

Tac gets a politician

FROM PAGE 1

him in November last year. Though investigation is going on against him since last year, ACC has not filed any case against him yet.

Despite repeated attempts, Kamrul could not be reached last night.

Meanwhile, eight more government servicemen including employees from Desa, Titas Gas and Sylhet City Corporation have disclosed before Tac of having ill-gotten wealth worth Tk 45 lakh only.

Besides, an ACC investigation reveals employees of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL), former Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (TTB), misappropriated over Tk 45 crore only in maintenance and preservation of its offices in Chittagong between 2000-2001 and 2007-2008.

The anti-graft watchdog yesterday also approved submission of two proposed charge sheets against five people including former LGRD state minister Ziaul Huq Zia on different charges. The ACC also approved filing of three separate cases against three people including former BNP lawmaker AKM Fazlul Haq Milon.

With yesterday's hearing, Tac heard 89 graft-accused and ordered them to return about Tk 16.12 crore to the state.

Of the 89, nearly half were from Titas Gas, one of the most corrupt state-owned companies according to NCC investigation, who disclosed before Tac of having about Tk 40 lakh only.

BTCL GRAFT The ACC taskforce, while probing corruption at BTCL in its Chittagong offices as part of a drive against institutional corruption, found that BTCL staffs ranging from the post divisional engineer to line-man misappropriated the money in connivance with each other.

The investigators also found BTCL staffs shared the money, drawn in advance for schedule maintenance and preservation by assistant engineers, illegally among themselves by a means invented by themselves at a fixed rate.

The ACC also approved issuing of notices against Abul Khair Bhuiyan's wife Rowshan Ara Begum and Afroza Jesmin, wife of Monirul Haque Saku, asking them to submit wealth statement to the commission.

Milon will be accused in the case for concealing information about wealth worth about Tk 2.48 lakh and amassing wealth worth about Tk 86.15 lakh beyond known sources of income.

The other two cases will be filed against former lawmaker Abul Khair Bhuiyan and former lawyer Moen Ahmed.

The ACC also approved issuing of notices against Abul Khair Bhuiyan's wife Rowshan Ara Begum and Afroza Jesmin, wife of Monirul Haque Saku, asking them to submit wealth statement to the commission.

Of the total money misappropriated, Tk 3.3 crore was shown as additional expenditure for maintenance and preservation, while Tk 41.9 crore through schedule work of maintenance and preservation.

The investigation found that though expenditure in schedule work of maintenance and preservation, work like maintenance and preservation of exchange, switch room and rectifier room, was shown about Tk 5.99 crore, the actual amount spent was Tk 17.96 crore.

Investigations reveal 25 percent to 40 percent of the drawn amount was spent on maintenance and entertainment purposes of the offices of the divisional engineers and top-level officers, while 10-15 percent was taken by the assistant engineers, who drew the money.

Besides, concerned deputy assistant engineers, TCT's, TCM's, wireman and linemen were each given Tk 4,000, Tk 1,600, Tk 1,400, Tk 1,300 and Tk 1,200 per month.

Moreover, the investigations find out that only 20 percent to 35 percent of the budgeted money was spent in maintenance and preservation, while the rest was

Zardari to meet

FROM PAGE 16

A Pakistani team will visit Delhi shortly to take up Kashmir-related matters, including cross-Line of Control trade, and Islamabad believes the long-standing Sir Creek boundary dispute and the military stand-off on the Siachen glacier could be resolved by the two countries, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said.

"I do not think that the peace process has come to a halt because our team is visiting Delhi shortly to discuss Kashmir-related issues, particularly cross-LoC trade. We are also keen to send a delegation from our side of Kashmir to Srinagar to discuss with business circles the tradeable items," he told reporters in Islamabad.

"That I would not call a stalling of the (peace) process," said Qureshi, who will be part of the Pakistani delegation that Zardari will lead to the UN General Assembly.

AL, BNP out to grab

FROM PAGE 1

already expressed their willingness to join the coalition. "We will welcome to the alliance any party that supports our programme."

