

# Corruption involving \$ 45m in lease on aircraft in five years

## TIB study on Biman reveals

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts and civil society members at a roundtable yesterday called on the government to publish the list of 'godfathers' and their accomplices responsible for massive corruption and irregularities in Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Corruption involving 45 million dollars took place only in the process of taking up lease on aircraft in the last five years, according to a study report presented at the discussion.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) conducted the study titled 'Biman Bangladesh Airlines: Diagnostic study'.

The study also said the government has turned the Biman into a public limited company without following the rules and regulations.

No audit has been done or no assessment of the assets and liabilities of Biman has been made before making it a public limited company, it added.

The study also identified some factors such as political interference, massive corruption, lack of accountability of the Biman chairman and dual policy (treating the organisation as service-oriented and also as commercial-oriented) as the reasons behind

the present bad shape of Biman.

Moreover, poor passenger service and failure to maintain schedule are also major problems facing the Biman, the study added.

TIB organised the roundtable titled 'Bangladesh Biman: Problems and the way out' at the National Press Club in the city, with its President Prof Muzafer Ahmad in the chair.

In its study, the TIB recommended eliminating the prevailing 'dual policy' in Biman's operational structure and not appointing any bureaucrats as the chairman of the Biman's board of directors.

The speakers at the discussion wondered why Biman has failed to make profit as there are some 70 lakh captive passengers in the country.

CEO and Managing Director of Biman Dr MA Momen said the extent of corruption in Biman is actually much higher than what the TIB has revealed in its study.

He criticised the former Biman bosses, including ministers, for ruining the organisation through political intervention and resorting to various irregularities.

"Biman's policy regarding purchase and others issues was friendly towards contractors and suppliers," he said, adding, "We will have to identify

godfathers and their accomplices who are responsible for the present situation."

Prof Muzafer Ahmad said Biman would be able to make profit within a short time, if it can get rid of corruption.

Biman will have to enhance its efficiency and competitiveness as an organisation, he said, adding that Biman should start its new journey as a public limited company with zero liability.

Media researcher Muhammad Jahangir demanded punishment to the 'villains' responsible for corruption and irregularities in Biman.

Former president of Biman Airlines Pilots' Association Nasimul Haque said that Biman MD should have absolute authority to run the organisation.

He also suggested abolishing the Biman's board of directors, saying that "This body is good for nothing."

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, former secretary Abul Kalam Azad, former lawmaker Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan, former secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed, Captain Masud and Secretary General of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh Maulana Eyaqub Sharafati also spoke.

## President for coordination in relief work

### UNB, Shariatpur

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said there should be effective coordination in relief operations and any other initiatives to be taken to assuage the sufferings of the flood victims.

"All the initiatives, including relief operation, to be taken for the welfare of the flood victims, will have to be well-planned and well-coordinated. And you, both civil and military administrations, will jointly implement those," he said at a meeting at the Circuit House here in the morning.

Industries Adviser Geeteara Safiya Chowdhury was present.

"I urge the countrymen, irrespective of party and opinion, to work together with the government to tackle the flood situation as it is not possible for the government alone to face it," he added.

Later, the president distributed relief among 600 flood-affected families at local Water Development Board and Shariatpur Government Girls' School.

## PEOPLES JUTE MILLS Another 584 workers get their dues

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Another 584 retrenched workers of closed Peoples Jute Mills received their arrears yesterday.

Earlier 650 out of 3,100 laid off workers took arrears on Tuesday, the first day of the payment of arrears.

Fazur Rahman, joint secretary of the ministry of jute, Mosharef Hossain, director of the BJMC, Abu Taher, general manager (quality control), and Habibur Rahman, project director of the closed jute mill, were present during the payment.

Meanwhile, payments in cheques have created mixed reaction among the workers, said Abdur Rahman, publicity secretary of Khulna regional committee of Patkal Sangram Parishad.

The BJMC director said workers are given cheques to check corruption during payment.

He said at least a week is required to complete the payment of dues to all retrenched workers.

A total of Tk 96.83 crore would be given to the workers and employees of the closed jute mill as their arrear salary, bonus, lay off benefit, gratuity and provident fund, said the project director of the jute mill.

