

Show cause notice served on FBCCI election board

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
A Patuakhali court on Thursday served a show cause notice on chairman and members of FBCCI election board asking them to explain as to why necessary legal actions should not be taken against them for violating a court order.
Patuakhali District and Sessions Judge's Court asked election board chairman Lt Col (ret'd) Anisuzzaman, two members—Md Sirajuddin, Prof Jahangir Chowdhury and secretary Afsarul Arifin to appear before the court on September 6 to defend themselves or face necessary legal actions for flouting the court order.
Afsarul Arifin yesterday received the court order on behalf of the board.
Earlier, the court on July 22 issued an interim injunction on the FBCCI election upon a petition filed by four members of Patuakhali Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In the petition, they said their names were not incorporated in the voters' list of FBCCI.
After hearing, the court on August 2 issued a temporary injunction on election. On August 7, the court rejected a petition filed by FBCCI election board for not maintaining proper legal procedure.
The latest order came as the election board did not comply with the court order and continued the election process despite the August 2 injunction.

TV commercials on the street!

Astrovision will be installed on Farmgate Ananda Cinema premises to telecast TV commercials, social awareness issues and breaking news everyday from morning till midnight.
This new form of advertisement, known as Astrovision, will be installed by Arkay Multimedia Limited with the technical assistance of Panasonic.
A contract to this effect has been signed between Arkay Multimedia Limited and Panasonic, says a press release.
Brigadier General (ret'd) Sarwer Hossain, director of Arkay group, and Bob Chua, engineering executive of Panasonic signed the contract on behalf of the companies in Dhaka on Wednesday.
The installation of the new facility in Dhaka will be the first ever visual communication in the sub-continent. Astrovision in this sub-continent to be installed at Farmgate Ananda Cinema Hall premises.
Astrovision is the commercial name of LED (Light Emitting Diode) produced by Panasonic.
The signing of the contract is the initial step of the implementation of a 25x18' gigantic LED in Bangladesh.
Arkay has also introduced Trivisions, Scroll visions, Video Wall and Plasma vision technologies in Bangladesh, which are the latest technologies for visual communications all over the world.

Islami Ins holds branch managers' training course

Islami Insurance Bangladesh Limited (IIBL) organised a 5-day in service training course for the branch managers of Dhaka region at the head office of the company recently. Hossain, chairman of the company, inaugurated the training course while ABM Nurul Huq presides over it, says a press release.
Md Islamil Nawab, vice-chairman, Nur Mohammad Mamun, chairman, Claims Committee, and M Tajul Islam, vice chairman, Executive Committee, were also present.

SkyCargo to launch freighter services to Frankfurt

Emirates SkyCargo will launch freighter services on Dubai-Frankfurt route from September 10.
The Emirates' Boeing 747-400 freighter will fly on Wednesdays and Sundays.
The new freighter services will add volumes over and above the current belly capacity in the airline's passenger aircraft. Emirates SkyCargo's capacity to and from Frankfurt will increase to 450 tonnes per week, underlining the importance of the trade tie-up between Dubai and Frankfurt.

GrameenPhone seeks legalisation of VoIP

Company may go for cross-border listing

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GrameenPhone Ltd, largest cellular operator of Bangladesh, has urged the government to open up Internet telephony to spur the growth of information and communication technology (ICT).
Legalisation of voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) will help growth of ICT, said noted economist Professor Muhammad Yunus.
And the VoIP can be used as an affective tool for poverty alleviation, added Yunus, also Managing Director of Grameen Bank.
He said GrameenPhone may become first Bangladeshi company to be listed on New York, Oslo stock exchanges simultaneously.
"I hope we can be able to float GrameenPhone shares soon in New York, Oslo and Dhaka," Yunus said while addressing a function organised by GrameenPhone Ltd to celebrate its one million subscriber base at a city hotel on Saturday. "It is a profit making company and it could be listed."
Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Hoque attended the function as the chief guest while Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Syed Marghub Morshed, Executive

Chairman of Board of Investment (BoI) Mahmudur Rahman, Chairman of GrameenPhone Khalid Shams, and Telenor Mobile Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Arve Johansen also attended.
The function was also attended by Science, Information and Communications Technology Minister Abdul Moyeen Khan, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman, senior government officials, diplomats, journalists and other dignitaries.
"This is a great occasion to celebrate. We have come a long way in a short time. When we started, we launched a dream and concept of connecting people," Yunus said.
He noted the contributions of the 32,000 village phone operators in connecting rural areas.
"We should have at least 13 million telephone subscribers considering the 130 million people in Bangladesh."
Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Hoque congratulated GrameenPhone for increasing tele-density in Bangladesh.
"I hope the company will continue providing quality telecommunication services to the people at an affordable price," the minister said.
GrameenPhone Chairman

Khalid Shams described the hurdles the company officials witnessed during launching of the network in 1997.
GrameenPhone Managing Director Ola Ree said his company is not celebrating the one million subscriber base, rather the company is celebrating the achievement of the country's telecommunication sector.
He said GrameenPhone has established itself as a very good brand in Bangladesh and the employees feel proud of being part of it. "We are also proud of the company's contribution to the development of the country."
The one millionth subscriber of the company, Syed Nazmur Rashid Chowdhury, a businessman from Dhanmondi in Dhaka, was introduced to the audience.
Crests were presented to GrameenPhone managing director by representatives of Ericsson, Siemens, Sony Ericsson and Sema.
BoI Executive Chairman Mahmudur Rahman underlined the importance of attracting private sector foreign investment for the development of the country's infrastructure. He lauded GrameenPhone's active role in developing telecommunication sector.

