

Hasina, Khaleda

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A two-member committee led by former speaker and former Bangladeshi high commissioner Sheikh Razzak Ali conducted an investigation into it. The committee submitted a report, which the then premier approved and forwarded to the Bureau for further investigation in January 2003.

In the other allegation, Tk 25.95 crore, Tk 16.79 crore, and Tk 1.83 crore were allocated for Sheikh Hasina Youth Development Centre, Bangabandhu Poverty Elimination Training Complex, and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Complex respectively in between 1999 and 2000.

Hasina and her family members misappropriated the money, the allegation says. Khaleda also approved this allegation to be investigated by the Bureau in April, 2003.

INQUIRIES AGAINST KHALEDA

The money laundering allegations say around 45 decimal land was purchased in Purana Paltan for establishing Zia

Charitable Trust and the money paid for the purchase was about Tk 7.5 crore, though the registered purchase value was found to be Tk 6 crore.

The money spent does not have any defined sources of income, the allegation adds.

In accordance with the other allegation, construction of the Bhairab Bridge began in 1999 during the AL tenure with a budget of Tk 400 crore.

The UK construction firm Natal Group got the contract and completed construction within the deadline of 2002.

The BNP-Jamaat-led government gave Tk 100 crore in compensation to Natal in addition to the Tk 400 crore budget, causing a loss of Tk 100 crore to the state, the allegation reads.

The ACC has already questioned former cabinet secretary Sadat Hossain, former member of inter-ministerial committee and former NBR chairman Abdul Mazid, former secretary Omar Hadi and former chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department Anwar Hossain in this regard.

5b to use mobile in 2010: UN

AFP, Barcelona

The ranks of cell phone subscribers will swell to five billion people this year thanks to the growth of smartphones in the developed nations and mobile services in poor nations, a UN agency said yesterday.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) also said the number of mobile broadband subscriptions would exceed one billion this year after reaching 600 million in 2009.

"Even during an economic crisis, we have seen no drop in the demand for communications services," ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Toure said in a statement at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain, the industry's biggest trade show.

The number of mobile subscribers had reached 4.6 billion people last year. "I am confident that we will continue to see a rapid uptake in mobile cellular services in particular in 2010, with many more people using their phones to access the Internet," Toure said.

In the developing world, the growth has been driven by the use of phones for mobile banking and health services, the ITU said.

Maoists kill

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offensive in several states to flush out the outlawed insurgents from their strongholds.

Two Maoist guerrillas were also killed in the raid in West Bengal state's Midnapore district following a gunbattle with security forces, West Bengal state police inspector general Surojit Purokayastha told AFP.

"Seventeen policemen have died in the Maoist attack," he said in state capital Kolkata.

Twelve of the policemen were shot dead while five others were burnt to death in a landmine blast that started a fire in their camp, he said.

Purokayastha said some "two dozen" securitymen were also injured in the hour-long attack, some of them critically.

National park

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In 1999, the then Awami League government banned constructions in Bhawal National Park.

A presidential order, issued on November 22 that year, prohibited building factories, houses or any structures in eight mouzas—Araisho Prasad, Bon Khorai, Bishoyakuribari, Baraipara, Uttar Salna, Bau Para, Bahadurpur and Mohana Bhabanipur—inside the national park.

It said violating the order would constitute an offence and be punished accordingly.

But with official connivance, a section of industrialists had disregarded the ban at will.

Bus rams

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Mirpur-12, Sub-Inspector Monirul Islam of Pallabi Police Station told The Daily Star.

The second bus had pulled over there, as it was having some mechanical problems.

Pallabi police said they could not yet know on which bus Firoz used to work.

Their wrecker pulled one bus to their station last night while officers were working to seize the other one as of filing this report at 12:30am.

HC stays

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The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Borhan Uddin came up with the order upon a writ petition filed by Sajjad Hossain, a voter of the city's Pallabi area.

The court fixed February 23 for hearing on the matter.

The petitioner prayed to the court to direct the government and EC to demarcate afresh DCC wards ensuring that each ward has equal population.

