

Ex-BNP MP Hafiz

FROM PAGE 16
presence of Hafiz.

The court also fined the BNP leader Tk 1 crore for the offences. He will have to serve one and a half year more in prison if he failed to pay the amount.

Meanwhile, Mafruza was also fined Tk 1 crore, in default of which, she would have to spend six months more in jail. As she is absconding and was tried in absentia, her sentence will come into effect from the day of her arrest or surrender.

The former BNP lawmaker, was handed down 10 years' RI for accumulating wealth illegally and three years' RI for concealing information about his actual wealth to the ACC. The sentences will run consecutively since the day of his arrest in the case.

The court also ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate his illegally earned immovable properties worth Tk 1.64 crore and Tk 4.73 crore in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) and savings account.

It also ordered confiscation of his wife's immovable properties worth Tk 1.90 crore and Tk 7.88 crore in FDR and savings account.

Other properties to be confiscated include one jeep, one private car and three CNG-run auto-rickshaws and taxicabs.

ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on May 8 last year.

In their wealth statements submitted to the ACC, Hafiz mentioned his wealth worth Tk 6.80 crore and his wife's wealth worth Tk 9.50 crore.

CHARGE SHEET AGAINST ALTAH

Briefing newsmen at the ACC office, commission director general (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said that Altaf Hossain concealed Tk 55.60 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to the commission.

He said that the anti-graft body investigation also found Altaf's wealth worth Tk 1.53 crore, which is beyond the BNP leader's known sources of income.

The anti-graft body yesterday

also approved submission of charge sheets against Nasrin Khan, wife of former foreign minister and BNP leader M Morshed Khan, Hedayetullah, son of former Awami League lawmaker AKM Rahmatullah and Kazi Kamaluddin Ahmed, deputy director of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for accumulating wealth and properties illegally.

Iqbal said the commission approved submission of charge sheet against Nasrin Khan for acquiring wealth worth Tk 1.67 crore beyond her known sources of income and concealing information about assets worth Tk 91.63 lakh.

Hedayetullah will be charged for concealing information of his assets worth Tk 12.72 lakh and acquiring wealth worth Tk 1.24 crore illegally, the ACC director general said.

Besides, the ACC also approved filing of a case against agriculturist Javed Iqbal for not submitting wealth statement to it within the stipulated time, Col Hanif Iqbal added.

ARREST WARRANTS AGAINST FOYSAH

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court issued the arrest warrants against Foysoh Morshed and wife Shyma Shezan Khan in a case filed for amassing wealth illegally and concealing wealth information to the ACC.

The court fixed June 24 for next hearing of the case.

On June 16, ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Talebur Rahman, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet against the two to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, showing 34 people as prosecution witnesses.

The case was filed against them on December 10 last year with Gulshan Police Station.

According to the case statement, Foysoh held back information about property worth Tk 6.94 crore and accumulated a Tk 7.10 crore wealth beyond his known sources of income. His wife was accused for aiding and abetting him in the offence.

140 ex-BNP MPs

FROM PAGE 1
anything happened to Tarique and Koko for not arranging their treatment abroad.

The former lawmakers of the immediate-past ruling party clearly said BNP "will not participate in any election other than the national election".

BNP Joint Secretary General and former state minister Selima Rahman read out the statement at a press briefing at BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain's Nam flat.

Over 30 former MPs from among the signatories were present at the briefing. They are Begum Sarwari Rahman, Shajahan Chowdhury, Shamsuzzaman Duda, Principal Sohrah Uddin, Khairul Kabir Khokon, Ashraf Uddin Nizami, Abdul Momen Talukdar, Nurul Kabir Shaheen, Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi, Selim Reza Habib, Shirin Sultana, Fahima Hossain Jublee, Helen Zerin Khan, Saumun Begum, Rezina Akhtar, Nure Ara Saha, Rehana Akhtar Ranu and Arly Sultana.

Ctg airport

FROM PAGE 1
He also said the situation is not too bad to close the runway. "But, if the situation becomes that bad, we will close the airfield or ask pilots to avoid the airport," he added.

The official said the SAIA has three fire-fighting vehicles, of which two are "problematic" while the other is partially unserviceable.

Group Captain M Naim Hossain, member (operations and planning) of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star on Monday that the fire-fighting vehicles of SAIA are not fully unserviceable.

According to him, technicians are supposed to go to the SAIA today to repair the vehicles.

Biman pilots said they are facing a lot of troubles in maintaining their service because of the present situation at the SAIA.

