

BNP bigwigs, Nizami

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were former CPA chairmen Commodore (retd) Zulfikar Ali and AMM Shahadat Hossain, former CPA director (transport) AM Sanwar Hossain, former chief finance and accounts officer Ahmed Abdul Qasem, former director Lutful Kabir, Ismail Hossain Simon-son of former shipping minister and BNP leader Col (retd) Akbar Hossain, Akbar's wife Jahana Anwar, Gato directors Syed Galib Ahmed, Syed Tanveer Ahmed, AKM Musa Kajol and Ehsan Yusuf.

Dropped from the charge sheet are former cabinet secretary Saadat Hussain, former joint chief of shipping ministry Khandaker Khaliquzzaman, former deputy secretary Abdul Matin, former deputy chief Jayonto Kumar Nandi, former joint chief of planning ministry Abdul Matin, CPA Director Kazi Abdul Momen, and Gato Chief Accountant Mosharraf Hossain.

The accused are charged with causing a loss of Tk 14,56,37,616.92 to the state by striking the container-handling deal with Gato although it lacked experience and skills.

The charges also include violating tender conditions in appointing Gato for the job, misuse of power, and mutual understanding among the accused in violating the tender conditions.

This is the second charge sheet the ACC has approved against Khaleda since her arrest and the first against Koko. The ACC approved the first charge sheet against Khaleda on April 30 in a graft case involving Canadian gas exploration and extraction company Niko Resources. The charge sheet was submitted on May 6.

Koko and Simon have been indicted as investigation found their involvement in taking Tk 2,19,99,736 from Gato in exchange for helping it win the job. Mosharraf Hossain, Saifur Rahman, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf, M Shamsul Islam, MK Anwar, and Motur Rahman Nizami were also accused earlier in the ACC case filed for graft in a Barapukuria coal mine operation contract to a Chinese company while AKM Mosharraf Hossain is an accused in the graft cases involving Niko and Barapukuria coal mine.

ACC Director General (Administration) Col Hanif Iqbal confirmed the press yesterday afternoon about the approval of the charge sheet.

Joint forces arrested Khaleda and Arafat at their Dhaka Cantonment residence a day after ACC Deputy Director Golam Shahriar Chowdhury filed the case with the Tejgaon Police Station.

Khaleda is now in a sub-jail set up on the Jatiya Sangsab Bhaban premises.

Different newspapers and news agencies on November 5 carried news items that investigating officer ACC Deputy Director Jorihor Huda in his report proposed inclusion of the names of 18 more people in the charge sheet.

CID sues Babar

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The other accused are Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam, Director of East West Property Development Pvt Ltd Abu Sufian, and a Director of Prime Bank and former BNP lawmaker Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal.

CID Assistant Superintendent Arman Ali filed the case with Ramna Police Station.

Earlier on May 6, the Anti-Corruption Commission pressed charges against former prime minister Khaleda Zia's son Tarique Rahman, Babar, Saleemul Huq, Shah Alam and his two sons Shafiq Sobhan Sanvir and Sadaat Sobhan, Abu Sufian and Tarique's personal secretary Mira Uddin Apu.

The anti-graft body said the eight were involved with the bribery to save Sanvir from the charges of killing Sabir, whose body was found outside a building in Bashundhara residential area on July 5, 2006.

Dhaka's fight

FROM PAGE 1
The disruption and dismantling of the JMB has shown that the Bangladesh government is serious about terrorism. This place does not harbour nor allow terrorist transit..."

Asked about forming a joint working group with Bangladesh, Dailey said, "We've numerous joint working groups right now to counter terrorism. Our relationship with Bangladesh across the border - economically, militarily - covers all of the needs to counter terrorism."

Briefing reporters over the meeting, Home Secretary Abdul Karim said Dailey assured of providing assistance in training the country's law enforcers including police and the Rapid Action Battalion.

"He also said the US will consider assistance in training members of community police," Karim added.

Dailey also paid a visit to Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif at his office to assess the legal infrastructure of the country for combating terrorism effectively.

Law Adviser Arif said, "He (Dailey) came to discuss our legal infrastruc-

BNP reformists

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before it. If they show up there is every chance they would be sent to jail since the charge against them is non-bailable, and if they don't, arrest warrants would be issued against them, according to legal experts.