Following a meeting with Khaleda at the residence of senior journalist Shafiq Rahman, BNP leader Shah Moazzam Hossain said, "We urged her to expand the alliance bringing like-minded parties to a common platform."

The BNP chairperson yesterday asked grassroots level leaders of the party to work unitedly to win the parliamentary election. Former lawmakers and grassroots leaders from Chittagong, Noakhali and Laxmipur met her at Shafiq Rahman's residence.

The four-party combine won a landslide victory in the parliamentary polls in 2001.

Ahead of the stalled ninth parliamentary election, which was scheduled for January 22 last year, the AL-led 14-party formed grand alliance bringing in Jatiya Party (Ershad), LDP and BDB.

But the grand alliance became ineffective with the declaration of the state of emergency on January

shared among the deputy assistant engineers, assistant engineers and divisional engineers.

Though entrance is restricted to the internal department in BTCL and labourers are not deployed to carry out work in the department, the BTCL staffs showed deployment of thousands of labourers in this regard and drew crores of taka, the investigation reveals.

Thousands of labourers were also showed deployed in work under external department, establishing telephone connection and cable renovation by digging roads when in reality labourers were not deployed, the investigation adds.

The investigation also reveals BTCL did not use its in-store cables and jointer in doing the job of maintenance and preservation.

The investigation says though the budget for maintenance and preservation of Chittagong offices between 2000-2001 and 2007-2008 was Tk 100.92 crore, the expenditure during the period was Tk 104.15 crore.

Another ACC investigation on July 21 revealed employees of BTCL Dhaka office misappropriated over Tk 45 crore in three sectors involving transportation between 2000-2001 and 2007-2008.

CHARGE SHEET AND CASES Ziaul Huq Zia and three others including former UNO of Ramganj in Laxmipur will be accused of misappropriation of 320 tonnes of government rice worth Tk 50.29 lakh in the proposed charge sheet.

The other charge sheet will be submitted against Comilla municipality chairman Monirul Haque Saku.

Milon will be accused in the case for concealing information about wealth worth about Tk 2.48 lakh and amassing wealth worth about Tk 86.15 lakh beyond known sources of income.

The other two cases will be filed against former lawmaker Abul Khair Bhuiyan and former lawyer Moen Ahmed.

The ACC also approved issuing of notices against Abul Khair Bhuiyan's wife Rowshan Ara Begum and Afroza Jesmin, wife of Monirul Haque Saku, asking them to submit wealth statement to the commission.

Milon will be accused in the case for concealing information about wealth worth about Tk 2.48 lakh and amassing wealth worth about Tk 86.15 lakh beyond known sources of income.

The other two cases will be filed against former lawmaker Abul Khair Bhuiyan and former lawyer Moen Ahmed.

The ACC also approved issuing of notices against Abul Khair Bhuiyan's wife Rowshan Ara Begum and Afroza Jesmin, wife of Monirul Haque Saku, asking them to submit wealth statement to the commission.

Of the total money misappropriated, Tk 3.3 crore was shown as additional expenditure for maintenance and preservation, while Tk 41.9 crore through schedule work of maintenance and preservation.

The investigation found that though expenditure in schedule work of maintenance and preservation, work like maintenance and preservation of exchange, switch room and rectifier room, was shown about Tk 5.99 crore, the actual amount spent was Tk 17.96 crore.

Investigations reveal 25 percent to 40 percent of the drawn amount was spent on maintenance and entertainment purposes of the offices of the divisional engineers and top-level officers, while 10-15 percent was taken by the assistant engineers, who drew the money.

Besides, concerned deputy assistant engineers, TCT's, TCM's, wireman and linemen were each given Tk 4,000, Tk 1,600, Tk 1,400, Tk 1,300 and Tk 1,200 per month.

Moreover, the investigations find out that only 20 percent to 35 percent of the budgeted money was spent in maintenance and preservation, while the rest was

Tahrir leaders held

FROM PAGE 1

Quoting the Quran in its leaflets, the Islamist group called upon Muslims asking them to "take oath for establishing the rule of Khilafat by deposing the present ruler in this holy month of Ramadan" to unite Muslims and revive their lost glory.