# Set up commission to make local govt effective

## Speakers tell view exchange meeting

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday underscored the need to form a local government

## US, Canada chapters of AL to observe August 15

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US and Canada chapters of Awami League (AL) will hold 27 separate programmes at different states and towns across the US and Canada to observe the 32nd death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15.

On the same day, they will stage demonstrations in front of UN headquarters, US Department of State and Canadian Parliament Building, according to a report of America News Agency.

The USAL will organise two mega programmes at Brooklyn and Quince in New York to mark the death anniversary.

Discussions, milad mahfils and protest rallies will be held in Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Washington DC, New Jersey, New England, Philadelphia, Boston, Toronto and Montreal.

In a joint statement, US Jubo League President Mizbah Ahmed and acting General Secretary Iqbal Hossain demanded the government declares the day as National Mourning Day.

Meanwhile, former general secretary of Bangladesh Krishak League Mohammad Mizanur Rahman Manu yesterday in a statement urged all to help the flood victims in their respective areas.

## AF Mujibur Rahman Gold Medal Award introduced at CU

The AF Mujibur Rahman Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Mathematics has been introduced at Chittagong University (CU) this year, says a press release.

The annual award was first introduced at Dhaka University in 1996.

This year's recipients of the Gold Medal award and scholarship from Chittagong University are Md Sazzad Hossain and Md Abdur Rob, who jointly obtained first class first in the honours final examination, and Mossammat Tahmina Akhter, Md Saleh Uddin Yousuf, Md Abu Bakr and Md Abdul Halim Faruqui, first class first in the master's (applied & pure mathematics) examination.

The AF Mujibur Rahman Foundation offers scholarships and financial support to a number of educational institutions, professional bodies and children's organisations. The Foundation will also be funding the AF Mujibur Rahman Gonit Bhawan for Dhaka University.

The late AF Mujibur Rahman, ICS was born in Faridpur and, to date, holds the record for the highest marks in mathematics, having broken the previous record held by Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, at Calcutta University. The Foundation has been set up by his son Rezaur Rahman FCA.



Students who were awarded AF Mujibur Rahman Gold Medal Award and scholarship pose with the guests at the award giving ceremony recently.

## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy falls at places in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

Highest temperature 34.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 24.2 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6:36pm today and rises at 5:32 am tomorrow.**

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius	Humidity in percentage		
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.5	26.2	71	67
Chittagong	31.3	25.5	75	82
Rajshahi	34.6	26.8	84	76
Khulna	33.2	27.2	74	74
Barisal	32.5	26.3	88	84
Sylhet	33.8	25.7	78	69
Cox's Bazar	32.3	25.5	75	80

## Obituary

Ibrahim Khan, a senior employee of the job department of the Daily Ittefaq, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the National Institute of Cardio Vascular Disease in the city yesterday at the age of 55, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

## Death anniversary

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 16th death anniversary of KAM Shamsul Huda Miah, former chief librarian of Dhaka University.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his West Nakhalpara residence after Zohr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the doa mahfil and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

### Alhaj Nehal Uddin Ahmed

Today is the fifth death anniversary of Alhaj Nehal Uddin Ahmed, a retired deputy finance controller of Army Finance, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Tarua of Brahmanbaria after Juma prayers tomorrow.

## Qulkhwani

### BSS, Dhaka

Qulkhwani of Rita Ahmed, wife of journalist Shehab Uddin Ahmed Nafa, will be held at her residence at 63 Laboratory Road (opposite to Coffee House) at New Elephant Road in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow (Friday).

### MA Bakr

Qulkhwani of MA Bakr, former director general of the Geology Directorate and former of Jahangirnagar University will be held at his residence at Jashimuddin Road at Kamlapur in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.



PHOTO: PID

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed distributes relief among the flood-affected people of Kajlpar area at Matuail under Jatrabari Police Station in the city yesterday.

## MURDER OF TEACHER Four arrested

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested four youths from Hazaribagh area in the city yesterday on charges of killing a teacher of E Haq Coaching Centre.

