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TRANSFORM ELECTRONICS

ARREST DRIVE 1,664 more behind bars

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces arrested 1,664 more people including 115 in the capital in the last 24 hours until 8.00am yesterday in special drives across the country, raising the number of arrests to 23,271 in the last 13 days.

Among the arrestees, 1,079 were held on warrants while the rest were detained on different charges including possessing illegal arms.

The law enforcers also recovered 19 firearms, seven bombs, five cocktails and 57 rounds of bullet during the drives.

Meanwhile, cases were filed against 1,802 vehicles for violating traffic rules in the capital while 59 vehicles were seized for not having legal papers.

HC asks govt why offshore tenders not illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule asking the government to show cause as to why its action of inviting international tenders to lease out 28 blocks in the Bay of Bengal for exploration of country's offshore oil and gas reserves should not be declared illegal.

An HC bench comprising Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Md Emdadul Huq passed the order following the filing of a writ petition, asking the energy secretary, law secretary and Petrobangla chairman to reply within two weeks.

Petrobangla floated the tender on February 15 for exploration of oil and gas in 28 blocks in the Bay of Bengal.

Barrister Munshi Ahsan Kabir, a Supreme Court lawyer, and Shah Abdul Hannan, former energy secretary, on May 4 this year, jointly filed the writ petition as public interest litigation with the HC challenging the legality of invitation of the tender.

In the petition, they stated that as per article 58(D) of the constitution, the caretaker government cannot make any decision on exploration of natural resources like oil and gas. The petitioners also prayed to the court to direct the government to stop the tender process.

Barrister Abdur Razzak, the counsel for the petitioners, yesterday told newsmen that the HC issued the order on the grounds that the caretaker government has no jurisdiction to make any policy decisions on exploration of the mineral resources.

Ex-BNP MP Hafiz, Mamun sued for murder, extortion

UNB, Bhola

A case was filed against 32 people, including former BNP lawmaker Hafiz Ibrahim and his brother Gias Uddin Al Mamun with Judicial Magistrate's Court here on Tuesday on charges of murder and extortion.

Mainuddin, a Sramik League leader and owner of Happy Electronics in Char Borhanuddin upazila, filed the case against Mamun, Hafiz, Hafiz's brother-in-law Fazlur Rahman Bachchu Mollah and 29 other BNP leaders and workers.

In his case statement, Mainuddin alleged that Mamun, Hafiz and his associates extorted Tk 2 lakh from him and killed a local resident, Mofazzel Hossain.

Mainuddin further alleged that he and his wife Shahnaz Pervin were injured in a bomb attack launched by the accused during the local UP election in February 2003.

Earlier, a number of cases were also filed against former BNP MP Hafiz.

Prayer Timing		
June 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Brac not 'NGO-nising' any primary school

Target is to improve quality of education, says Abed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac has no intention of privatising or commercialising primary schools in the country and its pilot project, funded solely by Brac, in 20 upazilas is aimed at improving the standard of education at primary schools, said Brac Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed yesterday.

Since Brac is funding the pilot project, it will not use public funds allotted for Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II) of the government, the Brac chief claimed adding, "We have no plan to take any fund of the PEDP-II or any fund from foreign donor agencies."

The Brac chairperson made the comments at a press conference held at a hotel in the capital.

His remarks came at a time when primary teachers across the country are agitating against a government decision that approved Brac to supervise and improve quality of education at all primary schools in 20 upazilas.

On June 10, teachers united under four organisations -- Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association (BPTA), Bangladesh Private Primary Teachers Association (BPPTA), Bangladesh Graduate Primary Teachers Association (BGPTA) and Bangladesh Community Primary Teachers Association (BCPTA) -- wore black ribbons across the country to protest the government decision.

Today the teachers will wear black ribbons again and submit a

memorandum to the chief adviser, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the government approval for the pilot project.

On May 23, the government approved the pilot project under which Brac would work to improve overall education and classroom environment in the 20 upazilas by training teachers and making school management committees (SMC) more effective.

Primary teachers say this move would not improve the standard of primary education and they see this move as a plot to gain control and thus commercialise the primary education system in the country.

Rebutting the speculations of the teachers, the Brac chief said,



Development work continues in Begunbari canal under a development project in Hatirjheel in the capital and supervised by Bangladesh Army.

28 dead in Sudan plane inferno

AFP, Khartoum

At least 28 people died when a passenger jet caught fire after landing at Khartoum airport, officials said yesterday, with dozens more still missing as authorities probed the cause of the accident.

The bodies of 28 people who burned to death when the Sudan Airways Airbus A310 caught fire late Tuesday have been taken to Khartoum's morgue, a Sudanese official said, adding that 121 people survived the accident.

State television previously reported that nearly half of the 203 passengers were killed when the

plane from Amman burst into flames after one of its engines exploded on landing. The plane was carrying 11 crew.

"At present, we have 28 bodies at Khartoum morgue," said Taher al-Haj Ibrahim, the general director of investigations. "For now, we have counted 121 survivors," he said, adding that 22 of them were injured.

"The rest we consider as missing, but according to our information, some passengers went home before they could be counted."

