

Ex-PMO official gets 3 yrs for receiving bribes

BSS, Dhaka
A special court yesterday sentenced former administrative officer of Prime Minister's Office (PMO) MM Ahsan Habib to three years' rigorous imprisonment and the owner of Bengal Consultant, Ahmed Mirza Khabir, to two years' rigorous imprisonment in a bribery case.
Judge of the Special Court-1 in Sanganal Bhaban area M Firoz Alam handed down the verdict to the two convicts. Both of them were tried in absentia.
The court also fined former PMO official Habib Tk 95 lakh. If he fails to pay, he will have to serve three more months in jail.
Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) official Shamsul Alam filed the case against them with Motijheel Police Station on April 2 last year.
According to the prosecution, Habib received a bribe of Tk 93.50 lakh through his friend Ahmed Mirza Khabir from the proprietor of Munshi and Monty Traders, Afzal Hossain, to help him get cigarettes, seized by the customs department, at auction.

2318 cans of soybean, mustard oil seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized 2,318 cans of soybean and mustard oil having no BSTI approval from the city's East Rampura yesterday.
Rab also arrested one Mohammad Moniruzzaman, 28, from the godown of Purnima Oil at Purnima Bhaban during the raid led by Major Ehsan of Rab-2.
Major Ehsan said they found the cans had less oil in quantity compared to what were written on the cans.
The seized cans include 10 cans of Soybean oil weighing five litres each, 40 cans of Soybean (two litres each), 118 cans of Soybean (each weighing 1 litre), 600 cans of Soybean oil (500 gram), 560 cans of mustard oil weighing 200 millilitre each and 540 cans of the same oil each weighing 100 millilitre.

3 civil staffs of army held on bribery charge

UNB, Dhaka
Army personnel detained three of their civil staffs on charge of taking bribe and handed over them to Kafrul police last night.
Police said auditors Zayedul Islam and Munshi Shahedur Rahman and super Abdul Khaleque were caught red handed while they were receiving Tk 4,250 from barber Norendra Kumar Chandra with assurance of clearing his bills at log area of the cantonment at 4:00pm. Hair cutting bills of Tk 7,700 have been lying unpaid for several months.
The bribe money was recovered from their possession.

Accomplice of Indian kidney snatcher surrenders

AFP, New Delhi
The suspected accomplice of an Indian doctor arrested over a massive illegal kidney transplant racket surrendered to police yesterday, officials said.
Saraj Kumar was one of several people wanted for helping Amit Kumar, who was arrested in Nepal last week. The suspect surrendered to the Gurgaon police Monday afternoon, said a Delhi police official who wished to remain anonymous.
He is due to be produced in court in Gurgaon, a wealthy New Delhi suburb, on Tuesday where investigators will seek an extension of custody, the officer said.
Meanwhile, officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) continued questioning Amit Kumar for the third successive day Monday, a spokesman for the agency said.
Kumar, the subject of an Interpol alert, was nabbed by Nepalese police at a hotel in the country's south on Thursday. He was flown to New Delhi late Saturday.
Dubbed "Doctor Kidney" or "Doctor Horror" by the Indian press, Kumar allegedly lured or forced hundreds of poor into giving up their kidneys.
He made millions of dollars by selling the organs to wealthy Indians and foreigners for transplants, police believe.
The CBI has charged him with causing grievous hurt with a weapon, wrongful confinement and fraud, the spokesman said. According to the Press Trust of India, he faces up to 10 years behind bars.

