

GRAFT CASE

ACC reprobing Falu's 'illegal wealth'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday started investigating again an allegation of illegally amassing wealth since 2007 by BNP leader Mosaddak Ali Falu.

An ACC high-up confirmed this, seeking anonymity.

ACC appointed its deputy director Jahangir Alam to investigate the allegation.

On July 8, 2007, ACC filed a graft case against Falu with Motijheel police on charges of illegally amassing wealth worth Tk 14.95 crore and concealing information about his property worth Tk 4.57 crore till 2007.

The case is now pending with a court.

On August 27 last year, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division scrapped a High Court verdict that had quashed the trial proceedings of the case in 2012.

Following a petition filed by Falu, the HC on January 19, 2012, quashed the trial proceedings of the case.

The court also declared that the notice issued by the anti-graft body asking Falu to submit his wealth statement was illegal as it was sent to him when he was in jail in 2007.

Turtle meat seized at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The authorities of Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday seized about 59.5kgs of flesh of turtles at the airport in Chittagong city yesterday.

During scanning, the flesh was detected inside two cartons yesterday, said airport sources.

On information, forest officials rushed and identified the flesh as of turtles, said Airport Manager Wing Commander Mohammad Reazul Kabir.

The flesh was supposed to be carried to Hong Kong by a flight, he said, adding that one Ripon Dey was detained in this connection.

The flesh was handed over to the forest officials, he further said.



These hunted marine fishes include sharks, sailfishes, and stingrays. Despite the fishermen netting them visibly indiscriminately in the Bay of Bengal for quite a long time, it looks like there is nobody to take care of the endangered species, forcing them to teeter on the verge of extinction and jeopardising the total marine ecosystem as well. The photo was taken recently at Sadarghat in the port city.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Lack of clear law endangering sea fishes in Bay of Bengal

MINHAJ UDDIN, Ctg

Conservation is now a hot topic the world over. More and more people are increasingly becoming aware that more needs to be done to protect species before we lose them from the earth.

But in Bangladesh, marine species like shark, stingray, skate and sailfish, are increasingly becoming endangered owing to indiscriminate harvesting because of a lack of clear regulation.

They are collectively referred to as elasmobranch, which is a subclass of cartilaginous fish having a skeleton made of cartilage, rather than bone.

It is these animals that play a crucial role in the marine ecosystem by containing the spread of the species below them in the food chain and serving as an indicator for ocean health. Ecologists warn that the loss of the fishes will lead to the decline in coral reefs, seagrass beds and possible of extinction of commercial fishing.

The flesh of the fishes is not so much in demand in the country as their other items.

"Only some of the indigenous

and coastal people eat their flesh," said Asutosh Das, the owner of Japani & Brothers, a shark trading shop at Fishery Ghat in the port city.

Nevertheless, they are of great commercial importance for their liver oil, which is high in vitamin content; for fins used in soups; teeth for ornaments, bones for medicine and skins for making bags.

Given their high value in the global export market, fishermen are seen catching them as by-catch indiscriminately including the juvenile ones, forcing them to teeter on the verge of extinction.

"We net the fishes of any size including the small ones, and sell them to buyers in Cox's Bazar, who process the fish items and export them," he said, adding, "Now, mostly small-sized fishes are netted as the big ones hardly ever land.

According to a 2008 study by Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, shark products export during 2008-09 was around 266-276 tonnes with a value of more than Tk 1.77 crore.

Bikram Jit Roy, a scientific officer of marine fisheries survey

and management unit at Marine Fisheries Department, said some 218 tonnes of shark fins were caught in the last one year.

The officials at Export Promotion Bureau said only \$3,008 worth of shark fins were legally exported in the last 10 months and the rest were smuggled into the neighbouring countries.

Indiscriminate harvesting apart, a paradox in the legal fabrics is, too, contributing to their possible extinction. The exiting Fish Act has no restriction on harvesting the fishes, while the Forest Act restricts it.

Furthermore, there is a dearth of detailed information on landing and harvesting of the fishes as no comprehensive survey was hitherto conducted on them, said the fisheries department officials.

"It is kind of difficult to say whether or not these fishes are being overharvested due to a lack of precise information. However, seeing the indiscriminate harvesting of the fishes in the Fishery Ghat, it looks like they are being overexploited," said Md Rashed-un-Nabi, professor of marine sciences and fisheries at Chittagong University.

"We took initiatives to conduct survey on the species several times, but to no avail owing to a lack of adequate funding and logistical support," he added.

However, pursuant to a monthly report prepared by the fisheries department, based on unloading of the fishes at two main ghats -- one in Cox's Bazar and the other in Chittagong --, a total of 33,218 sharks and stingrays, weighing around 18.64 metric tonnes, were harvested from the Bay of Bengal in August of 2015 alone.

Analysing the trend in catches between 2005 and 2010, Bikram said during the period the catching of juvenile sharks dramatically increased as the total marine catch decreased.

Nabi said overexploitation would not only cause their numbers to drastically fall, but also imperil the entire ecosystem in the bay.

So, a complete survey on the population of the species should be conducted as soon as possible, and in line with its findings, a uniform national guideline on harvesting of the fishes should be made, he stressed.

