

ACC to quiz Gen Harun on Nov 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission will interrogate Destiny Group President Lt Gen (ret'd) Harun-Ar-Rashid on November 4 in connection with two money laundering cases.

The commission's Chairman Ghulam Rahman said this to journalists while leaving his office at Segunbagicha yesterday afternoon.

Former army chief Harun was released on October 19, a day after the High Court granted him conditional bail for two months in the cases.

The ACC filed the cases with Kalabagan Police Station on July 31 against 22 top officials of the controversial group on charges of laundering Tk 3,285.26 crore.

Meanwhile, the ACC has set November 4 for quizzing Mashiur Rahman, the prime minister's economic affairs adviser, over corruption allegations in the Padma bridge project.

The ACC yesterday fixed the date in response to a request by Mashiur, said sources at the commission, an anti-graft watchdog.

Earlier on Monday, the ACC issued a notice asking Mashiur to appear at its Segunbagicha head office on November 6 for the interrogation.

In September, Mashiur was sent on leave to fulfil part of a condition imposed by the World Bank for reviving its funding for the Padma bridge project.

The ACC has so far interrogated 29 people, including former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain, in relation to the graft allegations.

The WB cancelled its \$1.2 billion credit for the project on June 29, on the grounds that it had proof of a corruption conspiracy involving senior Bangladeshi government officials and executives of a Canadian firm.

The global lender, however, decided to revive its loan on September 21 after the Bangladesh government agreed to its terms and conditions.

BNP

FROM PAGE 1 connect its north-eastern region with its other regions. "Therefore, we can demand a portion of the premium and that was exactly what we wanted to say."

However, Khaleda at a rally in Dhaka on November 7 demanded cancellation of the "transit deal" with India, saying no foreign vehicles would be allowed into Bangladesh territory.

She also said she would resist the government's anti-state activities even if it cost her life.

During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India early 2010, Dhaka and New Delhi signed three agreements on fighting terrorism and organised crime, and mutual transfer of convicted prisoners.

Besides, according to the joint communiqué issued after the tour, Bangladesh will allow the use of Mongla and Chittagong sea ports for transport of goods to and from India. Nepal and Bhutan too would be given access to the sea ports.

BBC Bangla service observes that the BNP chairperson has moved away from her years-long position against Bangladesh giving transit to India and the proposed Tipaimukh dam over the Barak river in Manipur state of the neighbouring country.

Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury, a vice-chairman of the main opposition, told BBC last night that at the talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Khaleda had suggested forming a sub-committee comprised of credible experts under the joint river commission to assess the impact of the dam on Bangladesh.

The party earlier staged a number of protests in and outside the capital against the dam.

Sabihuddin and Shamsher are in the delegation accompanying Khaleda Zia on her India visit.

Abducted boy rescued

3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday rescued the minor son of a rickshaw-puller from Feni, six days after his abduction from Chittagong.

The victim was Md Mehedi Hasan Al-Amin, 5, son of Md Mizu Ahmed of Chowdhury Nagar area under Bayezid Police Station in the port city.

Police also detained the abductors -- Sohagh Hossain, 20, and Md Sanaulah, 28, from Chittagong on Tuesday night and Saiful Islam, 18, from Feni early yesterday.

Sohagh planned the incident, and in collusion with the other detainees, abducted Al-Amin from in front of his residence at Chowdhury Nagar around 2:30pm on October 25, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) Sheikh Md Nasir Uddin of Bayezid Police Station.

After the abduction, they demanded Tk 1 lakh as ransom from Mizu Ahmed over mobile phone on October 27, the eid day, said the OC.

Mizu, a rickshaw-puller, gave Sohagh Tk 3,000 on that day, OC Nasir said.

"As instructed by Sohagh, I kept Tk 3,000 at a place in Chandra Nagar area under Bayezid Police Station," said the father. "But Sohagh demanded at least Tk 12,000 more to get my boy back," Mizu said, "or they would kill Al-Amin."

Later, Mizu filed a case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with the police station on October 28, said the OC.

After receiving information, police detained the trio from different areas, the OC said. On information from the detainees, the law enforcers rescued the boy around 6:00am yesterday from the custody of detained Saiful at Rghunath village in Daganbhuiyan upazila of Feni.