The teacher, Abul Kashem Badshah, 35, was gunned down on the first floor of the Kalabagan branch of the coaching centre on July 26.

The arrestees are Fahad Al Masud Ovi, 22, Sumon Hossain, 20, Saiful Islam Robin, 22, and Abu Bakar Abdullah Siddiq Rony, 23.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team raided a house at Charakhata in Hazaribagh at noon and arrested the four with a foreign revolver, seven bullets, Tk 98,000 and a motorbike. A sticker inscribed with 'Sangbadpatra' was attached to the number plate of the motorbike.

Masud told reporters at the Maghbaz office of Rab-2 that he, Rony and Sumon shot the teacher dead in the coaching centre.

He also said that Robin had a pistol in his hand but did not open fire.

Rab members said they have arrested Robin as they found the revolver used in killing Badshah and seven bullets from his possession.

## Bank account for donations

A bank account has been opened so that generous people and organisations can easily make donations to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for the flood-affected people, says an ISPR release.

Contributions can be sent to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund, Current Account No. 33004093, Sonali Bank, Chief Adviser's Office Branch, Tejgaon, Dhaka.

# More donations for flood victims

## Relief work continues

### STAR REPORT

Different government and non-government organisations continued to donate to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund and distribute relief among the flood-affected people yesterday.

UNB reports: In response to the Chief Adviser's call, more government and private organisations and individuals yesterday donated Tk 8,95,07,966.31 and 2,000 US dollars to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for the flood victims.

The donations, both in the form of cheques and cash, were handed over to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office.

Fifteen organisations and individuals made the donations. They include PKSF, Commerce Ministry, LGRD and Cooperative Ministry, BASIC Bank, Janata Bank, BTMA, GrameenPhone, Siemens, Otobi Ltd, Eastern Bank Ltd, Islamic Bank Consultative Forum, Butterfly Marketing Ltd, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd.

Dr Aminul Huq, who works at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and his wife donated 2,000 US dollars.

Tk 19,50,57,878.18 and 2000 USD has so far been given directly to the Chief Adviser for his relief fund in five consecutive days since Saturday.

Meanwhile, Tk 11 crore received by the CA's Relief Fund was allocated on an emergency basis on Tuesday for 15 districts hit hardest by the flooding.

**Australia** Meanwhile, Australia has donated 90,000 US dollar for the flood victims of Bangladesh through United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

**FBCCI** A team of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) led by its President Mir Nasir Hossain yesterday distributed relief among the flood victims in Manikganj, says a press release.

Later Mir Nasir at a meeting called upon the businessmen to stand by the flood-affected people.

Meanwhile, another team of FBCCI led by Vice President Dewan Sultan Ahmed and Director Abdul Wahed distributed relief among the flood victims in Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilfamari and Lalmonirhat yesterday.

## COAL EXTRACTION ‘Open pit method not economically viable’

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Open pit method will not be favourable for coal extraction since such method is not economically viable for the country, Convener of Citizens' Commission on Gas, Oil and Coal Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said yesterday.

He was speaking at a view exchange meeting jointly organised by Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) and the commission at National Press Club in the city.

Kholiquzzaman, also president of BEA, added that the draft coal policy unfortunately partially emphasised open mining method rather than underground mining for coal extraction.

Prof Abul Barakat, member secretary of the commission, Justice Golam Rabbani, Golam Mortoza and members of the commission were present at the meeting.

Kholiquzzaman said the government's intention to export coal must be removed from the draft coal policy as Bangladesh doesn't have necessary reserves yet.

He said the upcoming coal policy should be coordinated with the national energy policy so that public can know everything regarding coal reserve and its utilisation for national interest.

Ahmad said so far the government has provided lots of misleading information regarding country's coal reserve.

According to the latest draft coal policy, country's total coal reserve is 1168 million tons, which was estimated 1460 million tons and 2700 million tons respectively on the last two draft policies.

Therefore, the actual reserve should be mentioned in the final

coal policy, Ahmad said.

"Coal policy should be home-grown", said Professor Nurul Islam of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

Citing an example, he said Indian government itself operates 572 coal pits, whereas private sector operates only eight.

