



Tuku sues Moeen for defamation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP state minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku yesterday sued recently retired army chief Moeen U Ahmed for defamation and Tk 100 crore in damages.

On his behalf, barrister Moudud Ahmed lodged the case with the Third Joint District Judge's Court, Dhaka.

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Move to pay shady RPC contractor Tk 300cr

Ministry now pushes for paying LIPPS ousted in 2005 for sabotaging power plant; RPC to fight back pressure

SHARIER KHAN

The Rural Power Company (RPC) in August 2005 cancelled a plant operation and maintenance contract with Lahmayer International Pally Power Services (LIPPS) as it illegally shut down and "sabotaged" two 70-megawatt units of a Mymensingh plant.

The RPC also filed several cases against officials including the LIPPS chief who fled from the country not only for sabotaging the plant but also for committing a host of serious financial corruption.

The corruption charges include attempts to take over the RPC management. Their corruption affected RPC so much that the German government had cancelled 70 million euro grant marked for two power projects.

The LIPPS chief, a retired army official, then turned to a Singapore arbitration court in late 2006.

By showing a yet-to-be-effective contract for the third 70 MW unit of the Mymensingh plant, he won a verdict from that court which says RPC should pay LIPPS Tk 200 crore penalty for termination of the contract.

Delay in paying this compensation adds other penalties, the verdict says.

The RPC however obtained a stay order from the High Court against effectiveness of the verdict made in Singapore.

Two separate investigation committees looked into the matter and pinpointed a host of irregularities committed by the LIPPS chief and several high officials of RPC to milk out as much money as possible from RPC.

The committees recommended taking actions against the accused including the LIPPS chief.

However, the committees' recommendations were in vain as no action was taken till date.

As it was the affair of a limited company, except the Rural Electrification Board (REB) which owns some RPC shares, neither the power ministry nor any other government organs have any business or role in this regard.

Surprisingly, after four years the power ministry in May suddenly initiated a move to make RPC pay LIPPS the Tk 300 crore as per the Singapore verdict.

More intriguingly, the ministry made the move on receiving a report sent by a top intelligence agency in Bangladesh in

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KCC councillor gunned down

Stance against canal encroachment might be behind the killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Unidentified criminals shot dead Shahid Iqbal Bithar, ward councillor of Khulna City Corporation and presidium member of Jubo League, near his residence at Musalmanpara in Khulna early yesterday.

Sources said Shahid's tough stance against canal encroachers or intra-party conflict could be the motives behind the murder.

He was the convener of the 19-member committee formed by the KCC to conduct eviction drives against encroachers of 22 canals in Khulna city and its suburbs. Shahid reportedly received threats after the eviction drive was launched on July 2.

Witnesses told the police that two persons riding a motorbike fired two shots at Shahid, 48, while he was returning home on a motorcycle with his relative Mantu Shikder at around 12:45am. Mantu escaped unharmed.

The criminals fled the scene immediately.



Shahid Iqbal Bithar

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SIRAJGANJ TOWN Minister blames WDB for damage of embankment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain yesterday blamed the negligence of Water Development Board for the partial damage to Sirajganj town protection embankment by river erosion within 10 years of its construction.

He said the construction was affected by erosion due to lack of proper monitoring and maintenance by the officials of Water Development Board.

During his visit to the embankment site at noon, the minister told the journalists that unplanned lifting of sand from the riverbed and lack of supervision by the district administration possibly caused the collapse of the protection embankment.

He warned the officials concerned against any kind of

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A dredger defies Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority to dig out sand just off the bank of the Buriganga near Basila on the outskirts of Dhaka. It has permission to extract sand only from the mid-river.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Rules defied in sand lifting near Buriganga bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of people have been extracting sand on a large scale from the bank and adjacent shallow river bed of the Buriganga at Basila although they have permission for extracting sand from the middle of the river.

The activity allegedly backed by activists of the ruling Awami League is exposing the residential area to erosion and threatening to change the very course of the river.

These people are also defying the permission given by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority by using 14 powerful dredgers while they have permission for only three.

