

FARMERS BANK SCAM

Chisty, son  
jailed for  
12 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Farmers Bank’s former audit committee chairman Mahbubul Haque Chisty, alias Babul Chisty, and his son Rashedul Haque Chisty to 12 years’ rigorous imprisonment in a case filed over laundering Tk 160 crore from the bank.

Babul Chisty’s wife, Ruzy Chisty, and Farmers Bank’s former first vice-president Masudur Rahman Khan, were also sentenced to five years’ rigorous imprisonment in the same case.

Judge Syed Arafat Hossain of the Special Judge’s Court-4 of Dhaka handed down the sentence.

The court fined Babul, Rashedul, and Ruzy a total of Tk 319 crore. In case of failure to pay the fine, Babul and Rashedul will have to serve two more years in jail, while Ruzy will have to serve one more year in jail.

Masudur Rahman was fined Tk 10 lakh, in default of which he will have to serve an additional year in jail. During today’s judgment, Babul Chisty and Rashedul Chisty were present at the court, while Ruzy Chisty and Masudur Rahman were declared “fugitives” after their time petitions were dismissed.

The punishment of Ruzy Chisty and Masudur Rahman will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, said the judge in his judgment.

The judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges brought against the convicts “undoubtedly,” and they were given punishment for committing such offences.

The judge also observed that Babul and all of his family members were involved in laundering money from the Farmer’s Bank, and they deserve such punishment for the offences.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



MH Chisty



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Construction of this ramp of the flyover at Gazipur’s Chandona Chowrasta is nearing completion. The structure, which will be opened to traffic soon, will help ease congestion on this part of the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway. The photo was taken recently.

‘Stop the madness’ of climate change

UN chief urges world as he visits Nepal’s Himalayan regions

AFP, Kathmandu

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday urged the world to “stop the madness” of climate change as he visited Himalayan regions struggling from rapidly melting glaciers to witness the devastating impact of the phenomenon.

“The rooftops of the world are caving in,” Guterres said on a visit to the Everest region in mountainous Nepal, adding that the country had lost nearly a third of its ice in just over three decades.

“Glaciers are icy reservoirs — the ones here in the Himalayas supply fresh water to well over a billion people,” he said. “When

they shrink, so do river flows.”

Nepal’s glaciers melted 65 percent faster in the last decade than in the previous one, said Guterres, who is on a four-day visit to Nepal.

Glaciers in the wider Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges are a crucial water source for around 240 million people in the mountainous regions, as well as for another 1.65 billion people in the South Asian and Southeast Asian river valleys below.

The glaciers feed 10 of the world’s most important river



systems, including the Ganges, Indus, Yellow, Mekong and Irrawaddy, and directly or indirectly supply billions of people with food, energy, clean air and income.

Scientists say they are melting

faster than ever before due

to climate change, exposing

communities to unpredictable

and costly disasters.

“I am here today to cry

out from the rooftop of the

world: stop the madness”,

Guterres said, speaking from

Syangboche village, with the

icy peak of the world’s highest mountain Everest towering behind him.

“The glaciers are retreating, but we cannot. We must end the fossil fuel age,” he said.

The world has warned an average of nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius since the mid-1800s, unleashing a cascade of extreme weather, including more intense heatwaves, more severe droughts and storms made more ferocious by rising seas.

Hardest hit are the most vulnerable people and the world’s poorest countries, which have done little to contribute to the fossil fuel emissions that drive up temperatures.

Blockade begins amid fear of confrontation

FROM PAGE 1

BNP leader said.

Some educational institutions in the capital have already announced an unofficial closure. Some other institutions have informed guardians that classes will be held online.

Many institutions, however, said they will remain open.

“My son’s school has already asked us not to send the kids. But I have to go to work. I am worried about my safety as I have grim memories of the blockade in 2015,” said Moinuddin Ahmed, a resident of Mohammadpur.

According to The Daily Star’s count, at least 95 people were killed and about 1,500 injured during 91 days of blockade — from January 5 to April 5 — in 2015 enforced by the BNP-led coalition protesting the January 5, 2014, national elections. Another 45 suspected arsonists and opposition activists were killed in “shootouts” with law enforcers at that time.

BNP did not enforce any blockade after 2015.

This time, the party plans to cut off Dhaka from the rest of the country, blocking the highways at different points of the country. Apart from the capital, BNP men will also try to isolate districts from upazilas, party insiders said.

“Our party leaders and activists will take positions at some important points,” Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of the party, told The

Daily Star yesterday.

Party sources said grassroots leaders have been given necessary instructions to make the blockade successful.

AL leaders said they will resist any violence by BNP.

The ruling party believes BNP will focus its attention on the capital. So, AL activists will remain alert in the city.

AL has directed its leaders and activists to take positions at unit offices across the country after Fair prayer as they think BNP-Jamaat men will try to create unwanted situations from early morning to create panic.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader gave the directives at a joint meeting at the party headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue.

