

Tarique, Babar

FROM PAGE 1 Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan Shah Alam and his two sons Shafat Sobhan Sanvir and Sadaat Sobhan, Abu Sufian, director of East West Property Development Pvt Ltd, a sister concern of Bashundhara, and Tarique's private secretary Mia Nur Uddin Apu.

The ACC accused them of taking and giving the bribe to save the Bashundhara Group chairman's son Sanvir from the charge of murdering Humayun Kabir Sabbar, a director of Bashundhara Group, on July 5, 2006.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Abul Kashem filed a case in connection with the bribery on October 10 last year, accusing six except Tarique and Saleemul. In an investigation later, investigating officer ACC Deputy Assistant Director Rupak Kumar Saha found involvement of the two.

The three-member ACC approved the charge sheet at a meeting yesterday, said a source in the commission, adding that the ACC also issued a letter to the investigating officer informing him of the approval.

Sources said investigation found that Tarique had taken Tk 1 crore out of the Tk 21 crore bribe offered by Shah Alam in cash.

Of the remaining amount, Tk 6 crore was paid in cash and Tk 14 crore through cheques and pay-orders to Babar, who mobilised the amount to the bank account of Saleemul Huq in Prime Bank. Saleemul was the chairman of the bank at that time.

Babar realised the bribe at different times between August 7 and September 13, 2006.

"The allegation against Saleemul is that he kept the illegal money in his account and drew Tk 88 lakh interest against the amount," said a source.

Sanvir allegedly killed Sabbar on July 5, 2006 using a broken bottle over a feud centring a woman and threw the body from a building in the Bashundhara residential area, according to Rapid Action Battalion sources.

After the murder, Abu Sufian arranged a meeting among Babar, Tarique, Shah Alam and Apu to save Sanvir. At the meeting Babar demanded Tk 100 crore bribe but



Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal

after bargaining it was fixed at Tk 50 crore.

After a few days, Shah Alam sent Tk 1 crore to Tarique via Apu. The remaining Tk 20 crore was transacted through Sufian to Babar. With the change of government in October, further transaction was stopped.

During this transaction, Saleemul was safeguarding the bribe money, sources said.

After the present caretaker government took office and the joint forces started anti-corruption drive, Saleemul tried to save his skin by giving the money to the national exchequer.

"But he is a protector of this bribe money and he benefited by taking 6.5 percent interest against it," said an ACC official.

Both Tarique and Babar are now in jail, while Shah Alam, his two sons and Saleemul have been absconding abroad. Sufian is in hiding in Dhaka.

Investigating officer Rupak Kumar Saha yesterday told The Daily Star that he is yet to be informed about the ACC approval of the chargesheet.

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal acknowledged the approval, saying the charge sheet will be submitted before the court shortly.

The charges have been brought under sections 161, 165 and 165(A) and 109 of the Penal Code and section 5(2) of the Corruption Prevention Act, 1947 (CPA). The penal code sections deal with bribery and abetting such an act while the CPA section deals with misuse of power.

Koko, Selim

FROM PAGE 1 Koko and his mother were detained on September 2 last year in a late night joint forces raid. Earlier, on August 29, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) asked all banks to freeze the accounts of Koko, his mother and nine others of the family. This is the third time Koko is being accused in a case filed by the ACC. He is the prime accused in a Tk 1.20-crore extortion case and a co-accused in the Gato graft case.

ACC Deputy Director Abu Sayeed in his case statement mentioned that Koko in his January 9, 2008 wealth statement submitted to the ACC through jail authorities declared Tk 8,08,37,481 worth of movable and immovable properties under his wife, Sayeda Shamila Tabassum, their two daughters and his own name. However, the ACC during its investigation detected that the properties belonging to the Koko family are worth more than the declared figure.

The ACC investigators also found that Koko concealed information about the registration fee he paid for a flat he had purchased at Banani in Dhaka, the loans he received from different banks, and remuneration and other benefits he received from different businesses.

Koko also concealed information about 500 shares (Tk 100 each) he has in a business firm named Hasnaco Aviation Ltd and two bank savings certificates (Tk 1 lakh each) under his wife's name.

The ACC conducted its investigation based on documents collected from different government and private institutions including banks, the NBR and different sub-registry offices of the land department.

Koko's wife's Tk 1.50 crore investment in a business and Koko's overseas travel expenses for 84 trips between September 2003 and

December 2006 did not match the couple's recognised sources of income.