The difference between the population and the voters of the wards are very high, he said citing an example that the population of ward no 6 is 1,05,096, while the population of ward no 13 is 10,313.

The petitioner also said an equal amount of development budget can be allocated to DCC wards if they have equal population.

Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam appeared for the petitioner.

Slow anti-graft

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representatives raised questions as to whether the anti-corruption drive slowed down under the present government. They also wondered if the anti-corruption act would be weaker if the government amends it.

Later, Finance Minister AMA Muhith told journalists that the issue of corruption was discussed at the meeting. The donors wanted to know whether the anti-corruption act was being made softer by amending it.

"We admit that progress in anti-corruption drive has slowed a little," Muhith said. "We have also said many cases are becoming weaker due to procedural weakness. A number of committees are examining the issues if there are legal loopholes."

The donors expressed concern over the weaknesses in implementation of annual development programme (ADP), and different projects including those in infrastructure and power sectors.

In the first session, WB Country Director Ellen Goldstein said peace and stability are the sine qua non of development. "If I may summarise, the main message from our development partners today are two-fold. First, in order to achieve poverty reduction objectives and achieve middle income status by 2021, Bangladesh needs to accelerate growth to around 8 percent per annum. Second, in order to grow faster, Bangladesh needs both more investment and more effective investment," she said.

The WB official also said better and timely implementation of the ADP and strong local government are needed for increasing investment.

Renata Dessallien said if the regional integration could be achieved, Bangladesh's GDP growth would increase by an estimated two percent annually which could help create jobs and reduce regional disparities.

"By capitalising in the country's enviable geographical location—close to two emerging giants, straddling two regional blocks, and at the centre of the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh seems predestined to become an important trading hub. But the weight of history and popular misperceptions have held her back."

She said, "We hope the government's recent decisive move toward regional integration herald the beginning of a much needed sea change. But for this to happen, careful and detailed strategising and man-

agement are vital."

Renata said that they were heartened by the recent Supreme Court rulings, particularly the judgment on the Fifth Amendment, and formation of the Judicial Reform Committee.

She pointed out that democracy of Bangladesh has been affected by excessive competition between the two major political parties—a competition that has sometimes exceeded normal democratic parameters. The political parties should work constructively, she added.

She said giving chairmanship of two parliamentary committees to the opposition party was a welcome initiative by the majority party. "But we suggest these measures may not be enough to qualitatively change the tenor of inter-party relations."

The meeting sources said they welcomed the government initiative to prepare a civil service act for reforming the public service. They also recommended appointment of some persons from private sector in some government posts through outsourcing.

Replying to the donors' queries, the government presented its plans for action.

Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashur Rahman said they would set up an information centre replete with computers and internet connection in every union. Various programmes of the government would be available in the information centre where people could lodge their complaints.

In the session on power and energy, the government in its plan said that it has a target of generating 7,000-megawatt power with an investment of US \$9.5 billion by 2013.

The donors recommended increasing the price of power and energy.

The development partners assured the government of providing assistance to the power and energy sector.

The WB, ADB, Islamic Development Bank and Japan have assured the government of providing fund in public-private partnership power projects.

The donors recommended making a detailed energy audit to reduce wastage of energy and power in Bangladesh.

Prime Minister's Adviser Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury told journalists, "We will gradually increase price of power, energy and gas. However, the price would not be a flat rate for all—there will be different rates for consumers in rural and urban areas."

2 REB officials caught while taking bribe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A team of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) caught two officials of Rural Electrification Board red-handed in Jaintapur upazila of Sylhet while they were taking Tk 70,000 bribe from a businessman yesterday afternoon.

The arrested officials are Md Mofazzal Hossain and Dilip Chandra Chowdhury, general manager and deputy general manager respectively of Sylhet Palli Bidyut Samity-II. The REB officials have been serving on deputation at the samity in Jaintapur upazila.

ACC Director in Sylhet Major Masud who led the team told The Daily Star that owner of a stone crusher plant at Bholaganj in Companiganj Afzal Hossain contacted the GM for electricity connection to his plant.

