

ACC presses

FROM PAGE 1
On September 26 last year, Deputy Director Jahurul Huda filed the case with Kafilur Police Station against Tarique, Dr Zubaida and Iqbalmand Banu for concealing wealth information.

Tarique, elder son of detained former premier Khaleda Zia, was charged with earning wealth over Tk 4.82 crore illegally and concealing information of property worth over Tk 4.23 crore in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC earlier.

Zubaida and her mother were accused of abetting Tarique in establishing that the money was earned through legal income.

The case against Tarique, his wife and mother-in-law was filed under sections 26 (2) and 27 (1) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, section 109 of the Penal Code and section 15 (Gha) (5) of Emergency Power Rules, 2007.

Tarique submitted his wealth statement to the anti-graft body on June 10 last year through jail authorities, claiming to have assets worth Tk 1.37 crore in the names of himself, his wife and his daughter.

Jahurul Huda submitted a report to ACC on July 25 after an investigation into Tarique's wealth account.

During the investigation it was found that Tarique became owner of Bangla newspaper Danik Dinkal by taking over as publisher and printer on August 12, 1998 from Prof Mazidul Islam through an agreement.

Jahurul mentioned in the case that according to vouchers, cashbooks, ledgers and audit reports, by becoming the daily's owner Tarique owned over Tk 4.15 crore against an investment of over Tk 1.74 crore.

Tarique also concealed information about 250 shares of Rahman Group worth Tk 2.5 lakh in his wealth statement.

It was also mentioned in the case statement that Tarique, his wife and daughter own land and three Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) worth Tk 58.45 lakh. But the wealth did not match Tarique's actual income.

Of the wealth, 2.01 acres of land at Gabtoli in Bogra is in Tarique's name. His wife has two FDRs - worth Tk 25 lakh and Tk 10 lakh - with the Banani

branch of Prime Bank Ltd. Besides, there is an FDR worth Tk 20 lakh with the Banani branch of Dhaka Bank Ltd in the name of their daughter Zaima.

In the statement, Tarique mentioned that he bought the piece of land at Tk 3.45 lakh in May 2003 with the money he had earned from business. But his total expenditure during 2001-2006 was more than his income, which means he bought the land through dishonest means or unknown source of income.

The case statement says Zubaida claimed that her mother provided the money of the two FDRs. Iqbalmand Banu also said she provided the amount from the money she had got at a time renting out her houses at Mohakhali and Motijheel.

However, their claims proved to be false in primary investigations. One Enayetullah Bari Jewel, who has no relation or involvement with Zubaida, deposited the money with the bank for opening the FDRs. The IO believes Tarique provided the money from his undeclared income, the case statement adds.

The case also says Tarique claimed he provided Tk 20 lakh for opening the FDR for his daughter taking loan from Rahman Group, but no evidence was found in favour of the loan.

Earlier on March 7 last year, joint forces arrested Tarique at their Cantonment residence after an extortion case filed against him by a businessman. He has since been in Dhaka Central Jail.

He was later shown arrested in 10 extortion cases and another case in which he was accused of cheating following confessional statements of his close friend and business associate Giasuddin Al Mamun.

After submission of the charge sheet in the first extortion case, Tarique's lawyers submitted a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging legality of the case and the HC stayed its proceedings.

On the other hand, police are yet to press charges against him in one of the extortion cases, even though Mamun had given confessional statements involving him in the cases.

KL warns

FROM PAGE 16

Many of the workers are down with fever and diarrhoea. But they don't have enough money to take treatment, one of the workers Mohammed Mukles, 20, told the newspaper.

Another Bangladeshi worker Swapan Shukur, 30, said local people had given a few of them food but some workers could not have anything for days.

Quoting another Malaysian newspaper Kosmo!, The Star on Friday reported the Bangladeshi workers were living on coconut scraps and selling empty plastic bottles they fished out of the river.

They said they had been compelled to live like this as their recruiting agents had not given them work.

Another Bangladeshi Mostak Mia said they had been staying in Malaysia for about four months. They decided to move out of their temporary home in Kajang to stay somewhere close to the Bangladesh High Commission, hoping to meet high commission officials for requesting them to arrange jobs for them.

Hundreds of Bangladeshi workers remain unemployed in Malaysia, as their recruiting agents did not provide them with jobs.

The Bangladesh High Commission had set up three shelter houses to accommodate 500-600 workers facing such problems in the south-east Asian country.

