

ACC sues ex-secy for corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against former secretary Dr Proshanto Kumar Roy for amassing about Tk 1.25 crore beyond his known source of income.

ACC's Deputy Director Mashiur Rahman filed the case with its integrated district office against Proshanto, who was also the project director of 'Ekti Bari Ekti Khamar' project.

Investigators also found that the former secretary laundered huge money in Australia through hundi.

According to the case statement, the ACC issued a notice to the accused to file a wealth statement on December 08, 2019. Proshanto, who was secretary of the Rural Development and Cooperative Division, submitted the wealth statement on February 02, 2020.

He declared having moveable and immoveable properties worth about Tk 2,78,67,540. However, ACC's investigator found the total amount of his moveable and immoveable properties worth Tk 3,99,17,356.

"He concealed wealth about Tk 1,20,49,816 in his wealth statement which is a punishable offence," reads the case statement.

In his income tax file, the former secretary declared that his total earnings were about Tk 4.75 crore and expenditures Tk 2.01 crore. His neat legal earnings were Tk 2.73 crore.

After deducting his neat legal earnings from total assets, it is found that Proshanto had about Tk 1.25 crore in additional wealth which was beyond his known source of income.

During the investigation, the ACC also found the accused deposited about Tk 13.24 crore in different accounts belonging to him and his dependents at different times in 12 branches of Sonali Bank, National Bank, Prime Bank, Meghna Bank and Bank Asia.

At different times, he withdrew about Tk 12.98 crore.

"The transactions in the accounts of a government employee and his dependents were unusual and inconsistent," reads the case statement.

The statement said Proshanto had sent a huge amount of money to his two daughters who were studying in Australia.

"It is learnt that he sent Tk 35.95 lakh to them between 2013 and 2017 by banking channel and a lot of money through hundi," it said.

The investigation agency also found that the accused sent Tk 50 lakh to his nephew illegally through hundi.



Smoke billows behind buildings from a reported fire in Khartoum, Sudan yesterday, as fighting continues between two warring generals.

PHOTO: AFP

US, India agree on defence industry co-op plan

AFP, New Delhi

The United States and India agreed a roadmap for military industrial cooperation yesterday, as New Delhi seeks to reduce its reliance on key arms supplier Russia in the face of tensions with China.

"We established an ambitious new roadmap for defence industrial cooperation, which will fast track high priority co-development and co-production projects," US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said as he wrapped up an overnight visit to New Delhi.

But analysts warned that such pledges needed to be backed up by concrete action. Moscow and New Delhi have been allies for decades, with Russia by far India's biggest arms supplier.

Now India — which has not condemned Russia for its invasion of Ukraine — is looking to diversify, both by broadening its sources of imports and ramping up domestic production.

Western countries, including the United States and France, are negotiating multi-billion-dollar contracts, and diplomats say India is placing a high priority on technology transfer as part of any deal.

The agreement will fast-track technology cooperation and co-production in areas including air combat and land mobility systems, the "undersea

domain", and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, the US Defense Department said.

The initiative "aims to change the paradigm for cooperation between US and Indian defence sectors", it said, and "could provide India access to cutting-edge technologies and support India's defence modernisation plans".

India has displaced China as the world's most populous country this year, and relations between the Asian giants have been strained since a deadly high-altitude border clash in June 2020.

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At the same time, Washington and Beijing are engaged in fierce competition on diplomatic, military, technological and economic fronts.

But India is walking a diplomatic tightrope: uniquely, it is a member of both the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which includes Russia and China, and the Quad, set up with the United States, Japan, and Australia to counter Beijing's growing assertiveness.

As well as arms, India also imports oil

from Russia, increasing its purchases since the Ukraine war began.

Analysts said they would wait to see whether the US-India roadmap was anything more than rhetoric.

Expectations that Austin would talk about transferring engine technology to India and an armed Predator drone deal had gone unfulfilled, said Indian defence analyst Rahul Bedi.

"We've heard this many times before from respective defence secretaries, as well as the Indian side," he told AFP.

"But unless something concrete emerges I remain sceptical. The right path (of India-US relations) has to be backed with firm contracts and firm assurances."

Austin, speaking to reporters after meeting his counterpart Rajnath Singh, said boosting partnerships with India came against a backdrop of "bullying and coercion" from China, as well as Russian "aggression against Ukraine".

India's defence ministry said discussions had a "particular focus on identifying ways to strengthen industrial cooperation" with Washington, including the "co-development of new technologies and co-production of existing and new systems".

Austin's visit comes ahead of a trip by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington this month.

Indian Army chief in Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande arrived in Bangladesh yesterday on a two-day visit at the invitation of his Bangladeshi counterpart Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiqul Islam to attend the Passing Out Parade at Bangladesh Military Academy, Chattogram.

His visit follows the recent visit of General SM Shafiqul Islam to India when he was invited by the Indian Army chief to attend the Passing Out Parade at Officers' Training Academy, Chennai, said a media release yesterday.



During his visit, the Indian Army chief will pay tributes to the members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces who made supreme sacrifice during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 by laying a wreath at the altar of Shikha Anirban in Dhaka Cantonment.

