

Rangs Bhaban

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sixth floor of the beautiful building constructed at a cost of around Tk 700 crore.

Within hours of the court's order, the authorities announced that demolition of the building would start at 7:00am today. Microphones blared out sharp yesterday afternoon, asking companies housed in the edifice to vacate it by midnight.

Rangs Group however appealed to the government to allow 15 days for shifting its machinery and other goods from its building.

Abdur Rahman, a general manager of the Rangs Group, told the news agency over phone that 30 companies with 35,000 officials and employees used to operate from the commercial building --one of the tallest in Dhaka's rising skyline.

"It's a humanitarian disaster," Rahman said in a pensive mood, adding that both officials and employees were perturbed as to what is to be done at such short notice to clear their offices, furniture, equipment, papers and documents.

He said they were informed that over 600 labourers of Rajuk would join the demolition drive to break the building with bulldozers and other tools.

THE CASE
The High Court, in its 2000 verdict upon a writ petition filed by the Rangs Group, declared the Rajuk notices illegal, saying that the construction of Rangs Bhaban was done as per the plan approved by Rajuk following the terms and conditions.

It further said Rajuk notices canceling sanction of the plan and its other letters asking the petitioners to remove the construction beyond the sixth floor have been done without lawful authority and has no legal effect.

Later, the government appealed against the verdict. The long-pending hearing of the appeal began at the Appellate Division on July 24 this year.

When BNP was in power (1991-96), it made an abortive bid to pull down the building. Later, Awami League during its rule (1996-2001) also took an initiative to follow up the plan of its predecessors, but was restrained by the High Court order.

On the other hand, the present caretaker government in a meeting of the Advisory Council in April decided in principle to demolish the building at Bijoy Sarani intersection on Old Airport Road in the capital.

After losing the long legal battle, Rangs lawyer Barrister Rafique-ul Huq told reporters that the Supreme Court judgment was "not clear" and they would move a review petition against it. "I'm frustrated and disappointed at the court's order," said Huq.

Attorney General Fida M Kamal conducted the case on behalf of the government.

MAINUL ON RANGS BHABAN
Public Works Adviser Mainul Hossain said the planned road connecting Bijoy Sarani and Teigao would now be constructed demolishing the Rangs building.

"This is not only a building, but also a monument of illegal structure," he told reporters after the Supreme Court judgment was pronounced in the morning.

The adviser said new notice would not be served upon the owners of the Rangs Bhaban and the government would acquire the building up to the sixth floor and demolish the entire building for the construction of the road in public interest.

The plan of the road has already been prepared by Rajuk.

"We do not do anything out of anger... We'll not be able to set all the examples, as we are an interim government. But we are cooperating with the nation," said the

adviser.

RANGS APPEALS FOR TIME
Rangs Group of Companies yesterday appealed to the government to allow 15 days for shifting its machinery and other goods from its building.

In a press statement, the company said it is impossible to shift machinery and important documents of different industries and banks with a few hours' notice.

In a verdict yesterday, the Supreme Court ordered demolition of upper portion of the building from sixth floor.

Following the verdict, Rajuk asked the owners to shift their machinery and other goods by last night and announced over microphones that the building would be demolished from today.

Rangs group said it is very loyal to law but it needs at least 15 days to move the goods and machinery.

The company said there are Tk 200 crore worth of machinery of RanksTel on 14th and 15th floors, Tk 100 crore machinery of Ranks IT on 12th floor, Rangs Pharmaceuticals on 10th floor, Bank Asia on 8th floor, Apollo Ispat on 7th floor, SQ Group on 9th floor and Shannin Group on 6th floor of the building.

It is not possible to shift all the machinery and other goods within a night, the company said.

Meanwhile, a good number of electric switches of Grameenphone had to be shifted from the Rangs Building within last night, which would disrupt Grameenphone network a lot.

The company in a statement said Grameenphone will shift the switches and restore normalcy in its network coverage within the shortest possible time.

A high official of Grameenphone last night told The Daily Star that the GP subscribers in the districts of Jamalpur, Munshiganj and Tangail, and Jhikotola, Rayerbazar and part of Dhanmondi in the capital would face network problem due to relocation of its tower and equipment from Rangs Bhaban. He hoped that the network would be restored within 72 hours.

