

Former Interpol chief convicted

ALJAZEERA

A court in South Africa has convicted the former head of Interpol for accepting bribes from a drug dealer.

Jackie Selebi, also South Africa's ex-police chief, was convicted yesterday for accepting bribes worth \$156,000.

The trial, which began last October, focused on Selebi's relationship with Glenn Agliotti, a drug dealer who took him on shopping sprees.

Agliotti himself faces trial later this year for allegedly murdering Brett Kebble, a mining magnate, in 2005.

The verdict was the culmination of a four-and-a-half-year investigation. "MAJOR SHOCK WAVES"

The fact that a man who was the former chief of police and the former head of Interpol was found guilty is sending major shock waves throughout the country. Haru Mutasa, Al Jazeera's correspondent reporting from Johannesburg, said:

"Throughout the trial there was a debate going on about whether political corruption is hindering South Africa's fight against crime."

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Na'iem Jeenah, a political analyst and executive director of the Afro-Middle East Centre, an independent think-tank in Johannesburg, said: "I'm not sure that it will necessarily stem corruption which is quite bad in South Africa."

"But it certainly is a message that the authorities are willing to pursue these matters."

"The media covered the case from beginning to end,

much of the media in South Africa, it ran on the front pages for a long time.

"And people certainly were interested if you look at the number of people that were reading these newspapers, the number of people that were calling into radio talk shows etc.

"The main reason being people have been sick and tired of the idea of government representatives, government officials, being involved in corruption."

"And here was someone that was very high, very close to the top, also at the time to the former president of this country."

'CONTEMPT FOR TRUTH' In delivering the verdict, Judge Meyer Joffe said that Selebi had shown "complete contempt for the truth" during the trial.

Selebi could face 15 years in prison when sentenced on July 14.

Selebi had pleaded innocent to all charges. He said that evidence for the charges had been fabricated because he criticised the Scorpions, a now disbanded elite crime fighting unit.

The trial was wracked with political tension. Vusi Pikoli, the former chief prosecutor, lost his job for charging Selebi. He was accused of failing to inform his political bosses before taking the sensitive step.

"The fact that he has been found guilty means that maybe something is being done in the country to stamp out corruption. Some people are hoping that this is a sign to come," our correspondent said.

AI calls

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carried out a violent attack on those gathered peacefully inside the house of Mirza Abbas, a leading Bangladesh National Party politician and former mayor of Dhaka, it went on reading.

Victims of the raid described the unprovoked beatings of activists and Mirza Abbas' family members, denial of medical treatment after arrests, and the eliciting of signatures on blank forms as a condition of release, which Amnesty International suspects are for the purpose of falsifying confessions, it further read.

Police fired teargas shells and charged truncheons on pickets during the general strike, enforced by the BNP and its allies at different spots of the capital and picked up at least 167 people.

The arrestees included BNP Standing Committee Member Mirza Abbas, Vice-chairman Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, who is now on bail, BNP lawmaker Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee, and the party chairperson Khaleda Zia's advisers Abdul Mannan and Ahmed Azam Khan.

"The government should immediately investigate the circumstances surrounding this violent raid and ensure that any people hurt by security officials receive justice and appropriate compensation," said Abbas Faiz, Amnesty International's Bangladesh researcher, in Dhaka.

Amnesty International was calling on the authorities to order security forces to comply with their obligations to exercise restraint and avoid the use of excessive force as the country faces a series of clashes during protests. Founded in London in 1961, Amnesty International works in over 150 countries to stop abuse of human rights.

Another man

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Melarte Ghat, four policemen including two sub inspectors handcuffed him and took him on a boat.

They also tied his throat with a rope and beat him mercilessly with the rifle butts in front of his son Iqbal.

Meanwhile, Iqbal went to call his grandfather to the riverbank.

When the two came back to the river, police had left the place with Majibur, Ripon said.

"We found his body floating in the river in the morning," Ripon added.

He said locals saw the police torture the victim. Ripon also alleged that before Thursday's arrest, those two SIs apprehended his brother three in the last 22 days and forced them to pay Tk 24,000 for his release.

Darussalam police station Officer-in-Charge (OC) SM Mokter Hossain, however, denied the allegation of torturing Majibur to death but said they were investigating the matter.