CJ stresses positive relations between judiciary, press

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Justice SK Sinha yesterday said democracy was meaningless if the freedom of speech and press was not ensured.

He said this while addressing as the chief guest the launch of new daily the "Dainik Protidin Sangbad" at Bangla Academy in the capital.

"The role of newspapers is immense in a democratic system. The genuine beauty of a democratic social system is the freedom of speech and freedom of individual. Without the freedom of newspapers, democracy is meaningless," he said.

Sinha also underscored the need for forging positive relations between the judiciary and the press.

The media has been rendering its continuous support to the judiciary by publishing time-befitting news on the judicial processes, thus playing an important role in the reforms of the judiciary, he added.

He, however, noted that some newspapers created confusions among people by publishing biased, unethical and personally motivated news items.

"On many occasions, judges and people seeking justice are embarrassed due to media trial which is uncalled for and unexpected," he said, adding, "The judiciary is not even immune to mistakes. I hope the media will do constructive and fair criticism about the activities of the judiciary..."

The newspaper's publisher Md Tajul Islam, MP, and editor Abu Sayeed Khan were also present.

Unemployed nurses now want exam postponement

March to Nasim's house today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wearing shrouds, unemployed nurses will march towards Health Minister Mohammed Nasim's residence in Dhanmondi today, demanding postponement of exams scheduled for June 3.

"We are protesting the exam as it was announced in such a short time," said Nahida Akhter, general secretary of Bangladesh Basic Graduate Nurses' Society, adding that the exam was taking place after three years since the last recruitment.

The rally will start from the Central Shaheed Minar at 9:00pm, she told The Daily Star last evening.

Yesterday the nurses, under the banners of Unemployed Diploma Nurses' Association and Bangladesh Basic Graduate Nurses' Society marched towards the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), but police barricaded it at Shabbagh, she said.

A delegation of the nurses then went to the PMO and submitted a memorandum, she added.

Nurses have been demonstrating since early April protesting a PSC circular of March 28 on recruiting 3,616 senior nurses in public hospitals.

The circular says applicants below 36 and attaining Bachelor of Science and diploma in nursing had to take an exam. However, nurses said the exam prerequisite was unjust because nurses who attained the educational qualifications a few years back and approaching the age might be left out.

On May 1, the minister assured them of considering their demands, she said.

Later, he said he will take the nurse leaders to the premier by May 24, but that deadline is also over, she added. "We have no alternatives now. We will keep demonstrating unless our demand is met," Nahida Akhter said.



Marking the 117th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, his family members place a wreath at his grave on Dhaka University Central Mosque premises yesterday. People from all walks of life paid homage to the "Rebel Poet" and celebrated the day with poetry recitals and musical programmes.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Security improves

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standards, the diplomats stressed developing professional skill and efficiency of staff for ensuring full-proof security and assured further extending technical and technological support.

Sources at the meeting lasting for over an hour said the government would soon recruit over 500 persons and provide them adequate skill and efficiency development training.

The meeting stressed hiring a large number of experienced trainers for them and underscored the need for purchasing the latest security equipment and recruiting trained operators.

Bangladesh's government assured that

an "Aviation Security" would efficiently deal with relevant issues as it was formed with adequately trained and skillful members of different security forces.

The EU and Australian envoys separately told journalists that it was a "technical and fruitful discussion".

The diplomats comprised high commissioners Alison Blake (UK), Greg Wilcock (Australia) and Benoît-Pierre Laramée (Canada), deputy chiefs of missions Davil Meal (US) and Takeshi Matsunaga (Japan), EU Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon and a senior one from the UAE embassy.

Full HC verdict

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had recently released the full verdict and therefore, the trial court could now resume the trial proceedings. Meanwhile, AM Mahub Uddin Khokon, a lawyer for Khaleda, told reporters that his client would file an appeal with the Appellate Division.

The ACC accuses the former prime minister and 15 others of causing a loss of Tk 159 crores to the state exchequer by awarding a contract for operation of Barapukuria coalmine to a Chinese company between June 2003 and June 2005, abusing power.

Traders of

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to make the daily price list after visiting markets by officials concerned. They also said some persons in wholesale markets remain behind market manipulation and requested the mayor to take actions against them. In response, the mayor said they will also hold meeting with leaders of wholesale markets to keep the price stable.

27 BNP leaders face arrest

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others are now on bail while her adviser Shawkat Mahmud and three others are in jail.

A day after the January 23 attack, Jatrabari police filed two cases against 68 BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders - one for murder and the other under the Explosives Substances Act. The cases were

later transferred to detective branch (DB) of police.

Earlier, in May last year, DB submitted two charge sheets in this connection against Khaleda and 37 others.

According to the charge sheets, the BNP chief was implicated for masterminding the attack.

Closing arguments begin June 14

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crimes against humanity committed in Maheshkhali upazila mainly between May 1 and 6 in 1971, against 19 persons, including the 14.

Of the rest, Md Rashid Miah, a former BNP lawmaker from Cox's Bazar, is on bail for ill health while Salamat Ullah Khan, Badsha Mia, Nurul Islam and Osman Gani are in jail.

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