The GM demanded Tk 70,000 for the job a few days ago and they reached an agreement accordingly, ACC sources said.

At about 4:00pm yesterday, Afzal went to the official residence of GM. The ACC team caught the GM and DGM red-handed from the residence when they received the money. A contingent of Rab was also present.

The process was on to file a case, the ACC official added.

Stop saline

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Sundarban and Sonadia islands.

Besides, the HC ordered the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) authorities to submit a report to it within four months on the damage caused to soil, water and air due to dumping of industrial waste at Amin Bazar in Savar.

It also asked the government to submit a report to it within six months on the environmental impact of this dumping of industrial waste.

The reports have to be prepared by experts at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), according to the HC order.

An HC bench comprised of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir issued the directive concerning saline water upon a writ petition jointly filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) and Nijera Kori, two rights bodies.

Another HC bench comprised of Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Abu Tariq came up with the order relating to dumping of industrial waste upon a writ petition filed by Bela.

Advocates Prabir Niogi, Syeda Rizwana Hassan and Iqbal Kabir Litan appeared for Bela and Nijera Kori, Deputy Attorney General Razik Al Jalil stood for the government and barrister Ruhul Quddus Kajal represented the DCC.

Liberation War

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history of the war and thus books for children saw a hike in the sale.

Young people are also buying books of the war stories, they said.

Romana, a student of the city's Eden College, said she had bought the book *Bangladesher Avvudday O Ganatantr Path Parikrama* by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid as she wanted to know the history of the 1971 war from different angles.

Another book titled "A Little Fighter Sleeping with His Arms" by Oitijjho publication also found a good sale.

Meanwhile, as many as 104 new titles came out in the fair yesterday including Mutho Phoner Kabb-o-2 by Nirmalendu Gun, Hai Prem! by Rashid Haider, Maloy Bhawmik Natok Sangraha by Maloy Bhawmik, Samoyer Jabanbondi by Hayat Mahmud and Amar Jato Katha by Golam Sarwar.

Six cops sued

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Enayet, his mother, sister and son mercilessly and took away valuables worth Tk 2 lakh.

The accused later forced them to leave the house and put up a signboard of Ganderia Police Box.

Enayet then went to Sutrapur Police Station to file a complaint, but the OC and other high officials told him not to go ahead.

Khaleda's Gulshan office

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second cracker was discovered around noon near the spot.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Walid Hossain said a bomb disposal unit from the Detective Branch defused the crackers and found traces of sulphur.

However he said, "If the crackers had exploded they would not have caused injury, as they only have the capacity to make noise and smoke."

Meanwhile, BNP Parliamentary Party demanded that the government conduct a fair probe into the sources of those firecrackers.

"We earlier demanded enhanced security for the opposition leader. But the government paid no heed to our demand. Recovery of cocktails proves deterioration in law and order situation," Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque said in a press briefing at the Parliament's Media Centre.

Lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anee taking floor on a point of order raised the issue in the House. "Can't we say a conspiracy is being hatched to assassinate

Khaleda Zia?" asked Anee.

BNP Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain too expressed his deep concern over the recovery of the firecrackers and demanded that the culprits be apprehended.

He also said the government must ensure that Khaleda, who is also the leader of the opposition, has adequate security at all times.

A party press release signed by BNP Joint Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi states, "The government has withdrawn security personnel rather than providing necessary security for her."

Delwar alleged that the government is trying to destabilise the BNP and that such efforts will not be successful, because nationalistic forces cannot be defeated by creating panic over bombs, or any other type of repression.

He also condemned the police attacks on processions in different parts of the country led by BNP members who were outraged by the incident.

ZIA made Shahjalal

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Abul Kalam Azad told reporters during a post-meeting briefing.

The verdict meant that the governments between August 15, 1975 and April 9, 1979 including Ziaur Rahman assuming power were illegal, he said.

"The 6th cabinet meeting of the year also decided to change the name of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman University, Barisal to Barisal University.

The meeting argued that the international airport in Dhaka was named Dhaka International Airport when it was shifted from Tejgaon to Kurmitola in 1979. Later in 1981, the then government renamed it to Zia International Airport.