The problems could become serious if an aircraft does not have enough fuel to keep hovering in the sky, a Biman high official said.

He said if the International Civil Aviation Organisation or the Federal Aviation Administration comes to know about the present condition at the SAIA, the airport's status as an international airport might be downgraded.

Four international airlines--Thai Airways, Air Arabia, RAK Airways and Oman Air-- operate from the SAIA at present.

CA hopes

FROM PAGE 1
of work on general election and reform programmes undertaken by the caretaker government.

Thanking the chief adviser for his appreciation, high commissioner Barbara assured continuation of the Canadian government support for socioeconomic development of Bangladesh, according to CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim who was present at the meeting.

Referring to accomplishing the gigantic task of preparing voter list with photographs of about 80 million voters in a short time, Barbara said, "Bangladesh will be very proud of it, the country can do many things".

The envoy also appreciated the chief adviser's personal role in upholding Bangladesh's image in the outer world for making democratic setup in the country.

Barbara said she will apprise her government of election roadmap and other positive sides of Bangladesh and the interim government.

The CA said, "Bangladesh greatly values its close, friendly and cooperative relations with Canada." He recalled Canada was among the few countries that recognised Bangladesh after its independence in 1971.

He said Bangladesh is committed to promoting peace and stability and alleviating poverty in South Asia through regional cooperation.

6 JMB militants

FROM PAGE 16
but one, with a call for an Islamists' Jihad on August 17 of 2005.

In Chapainawabganj, the blasts rocked Biswaroad crossing, Old Judge Court Bhaban, Mahananda bridge area, New Market and the DC's office, and injured leaving three people--Moti Saha, Rabi Saha and rickshaw-puller Rabiul Islam.

Rabiul later succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Apart from a case for serial blasts, Sub inspector Abdullah Al Masud Chowdhury of Chapainawabganj Sadar police station also lodged a murder case in this regard.

Detective Branch police inspector M Hafizul Islam submitted the charge sheet in the murder case on November 14, 2005 accusing 10 people in both cases.

Later on October 11, 2006, he submitted a supplementary charge sheet in the murder case relieving Abdullah Al Mamun Nasim from murder charges.

JMB chief Shayakh Abdur Rahman, other Majlis-e-sura members Siddique Islam Bangla Bhai and Abdul Awal were also accused in the charges, but they were later relieved from the case after they were executed in 2006.

Meanwhile, the six militants and their other accomplice Abdullah Al Mamun Nasim were awarded life-term in the serial blasts case, by the same court, on January 31.

Aziz claims

FROM PAGE 1
board of directors of Asian Development Bank at the planning ministry.

"I can say for sure that the advisers and special assistants do not indulge in corruption. This is a major success," he said.

The adviser made the statement when reporters asked for his comments on TIB's report titled "National Household Survey on Corruption, 2007". The report said corruption in education, health, land administration and local government sectors and in different utility services increased in the first half of 2007 despite the caretaker government's anti-corruption drives.

Conducted among 5,000 households on incidents of corruption that took place between July, 2006 and June, 2007, the survey also revealed that corruption decreased, between January and June, 2007, in law enforcement agencies, judiciary, and in the power, banking and taxation sectors compared to the records of previous six months.

Asked about cutting down corruption at lower levels, the adviser yesterday said, "It is a time consuming task. Different social and economic issues should be taken into consideration for this."

The TIB report said law enforcement agencies including the joint forces, police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were found to be the most corrupt in terms of magnitude while land administration was found to be the most corrupt in terms of the amount of bribe that went into the sector.

Asked to comment on the TIB revelations, LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal told reporters at Bangladesh Secretariat that he had asked TIB for a copy of the report and that he would comment on it after going through it.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman also declined to comment before reading the report. Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Director (admin) Col Hanif Iqbal said the commission is not worried about the report of TIB.

"The commission will be working following its own methods and will not be run by the planning of any other institutions," he said at his commission office yesterday.

He said the ACC is not worried as the survey of TIB covered a time between mid-2006 and mid-2007.

He said, "The ACC believes that corruption cannot be uprooted overnight using Aladin's lamp."

About TIB's suggestions to strengthen ACC's anti-graft drives, he said the commission would try to incorporate the suggestions in its activities.

Replying to a question, he, however, said the ACC is not against the

TIB report.

Agreeing to the report about corruption of Police, IGP Noor Mohammad said only advising is not sufficient to change police, it needs time as well as the mentality to change and for that purpose community policing programme has been taken up.

