

'MONEY LAUNDERING' ACC seeks to bar Falu from leaving country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has asked the Special Branch of Police (SB) to take steps to prevent BNP leader Mosaddak Ali Falu and eight others from leaving the country over allegations of money laundering and illegal offshore investments.

A letter signed by ACC's Director Syed Iqbal Hossain in this regard was sent to the Special Police Super (immigration) of the SB, confirmed ACC sources.

The eight others are: SAK Ekramuzzaman, director, RAK Paints, Qamar uz Zaman, director, RAK Paints, Mohammad Amir Hossain, director, RAK Paints, Ashfaque Uddin Ahmed, director, Roza Properties, Md Maqsudul Karim, director, RAK Power (Pvt) Ltd, Shaylin Zaman Akbar, director, RAK Paints Ltd, Syed AK Anwaruzzaman, director, Julphar Bangladesh Ltd, and MA Malek, director RAK Consumer Products Ltd.

"The allegations of laundering around \$8 million and investing it in offshore companies by former law-maker Mosaddak Ali Falu, in collaboration with others, and amassing wealth worth over hundreds crore in Dubai are primarily found [to be] true," reads the letter.

"It is learnt from confidential sources that the alleged persons are trying to leave the country," it says, adding that necessary steps are needed to prevent them from leaving the country.

Sources confirmed that Falu was now staying abroad.

A two-member team, comprised of Iqbal Hossain and ACC's Assistant Director Gulshan Anowar Pradhan, is investigating the matter.

UNHCR official found dead in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The body of a UNHCR official working in Cox's Bazar was recovered from Mohehshkhali upazila's Sonadia point yesterday, three days after he had gone missing.

The body of Soliman Mulata, a citizen of Ethiopia, was caught in the fishing net around 9:00am. The fishermen took the body to the shore, said Afrozul Haque Tutul, additional superintendent of Cox's Bazar police.

On information, a team of Sadar Police Station sent the body to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The police official said Soliman had been working as the protection officer at the UN refugee agency. Soliman, who had been working in Cox's Bazar for the last one year, used to stay in a hotel in the district town.

Soliman came out of the hotel to visit Rohingya refugee camps on Monday morning and since then, he had remained missing, he said.

Police were investigating the matter, the police official added.

Endangered

FROM PAGE 20

one in the wild, owing to the successful breeding programme.

There are currently 31 turtles in the park.

The park's Station Manager A G J Morshed said of those 31, 23 are male and eight are female.

He added that in the wild the turtles were critically endangered, a status also give to them by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The turtle breeding project began in 2010 with the first success coming in 2012.

Currently, three males and four females make up the breeding group.

Under the project, another extension has been set up in Koromjol area in the Sundarbans.

There are around 300 hatchings. During the breeding season, a turtle can lay up to 32 eggs. The temperature shapes their gender, with the turtles becoming reproductive after 20 years.

The males of the species can reach weights of 12 to 13 kg, while the females can reach 25 to 30 kg.

The Batagur Baska live in coastal areas of Bangladesh and India. They were hunted in large numbers for their meat, and coupled with habitat loss, their population decreased.

Centre for Advanced Research in Natural Resources and Management, an Australian wildlife group, Bangladesh forest department, Nature and life foundation jointly started projected.

Editors, Noab

FROM PAGE 20

lung complications, died at a city hospital on Wednesday evening. He was 73.

He was one of the earliest exponents of business journalism and can be termed the doyen of economic journalism in the country, the Council said in a statement.

The veteran journalist, who was one of the founding members of the Council, started his career as a reporter at the erstwhile Pakistan Observer, the now-defunct Bangladesh Observer.

He then became special correspondent of the New Nation, economics editor of UNB, executive editor of Dhaka Courier and business editor of The Daily Star.

In the message, the Council said Moazzem's crowning glory was co-founding The Financial Express and turning it to the first successful English language business daily of the country. Due to his untiring zeal and hands-on stewardship of the paper, it grew into a very credible and financially viable business daily in the country.

The examples he set inspired many young journalists to enter the specialised segment of economic journalism which has resulted in the overall development of that sector with every newspaper and television station now having a business segment in their daily coverage, it said.

