

Arrest warrant issued against Harris Chy

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun on a seven-day remand in connection with a case filed for concealing Tk 62.21 crore in his wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Another Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrant against Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, in connection with a money laundering case.

Prayer for opening a bank locker of detained former BNP lawmaker M Naser Rahman and his wife Rezina Naser where they deposited ill-gotten wealth and ornaments was granted yesterday.

MAMUN'S GRAFT CASE

Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokon placed Mamun, close friend of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tanique Rahman, on a seven-day remand to interrogate him about his illegal wealth.

Earlier, Mamun was on remand for 55 days in the extortion cases filed with different police stations on different dates and later he was sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

The court passed the order after ACC Assistant Director Tahsinul Haq, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced him before it and sought a 15-day remand petition for interrogation.

On May 8, ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim filed the graft case against Mamun and his wife Shahina Yasmin.

In the FIR (first information report), the complainant said Mamun and his wife illegally amassed movable and immovable properties worth over Tk 62.21 crore.

Mamun was arrested at his DOHS home in the city on March 26. Police also seized a foreign pistol with eight bullets there. He was earlier convicted in two cases-- one filed for not submitting his wealth statement to the ACC and the other for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition-- and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

He was shown arrested in 10 other extortion cases. He gave confessional statements implicating Tanique in most of the cases.

CASE AGAINST HARRIS

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court accepted the charge sheet of the money laundering case and issued arrest warrant against Harris, as he has absconding since the case was filed.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents of the case, the court passed the order. The court fixed July 23 for next hearing of the case.

On July 1, Sub-inspector (SI) Babul Hossain of Gulshan Police Station, also the IO, submitted the charge sheet to the CMM's Court, showing 18 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrant against Harris and ordered to attach his properties.

On February 4, the joint forces seized two briefcases from Harris' Gulshan home.

The briefcases were opened on April 2 in presence of Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza and foreign currencies were found in it, sources said.

According to the statement, Harris hoarded foreign currencies worth around Tk 5.64 lakh with a plan to smuggle those abroad.

On April 9, Gulshan police filed the case against Harris under the Money Laundering Act.

On May 22, a special court sentenced Harris to three years' imprisonment for not submitting his wealth statements to the Anti-corruption Commission.

CASE AGAINST STABBED

The same court accepted the charge sheet of the money laundering case filed against former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas.

The court fixed Monday for hearing of the case and directed jail authorities concerned to produce before the court on the scheduled date.

On July 16, Motijheel police submitted the charge sheet against Mirza Abbas to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, showing 14 people as prosecution witnesses.

The case was filed against him under the Special Powers Act, Money Laundering Act and Excise Act on February 24.

The joint forces seized a huge sum in local and foreign currencies and other items from Mirza Abbas' South Shahjahanpur residence in the capital on February 4.

The items seized include sales slips for gold ornaments worth Tk 40 lakh, 4,600 US dollars, 17,000 bahts, 418 Singapore dollars, 432 Malaysian ringgits, several mobile phone sets and five passports.

Complainant of the case Sub-Inspector Rafiqul Islam alleged that Abbas had kept those in his possession evading a huge amount of taxes.

CASE AGAINST NASER

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jalal Ahmed yesterday assigned Metropolitan Magistrate Ashraf Uddin to conduct the operation of opening the locker of Naser and his

3 top army officers transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Important changes have been made in Bangladesh Army by transferring three top officials.

According to a highly placed source, Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Major General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan has been transferred to Defence Service Command & Staff College as Commandant while General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Chittagong Major General Sinha Ibne Jamali made CGS.

Commandant of the Staff College Major General Mobin has been appointed GOC of Chittagong.

3 to die for '93 Mumbai bombings

AFP, Mumbai

An Indian anti-terror court yesterday sentenced to death three people convicted of involvement in a series of bomb attacks in Mumbai in 1993 which killed 257 people, court officials said.

The court ordered that Pervaiz Sheikh, Abdul Turq and Mohammed Mushtaq Tarani all go to the gallows for their involvement in planting the bombs in India's financial and entertainment capital.

In total, 100 people were found guilty of involvement in the "Black Friday" attacks. Most of them have already been sentenced to jail and Wednesday's hearing was the first time the death penalty has been handed down.

The attacks were allegedly organised by Mumbai's Muslim-dominated underworld in revenge for deadly Hindu-Muslim clashes a few months earlier.