On continuation of this programme, the mentality of police will change and corruption may lessen, said the IGP speaking as the chief guest in a seminar held at the Barisal Auditorium yesterday.

He added that in comparison to the population of the country the number of policemen is very small.

Delwar asks EC

FROM PAGE 1
The statement came at a rally of the BNP-led four-party alliance in the city's Engineers' Institution where Khandaker Delwar and other alliance leaders echoed the BNP chairperson's renewed demand for holding the national polls by October 30.

The alliance organised the rally to press home their demands for the release of the detained political colleagues and denounce the EC's plan for announcing the schedules for the local government polls.

"Announce the schedule for the national polls, it's the core demand of the people," Delwar said amid cheers and slogans by thousands of alliance activists.

He repeated the demand for lifting of the state of emergency by June 30 to pave the way for holding the national elections by October 30.

He said there will be no election keeping BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Jamaat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami, Tarique Rahman and Ararat Rahman Koko behind bars.

Delwar asked the government to send Tarique and Koko abroad for medical treatment in line with the recommendations of the medical board.

In his speech, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid said the four-party alliance will resist any move for holding local government polls before the national polls.

He accused the Election Commission of taking up a plan for "selecting people" in the name of election.

BNP leaders Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui, Selima Rahman, Nazrul Islam Khan; Jamaat leaders Abdul Kader Molla and Rafique Islam Khan; BJP Chairman Andalib Rahman and Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun, IOJ Secretary General Maulana Abdul Latif Nezami, Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Anwar Ahmed Kader also spoke on the occasion.

Violent politics

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh, of a level electoral playing field with a fair referee. It is then up to the teams to play their part," Malik said.

He said all political stakeholders, including the political parties, must commit to holding elections because "the people of Bangladesh deserve a democratically elected government".

Asked for his opinion on former premier Khaleda Zia's detention when another former premier, Sheikh Hasina, has been released, Malik said although due process and equal treatment are essential, Britain cannot interfere in Bangladesh's judicial system.

He also said the state of emergency must be relaxed in order to let political parties campaign for the elections.

The government is due to relax the state of emergency today in areas where local polls would be held.

"Emergency at any point of time

anywhere is not ideal, so it would have to be loosened if elections were to be considered credible," said Malik.

The British under secretary of state for international development also praised Gen Moen and the military for their work on preparing the voter list with photographs.

Asked if Britain's aid is tied to the type of government, political stability or level of corruption, Malik said development assistance would continue regardless of any political change.

"The people who need the assistance should not suffer if politicians do not do their job," he said.

British development assistance to Bangladesh would rise to \$300 million a year by 2010 while about \$960 million has already been given in the last four years.

City elections

FROM PAGE 1
Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet--and nine municipalities--Manikganj Sadar, Chuadanga Sadar, Shariatpur Sadar, Naohata in Rajshahi, Dupchanchia in Bogra, Siripur in Gazipur, Phulbaria in Mymensingh, Golapganj in Sylhet and Sitakunda in Chittagong--might be held by the end of July or early August.

After these, the EC will conduct election in Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and some other municipalities in September. Then it will organise polls for 482 upazila parishes in phases from October.

On completion of the parliamentary election in the third week of December, the commission will begin holding polls for over 4,000 union parishes from mid-January or early February.

Elections in the remaining upazilas and municipalities will be slotted in between the union parishad polls, said senior officials at the EC Secretariat.

The EC in its electoral roadmap unveiled on July 15 last year announced that it would start holding local government

Hossain Zillur

FROM PAGE 16
thinking about holding advisory council meeting on the sidelines of the regional dialogue.

Replying to a question about the participation of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in the dialogue, the education adviser said invitation has been given to the parties and they were waiting for their reply. "Government efforts are continuing to bring all to the dialogue."

Regarding the much-talked-about releases of detained former prime minister BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her two sons, the adviser said the government is monitoring the matter closely and examining the legal process. He hoped there would be a "positive solution".

Speaking at the joint briefing, Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Maulana Yusuf Ashraf said they proposed holding the parliamentary election in October, two months ahead of the tentative timeframe, so that all hajj pilgrims could cast their vote.

The Khelafat Majlis opposed the Election Commission-set conditions for political parties' registration terming it contrary to the constitution.

The Islamist party put forward a 21-point demand in the dialogue. The demands include the lifting of the state of emergency and all restrictions on activities of political parties, and strengthening the anti-corruption drive with caution so that innocent people are not harassed.

On the National Women Development Policy 2008, the party demanded clear stand of the government and immediate implementation of the recommendations of the review committee.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed along with the advisers concerned was present at the meeting.