Not paid

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"I do not know what is to be done at this moment," said Motahar, to whom the factory owes Tk 5 lakh.

The workers are also uncertain how they would educate their children and more importantly where would they live as the BJMC is yet to give a specific deadline to vacate the Peoples Jute Mills Ltd colony.

On July 11, the factory authorities in a notice asked workers to vacate the colony immediately or rents would be deducted from their arrears. No further notices were issued.

A number of workers left the colony for their village homes yesterday. However, some do not even have the money to move their families.

Delwar, who in the last 30 years did not go to his village home, left for his village home in Pirojpur to see if there was anything left to fall back on.

"Delwar left for his village home to find a place to stay as we could be ordered or forced to vacate the colony. Besides, we have no money with which we could rent a house here," said Jahura, wife of Delwar, to whom the factory owes Tk 3.5 lakh.

Jahura fears her two sons would get no further education as she now cannot provide the costs. Jahura's elder son Al-Amin is an SSC examinee while the younger son Hemayet is a student of class-VII in the Peoples Jute Mills High School.

Business leaders

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Dr Kishore arrived here earlier in the day on a three-day visit to exchange views on economic management of the country as Bangladesh representative in the IMF executive board.

Kishore told reporters after the meeting with the BB governor that he is here to hear the authorities in Bangladesh and said the country's economic management is on the right track.

"The biggest challenge for Bangladesh is bringing budgetary and fiscal policies in order," he said.

About newspaper reports on 12 trade bodies' criticism about the IMF role in Bangladesh's economic policies, he said Bangladesh is a sovereign country to take decision on its own.

"No," Kishore said, replying to a question whether it is true that the IMF suggestions to raise energy prices and trade liberalisation are to make Bangladesh products uncompetitive at home and abroad.

"We've only given suggestions to the authorities on the trade policies and fiscal policies," he added.

Replying to another question whether the suggestions of raising energy prices simultaneously, if implemented, would put extra price burden on the people, he said: "Welfare of the people must be obliged while imposing any measure."

After his meeting with the finance adviser, the IMF executive said whatever the IMF may suggest, it is for the

authorities in Bangladesh to determine the pace, timing and sequence of reform, and the quantity and quality. "The final decision of implementation will be in Dhaka and nowhere else."

Finance Adviser Dr Azizul Islam told reporters that the IMF executive agreed with him that the timing and sequencing of any policy should be on the basis of national importance.

About criticism of the IMF by the trade bodies on its prescription to further liberalise trade, he said the local industry is highly protected as total tax incidence on imports would be more than 49 percent, comprising customs duty, supplementary duty and advance income tax.

VIP prisoners

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Kamalapur.

Major Haider further said that they prefer NAM buildings and the buildings in Sher-e-Banglanagar. "If we select the Railway Hospital, then all the employees and patients of the hospital need to be shifted to another place, causing problem," he said.

"After making proposal, we will send it to the IG office and then it would be placed to home ministry for final approval."

The DIG informed that around 60 VIP prisoners are presently staying behind bars across the country.

Green chilli

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poor supply and huge demand of green chilli in the capital.

Iman Ali, a green chilli wholesaler at Karwan Bazar, said that supply of local green chilli was 200 to 250 tons every day before floods hit the country. Now, the supply is reduced to 6 to 7 tons everyday as Narsingdi, Pabna, Rajshahi and Manikganj districts, which had been the main sources of green chilli, were affected by recent floods. The supply of green chilli from these districts, which was about 100 tons every day, has fallen drastically, he added.

Another green chilli wholesaler Mohammad Rezaul Karim said that he sold green chilli at Tk 120 per kg on Wednesday night while the price shot up to Tk 140 per kg yesterday morning and Tk 150 in the evening.

He said that he bought about 150 kgs of green chilli from Narsingdi on Wednesday night. Later, he purchased 600 kgs of green chilli at Tk 40 per kg from an importer of Indian green chilli. Of those, 30 to 40% was rotten. He sold the chilli at Tk 60 per kg on Wednesday night and Tk 80 yesterday morning.

Wholesalers at Karwan Bazar said about 100 tons of Indian green chilli was brought at the market four days back when the price of green chilli was Tk 70 per kg.