The OC also said Majibur was a drug peddler and he was killed by his rivals over an earlier feud.

They already arrested one Mohibul in this connection, the OC added.

NGOs

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Sources said the February chaos in Khagrachhari was instigated by some NGOs. The NGOs encouraged locals to take a stance against the government resulting in political instability in the area.

Some intelligence organisations have already informed the government about the NGOs involved in anti-government activities.

The government has taken the issue seriously, and it will take stern action against the NGOs, said Kamal.

Deputy Director of the bureau Muhammad Ibrahim said the ministry had taken some information about a few NGOs from the organisation two months back, but he was not aware of the government's move regarding the NGOs.

He refused to disclose the names of the NGOs and their activities.

However, a source in the bureau said the ministry collected the data relating to the NGOs' involvement in militancy and anti-state activities.

The bureau officials also said the intelligence agencies are even vigilant about some NGOs' activities in other parts of the country.

A high official of the home affairs ministry said, "We read a feature on the website of an NGO, which says Rohingyas in Bangladesh are passing their days under the sky and starving for three months."

The statement is not correct, and it tarnishes the image of the country, he noted.

The invited firms include

India takes mega projects

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longitudinally and connects the northeastern states and neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, according to a recent statement of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highway of India.

The Indian government has also decided to construct a bridge over the Feni river in south Tripura to get access to the Chittagong port and upgrade the connecting two-lane national highway into a four-lane one.

The proposed bridge would connect Sabroom town with Ramgarh in southeastern Bangladesh. For this, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has approved a proposal of the state government for conversion of the Agartala-Sabroom national highway into four-lane one.

India will also invest Rs 16.66 billion to develop highways in Tripura and Mizoram to improve connectivity of the landlocked northeastern states with Bangladesh and Myanmar.

The Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI) of India

has also given clearance for four lanes of the National Highway from Shillong up to Tripura's southern most border town of Sabroom.

India will also extend its railway network to two more places along the India-Bangladesh border by 2014 to improve connectivity between the two countries.

The two border points are Sabroom and Akhaurah in western Tripura, just six kilometres from the Agartala railway station. Bangladesh operates train services on its side up to Akhaurah.

Train services resumed in April 2008 between Kolkata and Dhaka. The service was suspended after the 1965 war between India and Pakistan when Bangladesh was Pakistan's eastern wing.

It is expected that by 2014, the ongoing work of railway connection up to bordering town Sabroom would be completed.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar has recently said the railway is also extending tracks up to Sabroom, making it very easy for connectivity

with the Chittagong port. "After development of the national highways and extension of railway tracks, Tripura and the entire northeast would be linked with Southeast Asia," Sarkar said.

According to the joint communiqué issued in New Delhi on January 12 during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit, Bangladesh is supposed to get financial support from India for its infrastructure development, said Communications Secretary Mozammel Haq.

He said this when asked about Bangladesh's preparations to build its infrastructure for connectivity with India.

"Once we get the assistance, we will start development of our rail, road and shipping infrastructure," he added.

Finance ministry sources say officials of both the countries are working to finalise the modality of Indian line of credit of \$1 billion to Bangladesh for a range of infrastructure projects, including setting up or upgrading railways.

BNP confused

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the real intention, and a chance of success in turning the arrests into the gateway to war crime trials, the sources added.

Many BNP leaders said they think the government is not sincere about trying war criminals; the arrests of the three Jamaat leaders are rather aimed at foiling the ongoing anti-government movement that was launched by the recent BNP-led hartal.

They look at the arrests as "political repression" due to Jamaat's support for the BNP-led emerging movement.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, BNP standing committee members Rafiqul Islam Mian, Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, and Goyeshwar Chandra Roy said they did not yet discuss within the party whether they should take part in Jamaat's street protests against the arrests, but their party is always against political repression.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain told reporters yesterday that his party will extend support to Jamaat's demonstrations as the arrestees are "victims of a government conspiracy".

When reminded about Jamaat's claim that it had actively participated in the June 27 hartal called by BNP, Rafiqul Islam Mian, also a former minister, said, "Nobody saw them on the street on the day of the hartal."