The investigators of the ACC found that out of the total Tk 7,85,53,556 worth of wealth amassed by Koko and his wife, Tk 2,23,18,245 worth of wealth was made illegally, said the case statement.

SELIM SUEDE BY ACC
The ACC yesterday filed a case against former health minister and AL leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim for concealing wealth information and amassing wealth illegally.

ACC Deputy Director Abdul Karim filed the case with Ramna police station under 26 (2), 27 (1) of ACC Act 2004 and 15 (Gha) of Emergency Power Rules.

The complainant in the case statement said Selim concealed information of wealth worth over Tk 22.39 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC and amassed wealth worth over Tk 3.38 crore -- that is beyond his known sources of income.

Selim submitted his wealth statement on July 22, 2007, declaring Tk 5,13,98,000 worth of wealth under his name.

EPR cases

FROM PAGE 1 over restriction on bail in criminal cases under the EPR.

Khandaker Mahub Hossain, vice chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, told a press briefing that it cannot be good for any government if jurisdiction of a higher court is curtailed. It hampers justice and increases people's sufferings.

He also said the government will have to be cautious about applying the EPR. And importance of cases should be considered before those are brought under the EPR, he added.

On the night of March 21 last year, the government issued a gazette notification relating to bail in cases filed under the EPR with retrospective effect from February 13.

According to the amended rule, an accused in such a case is stripped of the right to file bail petition during investigation or trial of the case.

Moreover, they cannot seek redress from any higher courts against any order given by any court or tribunal before or during the trial -- until the delivery of the final verdict, it says.

But the HC granted bail to Majjudin, which the SC stayed following the government appeal.

Majjudin's counsel Abdul Matin Khasru told reporters that following the SC judgment, no one will be able to come up with a petition in the HC seeking bail in cases under the EPR.

Barrister Rafique UH Huq said no one could now seek bail in higher court in cases under the EPR. Lower court and higher court are now put in the same row.

When this case was in the HC, counsel for the state had argued that the words 'court or tribunal' in the EPR stand for the HC. So, no one can apply for bail in the HC.

Voter registration

FROM PAGE 16 anticipate being negligible, possibly less than a percent," it said.

Among those who reported incorrect ID information, nearly two-thirds in Rajshahi, about one-fifth in Raozan and all in Tahirpur said that either the names of the ID card holders and/or names of parents were misspelled.

A small percentage of them reported that they had been waiting for delivery of cards.

To ensure a flawless list, the survey recommended vigorous publicity of registration schedule and follow-up schedule for those who were absent during the initial schedule of enumerators' visit at home.

Involvement of union council or ward commissioner for publicity may prove useful to check missing of voters in the list, while appropriate time schedule for delivery of ID cards would be very helpful, it said.

The survey also suggested setting up a permanent office where persons missing initial or follow-up registration opportunity can go with proper identification and get registered. "This place may be kept open year round to facilitate updating of registration as an on-going process."

Arrangements should be made for replacement of damaged, lost and stolen ID cards and a permanent registration place can take care of such requirements, it said.

Most participants in the survey appreciated the presence of the army and their help in orderly voter listing and recommended their presence during election time, it added.

"Preparation of error-free voter roll is the responsibility of Election Commission (EC). The participants were emphatic that the responsibility should stay with the EC and that political parties, NGOs and civil society cannot be trusted and they should not be involved in the preparation of the voter role in anyway," the report said.

Explaining such attitude by the participants, Dr Owen Lippert said that they are very suspicious, as they had earlier seen that political leaders influence the voters' registration process.

On whether the survey in three areas represent the national picture, he said it is not a national survey, but does give an idea of how things are going on around. "We can, however, learn from this," Lippert added.

90 killed

FROM PAGE 16 During the same period, the military has lost 218 soldiers, according to the defence ministry.

Military analysts noted that security forces had underestimated the strength of the Tigers, who had concentrated their forces in their mini-state in the north after they were driven out from the multi-ethnic eastern province.

Troops have been using aircraft, helicopter gunships and multi-barrel rockets against the Tigers while the rebels deploy mainly artillery and mortars at the battle front.

However, the guerrillas have also occasionally used light aircraft to bomb military installations besides sending in suicide bombers.

The Tigers ran the Jaffna peninsula as a de facto separate state for five years till October 1995 when they were driven out. However, they took back the southern part of the peninsula in April 2000.