Moazzem was deeply committed to the fundamental values of ethical journalism towards the growth of which he spared no effort. He was a

NGOs improve

FROM PAGE 20

TIB researchers Abu Said Mod Juel Miah, Nihar Ranjan Roy, Mostafa Kamal and Nazmul Huda Mina conducted the study.

"Out of the 48 NGOs, 32 have consulted the local community and stakeholders in assessing the needs of projects and selecting beneficiaries," said Abu Said.

Most NGOs have purchase commitments and follow specific list of vendors. Of the NGOs studied, 43 pay salaries through banks, he said.

Most of the NGOs have internal auditing arrangement and complaint redress mechanisms.

It also identified some governance challenges. For example, two of the five NGOs that pay their employees in cash have two separate registrars to pay employees less than their actual salaries.

The study found two NGOs claiming on papers that certain employees received full salaries from multiple projects, but the employees were paid from only one project.

It found at least 18 NGOs lacking any specific list of vendors, which put them at risks of corruption.

There are allegations of irregularities involving large amount of money against some NGOs.

Some high officials, especially the chief executives, took undue benefits from the NGOs by abusing power.

Relatives of high officials of some NGOs are recruited violating regula-

regular speaker in journalism faculties of different universities and training events.

The statement said a gentleman per excellence and modest to a fault, Moazzem was a man of few words but of immense knowledge of national and international developments in the world of economics. His insightful editorials and in-depth analysis of economic trends always served as a barometer of future tidings.

He will be remembered by the nation and revered by his fellow professionals as an inspiring figure in Bangladeshi journalism, it read.

Moazzem, who completed his MA in economics from Dhaka University in 1968, was the first president of Economic Reporters' Forum in 1992.

In another condolence message, Noab said Moazzem was not only a revered editor of the country's first English financial daily, but also one of the pioneers of the country's business journalism.

When journalism, like other professions, had been gripped by partisan and opportunistic attitude, he continued to do honest and independent journalism and remained above all kind of partisanship, elevating his newspaper to a high standard, Noab said in a statement.

Moazzem, who was also a Noab founding member, played an important role in running the organisation, the statement added.

Noab also extended its sympathy to his bereaved family members.

tions.

One third of the NGOs have weaknesses in consulting the local community and stakeholders while selecting beneficiaries and assessing the need of their projects. As a result, the people in need were deprived of the benefits in some cases.

Policy decision is supposed to be approved by the governing body, but in some cases the chief executive unilaterally takes decisions and implements them.

Nihar Ranjan Roy said local powerful quarters, especially a section of politicians made interventions in the NGOs. Some district and upazila administration officials illegally collect money from the NGOs during observations of national days.

A section of officials of the NGO bureau and intelligence agencies also harass the NGOs and ask for money during registration and project approval.

Some officials of the NGO bureau take undue privileges in terms of using vehicles and guest house facilities of the NGOs while they are on family tours, Nihar Ranjan said.

The study recommended establishing an online system for approving project funds, taking punitive actions against the corrupt officials of the NGO bureau and NGOs and enhancing coordination among NGOs to avoid duplication of activities and incorporating specific "governance component".

Dhaka sees no reason

FROM PGAE 20

Bangladesh Harsh Vardhan Shringla yesterday said making a list of citizens in Assam is an internal matter of India and it will not affect the country's bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Indian on Wednesday made it clear that those who have been excluded from the draft NRC in Assam can vote if they qualify under electoral laws even if the NRC is not finalised before the Lok Sabha polls next year.

"Suppose I am not in NRC but I fulfil the criteria under the Representation of People Act -- that is I am a citizen of India, 18 years of age and ordinarily resident of that area -- I can be a voter," Chief Election Commission OP Rawat explained to the media in New Delhi.

Rawat was speaking amid apprehension that those who have been dropped out of the NRC list would not be eligible to vote.

"Election Commission [EC] voter enrollment exercise is independent of NRC though they are working in synchronisation. The final electoral roll to be published on January 4, 2019, will be used for general elections," Rawat said.