AL warns

FROM PAGE 16

hospital before her treatment was complete, they threatened that the party's announced mass hunger strike would turn into an upsurge of demonstrations to free her.

They said this at a discussion meeting to celebrate the Independence Day at the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue with acting Awami League City Unit President MA Aziz in the chair.

"Release our party chief before the mass signature campaign beginning on April 4. If she is not released, stronger movements will be announced," said Awami League Presidium member Amir Hossain Amu.

He demanded the government officially recognise Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Father of the Nation and execute the verdict of Bangladesh murder case during its tenure.

Awami League (AL) Presidium member Tofail Ahmed said, "If the government does not free her, the party's mass hunger strike will turn into an upsurge in demonstrations to free our leader." Asserting that the government has lost its neutrality and credibility, Tofail said the Awami League has planted the seeds of movement by announcing the mass hunger strike programme across the country.

Terming the caretaker government unconstitutional and undemocratic, Suranjit Sengupta, a presidium member, alleged that the government is behaving vindictively towards Hasina.

He asked the government to announce election schedule and when it would lift the state of emergency.

He said they would resist any move to establish a government other than an elected government.

AL acting General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam demanded that the government free Hasina unconditionally and send her to the United States for treatment.

Alleging that the government has been luring away "young and honest" leaders of different political parties and trying to give them "special responsibilities", Syed Ashraf urged the government to stop such activities.

Party workers under the age of 40 are being asked by the government whether they could bear any special responsibilities, he said adding that the CVs of honest and competent candidates from all political parties are being collected at district level.

He asserted that the AL, not the government, would decide who would be their candidate.

Central Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor said people would free Hasina through movement for their survival.

AL leaders Mukul Bose, Abdul Mannan, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Yafes Osman, Bazlur Rahman, Qumrul Islam, Faizuddin Mia and Mukul Chowdhury also spoke among others.

JOINT STATEMENT
In a joint statement, leaders of Awami League's front organisations threatened to go for tougher movements if Hasina is not released unconditionally, the "false" charges brought against her are not dropped and she is not sent to the US for treatment.

The signatories to the statement are Bangladesh Krishak League President Mirza Jalil, General Secretary Mohammad Motahar Hossain Mollah, Jubo League President Jahangir Kabir Nanak, General Secretary Mirza Azam, Bangladesh Chhatra League President Mahmud Hasan Ripon, Awami Svecchhasebak League President AEM Bahauddin Nasim, Joint General Secretary Motiur Rahman Moti, Mahila Awami League President Ashrafunnessa Mosharraf, General Secretary Fazilatunnessa Indira, Jubo Mahila League President Nazma Akhter and General Secretary APUkl.

EX-CHHATRA LEAGUE LEADERS
In another statement, a number of former Chhatra League leaders said the present government would have to shoulder all responsibilities of an upsurge in demonstrations if the AL chiefs are not released.

The former leaders are: Balaram Podder, Sahajada Mohiuddin, Marufa Akhtar Popy, Rafiqul Islam Katowal, Saifuzzaman Shikhor, Qamrul Hasan Khokon, Moinin Patwari, Morseddin Selim, Zakir Hossain Maruf, Miraj Hossain, Salauddin Mahmud Chowdhury and Alamgir Hasan.

Ain O Salish Kendra in another statement expressed deep concern over the moving of Hasina to a special jail from hospital and asked the government to clarify the "questionable" move of the jail authorities.

Power abuse

FROM PAGE 1

He was detained as a graft suspect on February 4. Then his name came on the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) first list of corruption suspects on February 18.

Several cases were filed against him on charges that range from graft and extortion to land grab. Including yesterday's, jail terms the now detained former lawmaker has topped so far amount to 22 years.

On September 19 last year, a Sylhet court sentenced him to nine years in prison for extortion.

Nuruzzaman filed the extortion case on February 17 last year. Earlier on October 24, 2003, he held a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity and alleged that Naser demanded Tk 2 crore after he had won the contract for building Fenchuganj-Rajnagar-Moulvibazar-Jagadishpur regional highway.

In retaliation, Naser filed a false case against Nuruzzaman under Speedy Trial Act. Besides, a group of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists loyal to the ex-lawmaker attacked the contractor and left him seriously injured.

Apart from intimidating businesses into giving him cut of their profits, Naser would exert a huge influence on the banking sector during the alliance rule.

He made a hefty amount as he alone supplied all the money counting machines for Bangladesh Bank and other nationalised commercial banks.