The LTTE have been fighting since 1972 to carve out an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east. Tens of thousands have died on both sides.

42 fortune-seekers

FROM PAGE 16 "I was given a job as a cleaner and was paid only \$200 and nothing else. Sometimes I was paid even nothing," he added.

Shafiq said there is a group of 10 to 12 people including his nephew who are involved in such cheating.

"We were first taken to Dubai and after two days' stay at the transit of Dubai airport were taken to Iraq."

He went on to say that the manpower frauds seized their passports in Iraq and sold those to others. "Even we had to buy our own passports at higher cost."

A member of a taskforce formed in January this year to probe irregularities in overseas employment sector earlier told The Daily Star frauds force visas of United Arab Emirates to take Bangladeshi jobseekers to Iraq.

Law enforcers earlier arrested four people involved in cheating jobseekers.

Earlier on March 21 this year, 49 Bangladeshis of the same fate returned from the Middle East country, said Uttam Kumar Das, national programme officer of IOM Dhaka chapter.

Meanwhile, IOM Regional Representative for South Asia Rabab Fatima in a press release said AVR is one of the many migration management services they offer to the migrants and governments.

She said the service aims at orderly, humane and cost-effective return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin.

Ershad backs polls

FROM PAGE 16 dictator of the country however said some relaxation in the provisions of the emergency rules is desirable.

The JP chief was talking to reporters before and during the break in a press conference of the party in his Banani office in the capital.

Ershad, who had resigned from the post of the chief of JP last year, in a surprise move on April 7 claimed that he still retains the chairmanship of the party.

Yesterday for the second time, since his resignation, Ershad presided over a presidium meeting of the party.

Political analysts say Ershad, who was inactive in politics since 1/11, all of a sudden has become lively again with blessings from 'influential quarters'.

On June 30 of last year, the former military dictator who was overthrown from the seat of power by a popular upsurge in 1990, disclosed in a news conference that he had left his apex post in the party and had deputised Presidium Member Anisul Islam Mahmud as the acting chairman of the party to run the show until it elects a new chief.

Asked about his comments on the National Women's Development Policy and the ongoing strife between Islamist forces and the government, Ershad said the disputes will be over once the recommendations of the government formed review committee are implemented.

"If the upcoming election is not held under the emergency power rules, the country might revert back to the pre 1/11 situation," the JP chairman told reporters.

He also said detained 'corrupt politicians' will come out from jails and the election will turn into a showcase of black money and mus-

cle if the emergency is lifted.

Replying to a question, the former dictator who was also the country's president until overthrown, said, "Jatiya Party believes in democracy and we will contest in the election even if Awami League and BNP don't."

The JP chairman said his party is preparing for local government elections and selecting its candidates.

Ershad also said local government elections should be held this year, and the national poll should be held at the beginning of next year.

He said his party already launched an initiative to form electoral alliances with like-minded parties who are 'nationalists and believe in Islamic values'.

"We already had discussions with Bikalpadhara and a faction of Islami Oikyo Jote about possible electoral alliances," Ershad said.

Senior presidium members Raushan Ershad and Anisul Islam Mahmud, Secretary General ABM Ruhul Amin Hawlader, and presidium members GM Quader, and Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, were also present at the meeting.

BCH VISITS ERSHAD
Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) President Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday called on Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad at the latter's residence.

The two leaders discussed national issues, including electoral alliance and national consensus government.

The BDB president went to Ershad's President Park residence in the city's Baridhara at about 7:45pm and had dinner with the JP chairman.

BDB leader Mahi B Chowdhury said it was a courtesy call.

Undisclosed money

FROM PAGE 1 months and these will be announced in the next budget, 17 in the next four to six months and the rest will be implemented afterwards.

As per steps to be effective immediately banks will be asked to have separate desks to deal with women SME entrepreneurs. The central bank will permit opening of SME service centre to provide support for loans.

The next budget will offer tax benefits to SME investors.

All imported capital machineries for textiles sector will be declared tax-free in the next budget. Both export oriented and domestic market oriented factories will get this benefit.

The budget will slash down VAT on service charge for internet to 4.5 percent from 15 percent.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) will review inconsistencies prevailing at industrial units inside and outside the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) to set up a larger economic zone to ensure consistency.

Taxpayers will be able to register Vat online.

