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KIBRIA MURDER Wife finds new probe pace dismal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asma Kibria, wife of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria, yesterday expressed frustration with the pace of supplementary probe into the killing of her husband this day three years ago.

"Two months ago when my son called to enquire about current status of the investigation, a CID official told him they were yet to start the job," Asma told The Daily Star.

Earlier in March last year, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) informed courts that they had started fresh investigation in the two cases filed for the assassination.

Since then, 10 months have gone, but they could not prepare supplementary charge sheets.

Meanwhile, trial of both the cases—one for murder and the

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UNUTILISED PASSENGER HANDLING CAPACITY ZIA misses Tk 400cr income a year

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh misses the opportunity of earning over Tk 400 crore extra yearly as more than 60 per cent passenger-handling capacity of Zia International Airport (ZIA) remains unutilised.

Aviation experts and industry insiders said the earning of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) from ZIA would be tripled if the airport's full capacity could be utilised as more international airlines want to operate from here.

CAAB's income from ZIA was Tk 220.71 crore in 2006-07 fiscal year and Tk 160 crore in 2005-06, said CAAB Chairman Air Commodore Sakeb Khan Majlis.

Operation of more international

airlines would have also created employment opportunities at the airport.

Experts blamed the government's protective policy about Bangladesh Biman, inefficiency in ground handling at ZIA and lack of marketing initiatives for missing these opportunities.

With its present infrastructure, ZIA is capable of handling around 85 lakh passengers yearly while 150 planes can take off and land at the airport every day.

But, according to an analysis of last five years, ZIA has handled 32 lakh passengers yearly on an average with 50 flights carrying around 8,500 passengers to different international destinations daily, sources in the civil aviation ministry and

CAAB said.

The analysis found 30-35 planes land and take off at the airport during the peak hour from 6:00am to 12:00noon. Only 20 or less aircraft operate during the rest of the day, said a member of an inter-ministerial committee formed to prepare a feasibility study on allowing low-cost airlines to operate from ZIA.

Maximum utilisation of ZIA could be possible by allowing more flights during off-peak hours, he said, adding that the government can earn huge revenue from aeronautical and non-aeronautical services including landing, parking and route navigation with the existing facilities.

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TREATMENT OUTSIDE JAIL VIP inmates' health status to be checked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prison authorities will today examine health condition of the 17 VIP prisoners admitted to different city hospitals and take those needing no more treatment outside back to jail.

Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui yesterday said doctors of Dhaka Central Jail would do the check-ups. They would be assisted by the authorities of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSSMU).

Talking to The Daily Star last night, he said, "We've taken the measures so that others in need of treatment outside can be taken there."

Arafat Rahman Koko, former lawmaker Mosaddek Ali Falu, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, former

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KHULNA POWER PLANT CASE AGAINST HASINA CA firm says Summit lowest bidder

STAR REPORT

A chartered accounting (CA) firm gave its independent opinion that Wartsila-Summit group was the lowest bidder in the tender for installation of the 100 megawatt oil fired barge-mount Khulna power plant.

This contradicts the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on September 2 last year.

The ACC accused that the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six others through mutual understanding and use of influence helped Wartsila-Summit group win the bid depriving the lowest bidder -- New England Power Company (NEPC).

But reviewing the project's bid

documents, Chartered Accountants and Management and Tax Consultants SF Ahmed & Co gave its opinion that NEPC was wrongly rated as the lowest bidder.

In fact, NEPC was also non-responsive in the tender as its financial offer was conditional vis-à-vis the tariff for fuel, says the report of the accounting firm.

Following the ACC case, Summit Industrial and Mercantile Corporation approached SF Ahmed & Co on September 13 to give its professional opinion on selection of the lowest bidder from among the bids received in response to Request For Proposal (RFP) for the Khulna plant and the government policy on import of fuel for this plant. The firm completed its report on September 18.

Verifying the price offers of both NEPC and Wartsila in the light of various pricing factors like base fuel price, the firm reported that the bid evaluation report of Power Development Board's (PDB) tender committee headed by the chief engineer dated March 2, 1997 judged NEPC as the lowest bidder without considering fuel tariff suggested by the company. NEPC gave a condition -- fuel price of Tk 3.3 per litre plus an annual escalation factor of one per cent.

"The evaluation of tariff made on the basis of the above price of liquid fuel was not correct because 1. The indicative price of liquid fuel (furnace oil) was specifically suggested at Tk 4.51 litre which ought to have been used... and 2. Fuel cost

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Two more die in cold spell Rain continues

STAR REPORT

Two more people have been reported dead as the current spell of severe wintry weather continues across the country.

