

# LOAN DEFAULT Khaleda, 3 others to face new case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and three members of her family are to face trial in a loan default case. The three family members are Arafat Rahman Koko's wife Sharmila Rahman Sithi and her daughters Zafira Rahman and Zahia Rahman.

A Dhaka court yesterday granted a Sonali Bank petition to include the four as defendants in the case on behalf of Koko, who died on January 24.

Judge Rokhsana Begum Happy of Artha Rin Adalat-1 passed the order after the state-run bank on March 8 filed a petition to include Khaleda and three others to contest the case. The court also fixed April 12 for next hearing of the case.

Koko was made a defendant in the case filed for realising Tk 45.59 crore. On October 2 of 2012, Sonali Bank Ltd filed a money suit against 10 directors of Dandy Dyeing Ltd, including BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, for defaulting on a loan amounting to Tk 45.59 crore.

The company had borrowed Tk 12.16 crore from the bank's principal office in Dhaka on October 16, 2001, the case statement said. As the company failed to pay it off, the principal loan plus interest accumulated over the last 11 years totalling to an amount of Tk 45.59 crore.

Nine other accused in the case include Arafat Rahman Koko, Giasuddin Al-Mamun and his wife Shahina Yasmine, Nasrin Iskander, wife of late Sayeed Iskander, Shams Iskander, Shafin Iskander, Sumaiya Iskander, Mozaffar Ahmed and Kazi Galib Abdus Sattar.

Nazrul Islam, senior executive officer of the bank's principal office, filed the case with Artha Rin Adalat-1, while Hosne Ara Begum moved the suit for recovery of the loan.



The Musapur closure at Companiganj in Noakhali washed away by heavy current of the river Chhoto Feni, three hours after it was opened on Saturday.

# MEETING WITH CEC IGP for city polls by next month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police boss AKM Shahidul Hoque yesterday called on the Election Commission to hold the Dhaka and Chittagong city corporation polls by next month.

"Police will feel comfortable if the elections are held by April 30 as there will be [Bangladesh-Pakistan] cricket matches in May," said the inspector general of police, while talking to reporters after a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad at the EC secretariat.

The two-nation series is scheduled to take place between April 10 and May 7. But the IGP said the series might be deferred until May if necessary.

An election commissioner, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that the EC would announce the polls schedule in the next five working days.

Shahidul Hoque said his force was ready to assist the EC for holding the elections.

He said he came to know that the three city corporations (two DCCs and CCC) will go to polls on the same day.

Earlier, commission Secretary Sirajul Islam told reporters they completed all the preparations for holding the elections.

On March 12, the CEC said the EC would announce the polls schedules for the three city corporations this month and hold the polls before Ramadan.

The last election to the undivided DCC was held in April 2002, and its tenure expired in May 2007.

But the election could not be held in time for various reasons, including state of emergency and complexities regarding boundary demarcation.

Last month, the LGRD ministry requested the EC to hold polls to the two Dhaka city corporations.

The last CCC election was held in 2010.

# Target 7-nation power grid

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and then be submitted to the Third Energy Ministers' Meeting in Kathmandu sometime this year for signing.

Bangladesh has already set up cross border electricity grid with India for importing 500-Megawatt power from India.

The country is also currently negotiating to import at least 3,500-Megawatt more electricity through bilateral, regional and sub-regional joint venture initiatives from India, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan by 2030.

Officials said power import would serve as one of the main sources of the country's energy security by 2030. According to the government's plan, Bangladesh would have 39,000MW of power, nearly six times the amount today.

Elaborating on the Bimstec MoU, they said this would provide a broad framework for the implementation of grid interconnections to promoting rational and optimal power transmis-

sion in the region. Based on the principles of mutual cooperation and sustainable development, the member states aspire to build interconnections for reliable, secure and economic electricity supply in the region under the MoU.

The Bimstec deal is almost similar to Saarc Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation signed in Kathmandu on November 27, 2014 to set up a South Asian regional grid for cross-border trade of electricity.

Foreign ministry officials said the Bimstec move would expedite the implementation of the Saarc deal.

Officials said the MoU was prepared based on the Declaration of First Bimstec Energy Ministers' Conference held on October 4, 2005. This covered trans-power exchange and grid interconnection, hydropower development and energy security of the region.

Once approved, the MoU will pave the way for all member countries to buy and sell energy as per their necessity through private or public compa-

nies. It will ease power generation, distribution and trading between the Bimstec states.

The relevant Bimstec bodies will identify regional and sub-regional projects in the area of power generation, transmission and power trade, including hydropower, natural gas, solar, wind and bio-fuel, and implement them with top priority with to meet the increasing demand for power in the region.

