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ARREST WARRANT FOR BERA MAYOR

He was in plain sight for 33 months

Court now recalls the order

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI, AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU and MAHMUDUL HASAN

Police did not arrest Pabna's Bera municipality mayor SM Asif Shams for over two and a half years, even though he had an arrest warrant against him for his company's failure to pay Tk 191.63 crore it owed the state.

All the while, Asif, also the son of Deputy Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Md Shamsul Haque Tuku, continued his mayoral activities in public and even took part in campaigns of others running for local government offices.

Yesterday, the General Certificate Officer's Court of Dhaka recalled the arrest warrant issued against Asif, also the president of Bera upazila Awami League, after he showed up in court and submitted some documents.

On May 23, 2022, a copy of the arrest

warrant was sent to the officer-in-charge of Bera Model Police Station.

Md Rashidul Islam, OC of Bera Model Police Station, told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "After joining this station [on December 9, 2023], I learnt about the arrest warrant against him and informed my senior officials. Then I verbally told him to pay the government dues.

"His father is the incumbent lawmaker and the deputy speaker in parliament.... How do I dare to arrest him?"

In January 2014, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) filed the case against the International Gateway (IGW) operator Vision Tel Ltd chairman Asif; managing

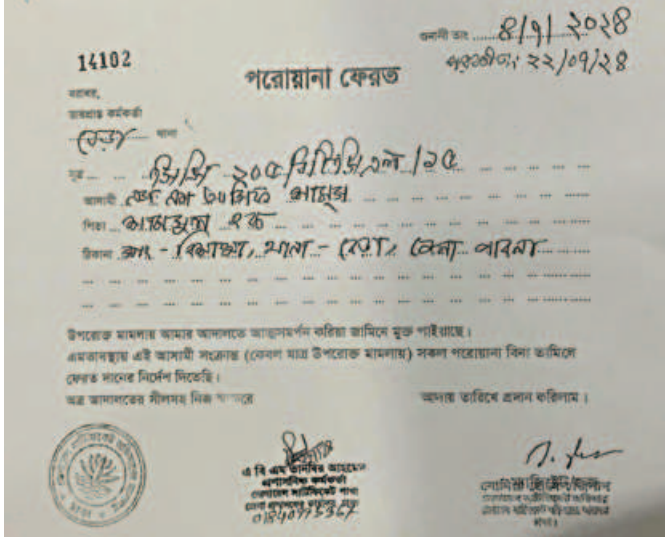
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"His father is the incumbent lawmaker and the deputy speaker in parliament.... How do I dare to arrest him?"

Bera Police Station OC



The arrest warrant, left, for SM Asif Shams issued in 2021, which was never executed by the police. The recall order of the arrest warrant, right, issued by a Dhaka court yesterday. Right bottom, Asif Shams, left in white panjabi, and his father Shamsul Haque Tuku, in Mujib coat at a tree plantation programme in Pabna's Bera upazila on June 28, 2024.



IMAGES/PHOTO: STAR/SOCIAL MEDIA

Court orders confiscation of customs official's assets

He 'amassed' wealth of Tk 10cr illegally; 4 flats, land of Matiur, his family to be confiscated

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all immovable properties of Mohammad Enamul Hoque, commissioner of the Commissionerate of Customs Valuation and Internal Audit, in a case filed over acquiring illegal wealth worth around Tk 10 crore.

The properties are 11 flats in Kakrail, Mohammadpur, and Gulshan areas of the capital, five kathas of land in Gazipur, and eight kathas in Dhaka's Badda.

Judge Mohammed Ash Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Farzana Yasmin, also investigation officer of the case, appealed for this, Anti-Corruption Commission Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, who moved the application, told The Daily Star.

On July 31 last year, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam in Dhaka filed

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Enamul

UK GENERAL ELECTION Labour landslide expected as millions vote



Britain's Labour Party leader Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria Starmer arrive at a polling station to cast their votes during the general election in London, Britain, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, London

Millions of Britons voted yesterday in a general election that polls predict will hand the opposition Labour party a landslide win and end nearly a decade-and-a-half of Conservative rule.

The first national ballot since Boris Johnson won the Tories a decisive victory in 2019 follows Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's surprise call to hold an election six months earlier than required.

His gamble looks set to backfire spectacularly, with polls throughout the six-week campaign -- and for the last two years -- pointing to a heavy defeat for his right-wing party.