Meanwhile, members of a team from Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress were yesterday allegedly stopped, beaten up and arrested at the airport in Assam's Silchar, where they were planning to campaign against NRC.

According to reports from NDTV, Hindustan Times and other media from Guwahati, the eight-member team of legislators and parliamentarians who landed at Silchar airport at around 2:00pm to attend a citizen's convention in the city protested at the arrival lounge for hours before being arrested.

Six MPs Sukhendu Sekhar Ray,

Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, Ratna De Nag, Nadimul Haque, Arpita Ghosh and Mamata Thakur and Bengal urban development minister Firhad Hakim and MLA Mahua Moitra are part of the delegation. The team claimed they were attacked by locals.

"As soon as we reached the arrival lounge of the Silchar airport, we were confronted by a team comprising the district magistrate and police officers. A police officer hit me on the chest. Cops also manhandled Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, Mamata Bala Thakur and Mahua Moitra," said Sukhendu Sekhar Ray.

Television channels played video clips of police personnel jostling with members of the Trinamool delegation.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), however, alleged that the delegation went to Silchar to "spread tension and create trouble" and that they have no business in Assam. "They are the problem. Who asked the Trinamool MPs to go there? None else has gone there ...," Dilip Ghosh, president of West Bengal's BJP unit, said.

"This is beginning of the end... They are frustrated and that's why they are showing muscle power," said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee while commenting on the incident.

Banerjee is a strong critic of the NRC. She and her party leaders have aggressively campaigned against the citizens' list, which was meant to be an exercise in identifying illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

In another development, the Assam unit of Trinamool Congress, led by its president Dwipen Pathak, quit the party en masse yesterday in protest against party supremo and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's aggressive stand on the draft NRC, according to a report of the Times of India.

Traffic chaos

FROM PAGE 20

for a job interview today. He had to get down from his bus near Uttara because of jam.

"I have been walking from Uttara to reach my uncle's house in Mohakhali," he told this correspondent near Banani intersection around 10:30am.

Abul Hossain, 70, along with his wife arrived at Kurmitola General Hospital around 5:00am for kidney dialysis. After the dialysis ended around 10:00am, the elderly couple went to the nearby bus stop. They waited there for nearly four and a half hours but did not get a bus to return home in Badda.

Later, the couple managed to board a pick-up which would go near the Airport. The couple believed they would get a bus near the airport and the vehicle would take them home.

"We have been coming to the hospital for the last three years but never faced a situation like this," Abul told The Daily Star while waiting at the bus stop.

Tapan Chandra Das, who works at a private firm in Farmgate, said he had to walk for hours to reach his office from Kanchpur Bridge area.

Many passengers were seen walking along with their luggage to and from the airport.

Sohel Rana, a man from Mymensingh who was going to board a Malaysia-bound plane, was seen entering the airport premises with a heavy bag on his head.

He told The Daily Star around 1:30pm that he walked from the Uttara House Building area.

Abdul Hossain, another man on his way to Malaysia, said he walked to the airport from Banani.

An official at the flight operations department at the airport said all flights arrived and left on schedule.

Meanwhile, many bus passengers were found waiting at Gabtoli. No long route bus left the Gabtoli terminal after 10:00am.

Bus staffers said they did not operate buses on long routes due to a dearth of passengers and road blockade by students at different places. However, night coaches might run as usual, they added.

In Chittagong, commuters in different parts of the city suffered immensely as many public transport remained off the streets. People had to walk to their destinations.

Shaheeda Begum, mother of a five-month-old baby, reached Dampara from EPZ area in four different modes of transport. Protesting students stopped the vehicles and checked their papers at different points.

"I had to walk a long way carrying my baby. However, I am in favour of this protest. I don't want my child to grow in unsafe conditions," she said.

Meanwhile, leaders of transport owners' associations in different districts have suspended operating buses.

Mymensingh District Transport Owners Association stopped running buses and trucks to Dhaka on security grounds, said Bikash Sarker, secretary of the association.

Researchers

FROM PAGE 20

The annual global average carbon dioxide concentration at the Earth's surface climbed to 405 parts per million, "the highest in the modern atmospheric measurement record and in ice core records dating back as far as 800,000 years," said the report.

