

Libya unity govt protests at 'untruths' in UN report

Libya's Government of National Accord has protested at what it said were "untruths" in UN envoy Ghassan Salame's latest report on the conflict in the North African country. Fayed al-Sarraj, head of the UN-recognised GNA which is based in Tripoli, summoned Salame on Wednesday "to deliver a protest note over untruths" in his report to the United Nations Security Council, it said.

Salame, in a videoconference on Monday, raised the alarm over "the increasing frequency of attacks on Mitiga", the Libyan capital's only functioning airport. "Several of these attacks have come perilously close to hitting civilian aircraft with passengers on board," he said.

Salame urged "the authorities in Tripoli to cease using the airport for military purposes and for the attacking forces to halt immediately their targeting of it".

Mitiga has closed several times over the past four months because of a battle for Tripoli between GNA forces and fighters of military strongman General Khalifa Haftar. Nearly 1,100 people have been killed since Haftar launched the offensive against the capital on April 4, according to the World Health Organization.



Women from different communities hold a banner during a protest against atrocities on women in Mumbai, India yesterday, after a teenage girl's accusations of being raped by a lawmaker have taken on national significance.

PHOTO: AFP

DIG Partha

FROM PAGE 20
into effect from the day of his arrest, said a notice of the ministry's Security Services Division (SSD).

Meanwhile, a separate SSD notice says AKM Fazlul Haque, deputy inspector general (prisons) of Chattogram division, was given additional duty as DIG (prisons) of Sylhet division on Wednesday.

Both notices are available on the official website of the SSD.

On Sunday, Anti-Corruption Commission Director Mohammad Yousuf quizzed Partha over allegations of irregularities and corruption as the then DIG (prisons) of Chattogram division. The interrogation continued at the ACC headquarters for about four hours.

Afterwards, an ACC team, accompanied by Partha, went to his Green Road residence and recovered the money.

They later detained him, and showed him arrested after the case was filed, said Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, ACC's public relations officer.

ACC Assistant Director Md Salauddin filed the case against Partha with ACC's Integrated District Office in Dhaka.

On October 26 last year, Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel arrested a jailer of Chattogram Central Jail, Sohel Rana Biswas, and recovered Tk 44 lakh in cash, documents showing fixed deposit accounts worth Tk 2.5 crore, and cheques of Tk 1.3 crore issued in favour of him, and 12 bottles of Phensedyl from his possessions.

Two cases were filed over the incident -- for money laundering and for carrying drugs.

At that time, Partha was DIG (prisons) of Chattogram division.

An investigation launched by prison authorities found that a section of Chattogram prison officials were involved in the incident. As per recommendations of the ACC, several prison guards and senior officials were transferred.

Port

FROM PAGE 20
stopped the unloading of goods from the MV Qi Xia Shan.

The vessel was then asked to leave the port jetty and was anchored at a jetty of Kafco on the bank of the Karnaphuly.

Of the three barges carrying a part of the cargo unloaded from the MV Qi Xia Shan, one is anchored at a port jetty while rest are in Banglabazar Ghat area, according to officials.

A day after the liquor was detected, the customs sent a letter to the port authorities urging them to unload the cargoes for a physical examination needed to make an inventory.

In reply, the port authorities on Monday asked the customs to unload the goods with the help of the shipping agents.

"How can we do that without the logistics?" Kundu said. The goods cannot be kept at the auction shed which is meant only for the auction-able goods.

Contacted, CPA Member (admin) Zafar Alam said the port was not related to cargoes seized by the customs and would not store them.

Meanwhile, two Chinese officials of the Bangladesh-China Power Company Limited met customs officials on Monday and admitted that they brought the liquor and some food items without mentioning those in the import documents, Kundu said.

He added that action would be taken under customs rule for bringing foreign liquor without prior announcement.

Land taken from man on remand

FROM PAGE 1
The Police Headquarters recently formed a three-member committee headed by DIG M Khurshid Hossain to investigate the allegations, said a senior official at the PHQ.

Besides, Metropolitan Magistrate Debabrata Biswas ordered a judicial inquiry after Zaher's daughter-in-law Afroza Akter Ankhi filed a case with a Dhaka court on March 14 this year.

Additional DIG Moazzam, his wife Farzana Moazzam and 18 others named, and 20 to 25 other unnamed persons were made accused in the case.

The other accused include DMP's Detective Branch Inspector Dipok Kumar Das, ex-officer-in-charge of Rugganj Police Station Moniruzzaman Monir, Demra Sub-Registrar Afsana Begum, Office Assistant of the Sub-Registrar's Office Hanif Ali Sheikh, and Executive Officer of United Commercial Bank's Nayabazar branch Sazzadur Rahman Majumder.

