

GULSHAN-2 FLAT ACC approves charge sheet against Tulip

BSS, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission approved a charge sheet against British lawmaker Tulip Siddiq in a case alleging she unlawfully obtained a flat from Eastern Housing Limited in Gulshan-2 in exchange for undue benefits.



ACC Director General Md Akhter Hossain said Tulip's name had appeared in the note sheet of the flat owners' list submitted to the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk).

The ACC filed the case on April 15 this year against Tulip and former Rajuk officials Shah Khasruzzaman and Sardar Mosharraf Hossain.

In July, Khasruzzaman secured a High Court order staying the investigation against him for three months.

When the ACC sought to vacate the stay through the Supreme Court's Chamber Judge, it received a "no order" ruling. With no further legal avenue over the past five months, the ACC dropped Khasruzzaman from the case and completed the investigation against Tulip and Mosharraf, Akhter said.



Displaced people arrive at a temporary camp in Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province yesterday amid clashes along the Cambodia-Thailand border.

PHOTO: AFP

Students led by Ducs leader harass pro-AL DU teachers on campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least three teachers of Dhaka University, who belong to pro-Awami League teachers' panel "Neel Dal", were harassed and assaulted yesterday allegedly by a group of students led by a Ducs leader.

The incident occurred around 1:30pm on the campus after the three teachers submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor's office, demanding that the teachers barred from taking classes be allowed to give lessons.

A video clip circulating on social media shows AB Zubair, social welfare secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Union, grabbing Prof Abul Kashem Mohammad Jamal Uddin, convener of "Neel Dal", on the Faculty of Social Sciences building. Prof Jamal is seen trying to escape, and Zubair is seen chasing him and attempting to prevent him from leaving in a car.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Jamal said, "We submitted a seven-point memorandum to the VC's office, including the demand for reinstating the teachers barred from taking classes. Afterwards, while having tea at the teachers' lounge, a group of students entered, called us accomplices of fascists, and said they would not let us leave."

He added that his sweater was pulled off during the scuffle.

He alleged that his bag, containing cheque books, bank cards, and journals, was taken away.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Election on February 12

FROM PAGE 1

Although national polls are normally held every five years, this election is taking place just two years after the last one in January 2024, as the Sheikh Hasina government was ousted in August last year.

KEY DATES

According to the timeline released yesterday, nomination papers must be filed by December 29.

Returning officers will scrutinise these between December 30 and January 4, with January 11 set as the final day for appeals.

The EC will dispose of these appeals between January 12 and 18.

January 20 is the last date for withdrawing candidature, and the final list of candidates will be published on January 21.

Symbols will be allocated the next day, marking the start of the campaign period, which will continue until 7:30am on February 10.

'NO NEGLIGENCE WILL BE TOLERATED'

CEC Nasir warned that "no negligence will be tolerated" as the country heads toward what he called a "unique and significant" twin election in the nation's political history.

He said the moment demands a renewed culture of "cordial democratic competition" among political parties, one rooted in the nation's larger interest rather than partisan divides.

But the campaign season is unfolding with misleading information being spread widely on social media. In particular, the use of artificial intelligence to generate falsehood and political propaganda is "increasing day by day".

"Necessary measures will be taken under the country's existing laws to prevent this," he said, reminding the public that the sharing of false information is itself a punishable offence.

The CEC urged everyone involved in the election process to carry out their responsibilities with "transparency,

impartiality, and firmness".

"No laxity or negligence will be tolerated in this regard," he warned.

"Election is the only path to establish representative ownership by the people," he said. "Sadly, the absence of quality elections has often dimmed our traditions and collective expectations."

ELECTORAL CODE TAKES EFFECT

The electoral code of conduct came

WHAT'S NEW

The EC last night issued a gazette appointing 69 returning officers for 300 constituencies. They include two divisional commissioners, 64 deputy commissioners, and for the first time in history, three EC officials.

This election will introduce several other new features.

Polling will run from 7:30am to 4:30pm, an hour longer, as voters will cast both election and referendum ballots.