It criticises sending of forces in United Nations Peace Keeping missions for protecting "enemies" instead of "turning them the flag bearers of Islam".

"Our rulers have discarded the Quran and the Sunnah...They have handed us over to enemies. So, we should take oath to overthrow the present ruler this Ramadan and we have to replace them with Khilafat rule," says the leaflet distributed by the arrestees.

Of the arrestees, four are teachers including the outfit's Coordinator Dr Syed Golam Mowla, who is a teacher of management at Dhaka University (DU) and a resident of Dhanmondi, while others are students of different universities and colleges.

The arrest sparked tension in the city forcing the authorities to beef up security.

The police produced the Hizb ut-Tahrir men before the court of Metropolitan Judicial Magistrate BM Tariqul Kabir under section 54, accusing them of engaging in a conspiracy to topple the government.

Police released microbus driver Jahangir.

From police custody Golam Mowla claimed to reporters that Hizb ut-Tahrir is not linked with militancy and that they organised the press conference to clear their position following a campaign linking them with militancy.

"We want to establish Islamic rule through a truly democratic way and abiding by the law of the land," Mowla said.

Asked about their call for deposing the government, he said, "Speaking against any ruler or their system of ruling is a democratic right of every citizen."

The Islamist group's senior member Ahmed Jamal Iqbal told reporters that they have convinced the government about their having no connection with militancy. He said the government even allowed them in writing to hold a discussion at the Engineers' Institute of Dhaka this morning.

"I do not understand why we are allowed in Dhaka and arrested in Rajshahi," Jamal said.

HIZB UT-TAHRIR AND ITS BANGLADESH CHIEF Intelligence agencies have been

City Press Club including its President and Dainik Sangram bureau chief Sardar Abdur Rahman, and daily Naya Diganta correspondent Sardar Anisur Rahman told reporters that the press conference was postponed as the Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders failed to show them any permission from the police.

However, the Islamist group was finally given a schedule for the press conference at 1:30pm without the permission from the RMP.

Members of different law enforcement and intelligence agencies and journalists started gathering in front of the press club from 11:00am and the police arrested Hizb ut-Tahrir activists Zahidul Islam and Mozammel Haque around 12:30pm when they were entering the press club with a banner.

Upon their information, the police waited at the scene and arrested the Islamist group's coordinator along with others when they arrived at the place at 1:15pm in a microbus. Later, the police took them to Boalia Police Station.

Senior officials of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and RMP and members of intelligence agencies interrogated the Hizb ut-Tahrir men for hours before sending them to the court. Police released microbus driver Jahangir.

From police custody Golam Mowla claimed to reporters that Hizb ut-Tahrir is not linked with militancy and that they organised the press conference to clear their position following a campaign linking them with militancy.

"We want to establish Islamic rule through a truly democratic way and abiding by the law of the land," Mowla said.

Asked about their call for deposing the government, he said, "Speaking against any ruler or their system of ruling is a democratic right of every citizen."

The Islamist group's senior member Ahmed Jamal Iqbal told reporters that they have convinced the government about their having no connection with militancy. He said the government even allowed them in writing to hold a discussion at the Engineers' Institute of Dhaka this morning.

"I do not understand why we are allowed in Dhaka and arrested in Rajshahi," Jamal said.

HIZB UT-TAHRIR AND ITS BANGLADESH CHIEF Intelligence agencies have been

alerting the government about the presence of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the country for several years as it is widely believed to be the political ideologue of all terrorist groups in the world.

In a report in 2005, the intelligence agencies expressed fear that the group may turn into an extremist organisation any time and suggested closely monitoring its activities.

Islami thinker Tokiuddin Al Nakhani formed Hizb ut-Tahrir in 1953 in Jerusalem, five years after Israel captured Palestine.

