

## DEFAMATION CASE

## Ex-secretary Abu Karim summoned

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued summons against recently force-retired information secretary ATM Fazlul Karim to appear before it by July 27 in a defamation case filed for writing verses criticising Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family.

The same court yesterday dismissed a seditious case, filed by Awami League (AL) leader AS Alam, against Fazlul Karim alias Abu Karim saying the complainant did not have prior approval from the government.

After scrutinising the docket and other relevant documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Kanika Biswas decreed the accused to appear before the court.

Advocate Omar Faruque filed the defamation case with the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Abu Karim and Sayeed Bari, proprietor of the Suchipatra Prokashana on February 24.

After the hearing on February 24, Metropolitan Magistrate recorded statements of both the complainants and fixed yesterday for the order on the cases.

In his complaint, advocate Omar mentioned that the accused had written a poem

entitled 'Baganey Phutey Achhey Onek Golap' in February 2006 and Shuchipatra Prokashana published his collection of poems in Ekushey Boi Mela, 2008.

The complainant came to know about the publisher from an excerpt of the book published in the daily 'Amader Shomoy' on February 20, said the complainant.

The daily quoted different lines from the verses where the accused claimed that only 30,000 people were killed during the Liberation War but the number had been exaggerated to 30 lakh.

In the book, the accused referred Bangabandhu as Latifur Rahman and also called him 'Alubokhara' (plum), Sheikh Kamal as Kamalakoli, Sheikh Jamal as Jamtoli and Sheikh Russel as Roskoli, the complainants said.

Such defamatory writings have damaged and undermined the image of Bangabandhu, his family members, Bangladesh Awami League and its front organisations, the complaint included.

The same court on March 2 issued an arrest warrant against Abu Karim on the same charges filed by another AL leader on February 22.

## 10 hurt in BCL intra-party clash at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least ten activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were hurt following an internal clash that lasted for nearly two hours at Muktiyoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall in Dhaka University (DU) early yesterday.

Hall sources said clashes erupted between activists loyal to BCL DU unit president Sohel Rana Tipu and general secretary Sajjad Saqib Badsha over dominance at the hall at around 1:30am.

Enraged activists from both groups swept on each other at the hall premises with iron rods, sticks and machetes in presence of police, university proctor and hall provosts. Top BCL leaders including the central unit general secretary Mahfujul Haider Chowdhury Rotan was also present at the time, sources added.

Around 10 rooms of the hall, where members of both groups reside, were also ransacked.

BCL activist Salman loyal to DU unit president Tipu and Maruf loyal to unit general secretary Badsha led the clashes on behalf of their groups.

Injured activists, Mohsin, a first year student of International Relations, Asad of Philosophy, Anisuzzaman and Prince of Islamic History and Culture, Rana of Sociology, Saiful of English, Fayal of History, Shihban of Psychology, Mahmood of Political Science and Lisan of Bangla were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and DU medical centre.

DU unit general secretary Badsha said organisational action would be taken against those responsible for the violence. He urged the university authority to take action against those who created violence on the university premises.

## SC stays

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Moudud's bank accounts. The government yesterday filed a petition with the chamber judge's court to stay the HC judgment.

The attorney general representing the government prayed to the court saying that the SC should examine whether the HC judgment was right.

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq, counsel for Moudud, opposed the government's stay petition and said the HC delivered the verdict in accordance with the law and it should not be stayed.

Earlier on January 22, the HC bench allowed Moudud to withdraw Tk 5 lakh a month from one of his frozen accounts with IFIC Bank and to deposit it in his savings account with the same bank from where he can withdraw the money.

On March 5, 2007, following the directives of the National Board of Revenue, five bank accounts of the former law minister were frozen in connection with tax evasion case.

Additional Attorney General M Enayetur Rahim assisted the attorney general in moving the government petition.

## EC stripped

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Senior officials at the EC Secretariat said the changes would benefit the registered political parties.

All major political parties including AL accepted the electoral reforms before the ninth parliamentary election, and brought provisional changes in their constitutions to be in conformity with the RPO provisions.

AL parliamentary board nominated candidates for the election from the panels prepared by the party's grassroots level committees.