According to a senior official at the Bimstec Secretariat, the seven member states have the potential of generating around 260,000 megawatt of hydropower, including 150,000MW by India, 40,000MW by Myanmar, 30,000MW by Bhutan and Nepal each, 500MW by Bangladesh and Thailand each and 1,000MW by Sri Lanka.

Earlier, Monowar Islam, secretary of Power Division at the power, energy and mineral resources ministry, inaugurated the meeting.

Bimstec Secretary General Sumith Nakandala spoke on the occasion.

# Help find

FROM PAGE 1  
police also handed over some murder evidence to the team for a DNA test.

Avijit was hacked on a sidewalk near Dhaka University's TSC around 8:45pm on February 26. His wife, Rafida Ahmed Bonya, was also injured in the attack and is now recovering from a number of wounds to her head and hands in the USA where she was taken days after the attack for safety reasons.

Joint Commissioner of Detective Branch Monirul Islam told journalists yesterday that another technical expert from the FBI was expected in the country any day.

Police have arrested Shafiqur Rahman Farabi in connection with the murder for issuing several death threats to Avijit on his Facebook page over the last two years.

Prof Ajoy is also considering placing a complaint to the Inspector General of Police against the policemen responsible for maintaining law and order at the crime scene on Feb 26.

# KHAGRACHHARI CLASH 11 indigenous people sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A Khagrachhari court yesterday sent 11 indigenous people to jail in connection with Sunday's clash with security personnel.

They were arrested in a case filed by Israfil Majumdar, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Dighinala Police Station, for allegedly attacking and injuring on-duty security personnel during the clash. 56 persons, including leaders of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), several local government representatives and 700-800 unidentified people are accused in the case.

Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Abul Mansur Siddique sent them to jail rejecting a bail prayer submitted by defence lawyers Advocate Gayano Jyoti Chakma and Advocate Somari Chakma, said court sources.

The court also rejected a five-day remand prayer by Investigation Officer

(IO) Abdus Salam and asked him to interrogate the accused in front of the jailgate.

The 11 arrestees are Shanti Bikash Chakma, Shymolendu Chakma, Chuklu Chakma, Suman Chakma, Ripon Chakma, Purnaraj Chakma, Rupkumar Chakma, Anil Bikash Chakma, Bagyadhan Chakma, Sadon Bikash Chakma and Nilu Chakma, according to Dighinala police.

Meanwhile, a dawn-to-dusk road blockade enforced yesterday by Dighinala Bhumi Raksha Committee ended without any violence.

DBRC enforced the blockade protesting Sunday's clash that left at least six indigenous people and four security personnel injured.

The clash broke out when security personnel blocked a peaceful procession of DBRC heading towards the BCB 51 Battalion in Babuchara to protest the eviction of indigenous families during the setting up of BGB offices there.

# UN expert for int'l action on N Korea

AFP, Geneva

A United Nations rights expert squared off with North Korea Monday by urging the global community to resolve the fate of 200,000 people allegedly abducted by Pyongyang, and refer perpetrators to the International Criminal Court.

"There is a real sense of urgency to solve this matter once and for all," said Marzuki Dariusman, the UN's independent expert on the rights situation in North Korea.

Addressing the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva Monday, Dariusman presented his latest report

on the human rights situation in the country, including a strategy aimed at keeping the issue of abductions in the international spotlight.

Dariusman urged fast and effective action on the matter, noting "the victims, those who have survived, and their families are, for the most part, well advanced in the years," and stressing "an international approach to the issue is now required."

Pointing out that the abductions had "caused unspeakable suffering to the victims and their families," he called for the cases to be brought before the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

North Korean representative Kim Yong-Ho attacked Dariusman's report as "politicised," telling the council the former Indonesian attorney general himself was "under manipulation of... hostile forces" and represented "their ill-minded political objectives."

He also cited recent news reports that Dariusman had called for "regime change" in North Korea, accusing him of misusing "human right issues as a means to dismantle or overthrow the country's system."

Dariusman rejected the charge, and denounced "vain attempts to discredit me."

# Father of the Nation's

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Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion, recalling Bangabandhu's contribution to the nation and paying glowing tribute to him.

Hasina, also the president of AL, will fly to Tungipara in Gopalganj around 10:00am after placing wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the capital.

She will place wreaths at the grave of her father Bangabandhu, who is the architect of the nation, and offer special prayers there.

Later, the prime minister will address a children's rally and inaugurate a book fair on the premises of the grave. She is also expected to attend a cultural

function to be organised by the women and children affairs ministry.

The ruling AL will hoist the national and party flags at Bangabandhu Bhaban in the capital and party offices across the country. It will also place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu in front of Bangabandhu Bhaban.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television, private TV and radio stations will air special programmes, while the national dailies will publish special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Bangabandhu, who led the country's all the important movements including the independence war, was born at Tungipara on this day in 1920.

He delivered the historic speech on March 7, 1971, which united and pre-

pared the entire nation for the Liberation War.