4 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT
At least four people were killed and 17 others injured in separate road accidents in Comilla and Rajshahi yesterday.
UNB from Comilla reports: Three people were killed and 17 others injured in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.
Two people were killed and 17 others injured, three of them critically, when a bus rammied into their microbus on Comilla-Sylhet Highway in the Mollarmore area in Muradnagar upazila at noon.
Microbus driver Shazaban, hailed from Sylhet died on the spot while an unidentified woman at Debidar Health Complex.
The injured were rushed to the local hospitals and clinics.
Meanwhile, a motorcyclist was killed when a bus hit his motorcycle on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in the Jaganathdighi area in

Declare date for general elections

Demands Maj Gen (ret'd) Ibrahim
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Kalyan Party (BKP) yesterday called on the government to declare specific date for the general elections in order to dispel confusion in the public's mind.
It also called for gradual lifting of the ban on indoor politics across the country.
"Announce specific date for the election to remove doubts in the public's mind about the next election," Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim, chairman of the newly floated political party, said at a press conference at the party office at Purana Palatan in the city.
If it is not possible to announce the specific date, the government should announce the specific month and week for holding the election, he added.
Placing an eight-point demand, the BKP chief urged the government to ensure neutrality at all levels of the administration before the election.
About the one year of the caretaker government, he said it has scored many successes alongside some failures.
The government will have to take responsibility for their failures, he added.
He also called on the government to take proper steps to save the jute industry and mitigate the suffering facing thousands of sacked jute workers.



Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim speaks at a press conference at the Bangladesh Kalyan Party office in the city yesterday. On his right is Abul Kalam Azad and on his left is Sadek Ahmed Khan.

Jubo Dal leader Alal sent to jail

No bail for Selim Bhuiyan
COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent detained former BNP lawmaker and General Secretary of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal to jail in a case filed against him for breaking the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).
Meanwhile, another court gave permission to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to interrogate detained former T&T CBA leader Mohammad Firoz Miah at the jail gate after he was shown arrested in a graft case filed in August 2001.
Besides, a bail petition of detained former Dhaka Club President Selim Bhuiyan in connection with the Niko graft case was not entertained.
ALAL CASE
Metropolitan Magistrate Ishmat Ara passed the order to send Jubo Dal leader Moazzem Hossain Alal to jail after Mohammadpur police produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM)'s Court after completion of his two-day remand.
In the forwarding report, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Mohammadpur police, who is also the investigation officer (IO), said information given by Alal during the remand are being verified and he needs to be confined in jail custody until the investigation completes.
Opposing the prosecution plea, defence lawyers argued that their client was implicated as part of a conspiracy to harass him.
After the hearing, the court rejected his bail petition and sent him to Dhaka Central Jail.
On Friday, Mohammadpur police arrested Alal, former MP from Barisal-2 constituency, at his Lalmatia residence at 1/6 Lucky Apartments on charge of violating the EPR.
Alal was arrested as he was uniting the youths of his party against the ongoing anti-corruption drive as well the caretaker government. Moreover, he amassed a huge wealth through illegal means by misusing his power, the police said.

Bhuiyan, as there is no provision to grant bail to any accused in the case filed by the ACC.
On January 15, Selim Bhuiyan, who was arrested in connection with the Niko graft case, admitted that all the dealings between Bangladesh government and the Canadian energy company were made through him.
The ACC in its January 11 forwarding report said Selim was involved in reaching the contract with Niko.
The case, in which BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleda Zia and five other people are also implicated, was filed with Tejjgaon Police Station on December 9 on charges that awarding the gas exploration deal to the Canadian company caused huge losses to the state.
The other accused are former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain, former energy secretary Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, former acting energy secretary Khandaker Shahidul Islam, and Kashedm Sharif, vice president (South Asia) of Niko Resources Bangladesh Ltd.
Detained Khaleda, Moudud, Mosharraf and Giasuddin Al Mamun were shown arrested in the case on December 30.
In the case statement, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam said Khaleda Zia, who was the custodian of the country's wealth in her capacity as prime minister, criminally violated her oath and abused power by giving Niko through corruption the opportunity to extract gas worth Tk 10,000 crore.
The plaintiff said the other accused were complicit in the illegal deal.