An official enquiry by the civil aviation authority and Sudan

US airstrike near Afghan border kills 11 Pakistan troops

AFP, Peshawar

Eleven Pakistani troops were killed in a US airstrike near the Afghan border yesterday, in an incident that Islamabad said could jeopardise cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Pakistan's military strongly condemned the "completely unprovoked and cowardly" attack, the first of its kind since Islamabad joined Western efforts to combat the Taliban in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The incident heightened tensions between Pakistan and US-led forces in Afghanistan, who recently warned that the new government's decision to hold peace talks with the militants could increase cross-

border infiltration.

An army statement quoting a spokesman said a paramilitary checkpoint at Gora Prai in the Mohmand tribal agency was "destroyed by coalition forces in Afghanistan through aerial attack", killing 11 troops including an officer.

"The spokesman condemned this completely unprovoked and cowardly act on the FC (Frontier Corps) post and regretted the loss of precious lives of our soldiers," the statement said.

"He blamed the coalition forces for violent act and said that the incident had hit at the very basis of cooperation and sacrifice with which Pakistani soldiers are

Tigers face India today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are up against a strong Indian outfit in the last league match of the Kity Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

The match will be telecast live from 3pm with Bangladesh Television (BTV), NEO Cricket and Geo providing the coverage.

India are virtually in the final of the day-night tournament following their massive 140-run victory over arch-rivals Pakistan on Tuesday and the Tigers' loss to Pakistan by 70 runs. Surprisingly, Bangladesh have an outside chance of making it into the final if they can upset their more illustrious opponents.

So far, the two sides have played

MK Alamgir's sons sued for not submitting wealth reports

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed two cases against two sons of convicted Awami League leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir for failing to submit their wealth statements to the commission on time.

ACC Assistant Director Taufiqul Islam filed both the cases with Gulshan Police Station against Alamgir's sons Jalal Alamgir and Joy Alamgir, who are believed to have been residing in the USA.

The ACC issued notices on the two on April 27, 2004 directing them to submit their wealth statements to the commission within seven working days.

Both the cases were filed under section 26(2) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004.

POWER PLANT GRAFT HC asks for case records on June 15

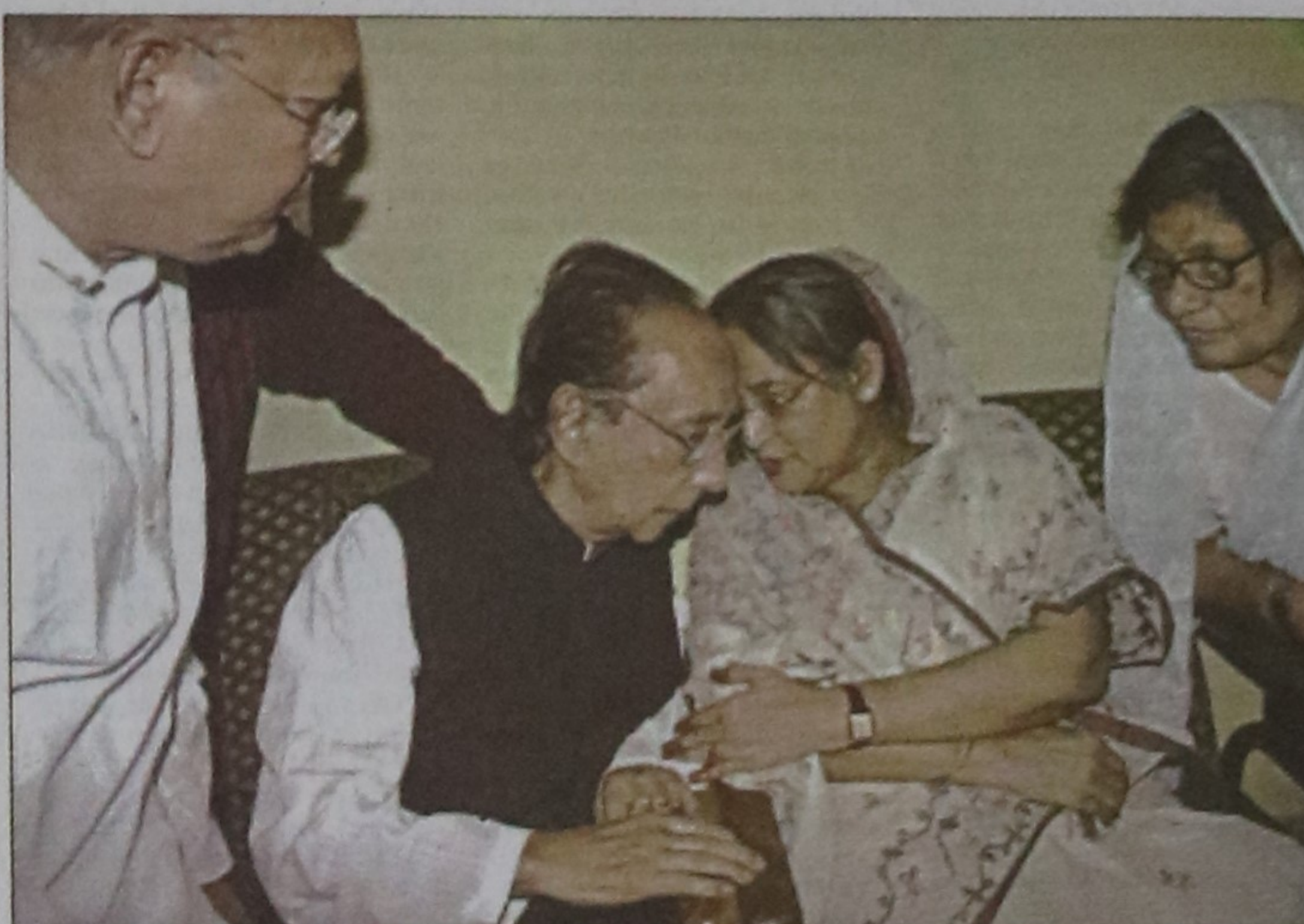
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday asked a trial court to submit to it on June 15 records of the barge-mount power plant corruption case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina for examining those.