However, none of the political parties contesting the April 2 by-elections in seven constituencies has nominated candidates on recommendations of the grassroots.

The provision for picking parliamentary contenders from grassroots panels was introduced to curb business over nominations in the major political parties.

The prohibition against forming or having associated organisations comprising teachers, students and workers was envisioned to purge partisan politics from educational institutions and industries or businesses.

The definition chapter of the RPO act says the electoral roll means the final voter roll prepared under the Electoral Rolls Ordinance 2007. It says so even though the ordinance stopped functioning with the passage of Electoral Roll Act 2009 on February 24.

EC Secretariat officials said the definition must be changed.

## BNP MPs stage

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Presiding over the sitting, Speaker Abdul Hamid assured the opposition lawmakers of expunging the remarks, if there was any "un-parliamentary language", from the proceeding.

The speaker also urged them not to walk out since they were being allowed to speak.

During the debate, BNP lawmakers claimed that Zia proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh while the treasury bench lawmakers denounced the claim and termed it a complete distortion of history.

"Have doubt whether Ziaur Rahman fought for the country's liberation. On his indirect support, criminals assassinated the father of the nation," said Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, deputy leader of the House.

Awami League (AL) lawmaker Tofail Ahmed said nothing could be more unfortunate and disrespectful to the nation if someone claims that Zia proclaimed the country's independence.

"The country was not liberated by the declaration of an army major. Ziaur Rahman is responsible for the country's current poor condition. He corrupted the country's politics by rehabilitating war criminals," Tofail said.

AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said, "There is no need to prove that Ziaur Rahman declared the country's independence on behalf of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

He also urged the speaker to give a ruling on the historic truth.

Mainuddin Khan Badal, lawmaker of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, a component of the AL-led alliance, urged the speaker to arrange a

## Govt forms

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Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) with cooperation of Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the seminar titled "Global Financial Crisis and Impact on Bangladesh" with BIDS Director General Quazi Shahabuddin in the chair.

Replying to a query on Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FCCI) Tk 6,000 crore rescue package demand to cope with the global financial meltdown, he said: "We will have to examine and analyse the demand."

He said the government is likely to announce a bailout package early next month for the business sectors suffering from the impact of global recession.

"May be we'll be able to announce the package in the beginning of April," he said.

Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, Professor of Economics of Concordia University Syed M Ahsan, Centre for Policy Dialogue Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman and Association of Bankers Bangladesh Chairman Kazi Mahmood Sattar also spoke at the seminar.

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## Bangabandhu's

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and its front organisations have taken up various programmes to mark the day with due respect.

Leaders, workers and supporters of AL and different socio-cultural organisations will place wreaths at the portrait of Sheikh Mujib at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on road No-32 in the city's Dhanmondi and also at Bangabandhu's mazar at Tungipara.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasions of the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu and the National Children Day.

The president in his message paid deep tribute to the memory of the Father of the Nation and conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the children of Bangladesh.

"Responding to the clarion call of the undisputed leader of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu, the countrymen participated in the war of liberation and earned the long-cherished independence," he said.

Paying tribute to the Father of the Nation, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message called upon all to come forward and build a prosperous Bangladesh by making it a safe place for children as aspired by Bangabandhu.

"The intellect and the sacrifice of Bangabandhu will build up confidence among our children and juveniles,

discussion on this and invite to it freedom fighters who are witness to the historic March 26, 1971.

BNP lawmaker MK Anwar said they never claimed that Ziaur Rahman's declaration of independence liberated the country. "We said he made the declaration at a time when many people were fleeing the country. His declaration inspired people," Anwar claimed.

The BNP lawmaker also demanded that all "indecent remarks" on Ziaur Rahman be expunged.

When the opposition lawmakers were making their noisy walk out, BNP lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anee left his seat, proceeded to the space in front of the front left side bench, and kept shouting at the speaker to expunge the remarks.

## US to help

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The assurance came when a three-member delegation led by Moriarty made a courtesy call on Attorney General (AG) Mahbub Alam yesterday afternoon.

After the meeting the attorney general told reporters that the US ambassador told him that the US government would provide assistance to modernise the attorney general's office and also to provide training to law officers.

