

We're mainstream

FROM PAGE 1
of the party and late president Ziaur Rahman.

The organisers, however, said it was not a meeting since there is a ban on politics and that they only used microphone and loud speakers for an "informal" discussion.

Leaders and workers present at the meeting chanted slogans to express their solidarity with Mannan Bhuiyan and other senior leaders.

Bhuiyan said at the meeting, "Suddenly they have expelled me although I have been in the party for the last 25 years. They can take my post but they cannot expel me from the party without issuing any notice...We cannot accept such a decision."

Bhuiyan, who was a powerful minister during the BNP-led alliance government, expressed his determination to keep the party united. He said, "The image of the party has been destroyed in the last five years. So, sacrificing leadership would be reinstated in the party and the corrupt and terrorist leaders will be excluded."

"We have to implement reforms to restore the party's image," he said, adding that a collective leadership of honest and competent persons should be established.

"Some persons are speaking against reforms. They looted public wealth when the party was in power...They have no popularity and they cannot win the election without the help of the administration," he said.

Bhuiyan also said the country cannot go back to the situation before January 11 since it saved the nation from a civil war like situation. "The real face of many persons have been made public after January 11," he noted.

Hinting at Bhuiyan's expulsion, Sadeque Hossain Khoka said Khaleda Zia proved the necessity of reforms before her arrest. "It was an unnecessary decision at a time when the party needed unity," he said.

"It is not a time to get post or position...Take the leadership after implementation of reforms," he said directing at Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Hannan Shah.

Former minister and BNP Vice President Major (retd) Hafiz Uddin

Verdict in gold smuggling case against Ershad today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will pass its judgment today in a gold smuggling case against former president and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, which was earlier adjourned six times on different grounds.

Judge Mohammad Abul Bashir at the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court will return the verdict at 11:30am, court sources said.

Both the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments. The court recorded statements of eight prosecution witnesses, including the complainant and investigation officer (IO) of the case.

Describing the background of the case, the prosecution said a team of customs officials held four people, two of them foreign nationals, at Zia International Airport on July 17, 1990 as they were attempting to smuggle in around 3.6 kgs of gold worth about Tk 2.5 crore.

A case was filed against the four - Bernhard Rudiger of Germany, Englishman David Anthony Chaimar Chaker, the airport's then manager Major (retd) Ashraf Uddin Sekender and Abu Taher, an airport security guard - with Cantonment Police Station the same day.

Ershad's name was included in the charge sheet on August 31, 1991 after the IO found evidence of his involvement in the smuggling bid.

The trial against Ershad, however, was shelved for several years following a High Court (HC) stay order.

Delwar warns

FROM PAGE 1

"They have to face the same fate - allegations of subversive activities [against the party] might be raised against them," he said when the reporters asked him about what he meant by the word 'risk'.

"But we will take the decision through discussion with party leaders," Delwar said, adding that every one will get the opportunity to rectify his or her actions and return to the party so the party stays united.

Questioning how Bhuiyan was able to call a meeting amid the state of emergency, Delwar said, "... is there no restriction for him?"

"It is the duty of the government to enforce the law [state of emergency] neutrally," he added.

The new secretary general said the letter expelling Bhuiyan and Ashraf, signed by Khaleda Zia, would be forwarded to the Election Commission so they can take necessary steps in this regard.

Rejecting the expelled leaders' claim that their expulsion was 'unconstitutional and undemocratic', he said the chairperson is empowered to appoint or to expel anyone.

Among others, party leader Ashraf Uddin Nizam, who had earlier signed a joint statement criticising Bhuiyan's expulsion order by Khaleda Zia, was present during the briefing.

Former lawmaker Rehana Akhter Ranu later told The Daily Star, "Many other former lawmakers who had signed the joint statement are keeping contact with Delwar."

Fakhruddin

FROM PAGE 1

to the hassle of "red tape" for business licences in Old Dhaka.

Replying to concerns regarding government plans to demolish illegal structures, Fakhruddin said the government hopes to finalise a policy on this regard by the end of this month.