ACC accepts Sajeda's wealth statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday accepted the statement of wealth submitted by ALA president member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury although it had earlier refused to accept the statement.
ACC Director General (admin) Col Hanif Iqbal confirmed that the statement submitted by Sajeda has been accepted late in the afternoon. He, however, could not confirm any details about the statement.
The commission on January 24 had decided not to accept the wealth statement of Sajeda because it had no dateline next to her signature. The same day the ACC started looking into the legal backing for filing a case against Sajeda Chowdhury.
The ACC on January 28, however, decided not to file non-submission case against the ALA leader.
Earlier, the High Court declared the ACC notice asking Sajeda to submit her wealth statement illegal after she filed a petition. The ACC moved to the Supreme Court and Sajeda was directed to submit her wealth statement while the matter is being resolved.
As Sajeda moved to submit the wealth statement through her lawyers the ACC denied accepting it on the ground.
The ACC had served notices against 11 people from the fourth list of 35 graft suspects published on October 4. Sajeda was among the 11.
UNB added: The ACC is going to file a case against former state minister for LGRD Ziaul Haque Zia for concealing information and amassing wealth beyond his known sources of income.
The anti-graft watchdog will also submit charge sheets in the graft cases against former Awami League MPs Kamal Ahmed Majumder and ANH Mostafa Kamal alias Lotus Kamal.

OVERSEAS JOBS Advocacy programmes to create awareness soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government is going to start widespread advocacy programmes to create awareness among the overseas job seekers redising the fact that lack of awareness about foreign jobs and employment conditions lead to various problems.
"The government has already started working on it. We shall use state-run Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, private television channels, leaflets and dramas to create awareness," Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Abdul Matin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.
Foreign job seekers must know the terms and conditions of overseas employment, salaries and cost of migration in details, he said, adding they also must know if they are going through government-approved recruiting agencies.
They also must report to the authorities concerned if any deviation of rules is done, he noted.
The money for advocacy programmes will be used from Wage Earners' Welfare Fund, added the secretary.

End support for US Mullah Omar urges world

AFP, Kandahar
Taliban supreme Mullah Mohammad Omar has urged the international community to distance itself from the United States' campaign in Afghanistan, a militant spokesman said yesterday.
The call by the elusive hardline leader came after US Defence Secretary Robert Gates urged European nations in particular to be more involved in the fight against the Taliban.
"The United States has been defeated in Afghanistan," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed quoted Omar as saying in a statement.
"They have been trapped here and are desperately trying to get other countries involved," Mujahed said in a telephone call from an unknown location.
Omar's statement said the United States, which led the campaign that toppled the Taliban from government in late 2001, had "invaded" and "occupied" Afghanistan.
"We're fighting to free our country," it said, adding: "We're not a threat to the world."
"The world nations must com-