Many projects where he had minimum interest or involvement were passed at the cabinet committee on purchase without question. He used to take up to 25 percent commission from busi-

ness firms for winning them contracts worth crores of taka.

During the coalition rule, his men were awarded work worth around Tk 1,000 crore without any tender in public works, local government, water development board, zila parishads, public health, roads and highways, north-south irrigation project, forest department and pourasabhas.

He had received a whopping 20 percent commission from those who won the contract to build a Tk 3.27-crore bridge at Lunguchhara on Moulvibazar-Kulaura road, said sources.

During construction of the bridge, he made the authorities allocate Tk 30 lakh for an alternative road that should not have cost more than Tk 8 lakh.

He allegedly received Tk 30 lakh for helping a contractor win work worth Tk 8 crore for a road extension and sodium lights installation project in Moulvibazar pourasabha.

Naser grabbed around 60 decimals of land near Sarak Bhaban on the outskirts of Moulvibazar town through forged documents.

He and his brother used their clout to take up a lease on a 200-acre hilly land for tea cultivation at a stunning rate of Tk 5 per acre.

Sources said Naser Rahman was part of a syndicate responsible for unusual hike in the price of sugar during the alliance rule. His father Saifur Rahman was compelled to reduce import tariffs on sugar before the end of fiscal year 2006-2007.

He used to pull strings in postings and transfers of police and civil servants to and from greater Sylhet.

Govt to take \$300m

FROM PAGE 1

conditions, and it is a soft loan.

Apart from the proposal for loan from Standard Chartered Bank, a proposal for loan from the BNP Paribas (Banque Nationale de Paris), a French bank, was also placed at the committee meeting yesterday. The meeting did not approve this proposal since it was disadvantaged compared to the other proposal, the finance adviser said.

"We have decided to ask the BNP Paribas to continue the negotiation for a lower interest rate," Sources said the BNP Paribas proposed to provide \$250 million loan under the LIBOR in addition to 1.84 percent interest.

Standard Chartered Bank offered \$250 million loan to the BPC, Mirza Aziz said. And the committee decided to take up to \$300 million if conditions are the same.

The adviser said cash flow of the BPC has been affected seriously due to high prices of petroleum products in international market. Price of oil per barrel was \$62 to \$63 in April last year when fuel prices in domestic market were adjusted for the last time. Price of oil per barrel is now \$110 to \$112, he mentioned.

The budget for this fiscal year had allocated Tk 6,000 crore as subsidies but different ministries increased their demands, and the

allocation now stands at Tk 15,600 crore.

According to BPC's quarterly performance report, its losses in the first half of this fiscal year stood at Tk 1,942 crore. Despite a recent allocation of Tk 800 crore, the BPC is still facing a deficit of Tk 1,600 crore.

Sources in the finance division said usually \$2.1 billion is required in a fiscal year to import petroleum products. But in the current fiscal year, the requirement would reach at least \$3.2 billion because of high fuel prices in the global market.

The BPC now incurs Tk 24 loss per litre of diesel and Tk 23 loss per litre of kerosene since it sells these at government-fixed prices, which are lower than the international market rate.

"Estimated losses on diesel and kerosene will be around Tk 8,600 crore in the current fiscal year," a BPC official said.

In January, the energy division had requested the finance ministry to arrange a loan of \$900 million.

The loan request came following the BPC's failed effort to get \$500 million from Bangladesh Bank (BB). The central bank refused to provide the amount saying the BPC already got \$300 million loan this fiscal year, and any new loan would create pressure on the foreign exchange reserve.

Optical fibre line

FROM PAGE 16

and Chittagong conducted investigations after the line was snapped, and detected the location at Basantapur, 23 km off Feni.

During the hours of disruption, telecommunication links were maintained using satellite communication, which caused call congestion. The internet links were virtually non-functional although the BTBT claimed that it functioned 'partly'.

There have been two dozen cases of such disruption in the 433 km optical fibre line since it was launched in 2006. Almost half of these disruptions had been identified as subversive acts, probably by illegal VoIP (Voice over internet protocol) operators.

Due to lack of a back up line, whenever the line was disrupted, international telecom and internet connectivity was affected. Since many businesses now rely on international connectivity, such disruptions have been causing incalculable losses. Plus, each disruption deprives the BTBT of at least \$70,000 revenue per hour.

On the third week of February, the BTBT signed a Tk 18 crore deal with Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) to provide a back up optical fibre network between Dhaka and Cox's Bazar to ensure better access to the submarine cable system.