The attorney general said they discussed the similarities and dissimilarities in the judicial systems of the two countries.

Additional Attorney General M Enayetur Rahim and other senior state law officers were present.

## Baby langur

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evening," said Sitish Babu, who had initially cared for the baby when it was first rescued. "In the morning, my meye (girl) died. My heart is bleeding."

The rescue centre authorities said they called in a vet in the morning when they found the baby sick. The vet found her body temperature too low. They administered saline but she did not revive.

"This only proves we need a better-equipped animal rescue centre," said Dr Anwar. "And the death reminds us that the wild must be left alone in the forest. We should not capture them for fun."

## Mixed view

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decisions. It is undisputed that the expected result cannot be achieved if actions are not taken in time.

The letter asked the secretaries to pay more attention to the activities of the officials below them and to motivate them into working properly.

"Take legal and punitive actions if anyone makes delays or creates obstacles," the letter read.

## Saudi national beheaded for killing Bangladeshi

AP, Riyadh

A Saudi national was beheaded in Medina after being convicted of stealing sheep and killing a Bangladeshi man.

Hmoud Bin Awadh al-Meteri was found guilty of stealing sheep and selling them after shooting their guard Shahin Khan Hemayat al-Deen to death, the interior ministry statements said.

There was no information on when the crimes or the beheading occurred.

Saudi Arabia follows a strict interpretation of Islam under which people, convicted of murder, drug trafficking, rape and armed robbery can be executed - usually with a sword.

Monday's execution brings the number of beheadings to 16 in the kingdom this year, according to an Associated Press count.

In 2008, 102 people were beheaded in Saudi Arabia.

## Sea border

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Foreign ministry sources said Bangladesh has already lodged a protest with the UN against the claim of Myanmar. It will do the same against India's claim if India submits its claim without resolving the disputes.

Under the UNCLOS, Bangladesh also has to file its claim by July 27, 2011.

The last talk between Bangladesh and India was limited just to determine the mid channel of Hariabhanga, a bordering river in the western part of the country. During the meeting, Bangladesh's claim over South Talpatty Island on the estuary of the Hariabhanga was disputed by the Indianside.

Even the countries could not reach a consensus on how the mid point of the Hariavanga will be measured as there are two major flows on both sides of Talpatty island, emerged in the estuary of the river.

Bangladesh proposed at the meeting that the middle point should be determined from the western side of the river while India wanted that the measurement should start from the eastern side.

The technical committees will try to reach a consensus on demarcation details before recommending for a final agreement.

## Five more

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Shibir (ICS) at Rajshahi University.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station, yesterday confirmed filing of the cases and said they already have started their investigation.

On Friday sporadic clashes between BCL and ICS men on RU campus left ICS General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Nomani killed and at least 100 people injured. All higher educational institutions in the city, including RU, have been closed one after another for an indefinite period following the clash.

Police said BCL RU unit Cultural Affairs Secretary Awal Kabir Joy yesterday filed a case against over 90 ICS men for Friday's violence.

ICS RU unit Organising Secretary Farhad, its Bangabandhu hall president Shochu, Shah Mukdum hall president Maruf, secretary Anis, Latif hall secretary Yasin, Sher-e-Bangla hall president Nazmul, among others, were made accused in the case.

Muhammad Aslam filed another case against 42 persons on Sunday night for damaging their business centre that left his two brothers - AL leader Shahed and Swechhasevak League member Robi - injured.

Former commissioner of Ward No-30 Abdus Samad, also a Jamaat leader, local and RU unit ICS men, among others, were made accused in the case.

BCL RU unit activist Shakawat filed another case against 90 RU unit ICS men for launching a gun and bomb attack on BCL men in front of Shamsuzzohra halls.

Police yesterday said RU Registrar Prof MA Bari on Sunday morning filed a case against 500 persons for damaging its properties worth around Tk 5 lakh during violence on March 11 that also left at least 20 BCL men injured.

The RU registrar also has filed another case in connection with the Friday's violence on the campus but police did not disclose it before for 'technical reasons', police said yesterday.

