Moudud Ahmed and his wife.

Moudud served as a minister in three cabinets since the country's independence in 1971. He also served autocrat ruler HM Ershad's government as a prime minister and as vice-president.

CASE AGAINST AMAN
ADhaka court yesterday fixed July 20 for hearing on charge framing against Aman and three others in a case filed under the Public Safety Act.

The three others are BNP lawmakers Nazim Uddin Alam, Alamgir Hossain and Joyntal Abedin Faruque. Judge Khondaker Kamalzaman of the Public Safety Court issued arrest warrants against Nazim and Alamgir.

According to the prosecution, Aman and others exploded bombs in front of Anjuman Mufidul Islam office to create panic during hartal hours around 4:15pm on April 9, 2001.

CASE AGAINST MUNSHI
Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday sent the graft case filed against BNP lawmaker Manzurul Ahsan Munshi and three of his family members to a special court for trial.

The three family members are Manzurul's wife Mazeda Ahsan Munshi, two sons barrister Rizviul Ahsan Munshi and Rizwanul Ahsan Munshi.

The case was transferred to the Fifth Special Court—set up at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel—for its quick disposal.

The case was filed on March 27 against them in connection with submitting false wealth statements before the ACC.

On June 17, the ACC pressed charges against them in connection with the case filed with Gulshan Police Station.

Nepal polls

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after being forced to end a much-criticised 14-month period of authoritarian rule last April.

Nepal's former rebel Maoists ended their decade-long civil war late last year and have been given five ministerial portfolios in the new government.

The fiercely anti-monarchy Maoists want the interim government to declare a republic before the polls and parliament has authorised such a step if the king attempts to interfere in politics ahead of the election.

Nepal's chief election official hailed the announcement.

"We welcome this agreement and now this political decision should be backed up swiftly," election commissioner Bhojraj Pokharel told AFP.

The commission had recently finished updating Nepal's electoral register, and about 17.6 million of the 27 million population were now registered to vote, Pokharel said.

"The government also needs to improve peace and security in order to create a stable environment to hold the polls," Pokharel said.

N-plant

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delegation is now in Dhaka to discuss different nuclear issues with the BAEC officials.

The other countries which got the IAEA approval for setting up nuclear reactor includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Morocco and some small countries in central Asia.

As part of the government move to resolve the persisting power crisis, the advisor said, a high-powered delegation will visit Myanmar to discuss the prospect of setting up a hydropower plant there and thus adding electricity to the national grid.

"We're considering all kinds of possible options to resolve the power crisis," Tapan said after a meeting at the power ministry.

The meeting was convened to discuss the relevant issues on setting up hydropower plants and import of electricity from the neighbouring country.

First Test

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previous Tests quite comfortably.

The match is set for an 11:00 am start with TEN Sports beaming live coverage from the premier venue of the island. However, rain, which has tapered the lone practice match, might play a big part during the course of the match.

Bangladesh played two games at the SSC ground back in 2001-02 and on both occasions they lost badly, mainly because of poor batting. But the new team management have had extensive work in this department to avoid the embarrassment of losing the game inside three days.

The SSC always offers bounce but the Bangladesh think-tank has decided to go with two pacers and two left-arm spinners as they announced a 12-member team leaving out left-arm pacer Syed Raseel, seaming all-rounder Mohammad Sharif and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim.

Bangladesh however will wait till morning for the fitness of veteran opener Javed Omar, who had suffered from dehydration during the last day of the three-day tour opener, before making a decision on the final eleven.

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak has given the chance to play his second Test after a long break following his impressive two-wicket haul against Sri Lanka A in the drawn warm-up game at the Colts Cricket Club ground.

While Bangladesh decided to go with two pacers, the home side preferred a three-pronged pace attack followed by champion off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, who holds a staggering record against the Tigers by picking up 50 wickets in six games.

TEAMS
BANGLADESH (from): Mohammad Ashraf (captain), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (vice-captain), Habibul Bashar, Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Rajin Saleh, Shakib Al Hasan, Khaled Mashud, Shahadat Hossain, Mohammad Rafique, Abdur Razzak and Mehrab Hossain.

SRI LANKA (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara (vice-captain), Michael Vandort, Chamara Silva, Tilkeratne Dilshan, Prasanna Jayawardene, Chaminda Vaas, Farveez Maharoof, Muttiah Muralidaran, Lasith Malinga, Dilhara Fernando, Malinga Bandara, Malinda Warnapura and Sujeewa Silva.

