

Niko graft case

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Commission (ACC) on March 13 in a letter through the jail authorities gave five days time to Hasina for submitting statement in her defence. The ACC on the same date issued similar letters to the other accused in the case.

On March 15, Hasina, now undergoing treatment at Square Hospital, refused to receive the ACC letter from the jail authorities without consulting her lawyers.

The jail authorities claimed that they made arrangements for the former prime minister's meeting with her lawyers as per her demand, but she did not agree to the arrangements.

Hasina's counsels complained that they were not allowed to visit their client.

SM Sabir Hasan, a deputy director of ACC and investigation officer (IO) of the case, said, they did not know whether Hasina received the notice or not. "We have given her a chance to defend herself in accordance with the commission laws. It's up to her whether she takes the chance or not. We have nothing to do here."

Sabir, however, said Hasina could submit her statement any time before the charge is pressed.

Commenting on the jail authorities not allowing Hasina's lawyers to visit her, the IO said Hasina could have informed the ACC in writing that she needed to see her lawyers.

The ACC filed the case against the AL chief on December 9 last year on charge of causing a loss of over Tk 13,630 crore to the public exchequer by initiating a gas exploration deal with Canadian company Niko Resources Ltd.

The other accused in the case are former state minister for energy Rafiqul Islam, former principal secretary to the Prime Minister's Office Dr SA Samad, former energy

secretaries Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and M Akmal Hossain, former Petrobangla chairman Mosharrat Hossain, and Vice-president (South Asia) of Niko Kashem Sharif.

Four of the accused have already submitted statements in their defence, the IO said adding that Rafiqul Islam and Dr Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury applied for time extension, but their pleas were rejected on ground of time limitations for submitting the investigation report.

Illegal billboards

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smoking openly during the six-hour drive in different areas including Goran, Khilgaon and Rampura.

Kamruzzaman told The Daily Star that the main objective of the drive is to create awareness among people rather than giving punishment.

He said since most of the guilty shopkeepers are poor they were not fined heavily.

"We fined a shop in Khilgaon highest Tk 600 as the shopkeepers didn't cooperate with us initially," he said.

But, other shopkeepers had cooperated with them willingly, he said adding that most of them don't know that it's a violation of law to install such signboards.

Quoting the shopkeepers, he said the tobacco companies give them such signboards for free.

Dr Harunur Rashid, health officer of the Directorate of Health, was also present.

Tax evasion case

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The trial court has also ordered confiscation of his property worth about Tk 3 crore.

MANJU CASES
The SC yesterday stayed further trial proceedings of two separate corruption cases against former minister and JP Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju, his wife Taslima Hossain and cousin Mohammad Hossain.

The cases are now pending with the special court set up at parliament Bhaban complex.

A six-member bench headed by Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin passed the orders while granting the leave to appeal petition filed by one of the three accused, Mohammad Hossain.

On July 25 last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station. In the First Information Report (FIR), the complainant said Manju, during his days as communications minister, took Tk 1 crore in bribe from Al-Amin Construction Company Ltd between February 17 and February 20, 2000.

The same day, the ACC filed another case with Shahbagh Police Station accusing Manju of taking Tk 75 lakh in bribe from China National Overseas Engineering Corporation between February 13 and February 18, 2001.

On June 26 last, Manju, now a fugitive, was sentenced to five years' simple imprisonment and fined Tk 10,000 for possessing 21 bottles of liquor at his Dhanmondi house.

Wheat

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Karin passed the order.

The grounds for rejecting the leave petition could not be known immediately," Advocate Manzil Murshid told UNB, after emerging from the court.

On May 8, 2006, the High Court had summarily rejected a Public Interest Litigation writ petition filed by five lawyers, saying that the contentions raised by the petitioners are "devoid of any substance".

The High Court had viewed that Jamaat's election symbol in no way undermines and tarnishes the image and dignity of the Supreme Court and its monogram - the scales, which is a symbol of justice.

Scales will be used as election symbol, if allocated by the Election Commission, only during the election time for the purpose of conducting election, it had further observed.

Power outages

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Gas companies under Petrobangla are currently able to supply around 1,700 million cubic feet of gas a day for the nation.

Gas supply to Chittagong has been declining for the last few years due to the nose-diving gas production from the Sangu Gas Field.

Chittagong is experiencing a shortage of around 100 million cubic feet of gas a day, for which gas-fired power generation in Chittagong is suffering heavily. The shortfall is also creating a crisis in the industrial belt and the export processing zones in the port city.

Meanwhile, Dhaka city dwellers are more worried about the situation to develop soon if things keep going on in this way.

"It's like a game... power was on and off. I am scared about what will happen in the coming days when the whole country experiences the scorching heat," said Aminul Islam, a resident of Kathalbagan.