He also said the trade licence issuing process for people intending to do business in the old part of Dhaka would be revamped so that businesses are being harassed by 7 to 8 regulatory, taxation, and law-enforcement agencies at once, which is preventing the entrepreneurs from running their businesses.

President of the International Chamber of Commerce, Bangladesh Mahbubur Rahman said there is a public perception that 'within a limited time-frame coupled with constraints on resources and administrative capacities, the government should not have undertaken too many agenda even at a micro-level, losing focus on the priorities'.

"It is not that the businesses want the anti-corruption drive to stop, but they do expect it to be carried out with due care and of course without sending a wave of panic through the entire range of business activities in the country," he added.

Mahbubur also urged the government not to sign the International Monetary Fund's Policy Support Instrument as it would be 'compromising the country's sovereignty allowing the international agency to act just as a credit rating agency in relation to Bangladesh'.

He also said the government has been working toward raising Bangladesh's ranking in the annual global Doing Business report of the World Bank to at least 15 spots higher by the end of 2009.

Bangladesh was ranked 88th in the 2007 Doing Business report.

Mig-29 case

FROM PAGE 16

government lawyers today.

An official of the now defunct Bureau of Anti-corruption (Bac), Abdullah Al Zahid, filed the case on December 11, 2001 with Tejgaon Police Station accusing five including Hasina.

According to the First Information Report (FIR), the government incurred a loss of Tk 700 crore on account of the warplane purchase for Bangladesh Air Force. Hasina was Prime Minister then.

The long pending appeal from Hasina finally came up for hearing following the government's sudden move for its quick disposal.

His mother Rabeya Siraj was

Lotus Kamal

FROM PAGE 1

Court, Dhaka issued the arrest warrants against Obaidul Karim and the five bankers after taking the embezzlement into cognisance.

Apart from Obaidul Karim, the other accused in the case are Oriental Bank's former senior vice-president Shah Mohammad Haroon, incumbent senior assistant vice-president AQ Mahmud Ullah, former assistant vice-president Mohammad Fazlur Rahman, incumbent assistant vice-president Neemayullah and executive officer ANM Raquibul Islam.

The corruption watchdog's Assistant Director Rafiquzzaman, also the investigation officer (IO), submitted a charge sheet against the six to the CMM court on August 27, showing 12 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO included the names of Neemayullah and Raquibul Islam in the charge sheet as he found evidence of their involvement in the corruption during investigation, although their names were not mentioned in the first information report (FIR).

ACC Assistant Director Abdul Latif filed the case against Karim and three other people with Motijheel Police Station on February 1, accusing them of embezzling Tk 6.7 crore from the principal branch of Oriental Bank Ltd.

ABBA'S CASE

Judge Mohammad Abu Mohsin of the Fifth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court will decide on September 9 whether to frame charges against the former housing minister.

The court set the date yesterday after hearing arguments from the prosecution and the defence on the issue in the presence of Mirza Abbas.

Motijheel police submitted the charge sheet against the former minister to the CMM court, showing 14 people as prosecution witnesses.

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

The joint forces seized stacks of local and foreign currencies and other items from Abbas' South Shahjahanpur residence in the capital on February 4.

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

The complainant of the case, Sub-Inspector Rafiqul Islam, alleged that Abbas had kept those in his possession, evading tax.

HARRIS CASE

Judge Sayed Jahan Mansur of the Metropolitan Special Tribunal-9 yesterday finished recording statements of all the prosecution witnesses in the case for keeping foreign currencies at his Gulshan residence.

The court set September 10 for arguments.

Sub-Inspector Babul Hossain at Gulshan Police Station, also the investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet to the CMM court, showing 18 people as prosecution witnesses.

The joint forces on February 4 seized two briefcases from Harris' Gulshan residence. The briefcases were found to be full of foreign

cash.

Opposing the bail prayer, Mihir Kanti Das, who stood on behalf of the state, said vital information was found about the mayor's involvement in the murder of Tera Shahjahan.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the judge turned down the bail prayers and sent Sarwar and the three other accused to jail.