He will also hold discussions with the Bangladesh army chief and review defence cooperation between India and Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi man shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi man was shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Kalirhat border in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat early yesterday.

BSF took away the body of the victim, Yousuf Ali, 25, of Meserdanga village in Patgram upazila. Commander of Kalirhat BOP Camp under BGB Battalion 61 Nayek Subedar Sadekul Islam confirmed the incident.

Jagatbar Union Parishad Chairman Mostafizur Rahman Sohel told The Daily Star that 10-12 Bangladeshi cattle rustlers trespassed into India to bring cattle.

The BSF patrolling team opened fire on them when they were bringing cattle from India's Sarkarpara area.

Yousuf was shot and died on the spot, the chairman said.

A protest letter has been sent to the BSF, which also sought the body of Yousuf, said Commander Sadekul Islam.

Rohingya man killed at Kutupalong camp

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya man was shot dead by masked criminals at Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The deceased identified as Mohammad Bashir, 19, son of Rahmat Ullah, was a resident of Camp 6. Sheikh Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station, said a group of 25-30 masked criminals, carrying firearms, fired at the victim, leaving him injured.

Later, he was taken to a local hospital where the doctors declared him dead, the OC said.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

Police are trying to arrest the attackers, said OC.

Next nat'l election a challenge

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official residence Gono Bhaban. Bangladesh is likely to hold a general election in December or January.

BNP, the country's main opposition, has vowed to boycott the polls unless the government steps down in favour of a non-partisan caretaker administration to make it free and fair.

The government has rejected the demand as unconstitutional.

Hasina, also the AL president, said whenever the life of the country's people improves to some extent, some black sheep of the country speak against Bangladesh and spread lies.

Some people raise false narratives about Bangladesh before foreigners to get international donations, she said.

She said those who didn't believe in the independence of Bangladesh, committed genocide and other offences, including plundering, rape, and repression, during the Liberation War, and their generations have been carrying out propaganda against Bangladesh.

The PM said BNP has a record of vote-rigging and snatching democracy. "But we now hear [the talk of] democracy from them," she said.

"Now we have to get the lesson on democracy and voting from a party which was formed in the hands of a military dictator. Stealing votes is their habit. So, what can the people of Bangladesh learn from thieves?" she added.

The AL chief asked her party members to work and strengthen their party.

Focusing on the development of Bangladesh, Hasina said this development has been possible as her party has been in power for 14 years in a row after the 2008 general election and has maintained a stable democratic environment in the country.

"We wanted to change Bangladesh. And, today we've successfully been able to do so," she said, adding that Bangladesh has graduated into a developing country.

"Our biggest achievement is that the

poverty rate declined in the rural area. The poverty rate is high in Dhaka city but lower in the rural areas. No one could think of it in the past," she said.

PM Hasina said her government kept its pledge by providing electricity to every house. But Bangladesh is facing difficulties as commodity prices, transport costs, and the prices of gas, fuel, and coal soared globally following the Ukraine war.

She said the interest rates of foreign loans have increased, which created pressure on the country's reserve of foreign currencies. However, there is still a reserve which is enough to procure food for five months, she added.

The PM asked to boost agricultural production by not keeping any piece of land uncultivated in the country, in order to meet the local demand and also export these.

She said food prices increased throughout the world and also in Bangladesh. People are suffering from the commodity price-hike, but the goods are available (in the market) and there is no scarcity of any item.

She said Bangladesh has witnessed a good yield of rice and other crops this time as well. Everything — vegetables, fish and meat — is being produced, even though the prices have increased, she said.

The premier said her government has recently had a record biggest national budget of Tk 761,785 crore. None could give such a big budget in the past. The most important matter is that the government has been able to give such a budget during this tough time.

She said both the number of beneficiaries and the size of allowance under different social safety net programmes were increased in the budget.

Besides, the government has arranged a card system so that low-income people can purchase some essential commodities including rice, pulse and edible oil at subsidised prices to ease their suffering, she said.

Inflation hits 11-year high

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electricity, gas, fuel and fertiliser prices that transpired earlier this fiscal year.

What is more unfortunate is the government does not seem to have any plan to rein in the escalating prices.

In the proposed budget for fiscal 2023-24, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal sought record bank borrowing to fund the deficit, a large part of which would most definitely be coming from the central bank.

"What could be a worse nightmare for the common people than the inflation rising and real wage rate and employment declining?" Hussain said.

In fact, for the poor and low-income people, their reality appears to be an endless trial.

Shariul Islam, a construction worker in Dhaka's Mirpur-II, is barely

getting by these days. Construction work has declined markedly over the last five-six months because of the price spiral of rods and cement, leaving Islam gainfully employed for 10-11 days a month.

That is not enough to feed three square meals to his family of four.

The family has already left out meat and fish from their meals and switched to a completely vegetarian diet along with cutting down on portion size to the bare minimum.

"But the vegetables are also becoming dearer. I have already borrowed money from many to continue with my children's schooling. If things continue this way, I don't know how I will get by at all," he said.

Food inflation rose to 9.24 percent in May from 8.84 percent the previous month. Non-food inflation increased 24 basis points to 9.96 percent in

May.