Green chilli was sold at Tk 160 per kg in Khulna yesterday while the price was Tk 100 per kg on Wednesday, reports our Khulna correspondent.

Intercom system

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at the house, were also removed by the authorities, said the sources.

Earlier in May, land phone connection of the BNP chairperson's cantonment house was also disconnected.

Khaleda, Saifur

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those are legal, NBR sources said.

However, the tax submitted by Saifur might be accepted as he maintained all the required procedures correctly, another source said.

Khaleda has shown her income as house rent, fixed deposit, salary and remuneration as prime minister and leader of the opposition during the last 15 years, remuneration as parliament member, government remuneration of late president Ziaur Rahman and life insurance amounts of both herself and her late husband.

"The NBR needs to make sure whether the income she has shown was earned legally. Income tax officials are scrutinising her sources of income," a high official of the NBR said preferring anonymity.

The official said that if Khaleda's income was earned legally, she might get another chance for submitting tax to legalise her undisclosed money as the NBR has extended the deadline for tax submission.

When asked, Khaleda Zia's lawyer Ahmed Aazam said that they would submit a fresh return if the NBR asks for it. He said that the NBR was yet to inform him anything about it.

Meanwhile, the NBR sources said that Saifur Rahman has submitted taxes correctly to legalise his undisclosed money.

"The former finance minister maintained all the procedures correctly, so the NBR has no objection to receiving his taxes," another high official of the NBR said preferring anonymity.

In yesterday's board meeting, the NBR has transferred 11 customs and income tax commissioners to different circles.

Meghnaghat

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The same HC Bench has already fixed August 7 as date of hearing two petitions filed by Hasina seeking the quashing of two other graft cases against her regarding two big defence purchases during her tenure as prime minister. In the cases, she has been charged with causing financial losses to the public exchequer through buying eight MiG-29 fighter jets from Russia and a Korean-made frigate.

In May, the High Court, following a sudden move by the present interim regime, had decided to start hearing of the petition for quashing the Meghnaghat power plant graft case against Hasina.

In December 2002, Hasina filed the petition with the HC for quashing the case and it stayed all proceedings of the case in the lower court that had initiated the trial process earlier in October.

On December 11, 2001, Gulam Mostafa, a director of the now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, filed the case with Ramna Police Station accusing ex-state minister for power Prof Rafiqul Islam of misappropriating Tk 17.89 crore during the process of installing the

Meghnaghat power plant. But, in the charge sheet, Hasina and three others were implicated in the case.

Dhaka signs

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The foreign adviser also held key bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the ARF with the Indonesian foreign minister and Canadian deputy foreign minister.

Besides, Iftekhar attended a retreat of 27 foreign ministers from South-East Asia, Far East Asia, South Asia, Europe and the United States, where he invited regional countries to send their troops to train at BIPSOT, Bangladesh's 'state of the art' peace-keeping training facility.

"In my intervention, I stressed on Bangladesh's commitment to both security and development. I referred to our huge role in peacekeeping that has earned international accolade," Iftekhar said, according to a foreign ministry press release from Manila.

He also apprised the attending ministers of Bangladesh's concern with regard to climate change and disaster management.

Regarding TAC, Iftekhar said, "This treaty is the centerpiece of ARF and today is a red-letter day in the history of Bangladesh foreign policy."

"Security, peace and development are the concerns we share with others in the region, and I have no doubt that in all these areas the cooperation among our countries will strengthen," he said.

Asean's 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation is the grouping's founding non-aggression pact aimed at promoting regional stability.

AL disappointed

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and false," acting AL President Zillur Rahman told reporters in a press briefing at his Gulshan home in the capital after the SC Appellate Division stayed the HC's order until August 14.

He said the SC did not cancel the order of the HC rather it has only stayed the order until August 14 for further hearing. "We are always hopeful and we respect the law. We hope that we will get justice one day," said the AL leader.

He said the AL would fight the legal battle and is not thinking about other options, including movements, to have Hasina released. "We will continue our legal battle until we get justice," said the AL leader terming the cases against the AL chief false, baseless, and politically motivated.

He urged the government to withdraw the cases against Hasina and release her. "We are all united in seeking Sheikh Hasina's release. There is no conflict among the party leaders in this regard," he added.