The referendum ballot will be pink, the national election ballot will be black and white.

Both will be dropped into a single ballot box.

Additional secret booths will be set up to allow more voters to cast their ballots at a time.

Constituencies with only one candidate will include a "no vote" option.

For the first time, campaign posters are banned nationwide to reduce environmental damage.

The EC has launched an online postal-ballot registration system for expatriates, with around 2,97,000 having registered by yesterday evening.

Their ballots, containing only party and independent symbols rather than candidate names, must reach returning officers before the close of polls.

All candidates, or their proposer or seconder, must now submit nomination papers in person.

All polling materials, including ballots, will reach centres the day before voting.

The Election Commission has already published the final voter list, completed the delimitation of 300 constituencies, registered two new political parties, and updated the electoral code.

It has finalised preparations for 42,761 polling centres and 2,44,739 booths for around 12.76 crore voters.

Several lakh officials -- presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, and polling officers -- are being appointed and trained.



Rise above fear, temptation, deception, and limitations, and exercise your right to vote without hesitation.
CEC AMM Nasir Uddin

into effect immediately after the announcement.

The EC has asked the public administration ministry to deploy two executive magistrates to each upazila to enforce it until two days after voting.

Parties and candidates must remove posters, placards, banners, and billboards from public spaces within 48 hours from the announcement of the schedule.

According to the electoral code of conduct, advisers and senior officials will be barred from using government facilities for campaigns. The government will also not be allowed to approve or inaugurate development projects that may influence voters.

Kurigram bank, treasury raided to fund war

FROM PAGE 1

Officer (SDO) Mamunur Rashid to consider organised raids on banks and treasuries to support the war effort.

A plan was soon made to break into the National Bank vault in Kurigram on April 16.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Akhtaruzzaman Mondol said that, following Captain Nawazesh's suggestion, SDO Mamunur met with members of the local Sangram Committee.

They later consulted EPR officers Subedar Arab Ali and Subedar Borhan Uddin and Bhurungamari Thana Magistrate Ziauddin Ahmed, who all agreed to participate.

After Juma prayers, freedom fighters broke into the bank while 20 EPR members stood guard. "We brought shovels and broke a hole in the wall, then threw a grenade inside," Akhtaruzzaman said.

"I entered and opened the door. When others came in, we broke the vault and began filling bundles of cash into wooden boxes and sacks."

The team recovered Tk 1,60,60,000."

He also said that two EPR trucks and a jeep transported the money, with EPR guards providing security. The freedom fighters had earlier informed the Indian authorities and the BSF that they might cross the border, but they had not disclosed the scale of the operation.

According to Muktiuddher Ithashar Khoje Kurigram, After crossing, they took the cash to the State Bank of India's Cooch Behar branch. Central approval for the deposit came within two days. Of the recovered amount, Tk 60,000 was kept at Bhurungamari for immediate wartime needs, and the rest was deposited in bank accounts.

The Kurigram Treasury was raided on April 18.

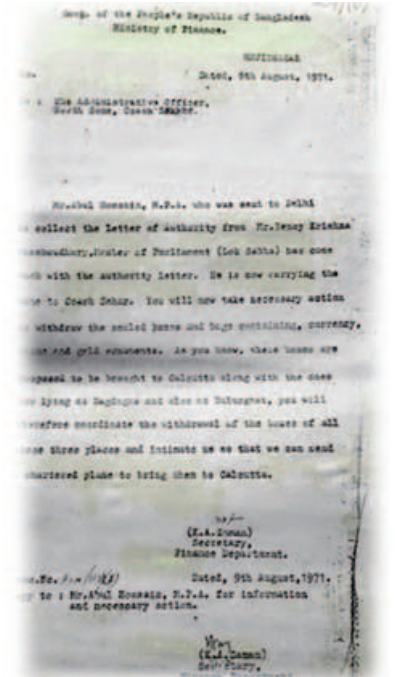
According to Boihobhe Ekattor, the operation was led by National



Shamsul Haque



Abul Hossain



Mujibnagar government's letter to the Cooch Behar administration requesting withdrawal of treasury fund.