Golam Mowla, a lecturer of management at DU, went to London in 1993 to do his PhD and was introduced to Nasimul Gani and Kawser Shahnewaz, who were holding an open discussion on Hizb ut-Tahrir at Regent Park.

After returning to Bangladesh in 2000, Nasimul and Shahnewaz set up an office at a coaching centre at Dhanmondi-6/A for the organisation's Bangladesh chapter and launched the group's activities under Golam Mowla's leadership.

The organisation has no committee or constitution. With Golam Mowla working as its coordinator, Mohiuddin Ahmad, senior lecturer of DU IBA department, Sheikh Towfiq of DU public administration department, Kazi Morshedul Haque, Dr Nasimul Gani and Kawser Shahnewaz are working with the organisation.

Hizb ut-Tahrir preaches a utopian ideology of establishing an Islamic Caliphate across the globe.

Termining Muslim majority countries, including Bangladesh, "Daarul-Kuffar" (land of the infidels) because they follow non-Islamic laws and practices, it wants to turn them into "Daar-ul-Islam" first and then take on the Muslim minority countries which according to them are "Daar-ul-Harb" (land of war).

Hizb ut-Tahrir men allegedly have misinterpreted the Quran and are being financed mostly by Middle Eastern countries.

Although banned in the western and most Muslim majority countries, Hizb ut-Tahrir has been freely operating in Bangladesh for the past few years. On its website it promotes racism and anti-Semitic hatred, calls suicide bombers martyrs and urges Muslims to kill Jews.

Asked about their call for deposing the government, he said, "Speaking against any ruler or their system of ruling is a democratic right of every citizen."

The Islamist group's senior member Ahmed Jamal Iqbal told reporters that they have convinced the government about their having no connection with militancy. He said the government even allowed them in writing to hold a discussion at the Engineers' Institute of Dhaka this morning.

"I do not understand why we are allowed in Dhaka and arrested in Rajshahi," Jamal said.

HIZB UT-TAHRIR AND ITS BANGLADESH CHIEF Intelligence agencies have been

Bails slow down

FROM PAGE 1

prayers and issuing rules against the government and the anti-graft body.

The government however, he added, will not give up. It will continue its purge on corruptionists.

"Rulings of the honourable higher court have slowed down our drive against corruption," he said, adding that the court decisions have also held back investigation in the graft cases.

Asked if flawed framing of charges are responsible for the current state, he replied, "I don't think so. There are however some loopholes in the laws."

Replying to a query, the adviser said the responsibility of the NCC is to assist the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to ensure proper probe into corruption. "We have performed our duties."

He said 158 people were granted bail and 188 cases stayed between July 14 and September 8.

Since then, over a dozen people have been let out on bail.

Matin said at present trials of 228 cases against 108 people are underway.

He said 512 cases have been filed since they took over on January 11 last year. Of those, 152 have been tried and 97 people convicted.

The drive against corruption has seen 78 people arrested and 222 listed as graft suspects, he added.

"We hoped to see the maximum number of graft cases resolved before December. But now it seems we'll not be able to make it," he said.

The government to be elected should carry through the efforts, he observed, adding that the job would

be quite challenging though.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman, BNP leaders Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, MK Anwar, Shamsul Islam and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Jamaat-e-Islami chief Motiur Rahman Nizami are among those freed on bail.

Release of many more is in the offing.

In a significant development, the HC Wednesday stayed corruption conviction of seven people including three former state ministers. This was the first stay on verdicts in the cases filed after 1/11.

The HC put off for three months the convictions of state ministers Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku, Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and Aman Ullah Aman, BNP leader Syeda Ashrafi Papiya, former BNP minister Mirza Abbas's wife Afroza Abbas, Nasir's son Mir Helaluddin, and Orion Group Chairman Obaidul Karim.

They were convicted and sentenced to varying prison terms in cases filed by the government and the ACC.

About the fate of the cases, Matin said the bails and stay orders do not necessarily mean an end to the trial process. "I hope the process will continue."

