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## Babar now accused

Shown arrested in 10-truck arms haul cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar has been accused and shown arrested in cases linked to the country's largest ever arms haul in Chittagong on April 2, 2004.

The investigation officer (IO) of the two cases filed in connection with the seizure of ten truckloads of arms and ammunition yesterday submitted a 10-day remand prayer for Babar to the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong.

Metropolitan Magistrate Fazlul Bari passed the order for showing Babar arrested in the cases following a prayer from IO Mohammad Moniruzzaman Chowdhury, senior ASP of Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The court also fixed October 13 to hear the remand prayer and ordered to produce the former BNP minister before it during hearing.

Chittagong Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Kamal Uddin told The Daily Star the IO made the appeal to arrest Babar after getting information of his involvement in the arms haul.

He said a former commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP)



In this 2004 photo, the then state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar inspects an submachine gun from the 10-truck arms seized in the port city.

FILE PHOTO

and three members of the five-member probe committee, formed by the then BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government, gave a clear picture of Babar's involve-

ment. "He [Babar] tried to hide the real incident and save the NSI officials who were involved in different ways. He also influenced the investigators to hide their [NSI officials'] involvement," Kamal said. "He knew everything and everything happened within his knowledge," the PP added.

Police and coastguards found submachine-guns, AK-47 rifles, submachine carbines, Chinese pistols, rocket shells

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## Babar blamed AL after seizure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the largest ever arms haul in Bangladesh's on April 2, 2004, the then state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar blamed the Awami League for hatching a conspiracy against the government.

Babar said the weapons were smuggled in as part of a conspiracy to carry out

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## MK ALAMGIR'S SEAT EC decision slated in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two senior Awami League leaders in parliament yesterday accused the Election Commission of violating the constitution by interfering in the jurisdiction of parliament and the speaker.

They brought the accusation against the EC for issuing a gazette notification last month declaring AL leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir's parliamentary seat vacant.

AL lawmakers Alamgir and Suranjit Sengupta said the EC has the authority to decide whether to cancel the parliamentary membership of an MP only when a dispute relating to the seat in parliament is raised and the speaker sends the issue to the commission for disposal.

But the EC in a sudden move issued the gazette notification and through that it exercised its power with mala fide intentions, they alleged.

Alamgir, also chief of the

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## AFGHANISTAN

# Bangladesh not sending troops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will not send forces to Afghanistan even if the US shows up with a formal request for troops.

The government will argue that the national sentiment is against sending troops to Afghanistan, according to government and ruling party sources.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already said her government did not receive any formal proposal from the US about sending troops. "So there is no question of sending troops," she told her party's advisory council members during a meeting Saturday.

All Awami League advisers urged Hasina, president of Awami League, not to send troops considering the public sentiment.

In response Hasina had said, "Why has the issue come up for discussion when the USA did not even make any formal proposal to us? The issue just came up during a conversation."

The advisers said even if the formal proposal comes, the government should not make any decision to send troops to a Saarc country as it would go against the sentiment of more than 90 percent Bangladeshis.

"We are a developing nation, not a developed one. We have no capacity to fight battles at this moment. We can send troops only for UN peacekeeping, not for fighting battles," yesterday an adviser who attended the Saturday meeting at the Gono Bhaban quoted Hasina as saying.

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## Govt working on national media policy

Information minister tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is working to formulate a national broadcasting policy soon for newspapers and satellite television channels. Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad told the House yesterday.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, the information minister said they have already prepared the draft of the policy, which is now under scrutiny.

"We should think before talking about such sensitive issue like formulating a national broadcasting policy," he said.

"Different quarters including the print and electronic media started criticising the government, when we began talking about the necessity of formulating such policy after assuming office," Azad said.

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## Forest dept rejoinder, our reply

In a rejoinder to our reports headlined "Logging fest" published on September 20 and "Forest men not guilty" published on September 22, the Department of Forest says two out of three Padma chars were denuded in 2007-08 and erosion is still washing away trees, so plundering of trees in last six months is not true.

Signed by the divisional forest officer (DFO) of the Social Forest Division, Rajshahi, the rejoinder says

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## ILLEGAL CHEMICAL STORAGE

# Old Dhaka hub left out of first day's drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Day one of the drive against warehouses of combustible chemicals in the city's residential areas yesterday ended without visiting its nerve centre in Old Dhaka amid lack of coordination between the mobile court and fire service officials.

Starting around 12:45pm, the court managed to raid only four warehouses of inflammable chemicals and a plastic factory at Elephant Road

and outer part of Old Dhaka in three hours.

Of them, the three chemical storehouses at Elephant Road were found empty, as their owners have already shifted them outside of Dhaka in line with the government directive.

Following the devastating Nimtoli fire that killed at least 121 people in June this year, the government directed the owners to shift their warehouses of combustible chemicals from residential areas within September 30.

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## Industrial police launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The industrial police, a specialised unit of law enforcers, formally started its journey yesterday, aiming to maintain order in the country's four industrial zones.

Initially, 1,580 personnel deputed from the police department will make up the force. They will later be joined by 1,410 more cops to patrol Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chittagong industrial hubs.

A 10-day training programme for the new unit began at Police Staff College in the capital's Mirpur yesterday morning.

Inaugurating the programme, Home

Minister Sahara Khatun said the government has formed the force to ensure no outsiders can incite violence or create anarchy in the industrial sector.

Salim Osman, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association, told The Daily Star they hope the industrial police will help tackle labour unrest.

For regular police, it takes much time to reach the spot, and often the situation spirals out of control before they arrive. Fending off violence in industrial areas will be easier now with the industrial police readily available, he observed.

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## National edn policy placed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national education policy 2010 has outlined a plan for building an efficient education administration with various measures including formation of a permanent education commission and an accreditation council for proper implementation of the policy.

Education Minister Nurul

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## WE MOURN

BRAC is shocked and deeply saddened by the passing of **MD. AMINUL ALAM**, a member of its Governing Body and Executive Director, BRAC International.

Amin joined BRAC in 1975 and has been a principal architect of BRAC programmes, leaving an indelible mark across BRAC's diverse activities.

He led the expansion of BRAC's programmes across Bangladesh and subsequently into ten countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Under his leadership, BRAC earned an unparalleled reputation for the range and scale of its activities.

His boundless energy and selfless devotion to duty in the service of the poor garnered wide admiration and respect throughout BRAC and the development community. His untimely loss will be deeply felt by his family, friends and colleagues, and the millions of poor in Bangladesh and abroad whose lives he has touched.

The BRAC family



Did you know...

water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and typhoid are responsible for the highest death rates in Bangladesh?

Source: Pulitzer Center



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