RU Proctor Prof Zakaria, assistant proctors and high officials of police yesterday held a meeting at the Proctor Office and discussed law and order.

## Red Cross report reveals CIA's torture on Qaeda

AFP, Washington

The International Committee of the Red Cross produced in 2007 a secret report, in which it concluded that the treatment of al-Qaeda captives by CIA interrogators "constituted torture," The Washington Post reported yesterday.

The newspaper quotes the ICRC report as saying that the treatment of inmates at secret prisons run by the US Central Intelligence Agency amounted to "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment," which is prohibited by the Geneva Conventions.

The findings were based on conclusions by ICRC officials who were granted exclusive access to the CIA's "high-value" detainees after they had been transferred in 2006 to the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the report said.

The 14 detainees gave uniform accounts of abuse that included beatings, sleep deprivation, extreme temperatures and, in some cases, waterboarding, the paper noted.

The Post said that at least five copies of the report had been shared with the CIA and top White House officials in 2007, but barred from public release by ICRC guidelines intended to preserve the group's policy of neutrality in conflicts.

The paper quotes an unnamed US official familiar

with the report as saying that "it is important to bear in mind that the report lays out claims made by the terrorists themselves."

The report says prisoners at the secret jails were routinely beaten, doused with cold water and slammed head-first into walls, according to The Post.

Between sessions they were stripped of clothing, bombarded with loud music, exposed to cold temperatures, and deprived of sleep and solid food for days, the paper says.

Some detainees described being forced to stand for days, with their arms shackled above them, wearing only a diaper, it adds.

"On a daily basis... a collar was looped around my neck and then used to slam me against the walls of the interrogation room," the report quotes detainee Walid bin Attash as saying.

Later, he said, he was wrapped in a plastic sheet while cold water was "poured onto my body with buckets."

ICRC officials did not dispute the authenticity of the report, but a committee spokesman expressed dismay over the leak of the material, The Post said.

"We regret information attributed to the ICRC report was made public in this manner," the paper quotes spokesman Bernard Barrett as saying.

## Pak govt reinstates

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said from inside his SUV, showered with pink rose petals and stranded in a sea of jubilant supporters in the central city of Gujranwala.

He said the decision had been taken following discussions with lawyers and leaders of allied political parties, such as cricket hero Imran Khan.

The US called the decision "statesmanlike," but it also was a significant concession that could weaken US-allied President Asif Ali Zardari, who had long refused to restore the independent-minded Chaudhry despite demands by lawyers and opposition leader Nawaz Sharif. Already, attempts to quell the protest movement through arrests and bans on rallies have triggered cracks in the ruling party.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's announcement also promised the restoration of a handful of other judges who had remained off the bench since former President Pervez Musharraf sacked them in 2007. He further ordered the release of activists arrested over the past week and appealed for political reconciliation in Pakistan, a nuclear-armed nation that also faces an economic crisis.

The moves prompted scenes of jubilation outside Chaudhry's Islamabad home and other parts of the country, where activists called it a triumph for democracy. The nation's embattled stock market rallied in the morning.

"No country can progress without an independent judiciary and the government by restoring the chief justice and other judges has also realized it, and we think it is a big success," said Ali Ahmad Kurd, a leader of the protesting lawyers.

The concession came as thousands of protesters led by Sharif, a former prime minister and the head of the largest opposition party, were traveling to Islamabad to join the planned sit-in. Sharif joined the convoy after ignoring a house arrest order in his hometown of Lahore in Punjab province, where his supporters fought police.

Sharif thanked Zardari and Gilani after the announcement, but signalled his seemingly strengthened position by focusing on the future.

"From here, God willing, the fate of this nation will change," Sharif said, using a microphone from inside his jeep in Gujranwala as supporters mobbed it. "From here, a journey of development will start. From here, a revolution will come."

Musharraf fired Chaudhry in 2007 after he took up cases challenging his rule, sparking a wave of protests that helped force the military ruler from office in 2008. Overall, Musharraf sacked some 69 judges. Most have already been reinstated.