The whole activity is being overseen by armed men in at least three engine boats patrolling the river.

A number of residents of Basila said they had filed complaints in writing with Hazaribagh Police Station about the plundering of the bank and the adjacent river bed in the last 10 days but

police have remained mysteriously silent.

Every day these hoodlums are extracting sand worth more than Tk 5 lakh.

BIWTA Deputy Director (Port) Golam Kabir admitted that their highest authority issued permission for three dredgers for 30 days. "But we never permitted anyone to extract sand in a way that may threaten a township and the course of the river," he said.

BIWTA Chairman Abdul Mannan Howlader said as per rules these dredgers are supposed to extract sand from the middle of the river, not from the bank.

A team of three Detective Branch policemen, led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Ahsan Habib, was patrolling the shore adjacent to ZH Sikder Women's Medical College and Hospital near the dredging site.

The law enforcers said they could not intervene in the matter despite their full knowledge that it was an illegal act.

"We know who these people are but we are

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BSF to be asked to stop killing

DG-level talks with BDR begin in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India kicked off a border conference at the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) headquarters yesterday morning, while two Bangladeshis were shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at Chuadanga and Dinajpur frontiers.

At the three-day director general level conference between BDR and BSF, Dhaka will raise the issue of killings, wounding, and torture of unarmed Bangladeshi nationals by BSF and Indian civilians at the border.

"Once again we will request our counterpart to take measures and stop such killings and the firings," a senior BDR official told The Daily Star last night.

Four other Bangladeshis were also killed on Thursday in separate incidents of BSF firings at the border.

According to Odhikar, a human rights organisation, 50 Bangladeshis were killed by BSF firings at the border in the past six months.

An 18-member Indian delegation led by BSF Director General ML Kumawat arrived in Dhaka on Saturday afternoon for the conference, where a 22-member Bangladeshi delegation is being led by BDR DG Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam.

Discussions on strengthening joint patrols and preventing trans-border smuggling, especially of narcotics, will figure prominently at the conference. Both sides will try to strengthen the relationship through various programmes.

Bangladesh will also raise the issue of pushing in Bangla

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BSF firings kill 2 more Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENTS, Dinajpur and Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force yesterday killed two Bangladeshis—a farmer and a cattle trader—on the borders of Dinajpur and Chuadanga.

The deceased were identified as Yakub Ali, 27, son of Mohiz Ali of South Daudpur in Birampur upazila of Dinajpur and Badruzzaman, 40, son of Safiuddin of Nastipur in Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga.

BSF troops from 57 Gobindapur camp opened fire on Yakub, while he was working in the field about 100 metres inside Bangladesh border at Daudpur around 10:30am, leaving him critically injured, BDR officials of 40 Battalion at Phulbari said quoting witnesses.

Yakub was rushed to Birampur Upazila Health Complex and died at about 11:55am, BDR sources added.

After the incident, the villagers burst into protest but

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Banks must report stock portfolios every month

BB strengthens monitoring amid stock market scandal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank has asked all banks to submit monthly reports on their stock portfolios, following unearthing of irregularities in share business by a Dhaka Stock Exchange investigation.

Banks from now on must submit detailed information about their stock portfolios by categories of purchase, mortgage, and deposit, sources said.

The monthly reports must be submitted within seven days of the next month to the Department of Off-sight Supervision of Bangladesh Bank on a regular basis.

For the month of June 2009, the report must be submitted by the 15th of this month.

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Continue fight against graft

President asks ACC chief not to make any compromise

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday called upon the Anti-Corruption Commission to continue its ongoing fight against corruption without making any compromise with a view to building a corruption-free society.

"The ACC will need to remain firm with its ethics and values," Zillur said while new ACC Chairman Golam Rahman paid a courtesy call on him at Bhagabhaban in the afternoon.

During the meeting, the ACC chairman apprised the president of the ongoing activities of the commission and sought his cooperation in the discharge of his duties.

Zillur assured him of all-out support in performing his responsibilities.

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