Asked about the motive behind the abduction, Sohagh, the mastermind, told the Daily Star that they abducted the minor boy only for money.

Cops in ammo

FROM PAGE 1 Metropolitan Police said, "After the arrest of the policemen and seizure of more arms and ammunition from their possession, the process of counting all the arms and ammunitions has begun."

"We are trying to root out the ring for the sake of the country," he said, adding, "None will be spared and the entire police department cannot take responsibility for such illicit acts of a few of its members."

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police authorities on Sunday formed a six-member committee led by Joint Commissioner Maruf Hasan, also chief of detective police.

According to police sources, Detective Branch of Police on Sunday arrested constable Masud Miah and on Tuesday night Sub-Inspector Mohammad Zahid Hossain and constable Abu Sayem with the bullets, cartridges, a revolver and the money.

The three were deployed at Rajarbagh Police Lines armoury while Prem and Jannal were deployed at the reserve storage of the armoury at the Public Order Management unit of the police department at Mirpur in the capital.

Jannal and Prem yesterday made their confessional statements before Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mohammad Adnan on the fifth day of their six-day remand.

They told the magistrate that detained policemen Zahid and Sayem had been stealing arms and ammunition from the armouries for a

Rab talks

FROM PAGE 1 1:00pm with his maternal uncle Nawsher Roman, who had filed the case over the double murder committed on February 11.

Megh's another uncle Nawshad Alam told The Daily Star that the investigation officer asked Megh questions about the murders and that fateful night.

"Megh was not interested in answering those questions as he was busy playing," he added.

On February 11, Sagar, a news editor at Maasranga television, and his wife Meherun Runi, an ATN Bangla reporter, were killed at their flat at Rajabazar in the capital. Megh was at home then.

Sri Lanka storm exposes Tigers' heavy weaponry

AFP, Colombo

A storm surge in Sri Lanka's northeast has exposed buried artillery guns of Tamil Tiger rebels in a region where the final battles of the country's 37-year conflict were fought, the army said yesterday.

Khaleda in Jaipur

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, now in India on a weeklong official tour, reached Jaipur yesterday.

She will offer special prayers at the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer Sharif today.

Maruf Kamal Khan, press secretary of the chairperson, told UNB over phone "She (Khaleda Zia) left New Delhi for Jaipur in the morning and will be staying overnight there."

Khaleda along with her entourage left Hotel Taj Palace at 10:30am (Indian time) and started for the capital of Rajasthan State by road with special security arrangements.

Officials received Khaleda and her entourage when they reached the city around 2:30pm. They were staying at Rambagh Palace.

The BNP chairperson attended a dinner hosted by the Commerce Minister of Rajasthan Rajendra Prakash last night.

She is expected to return to New Delhi tonight.

Govt okays

FROM PAGE 1 Hossain Bhuiyan told journalists after the cabinet meeting.

The meeting also decided that equal number or more trees would be planted at suitable places after implementation of the project.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting held at her office.

"It is not possible to expand Joydebpur-Mymensingh highway without removing some trees on both sides of the road. That is why the cabinet has approved the proposal for removing the trees by relaxing a previous policy," said Musharraf.

The cabinet also approved the draft of National Biotechnology Policy, 2012 to increase food production, ensure nutrition for all and reduce poverty. The Ministry of Science and Technology has formulated the draft policy.

Quoting the cabinet secretary, UNB said, "It could be used effectively in curing diseases, ensuring food security, improving the status of health and nutrition and protecting environment."

The priority areas of the policy are agriculture, healthcare, nutrition, afforestation, animal husbandry, preservation of fish and livestock and improvement of the standard of goods and service.

Besides human resources and infrastructure development, research and development and optimum utilisation of capability have been incorporated in the policy, UNB said.

A national taskforce headed by the prime minister, a national executive committee headed by the cabinet secretary and a technical committee headed by the science and technology secretary will work for implementing the policy.

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Brain drain dims

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI), Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI), Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) and Bangladesh Sericulture Research and Training Institute (BSRTI).

BARI and BRRI are the biggest losers in the brain drain phenomenon as the two institutions together lost nearly 200 scientists in recent years. They (scientists) preferred voluntary retirement and joined research institutions abroad or universities at home where better pay package and other facilities are available.