According to the Met office, Dhaka saw a high of 33.8 Celsius yesterday while the highest temperature of the country was recorded in Rangpur at 35.0 Celsius.

Indian customs

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the decision.

However, the export might start today (Thursday) once the Indian customs authorities at Petrapole land port receive written instructions on the matter, said exporters.

Indian central commerce ministry following rounds of talks with Organisation of Export Import Association decided that the rice that reached Petrapole before March 6 would be allowed for export at the previous rate, said an Indian rice exporter.

Around 3,000 trucks loaded with rice have been stranded at Petrapole land port near the border on the Indian side for the last 13 days.

On March 5, India imposed restrictions on export of rice to Bangladesh at prices lower than \$ 650.

WB MD

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Parel, also present at the briefing, said WB is also helping the government design a better safety net for the poor, who are the hardest hit.

Asked whether a democratic government would be better equipped to handle the food crisis, Ngozi said it would not matter which form of government was in place.

Ngozi however stressed that reforms must continue, especially structural reforms to open up the economy, and to create a climate more conducive to investment, with a level playing field.

She identified energy sectors, the agriculture sector, social sectors, and environmental management, as requiring reforms.

"Bangladesh can recover from the food and oil price shocks and the natural disasters of last year by supporting farmers and creating an investment friendly climate," she said.

Ngozi also said Bangladesh must have a long-term plan to adapt itself to climate change, so it may protect its crops and its infrastructure from greater intensification of the effects of global warming.

WB is also helping the government recover stolen assets from home and abroad through programmes like training the officials of its central bank's financial intelligence unit.

Emergency

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incidents of human rights violation has gone down. An independent human rights commission is being set up," he said.

The CA also refuted an allegation that the press in Bangladesh is being controlled under the emergency. He said newspapers and electronic media are enjoying freedom and they are allowed to criticise the government.

Fakhrudin also attended a press conference at Bangladesh High Commission, attended by Bangladesh-British journalists, yesterday.

He narrated the outcome of his talks with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other British ministers.

He said he raised the concern with the British prime minister over the shortage of staff at the Bangladesh-run curry restaurants in the UK. He requested Prime Minister Brown to allow semi-skilled people from Bangladesh to work as chefs in the restaurants.

In reply to a question, the CA said there is no food crisis in Bangladesh, as he observed there is enough food in stock. However, he agreed that prices of rice and other commodities have gone up due to price hike on the international market.

Asked about the "minus-two" formula to exclude Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina from active politics, the CA said he is not aware of it but added that the reform in the political parties is the demand of the people.

He hoped that the reforms undertaken by the Election Commission would bring about a lot of changes in political parties.

Asked about controversy over holding elections to the local bodies prior to the general elections, the CA said the elections will be held in those local bodies whose terms have expired. He observed that the local body polls won't hamper the national elections.

About holding trial of the war criminals, he said the incumbent government has time constraint to do it.

Emon

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space since they have a good relationship and following an understanding between them."

According to sources, Selim has a huge area of land in Karwan Bazar wholesale fish market.

They said following the feud with Babar, Lion made good relations with criminals like "Langra" Masud and Shahabuddin of Karwan Bazar. Masud was allegedly gunned down as a result of the feud between Babar and Lion.

Talking to The Daily Star Monday, Lion said, "I had good relationship with Babar but it deteriorated before the municipal election in 2002 as Babar backed candidate Dewan Mosaddek Shaif."

"In March 2006, goons hired by Babar attacked me during a conference of Madan upazila BNP, but I managed to flee the scene and save my life."

Emon, recently deported by the Indian authorities, allegedly admitted to the CID investigators that he did not carry out the murder since the two were relatives.

Ex-MP Zafarullah

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approval to the investigation officers (IOs) for submission of the charge sheets against detained former state minister for youth, sports and cultural affairs Obaidul Quader and detained former premier Khaleda Zia's assignment officer Dr Firoz Mahmud Iqbal in graft cases.

Meantime, a Dhaka court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against Sajedul Hossain alias Dipu Chowdhury, son of former state minister for shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, in connection with a case filed against him for non-submission of his health statements to the ACC.

Besides, another Dhaka court completed recording statements of prosecution witnesses in connection with the case filed against Akhter Hamid Paban, son of Khaleda Zia-appointed BNP Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain, and four others for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition.

CASE AGAINST ZAFARULLAH
ACC Assistant Director Ashrafur Islam filed the case against Zafarullah with Gulshan Police Station for not timely complying with the directive of the commission.

The case against the AL leader was filed under section 26(2) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004.

CASES AGAINST QUADER
Investigating Officer (IO) Mohammad Taleb Rhaman yesterday sent the sanction letters of the three bribery cases to Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court.