Various charges of foreign banks will be brought down to those of the domestic banks. Some charges will be fixed on the basis of actual cost. Bangladesh Bank will ensure these matters through strict monitoring.

The central bank will guide the banks in taking help from various non-government organisations (NGOs) in selecting SME borrowers and in loan distribution and collection.

A venture capital company will be formed to encourage small and new entrepreneurs.

The central bank will put moral pressure on the banks to fix a maximum interest rate on production oriented industrial and current loans.

The BBBF yesterday also okayed a host of ICT related steps, which include a private sector submarine cable project, launching the first communication satellite for the country, setting up ICT village etc.

No polls

FROM PAGE 1 "emergency needs".

In another development, the pre-dialogue talks between caretaker government advisers and leaders of the pro-Khaleda faction of BNP which was scheduled to be held yesterday evening, was deferred until Saturday as a cabinet meeting was called at that time.

"We will inform them of the time of the meeting later," Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman told reporters after a meeting with Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader and LGD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal at the housing and public works ministry.

Khandaker Delwar yesterday told reporters at his Nam flat that the people of the country will resist the "conspirators" who want to hold a "manipulated" election excluding the two political leaders -- Khaleda and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina.

Delwar blasted the CEC for inviting the "breakaway" faction of the party to the electoral reform dialogue ignoring requests from five BNP standing committee members for inviting him as the lawful secretary general of the party.

"Holding a constitutional post, the CEC is acting beyond his constitutional jurisdiction," he said after a meeting with senior and central leaders of the party. "A free, fair and acceptable election cannot be held under this commission as the CEC is implementing the directives of certain quarters," he said.

The meeting discussed issues including the EC's invitation to the party's reformist faction, pre-dialogue talks with advisers and the government's policy in dealing with BNP leaders and former lawmakers.

About the pre-dialogue talks with the advisers, Delwar said they will join the meeting with the advisers on Saturday as the BNP wants to sit in the final dialogue with the government.

Demanding release of both Khaleda and Hasina, he said his party will not participate in any election based on conspiracies to yield manipulated results. "No election would be held under the state of emergency and release of the two top leaders is a must for holding an acceptable election," he added.

Delwar alleged that certain quarters have been harassing party leaders Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddiqui and M Shamsul Islam. He also accused the caretaker government of making a blueprint for the upcoming election and

working towards achieving the goal of holding the election in line with that blueprint.

"The government wants to form a parliament with persons of its choice, excluding the chiefs of the two major political parties, but the people will not accept it," he said, adding, "The government has started a process to divide the political parties according to its blueprint."

Replying to a question, he said the people have no trust on the non-elected government, which is why they are ready to go for agitation to get rid of the existing unbearable situation.

Reacting to the statement of Maj (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed that he would take Delwar to the EC dialogue along with him, Delwar said, "Who is Hafiz that I will have to go with him? He is a vice-president of the party, nothing else."

He said, "Party men are mounting pressure on me to expel Hafiz from the party as he has violated party discipline."

BNP chairperson's Adviser ASM Hannan Shah, joint secretary general Selima Rahman and Nazrul Islam Khan, and acting office secretary Rizvi Ahmed were also present at the briefing.

Meanwhile, Maj (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, acting secretary general of the pro-Saifur faction, said they submitted a letter to the jail authorities yesterday morning, seeking permission to meet Khaleda for her directives on running the party.

He said Khaleda told her lawyers at the sub-jail on Tuesday that she is thinking about the reforms.

Hafiz was addressing a group of leaders and workers of Jubo Dal Gulshan unit at his Banani residence.

He said Saifur Rahman has tried to contact with the party's standing committee members after receiving the EC's invitation letter but failed.

"I will run the party following the directives of the party's standing committee," he said, expressing hopes that a united BNP will participate in the electoral dialogue with the EC.

Termining Khaleda Zia the symbol of party unity, the former minister said there is no debate about her leadership. He, however, said, "The party cannot be held back for anyone's personal interest as 102 former lawmakers and 80 percent leaders and workers are with us."

Technical fault in Biman flight in Dubai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Biman Bangladesh Airlines Airbus had to return to Dubai International Airport about half an hour after taking off yesterday due to technical glitches.

The Airbus 310, flight No. BG-015, left Zia International Airport (ZIA) with 219 passengers at 9:00am yesterday for London via Dubai.

Technical problems were detected in the aircraft's communications devices after it had landed at the Dubai Airport at 2:45pm Bangladesh time, said a Biman official.