"The accused have argued that the Babri Masjid and Hindu-Muslim riots impacted their actions. But this is not true... Their act is a disgrace to the community," Judge P. Kode told the court.

The alleged masterminds of the blasts, Dawood Ibrahim and Tiger Memon, have been on the run since 1993. Indian investigators say they were aided by Pakistan's intelligence service but Islamabad has denied any link.

Chief prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam said Sheikh was found guilty of being involved in the main conspiracy and smuggling in the explosives.

Turq, known to be close to the Memon family, drove a jeep packed with explosives into a shopping arcade, while Tarani was found guilty of parking an explosives-laden scooter at a five-star hotel.

14,000 workers

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Geeteera said steps have been taken to realise actual prices of the land of Adamjee Jute Mills in Narayanganj and City Centre at Motijheel in the capital which were given to Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority and Dhaka City Corporation at token prices.

She said many countries have expressed interest in procuring jute goods from Bangladesh.

"We think when a market is growing and infrastructure is available, why not the government utilise the opportunity to generate employment and makeup losses," she said.

The jute ministry earlier identified some major reasons of the state-owned jute mills for their losses. The reasons include late financing to procure jute, power crisis, pay commission implementation, labour unrest and ghost labour.

The accumulated losses of the BJC mills stood Tk 4,770 crore in 2006.

Jute Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarker and BJMC Chairman Ataharul Islam were present at the press conference.

Rejoinder

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Prime Minister's Office sent the summary back stating "The summary as stated is sent back as directed for necessary action under Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat Act, 1994."

It clearly proves that before the Speaker is responsible to the parliament only for expenditures through the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

(c) Under section 14, the speaker is responsible to the parliament only for all acts of Sangsad Secretariat. (d) Under Section 18, the speaker is the final authority for approval of the expenditure of the Sangsad Secretariat.

(e) Undertaking/guarantee to refund the money of medical bill if parliament and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, which is the interpreting authority of the act of parliament disapproves undoubtedly proves the speaker's more bona-fide, accountability and transparency in the matter, says the rejoinder.

The Speaker hopes that there should be no further dragging on of the matter unnecessarily since the Speaker is responsible to the parliament.

The announcement came from a procession around 4:00pm yesterday. Leaflets with the call of hartal were distributed among the people from the procession.

None allowed

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misunderstandings within the party which should be resolved.

They also said they will extend any kind of legal assistance to free Hasina, AL sources said.

Zillur Rahman told The Daily Star last night that the two AL Presidium members came to him and said they will work together in the absence of Hasina and under her leadership.

Police sources meanwhile said the charge sheet of the extortion case in which Hasina has been shown arrested will be given within a couple of days.

According to the emergency rules, the whole trial process will also be completed in 45 days from the day the court takes the charge sheet into cognisance, they said.

The ACC on Tuesday served a notice on Hasina to submit the statement of her movable and immovable properties to the commission within seven working days. The anti-graft body will file a graft case against Hasina if she fails to submit the statement within the stipulated timeframe.

Hasina was detained on extortion charges and sent to a special jail set up in the parliament complex on Monday.

The family members and lawyers of the former prime minister stayed on the parliament premises for over two hours and then returned since the authorities did not allow them to meet Hasina.

"We came here to meet our leader to assist her in preparing the wealth statement. We also wanted to know if she has any suggestion about the matter," Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Hasina's assistant personal secretary, told The Daily Star.

The authorities also allegedly returned food Hasina's family members brought for her lunch.

An AL activist from Natore brought a black and white television set for Hasina, but the authorities did not receive it although DIG Prisons Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told The Daily Star last evening that they will allow Hasina to watch TV without cable connection if the TV set is provided by her family.

Talking to reporters Hasina's special aide Dr Hasan Mahmud urged the caretaker government to

take necessary steps soon so that Hasina's family members, personal staff and lawyers can meet her.

Khalid said a list of names of 27 family members and four personal staff has been given to the jail authorities so that they can meet Hasina as per the jail codes.

Hasina's nephews Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and Sheikh Fazle Sun Parosh, Hasan Mahmud and Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury went to meet Hasina at about 1:45pm and waited there until 4:00pm when the DIG prisons told them that the authorities cannot allow them.