Sources said the charge sheets of the cases will be placed before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, within a short time.

On September 30 last year, ACC Assistant Director Ashrafur Islam filed the cases with Paltan Police Station against detained Awami League Joint General Secretary and former state minister for youth, sports and cultural affairs Obaidul Quader on charges of taking Tk 1.41 crore in bribe from bidders on different dates.

In the cases, the complainant said the AL leader while at the helm of the ministry took bribes to help bidders win tender of different development activities under National Sports Council and obtain bill after work.

In the cases, the complainant mentioned that Obaidul Quader took Tk 37 lakh, Tk 57 lakh and Tk 47 lakh from three contractors on different dates between January 1, 1999 and September 3, 2001.

CASE AGAINST DR FIROZ
ACC Investigating Officer Jahangir Alam yesterday sent the sanction letter to the same court in connection with the case filed against Dr Firoz for wasting government money through abuse of power.

On November 13 last year, ACC Deputy Director Iqbal Hossain filed the case with Tejaqon Police Station under the Anti Corruption Act and Emergency Power Rules.

In the first information report, the complainant mentioned that Firoz used three vehicles of Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL) and two vehicles of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) for his own and family purposes from June 2003 to October 2006, incurring a loss of Tk 34.90 lakh to the national exchequer.

ARREST WARRANT AGAINST DIPU

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents, Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order and fixed March 24 for service return of the arrest warrant.

On March 18, ACC investigating officer (IO) Mahbubur Rahman submitted the charge sheet against Dipu to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka showing 11 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrant against him and the order to attach his properties, as he has been absconding since the filing of the case.

On November 22 last year, ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim filed the case with Sutrapur

Shahidul, also a Khelafat Majlish leader, was a pioneer in Islamist militancy in Bangladesh and was reported to have close links to al-Qaeda, including its supreme Osama bin Laden.

Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina once pointed to his militant roots when he was an MP in the last parliament. He was arrested in 1999 during the AL regime for his involvement in bomb attacks on an Ahmadiyya mosque in Khulna that killed eight people.

Following his release, he left the country and reportedly roamed in Afghanistan, Pakistan and some African countries. He also got al-Qaeda training in bomb making. Detained leaders of the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) also mentioned his name as their patron.

On his return home in 2001, after the AL handed over power to a caretaker government, he joined the IO.

Surprisingly, he got nomination from the AL-led grand alliance to contest last year's scrapped general elections following a five-point moratorium of understanding signed between AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and the Khelafat Majlish.

Shahidul founded al-Markazul Islami, an NGO that provides free health healthcare and ambulance services. The NGO was reportedly founded on suggestions of the al-Qaeda. It allegedly promoted terrorism in Bangladesh under the guise of helping people.

He also set up at least 40 mosques and 13 madrasas and dug 350 wells in his constituency. He became a talking point after he began sacrificing 100 cattle on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha each year.

British PM

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and basic individual rights at all times.

They noted that the separation of the judiciary from the executive in Bangladesh had been a historic step forward and underlined the importance of a strong and independent judiciary for ensuring fair and transparent trials for all.

Both sides agreed to work closely together to combat terrorism and to enhance Bangladesh's institutional capacity to that effect. They agreed in this regard that education, women's empowerment, opportunity and prosperity in mainstream society offered the most effective defence against extremism.

The chief adviser highlighted the climate change challenge uniquely faced by Bangladesh due to global warming and sea level rise. Both sides agreed to work together in international forums to secure an effective and responsible international response to climate change.

The prime minister confirmed that Britain would host an international climate change conference in London in May this year at the request of the government of Bangladesh to explore how the country can best prepare and adapt to a changing global environment.

The chief adviser confirmed Bangladesh's support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Call to Action. This was launched by the UN secretary general and the prime minister in July 2007 to encourage greater collective action to attain the MDGs by 2015.

Rivers

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chromium and at least 30 other toxins every day.

These toxic waste flows untreated into the Buriganga through the Rayer Bazar sluice gate.

The report also said the waters of Buriganga became so polluted that it is impossible for any aquatic life to survive there.

The government following the report took an initiative to relocate the tannery industries in Savar but the move has been stalled since then.

The waters of the Shitalakha have meanwhile also become severely polluted. Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) and Aqua Consultant and Associates surveyed and tested the water of Shitalakha in 2006 and recommended relocation of water intake point of Wasa from Sarulia point of Demra as the water over there is severely polluted.

But still the government allows the industries to pollute the water of Shitalakha and Wasa is also supplying its water.

Talking with city dwellers from different areas including Basabo, Goran, Mugda, Narinda, Jatrabari, Maghbazar, Tejaqon, Hatirpul and Mirpur it was learned that they often find bad odour in the water.