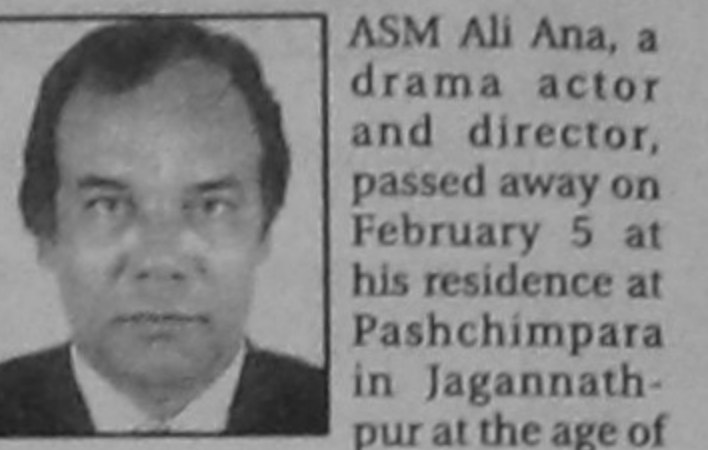
Workshop on environmental management

The Department of Environmental Science and Management of North South University (NSU) and Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, Canada jointly organised a workshop on 'Curriculum development of masters programme in resource and environmental management' on NSU Campus in the city yesterday, says a press release.
Rehana Rahman, chairman, Board of Governors, NSU Foundation, spoke on the occasion as the chief guest.
NSU Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr SAM Khairul Bashar, Prof Emdad Haque, director of UM & PD Canadian Institution, Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, pro-VC of Brac University, Prof Fikret Berkes, Canada Research Chair, NRI, UM, Syed Tanveer Hussain, former secretary, Dr Leslie King of University of Manitoba, Dr Shirley Thompson, Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Dr M Ali Rashid and Dr Mizan R Khan, chairman, DESM, spoke on the occasion.
Dr Siddiqi said, "Bangladesh is not a pollution-free country, so we need more alertness from all concerned and we should not hesitate to admit our poor environmental features."
Rehana Rahman said the opening of Masters Programme in Resource and Environmental Management at NSU would be a very encouraging initiative.

US teams conduct Sidr damage assessment

UNB, Dhaka
Two US Interagency Assessment Teams (IAT) have completed cyclone Sidr damage assessments in five upazilas in Khulna and Barisal Divisions.
The teams composed of representatives from the US Department of State, US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Department of Defence.
In addition to conducting detailed surveys for use in long-term rebuilding and rehabilitation projects, the teams also provided micro grants for immediate assistance.
In one such project, IAT provided a micro grant to the Haji Ibrahim Smriti Memorial Rahmania Dakhil Madrasa to construct a new roof. In addition to the roof, the micro grant also paid for school supplies to the madrasa's 300 students.
Coupled with contributions from the government of Bangladesh, this madrasa can continue to educate the leaders of tomorrow.
Other micro grant projects include reconstruction of a post office and a mosque, as well as replacing roofs on a kindergarten and a Hindu temple, says an American Centre release.

Obituary



ASM Ali Ana, a drama actor and director, passed away on February 5 at his residence at Pashchimbanga in Jagannathpur at the age of 50, says a press release.
He had long been suffering from cardiac diseases.
He left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.
ASM Ali, who also acted in several films, including Pahari Phul and Simana, received a number of awards in recognition of his contribution to cultural arena.

Engn Syed Shahidul Islam

Engn Syed Shahidul Islam, a sports organiser, former member of the National Sports Council and former honorary general secretary of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), passed away due to old age complications at Cure Hospital in the city at the age of 75, says a press release.
He left behind one son, five brothers, five daughters, grandchildren and a host of admirers to mourn his death.
His first namaz-e-janaza was held after Asr prayers at Telecommunication Bhaban at Shahabagh in the city yesterday.

AKM Mostafizur Rahman



AKM Mostafizur Rahman, General Manager of Bangladesh Bank, passed away at a city clinic on Sunday at the age of 55, says a press release.
He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of admirers to mourn his death.
He joined in Bangladesh Bank as an assistant director in 1981 and became general manager in 2006.
His namaz-e-janaza was held at the head office of Bangladesh Bank yesterday.
High officials and staffs of the bank attended the namaz-e-janaza.
He was buried at the family graveyard at Dhulia Palashtali, Bhaluka, Mymensingh.

Selima Murshed

Selima Murshed, wife of former additional IGP Ghulam Murshed, daughter of former chief justice BA Siddique and mother-in-law of director general of the Foreign Ministry Mahbubuzzaman, passed away at her residence in the city on Sunday at the age of 55, says a press release.
She left behind her husband, three daughters and a host of admirers to mourn her death.
Her namaz-e-janaza will be held today after Zohr prayers at Batul Mukarram Mosque.
She will be buried at Banani graveyard.
Her kulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers at her residence (Ahmed Manzil, 6/A Segunbagicha, in the city on February 14.
Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the kulkhwani and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Mir Aminul Islam Shihab

Mir Aminul Islam Shihab, vice principal of Jashim Uddin Institute (a children education centre at K h i l k h e t), passed away due to a cardiac asthma at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital at Uttara in the city on Sunday at the age of 32, says a press release.
He left behind his wife, mother, four brothers, one sister and a host of admirers to mourn his death.
He was buried at his village home at Kotalipara in Gopalganj yesterday.
A milad mahfil will be held after Asr prayers at the institute on Thursday.
Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the milad mahfil and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Sirajul Hoque Suruj

