

Panama Papers put 'big names'

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The leaks also named some heavy-weight telecom personalities of the country.

One of them is Mehboob Chowdhury, chief executive officer of mobile phone operator Citycell. Sources close to him said he is in talks with senior lawyers on the issue.

The names of former officials and a relative of the top management of Citycell, the oldest mobile phone operator in Bangladesh, also came up.

Kafil HS Mueyed, CEO of international gateway operator Cel Telecom, was also mentioned in the list.

The Daily Star tried to contact them but their mobile phones were found switched off.

The names of another IGW operator Bangla Trac's owner Mohammad Aminul Haque and his sons Nazim Asadul Haque and Tarique Ekramul Haque have appeared in the first list of the leaks.

Their company Bangla Trac Ltd has also been named.

Tarique Ekramul Haque, who is now abroad, received the correspondent's phone call but when asked about the issue he switched off his mobile.

Zain Omar, owner of internet service provider AccessTEL, was mentioned in the list.

Mullick Sudhir, a former commissioner of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, was named as well.

However, when contacted, Sudhir said he was not the same person mentioned in the papers.

"This is just a name that matches mine. I guarantee that you will get real information when more details are revealed," said Sudhir, now a senior consultant for a project under the BTRC.

The leaks also named Bangladesh Biman Inc, Islamic Solidarity Shipping Company Bangladesh and Bangladesh Textile Agencies Ltd.

In a statement, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the national flag carrier, said it had nothing to do with the so-called offshore company that might have some resemblance only to the name of the airline.

Some of the addresses stated in the Panama Papers are located in the capital's Gulshan residential area and they were verified.

One address mentioned in the Panama Papers is house No 4/A on Gulshan road No 73.

It is owned by former minister and ruling Awami League presidium member Kazi Zafrullah and his wife Nilufar Zafrullah MP, according to a security guard on duty at the property.

Kazi Zafrullah did not respond to the correspondent's repeated phone calls or messages.

Another address, house No 23/B on Gulshan road No 35, is owned by one Giri Babu, said a security guard on duty yesterday.

The owner or owners of house No

NAMES FOUND IN PANAMA PAPERS

1. ISHRAQ AHMED
2. MS NOVERA CHOWDHURY
3. FARHAD GANI MOHAMMED
4. MEHBOOB CHOWDHURY
5. BILKIS FATIMA JESMIN
6. ROGER BARB
7. MD ABUL BASHAR
8. M SELIMUZZAMAN
9. KAFIL HS MUYEED
10. THE BEARER
11. THE BEARER
12. PESSINA STEFANO
13. RUDY BEN-JAMIN
14. MD YUSUF RAIHAN REZA
15. ZAIN OMAR
16. BENZIR AHMED
17. MD AFZALUR RAHMAN
18. MULLICK SUDHIR
19. SARKAR JIBAN KUMAR
20. NIZAM M SELIM
21. MOHAMMAD MOKSEUDUL ISLAM
22. MD MOTAZZARUL ISLAM
23. MD MOTAZZARUL ISLAM
24. MD AFZALUR RAHMAN

25 (CES A) on road No 121, a relatively old two-storey structure, could not be identified as the security guard on duty, Thomas, said: "I do not know the owner's name."

The apartment No 1 of house No 21 on road No 123 of Gulshan is owned by one Md Rubel, said the security guards on duty.

Two addresses -- one at house No 33 on road No 22 and house No 31 on road No 17 -- could not be located.

One address in South Monipur in Mirpur turned out to be a residential building.

The names and addresses based in Chittagong city were found to be fake.

According to the Panama Papers, one Aleksandar Zakharov used the address -- house No 29, road No 2, Hill View Residential Area, 571 Nasirabad, Panchlaish in Chittagong.

The Daily Star correspondent visited the area and found house No 29 on road No 1 in the area. Houses -- from No 13 to No 21 -- were located on the quoted road No 2 in the area.

The house No 29 on road No 1 is a six-storey tower named Jumairah Lamsy Palace.

Rasul Ahmed Rana, manager of the tower, said no one by the name of Aleksanar Zokharov resided in the property since it was constructed about five years ago.

The address of Capt MA Jaul, house No 3, road No 3, Khulshi Hill, Chittagong was also mentioned.

Garment maker Syed Sirajul Haque is the owner of house No 3. He is the chairman of Beaumonde Group, said Didarul Alam, in-charge of the company.