Huji man Wali

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case, said Wali is an active member of Huji and he might be involved in the blasts. So, he needs to be interrogated intensively to dig out clues about the blasts and whereabouts of the perpetrators.

The police so far arrested 22 people in this connection and 12 obtained bail from the High Court. On June 14, 2001, one of the arrestees, Moulana Akbar Hussain gave a confessional statement to a metropolitan magistrate and disclosed names of Mufti Hannan and others involved in the blasts.

Moreover, on November 19 last year Mufti Hannan also gave confessional statement disclosing the names of people involved with the blasts.

Tarique

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The same day they raided two buildings co-owned by Zubaida in Motijheel and Mohakhali areas.

Some five members of the army-led crack forces entered the residence of Syeda Iqbal Mand Banu, mother-in-law of the detained son of former premier Khaleda Zia, on Dhanmondi Road No. 5 at around 5:15pm.

They asked her and her elder son-in-law Air Commodore (retired) Syed Shafuzzaman about the assets of Zubaida, a physician by profession. They sought what they said were proper documents of her assets.

"They wanted to know how she [Zubaida] owns the wealth, if she has inherited those or got from Tarique," Lutfur Rahman, caretaker of the house, told The Daily Star last night.

They also asked them if Tarique, also senior joint secretary general of BNP, had kept those assets in someone else's name, he added.

"The joint forces left at around 5:45pm with photocopies of all the papers and documents regarding Zubaida's property," the caretaker said.

Presently, only Iqbal Mand Banu lives in that house.

The joint forces took away some papers including those relating to house rent from the building at 71, Motijheel Commercial Area, said caretaker Tayebur Rahman.

Details about the raid on the other one could not be known.

According to Tarique's wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission, Zubaida owns with others five houses in the capital. She inherited those from her late father, former naval chief Rear Admiral MAKhan.

She also owns a one-bigha land at Joydevpur.

The statement shows that Tarique, his wife and daughter have assets worth around Tk 1.40 crore.

ACC asks Morshed

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yesterday through the Dhaka Central Jail authorities.

Besides, the ACC at a meeting yesterday decided to ask for wealth statement of Awami League leader and former lawmaker Rafiqul Anwar.

Landslide Probe Report

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concerned could not take effective measures in this regard since some of their officials had always been involved with the activity directly or indirectly.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Mokhesur Rahman said, "The probe reports will be sent to the chief adviser, communications adviser and the cabinet division through special messengers by tonight [Sunday]."

He urged all government and non-government organisations and departments to come forward to make the Port City an eco-friendly zone by helping implement the recommendations made in the reports.

The committees were formed on June 14 but could not start their field level work before June 16 because of their involvement in disaster management and relief work.

LANDSLIDE PROBE
The committee that probed landslides in Chittagong city and adjoining areas identified 28 reasons behind the deadly incidents that left 115 people dead. It made a 36-point recommendation for avoiding such disaster in future.

The investigation report said in soil tests the committee found that the upper parts of the hills in the region are not compact while the surface soil is mostly sandy and soft and cut indiscriminately. As a result, excessive rainfall washed out huge chunks of soil from the upper parts and caused the landslides.

Due to the absence of policy guidelines on hill management, government organisations like the CDA, CCC, DoE and the Forest Department could not control hill cutting in the last few years, the committee observed.

A huge amount of money has been allocated for afforestation in a vast area adjoining Chittagong city including Sitakunda, Mirsarai and Hathazari under the Bare Hill Afforestation Project, but the forest department divisional office did not implement it, the report said.

It said encroachers cut huge areas of Batali Hill and Matijharna—prospective tourist spots owned by Bangladesh Railway—in coopera-

tion with some unscrupulous BR staff and with direct support from influential political sections.

It suggested that a national hill management policy be prepared and a committee be formed comprising all sections concerned led by the divisional commissioner.

It also recommended not allowing any brickfield within 10km and any housing project within 5km of any hill and building boundary walls and guide walls immediately at all offices of government organisations located in hillside areas.

WALL COLLAPSE PROBE
The five-member committee formed to probe the wall collapse identified 38 persons including 10 railway staffs as encroachers who illegally built slums on railway land.

An 80-feet stretch of the 828-feet long boundary wall of General Electric Repairing Shop of Bangladesh Railway near Pahartali Bazar collapsed due to heavy rainfall killing 12 persons.

The committee identified five reasons behind the collapse of the wall beside which around 12 houses were built. It also presented 14 recommendations in its report.

The committee report mentioned that the boundary wall also collapsed during the cyclone of April 29, 1991 and was built again without taking proper protection measures.