The deal however requires that the BTBT spend about Tk 3.42 crore to install additional links and some machinery to avail the PGCB service. The BTBT recently floated a tender in this regard. Sources said it will take many more months before the BTBT can use this backup

system.

The BTBT had a second option of signing a deal with Bangla Phone for a free back up line provided that when Bangla Phone's own line is disrupted, the BTBT will give access to its line on equal terms.

Bangla Phone set up the fibre optic line early last year on the basis of negotiations with the BTBT.

Presently, the BTBT is using approximately 2,799 Megabyte per second (Mbps) voice and 1,244 Mbps data bandwidth through the optical fibre and submarine cable. The submarine cable's allocation for the BTBT is more than 14 Gigabyte per second.

Boiler blast

FROM PAGE 1

College and Hospital (DMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries.

The tin-shed factory was badly damaged as it caught fire due to the explosion. Several houses near the factory were also damaged.

On information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after a two-hour-long effort.

Nur Hossain, assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they rescued 16 injured workers who got trapped inside the factory.

He said the explosion might have caused due to the worn-out boiler machine.

Over 150 workers worked at the factory in two shifts.

Mohammad Shahjahan, the owner of the factory, went into hiding after the incident.

The family members of the victims have demanded compensation from the authorities.

Public servants

FROM PAGE 16

corruption, ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said while speaking at a press briefing at the ACC headquarters.

The commission in a letter to the cabinet secretary yesterday offered the suggestion to deal with the wealth statements submitted by government officials following an order from the establishment ministry.

The ministry has informed the ACC that the government officials have submitted their wealth statements. Earlier, the commission urged the ministry to issue orders asking the government employees to submit their wealth statements.

"The government officials have submitted their wealth statements to the establishment ministry," said Col Hanif Iqbal adding that if the wealth statements are scrutinised, it would be possible to get a clear idea about corrupt officials.

Replying to a query whether the commission will look into the wealth statement, Hanif said, "The ACC will not get involved in the task. The respective offices or departments or ministries will scrutinise the statements under their own arrangement, which will be a permanent system."

"The system would help us get a clear idea about corruption done by government officials so far and curb it," he said adding that if necessary, fresh recommendations on the matter might be forwarded.

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday approved submission of charge sheet against former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and his wife Gulshan Ara for amassing Tk 26.92 crore beyond their known sources of income and concealing information about their wealth worth over Tk 10 crore.

Land commission

FROM PAGE 16

nation, we will be blamed if we do not ensure indigenous communities' birth rights and if we failed to force the government to implement it," he said calling on the government to sit with major political parties and have their pledges in this regard.

Former adviser to a caretaker government advocate Sultana Kamal said the government must look into the problems of CHT areas with a humanitarian perspective. She said strong political will and pledges coupled with united effort are required to settle the land and other disputes in the CHT areas.

Gono Forum leader Pankaj Bhattacharya suggested holding broader dialogues between the government and the civil society in this regard.

Economist Prof Abul Barakat held previous governments responsible for patronising land grabbers. He said no government took any initiative to recognise the indigenous communities. He said 30 years ago 75 percent of the people in CHT areas were indigenous people but currently the percentage stands at 47, complicating the issue.

He said political will is required to settle the land disputes. Prof Barakat urged the government not to include any people from the anti-liberation war force in the land commission. He suggested that the government rehabilitate the Bangla speaking settlers on government lands outside CHT areas.

Writer and journalist Syed Abul Maksud demanded forming a high-powered commission to settle the land disputes in CHT areas.

Barrister Sara Hossain, Rabindranath Saren, and Shamsul Huda also spoke at the roundtable among others.

Prices rise

FROM PAGE 1

their headquarters in this regard.

In the wholesale markets, price of coarse rice including Indian Swarna and Ratna was hovering between Tk 1,260 to Tk 1,300 a maund yesterday. Only one day ago, the items were sold at Tk 1,250-Tk 1,280 per maund.

Local coarse varieties were selling at Tk 1,160 to Tk 1,270 per maund, which was Tk 1,150 to Tk 1,250 the previous day. On the other hand, price of fine rice also rose by Tk 10 to Tk 20 per maund.

Sardar Mohammad Hossain, president of Badamtali and Babubazar Rice Wholesalers' Association, said it will be illogical if the price rises further as new local rice is going to hit the market within 15 to 20 days.

There is no shortage of supply now and the stock in the wholesale and retail markets is quite enough for the rest 20 days, he added.