"Sometimes the water smells like soil," said a Mirpur resident, while another from Hatirpul said the supply water sometimes stinks like decomposed rats.

But the Wasa officials said the stink is a result of chlorine and ammonia sulphate used to treat the water.

"Though it's stinky it's safe as we tested the water in every hour before supplying," said a top Wasa official.

The total population in Dhaka city grew from 0.1 million in 1906 to 12 million in 2008. Industries and houses have also mushroomed but the city authorities could not prepare and implement a long-term plan to keep the water bodies free from pollution.

Following investigation, the ACC pressed charges against the ex-MP and dropped his wife's name from the charge sheet.

Shahidul was on the first list of 50 graft suspects the ACC published on February 16 last year.

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Writer Arthur C Clarke

FROM PAGE 16
He was credited with the concept of communications satellites in 1945, decades before they became a reality. Geosynchronous orbits, which keep satellites in a fixed position relative to the ground, are called Clarke orbits.

He joined American broadcaster Walter Cronkite as commentator on the US Apollo moonshots in the late 1960s.

Clarke's non-fiction volumes on space travel and his explorations of the Great Barrier Reef and Indian Ocean earned him respect in the world of science, and in 1976 he became an honorary fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

But it was his writing that shot him to his greatest fame and that gave him the greatest fulfillment.

"Sometimes I am asked how I would like to be remembered," Clarke said recently. "I have had a diverse career as a writer, underwater explorer and space promoter. Of all these I would like to be remembered as a writer."

From 1950, he began a prolific output of both fiction and non-fiction, sometimes publishing three books in a year. He published his best-selling "3001: The Final Odyssey" when he was 79.

Some of his best-known books are "Childhood's End," 1953; "The City and The Stars," 1956; "The Nine Billion Names of God," 1967; "Rendezvous with Rama," 1973; "Imperial Earth," 1975; and "The Songs of Distant Earth," 1986.

When Clarke and Kubrick got together to develop a movie about space, they used as basic ideas several of Clarke's shorter pieces, including "The Sentinel," written in 1948, and "Encounter in the Dawn." As work progressed on the screenplay, Clarke also wrote a novel of the story. He followed it up with "2010," "2061," and "3001: The Final Odyssey."

In 1989, two decades after the Apollo 11 moon landings, Clarke wrote: "2001 was written in an age which now lies beyond one of the great divides in human history; we are sundered from it forever by the moment when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped out on to the Sea of Tranquility. Now history and fiction have become inexorably intertwined."

Clarke won the Nebula Award of the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1972, 1974 and 1979; the Hugo Award of the World Science Fiction Convention in 1974 and 1980, and in 1985 became Grand Master of the Science Fiction Writers of America. He was awarded the CBE in 1989.

Born in Minehead, western England, on Dec. 16, 1917, the son of a farmer, Arthur Charles Clark became addicted to science fiction after buying his first copies of the pulp magazine "Amazing Stories" at Woolworth's. He read English writers H.G. Wells and Olaf Stapledon and began writing for his school magazine in his teens.

Clarke went to work as a clerk in Her Majesty's Exchequer and Audit Department in London, where he joined the British Interplanetary Society and wrote his first short stories and scientific articles on space travel.

It was not until after the World War II that Clarke received a bachelor of science degree in physics and mathematics from King's College in London.

In the wartime Royal Air Force, he was put in charge of a new radar blind-landing system.

But it was an RAF memo he wrote in 1945 about the future of communications that led him to fame. It was about the possibility of using satellites to revolutionize communications - an idea whose time had decidedly not come.

Clarke later sent it to a publication called Wireless World, which almost rejected it as too far-fetched.

Clarke married in 1953, and was divorced in 1964. He had no children.

He moved to the Indian Ocean island of Sri Lanka in 1956 after

He said the party would announce the name of its candidate when the government convened the National Assembly session to elect the leader of the house.

However, some political analysts believe that the party may spring a surprise and someone other than the three of four people whose names are doing the rounds may become the prime minister.

AFP adds: The teenage son of slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan yesterday to announce the party's nomination for the post of prime minister, a party spokesman said.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, a 19-year-old student at Britain's prestigious Oxford University, was named Bhutto's heir apparent in December following her assassination at a political rally.

Bilawal is completing his studies, and in the interim his father Asif Ali Zardari has taken the reins of the Pakistan People's Party, which won the most seats in last month's parliamentary elections.

"Bilawal will announce the name of the prime minister. He has come to Pakistan, he is in Karachi," party spokesman Farhatullah Babar told AFP.

Bilawal would be first travelling to the mausoleum in rural southern Sindh province where Bhutto was buried, Babar said.

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