Two tea garden labourers in Moulvibazar district died from the cold on Friday. The dead were identified as Radha Nayek, 45, and Murti Barai, 55, both former employees of Ratna Tea Garden under Juri upazila.

In the capital city the sky remained cloudy with interrupted moderate rain for the third consecutive day yesterday. The drizzle and foggy weather disrupted city life. Slum dwellers, children and the very old were the worst victims of the wintry chill.

Dhaka's lowest temperature was recorded at 15.7 degrees Celsius yesterday.

Our Khulna correspondent adds: Sidr victims in the southern coastal regions, living in temporary shelters, are some of the worst sufferers of the continuing cold spell and rain.

UNO Shahnawaz Talukder distributed 15,000 metres of polythene sheets among four unions of Sharankhola upazila yesterday for protection of makeshift shelter

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Several streets in Dhaka became waterlogged even in light rain during the last few days. The photo was taken yesterday at Uttara.

PHOTO STAR

Parties must become accountable first for emergency to relax

CA tells reporters at Davos

SHAWKAT HOSSAIN MASUM, from Davos, Switzerland

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed has said the state of emergency will be gradually withdrawn and the ban on indoor politics outside the capital will also be lifted if the political parties become more accountable.

He also said economic activities will pick up pace this winter and the caretaker government is trying to find ways to deal with the pressures from the price hikes on the international market in a bid to curb rising commodity prices at home.

"The state of emergency will be relaxed gradually, and there is a plan to lift the ban on indoor politics outside Dhaka, but some time was needed to do that. The reasons for needing the time also need to be considered. Some more accountability needs to be established in the activities of political parties," said Fakhruddin to reporters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, before leaving for

home on Friday.

He said the government hopes political parties will on their own bring reforms to their organisations, as the people also want that.

Soon the parties will have to decide on how they will carry the country forward after the election, and a consensus among the people will also be formed on the matter.

"The political parties also have a responsibility to bring dynamism to politics," he said.

He also said he tried to draw attention to the effects of climate change and Bangladesh's vulnerability in the face of global warming.

Asked whether Bangladesh has been identified with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq as the leaders from all three countries were grouped together in a session, Fakhruddin said he highlighted Bangladesh's difference with other countries in the forum, adding who sat next to who in a session is not

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Ijtima devotees face transport problem

UNB, Gazipur

Devotees faced trouble in returning home due to inclement weather and lack of transports following sudden conclusion of Biswa Ijtima at Tongi on Friday.

About 50,000 devotees were at Ijtima ground till Saturday evening. They underwent immense suffering as they had to wait for transports under the open sky and rain station in drizzle.

About 100 devotees from Middle East countries came to the Ijtima ground Saturday morning, as they did not receive the news of its early conclusion.

They arrived at Zia International Airport Friday evening and were taken to Kakril Mosque. They came to the Ijtima ground Saturday morning.

About 6,775 devotees, who had come to the Ijtima from 68 countries, will stay at the ground till tomorrow.

Meanwhile, a Pakistani devotee, Nisar Uddin, died of old age complications yesterday. His namaj-e-janaza was held after the Johr prayer. His body was flown to Pakistan yesterday night.

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MOUDUD'S 'ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED' HOUSE Law ministry to send its opinion to housing this week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry is likely to send this week its opinion to the housing and public works ministry on the abandoned house in the city's Gulshan area which former law minister Moudud Ahmed has been occupying "illegally" for about three decades.

The housing and public works ministry said the two-storey house on 35 kathas of land on Gulshan-2 Avenue is an abandoned house and so public property.

Staffs of Moudud's law chamber, however, claimed that the former minister's brother Monjur Ahmed owns the house and gave Moudud its power of attorney.

A lawyer there even said Monjur had bought the house.

The dispute over the ownership of the house arose following Moudud's arrest on April 3 last year as the joint forces did not find any document in favour of his ownership.

Sources said the housing and public works ministry sent a letter to the residents of the house last September, asking to explain the basis of occupying it and that the

reply could not satisfy the ministry.

The public works ministry had taken control of the abandoned house after the Liberation War and rented it out to Australian agriculturalist Dr Mary D Dawson. It was learnt that she lived there up to 1979.

According to a recent investigation by the joint forces, Moudud occupied the house in 1980 when he was a deputy prime minister in former president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet.

Moudud and his wife Hasna Moudud started living in the house but no one then questioned how he got it.

A gazette notification dated September 23, 1986 showed that the house was an abandoned property, but no government agency took any initiative to ask Moudud, then an influential minister in HM Ershad's cabinet, for any explanation.

A high official of the housing ministry said a superintendent engineer and an executive engineer have been asked to collect and submit updated and detailed information about the house.

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GRAND OPENING OF Pahartali Branch

Hajrat Taiyabia Complex
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Chittagong
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