On March 25 the same year, Pakistani army pounced on the unarmed Bengali people killing hundreds and later arrested Bangabandhu from his Dhanmondi residence.

The entire nation, except for few Pakistani collaborators, fought against the heavily-equipped Pakistani armed forces, and after nine months of bloodshed, the country was finally liberated.

Throughout his life, Bangabandhu struggled to ensure Bangladeshis' rights and freedom.

On August 15, 1975, the great leader was assassinated, along with most of his family members, by some disgruntled army personnel in the capital.

# OIL, GAS EXPLORATION Technical fault halts drilling at Mubarakpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Drilling an exploration well in Mubarakpur to detect oil and gas reserves there. The trouble began after it had dug around 3,500 metres.

The drilling operations would take another two months to be completed, said officials concerned.

On completion of a five-year joint seismic survey by Petrobangla and German company Prakla Seismos in 1984, Mubarakpur was identified as a prospective site.

Later, Bapex started pushing for the exploration, considering gas crisis in the country.

The rig, Bijoy-12, was deployed in the well later, aiming to drill up to 4,500 metres for detecting oil and gas reserves there. The trouble began after it had dug around 3,500 metres.

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In March 2009, the government approved a fund of Tk. 89.26 core for the project—Tk 61.84 core of which came as foreign fund.

# Business first

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arguments on behalf of political leaders, he said.

"We have reached an understanding with the chief justice that the case of a lawyer will not be dismissed, if he or she cannot attend court due to hartal," the SCBA president said.

Mahub said they would not withdraw the SCBA's February 8 decision as they were seeing it as not obligatory.

He said if any lawyer wanted to attend court, he or she could do so, and if any lawyer did not wish to attend court, he or she could refrain from attending court proceedings.

They made the decision to obstruct proceedings of cases against BNP leaders, including its chief Khaleda Zia, and the war crimes cases against Jamaat-e-Islami leaders, he claimed.

The top law officer of the country said the lawyers, including those of BNP and Jamaat disposition, were showing up before courts as no lawyer was obligated to comply with the SCBA decision.

Top SCBA leaders were moving political cases.

On March 5, former SCBA president and BNP chairperson's adviser Zainul Abedin appeared before the HC and represented BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in two of her petitions expressing no-confidence in the judge of a lower court dealing with the Zia Orphanage

and Zia Charitable Trust graft cases.

A group of pro-BNP lawyers, including former SCBA president AJ Mohammad Ali and incumbent SCBA Secretary AM Mahub Uddin Khokon, were present in the courtroom that day, Additional Attorney General Moutaz Uddin Fakir told The Daily Star.

He said former SCBA president Habibul Islam Bhuiyan and a few other pro-BNP lawyers appeared before the SC chamber judge on March 5 on behalf of Zainul Abedin in connection with a case.

On March 1, Mahub Uddin Khokon and former SCBA secretary and pro-BNP lawyer Bodruddoza Badal on March 2 had appeared before the High Court for moving Khaleda's no-confidence petitions.

# Family's

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But on that day, the law enforcement agencies told the court through the attorney general that they did not detain Salahuddin.

Upon an appeal by Hasina's lawyers, the HC had adjourned the hearing till yesterday.

As the court resumed hearing yesterday, Attorney General Mahubey Alam read out from the reports submitted by five law enforcement agencies saying they were trying to find out the BNP leader.

The HC bench of Justice Quamrul Islam Siddique and Justice Gabinda Chandra Tagore did not pass any order other than adjourning the hearing yesterday, since the attorney general told it Salahuddin was not in the custody of law enforcers.

After the court proceedings, Mahubey Alam told reporters at his office that Hasina Ahmed's statement about the law enforcers' reports was misleading and baseless.

The reports have been submitted to the HC through affidavits as they are true, he claimed.

In the middle of yesterday's hearing, Hasina's counsel Moudud Ahmed appealed for adjourning the hearing.

Moudud told the court that he would place arguments in detail on the issue and respond to the reports submitted by the law enforcement agencies about their actions to find out Salahuddin.

The offices of the inspector general of police, the director general of Rapid Action Battalion, the Criminal Investigation Department, the Special Branch of Police and the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police submitted separate reports to the HC on March 15, saying they did not detain the BNP leader.

Hasina's lawyers said law enforcers were still obligated to trace Salahuddin as the court did not dispose of the petition.

Emerging from the courtroom, Moudud told The Daily Star there were many false statements in the law enforcers' reports and that they would place their response before the court in this regard on April 8.

But Moudud, also a BNP standing committee member, would not say which parts of the reports were untrue.

"The adjournment has been good for us, as the petition will remain pending with the High Court and the government will feel a pressure and will try to find out Salahuddin," he said.

After yesterday's hearing, Hasina told reporters that the law enforcers' reports about her husband were false and fabricated.