"As we talked to the DIG prisons for meeting with the leader [Hasina], he asked us to go back and that he will let us know later. We waited there for more than two hours and again contacted him. He said he was communicating with the high-ups over the matter. Finally, the DIG prisons told us that we cannot meet Hasina as the high-ups did not give the permission," Khalid told The Daily Star.

When contacted the DIG prisons said last evening, "We did not allow them to see her due to security reasons... They came to meet her without informing us."

He said they have not yet started the process of allowing family members to meet Hasina but will start it soon. He, however, denied sending back food items, saying those were sent to the AL chief.

Contacted by The Daily Star last evening Advocate Sahara Khatun, law secretary to the AL, said they sent a letter to the home secretary yesterday seeking permission to meet Hasina. "But we did not get any permission," Sahara said.

Advocates Youssuf Hossain Humayun, Mahbube Alam, Quamrul Islam, Abdul Matin Khasru, Sahara Khatun and others have started examining the legal aspects of the charges brought against Hasina.

"We want to see unity and would not do anything that might harm the party," he added.

The party council is likely to be held in August, Ashraf said following a meeting at BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan's Gulshan residence.

A number of BNP leaders met with Bhuiyan yesterday to discuss issues regarding the council and the latest situation in the country.

When asked about the rumour of Khaleda Zia's possible arrest, Ashraf said, "Why should she be arrested? I cannot say anything beforehand."

"We have to move forward toward our desired democracy. Ensuring stability and establishing national consensus are necessary for this," Khaleda said. Everybody

Bhaluka UNO held for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The joint forces yesterday arrested Bhaluka Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) on charges of bribery.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the joint forces raided the office room of UNO Rezaul Kabir at around 12:30pm and recovered Tk 49.5 thousand from his possession.

Police said the UNO took the money in bribe from the project director of Bhaluka Megha Fishery Project for solving some problems of the project.

The arrested UNO was later handed over to Bhaluka Police Station.

Anti-reformists

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hands with them.

When asked about the fate of the council in case the party chief is arrested, they said the council with reform agenda will be held whether Khaleda Zia is arrested or not.

Earlier on Monday, during a teleconference with the Judo Dal leaders in Germany, Khaleda Zia claimed that the people and followers of BNP are behind her, but some people are conspiring to tear the party apart under the guise of reforms.

Ashraf Hossain, a pro-reform leader and joint secretary general of the party, refuted Khaleda's claim and urged her not to make any provocative comment that might create division in the party. "It's not fair... They [anti-reform activists] will destroy the unity among the party activists if they brand us conspirators."

"We want to see unity and would not do anything that might harm the party," he added.

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Wheat scam

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The court also sentenced two officials of Abul Khair Group, importer of the wheat, to one-year in jail for paying the bribe and confiscated the bribed money.

The court fined the policemen Tk 1 lakh and the Abul Khair Group officials Tk 10,000 each. Failing to pay the fine, the police officers will have to serve one-year jail term while the Abul Khair Group officials one month each.

Judge Shamsunnahar of the special court-4 delivered the verdict as the police officers were found guilty under the Anti-corruption Act 1947.

The convicted cops are officer-in-charge of Fatullah Police Station Ashraf Ul Islam, sub inspectors Enamul Haque and SM Miraj Al Sayeed.

The convicted Abul Khair Group officials are Assistant General Manager of Shah Cement Industries Ltd Mustafizur Rahman and Assistant Manager (human resource) Zakir Hossain.

The defence lawyers confirmed that they would appeal against the

verdict.

According to the charge sheet submitted by ACC, magistrates Manzurul Mannan of Narayanganj and Jasim Uddin seized rotten wheat worth over Tk 19 crore imported by Smile Food Products Ltd of Abul Khair Group on January 29 this year.

Police filed a case in this connection on January 31 under Special Powers Act, 1974. But the name of Abul Khair Group Chairman Abu Sayeed Chowdhury was dropped from the charge sheet and the convicted police officers demanded Tk 50 lakh as bribe for this.

Several hours after the seizure, SM Miraj went to the Shah Cement factory of Abul Khair Group at Muktarpur and made a settlement with the two officials of the group. Rapid Action Battalion caught them red-handed while taking bribe.

Later, Deputy Assistant Director of Rab-11 Abu Sadek filed a case against the arrestees on February 5 with Fatullah Police Station. The ACC submitted charge sheet on May 15.

Khaleda demands