He however added that the government's moves, centring the arrests of the Jamaat leaders, are making all confused, as it is not clear what the government wants to achieve. But it is clear that the government wants to move towards a one party rule, he added.

Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman said, "We are very cautious about expressing our views on matters related to Jamaat right now due to many reasons, but it does not mean we will keep quiet about political repression."

He said BNP will formulate its concrete position regarding its support for Jamaat, considering where the fast evolving events end up, the expectations of BNP's rank and file, and the

ME currencies seized at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs officials seized foreign currencies amounting to around Tk 70 lakh from a Muscat-bound passenger at Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday.

The arrestee was identified as Mohammad Ali, son of Korban Ali, hailing from Sadeqnar village under Fatikchhari upazila in the district.

Sources said acting on a tip-off, customs officials led by Superintendent (Airport Customs) Abdul Halim got on a flight of Oman Airways and found the currencies after searching Ali's luggage at around 9:30am.

The seized currencies include Oman Riyal, Saudi Riyal, Dubai Dirham and Qatari Riyal amounting to over Tk 70 lakh.

Assistant Commissioner (Immigration) Md Moinuddin said the arrestee was later handed over to the Patenga Police and a case was filed in this connection.

DB focuses

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Though the leaders deny the accusations, police have evidence of their links to those incidents, he added.

The OC said Nizami will be brought out of the central jail for interrogation only when jail doctors will say he is fit to be quizzed.

Wishing not to be named, an investigator claimed Jamaat carried out subversive activities the night before the hartal to put BNP and the government on a collision course.

DB Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam meantime told reporters that Jamaat activists are disciplined and do nothing beyond instructions of the high command.

"The Jamaat leaders have been taken on remand to know what their instructions were about assaults on the law enforcers," he added.

Mojahid and Sayedee were interrogated till Thursday night, said sources.

Power sector

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earlier announced a mega plant to generate an additional 9,426 megawatts of electricity by 2015 through setting up of power plants, both in private and public sectors.

This plan include seven base-load combined cycle power plants having generation capacity of 1,650 MW, eight peaking power plants having 700 MW generation capacity, 2,600 MW imported coal-based steam plants, and renewable energy-based 109 MW power plants.

A huge number of the plants will be set up on build, own and operate basis by next five years under public private partnership.

"We would project the government's future programmes in power sector before the private sector entrepreneurs at the function," said prime minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury.

He said the programme, which is the first of its kind, would reflect the government's commitment to move forward with the ongoing activities in the power sector.

Officials said major global players in power, energy and financial sectors have been invited to attend the conference.

Rolls Royce, Enpower Corporation, Globelec, AES, Vopak LNG, GCM Resources, Watson Gough, SBM Offshore, Mij International, Brummer and Partners, CDC Group, Seamar Group, EIC, RJI Capital, Centrax, Societe General and BNP Paribas.

Besides, development partners, multilateral donor agencies, managing directors of all local and foreign commercial banks, and the Bangladesh Bank Governor have also been invited to join the mega event on investment in the power sector.

Board of Investment Chairman SA Samad will be the special guest at the conference.

Over a dozen ministers and state ministers including of commerce, industries, planning, land, law, home, shipping, foreign, posts and telecom, and environment and forest will take part in the conference.

Top executives of all the country's operational independent power producers, small power plants and rental power plants will also participate in the event.

State-owned power and gas sector entities will showcase their future projects to attract investment during the conference.

Blast kills one, hurts 10 in flashpoint Kosovo town

REUTERS, Mitrovica

An explosion killed one person and injured 10 on Friday in the Serb part of the divided town of Mitrovica in northern Kosovo, police and doctors said.

The explosion occurred just meters away from some 600 Serbs protesting against the opening of an administrative office which they see as representing the Albanian majority, northern Mitrovica police chief Milija Mileosevic said.

Kosovo's Serb minority, financially backed by Serbia, refuses to accept Kosovo's independence, declared in 2008.

Serbs in northern Mitrovica said the perpetrator was an ethnic Albanian. Serb head of

Minister gets

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Mahtab Ali handed over the 5.5-inch long key to the minister in a citizen reception programme held on the municipality premises in the morning.

While handing over the key, Mahtab Ali said, "The handing over of the key means the handing over of all the responsibilities of the municipality. Now, it lies upon you to build the municipality properly."