Sohel, Salman

FROM PAGE 16

currencies after they were opened on April 2 in the presence of Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza.

Gulshan police on April 9 filed the case against Harris under Money Laundering Act. The case statement said Harris planned to smuggle out the foreign currencies worth about Tk 5.64 lakh.

Earlier on May 22, a special court sentenced Harris to three years in jail for not submitting wealth statement to the ACC within the stipulated timeframe.

HELAL CASE

Detailed Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) president Azizul Baree Halal was sent to jail after a 10-day police custody in connection with two cases filed for allegedly disrupting law and order on the Dhaka University campus.

Metroplitan Magistrate Shah Alam Sarder passed the order after Ramna police produced Halal before the court on completion of a four-day remand.

In the forwarding report, the IO mentioned that the accused gave important information on the incidents which was being verified. He should be confined in custody until the investigation is completed, the IO said.

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Halal at his Moghbazar residence in the capital on August 24.

MILON CASE
Metropolitan Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah yesterday sent former BNP lawmaker AKM Fazlul Haque Milon to jail after Ramna police produced him before court.

He was shown arrested under the Emergency Power Rules. Police told the court that he amassed huge wealth through illegal means while was a BNP lawmaker.

The former Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal president was arrested as he was driving through the upscale Gulshan neighbourhood on Tuesday.

He had been absconding since the joint forces started the crackdown on corruption suspects.

Our Barisal correspondent reports: A Barisal court yesterday sent Barisal City Corporation Mayor Major Biplob Rahaman Sarwar to jail after completion of a ten-day remand in two phases in connection with a murder case.

Barisal Sadar Upazila Magistrate Munim Hassan also gave order to send three other accused - Abdus Sobhan, Mamun Talukdar and Kali Kha -- to jail after rejecting their bail prayers.

Mayor Sarwar was produced before the jam-packed court amid tight security. His counsel prayed for bail, saying no importation information about his involvement in the crime was found during investigation.

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Iajuddin

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alongside maintaining transparency and accountability in all spheres of national life for creating a meaningful democratic atmosphere," he said in a message marking the end of his tenure.

President Iajuddin, who took over as the country's 18th president on September 6, 2002, will stay in office until his successor is elected.

He thanked the government and the people for their continued cooperation in discharging his duties.

"The people of our country are very courageous. They can face any kind of natural calamity and they have been doing that for long. And we'll build Bangladesh as a prosperous country with the united efforts of all," said the president.

He also prayed to Allah for the well-being of the country as well as its people.

DU syndicate

FROM PAGE 16

"By the time, we'll appoint the two acting deans to hold the Deans Committee meeting on September 9, which is essential for holding the syndicate meeting scheduled for September 11," Prof Faiz told reporters.

The two posts are now vacant as Social Science Faculty Dean Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Biological Science Faculty Dean Prof Anwar Hossain were arrested following the August 22 student unrest on the campus.

He also said the trade licence issuing process for people intending to do business in the old part of Dhaka would be revamped so that businesses are being harassed by 7 to 8 regulatory, taxation, and law-enforcement agencies at once, which is preventing the entrepreneurs from running their businesses.

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Corruption suspects

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aligned with economic good sense for the country, he said at a dialogue between the government and business leaders on "Bangladesh Economy and Future Perspective" organised by the commerce ministry at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in the capital.

"I call this realisation and change a new social contract, reminding us of our objective at hand and indicating the need for reconciliation for economic development," he said.

Referring to last month's violent demonstrations at Dhaka University, Moeen said it has left a mole in last half year's governance of the caretaker administration.

"Disputes and problems, whatever its variety, whether they are subtler act of few academicians or naked form street hostility of agitated innocent citizens are deplorable, and once more proved that students are hostage to the unconscious politics in the government universities and colleges both by their political masters and patrons," he said.

He said the country's economic policy has to be framed by the expectations of students, rickshaw-p