In the case statement, Afroza alleged that on July 10 last year Rugganj OC Monir called her father-in-law Zaher and asked him to go to the Police Headquarters along with his eldest son Abdul Matin to discuss some business and official issues. Zaher left for the PHQ with his son-in-law Taher and since then their cell phones were found switched off. "They were blindfolded and confined to a secluded place," she alleged.

The next day, on July 11, Zaher was forced to sign five documents declaring transfer of his land. The deed numbers are 8430, 8431, 8432, 8433 and 8434, the statement reads.

Four days later, some of the accused claiming themselves as DB members allegedly abducted Afroza's husband Matin from Kuril Biswa Road near Bashundhara Residential Area.

Threatening to kill Matin in "crossfire", they got four other documents signed for transfer of land in Rugganj. The deed numbers are 8573, 8574, 8576 and 8577, reads the statement.

Zaher, Matin and Taher were traceless until police showed them arrested on July 23 last year in a case filed with Shahbagh Police Station on July 16, 2018.

After a court order, they were then taken on a five-day remand beginning on July 25 last year.

ABM Siddiqur Rahman, senior general manager of Ananda Housing Society, filed the case against the three on charges of embezzling money, creating forged land documents and selling land pretending to be its owner.

DB Inspector Dipok Kumar Das, investigation officer of this case, allegedly tortured Zaher during remand.

The official also took Zaher to Scout Building at Nightingale Crossing in the capital's Paltan area on July 26 and forced him to sign two documents, said Afroza's case statement.

Zaher, a land broker by profession, had to sign another paper revoking his power of attorney for the land he had mortgaged to Nayabazar branch of UCB. He handed over the power of attorney to Additional DIG Moazzam.

Afroza also alleged that police drove out family members from their houses on August 31 last year, and filed cases one after another against them.

Zaher along with his son and son-in-law were released on bail before the last Eid-ul-Fitr and went into hiding, according to his brother Ali Hossain.

Neither Afroza nor the three victims could be reached over phone despite repeated attempts. Nobody could say where they were when one of these reporters visited their homes in Tengra of Demra and Bhaktabari in Rugganj earlier this month.

In a TV channel recently, Zaher alleged that during his remand in DB office, police tortured them severely and threatened them to kill if he does not transfer his land to Moazzam.

"They inhumanely tortured me before my son and son-in-law. They also tortured them in front of me. They referred to Ilias Ali [disappeared BNP leader] saying, 'Has he ever come back?'" he said, sobbing.

Ali Hossain said after the incident was reported in the media, police again started looking for his brother. "I have an apprehension that police might abduct and kill them. Everyone has gone into hiding in fear," he told The Daily Star.

Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general (media) at the Police Headquarters, said the housing project doesn't belong to Bangladesh Police. Some policemen may be personally involved in it.

"However, if any law has been violated in the process, we will take action after probe."

Contacted, DB Inspector Dipok Kumar said the trio were on remand but he does not know anything about the transfer of land.

Asked how come he does not know anything about the land transfer when the three were under his custody, he

said other police members might have taken them away for questioning.

Replying to another query, Dipok said as far as his knowledge goes, around 1,200 police officials are members of the housing project.

Moniruzzaman, now posted at Sonargaon Police Station, said, "It is not true that I called him [Zaher] over the phone and asked him to go to the Police Headquarters. They are annoyed at me as several cases were filed against them during my term."

This newspaper repeatedly tried to reach Additional DIG Moazzam but he did not receive any phone calls. He also did not respond to text messages.

VISIT IN DEMRA
The three buildings in Demra's Paschim Tengra have long been known to locals as the property of the family of Zaher Ali. Now, they say, the houses have been occupied by a police officer.

"We came to know that police arrested Zaher Ali and his son and grabbed the houses," said Abdul Mannan, a resident of the area.

Hadis Sikder, a former tenant of one of the buildings, said, "Eight to nine months ago, some policemen came to our house and asked us to shift elsewhere by next month. All the families left within a couple of weeks."

As this correspondent visited the house, a youth aged around 25 identified himself as the caretaker of the building but declined to disclose his name.

"Additional DIG Moazzam Sir owns the three houses," he said.

Demra Sub-Registrar Afsana Begum and Nayabazar UCB's Executive Officer Sazzadur Rahman Majumder could not be contacted.

'Main culprit' held

FROM PAGE 20
Darus Salam Police Station on October 3, 2012.

"He [Aminul] is charge-sheeted in 33 cases and the main culprit of the scam," said an ACC official.

The official said Aminul led the syndicate of frauds who embezzled Tk 18.5 crore from Sonali Bank.