Assembly member Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, Provincial Assembly

members Abul Hossain and Sadakat Hossain Chowdhury, Abdullah Sarwardi and others. Hossain, general secretary of the Kurigram Mahkuma Awami League and convener of the Lalmonirhat Thana Struggle Committee.

His son, Professor Hamidul Haque compiled his wartime documents and wrote "Boihobhe Ekattor".

According to Hamidul, SDO Mamunur asked Hossain to lead the raid. The fighters broke the small opening above the treasury door, allowing Haider Ali to squeeze through and unlock it from inside.

They then smashed open cupboards and safes using hammers, crowbars and shovels. The haul was enormous: 57 sacks of currency notes, 25 sacks of coins and 29 wooden boxes of gold.

Earlier, freedom fighters had derailed a freight train at Rajarhat Station, but on April 18 they learned Pakistani forces were repairing the tracks and could enter Kurigram at any moment.

The book also mentions that they pressed ahead, using 15 bullock carts to move the money and gold towards the border. Subedar Arab Ali, Subedar Borhan Uddin, Ansar Commander Mohiuddin Ahmed, and several EPR members joined the mission.

At the border, with help from local Congress leaders, they rented two trucks and transported the money to the Cooch Behar District Council office.

According to the letter with references, Lok Sabha member Binoy Krishna Chowdhury and the district magistrate rushed in and immediately sought permission from Delhi.

Once approved, the cash and gold were counted and weighed in their presence, totalling Tk 1,40,00,000 and 15kg of gold. Twenty-nine sacks of metal coins were handed to Shamsul Haque for wartime use.

The letter references also confirm

Nation's heart breaks as fight for little Sajid ends in tragedy

FROM PAGE 1

child was located around 9:00pm, hours after a press briefing in which they had said they were still unable to find him despite digging 40 feet into the pit.

At 9:10pm, Tanore Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Shahinuzzaman said the child had been taken to Tanore Upazila Health Complex by ambulance. Thirty minutes later, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Barnabus Hasdak declared him dead. The body, he said, had already been handed over to the family.

As no autopsy was conducted, the exact cause of death could not be determined.

Lt Col Tajul Islam, director (Operations) of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said, "The operations we usually conduct are very different from this one. There were many challenges here, many complications, and despite all limitations, we worked together as a team. It was through the tireless efforts of our firefighters that this operation could be completed."

"Given the child's initial condition, the more he moved, the further down he slipped. If any pressure was applied from above, even a small weight could become heavy at that depth. At 30, 40 or 50 feet underground, even a small piece of brick can become dangerously heavy or cause a serious accident, especially because oxygen levels are extremely low."

He added, "When we finally reached him, we found him unconscious and immediately sent him to the hospital. As you know, the hospital later declared him dead."

Earlier, Tajul said eight units were deployed. Rescuers dug a parallel pit using an excavator, but the shaft repeatedly collapsed and merged with surrounding soil, complicating the mission.

Rajshahi division Fire Service Deputy Director Monzil Haque said the presence of a pond just 8-10 feet from the shaft made excavation even riskier, slowing efforts to reach the boy in time.

After news of his recovery spread, netizens held out hope, which lasted less than an hour.

An outpouring of grief filled social media after the child was declared dead, with people expressing sorrow and offering prayers for his soul. One Facebook user wrote, "I had been following the news since he fell and praying. Many portals posted that he was rescued alive, and I was so hopeful. But those weren't true. Then I learned he actually died. It was devastating."

Sajid fell into the shaft, estimated to be around 30 feet deep, at Koel Hat Purbo Para village in Panchandar union, around 1:00pm on Wednesday.

By 10:50pm that night, rescuers had dug nearly 18-20 feet into the soil, said Abdur Rouf, a Tanore fire service official. Three units worked through the night, with an excavator digging a parallel pit while two tractors cleared soil. Oxygen was pumped continuously into the shaft.