The HC yesterday stayed the proceedings of the MiG-29 scam case filed against AL president Sheikh Hasina during the four-party rule.

The NCC chief said they will take steps to challenge the higher court rulings with regard to the graft cases.

7 US troops

FROM PAGE 16

British military spokesman Major Paul Smyth said a British quick reaction force was despatched from Basra and a British road convoy in the vicinity was diverted to the scene of the crash.

He said both British and US personnel were at the scene.

The US military said the incident was under investigation. "However enemy activity is not suspected," it added.

"It is a tough day for the coalition and we are deeply saddened by the loss of our soldiers," said Colonel Bill Buckner, a spokesman for the US military.

The crash was the worst since August 2007 when a US Blackhawk transport chopper crashed in northern Iraq, killing 14 US military personnel.

Two American soldiers were wounded when their helicopter crashed south of the Iraqi capital Baghdad in June this year.

The worst single US chopper crash was on November 15, 2003, when two Blackhawks collided near the main northern city of Mosul, killing 17 soldiers.

In January and February last year there was a spate of crashes, including some shot down by an insurgent cell, which deployed anti-aircraft crews north of Baghdad. US forces have since hunted down those gunners.

The latest US deaths bring to 4,168 the number of US soldiers killed in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, according to an AFP count based on independent website casualties.org.

The military's losses have been declining in the past few months on the back of an overall fall in violence across the country.

The latest deaths bring to 17 the number of US service members killed in Iraq so far this month, compared to 66 slain in September 2007.

In August, 23 soldiers were reported killed in the country.

Judicial probe

FROM PAGE 16

board of directors on charges of negligence of providing proper treatment to Manna.

In the case, the complainant mentioned that Manna went to the hospital with chest pain at 4:15pm on February 17 and died at 2:00pm. He alleged that Manna was in the hospital without treatment for over five hours.

Policy summit

FROM PAGE 16

to lift the emergency immediately.

AL Presidium member Tofail Ahmed, however, termed the idea of policy summit impractical. The government should not do any more experiments as the national election is scheduled for December, he said.

An elected government should decide how the country would be run after the election, Tofail told The Daily Star.

Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman Wednesday said the government would organise a policy summit in November with the country's top political leaders on three key issues-- investment growth, administrative reforms and education.

Termining the government decision impractical, leaders of other parties said the only job of the caretaker government at present is to hold the national election. An elected government should decide on the summit issue, he said.

MK Anwar, BNP vice-president, told The Daily Star last night that the government should not go for any further "adventures".

"It is the elected party or the alliance who will determine how the country will run," Anwar said, adding that every party has their own policies on how they will run the country once they assume power.

JP acting Chairman Anisul Islam Mahmud said, "Of course there could be a discussion among political parties but there is no environment to hold such summit ahead of the parliamentary polls."

"The parliament should decide on the matter in parliament through discussions, not the caretaker government," he told The Daily Star.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon said the caretaker government is not supposed to organise this kind of summit.

"Every day they are talking about new ideas and plans which are beyond their jurisdiction and the policy summit is their latest idea," he said.

Talking to The Daily Star CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan termed the government's plan a new conspiracy to stay in power for longer.

JP (Manju) Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam in a statement termed the government plan irrational and asked the government to concentrate on holding a free, fair and credible national election.

Jamaat Senior Assistant Secretary General M. M. H. Qamaruzzaman said, "The caretaker government is not in a position to carry the load of organising this kind of summit. Even the agenda of the policy summit is not clear."

He, however, said they are not against the holding of this kind of summit.

Meanwhile, AL acting President Zillur Rahman welcomed the initiatives of barrister Rafique-ul-Huq, who defended former premier Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia in court, to persuade the two leaders to sit together.

The final decision on the matter would be made after Hasina's return from the US, he said.

Amar Desh served

FROM PAGE 16

Publisher Hasmat Ali and the correspondent concerned to immediately withdraw the report published on September 3, beg unconditional public apology and publish the full rejoinder sent to them earlier.