"I have never heard of any name like Capt MA Jaul. The owner has been

NAMES FOUND IN OFFSHORE LEAKS

1. SYED SERAJUL HUQ
2. FM ZUBAIDUL HAQUE
3. ZAFARULLAH KAZI
4. MOHAMMAD AMINUL HAQUE
5. NAZIM ASADUL HAQUE
6. TARIQUE EKRAMUL HAQUE
7. CAPT MA JAUL
8. KAZI RAIHAN ZAFAR
9. MOHAMMAD SHAHED MASUD
10. SALMA HAQUE
11. KHAWZA SAHADAT ULLAH
12. SYEDA SAMINA MIRZA
13. DILIP KUMAR MODI
14. MOHAMMED FAISAL KARIM KHAN
15. MOHAMMAD SHAHED MASUD
16. ZAFARULLAH KAZI AND ZAFARULLAH NILUFER
17. ZULFIQUAR HYDER
18. UMMEH RUBANA
19. AZMAT MOYEEN
20. MIRZA M YAHIA
21. MR NAZRUL ISLAM
22. MOHAMMAD JAHIDUL ISLAM
23. JAFER UMMEED KHAN
24. NILUFER ZAFARULLAH
25. BANGLA TRAC LIMITED
26. FM ZUBAIDUL HAQUE & SALMA HAQUE
27. ASMA MONEM
28. AFM RAHAMATUL BARI
29. ASM MOHIUDDIN MONEM
30. KHAWZA SAHADAT ULLAH
31. MAHTABUDDIN CHOWDHURY
32. ZAFARULLAH NILUFER

residing in the house all along and it has never been let to outsider," Alam added.

The ICIJ website says it does not intend to suggest or imply that any persons, companies or other entities included in the ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database have broken the law or otherwise acted improperly.

It said many people and entities have the same or similar names.

"We suggest you confirm the identities of any individuals or entities located in the database, based on addresses or other identifiable information."

A former senior official of the NBR said unscrupulous people largely used tax heavens such as Panama to dodge tax.

"So, when some bodies or entities' names come up in such leaks they become uneasy," he told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

Bangladesh's law is very strict about allowing its citizens to invest abroad. They have to take permissions from the central bank to do so.

So far in the history of Bangladesh, only one or two companies have been allowed to invest outside of the country.

SC hearing

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placed arguments on behalf of the state. He replied to some legal questions raised by the apex court. Deputy Attorney General Khondker Diliruzzaman assisted him.

Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, later started placing arguments before the court.

The hearing began at 11:45am and continued till 1:30pm.

On March 29, a three-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by the chief justice, started hearing the appeals of the five convicts sentenced to death for rape and murder.

Two other members of the bench were Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice Mirza Hussain Haider. On April 5, the chief justice included Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Md Imman Ali in the bench.

According to the case documents, Shazneen was brutally murdered at her Gulshan house in the city on April 23, 1998.

On September 2, 2003, Judge Kazi Rahmat Ullah of the Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression in Dhaka delivered the verdict in the case.

The court handed death sentences to all the six accused in the case on charges of planning the rape and murder and abetting the offences.

The six are Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan, who was a contractor for renovating Shazneen's house, and his assistant Badal, domestic help Shahidul Islam Shahid, housemaids Estema Khatun Minu and Parvin, and carpenter Shaniram Mandal.

The convicts later appealed to the HC against the tribunal verdict.

The HC on July 10, 2006, confirmed the death penalties of Shahid, Badal, Minu, Parvin and Sajjad. It, however, acquitted Shaniram of the charges.

Later, Sajjad, Badal, Minu and Parvin filed separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC, seeking permission for filing regular appeals against the HC verdict. The SC on April 26, 2009, granted their petitions.

The other convict, Shahid, filed a jail appeal.

Pashur river

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Earlier the condition of ships was not checked but now faulty ships will not be allowed to enter the river, the minister said.

According to the project, dredging will be done from the jetty no-9 of Mongla port up to 13 kilometres upstream to ensure navigability of the river so that imported coals can reach the power plant easily.

An agreement was signed between Bangladesh and India in April 2013 for setting up the power plant. One of the main conditions of the agreement was that the government will conduct the primary dredging of the Pashur river. The maintenance work will be done by Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Co.

Under the project, 38.81 lakh cubic metres will be dredged and 3.28 lakh cubic metre earth will be needed for constructing embankments. Hydrological and morphological impacts of the dredging work will be monitored by hydraulic experts.

The power plant will have two units, each with 1,320 megawatt capacity, built in collaboration with India. Land acquisition and building of the road networks have already begun amid a movement by environmentalists against the initiative.

The planning minister yesterday said 19 south western districts were undeveloped and so they were not contributing much to the GDP (gross domestic product).

The government has taken steps to develop Mongla port and Payra sea port and also moved to set up coal-fired power plants like the one in Rampal to increase economic activities in the region, he added.

Her refusal

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at seven [on Sunday evening]," Anwara told reporters, coming out of the CID office in Comilla.

Tonu's parents, brother Anwar Hossain and cousin Laizu Zahan were questioned once again at the CID office yesterday.