Bangladeshi scientists' back-to-back successes in plant and fungi-genomics research in recent years made the government upbeat about the country's capability in advance agro-science. On both the occasions -- jute genome decoding in 2010 and fungi genome decoding in September this year -- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina informed the nation about the scientific feats by announcing that in parliament.

But, the agro-scientists' morale remains low due to non-implementation of the promised incentives for them, said a top NARS official, preferring anonymity.

They are frustrated by factors such as retirement at the age of 59, promotion policy based on vacant positions, lack of scope for higher studies in modern agriculture, lack of recognition for achievements and absence of pension benefits and recreation leave.

In neighbouring countries India and Nepal, agro-scientists working in public sector retire at the age of 62 and 60 years respectively compared to 58 years for other public servants. In Pakistan, scientists are given special increments in salary if and when they pursue higher education while in service.

AGRO-SCIENTISTS GONE ON SELF-RETIREMENT	
Research Institutions	Number of Scientists
BARI	110
BRRI	58
BJRI	28
BSRI	14
BINA	10
BLRI	28
BFRI	26
BTRI	11

Contacted, renowned agro-economist and former head of social science division at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) Dr Mahbub Hossain said, "Public research institutions should not deprive themselves from the services of talented agro-scientists just because they reached retirement age. Rather, they should be retained up to a certain age so that the country can benefit from their expertise."

Mahbub, now executive director of Brac that has a huge agro-research resource pool in which many are former public sector scientists, stressed that the government should come up with special incentives for the scientists to stop brain drain.

"We've repeatedly pleaded with the prime minister for incentives for agriculture scientists. But nothing has been done as yet," said Dr Nitish Chandra Debnath, who heads the Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh (KIB).

KIB is one of the oldest and largest professional organisations in the country that represents over 20,000 agriculture graduates.

"It's nothing extra that the country's agro-scientists are asking for, rather, we're asking for the minimum incen-

No to central bank's

FROM PAGE 1 removing the chairmen, directors and other high officials, including the managing directors of state-run and specialised banks, has been kept with the government instead of with the Bangladesh Bank.

According to conditions set by the IMF for it to release the second installment of the \$1 billion credit, the government has to amend the Bank Companies Act, paving the way for the BB to oversee the state-run and specialised banks like all other commercial banks.

Article 46 of the existing act says the BB can remove the chairman, director or any other official of all commercial banks on charges of irregularities except for the government-nominated chairman, director or chief executive.

In case of irregularities by any government-picked official, the BB can only submit a report to the government for the latter to consider.

The banking division proposed no changes to that provision other than inserting it in Article 47.

The division in its defence says the government as the "owning authority should retain the power of abolishing

the board of directors of any state-owned banks or specialised banks".

Asked to comment on such a justification, a top BB official said, "It is a lame excuse."

If the government exercises this power, owners of private banks can do the same as the "owning authority," added the official, requesting anonymity.

At present, there are four state-owned and four specialised banks in the country. The state-run banks are Janata, Agrani, Sonali and Rupali and the specialised banks are Krishi Bank, Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank, Bangladesh Development Bank and Basic Bank.

The IMF sent a proposal to the government early this month, recommending that the government ensure all banks -- public and private -- receiving public deposits are subjected to the same supervisory framework.

It also proposed amending the current banking law to empower the central bank for removing government-appointed directors and executives.

On several occasions, Finance Minister AMA Muhith blamed the BB for "acting late"

tives that our counterparts in all neighbouring counties are already getting," said Nitish, also former vice chancellor of Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Science University.

He said brain drain can be stopped if scientists are given in situ promotion (promotion based on expertise and experience, and not on vacancy) as is the practice in public universities. He mentioned that many brilliant scientists in the NARS ended up working in the same positions for years.

Executive Chairman of BARC Dr Wais Kabir told this correspondent that he had forwarded two years ago a draft proposal on how the government could provide incentives to scientists.

Kabir said he thinks the country would lose its science talents if a minimum incentive package is not arranged.

Reached over the phone, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said the draft proposal was under active consideration but she couldn't give any timeframe when the government would announce the package.