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Ghulam Quader, LGRD Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal, Khelafat Majlis leaders Ashraf Ali, Abdur Rab Yusufi, Nizamuddin, Toffazul Huq, Reazul Karim Jalali and Mahmudul Huq were present at the dialogue and the joint press briefing.

AL to sit with govt

FROM PAGE 1
other like-minded parties to forge a common stance on vital issues, to be placed at the July 3 dialogue.

Later, Ashraf told reporters that final decision regarding AL's taking part in local government elections would be taken at a meeting of its central working committee.

Hasina vows

FROM PAGE 1
family members will leave Boston for Washington today. She will go to Orlando in Florida for ear treatment after undergoing eye check-up in Washington.

AL chief's personal aide Dr Hasan Mahmud, and party leaders Abbas Sobhan Golap, Dr Siddique Rahman Khan, Dr AKA Momen, Syed Basharat Ali, Abul Mansur Khan, Sazzadar Rahman Sazzad, Nizam Chowdhury, Mujibur Rahman Mia, Abul Kashem, Khosruzzaman Khosru, Mamotaz Shahana, Amina Parvin, Shamsuddin Azad, Bakhtiar Ali Shah, Abdus Samad Azad, Faruk Ahmed and Jahangir Alam, among others, were present.

Motor vehicles

FROM PAGE 16
passengers is now Tk 3600 and those less than four passengers is Tk 3000.

Tax on vehicles, which are not for hire, carrying goods not exceeding 3500 kg is now Tk 3500. Tax on vehicles carrying goods over 3500 kg but less than 7000 kg will be calculated at Tk 3500 for the first 3500kg and Tk 500 for every additional 500kg.

Updated taxes on goods transport vehicles carrying 7500 kg is Tk 7500, those carrying over 7500 kg but less than 12500 kg will pay Tk 7500 for the first 7500 kg and Tk 1100 for every additional 500 kg.

Those carrying over 12500 kg will pay Tk 17500 as tax and Tk 1200 for every additional 500 kg.

The annual tax on vehicles transporting goods for hire, and carrying less than 3500 kgs is Tk 2000 and those carrying over 12500 kg will pay Tk 8500 for the first 12500 kg and Tk 500 for every additional 500kg.

The increase will see taxes for light motorbikes at Tk 500 and Tk 1000 for heavy motorbikes. For motorbikes, taxes have to be paid for 10 years at a time to BRITA, according to a BRITA official.

Annual tax for tri-cycle motor vehicles carrying not more than two passengers is Tk 1800, those carrying more than two passengers will have to pay Tk 1800 for the first two passengers plus Tk 500 for every additional passenger after that.

Tax on vehicles carrying more than two passengers and not used for hire is Tk 2500 and those carrying more than four passengers have to pay Tk 5000 plus Tk 500 for every additional passenger.

The government targeted an increase of revenue up to Tk 2289 crore out of NBR in the next fiscal, which is 12 per cent more than the revised budget of current fiscal.

Sigma, Mir Helal

FROM PAGE 16
months' ad interim bail.

The case against Sigma and her husband was filed by the ACC with Dharmadip Police Station on March 21 last year under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR), stating that the couple received Tk 2.4 crore in bribe from the proprietor of a construction firm. The corruption watchdog pressed charges against them on June 4 the same year.

Later that year, on August 27, a special court sentenced Sigma to three years' simple imprisonment and Nazmul to seven years' rigorous imprisonment for their involvement in the bribery.

The case against Helal and his father Mir Nasir was filed by the ACC with Gulshan Police Station on March 6 last year under the EPR. Helal was accused of abetting his father while the father was accused of amassing wealth illegally.

On July 4 the same year, a special court handed down three years' prison term to Helal for helping his father conceal ill-gotten property by withdrawing Tk 5.64 crore from a joint bank account of his family and depositing the amount into the accounts of his wife and mother-in-law.

Nasir was given 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and three years' simple imprisonment for concealing wealth information worth over Tk 6.72 crore to the ACC.

On December 13 last year, the HC granted bail to Sigma and Helal in the two cases following their separate petitions.

This year on March 6, the ACC appealed to the Appellate Division against the HC orders, seeking cancellation of the bail orders.

The Appellate Division in its ruling on March 6 said that appellate courts, including the HC, do not have the jurisdiction of grant-

ing bail to individuals convicted by special courts, trying cases filed under the EPR.