"The global growth rate of CO2 has nearly quadrupled since the early 1960s."

HEAT RECORDS

The record for hottest year in modern times was set in 2016, but 2017 was not far behind, with "much-warmer-than-average conditions" across most of the world, it said.

Annual record high temperatures were observed in Argentina, Bulgaria, Spain and Uruguay, while Mexico "broke its annual record for the fourth consecutive year."

Smashing more heat records, temperatures reached 110.1 degrees Fahrenheit (43.4 Celsius) on January 27 at Puerto Madryn, Argentina, "the highest temperature ever recorded so far south anywhere in the world."

The world's highest temperature ever for May was observed on May 28 in Turbat, western Pakistan, with a high of 128.3 degrees Fahrenheit.

"The 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1998, with the four warmest years occurring since 2014," said the report.

Last year marked either the second or third hottest since the mid 1800s, depending on which data is consulted.

In another alarming milestone, 2017 was also "the warmest non-El Nino year in the instrumental record," referring to the absence of the occasional ocean warming trend that pushes temperatures higher than normal.

ABNORMAL ARCTIC

Unprecedented heat enveloped the Arctic, where land surface temperature was 2.9 degrees Fahrenheit (1.6 Celsius) above the 1981-2010 average.

Arctic temperatures were the second highest -- after 2016 -- since records began in 1900.

"Today's abnormally warm Arctic

3 ministers slam BNP

FROM PAGE 1

fifth consecutive day yesterday, demanding safe roads and justice for two college students who were killed in a road crash in the capital's Kurmitola area on Sunday.

Speaking at the inauguration of a modern bus terminal in Bhola's Charfashion upazila, Tofail criticised the BNP for "seeking to do politics with everything, including accidents, as the party didn't have any political issue".

Politics should not be linked to road accidents, he said.

The minister said the bus drivers responsible for Sunday's accident would face legal actions. "There will be no compromise over the matter.... They will face exemplary punishments."

In the capital, Obaidul Quader said the BNP was depending on quota reformists and the ongoing student movement as it didn't have the strength, courage and ability to wage a movement.

"They [BNP] have no options left. So they will now depend on the quota reform movement and student movement. They don't have the strength, courage and ability to do something on their own," he told reporters at his secretariat office.

Quader, also general secretary of the ruling Awami League, claimed the intensity of ongoing student protests has weakened.

Regarding the students' demands, the minister said all those have been addressed in the proposed Road Transport Act.

He said checking driving licence by the agitating students was nothing new as he was the first person to begin it in the country.

At a briefing at his Dhanmondi home last night, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan alleged that Chhatra Shibir and Chhatra Dal men infiltrated into the students' movement and they could lead the innocent ones to carry out criminal activities and sabotage.

"The opportunists and vested groups get involved in such a movement. We have a recorded conversation in which Chhatra Dal leaders are asking their activists to join the demonstration in school uniform," he told reporters.

The minister said a quarter was trying to instigate students by circulating some old photographs to achieve their political goals. "They have been identified and actions will be taken against them."

Asaduzzaman urged the students to return to their schools and homes as some of their demands have already been met and the others will be fulfilled.

He also urged the guardians, teachers and managing committees of educational institutions to take steps in this regard.

"Any accident or act of sabotage may occur in the current situation. So they [students] should return home. If any incident happens, our law enforcers will not take the responsibility as they are showing patience," he told reporters.

What the students have been doing is not their job, the minister said. "Let the work be done now by the authorities concerned. All the people of the country have come to know about their demands and they need not to stay [on the streets] anymore," Asaduzzaman said, adding that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the authorities concerned to meet the students' nine-point demand.

Asked whether the students would face harassment for joining the movement, the minister said, "They are our children. What will happen to them? Nothing will happen to them.... I hope the students will not face any problem at schools and colleges either."

Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed said a vested quarter was trying to redirect the students' emotion.

He said 318 vehicles were vandalised, a police sergeant was beaten up in the capital's Dhanmondi, a government office in Segun Bagicha was ransacked and a police station in Kafrul came under attack during the protest.

"We are urging the guardians to keep an eye on their children so that none can use them in carrying out any misdeed."

