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Mighty shelter for thug brothers

Ex-Faridpur AL leader Barkat, his brother Rubel amassed Tk 2,535cr illegally, backed by Khandaker Mohtesam Babar: CID probe

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Former Faridpur Awami League leader Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat and his brother Imtiaz Hasan alias Rubel amassed Tk 2,535.11 crore beyond their known sources of income, a CID probe has found.

They did so under the shelter and with assistance of at least eight other accused in a money laundering case, including Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar, brother of former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, according to the probe by the Criminal Investigation Department.

Of the ill-gotten wealth, only Tk 9.75 crore was found in the bank accounts of Barkat, ex-general secretary of Faridpur town AL unit, and his brother Rubel, who was the president of Faridpur Press Club.

They siphoned off the rest -- over Tk 2,525 crore -- abroad, the CID mentioned in the charge sheet, submitted to a Dhaka Court yesterday, against the 10 accused in the money laundering case filed with the capital's Kafirul Police Station in June last year.

Babar, now vice-president of Faridpur district Awami League, was shown as a fugitive accused in the charge sheet.

The CID probe also found that the brothers own 5,388 bighas of land worth over Tk 392.76 crore, according to deeds.

Barkat and Rubel amassed the huge wealth since 2008 after they came

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Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury addressing a demonstration after the protesters, marching towards the Prime Minister's Office to demand the Digital Security Act be repealed, were stopped by a police barricade near hotel InterContinental Dhaka yesterday. Protests have been taking place since writer Mushtaq Ahmed died last week after being in jail for nine months under the act.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Covax brings good news

Bangladesh to get 1.09cr vaccines for free

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bangladesh will get 1.09 crore doses of the Oxford vaccine for free under the Covax facility by May.

These are part of the 6.8 crore doses the country will receive from the Covax. Officials hope that all of these will eventually be free.

Officials said the vials would arrive in several phases between March and May.

Health officials on November 25 last year said the government would be paying between \$1.62 and \$2 for each dose.

"A few days ago, Gavi informed us that the first 1.09 crore of the 6.8 crore doses will be free of cost. Hopefully, the rest will also be free," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Covax facility is a global initiative coordinated by the World

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HT Imam no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime minister's political adviser HT Imam died early today at a city hospital.



He was 82. He died around 1:15 am today at the Combined Military Hospital, prime minister's Special Secretary Biplab Barua has confirmed.

Imam was admitted

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Kishore granted bail, after 10 long months

6 days ago, his co-accused Mushtaq died in jail; prison probe finds no negligence over the writer's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cartoonist Ahmed Kishore finally secured bail yesterday after languishing in jail for 10 months in a case filed under the controversial Digital Security Act.

A High Court bench granted him bail, six days after writer Mushtaq Ahmed, another accused in the case, died while in custody. The two were prosecuted for their cartoons and writings.

The death of Mushtaq, who was denied bail six times and kept

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KHALEDA ZIA Family applies for waiver of her sentence

Says Home boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said that the decision on relaxing the bail conditions and waiving the sentence of BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia would be taken after discussion with the law ministry.

The minister made

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No amendment, DSA has to go

Demands a protest rally in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of eminent citizens yesterday demanded justice over the custodial death of writer Mushtaq Ahmed and abolition of the Digital Security Act, not any amendments to the controversial law.

They gathered in front of the Jatiya Press Club around 11:00am and held a protest rally under the banner of "Nagarik Somabesh".

"It's loud and clear... We don't want any amendments... This black law has to

be abolished for good," Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury told the rally.

He said Mushtaq gave his life to protect the citizens' freedom of speech.

The freedom fighter demanded repeal of the DSA by March 26, justice for Mushtaq and the release of all those detained under the controversial law.

The protesters, led by Dr Zafrullah in a wheelchair, started marching towards the Prime Minister's Office around 1:15pm.

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TALKS ON MODI VISIT Jaishankar arrives in Dhaka today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will arrive in Dhaka today on an official visit ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country on March 26-27 to attend the golden jubilee celebrations of Bangladesh's independence.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen is scheduled to welcome the Indian minister, who will fly from Delhi in a chartered flight, at the Bangabandhu

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ANTI-COUP DEMO IN MYANMAR Security forces kill 38 protesters

Junta tells UN it's ready to weather sanctions

AGENCIES

Thirty-eight people were killed in Myanmar yesterday as the military tried to quell protests in several towns and cities, the United Nations said, the most violent day since demonstrations against last month's military coup first broke out.

Police and soldiers opened fire with live rounds with little warning, witnesses said.

The bloodshed occurred one day after neighbouring countries had called for restraint in the aftermath of the military's overthrow of the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

"It's horrific, it's a massacre. No words

can describe the situation and our feelings," youth activist Thinzar Shunlei Yi told Reuters via a messaging app.

The dead included four children, an aid agency said. Hundreds of protesters were arrested, local media reported.

"Today it was the bloodiest day since the coup happened on the 1st of February. We had today -- only today -- 38 people died. We have now more than over 50 people died since the coup started, and many are wounded," United Nations special envoy on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, said in New York.

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

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WE MOURN



MRS. BAKHTUNNESSA CHOWDHURY

With profound grief, we inform you that Mrs. Bakhtunnessa Chowdhury, mother of **Mr. Azam J Chowdhury**, renowned industrialist and former Chairman of Prime Bank Limited and grandmother of **Mr. Tanjil Chowdhury**, Chairman of Prime Bank Limited passed away Tuesday night at Square Hospital, Dhaka (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun).

The Prime Bank Family is deeply mourning the sad demise of their revered guardian. We pray to the Almighty for the salvation of the departed soul and convey our deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

WE MOURN

Omera family is deeply saddened by the demise of **Bakhtunnessa Chowdhury**, mother of **Mr. Azam J Chowdhury**, Founder & Chairman of East Coast Group.

We all pray for her departed soul. We pray to the Almighty for the strength and perseverance to all family members to get through this difficult time of irreparable loss.