AL leaders Motia Chowdhury, Maj Gen (ret'd) Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, Dipu Moni, Hasan Mahmud, Mirza Jalil, Subhas Singha Roy, advocate Abdul Matin were also present at the briefing.

Talking about the flood situation in the country, he said the entire country is witnessing a devastating flood. He urged AL leaders and workers across the country to stand beside the flood-

affected people in their time of distress and help them with whatever they have.

"You will have to stand beside the flood victims like the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina stood beside them during the devastating flood of 1998," Zillur Rahman said.

The AL leader also demanded immediate release of four female party workers who were arrested at the court premises while protesting the arrest of Sheikh Hasina on July 16. He also demanded withdrawal of the "false" case filed against them.

He said jute mill workers are passing their days in untold difficulty as many mills have shut down. He demanded the caretaker government pay the wages of the workers timely.

Meanwhile, Labour and Manpower Secretary of AL Mohammad Habibur Rahman Siraj in a press statement urged the caretaker government to pay the wages, arrears and the golden handshake money to the workers of the closed jute mills.

He said as new jute mills are being launched in India, Pakistan and China, jute mills of this country are shutting down, which was "very sad".

Siraj asked the government to rethink about closing the jute mills. He also observed that the unemployment problem would be intense due to closure of the jute mills.

Flood delays

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continuing the preliminary tasks as the main election office has planned to begin the task in such an enthusiastic atmosphere that will help prepare the electoral rolls smoothly across the country, as per its roadmap.

Before announcing the roadmap, the chief election commissioner on June 30 announced that the task would begin in RCC area in July. But in the roadmap announced on July 15, the EC promised to begin the field level task from August and complete the job in all parts of the country in October next year and hold the stalled parliamentary election in December 2008.

Asked whether the EC will have to face difficulties in implementing its roadmap on time if the beginning of the field level task is delayed due to the flood, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain told reporters at his office yesterday.

"The entire civil administration and Bangladesh Army are busy with tackling the flood situation which is the first priority of the head of the government," he said.

In the RCC area, the EC has unofficially started the field level task for simultaneously preparing a fresh voter list with photographs and national identity cards although a new law for it has yet to be made. The local election office on July 29 started sending its enumerators on door-to-door visits in the city corporation area to collect particulars of prospective voters as per the prescribed forms for preparing the voter list.

The EC had also planned to start the field level task for voter listing in Khulna City Corporation (KCC) and eight other municipalities by the middle of August. The local election offices, along with the army officials, are making preparation.

But Election Commissioner Sakhawat yesterday said the field level task in KCC and eight municipalities is likely to begin on August 20 or 21.

and eight other municipalities in this month following the inauguration.

The office of the CA on Wednesday morning sent a detailed schedule to the EC Secretariat about his visit to the RCC area.

But the head of the interim government flipped his mind after visiting the flood-affected areas in Kurigram in the morning the same day.

"Flood affected his [CA] mind. We have been informed of it on Wednesday afternoon," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain told reporters at his office yesterday.

"The talks come as Musharraf faces trouble on all sides, from a wave of Islamist attacks sparked by the army's storming of a radical Islamabad mosque to a bruising legal defeat by the country's chief justice.

Adviser Tapan

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severe enough for the government to appeal for international help. "At this level, we can manage but of course, we would appeal to the international community for help if the situation demands."

There are scopes for NGOs and other voluntary organisations to be incorporated in the district level relief and rehabilitation committees and they are coming forward, Tapan added.

Local Government and Rural Development Adviser Anwarul Iqbal said Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK announced granting Tk 7 crore more to a livelihood project in the char areas of the Jamuna basin.

This money will be distributed to the people as relief under the project, he said, adding that the European Union also announced \$2 million as relief, which would be distributed through NGOs.

As attention was drawn to Tapan's comment on Wednesday that the extent of damage to embankments and bridges could have been limited if the administration acted on time, Anwarul Iqbal said the allocation for the Water Development Board was insufficient for the projects.

Efforts should have concentrated in repairing vulnerable points of embankments and bridges, but no project could be fully implemented as the allocated money was spent by projects all over the country, he added.

Musharraf

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of Benazir, being inducted in the run-up to the polls. The cabinet denied that any such move was in the offing.

Meanwhile, former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto said she will return from exile this year to take part in a general election due next year, according to an interview published yesterday.