When the Gato case was filed on September 2 last year, none of Saifur and Bhuiyan was among the accused. But later their names were included in the charge sheet after the anti-graft body probe found their "involvement in the offence".

Former prime minister Khaleda Zia, who has been detained since September 3 last year, was arrested in hours after the case was filed.

The ACC is conducting investigation also in the Barapukuria coal mine case that was filed on February 16 under emergency power rules against Khaleda, Saifur and Bhuiyan, among others.

Meanwhile, Saifur's statement has upset the leaders with the background of left politics. They plan to raise the issue after Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, acting secretary general appointed by the standing committee, returns to the capital.

Saifur on Wednesday night said the pro-reform leaders who were once involved with leftist parties can only split the party. He also alleged that Khaleda Zia's government could not implement many a good decision due to those leaders who were in the cabinet then.

Meanwhile, Brig Gen (retd) Hannan Shah, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, yesterday welcomed Saifur's statement. He said he hopes that the other "dissidents" would follow the senior most standing committee member's lead, and at the end return to where they belong.

He also observed that the reconciliation move would only get stronger after Saifur's remarks.

DELWAR SLATES GATCO CHARGESHEET

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday condemned the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) decision to approve the charge sheet in the Gato corruption case against Khaleda Zia.

He alleged that the charge sheet has been approved as part of the conspiracy to keep their party chairman in jail.

She (Khaleda) was not involved in any corruption. A file comes to the Prime Minister's Office for final approval after being approved by all government committees concerned, he told The Daily Star last night.

He also alleged that the government wants to hold a 'blueprint' election and prevent the party president from participating in the electoral process by filing cases against her.

On the other hand, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahid told The Daily Star that the ACC approved the charge sheet to harass their party chief Motur Rahman Nizami.

Justice Fazlul

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97 lakh beyond his known source of income.

ACC sources said a team of investigators, including investigation officer Mohammad Ibrahim, questioned Justice Fazlul Haque, his wife Sultana Haque and brothers Aynul Haque and Ekrumul Haque at the ACC headquarters.

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday filed a case against Justice Fazlul Haque's son-in-law Tariqul Haque Prince for failing to submit his wealth statement to the commission in due time.

Assistant Director Ibrahim filed the non-submission case with Cantonment Police Station under section 26(2) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004.

The ACC issued a notice on April 15, asking Prince to submit his wealth report to the commission within seven working days.

Pro-Khaleda BNP

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prayers across the country on May 16(Friday), seeking release of the now detained former prime minister.

The other demands include release of all political leaders, withdrawal of emergency and checks on indoor politics, measures to contain price spiral of essentials, introduction of rationing system for those hard-pressed and cancellation of the Election Commission's (EC) delimitation of parliamentary constituencies.

Besides, the faction led by Khandaker Delwar Hossain, secretary general appointed by chairperson, announced programmes to observe the death anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman on May 30.

Those include hoisting BNP flags at half-mast, laying wreaths at Zia's grave in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and holding discussions.

The party and its front organisations will distribute food among the destitute people throughout a week beginning from June 2.

Delwar came up with the raft of demands and programmes at a press briefing at his Namia flat yesterday afternoon.

Speaking on the occasion, he called for the government to scrap the draft gazette on the constituency demarcation.

Delwar demanded withdrawal of the cases against all political prisoners and an end to the state of emergency.

He also asked for withdrawal of the charge sheet against BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman in the bribery case concerning the murder of Bashundhara Group director Sabir.

Among others, BNP Joint Secretary General Selima Rahman and acting office secretary Rizvi Ahmed were present at the briefing.

EC roadmap

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million voters of which major portion has been completed, and carrying out reform of electoral rules "so that money, muscle and misuse of authority do not influence the future elections".

The EC has already held a series of dialogues with different political parties on reform of electoral rules, which was also a public demand, he told the duo US emissaries.

"We see a democratically elected government emerge in Bangladesh from next year. But also see the guarantees for democracy that is put in place to continue on a stable basis for the long term," he added.

Boucher added that institutional reforms undertaken by the government, in bodies such as the Anti-Corruption Commission and the planned Human Rights Commission would guarantee the sustainability of democracy in the country.

He said reform will continue in the future as it is a continuous process.