In its report, the committee recommended that the railway authority show "zero tolerance" in taking administrative initiatives to demolish all types of illegal structures built on railway land and serve notice for evacuating the place in a minimum time.

Rejoinder

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Rahman, son of Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, said they inherited more than seven acres of hilly land in Chittagong. He sold the land in the face of financial crisis and the new owner of the land "developed" the land and sold it to several people as plots since 1992 to 1995.

"So it is not correct that Engineer Mosharraf was involved in hill-cutting. He has all along been careful about environment," the rejoinder said.

Sakhawat Hossain.

The two election commissioners also sought cooperation from the foreign ministry regarding registering non-resident Bangladeshis as voters.

The EC has planned to open cells in some Bangladesh embassies to register non-resident Bangladeshis as voters.

The EC has estimated that about a crore of Bangladeshi citizens eligible for being registered as voters now live abroad.

The EC has also started working to amend the electoral ordinance and the rules regarding registering voters from among the non-resident Bangladeshis.

On the caretaker government's decision to make the EC Secretariat free from the control of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Election Commissioner Sakhawat said the move is historical, which will finally make the EC fully independent for discharging its duties, since no other authority will have control over it.

He said the EC thanked the caretaker government for the Saturday's decision to sever the EC secretariat free from the PMO's control.

Fertiliser price

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purchase from the Kafco. The cost of per tonne imported urea fertiliser is about Tk 25,000.

Due to the current subsidised price of urea fertiliser, the factories have to bear a loss of Tk 2,200 a tonne as the current production cost of per tonne fertiliser stands at Tk 7,000. This price of urea fertilise Tk 4,800 at the factory end was fixed in 1997.

The industries ministry proposal also cited the prices of urea fertiliser in India, from Tk 7,000 to Tk 7,600, and in Myanmar, from Tk 15,000 to Tk 19,000. Due to the high prices there, about 2 to 3 lakh metric tonnes of urea fertiliser is smuggled out each year, the ministry estimates.

The proposal observed that the government incurs a total loss of Tk 2,900 crore per year due to low prices of urea. The loss is for subsidy in importing urea fertiliser and factories' losses as the production cost is higher. The urea factories are also suffering from acute cash flow crisis, which may compel these to close down.

Meanwhile, as the urea fertiliser is cheaper than other fertilisers, the farmers tend to use it more in their fields, which is a cause of declining fertility of land.

Besides, there are massive uses of subsidised urea fertiliser in non-agricultural sectors like paint industries, paper mills, dying mills, hard-

Woman dies from bomb splinters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A woman was killed after allegedly being hit by splinters of a bomb dropped from a training aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force at Pahar Pabajan of Muktagacha upazila of Mymensingh yesterday afternoon.

The victim was identified as Ramisa Khatun, 30, wife of Arsad Uddin of Pahar Pabajan.

According to locals and police, Ramisa was hit when she was grazing her goat in a field near Rajmani Primary School. She died on the spot.

Police claimed the bomb was accidentally dropped outside the perimeters of Rasulpur Firing Range. They kept the body in Muktagacha Police Station and cordoned off the spot.

Following the incident, officials of Rasulpur Firing Range and Bangladesh Air Force visited the spot.

On contact, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said they were not aware of the incident.

Forest

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The intelligence agencies are reportedly keeping a close watch on the movements of those officials who include the DFOs of west and last wings of the Sundarbans Forest Division.

Our correspondent from Rangamati reports: The joint forces split in several groups raided the District Forest Office at about 3:45pm and held Asit Ranjan Pal, the DFO covering CHT South Forest Department and Pulpwood Forest Division.

They first took him to the sadar zone headquarters and after primary interrogation there, they took the detained forest official to the Pulpwood Forest Office at Kapitai upazila.

The crack forces also searched the DFO residence at Kapitai. Later, they handed Asit over to Kapitai police.

3 JMB patrons

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statements at the court.

Earlier on June 17, the court framed charges against 30 people including former telecommunications minister Aminul Haq, former deputy minister for land Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu and Nadim Mostafa.

Of the accused, 14 including Dulu were produced before the court amid tight security. Aminul, Nadim and 14 others are on the run.

Sub Inspector Shakil Uddin Ahmed of Bagmara Police Station submitted the charge sheet on April 23.

Ayub in his case alleged that he was kidnapped and taken to Ramzan Kaya's house at Hamirkutsa of Bagmara on April 7 in 2004.

He was tortured until he paid a ransom of Tk 80,000. He said during his days in captivity, the militants named Aminul, Dulu and Nadim as their leaders.