The city unit leaders were asked to mobilise at bus terminals in the capital to boost the morale of the transport workers, said party sources.

Besides, city unit AL activists have been directed to be onboard the buses plying city roads to dispel fear among passengers and transport workers, they added.

The AL men were asked to remain alert and not to initiate any attacks. They were directed to respond fittingly if they come under attacks. The party will also hold “peace rallies” across the country.

Yesterday, a large number of people rushed out of their homes to

get important tasks done before the blockade takes effect, creating massive tailbacks in many parts of the city.

Transport association leaders asked all transport workers and owners to continue operation.

They made the decision at a joint meeting with different transport associations yesterday. AL lawmaker Shajahan Khan, president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, was in the chair.

A top leader of the association said they already sought police protection to continue their operation.

“We think the blockade called by BNP and Jamaat may prolong. So, we are going to hold meetings with the police and administration within a day or two so that we can continue to operate,” the leader said, wishing not be named.

Bangladesh Railway directed all loco masters and their assistants to wear helmets during operations.

Police officials said there might be some ambush and disruptive activities during the blockade.

“We have already instructed highway, rail, and river police to remain vigilant so that no one can carry out any ambush,” said Md Anwar Hossain, deputy inspector general (operation) of the police headquarters.

“We are ready to face any untoward situations and have taken all necessary measures to ensure public safety,” he told The Daily Star.

Top cops for sending ballots day

FROM PAGE 1

Briefing reporters after the meeting, EC Secretary Jahangir Alam said they were yet to make any final decision on sending ballots to the polling centres.

“There is still adequate time before the election. There will be more meetings. The decision will be made based on the law and order situation at that time,” he added.

Jahangir said the law enforcement officials informed the EC that there were no big obstacles to arranging the 12th Jatiya Sangsad election and that they remain alert so that law and order does not deteriorate during the BNP’s political programmes.

He said the current law and order situation is “conductive” to announcing the polls schedule.

The secretary of the Public Security Division of the home ministry, a representative of the Armed Forces Division, and the chiefs of the police, Rab, BGB, Ansar, Coast Guard, DGFI, NSI, and police’s Special Branch were present at the meeting organised as part of the election preparations.

Earlier, several district deputy commissioners and superintendents

of police in EC training sessions said if the ballots were sent on the polling day, there would be a shortage of staffers.

Until the last general election in 2018, ballots were sent the day before the voting. The matter became contentious after that election, with opposition political parties alleging that stuffing of ballot boxes took place the night before the voting day.

The Jatiya Oikyafront in January 2019 had told the EC that between 30 and 60 percent of the ballots were stamped the night before the voting.

On January 15, 2019, Transparency International Bangladesh in a study titled “Review of Election Process of 11th National Election” found that stamping of ballots took place in more than one centre in 33 constituencies out of 50 surveyed.

Speaking to The Daily Star, EC officials said there would be no logistical problems for them and law enforcers in sending ballots on the voting day.

They said election officials can use Border Guard Bangladesh and Rab to

send ballots on the polling day. These forces would be divided in two or three groups and they would be able to reach the polling centres before the voting opens.

According to EC officials, the election officials can create a cluster of polling centres for each union. The officials would send the ballot papers in the morning and the winter fog would not be an issue.

Former election commissioner Brig Gen (ret’d) M Sakhawat Hossain said ahead of the 2014 and 2018 parliamentary polls, he had suggested sending ballots on polling day.

“Vehicles can now reach all polling centres. So, sending ballots in the morning will not be a problem for the election officials.

“If the ballots are sent to the polling stations on voting day, it will help the EC avoid any controversy over stamping of ballots the night before the election day,” he told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the EC will hold another meeting tomorrow with high officials, including those from Bangladesh Bank and different ministries and divisions.

Two killed as violence erupts

FROM PAGE 1

He had countless pellet injuries on the right side of the chest, Sufian said.

Khandaker Mukhlesur Rahman Apu, commercial manager at the factory where Rasel worked, said, “Workers of several garment factories of the area were agitating for a hike in minimum wage so we closed our factory for the day and let the workers go. Rasel was going home when he was hit with pellets in his right arm. The police then caught him and shot him in the chest. He kept saying that he was not a protester and that he was a staffer of the factory, but they did not listen.”

Agitating workers blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Tangail highways at different points in Gazipur.

They torched a pickup truck that was being used by the police near the Bhogra Bypass, which closed the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway to traffic for two hours.

Mosharrar Hossain, additional superintendent of industrial police in Gazipur, said the workers’ protest began around 10:00am and they resorted to vandalism at places.

Police responded with teargas shells, rubber bullets, and spraying water from cannons, he said, adding that he did not know how Rasel died.

A platform of nine workers’ rights bodies called “Mojuri Briddhite Garment Shramik Andolon” issued a statement decrying the killing of Rasel.

“Under such circumstances, it is

in no way logical for the police to use rubber bullets on workers,” said the statement.