Boucher said he is glad, as the caretaker government has given a lot of emphasis on future elections.

He said reform should go on a wider scale.

Appreciating Bangladesh's counterterrorism measures, particularly legal procedures, Boucher said his country would like to follow the model of action.

He also said the US wants to see democracy succeed in Bangladesh and definitely supports the country in its effort to strengthen the democracy.

Boucher said his country will be a partner of Bangladesh in the field of development, economy and counterterrorism.

Proposed dialogue between the government and the political parties was also came up in the meeting.

About reform in political parties, the CA said the political parties have to decide on their own.

The CA said Bangladesh values close and friendly relations with the United States and wants to carry it forward, particularly in the field of education, combat terrorism and trade and economy.

Boucher noted that Bangladesh has achieved considerable success in counterterrorism and they were looking forward to working professionally with those who are dealing with terrorism.

He appreciated various Acts formulated by the interim regime, like the Anti-Money Laundering Act and the Anti-Terrorism Act, to curb terrorism.

The CA said, "Bangladesh takes tough stand both domestically and internationally in dealing with terrorism."

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munain briefed newsmen about the outcome of the meeting.

US Ambassador James F Moriarty and Secretary to CA's Office Kazi Aminul Islam were also present.

Our staff correspondent adds:

After talks with Foreign Secretary Tousif Hossain at the foreign ministry yesterday, Boucher said it is important for the US to see Bangladesh hold its elections by the end of the year.

"Domestically, you are on a path

EC plans

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extended by three or four months so that the parties can complete their preparations to be registered." Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain told reporters yesterday at the ACC during the last two days.

"We may even extend the timeframe until the announcement of the election schedule in October," he said.

Asked if the EC would ask the government again to lift restrictions on politics, Sakhawat said the commission would ask the government to create an environment conducive to carrying out the activities required for the parties to be registered with.

On growing doubts over holding of the parliamentary election as per the roadmap, he said the EC has been working to hold the stalled ninth parliamentary election by the end of this year as per the set deadline.

"We will announce the election schedule in October once the voter list is ready by then. We do not have any alternative to holding the polls within the timeframe," he said.

The other demands include release of all political leaders, withdrawal of emergency and checks on indoor politics, measures to contain price spiral of essentials, introduction of rationing system for those hard-pressed and cancellation of the Election Commission's (EC) delimitation of parliamentary constituencies.

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The party and its front organisations will distribute food among the destitute people throughout a week beginning from June 2.

"The final voter list will be ready by October after correction of the draft lists," he added.

When his attention was drawn to BNP acting Chairman Saifur Rahman's remark on Wednesday that his leadership became ineffective as the party's standing committee members who appointed him to the post withdrew their support through affidavit, Sakhawat refused to make any comment on it.

Five standing committee members in a letter asked the EC to invite Khandaker Delwar Hossain, BNP secretary general appointed by the party's detained chairperson, to the electoral reform talks.

But, the EC ignored the affidavit and invited the Saifur-led faction of BNP to its electoral reform talks last year.

The case was brought under the Emergency Power Rules for its quick disposal.

EU wants polls

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Ambassador Stefan Frowein is a statement at the Europe Day press conference at the Sheraton Hotel in the capital.

Replying to questions about implications of election boycott threats by political parties, German Ambassador Frank Meyke called upon political parties to carry out reforms and remain committed to elections.

"If they boycott, political parties would have to bear the responsibilities of bringing back a situation similar to that before the state of emergency was declared (in January 11, 2007)," said Meyke.

Frowein said, "Boycott is not nice and not something we like. But it does not mean an election cannot be free, fair and credible -- not a sine qua non."

He also said the January 22 elections in 2007 were called off not because the Awami League threatened to boycott the polls, but because it was a "one-sided election".

"We are here with a broad agenda. The agenda, I think, speaks of the desires and needs of the people of Bangladesh," he said.

Boucher said he is ready to assist Bangladesh restore its democracy and push forward economic development.

The US State Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism Dell L Dailey accompanied Boucher.

"In addition to democracy and development, one of the main issues for us is denial of space for terrorists," said Boucher.

Boucher also met Army Chief Gen. Moeen U Ahmed at the army headquarters yesterday.

He is scheduled to meet the Chief Election Commissioner today.

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