"In default, we have instructions to institute appropriate legal proceedings against you for defamation, in which event you will be liable for the costs and consequences thereof," the notice said.

The same demands were made in the first legal notice served on the three on September 7.

The second notice was served on September 17 on behalf of Prothom Alo Editor Matur Rahman, The Daily Star Editor-Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Transcom Group Chairman and Managing Director Latifur Rahman.

In the notice, jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said, "Following the legal notice sent on behalf of our clients on September 7, to which you are yet to reply, we have been instructed by our clients to write you that you have published an editor's note on September 12, 2008, which makes reference to our legal notice and states that you have published a large part of our rejoinder, especially those that relate to your story, it was not the intention of Amar Dosh to defame or harm anybody, your intention was to point out another example of trying to depict Bangladesh as an outpost of ULFA, since you have come to know that Matur Rahman, Mahfuz Anam and Latifur Rahman have seriously reacted to your report, you are expressing your sincerest regret, and since you have been served with a legal notice, you would reply through your legal counsel to that legal notice."

In the editor's note, the Amar Dosh editor, publisher and the correspondent stated that a formal reply to the legal notice would be sent through their lawyer, he said. "Till September 17, neither our clients nor we have received any reply," he added.

"We would like to point out that what you have published on September 12, 2008, does not meet the demands set out in our notice, calling for withdrawing in full the published report by your correspondent and extending unconditional apology to our clients for

having published the said false, highly defamatory and scurrilous report by your correspondent," the notice said.

"We point out that in the editor's note you have not extended an unconditional apology for publishing the said false and defamatory report but expressed regret for hurting 'the feelings of our clients'. Personal feelings of our clients are not the issue. The issue is of demanding the reputation and public standing of our clients which have not been addressed in the said editor's note."

The jurist said, "Your claim in the editor's note that your only intention behind publishing the report was to present another example of attempts of depicting Bangladesh as an ULFA outpost, is belied by the reply your correspondent gave while publishing our reply. In that reply further issues, not contained in the original report, were added making clear your intention to defame our clients."

Dr Kamal Hossain said his clients are unable to accept the editor's note. He reiterated his clients' demands for immediate compliance with the demands for withdrawal of the full report and seeking unconditional apology from his clients for publishing such a false, defamatory and scurrilous report.

Israeli PM

FROM PAGE 16

The 50-year-old foreign minister narrowly won a leadership vote to replace scandal-plagued Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is standing down to battle a number of corruption allegations.

Livni secured 43.1 percent of the vote against her main rival Transport Minister and former army chief Shaul Mofaz's 42 percent, winning by just 431 votes, the central electoral commission said.

"I will start tomorrow to meet representatives of the other parties in the Knesset to form a new coalition as quickly as possible in the face of the serious threats," the former Mossad spy said after her victory was confirmed.

Livni, who has been leading US-backed peace negotiations with the Palestinians, will have 42 days to form a government if she hopes to prevent an election that polls say would bring the right-wing Likud party to power.

"I will do my utmost not to disappoint you. I want to do what's best for the country," she said.

India faces

FROM PAGE 16

Singh's government has been strongly criticised in the wake of serial bomb blasts this year in the cities of Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and New Delhi, which have claimed more than 100 lives.

After the latest bombings killed 22 in the Indian capital on Saturday, the media accused the government of incompetence and of lacking a coherent counter-terrorism strategy.

While acknowledging there were "vast gaps in intelligence" that needed to be overcome, Singh rejected charges that his administration's policies had made the country more vulnerable to attack.

"There is no question of government being soft on terrorism," he said.

India's main opposition, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, has taken the Congress-led government to task over its decision in 2004 to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act ushered in by the previous BJP-run administration.

Congress had argued that the legislation was misused to settle political scores and harass Muslims -- a point reaffirmed Thursday by Information and Broadcasting Minister Priya Ranjan Dasgupta when he ruled out bringing the act back.

"No, No, No. It is draconian," Dasgupta told reporters.

Singh, however, acknowledged that the security forces might need stronger legal tools in conducting counter-terror operations.