After three hours of repairing, the aircraft flew for London but in about 30 minutes it was forced to land back at the Dubai Airport, he added.

Another Airbus flew from Zia for Dubai at 3:30pm to carry the stranded passengers to their destination and it was likely to land in Dubai early today.

All passengers of the flight have been kept at different hotels in Dubai, said the Biman official.

Cherie Blair

FROM PAGE 16 Bangladesh, which were her special areas of interest as a lawyer.

The press meets were held at the SC after the hearing and after her lunch with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury at the state guest-house Padma.

Cherie Blair arrived Dhaka on Tuesday on a three-day visit.

She was invited by British-Bangladeshi barrister Ajmalul Hossain and Bangladeshi lawyer Rafiqul Haque, Blair said adding that she was serving as a consultant to Hasina's legal team, led by Rafiqul.

"I was invited here to give an opinion on how laws here comply with international human rights laws and conventions," she added.

Asked for her observation on human rights situation in Bangladesh, Blair observed that Bangladesh's constitution contains principles that comply with international human rights standards. "It is important to make sure that these principles are not just on paper but are in practice," she added.

Blair said the judiciary is adequate to defuse the complaints about Hasina's trial. "I am sure judges in Bangladesh will uphold their own positions and duties to the fullest," she added.

Blair sidestepped questions on the state of emergency, terming them as 'political'. She, however, acknowledged that human rights are in conflict with state of emergencies.

"But Bangladesh and its people will decide how they tackle human rights, and come back to democracy. It's not my job," she said.

Earlier in the morning at the SC, Blair observed the government appeal against the High Court verdict that cancelled the Tk 3 crore extortion case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury against Hasina.

"Cherie Blair was my colleague. She is visiting Bangladesh on my personal invitation. Politics has nothing to do with her visit," barrister Azmalul Hossain said after the hearing.

Blair is due to leave tomorrow.

Kazi Zafarullah

FROM PAGE 16 order to attach his properties, as he has been absconding since the case was filed.

ACC Assistant Director Ashrafur Islam filed the case against Zafarullah with Gulshan Police Station on March 19 for not submitting his wealth statement to the commission in due time.

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

Zafarullah was arrested but later released after getting bail from the High Court.

CASE AGAINST OBAIDUL
ACC Assistant Director Abul Hossain, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the CMM's Court, showing 28 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuing arrest warrant against Obaidul Karim and the order to attach his properties as he has been on the run since filing of the case.

The IO dropped the names of Obaidul's wife Arjuna Karim and son Salman Karim from the charge sheet as their involvement with the corruption was not found.

ACC Deputy Director Abdul Karim filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Obaidul Karim, his wife and son on October 8 last year for concealing information about their wealth.

In the case, the ACC deputy director stated that Obaidul Karim, his wife and son did not mention their wealth worth over Tk 6.36 crore in the statement submitted to the commission.

Obaidul Karim was sentenced to different terms of punishment earlier in connection with corruption cases.

CASE AGAINST NADIM
Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ali Mamun recorded the statement of Nadim's mother-in-law Jahannara Begum after ACC Assistant Director SM Rashedur Raja produced her before the court.

But details of the statement could not be known immediately. ACC Assistant Director Ali Akbar filed the case against Nadim and his wife Nurunnahar Parul on December 12 last year for amassing Tk 30,323,139 illegally.

Hillary keeps

FROM PAGE 16 Clinton snapped up 55 percent of the vote to 45 for Obama in her bid to be America's first woman president.

Hillary Clinton aides said her cash-strapped operation raised two and a half million dollars online in two and a half hours after the polls closed, the fastest fundraising rate of the campaign.

And with victory under her belt, Hillary Clinton rounded on critics who have called for her to quit the epic race, already the longest and costliest in history, to enable Democrats to rally round one candidate.

"You know, some people counted me out and wanted me to drop out," she said, as the crowd loudly booed her detractors.

"Well, the American people do not quit, and they deserve an American president who does not quite either."

Obama, 46, had downplayed any likelihood that he could win in Pennsylvania, but pointed out that he had whittled down her lead from 20 points.

Clinton closed the battle was not just about defeating the Republicans and their candidate John McCain in the November polls, but what kind of party the Democrats wanted to be.

"We can be a party that thinks the only way to look tough on national security is to talk, and act, and vote like George Bush and John McCain. We can use fear as a tactic,