On September 14, 2010, the state-run bank lodged a case with Motijheel Police Station over misappropriation of the money. The Detective Branch of police arrested Aminul in connection with the case. He was then freed on bail, he said.

The case was later sent to the ACC for further investigation.

"He told the DB that of the Tk 18.47 crore, he got Tk 4.8 crore as his share," the ACC official added.

Aminul has Tk 52.14 lakh and Tk 30.64 lakh in Begum Rokeya Sarani and Mirpur branches of Brac Bank Ltd.

On ACC's appeal, a Dhaka court froze the accounts in September 2018. It also seized his 473 decimal land worth Tk 1.17 crore in Manikganj Sadar upazila.

"After misappropriating the money from Sonali Bank, Aminul founded an NGO -- Ekush Shotoker Unnayan -- in Manikganj and invested about Tk 1.30 crore there," the ACC official said.

"He has 11 accounts with Brac Bank's Mirpur branch. We've got proof that he made transactions of over Tk 8 crore in the accounts between 2010 and 2011," the official added.

In 2012, the ACC filed 33 cases against a number of individuals over misappropriation of Tk 18.5 crore from Sonali Bank.

In 26 of the cases, Abu Salek, a businessman, was accused. But the anti-graft body identified Jaha Alam as Salek. He was arrested in 2016 and

sent to jail.

When the issue of wrongly implicating Alam surfaced in the media, the HC intervened and ordered his release. He was released from Kashimpur Central Jail-2 in Gazipur on February 4 this year.

The ACC then assigned its Director (legal wing) Abul Hasnat Md Wadud to enquire into the matter.

On July 11, the anti-graft body submitted before the court Wadud's findings, where former investigation officials of ACC are held responsible for the wrongful implication.

"It seems that the mistake of identifying Jaha Alam as Abu Salek happened because of the investigation officials," said the report.

Describing the extent of the officials' carelessness, the report said 12 ACC officials investigated the cases, but none of them visited Alam's house.

Some bank officials and introducers of Salek's bank accounts misled the investigation officials, it mentioned.

"But it is the duty of the investigation officials to unearth the truth and present it before the court. There is no scope for shifting this duty to bank officials or someone else," said the probe report.

"During my investigation, I visited Jaha Alam's house. His house is so dilapidated that anyone would doubt how the house of a person involved in misappropriation of over Tk 18 crore could be in such a dismal state?"

On July 16, the HC said they wanted to know about the actions taken against the officials of ACC and banks responsible for wrongly implicating jute mill worker Alam in corruption cases.

It fixed August 21 for further hearing and passing order on this issue.

India's ruling party

FROM PAGE 20
had been expelled by the BJP amid waves of public outrage.

Sources say the ruling party finally cut its losses feeling that the incident "was bringing a bad name to the party and damaging its reputation".

The message from Delhi apparently missed the party's UP chief, the only BJP leader to come on record on Kuldeep Sengar.

"Kuldeep Sengar remains suspended," BJP's Uttar Pradesh Chief Swatantra Dev Singh told reporters. However, in the evening, he clarified that Sengar had indeed been expelled.

"Expelling someone is not in the domain of state presidents. It is the central leadership's prerogative. In Kanpur when I said he is suspended, I had no knowledge of the centre leadership decision. As of now, Sengar is expelled," he said.

The BJP's move, described by critics as a year in coming, comes days after the Unnao rape survivor and her lawyer were critically wounded and two of her relatives were killed in a car crash on Sunday involving a speeding truck that had its number plate painted black.

The girl is still critical and on the ventilator, a hospital said yesterday in its latest update.

The girl's family has accused Sengar of plotting the crash, which is being investigated by the CBI.

The BJP was repeatedly confronted with questions about its apparent sloth in acting against the lawmaker. Sources say after the party suspended Sengar last year, it waited for "the law to take its own course".

Ultimately, the decision came from BJP chief Amit Shah and working president JP Nadda, sources say. "The onus of proving his innocence is on Sengar," they told NDTV.

The police complaint accusing Sengar of a role in the car crash reportedly led to a rethink in the party; its top leaders believed the BJP should not be seen defending a lawmaker accused of murder besides rape.

The Unnao rape case became a saga of police callousness, administrative neglect and the harassment of a young girl and her helpless family by a politician who seemed to enjoy leniency at every step. Despite sharp criticism, the ruling party acted only a year after his arrest for rape.

Bin Laden's son

FROM PAGE 20
father's side in Afghanistan before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and spent time with him in Pakistan after the US-led invasion of Afghanistan pushed much of al-Qaeda's senior leadership there, according to the Brookings Institution.