Zardari pledged to restore Chaudhry within 30 days of his party forming a government in spring 2008. But he reneged, apparently fearing Chaudhry might examine a deal that

Zardari and his wife, slain politician Benazir Bhutto, struck with Musharraf to grant the pair immunity from prosecution over alleged corruption.

Zardari aide Farahnaz Isphani said Monday the prime minister "recognised the mood of the people" and "agreed that it was in the country's best interest for stability" to restore Chaudhry. She said the matter had languished because the government had more pressing concerns including reviving the economy and tackling the terror threat.

"Instead of weakening the government or the president or prime minister it has actually strengthened the government," Isphani insisted. "We have taken the issue away from those who wanted to use mob violence and intimidation. We have taken the country out of the political crisis in an extremely mature and political way."

Sharif initially entered into a coalition government with Zardari's party but switched to the opposition over the judges' issue.

Last month, the Supreme Court ruled that Sharif and his brother Shahbaz were ineligible for elected office. Zardari then dismissed the government led by Shahbaz in Punjab, the most powerful Pakistani province.

A furious Sharif accused Zardari of a power grab and urged his supporters to join lawyers and other activists planning to march on the capital, re-energizing what had been an alighting movement.

Gilani repeated a pledge made Saturday to appeal the verdict over the Sharif's eligibility to the Supreme Court.

The Zardari-Sharif showdown raised the prospect of a military intervention in a country prone to military coups. The powerful army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, met with Zardari who has stayed largely out of public view in recent weeks as the crisis unfolded over the past few days, though officials would not detail their discussion.

Western capitals were concerned the crisis was distracting Pakistan from its fight against Taliban and al-Qaeda militants operating along the Afghan border. US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton had urged Zardari and Sharif to strike a deal.

The US Embassy in Islamabad issued a statement welcoming Monday's announcement.

"This is a statesmanlike decision taken to defuse a serious confrontation, and the apparent removal of this long-standing national issue is a substantial step towards national reconciliation," it said.

For days, the government tried to thwart the protest march banning rallies, detaining hundreds of activists, putting the army on alert, and barricading the capital. The moves, which sparked clashes between Sharif supporters and police over the weekend, echoed Musharraf's responses to the lawyers' back in 2007.

## Militants apart

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Intelligence reports say that extremists inside the country have links with the Taliban militants of Afghanistan.

"Some people are trying to assist those who were directly involved in the mutiny," said Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, recently assigned to coordinate the probes into the carnage, while talking to reporters at his Secretariat office.

"Everything would come to the surface after investigation," he added.

Some BDR members who fled with firearms and grenades could not be arrested yet which is a threat to the country, the commerce minister said.

Referring to the mass murder of BDR officers during the mutiny, he said it was staged to turn the country into a failed state.

The retired army officer turned politician said last week that evidence of Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) involvement in the Feb 25-26 massacre had been found.

The minister repeatedly reminded about the prime minister's recent announcement that no innocent BDR soldier would be punished or harassed.

He said for BDR members things are returning to normal quickly as they are now in touch with their family members and the borders are also well protected.

## SUSPECTED MUTINEERS REMANDED

A Dhaka Court yesterday placed 19 BDR jawans on a five-day remand each after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) tasked with the investiga-

## Govt to provide

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During the emotional meeting, the prime minister consoled the bereaved family members and assured them of standing beside them in their weal and woe in future.

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Meanwhile, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday sought cooperation of the Malaysian-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry to solve the problems of workers in Malaysia.

He made the request when a nine-member delegation of the chamber led by its Vice President Abdus Salam met the minister at his office.

The delegation said they would extend all cooperation in improving manpower export and trade relations between the two countries.

Earlier on March 10, Malaysia cancelled 55,000 work visas for Bangladeshis.

"We hope that the visa cancellation is temporary, and the problems will be solved soon," he told reporters after the meeting.

Meanwhile, foreign minister Dr Dipu Moni and Khandaker Mosharraf will visit Malaysia on March 25 or 26.

Dipu Moni said yesterday the government will take every step necessary to resolve the problem. If needed, the prime minister will also visit Malaysia.

"We are looking into the issue comprehensively," she told reporters after attending a language festival organised by 'Aamra Bahanno Foundation' and held at the Central Public Library in the capital.