An HC bench comprising Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Masuque Hosain Ahmed passed the order following a petition filed by Hasina for quashing the proceedings against her in this case.

The case is pending with the Special Judge's Court-1 on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

Hasina's counsel barrister Shaheque Ahmed yesterday told newsmen that the HC asked for the records to examine whether the case against the Awami League (AL) chief was filed following due process of law.



Released Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, flanked by her party colleagues, talking to acting party president Zillur Rahman at Sudha Sadan yesterday.

Militants regrouping for attacks, says study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Right-wing militants have regrouped across the country over the past year, putting together their networks and strengthening training and indoctrination operations despite a lull in terrorist attacks in the same period, according to a study released yesterday.

The "2007-2008 Trends in Militancy in Bangladesh" report by Enterprise Institute (EI) said while there had been five to six bomb attacks a year between 1999 and 2006, the execution of JMB kingpins last year partly resulted in the total fall of terrorist attacks.

It, however, said reports of bomb explosions and bomb-making cells indicate that militant groups are once again organising themselves for terrorist attacks, only waiting for the opportune moment.

The report said the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants who managed to remain at large after the August 17 syn-

chronised bomb explosions across the country in 2005 have regrouped and launched recruitment drives.

They are reportedly holding public meetings, raising funds and running recruitment drives in Gaibandha while the Allah'r Dal, a JMB offshoot, is active in the south-west, especially in Kushtia, Meherpur and Chuadanga.

The report said the outlawed outfits are handing out propaganda leaflets, CDs, books and handbills in their drive for new cadres, occasionally using coercion to that end.

"They are inviting people to join JMB and trying to motivate innocent villagers in the name of Jihad to establish Islamic rule in the country. Villagers are called kafirs (non-believers) when/if they refuse to listen to the militants," the report said.

It feared that militants could attempt to destabilise the elections, adding that recent Maoist victory in Nepal may embolden both leftist and rightist militancy here.

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Govt signs deal with UNDP for translucent ballot box

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday signed an agreement for a \$6.586 million fund with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on procuring translucent ballot boxes for the next parliamentary elections.

The Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) will channel the fund through the UNDP for the Election Commission's 'Translucent Ballot Boxes' project, which began last month and would run through April 2009.

Additional secretary at Economic Relations Division (ERD) Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan and UNDP Country Director Larry Maramis signed the project document. Senior ERD, UNDP and Cida officials were present at the time.

An ERD press release said the project would help build public confidence in the credibility of the elections by procuring the translucent ballot boxes, training the users and informing the public about their role and use in the election.

The EC decided to introduce translucent ballot boxes to the ninth parliamentary elections, reportedly to be held on the third week of December.

The EC hopes that the translucent boxes would be available by October.

Criminal killed in 'encounter'

UNB, Narasingdi

A criminal was killed yesterday in an encounter between his cohorts and police at Shankhola in Shibpur.

The dead was identified as Emran, 28.

Police cordoned off Shankhola area at about 3:30pm and asked Emran to surrender. But, Emran and his associates suddenly opened fire on the law enforcers prompting them to retaliate.

Emran was killed in the encounter while his accomplices managed to escape.

Police recovered a loaded pistol from the scene.

Emran was wanted in 20 criminal cases on different charges including murder, police said.

53 Bangladeshis back home from Indian jails

UNB, Benapole

Fifty-three more Bangladeshis, who served two years' imprisonment in Indian jails, were handed over to Bangladesh authorities by BSF at Benapole checkpoint Wednesday, raising such returnees to 162 in the last three days.

Sources said the Bangladeshis who went to India two years back in search of jobs were arrested by Indian police and then sent to jails.

The BSF handed over them to BDR and police as Bangladesh Mohila Ainjibi Samity has arranged their return from India through contact with the prison authorities of Damdam in Kolkata.

Later, members of the Ainjibi Samity received the Bangladeshis citizens from the police at Benapole Police Station to send them to their family members.



Children, oblivious to their fundamental rights, break bricks at a construction site in the city as the world observes World Day Against Child Labour today. This year the day is being marked with activities to raise awareness that Education is the Right Response to Child Labour.