Anwara said the entire body of her daughter bore torture marks. She also expressed surprise that doctors did not find any such mark.

According to her, Tonu's body was dumped in the bushes following her murder elsewhere.

The body of Tonu, 19, a second-year history student and a member of Victoria College Theatre, was found inside the cantonment on March 20, triggering a huge public outcry.

The police inquest and first autopsy, performed at Comilla Medical College, found no primary evidence of murder. The autopsy even failed to determine the cause of her death.

The report of a second autopsy, carried out on March 30 at the same college, has not been prepared yet.

The investigators are yet to arrest anyone though over a month and half have passed since the murder.

NY Fed, BB, SWIFT

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bank was compromised in stealing the reserves.

The promise to work jointly may help Bangladesh enhance its cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the US on the issue.

Quoting the people familiar with the investigation, the Wall Street Journal in a report yesterday said interactions between the FBI and Bangladesh officials haven't always been easy since the heist, and the US State Department has intervened in an attempt to foster a better working relationship.

The FBI and federal prosecutors in Manhattan are investigating the cyber attack.

The BB delegation, which includes BB Lawyer and Queen's Counsel Ajmalul Hossain, went to the Swiss city to attend the meeting in an effort to convince the NY Fed to put pressure on the Philippines so that Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, where the stolen money was wired, returns the funds to the BB.

The central bank's strategy is not to go for lawsuit. Rather, it wants to recover the money through arguments, by pointing to the faults of all the parties involved in the world's biggest cyber heist, according to a number of BB officials.

WHAT US INVESTIGATORS SAY
US investigators suspect the theft of \$81 million was partly an inside job, the WSJ reported.

However, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) investigators, who are probing the matter in Bangladesh, didn't confirm the FBI claim.

Quoting people familiar with the matter, the WSJ report said FBI agents have found evidence pointing to at least one bank employee acting as an accomplice. The evidence suggests a handful of others may also have assisted hackers in navigating Bangladesh Bank's computer system.

The hackers tried to steal nearly \$1 billion in an attack that involved an extensive penetration of BB computers, dozens of orders on the official interbank fund-transfer network and a money trail that ran through the Philippines' murky casino business, according to investigators.

In February, around \$100 million went missing from the BB account with the NY Fed. Authorities are still piecing together what happened.

The attackers successfully transferred \$100 million out of the BB account. The BB has been able to recover about \$20 million so far.

BB Spokesman Subhankar Saha said the FBI hadn't informed the bank that one or more of its employees could

have acted as accomplices in the heist.

"The central bank is pursuing this case with utmost vigour and if anyone within the bank is found to be involved, we will take legal action as appropriate," he told the WSJ.

BB and its lawyers have suggested some of the blame lies with SWIFT, a Brussels-based cooperative of financial institutions that operates a crucial messaging system among thousands of banks.

The BB lawyers have also hinted some responsibility may lie with the NY Fed, which stopped as suspicious most of the 35 transfer orders sent by the attackers but let five through.

At a conference in Miami last week, Richard Dzina, NY Fed executive vice president, said the bank acted properly authenticated message instructions.

Meanwhile, SWIFT has rejected the allegation by the BB and CID officials against it, according to Reuters.

The global messaging system termed the allegation "false, inaccurate and misleading."

"The accusations have no basis in fact," it said in a statement on its website.

SWIFT said it was not responsible for any of the issues cited by the officials, or party to the related decisions.

"As a SWIFT user like any other, Bangladesh Bank is responsible for the security of its own systems interfacing with the SWIFT network and their related environment -- starting with basic password protection practices -- in much the same way as they are responsible for their other internal security considerations."

The comments from SWIFT came after Reuters reported quoting CID officials that the BB became more vulnerable to hackers when SWIFT technicians connected Bangladesh's first real-time gross settlement system to SWIFT messaging three months before the heist.

Shah Alam, additional deputy inspector general of the CID, told The Daily Star, "We stand by our comments."

"There is a difference between the way SWIFT had planned to work and the way it actually did. We found some loopholes."

Asked, Alam said he read the WSJ report on the FBI findings.

"The report does not say a BB employee was involved in the heist. The FBI has found insider's involvement. It is nothing new."

"We have already said we found some loopholes in the BB's IT system. One system had been isolated and it was connected. As a result, hackers got the chance to do the hacking."

Independents, rebels press for fair polls

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She was talking to The Daily Star at the EC Secretariat yesterday after filing an application with the commission seeking necessary steps to ensure a congenial atmosphere for fair polling.

"Supporters of my rival candidate are intimidating voters and planning to hire armed criminals on the voting day to occupy poll centres. I want the commission to take necessary measures to prevent any such misdeeds," she said.

Not only Parvin, demands for fair and peaceful polls are getting louder from many other candidates.