Bangladesh can follow the Indian model by handling all coal mines through a government body like India, he said.

Besides, after preparing a draft coal policy in December 2005, a total of seven versions have already been prepared. But unfortunately the policy is still hanging for government's final approval.

## Rajuk worker falls from Rangs Bhaban, dies

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rajuk worker died after falling from the 12th floor of the Rangs Bhaban while he was demolishing its internal structure yesterday.

Sohrab Hossain, 20, was working in the north side of the building. Suddenly he fell and landed on the roof of a tin-shed motor garage nearby. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Police said they will see whether it was an act of sabotage.

Sohrab's father Ismail Hossain filed an unnatural death case with Tejgaon Police Station.

## RANGS BHABAN SC rejects plea for halting demolition

### UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday summarily rejected an appeal for halting Rajuk's ongoing demolition of 22-storey Rangs Bhaban.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division passed the order following an application moved by Barrister Rafique-ul Huq, counsel for the Rangs Group, seeking review of last Thursday's Supreme Court judgment.

The apex court had declared illegal the construction above sixth floor of the 22-storied Rangs Bhaban on Old Airport Road near Bijoy Sarani in the capital.

After getting the Supreme Court judgment, Rajuk started demolishing the Rangs Bhaban on Friday morning.

## DIGITAL LAND PHONE Line rent, shifting charge refixed

### UNB, Dhaka

The monthly line rent and shifting charge of digital land phone have been re-fixed with effect from August 1, said a government announcement yesterday.

The line rent for the divisional and district headquarters has been reduced to Tk 100 from Tk 150 while Tk 50 from Tk 150 for upazila and growth centres.

However, the line rent of Tk 150 in multi-exchange areas—Dhaka and Chittagong—will remain unchanged.

Besides, phone-shifting charge for Dhaka and Chittagong has been re-fixed at Tk 1500 while Tk 1000 for other divisional and district headquarters and Tk 500 for upazila and growth centres against the previous rate of Tk 2500.

## GRAFT CASE Next hearing September 5

### COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four prosecution witnesses of a graft case against former president and Jatiya Party Chairman gave their statements to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Judge Malik Abdullah Al Amin of the Special Court for Dhaka Division recorded statements of the witnesses and fixed September 5 for next hearing of the case.

According to a case, filed with Tejgaon Police Station in 1992, Ershad, while in power, allegedly directed the authorities concerned to purchase ENG (electronic news-gathering) equipment worth about Tk 2.93 crore to be used by him and his wife through all broadcasting facilities were available in his secretariat.

Meanwhile, the same court yesterday adjourned the proceeding of another graft case until September 3 following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers.

The proceeding of the case was stayed for a long time due to a High Court order though charges were framed on July 7, 1992.

## Workshop

The Polices Reform Programme (PRP) organises a workshop on victim support service. Venue: Marble Room, Dhaka Sheraton hotel. Time: 9:30am.

## Seminar

Eastern University Social Welfare Club organises a seminar on drug addiction. Venue: Campus-2, Dhanmondi-4. Time: 4:00pm.

## Dialogue

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) and UNFPA will jointly organize a dialogue on 'Reproductive rights, health and gender situation of garment workers'. Venue: Bakul, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

## Indigenous Day

Bangladesh Adivashi Forum organises a daylong programme to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous People 2007. Venue: Engineers' Institute. Time: 10:00am.

## Inauguration

The inauguration of Tophkana Road branch of First Security Bank Limited will be held. Venue: Bengal Centre. Time: 11:15am.

## Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony for the 'Cartoon Contest Against Corruption', organised by Star Insight on the occasion of its first anniversary, will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

## Book launch

The launching ceremony of poet Shamim Azad's 'Om' will be held. Venue: British Council auditorium. Time: 6:00pm.

## Certificate giving ceremony

The certificate giving ceremony of a training course titled 'Gender budgeting for women empowerment', organised by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, will be held. Venue: Chhayanaut Bhawan. Time: 3:30pm.

## Rotary Greater Dhaka

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Greater Dhaka will be held. Venue: Hotel Eastern Residence, Banani. Time: 6:00pm.