Sirajul Hoque Suruj, a journalist and son of late Nichar Ali of Rambadhra Pur village, passed away due to heart attack at his residence in Muktagacha Upazila on Sunday night at the age of 48, says a press release.
Sirajul worked in different national and local dailies. He was the member of the executive body of Muktagacha Press Club.
He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters and a host of admirers to mourn his death.
His first namaz-e-janaza was held in front of Muktagacha Press Club and second namaz-e-janaza at the premises of Rambadhra Pur Jame Mosque in his village yesterday afternoon.
Later, he was buried at the family graveyard.

UN launches 'Ask the Secretary-General' project

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will respond to questions from children and youth around the world in a new feature on the UN Cyberschoolbus (titled 'Ask the Secretary-General'), says a press release.
Students in primary, intermediate and secondary schools around the world can send in questions about the United Nations, the role of the Secretary-General and global issues on the United Nations agenda.
Questions will be collected by the UN Cyberschoolbus between now and March 31 and a representative selection will be chosen for the Secretary-General to respond to and posted on the UN Cyberschoolbus site.
This initiative will also help the United Nations get a sense of what questions and issues young people are thinking about today and at the same time help make the United Nations more accessible to them by giving young people the opportunity to ask questions directly of the Secretary-General.
After taking the oath of office as Secretary-General, Ban stated "I earnestly hope that young boys and girls of today will grow up knowing that the UN is working hard to build a better future for them. As Secretary-General, I will embrace their hopes and hear their appeals." This new feature follows up on this pledge.
Students should submit their question by logging in to this hyper link http://www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/AskSG/ask_sg.html.
They are asked to write down their queries in the Text Box and name, school, e-mail, city, country and age before submitting the question.
Moreover, interested students can send their questions by online without any cost from United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Library, IDB Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka.
For further details, they are requested to dial 8117868 or mail at info.unic@undp.org.

One to die for killing wife for dowry

UNB, Sathkhira
One person was awarded death sentence for killing his wife for dowry in 2004.
The Women and Children Repression (Prevention) Tribunal judge Motazidur Rahman handed down the verdict to Azgar Ali of Brojobok village in Kalaroa upazila.
His mother Sakhina Begum was acquitted as the charge brought against her could not be proved.
According to the prosecution, Azgar demanded a dowry of Tk 20,000 from the parents of his wife Rebeka Khatun. Rebeka failed to bring the money from her poor father. This angered him. He strangled Rebeka on December 26, 2004.

Convocation

The first convocation of Bangladesh University will be held. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre and JICA jointly will organise a seminar on 'Improving public service through TQM'. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Save Environment Movement organises a roundtable on duties to save the reserve forest. Venue: Auditorium, Save Environment Movement. Time: 3:30pm.

DHAKA TODAY

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Book launching
The launching ceremony of the book 'Parliamentary Control and Government Accountability in South Asia' by Dr Taibur Rahman will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

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Rotary Dhaka
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5:30pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely
UNB, Dhaka
Weather will remain mainly with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.
A short-lived mild cold wave may sweep over Rajshahi division and regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Tangail, Met office said.
Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, it said, predicting slight fall in night temperature over the country.
Highest temperature 27.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 09.0 degrees Celsius at Ishwardi and Rajshahi.
The sun sets in the capital at 5:51 pm today and rises at 6:33am 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 | 25.0 | 14.5 | 53 | 54 |
| Chittagong | 24.5 | 18.2 | 88 | 46 |
| Rajshahi | 23.6 | 09.0 | 84 | 57 |
| Khulna | 25.0 | 14.0 | 67 | 61 |
| Barisal | 25.0 | 13.5 | 69 | 62 |
| Sylhet | 25.5 | 14.1 | 92 | 47 |
| Cox's Bazar | 27.0 | 19.3 | 91 | 60 |