"I am touched to receive this honour," the minister said in his speech.

Municipality officials said Fency Jewelers at Niltuli in the town made the key.

Contacted, Khondoker Mosharrar Hossain told The Daily Star he was not aware that the key was made of gold.

Faridpur Deputy Commissioner Helaluddin Ahmad, Police Superintendent Md Awlad Ali Fakir, Faridpur Sangbadik Samiti President Munsiri Harun-or-Rashid, among others, attended the function.

the Mitrovica region, Radenko Nedeljkovic, blamed the incident on the NATO and EU mission for not securing the protest.

Serbia's president, Boris Tadic, called an emergency session of the Security Council to discuss the tensions in the region.

"Serbia is once again facing huge challenges in Kosovo. Our citizens in Kosovo were attacked," Tadic said on Friday.

Police said they believed the explosive device may have been a hand grenade. Police and doctors in Mitrovica had earlier said that 12 people were injured.

Russian experts visit Roopur plant site

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An eight-member Russian expert team visited the Roopur Nuclear Power Plant in the district Thursday.

Earlier at a meeting of the Ministry of Science and ICT on Wednesday, the technical support team discussed issues related to installing nuclear reactors for the Roopur power plant, sources said.

During the visit, the experts also talked about hydrological and environmental condition of the plant site.

"The Russian experts visited and studied the entire location and observed it. They were seemingly very positive about the whole issue," a high official of Atomic Energy Commission said, seeking anonymity.

Okinawa city to sue Japan over US base issue

AFP, Tokyo

A Japanese city hosting an unpopular and controversial US military airbase plans to file a lawsuit against the country's government for failing to address the needs of locals, its mayor said Friday.

The issue of where to relocate the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma from its current position in a densely populated area in Okinawa strained ties with Washington and helped trigger former prime minister Yukio Hatoyama's downfall.

Anti-base protests have flared in recent months after Hatoyama first pledged to move the contentious Futenma airbase off Okinawa, then reneged on the promise following protests from the United States, enraging locals.

Hatoyama's successor Prime Minister Naoto Kan has pledged to follow an accord reached in May under which the base would be relocated within Okinawa -- as first agreed in 2006 -- to the island's coastal Henoko region.

Okinawans have been the reluctant hosts of Japan's largest concentration of US forces for decades and have long complained about noise pollution and potential safety problems from low-flying US military jets near the airbase.

"We were forced to accept an excess burden of hosting the US base and denied even the basic human rights in our everyday lives. Therefore, I decided to question at court the government's policy in providing the Futenma airbase (to the United States)," Ginowan mayor Yoichi Iha said in a news conference.

42 killed

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Pakistan has been hit by a wave of attacks by the Taliban and other Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist extremists that have killed more than 3,400 people in the last three years.

But a spokesman for Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan denied it was involved in Thursday's attack, the second bloody bombing against religious sites in Lahore in just over a month.

"We are not responsible for these attacks, this is a conspiracy by foreign secret agencies, you know we do not attack public places," Azam Tariq told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

"We condemn this brutal act. Our target is very clear and we only attack police, army and other security personnel," he added.

The group was thrust into the global spotlight over its alleged involvement in a plot to blow up a car bomb in New York's Times Square in May.

Yesterday, large numbers of police and other security personnel were patrolling all busy and sensitive areas in Lahore, a city of around 10 million people in eastern Pakistan.

Security was particularly tight around mosques for weekly Muslim prayers.

Thousands of people were at the shrine in the crowded centre of Lahore dedicated to Sufi saint Hazrat Syed Ali bin Usman Hajweri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, at the time of the blasts.

"A total of 42 people have been martyred," senior rescue official Mazhar Ahmad told AFP.

Authorities said they had found the heads of two suicide bombers, who wore the green turbans of Sufi followers, and were investigating how they

had managed to penetrate the area despite strict security measures.

"We were searching everyone walking through the gate. One bomber crossed the gate and a security guard ran to catch him because he was suspicious but in the meantime he blew himself up," Rao Fazal-ur-Rehman, an administrator at the shrine, told AFP.