That would almost certainly put Labour leader Keir Starmer, 61, in Downing Street, as leader of the largest party in parliament.

Centre-left Labour is projected to win its first general election since 2005 by historic proportions, with a flurry of election-eve polls all

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PENSION SCHEME Univ teachers carry on strike as meeting with Quader cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association yesterday said it is hopeful of having a meeting with government representatives regarding their demand for reinstating teachers' pension scheme.

A scheduled meeting between the federation and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader was cancelled yesterday, said Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of the FBUTA.

He said, "Minister Obaidul Quader told us that he has to sit with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss some other issues. As a result, he has decided not to hold the meeting with the teachers today [Thursday]."

Prof Nizamul said, "We are still hopeful of a meeting with the government. At the same time, we will continue our protest."

The teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) continued their strike for the fourth straight day.

Teachers of other public universities, including Buet, Rajshahi university, Ruet, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Barisal University, Begum Rokeya University, and Hajee Mohammad Danesh University also observed the strike.

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Hezbollah rains rockets on Israel

UN chief warns of wider ME conflict as Israel retaliates with strikes; gun battles rock Gaza

AGENCIES

Lebanon's Hezbollah said it launched more than 200 rockets and explosive drones at Israeli military positions yesterday as tensions have soared amid the almost nine-months-old offensive raging in Gaza.

The Iran-backed group said its latest attack, which followed the launch of over 100 rockets the previous day, came in response to Israel's killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in south Lebanon.

Israel did not report any deaths in its northern border area, where most communities have been evacuated, but quickly said it had responded with strikes on targets in southern Lebanon.

Israel and Hezbollah, an ally of Palestinian group Hamas, have exchanged near daily cross-border fire since the Gaza offensive began on October 7, stoking fears the clashes could escalate into all-out war.

UN chief Antonio Guterres is "very worried about the escalation of the exchange of fire", his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said, warning of the risk to the wider Middle East "if we were to find ourselves in a full-fledged conflict".

The Gaza offensive at the heart of the regional tensions has meanwhile raged on, and gun battles, air strikes and artillery shelling rocked Gaza City for an eighth day yesterday.

Gaza's civil defence agency said at least five people were killed in a strike that hit a Gaza City school, reports AFP.

Fears of renewed heavy fighting have also surged in Gaza's southern

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Witnesses report heavy shelling in western Rafah

Israel weighs Hamas response to truce proposal

Gaza death toll now 38,011

Messi, Ronaldo and plenty more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Football fans in Bangladesh will wake up bright and early today and stay up way past their usual bedtime, enjoying three mouthwatering knockout matches across two continents in a dream weekend of international football.



Football-loving officegoers and students, who usually get a few extra hours of sleep on Friday mornings, will set their alarms earlier than they do on weekdays, gluing themselves in front of a screen, preferably with a hot beverage in hand, to catch Lionel Messi's Argentina take the field in their Copa America quarterfinal clash against Ecuador.

The match, taking place at the NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas, will start at 7:00 am Bangladesh time.

However, this sacrifice of sleep could go in vain for Messi fans, as there is uncertainty whether the Argentine maestro will turn up on the field.

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LIFE IN THE CITY

A troop of rhesus macaques on the hunt for some food in a residential area in the capital's Gulshan-2. Rhesus monkeys account for a large portion of the country's urban wildlife. Even in metropolitans like Chattogram or Dhaka city, they can be spotted in certain areas, roaming comfortably among humans. Their adaptability to human-dominated landscapes has earned them the title of "commensal primates". However, more often than not, this hunt for food in urban spaces has proven to be not beneficial for them as their desperation can lead them to raid or snatch, which can put them in the face of the wrath of humans. Rhesus macaques, though hardy and adaptable, are often persecuted as "menaces" and can become victims of violent abuse. Some good Samaritans though always find some bread to hand out to the primates in need.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Fun trip turns fatal for 5 friends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least five people were killed as a car hit a roadside tree in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila last night.

The deceased were Jihad, Bijoy, Shishir, Sifat and Shaon. The injured are Shahid and Nayeem.



Residents of Azampur village of the upazila, all the deceased and injured were friends and aged between 20 and 22.

The accident took place at the Pabna Sugar Mill area on the Pabna Rajshahi highway around 9:30pm, Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Police said Nayeem came to work as a drive of a ride-sharing service in Dhaka.

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