At a briefing at the DMP Media Centre, Additional Commissioner of DMP Monirul Islam called upon the students to return home and asked the guardians to take back their children home from the street.

Monirul, also the chief of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, asked the protestors not to pay heed to rumours spread by some vested quarters on social media.

He said those who were spreading rumours were not students. "They have been identified and will be brought to book."

SHAJAHAN WON'T STEP DOWN

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan yesterday dismissed any possibility of his resignation, saying it was a demand of BNP, not of the students.

"I haven't heard anything about this [his resignation]. The nine-point demand does not mention about my resignation either. In the demand, they asked for my apology and I have offered my apology. The demand regarding my resignation was raised by BNP, not by the students," he told reporters at the secretariat.

Shajahan, also a labour leader, urged transport workers not to create any disorder on the streets over the issue.

Govt signs

FROM PAGE 20

approved the project on November 8 last year. The Spanish firm was picked by the Bridges Division as the consultant for the project.

Once completed, about 40 lakh out of around 80 lakh working population of Dhaka city would be able to use the underground subway on four routes and there will be no traffic jam in the city, said officials.

Greenhouse gases surge

FROM PAGE 20

The annual global average carbon dioxide concentration at the Earth's surface climbed to 405 parts per million, "the highest in the modern atmospheric measurement record and in ice core records dating back as far as 800,000 years," said the report.

"The global growth rate of CO2 has nearly quadrupled since the early 1960s."

HEAT RECORDS

The record for hottest year in modern times was set in 2016, but 2017 was not far behind, with "much-warmer-than-average conditions" across most of the world, it said.

Annual record high temperatures were observed in Argentina, Bulgaria, Spain and Uruguay, while Mexico "broke its annual record for the fourth consecutive year."

Smashing more heat records, temperatures reached 110.1 degrees Fahrenheit (43.4 Celsius) on January 27 at Puerto Madryn, Argentina, "the highest temperature ever recorded so far south anywhere in the world."

The world's highest temperature ever for May was observed on May 28 in Turbat, western Pakistan, with a high of 128.3 degrees Fahrenheit.

"The 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1998, with the four warmest years occurring since 2014," said the report.

Last year marked either the second or third hottest since the mid 1800s, depending on which data is consulted.

In another alarming milestone, 2017 was also "the warmest non-El Nino year in the instrumental record," referring to the absence of the occasional ocean warming trend that pushes temperatures higher than normal.

ABNORMAL ARCTIC

Unprecedented heat enveloped the Arctic, where land surface temperature was 2.9 degrees Fahrenheit (1.6 Celsius) above the 1981-2010 average.

Arctic temperatures were the second highest -- after 2016 -- since records began in 1900.

"Today's abnormally warm Arctic

air and sea surface temperatures have not been observed in the last 2,000 years," it said.

And glaciers across the world shrank for the 38th year in a row.

"Cumulatively since 1980, this loss is equivalent to slicing 22 meters off the top of the average glacier," said the report.

In the Antarctic, sea ice extent remained below average all year, with record lows observed during the first four months.

RECORD SEA LEVEL

Global sea level reached record high in 2017 for the sixth consecutive year.

The world's average sea level is now three inches (7.7 centimeters) higher than in 1993.

"I think of the oceans like a freight train," oceanographer Gregory Johnson from NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory told reporters.

"If we were to freeze greenhouse gases at the level they are today, the oceans would continue to warm and seas would continue to rise for centuries to millennia."

EXTREME RAIN

Precipitation in 2017 "was clearly above the long-term average," said the report.

Warmer ocean temperatures has led to increasing moisture in the air, particularly in the last three years, causing more rain.

Climate change can also exacerbate extreme weather.

Some parts of the world suffered extended droughts, demonstrating that "extreme precipitation is not evenly distributed across the globe."

CORAL BLEACHING

Ocean warming over the last few years has been blamed for widespread coral bleaching, as disease spreads in this precious habitat for fish and marine life.

"The most recent global coral bleaching lasted three full years, June 2014 to May 2017, and was the longest, most widespread and almost certainly most destructive such event on record," said the report.