Police said the accident happened after a soil-laden trolley suddenly sank into the ground around noon. Curious about the scene, the child's mother, Runa Khatun, went to the field with her son. As they walked,

Sajid suddenly slipped into the shaft. She later heard faint cries of "Ma, Ma" from underground.

Runa said the opening of the shaft had been covered with straw, making it impossible for her to see it.

Locals said groundwater levels in Koel Hat village have dropped significantly, prompting villager Kochir Uddin to dig the shaft to check water levels.

Breaking down in tears early yesterday, Runa said, "My child died in such a way that his body cannot even be found."

She said Kochir had dug three holes in search of groundwater to install a tube well for irrigation, but after failing to find water, left them uncovered for over a year, loosely covered with straw and foliage.

Runa demanded exemplary punishment for Kochir.

Kochir's neighbour Delwar Hossain said Kochir had been missing since about an hour after the incident.

Tanore police OC Shahinuzzaman also confirmed that law enforcers have not yet located him.

Relatives of the family also sought justice. Speaking to Channel 24 shortly after Sajid was found, an uncle of the child's mother said, "He is my grandson. When we heard he was found, we felt so good and thanked Allah. After he was taken to hospital, we learned that he is dead...."

"May Allah bless all those who did all they could to rescue the child. Those who left these shafts illegally open for as long as a year should be brought to justice so that no such incident occurs ever again."

Trader shot dead

FROM PAGE 1

of Sir Salimullah Medical College Mitford Hospital by pedestrians, where doctors pronounced him dead around 1:30pm, said Motiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sutrapur Police Station.

"According to locals, a man named Noyon, 45, a neighbouring shop owner, shot him and fled the scene," the OC said, adding that they are working to arrest the shooter.

A CCTV footage shows a suspect wearing a black mask and a black jacket walking briskly down the street moments after the shooting. Locals were seen rushing to the scene.

At the hospital, the victim's wife Shahinur Begum told reporters that her husband left home hurriedly around 11:45am for a meeting.

"He received phone calls twice before leaving and said, 'I'm on my way.' He ate in a hurry, standing. Then he rushed out," she said.

Within five minutes, she heard a loud bang.

Shahinur said locals saw Noyon, also a spice trader, running away from the shooting scene with a pistol.

"In broad daylight, on a public road, he killed my husband. My three children have now become orphans. I want justice," she said.

Abdur Rahman's brother-in-law, Md Wasim, said Rahman, owner of Shakil Moshla Ghor, had been the president of Shyambazar kitchen market two years ago. At the time, a dispute arose with Noyon over a plan to convert a single storey market into two or three storeys.

Rahman opposed the proposal, saying the construction would be illegal and authorities might later demolish the structure. The disagreement escalated, but business association leaders eventually mediated a settlement between them,

Wasim added.

Wasim accused Noyon of shooting Rahman in front of numerous spectators. He said Noyon and two of his associates fled the scene as locals gave them a chase.

Locals said everyone in the area knows Noyon, proprietor of Noyon Enterprise.

Shakil Ahmed, son of Abdur Rahman, told The Daily Star that his father had run his business with a good reputation for many years, and tensions over a piece of land with Noyon, had persisted for a long time.

"This long-running dispute led to my father's killing," Shakil alleged.

He said he has already filed a murder case against Noyon and several others and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Sub-Inspector Apurba Chandra Das of Sutrapur Police Station said locals informed police that Noyon shot Rahman over a business dispute.

"An investigation is ongoing to know what really happened and who are involved with the killing," he said.

A spate of killings, including targeted daylight shootings in crowded places, has renewed concerns over law and order ahead of the national election.

A few days ago, two men linked to a criminal gang were gunned down outside the Khulna Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court. On November 17 in Dhaka's Mirpur, assailants entered a shop and shot dead Golam Kibria, member secretary of Pallabi Thana Jubo Dal.

Days earlier, listed top criminal Tariq Saif Mamun was shot dead near Dhaka's busiest court area, and earlier last month, Chattogram's underworld figure Sarwar Hossain Babla was killed during a voter outreach event.