Hours after the blasts, two firecrackers exploded near the American consulate and Lahore Press club, adding to jitters in the city, but no-one was hurt.

Lahore has increasingly suffered Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked violence, with around 265 people killed in nine attacks since March last year.

The city is considered a playground for Pakistan's elite and home to many top brass in the military and intelligence community.

Sufism is a mystical movement that spreads the message of Islam through music, poetry and dancing. Radical groups consider the movement, which includes both Shiites and Sunnis, as un-Islamic.

In May suspected Sunni Muslim militants wearing suicide vests burst into two Ahmadi prayer halls in Lahore and killed 82 worshippers.

They were the worst attacks in Pakistan since a suicide bomber killed 101 people on January 1 at a volleyball game in Bannu near the tribal belt along the Afghan border that Washington calls Al-Qaeda's global headquarters.

Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked militants have orchestrated a three-year bombing campaign in Pakistan to avenge military operations and the government's alliance with the United States over the war in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Accused WWII criminal wins bid against extradition

AP, Perth, Australia

An alleged Nazi collaborator wanted in Hungary in the torture and killing of a Jewish teenager in 1944 won an appeal yesterday against extradition from his adopted country of Australia.

Charles Zentai, 88, is suspected by the Hungarian government of being one of three men who brutalized and killed a Jewish teenager in Budapest in 1944 for failing to wear a star identifying him as a Jew.

Zentai, who migrated to Australia in 1950 and later became a citizen, says he is innocent and was not even in Budapest at the time.

Hungary issued a warrant for his arrest in 2005, and after a long legal process Australian Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor late last year approved a request to send Zentai back to face trial.

Zentai and his family appealed the decision to Australia's Federal Court, and on Friday Judge Neil McKerracher ruled in his favor.

McKerracher said O'Connor was not authorized to approve the extradition because Hungary's accusations against Zentai fell short of what are required under Australian law to honor an extradition request.

2,500 sued

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inspector general (DIG) of police yesterday asked officer-in-charge of Sirajdikhan Police Station Mizanur Rahman, who was suspended right after the shooting incident, to report at Dhaka police headquarters.

Local lawmaker Sukumar Ranjan Ghosh yesterday selected site for a passenger shed and started the construction in the face of the demand by locals.

He said, "Such irresponsible action by the police embarrassed us and tarnished the image of the government. The government would leave no stone unturned to punish the culprits."

The deceased in Thursday incident Moslem was buried at his village in Kachumora yesterday.

A family member of the deceased said they could not lodge any case due to financial crisis as Moslem was the only breadwinner of the family.

Dutch stun Brazil

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They paid dearly in the 68th minute when Dirk Kuyt flicked on Arjen Robben's corner at the near post and Sneijder headed into the net.

Shortly afterwards, Felipe Melo was sent off for stamping on Robben.

Victim's wife

FROM PAGE 16 Rahman was in Dhaka Medical College morgue as of yesterday even though the autopsy was complete.

"I would not take my husband's body until I get justice," she said.

Mizanur Rahman, 29, owner of electronic goods shop Liza Sound System in Nayanagar in the city's Badda, succumbed to bullet injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital early Thursday.

Another person named Manik, who was also shot, was undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

Gulshan Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mohammad Kamal Uddin claimed Mizan and Manik were muggers. He told The Daily Star Thursday evening that both the muggers received bullets during a gunfight on Road-42 in Gulshan early that day.

A three-member committee was formed yesterday to probe the incident.

Taslima Begum claimed that a team led by Sub-Inspector Anisur Rahman of Gulshan Police Station picked up her husband at their Nayanagar home early Tuesday and she met her husband five times at the police station during the last two days.

She said Anisur initially demanded Tk 2 lakh bribe and later reduced it to Tk 10,000 for releasing her husband.

Anisur, however, denied the allegation.

She yesterday evening told The Daily Star that police picked up her husband in presence of many neighbours and killed him for money after levelling him as mugger. "My husband is innocent and there is no case against him," she said, adding that she wants justice.

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Bird smuggling

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He said a case was filed against the Pakistani citizen under Wildlife Preservation Act 1974. Under the act, catching such birds is a punishable offence.

According to Fazlul Haq the price of a pair of these birds range between Tk 400 and Tk 10,000.