"Yes, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and I will be part of an election in Pakistan this year," Benazir told the English-language Emirates Today newspaper.

Benazir, who has lived in self-imposed exile in London and Dubai since 1998 because of corruption allegations against her, could be detained on the charges if she goes back to Pakistan.

She held secret talks in Abu Dhabi on Friday with Pakistan's embattled military ruler Pervez Musharraf about a pre-election power-sharing deal, but they reached no agreement on two key issues, Pakistani officials said.

The sticking points were Musharraf's dual role as president and head of Pakistan's powerful army and a rule that prevents Benazir having a third term as premier.

General elections are due by early 2008.

Benazir said talks between her political party and the government aimed to restore stability to Pakistan, but it was too soon to be certain of their outcome.

"The contacts between the PPP and the Musharraf regime are aimed at restoring democracy and the rule of law," Benazir told the UAE newspaper.

"It is too early to say whether a deal may be brokered to re-establish democracy in Pakistan but both sides are discussing the issue."

The talks come as Musharraf faces trouble on all sides, from a wave of Islamist attacks sparked by the army's storming of a radical Islamabad mosque to a bruising legal defeat by the country's chief justice.

Govt to import

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country will cause further rise of prices of essentials.

The finance adviser said the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management was looking after the issue and there is no supply shortage of food at present.

"We'll import more food, if necessary," said the adviser. "There is nothing to be scared of."

Replying to another question, he said the government would examine the inter-linkage of impacts before raising the prices of fuel oil, electricity and gas now under the government plan.

Train accident

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Noakhali-bound inter-city train Upakul Express, he took off his red vest and waved it, signaling the train to stop.

The train driver saw the red signal shown by the boy and stopped the train in time, at about 11:15am, to escape a certain accident.

After the rail track was repaired at about 1:45pm, the train resumed journey towards its destination with nearly 1,000 passengers.

Part of Dhaka-Aricha

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officials said, adding that, around 57 lakh people in 34 districts were flood affected.

Meanwhile, three more bodies were recovered in the Tangail bridge collapse tragedy.

The amount of food and water purifying tablets distributed among people were inadequate, while the food allocated to the districts are not being distributed accordingly, sources and flood-affected people alleged.

Amana Begum, 35, of Rajapur of Kalmakanda in Netrakona said she could not give any food to her three children for a day as she lost everything in the flood, reports our Netrakona correspondent.

"Today [Thursday] I went to the union parishad office for relief, but got nothing," she said.

"We lack drinking water as all the tube wells went under floodwater," said Fazilatunnessa, 62, of Jagannathpur under Khaliajuri upazila, who took shelter on higher grounds along with many others.

In Netrakona, where the flood situation deteriorated even further, 25 percent of the allotted relief food was distributed, local administration sources said.

Our staff correspondent from Bogra reports: Water-borne diseases are spreading among people in the flood-affected upazilas and the number of water purifying tablets distributed by the government is inadequate.

The government distributed 90 tonnes of flattened rice and 215kg of molasses, insufficient compared to the amount required. Bogra district administration estimated the number of affected people is about 240 lakh. However, sources in Dhunat upazila claimed the number of flood-affected people in Dhunat alone is over 4 lakh.

According to FFWC, the Jamuna continued to swell at down-stream points of Sirajganj and Aricha and was flowing 35cm, 62cm, 77cm, 120cm and 127cm above danger levels at Noonkhawa, Chilmari, Bahadurabad, Sirajganj and Aricha.

The flood situation in Jamalpur, Sirajganj, Pabna and Tangail was deteriorating yesterday. The Padma continued to swell at all points and was flowing 144cm and 100cm above danger levels at Goalundo and Bhagyakul deteriorating the flood situation in Manikganj, Munshiganj, Faridpur, Rajbari, Madaripur, Shariatpur and Dohar and Nawabganj upazilas of Dhaka.

The water level of the Meghna at Bhairab Bazar continued to rise and was flowing 53cm above danger level yesterday morning and is likely to rise further and inundate more low-lying areas of Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Gazipur and Narayanganj.

Small rivers surrounding Dhaka and Narayanganj continued to swell and the Balu at Demra, the Lakhya at Narayanganj, the Tongi canal at Tongi were flowing 9cm, 19cm and 11cm above danger levels. The Turag at Mirpur is likely to cross danger level in the next 24 hours.