The four phases of polls, which were held in between March 22 and May 8, were marred by massive violence and irregularities. Around 84 people were killed and 6,000 injured due to violence.

Several candidates are now lobbying hard to ensure peaceful and fair voting in the next phases.

"Supporters of my rival candidates are regularly making showdown brandishing arms to intimidate voters," said Sultan Khan, an independent candidate of Bharara UP under Sadar upazila in Pabna.

"I have already talked to the district election officer and the upazila election officer and will submit a written application to the deputy commissioner requesting necessary steps for peaceful voting on June 4," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Even the ruling Awami League-nominated chairman candidates in a number of UPs are in fear of violence and irregularities.

Abul Khayer Mohammad Ali Khokon, an AL-nominated chairman candidate of Guagachiya UP under Gazaria upazila in Munshiganj, has sought additional security in polling stations fearing violence and irregularities.

Three polling stations in that UP have been dubbed as most vulnerable and might be occupied by rival candi-

dates, Khokon said in an application to the EC yesterday.

"I strongly demand deployment of magistrates and mobile teams of law enforcers round the clock at the centres," the application read.

Local sources said an influential AL leader of Munshiganj is blessing an independent candidate in Guagachiya UP that will go to polls on May 28.

Saidur Rahman, a BNP-nominated chairman aspirant of Tajpur UP under Singra upazila in Natore, has meanwhile filed an appeal with the EC demanding deployment of army during the polls.

Elections to 725 UPs were held on March 22 in the first phase, 639 UPs on March 31 in the second phase, 615 UPs on April 23 in the third phase and 703 UPs on May 8 in the fourth phase.

Besides, polls to 733 UPs are slated for May 28 in the fifth phase and 724 on June 4 in the sixth phase.

Jaishankar due today

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Dhaka will make a fresh push for working out the Teesta water-sharing deal which has remained unrealised for years.

It will also press for an integrated approach to harness the waters of common rivers by adopting a river-basin system, said sources.

Investment, transit, development of Pyra sea port, Indian Line of Credit and a host of other issues will come up for discussion, foreign ministry officials said.

"Jaishankar is expected to carry a message from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over the ongoing security situation amid the spate of killings orchestrated by the radical groups against the backdrop of Sheikh Hasina's government

crackdown on extremist organisations and war criminals," a highly placed source told The Daily Star yesterday.

During his call on the PM, the foreign secretary will formally hand over a letter of the Indian PM to Sheikh Hasina inviting her to visit India. He will also convey India's message to stand by her government on security or any other issues for the interest of India and Bangladesh.

New Delhi also wants Hasina's government to take effective measures to ensure full safety and security of religious minorities in Bangladesh.

Jaishankar's visit is also taking place soon after US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Desai Biswal visited Dhaka following the

brutal murder of a local staff of USAID Xulhaz Mannan and his friend Mahbub Tonoy.

US Deputy Secretary of State Anthony Blinken during a Congressional hearing in Washington on April 28 said the US is working with India on countering violent extremism in Bangladesh.

"Our three governments -- Bangladesh, India and the United States -- all fighting extremism. We're all on the same page here. All three of us are on the same page in that regard," said US Ambassador in Dhaka Marcia Bernicat on Monday.

India has also noted that Bangladesh has again asked Pakistan on Monday not to interfere in its internal affairs, like trial for crimes against humanity.

'A lot left to do' for Assad's forces in Syria: Putin

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday said there remained "a lot left to do" for the forces of Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad despite Russian firepower hitting over 30,000 targets in the war-torn country.

The Kremlin strongman also admitted that the Russian operation in Syria has exposed unspecified "problems" for Moscow's military that need to be probed.

"Since the start of the operation the Russian airforce has carried out over 10,000 sorties against international terrorist infrastructure in Syria and conducted a large number of strikes, with over 30,000 targets hit," Putin told a meeting of military chiefs and weapons manufacturers.

Putin insisted that Moscow's strikes against the Islamic State group and al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front had been "precise, powerful and effective" but also said "the situation there is complicated and there is

still a lot left to do for the Syrian army".

He conceded that "operation in Syria has exhibited certain problems, insufficiencies" for Moscow's military without giving any further details.

"The most thorough investigation must be carried out into every problematic issue," Putin said.

Russia has been carrying out a bombing campaign in Syria in support of Assad's forces since September but has been accused by the West of targeting moderate regime opponents and hitting civilians.

Moscow is currently spearheading a diplomatic push alongside the United States to resolve the conflict and Putin once again highlighted that Moscow is interested in a political solution to the war.

Government forces and rebels in the Syrian battleground city of Aleppo agreed Monday to extend their truce for a second time, the army said, as the US and Russia vowed to "redouble" efforts to end the five-year conflict.