In Ashulia, Nazrul Islam, 35, an employee of Envoy Fashion in Jamgara, was hit in the head with rubber bullets when he was crossing a road, said his coworker Md Hashem.

He said their factory was closed in the morning as workers of nearby factories were demonstrating.

“While crossing the road, Nazrul was hit in the head by the police’s rubber bullets,” he said.

Bachchu Mia said Nazrul was in critical condition at DMCH.

The clashes between RMG workers and law enforcers left 30 people, including two police personnel, injured in Ashulia industrial area yesterday.

Locals said around 7:30am, thousands of workers began demonstrating in Jamgara area, blocking the Tongi-Ashulia-EPZ road.

When the industrial police showed up to drive the workers away, they were pelted with brick chunks and the police responded with teargas canisters, rubber bullets, and water cannons, claimed witnesses.

The clash continued until 1:30pm. A total of 25 injured were treated at Ashulia Women and Children Hospital. Five had rubber bullet injuries.

Several workers told The Daily Star that they were demonstrating peacefully, but the industrial police swooped on them.

Sarwar Alam, superintendent of

Ashulia Industrial Police-1, claimed that they did not use rubber bullets.

When the police attempted to remove the roadblocks, the workers threw brick chunks at law enforcers. A chase and counter-chase ensued between the workers and police personnel, he said.

Several workers also said a number of youths wielding cleavers beat up protesting workers at Padmar Mor when the workers took to the streets.

Mahmud Naser Johnny, additional superintendent of Ashulia Industrial Police-1 who was at Padmar Mor, told this newspaper that the workers of Dird Group factory, which is closed, gathered in front of the factory demanding arrears and vandalised nearby factories.

Dird Washing Ltd laid off around 300 workers on October 21.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Monnujan Sufian yesterday said the labour unrest was due to a section spreading confusing information regarding the minimum wage for garment workers.

Some now believe that the minimum wage has been set at Tk 10,400, but the fact is it is just the factory owners’ proposal, she said.

At a press conference at the Secretariat, she said the wage board, set up to fix the wages, has time until November 30 to announce the minimum salary.

The workers will get their salaries under the new pay structure from January, Sufian said.

Tigers look

FROM PAGE 1

Burdened by the constant shuffling in the order, Bangladesh’s batters failed to leave any mark in the apex tournament — even Mahmudullah Riyad’s century, the lone ton by a Bangladeshi this edition, came during a 149-run thumping at the hands of a high-flying South Africa.

It won’t be a surprise if the Tigers’ think tank makes a few changes for today’s clash. With no options left in the opening slot, young Tanzid Hasan Tamim is expected to get one more opportunity to provide a flying start alongside Liton Das and provide the platform for the remaining batters.

Skipper Shakib is also due to deliver with the bat in this World Cup. Shakib’s trip to Dhaka in order to practise with his childhood mentor Nazmul Adedeen Fahim midway through the tournament in India only added to criticisms from all quarters, and the champion all-rounder is yet to show a reflection of his work.

Shakib had an injury scare during batting practise yesterday as he left the nets, complaining of neck pain. However, he returned to training after having received treatment and with straps wrapped around his neck.

Govt committed  
to free, fair nat’l  
polls: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated yesterday that her government is committed to holding a free and fair national election.

The prime minister made the statement while a group of incumbent and former election commissioners from India, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Nepal called on her at her Sangsad Bhaban office.

They are the former chief election commissioner of India, Dr SY Quraishi, Chairman of the Election Commission of the Maldives, Fuwad Thowfeek, Chairman of the Election Commission of Sri Lanka, RMAL Rathnayake, Election Commissioner of Nepal, Sagun Shumsher JB Rana, and former election commissioner of Nepal Ila Sharma.

They are visiting Bangladesh at the invitation of the Election Monitoring Forum (EMF), a election watchdog consisting of incumbent and former election commissioners from neighbouring countries, PM’s Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told reporters after the meeting.

The prime minister mentioned that the Election Commission of Bangladesh has been constituted under a law passed by parliament.

“Besides, the government has given absolute budgetary independence to the EC,” she said.

The prime minister said female candidates, alongside males, can contest in the 300 seats of Jatiya Sangsad, while there are also 50 seats reserved for women proportionally from the political parties representing in the parliament.

Hasina also said the EC has already set examples of smoothly conducting elections, including parliamentary by polls and local government elections.

Referring to the 2018 general election, Hasina said that the BNP participated by nominating 700 candidates in 300 seats while changing their candidates time and again.

“The BNP even withdrew their candidates from the polls on the day of voting to make the election controversial,” she said.

During the meeting, the delegation members said they discussed the issue of the next general election in Bangladesh with the Election Commission.

“The EC of Bangladesh is very confident in holding it in a free and fair manner,” former Chief Election Commissioner of India Dr SY Quraishi said.

He said that the Indian Election Commission takes over the administrative power of the government during the election period.