5 killed

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Medical College Hospital and recovered the five bodies.

Police seized the bus and the truck but failed to arrest the drivers or the helpers of the vehicles as they fled the scene soon after the accident.

BNP reformists

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persons who are inspired by the desire of ensuring welfare of the people."

"We are preparing our statement and it will be placed before the nation very soon," he said adding that they made a lot of mistakes in the past and the current party constitution also has many errors.

He said six or seven of the current provisions in the party constitution will be changed according to the proposal, but the main objective will be decentralisation of power and putting an end to dynastic leadership.

"We think our proposal is logical," he said adding that according to the proposal a leader will lose his or her membership if he or she is proven to be corrupt.

When asked to comment about Khaleda Zia's recent statement that she is also preparing a proposal of her own, the former whip said, "She will give her proposal and we will give ours, both might be considered."

Former lawmaker Abdul Alim after his meeting with Mannan Bhuiyan told the reporters, "The proposal is now in Mannan Bhuiyan's custody... he will disclose it when the time is right, so please wait and see."

"All active leaders of BNP across the country will be with us, not only a few people," he said when asked about Khaleda Zia's recent remark that reforms cannot be brought to the party by only a few people.

He also said, "You [journalist] will see for yourselves whether there are only a few people with the reform agenda, as the names of all pro-reform leaders will also be announced with the proposal."

When asked whether they will discuss the proposal with Khaleda, Alim said, "She lives in such a place where we cannot visit her, and that is why we are not being able to inform her about anything."

Dubai dreams turn

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some of it came from personal loans. Ashrafat, a manpower broker from Rampal village in Munshiganj, managed a visa to Dubai for her as a domestic help.

Only after 15 days of her initiation at work as a domestic help in an eight-member family in Dubai, the housewife and three of her daughters unleashed endless torture on Ismat, even over the simplest unintended mistakes. She was never allowed to meet anyone and was kept isolated from the outside world.

The one-storey house where she used to work was in a huge compound with twelve rooms, five bathrooms, and two big balconies. As the lone domestic help everyday she had to wash all the rooms, clean all the furniture, prepare food, make tea, wash clothes, and serve every single person in the family even with glasses of water.

Ismat all could never take a second's break all through the day as she used to be submerged in a pile of work. If she would be busy with a chore, someone of the family would be calling her with another chore and quite often as she would run in a hurry from one chore to another leaving the previous one half done, she would earn bouts of beatings.

To be able to manage the work load with an intention to avoid beatings she

would have to work 22 hours a day, still she would not always be able to evade the daily beatings. Sometimes she would not be allowed to sleep for two days in a row. Whenever she would try to take some rest due to debilitating exhaustion, the entire family of the employer would descend on her. Mariam, the housewife, and her three daughters used to beat her in a locked room. She used to be fed only once a day and her salary was only Tk 8,000 a month.

Not being able to take the inhuman torture anymore, which had gone on for seven months, she at last thought of a way out and threatened to commit suicide if she was not sent back home.

The day before she was sent back, Mariam banged Ismat's head against a wall twice for delaying in ironing a garment.

"How am I gonna face my family members with all my belongings lost, on top of which I couldn't even inform them about my return," Ismat Ara lamented to The Daily Star yesterday after regaining her consciousness in DMCH.

A frail Ismat Ara was heaving sighs as she lied on the hospital bed thinking of her elder daughter whose wedding was supposed to be scheduled after her mother's return home.

Govt not imposing

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place. The government is not obstructing these activities.

He however said there are restrictions regarding party politics and its organisational matter.

About lifting of the ban on indoor politics, Mainul said it needs a little more time to withdraw the embargo, which, he observed, is helping the reforms activities.

He said the government will decide on lifting the ban timely after discussing the matter at the highest level.

Asked why the government did not allow Awami League President Sheikh Hasina to go abroad although it allowed Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahed—both accused in similar cases, Mainul said the government did not take any step directly, the steps were taken through the court.

"Court's matters will move on through the process of the court. We are not supposed to play any role there," he said.

The meeting decided to direct the law enforcement agencies to maintain more caution than before while making arrests under the state of emergency law.

Officials attending the meeting said law enforcement agencies have been asked to remain alert so that no one

can abuse the law taking advantage of the state of emergency.

They said from now on, an accused will not be arrested as soon as a case is filed against them. Law enforcers will arrest the accused after assessing the allegations.

Home Secretary Abdul Karim said the committee reviewed the overall law and order in the country.

The meeting decided to withdraw the restriction on the first class government officials for getting