Several wholesalers and retailers were seen hanging the price chart, as instructed by the joint forces, so that no one can claim additional price.

Col Halim said they would take "stern" actions against the individuals found guilty of irregularities.

IMPORT FROM INDIAN RESUMES
Rice import through Bhoma land port resumed yesterday as at least 40 trucks with 520 tonnes of rice entered Bangladesh, reports our Sathira correspondent.

The import remained halted since Thursday over dispute between the groups of Indian workers' organisations, sources said.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 16

petition of the prosecution, the order was stayed yesterday.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shahin Uddin passed the order following the defence's plea for returning Hasina's passport.

AL leader Advocate Sahara Khatun, also a counsel of Hasina, said Hasina's passport, which had been seized by joint forces on July 16 last year immediately after her arrest from her Sudha Sadan residence, might be needed any time for her trip abroad for treatment.

After hearing the petition, the court stayed the March 12 order and asked the QC of Dharmadi police to submit a report regarding the return of the passport to its owner.

Hasina was arrested on July 16 last year after Azam J Chowdhury filed an extortion case against her.

Dr Kamal

FROM PAGE 16

dwellers in the city.

Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra is implementing the project. The slum dwellers bought the land with their own money. In the first phase of the project, a six-storey building would be built on three big plots of land accommodating 350 families.

Buriganga

FROM PAGE 16

the Buriganga River - - Augmentation of Dry Season Flow' organised by Bangladesh National Committee of ICID (BANCID) in association with Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) at the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Centre (BARC) auditorium in the capital.

Participants said the quality of water in Buriganga and other rivers that surround Dhaka is deteriorating every day. The situation worsens particularly during the five months of dry season from January through to May because the rivers around Dhaka hardly get any water flow during this period.

Agriculture and Water Resources Adviser Dr CS Karim said that the Buriganga can be saved by transferring water from Jamuna to it.

"The time has come to discuss the possible routes of transferring water from Jamuna to Buriganga. We will take a decision based on experts' views of the matter," he said while addressing the seminar as chief guest.

Emaduddin Ahmad, executive director of IWM, said that according to their survey, around 50 to 60 percent of the contamination of Buriganga is caused by industrial effluent and the rest by domestic wastewater.

He also identified nine industrial clusters in the Dhaka water shed which are the main sources of pollution.

Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, chairman of Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, urged the caretaker government to take immediate measures against polluters who do not comply with wastewater treatment guidelines and regulation.

Enam A Chaudhury, former chairman of the Privatisation Commission, said an integrated approach is required to save the water resources in Dhaka from pollution.

Among others, Water Development Board Director General HS Mozaddad Faruque, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) professor M Fazlul Bari, former professor of Dhaka University KB Sajjadur Rasheed addressed the seminar.

Gulistan-Jatrabari

FROM PAGE 16

investigation and revealed that there was not enough money in the bank account and the head office of Oriental Bank provided a fake guarantee of Tk 6.70 crore.

When the DCC asked Oriental Bank to explain, the bank authorities said Obaidul Karim was then the chairman of Oriental Bank and he influenced bank officials to issue the fake guarantee paper.

After detection of the forgery, the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case against Obaidul Karim with a special court. The court on December 27 last year sentenced Karim to life imprisonment and fined him Tk 6.70 crore. It also cancelled the guarantee paper.

However, Belhassa JV Accom obtained an ad interim stay order from the High Court on the cancellation of the contract of Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover project. The DCC later appealed to the Supreme Court and the court vacated the High Court stay order.

Following the vacation order, the DCC authorities started the process of cancelling the contract.

Earlier, project director of Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover project engineer Ashiqur Rahman was suspended after proof of his involvement in corruption was found.

Belhassa JV had received the work order under Build Operate and Transfer (BOT). They had permission to operate the flyover and collect pre-approved toll for 24 years after completing the project in three years.

The DCC floated an international tender in 2003 to build the Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover. The DCC signed the deal with the company on June 21, 2005.

US airstrikes

FROM PAGE 16

was hit by a roadside bomb, injuring one soldier.

While soldiers were securing the area they found a second bomb nearby. They were then attacked with mortars or rockets, rocket propelled grenades and small-arms fire from a nearby house.

"A mortar team was spotted on the roof of the house where the attack was coming from," the statement said, adding that air support was called in and the house bombed, killing 25 criminals."

In northeast Baghdad, another eight "criminals" were killed when they attacked US soldiers, a separate statement said.