Islam's neighbour Kohinoor Begum, who runs a roadside tea stall, is scrimping in the kitchen, too.

"We can no longer afford oil, lentils, sugar, meat and fish in our meals," she said, while wondering if the comfortable life her family had two years back would ever come back.

The elderly Wasi Ahmed in Mohammadpur is wondering the same.

"We don't feel full after meals. But even then, our expenditure is only increasing. How will we survive like this?" he told The Daily Star yesterday.

In urban areas, inflation increased to 9.97 percent last month from 9.68 percent in April.

Over in Satkhira, Tauhidul Islam, an electrician, has similar grievances.

"It's tough to run the house with the prices of everything rising like this. My income did not increase."

Inflation in rural areas stood at

9.85 percent, up from 8.92 percent in April.

Islam has switched to all economic options for sustenance, but that will not be enough.

"If the government helps us, it will bring us some relief," he said.

But that is unlikely to happen.

In the proposed budget for the incoming fiscal year, Kamal did not make any allocation to cushion the poor from the wrath of inflation.

In fact, the social safety net budget is smaller than the current fiscal year's both in proportion to the overall budget and GDP.

Even then, as much as 60 percent would be going towards those not in dire need.

In reality, just 1.01 percent of the GDP would be spent on the poor via the social safety net schemes — and not 2.52 percent, as touted by the government.

10 political leaders complicit in Tipu murder

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underworld criminals.

The DB said the accused planned the murder after failing to take control of tenders, footpaths, kitchen markets, cable TV business in Motijheel and admission to Motijheel Ideal School and College from Tipu.

Twenty-four of the accused have so far been arrested.

According to the charge sheet, some of the accused held several secret meetings at different places in Dhaka from the middle of December 2021. Fugitive top underworld criminals Zeesan Ahmed alias Monti, and Jafar Ahmed Manik alias Freedom Manik joined several of the meetings through video calls from the UAE and India respectively.

The last meeting was held at the Bird's Eye Rooftop Restaurant and Convention Hall in Purana Paltan and the final decision to kill Tipu was made.

On March 24 last year, three of the accused opened fire at Tipu's car in the capital's Shahjahanpur, leaving the AL leader and a college student,

Samia Afran Jamal Prity, dead.

Among the accused are Dhaka city (south) AL Organising Secretary Golam Ashraf Talukder, its member Maruf Ahmed Mansoor, also the ward-10 councillor of Dhaka South City Corporation, former general secretary of Motijheel Thana Chhatra League Khairul Islam, Motijheel thana Jatiya Party leader Juber Alam Khan Robin, former convener of Habibullah Bahar College Chhatra League Sohel Shahriar, expelled ward-10 Jubo League president Maruf Reza Sagar, former ward-II Jubo League president Kamruzzaman Babul, former member of ward-10 Jubo League Morshed Alam Polah, former ward-10 Swachhasebak League leader Aminul Islam Habib, ex-convener of Motijheel thana Chhatra League Arifur Rahman Sohel alias Ghatok Sohail, Arfan Ullah Imam alias Damal, Nasir Uddin Manik, Suman Sikdar Musa, Mahbubur Rahman Titu, Shamim Hossain Mollah, Mohammad Maruf Khan, Hafizul Islam, Masum Mohammad Akash, Sakendar Sikdar, Istiaque Ahmed Zitu, Imrun Hossain,

Rakibur Rahman, Toufiq Hasan Babu, Rifat Hossain, Nasir Uddin alias Killer Nasir, Omar Faruk, Abu Saleh Sikdar alias Shooter Sikdar, Moshir Rahman Ikram, Yeasir Arafat Saikot, Rana Mollah, Shamsul Haider Uzzal, Excel Sohel, Zeesan Ahmed alias Monti, and Jafar Ahmed Manik alias Freedom Manik.

Though the investigation officer of the case, Mohammad Yasin Sikder, also a DB inspector, found 34 people involved in the murder, he submitted the charge sheet against 33 accused as the identity of Excel Sohel could not be confirmed.

Tipu's wife Farhana Islam Doly, the complainant of the case, said she was satisfied with the charge sheet as it named those involved in the murder.

She, however, requested the law enforcers to arrest the fugitive accused.

"My life will be at risk if they are not arrested," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Farhana, also the woman councillor in the reserved seat for wards-1, 11, 12, said she already lodged

six general diaries with the police following threats by unidentified callers.

She demanded expulsion of the accused who are holding posts in different organisations.

DB Chief Mohammad Harun Or Rashid said they filed the charge sheet against those found involved in the murder regardless of their political affiliations.

The charge sheet said Suman Sikder Musa, who was flown back home from Oman by the DB several months after the killing, was the main coordinator of the murder. He contacted Shamim Hossain who later selected his longtime friend Masum Mohammad Akash for the mission and assured him of accompanying him during the gun attack.

Musa, an accused in the Bocha Babu murder case, became annoyed with Tipu as he was assisting Babu's father for quick disposal of the case, the charge sheet added.

Musa, Shooter Akash and Nasir Uddin Manik made confessional statements before magistrates.