More low-lying areas in the eastern part of Dhaka city are likely to be inundated further, while the flood situation in Netrakona, Sunamganj and Sylhet may remain unchanged.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: The district still has only one water treatment plant on an embankment and the flood-affected people need more water purifying tablets even though the food and disaster management adviser said the government is distributing the tablets as required.

The prices of essentials are skyrocketing in Sirajganj, the correspondent reported.

The district administration expressed dissatisfaction saying the municipality chairmen and ward

commissioners were not cooperating enough in conducting relief distribution activities. The relief materials were also inadequate.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: Two boys--Shimul, 6, and Likhon, 7--of Alam Biditor under Gangachara upazila drowned in the floodwater near Teesta embankment Wednesday night.

Even though the district administration distributed 17 tonnes of rice, most of the flood-affected people alleged that they received nothing from the government.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Three more bodies were recovered yesterday taking the death toll to six after Baruria Bridge on Eलगengi river in Tangail collapsed Tuesday. Seven people are still missing.

Most of the schools and educational institutions remained closed in Faridpur due to floods, while crops on 13,319 acres of land were destroyed and crops on 14,445 acres were partly damaged, our correspondent in Pabna reports.

Our correspondent from Gaibandha reports: Janat Begum, 5, of Lalchamar under Sunderganj upazila drowned in the floodwater.

Major cracks have developed along the Karotoa flood control embankment on the Karotoa in Palashbari upazila, while water continue to seepage through four vulnerable points in Cherega, Nayanpur, Khorda and Tengra.

Even though district administration and NGOs conducted relief operations, they were inadequate, said officials of a local NGO.

Our correspondent from Kishoreganj reports: About 6,000 people were marooned, 86 schools were closed, crops on around 3,000 acres of land were destroyed and over 600 houses were washed away in the haor areas of seven upazilas of the district. The overall flood situation in the district deteriorated further.

Our correspondent in Brahmanbaria reports: Rabeya Akter, 9, of Chunta under Sarail upazila drowned when she was bathing in the floodwater yesterday.

Our correspondent in Magura reports: The Fatki was flowing 136cm above danger level at Magura yesterday inundating about 85-square-kilometre area of 20 villages under Shaikhkha upazila.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna reports: 10 villages were inundated and 2000 shrimp enclosures were washed away as breaches developed at Kamargati sluice gate in Digholia upazila.

10kg bomb

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they launched a drive on August 1. With the help of Rab-11, they spotted a militants' den at Block C in Mirpur-12 Wednesday night.

They busted the mess at house No. 8, lane No. 21 at around 2:00am and arrested the four JMB members. Carrying out a thorough search, they also recovered the huge cache of explosives.

Ishaq and Anis claimed that a fellow JMB cadre named Jitu had kept the explosives there a few days back. He [Jitu] used to come and preach about jihad and its objectives.

"He used to remind us that if necessary we will have to die for the cause," a bearded Ishaq told The Daily Star during the press briefing where all the four were paraded in front of TV cameras and journalists.

He said Jitu is clean-shaven and he wears pants and shirt to cover his identity.

Earlier on July 11, the Rab arrested a member of Majlissh-e-Shura, the highest decision-making body of JMB, at his rented house in Mirpur-1.

During the raid, they seized two 9mm pistols with nine bullets, seven computers, a large number of CDs and books on jihad.

US again backs

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undertaken a series of reform measures, which will benefit the people of Bangladesh, if carried out successfully.

He said the reforms measures taken by the government are necessary to restore integrity of the government and ensure proper funding of public programmes from tax revenue and impartiality of the criminal justice system.

"But it is also essential to free Bangladesh's economy from corruption to allow it to function properly and become more efficient in order to continue to grow and expand," he added.

At the hearing, US Congressional Committee members on Foreign Affairs hoped that the ban on political activities would be lifted soon and the government would stick to the deadline of holding the general elections by 2008 as per the roadmap.

When the Committee asked him about how things are progressing in Bangladesh, Gastright said the government had expressed its determination to stick to the election roadmap.

Commenting on the law and order situation in Bangladesh, the US State Department official said there were fewer incidences of law and order in