Regarding renaming the airport, the cabinet said that since the people of the country respect Sufis and religious figures and wish to keep their memory alive many important establishments had been named after them.

It referred to the airport in Rajshahi, which was named after Shah Makhdum (R), Shah Amanat (R) airport in Chittagong and Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali (R) for the under construction airport in Khulna.

"Considering these, the cabinet's renaming of the Zia

International Airport as Hazrat Shahjalal (R) International Airport, Dhaka is right," Azad said.

According to the cabinet decision, Begum Khaleda Zia Medical College and Shaheed Suhrawardi Hospital will be renamed as Shaheed Suhrawardi Medical College and Hospital while Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge as Bangabandhu Bridge and Dhanmondi Women Sports Complex as Sultana Kamal Sports Complex, among many others.

The cabinet also approved proposals to pass EPZ Workers Welfare Association and Industries Affairs Bill 2010, Bangladesh Economic Zone Bill 2010, Bangladesh Textile University Bill 2010 and Chartered Secretaries Bill 2010.

Under the Bangladesh Textile University Bill 2010, the present College of Textile Technology, Tejgaon is going to be upgraded to university.

Meanwhile, Chief Whip of the Opposition Zainul Abidin Farroque, during a press briefing at the parliament's media centre, warned the government of mass movement if it did not scrap its decision of renaming the Zia International Airport.

Govt to go after

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examined carefully before taking any disciplinary action, said sources.

An influential official at the Prime Minister's Office is looking into the matter.

The government has suspended several police personnel for negligence during Chhatra League-Shibir clashes that left a student killed and 100 more injured at Rajshahi University.

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku told The Daily Star, "If law enforcers are found serving interest of any quarters, actions will be taken irrespective of political beliefs."

The law enforcers are the servants of the people and should not have any party affiliations, he said.

The minister urged all in the administration and law enforcement to discharge duties neutrally and in line with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Anyone doing otherwise would be subject to administrative and legal actions, he added.

Replying to another query, Tuku said, "We are trying to detect the fundamentalist elements in the law enforcement agencies with the help of intelligence agencies."

The anti-Liberation forces rehabilitated in different state organs after the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman have all along been scheming to destabilise the government, he observed.

ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to caretaker government, said none should be allowed to get away with using their offices to serve the purposes of any political party.

"Anyone neglecting duty must face disciplinary actions, no matter whether his allegiances lie."

The government should prove that it is indeed working to make good on its electoral pledge not to politicise the administration.

RMP lists 54 Jamaat

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has already been sent to all police stations across the country.

Sources said Motihar and Boalia police arrested 11 activists of Jamaat and Shibir from different parts of Rajshahi city yesterday in connection with the Rajshahi University (RU) violence that killed a worker of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

However, the police at the end of five-day remand produced 28 Shibir leaders and activists before the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ruhul Amin.

The court granted another five-day remand for Hasmat Ali Liton, president of Abdul Latif 27 Shibir men to jail custody.

In Satkhira, police in a drive arrested some 22 workers of Jamaat and Shibir from the town Sunday night.

MA Hashem Khan, officer-in-charge of Sadar police station in Satkhira, told The Daily Star that they raided different hostels and messes in the town and arrested 22 activists. The arrestees were sent to jail.

Police arrested the activists apprehending that they might

conduct any subversive activities, the OC said.

In Chittagong, the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Osman Gani yesterday granted a two-day remand against 19 out of 24 Shibir activists who were detained on Chittagong University campus early Saturday.

However, the court rejected the remand prayer against four others when police sought a seven-day remand for 23 of them.

SEDITION CHARGE
Uttara zone deputy commissioner (DC) Nisarul Arif told The Daily Star yesterday they have already found evidences that indicate the Shibir men were involved in anti-state activities.

"We have seized some leaflets, posters and CDs containing provocative statement against the state and the government from their possession", the DC said.

Police will seek permission from the home ministry for filing a sedition case against them, the DC added.

Uttara police said during the three-day remand, the detained Shibir cadres also disclosed different information about their plans and activities.