The apex court, however, said that an appellate court may grant bail on three grounds: if the appellant was given short prison terms, if their appeal against the special court's sentence was not disposed of in the stipulated 90 days or if a duly constituted medical board certified that the appellant was ill.

Both Sigma and Helal had filed the bail petitions on the ground that the court can grant them bail since their appeals against the conviction order were not disposed of in the stipulated 90 days.

Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed represented Helal while barrister Rafique-ul Huq represented Sigma yesterday.

Joj Mian

FROM PAGE 16
seven years' imprisonment in 2005 in a case filed in 1998 under the Explosive Substances Act, Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star last night.

The investigators of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had implicated Joj Mian in the deadly grenade attacks on an Awami League rally in 2004 and arrested him at Senbagh in Noakhali in June 2005.

Later, the then CID investigators managed to persuade Joj Mian in giving a confessional statement before a magistrate.

However, the CID recently submitted the charge sheet of the case mentioning that they did not find Joj Mian's involvement in the incident.

Gaza truce

FROM PAGE 16
fighting that has killed seven Israelis and more than 400 Palestinians many of them civilians since the Islamic militant group Hamas wrested control of Gaza a year ago.

It also obliges Israel to ease a punishing blockade of the coastal strip. The sanctions were designed to pressure Palestinian militants to halt their rocket and mortar fire on southern Israel, but have driven ordinary Gazans even deeper into destitution and confined them to their tiny seaside territory.

"I want to be able to sleep without the sound of shelling or warplanes," said Fman Mahmoud, a 22-year-old Gaza university student. "We have been living a nightmare... I am not sure how long it is going to last, but my dream is that this calm will continue."

As if to underscore just how fragile the agreement would be, intense Palestinian rocket and mortar fire and Israeli air reprisals raged Wednesday. Shortly before the truce took hold, a Hamas militant was killed in an Israeli airstrike in central Gaza that the military said targeted a rocket squad.

Hamas, the Islamic militant group that has ruled Gaza for the past year, reported that the Israeli navy fired four shells into the waters off Gaza City minutes after the truce began. But the shells fell about 500 yards from shore and there were no apparent targets in the area, witnesses reported, suggesting the shells might have been fired as part of a military drill. The military said it had fired warning shots into the air after Palestinian fishermen entered Israeli waters.

Hours into the truce, there were no other reports of fire.

If the quiet holds, Israel will ease its blockade on Sunday to allow larger shipments of some supplies. A week later Israel is to further ease restrictions at cargo crossings, which in recent months have been closed to all but humanitarian aid and limited fuel supplies.

56 militants killed

FROM PAGE 16
wounded during the offensive and also confirmed that the district had been cleared.

Nato civilian spokesman Mark Laity said the operation, which was led by Afghan forces and involved Canadian troops, was an effective response to Friday's jailbreak in Kandahar.

"Nobody is complacent, but so far it has been highly successful," Laity told reporters.

"After the recent incident, the jailbreak, there was concern about our capabilities. This was a fast and very effective response. I think something that all Afghans can take great heart from," Laity added.

The joint forces were now "in the closing stage of the operation," codenamed Operation Doar Bukhou, or Turn Around, ISAF military spokesman General Carlos Branco told the same news conference.

He accused the Taliban of lying about their numbers in the district, adding: "The insurgents were there, but they do not have the numbers or the foothold that they have claimed."

The Taliban's build-up in Arghandab posed a fresh challenge to President Hamid Karzai as he seeks to tackle the bloodiest phase of an insurgency launched after the hardline movement was toppled in

2001. The rebels viewed the district as a strategic stepping stone towards their goal of retaking Kandahar, the city where the movement rose to power in 1996.

The Taliban said in a statement on their website that a group of "martyrdom attackers" had entered Kandahar city to target Canadian and Afghan soldiers and Afghan officials, the SITE Intelligence Group said.

With nearly 70,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, Karzai has come under growing pressure from his Western allies to improve security, but the Afghan leader has faced a series of setbacks including Friday's mass prison breakout.

Karzai responded by threatening to launch attacks on militants on Pakistani soil, sparking a war of words with Islamabad.

In the Pakistani border town of Chaman on Thursday, hundreds of people chanting "Death to Karzai" burned an effigy of the Afghan leader in protest at his comments, an AFP reporter witnessed. The Arghandab operation began as the deaths of the six Nato soldiers were announced elsewhere in Afghanistan. Four were British, including the nation's first female casualty in Afghanistan, in the southern province of Helmand.

Niko graft case

FROM PAGE 1
graft cases.