Osama bin Laden was killed by US special forces who raided his compound in Pakistan in 2011. Hamza was thought to be under house arrest in Iran at the time, and documents recovered from the compound indicated that aides had been trying to reunite him with his father.

The New York Times reported that the United States had a role in the operation that led to Hamza's death, which it said took place in the past two years. Reuters could not immediately verify those details.

Still, the US government's conclusion appears to be a recent one. In February, the State Department said it was offering a reward of up to \$1 million for information leading "to the identification or location in any country" of Hamza, calling him a key al-Qaeda leader.

Introduced by al-Qaeda's chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in an audio message in 2015, Hamza provided a younger voice for the group whose aging leaders have struggled to inspire militants around the world galvanized by Islamic State, according to analysts.

Hamza has called for acts of terrorism in Western capitals and threatened to take revenge against the United States for his father's killing, the US State Department said in 2017 when it designated him as a global terrorist.

He also threatened to target Americans abroad and urged tribal groups in Saudi Arabia to unite with Yemen's al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to fight against Saudi Arabia, it said.

In March, Saudi Arabia announced it had stripped Hamza bin Laden of his citizenship, saying the decision was made by a royal order in November 2018.

Victims

FROM PAGE 20
"It is a well-known fact that the vast majority of undocumented migrant workers in Malaysia fall into the category of irregular migrants. In fact, they usually become the victim of the scams by labour agents, often aided and abetted by corrupt officials," said Glorine Das.

Hence, denying the workers their just wages are tantamount to rubbing salt into their wound, she told The Daily Star in an email.

Some two lakh of the total eight lakh Bangladeshis working in Malaysia are estimated to be undocumented.

Ismail Sagar, a Bangladeshi working in Selangor state of Malaysia, said there were thousands of examples where undocumented workers had been denied wages.

There was no scope to file any complaints to any authority, he added.

"If the new ruling can be implemented, this will be a great help for the undocumented migrants who are often deprived of justice," he told The Daily Star by phone yesterday.

However, Ismail said undocumented migrants usually avoid going public places fearing police detention.

"If Bangladesh high commission in Malaysia helps such undocumented workers, it would be easier for them to seek justice," he also said.

US slaps sanctions on Iran FM

WASHINGTON
FROM PAGE 20
"Zarif implements the reckless agenda of Iran's supreme leader, and is the regime's primary spokesperson around the world," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

"The United States is sending a clear message to the Iranian regime that its recent behaviour is completely unacceptable."

The arch-foes have been locked in a battle of nerves since President Donald Trump withdrew the US from a landmark 2015 deal placing limits on Iran's nuclear programme and began reimposing sanctions.

The situation has worsened since the Trump administration stepped up its campaign of "maximum pressure" against Iran this year, with drones downed and tankers mysteriously attacked in Gulf waters.

But in a mixed message to Tehran,

Washington on Wednesday extended waivers for three Iranian civil nuclear projects, to avoid upsetting the other parties to the 2015 agreement -- Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

"This is a short 90-day extension," said White House national security adviser John Bolton, a champion of the hawkish policy towards Iran.

"We are watching those nuclear activities very closely, they remain under daily scrutiny," he told Fox Business.

Zarif has been at the heart of complex talks with foreign capitals over Iran's nuclear power industry, which Tehran says is peaceful, but Washington and regional allies including Israel insist is cover for a secret weapons programme.

The European Union said it regretted the US decision to impose

sanctions on Zarif.

Stressing the "the importance of maintaining diplomatic channels", it vowed to continue working with the Iranian minister.

But a senior Trump administration official said Zarif's diplomatic image -- bolstered by his fluent English, self-effacing humour and US academic background -- was false.

"The key issue is that he has had this veneer... of being the sincere and reasonable interlocutor for the regime. Our point today is that he is no such thing," the official said on condition of anonymity.

"Today President Trump decided enough was enough," the official said, accusing Zarif of functioning as "propaganda minister, not foreign minister".

Zarif shot back, tweeting that the United States was trying to silence

Iran on the international stage.

"The US' reason for designating me is that I am Iran's 'primary spokesperson around the world'! Is the truth really that painful?" he wrote.

"We know that calling for dialog & peace is an existential threat to #B-Team," he added, referring to Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others pushing a hard line on Iran.

Other Iranian officials echoed Zarif's comments.

"America is not only afraid of Iran's missiles but also of Iran talking," Abbas Ali Kadkhodayi, spokesman for Iran's law-vetting Guardian Council, said on Twitter.

"Sanctioning @JZarif means America's claim of freedom of speech is false. Sanctioning Zarif means the fall of the Statue of Liberty."