At a reception Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hosted on June 24, 2010 for the scientists who decoded jute genome, she said, "We will take special measures so that researchers do not face any trouble due to limitation of job tenure and limited salary."

Ten months later, as this paper enquired in April last year about the progress to that end, the then agriculture secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed said, "We want to give our scientists a fair deal. So, we are planning to increase benefits and facilities for them. We are doing this for the sake of the nation."

And on November 23 last year, addressing a city programme the prime minister again said, "We'll have to think how the researchers can be given special facilities including financial support and extension of job tenure."

in identifying the Tk3,547 crore swindle from Sonali Bank by Hall-Mark and five other companies.

But a BB official said the central bank had alerted the government about various irregularities by the directors of the government-owned banks, including those of Sonali Bank, but the government did not take any action.

In the case of the Hall-Mark swindle, the biggest scam in the country's banking history, though some top Sonali Bank officials were sued by the Anti-Corruption Commission, no charges were brought against the board of directors, the ultimate authorities to safeguard the public money.

Sonali Bank officials allege while many of their "innocent" colleagues were implicated in the scam, not a single director faces any charges despite Bangladesh Bank's recommendation for action against the board.

According to a former BB official, owners of the private banks have minimum responsibility as they get dividends at the end of the year. But the government-appointed directors of the state-run banks have no such responsibility.

Ramu Press Club President Nurul Islam Selim, were present at the programme.

Rijon, one of the organisers of the event, said he could not invite all because of a shortage of time. But he had invited all elderly persons from the local Buddhist community, who were not there at the event.

He said that like many others Upazila Parishad Chairman Kajol had advised him on how to organise the programme.

Kajol, however, denied the allegation of supporting the programme. He said some youths of Hazari Kul village had organised the programme. On receiving an invitation, he just attended the programme, Kajol added.

Bijon Barua, a local Buddhist, told The Daily Star that it was an insult to the community. Many others echoed his view.

20 hurt as Kushtia AL men clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between two rival factions of Awami League in Kumarkhali of the district yesterday in presence of AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif.

Hanif was attending the AL upazila unit council as the chief guest.

Police said the clash took place over taking control of the council venue.

Supporters of a faction led by General Secretary of AL Kumarkhali upazila unit Abdul Mannan took control of the venue at about 11:00am.

The clash ensued 20 minutes later when supporters of Zahid Hossain Zafar, AL upazila unit president, also administrator of Kushtia Zilla Parishad tried to seize control of the venue.

The ruling party men vandalised around 40 shops and blocked the Kushtia-Rajbari highway halting traffic for two hours, said Abdur Razzaque, officer-in-charge of Kumarkhali Police Station.

Later police intervened and dispersed the agitators from the highway.

Six of the injured were admitted to Kumarkhali Upazila Health Complex while the others received first aid.

Mannan and Zafar, however, blamed each other for the attack.

Laxmipur

FROM PAGE 20

Kalibazar for mass contacts ahead of the next general election.

At one stage, the followers of Majid attacked the activists of their rival faction and opened fire on them that triggered a clash.

A chase and counter chase took place during the melee that left Didar, a loyal supporter of Abul Khayer, dead on the spot and 10 other activists of Jubo Dal and BNP injured.

The injured were admitted to Sader Hospital and local clinics.

Later, the supporters of Abul Khayer blocked different roads in the area protesting the killing of Didar.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Mamun

FROM PAGE 1

framed the charges after rejecting a discharge petition filed by Mamun on August 13.

Mamun, who is now in custody, had pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after the charges were read out to him.

The court fixed November 18 for starting trial of the case and summoned complainant of the case to appear before it on that day to give his statement.

On September 22 last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case with Cantonment Police Station against Mamun, a business partner of BNP chief Khaleda Zia's elder son Tarique Rahman.

The ACC pressed the money-laundering charges against him on April 29.

ACC Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka, showing 14 people as prosecution witnesses.

According to First Information Report (FIR) of the case, Mamun opened two accounts with a London branch of NatWest Bank and laundered the money.

Trial of another money laundering case filed against Mamun and Tarique is going on with the same court.

Mamun, who stands accused in 13 other cases, has already been convicted and sentenced to 20 years in jail in three cases, two of which were for corruption.