BTRC Chairman Syed Marghub Morshed noted pragmatic government policies and incentives which helped in tapping substantial foreign direct investments in the telecommunication sector.
GrameenPhone Chairman Khalid Shams noted if China could add five million new cell phone subscribers each month, Bangladesh, having one-tenth of China's population, should also aim to add half-a-million subscribers per month.
"We want the government to play the role of a real facilitator and not that of a grudging co-operator," said Shams. "How long we wait for the government approval of the voice over Internet protocol (VoIP), which has been allowed in all neighbouring countries?"
Telenor Mobile CEO Arve Johansen said, "We are very proud to have GrameenPhone as an important member in the Telenor Mobile family. Many people today recognise your good work and we believe your achievement is extremely important for the development of Bangladesh."



Managing Director of GrameenPhone Ola Ree holds a souvenir at a function to celebrate one million subscriber base of the company at a city hotel on Saturday while Telenor Mobile Chief Executive Officer Arve Johansen looks on.

Salt import on the cards

Commerce ministry reviews demand and supply

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The country is set to import salt for the second consecutive year to meet more than one lakh metric tons deficit of the essential item.
According to official statistics, this season eight lakh tonnes of salt has been produced against the estimated demand of over nine lakh tonnes.
Although salt is an import restricted item, the country had to import one lakh ton last year as the production was 7.75 lakh tonnes against a demand of 8.82 tonnes.
The Ministry of Commerce held a meeting with the salt refiners yesterday to review the price as well as supply and demand situation in the market with Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury in the chair.
Government officials and leaders of Bangladesh Laban Mill Malik

Samity attended the meeting held at the ministry conference room.
Emphasising the need for import, the meeting entrusted Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) with the responsibility of conducting a survey for assessing the present demand for salt.
The meeting decided to finalise the import process later as the present stock is expected to meet the demand of few more months.
Although the government has estimated a deficit of one lakh tonne, the refiners told the meeting that this year's shortfall may be around two lakh tonnes.
The meeting decided to make the use of poly-sheet in salt production for improving the quality and take actions against selling raw salt in the market.
According to import policy, salt

import is restricted. "As salt is one of the sensitive essential items, the government is aware of the shortfall and will take timely decision for import," a commerce ministry official said after the meeting.
The commerce minister on April 27 this year held a meeting with the private sector representatives involved in the salt production, refining and trading to review production, stock and supply situation.
It was decided in the meeting that at the end of the season BSCIC would prepare a detail report on salt production and demand and submit it by May 31 this year. But the report was not yet submitted.
"Today's meeting was supposed to take decision on the basis of the report but we did not receive any estimate from BSCIC and Industries Ministry," the commerce ministry official said.

FBCCI polls campaign gains momentum

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With only a week remaining, candidates of the FBCCI election have started door-to-door campaign to drum up support for their panels.
The three presidential candidates -- Abdul Matlub Ahmad, Abdul Awal Mintoo and MA Rouf Chowdhury -- are now travelling across the country holding meetings with district level chambers seeking their favour.
After a long legal battle in the court, the election to the country's apex trade body -- Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) -- is going to be held on August 25.
Matlub and Mintoo have already announced 24-member full panels comprising 12 each candidates from chamber and association group while MA Rouf Chowdhury came up with a 12-member panel.
Businessmen sources said the competition is likely to be confined between Abdul Matlub Ahmed and Abdul Awal Mintoo.
However, being a nominated director from Bangladesh Association of Banks, Mintoo will not need to contest in the first tier election for directorship. Matlub Ahmad will first contest for director-

ship and then the top slot.
Multimode Group Chairman Mintoo, who served as president of the FBCCI during 1998-2000, is now on a visit to Mymensingh region to gather support for his panel.
A total of 1,193 voters, 257 from chamber group and 936 from association group, will elect 24 directors from 64 candidates. Besides, 14 directors have been nominated by different chambers and trade associations.
In the final stage of the election, 38 elected and nominated directors will exercise their franchise to elect a president for a two-year term. Sources said the support of 14 nominated directors will prove to be vital for presidential candidates.
Nominees from Barisal and Khulna chamber and Bangladesh Aushad Shilpa Samity have already extended support to Mintoo-led panel. A close associate of Mintoo claimed that 13 nominated directors have extended support for their panel.
Abdul Matlub Ahmad of Bangladesh Cement Manufacturers Association has already held meetings with almost all district chambers. His panel members are also holding meetings with different chambers and associations every-

day.
Sources said as the incumbent vice-president of FBCCI Mohammad Ali supported his panel, Matlub, chairman of Nitol Group, can earn support of some current directors. A total of seven incumbent directors are in the panel.
This panel will get strong backing from association group, the sources said. The leaders of the panel are now mobilising support from the chambers. Matlub along with his caravan is now in Khulna region meeting with district chambers.
MA Rouf Chowdhury of Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanaspati Manufacturers Association is trying to woo support from voters who are opposed to a statutory regulatory order (SRO) regarding FBCCI election reforms.
Chowdhury had discussions with about 200 voters at a city hotel yesterday. He earlier met Narayananj chamber on Saturday. He is now in Chittagong to meet chambers and associations of the region.

StanChart holds roundtable on SWIFT

Standard Chartered Bank held a roundtable on the prospects and progresses of SWIFT operation in Bangladesh recently.
The discussion was organised by the Financial Institutions department of Standard Chartered Bank.
The workshop was attended by senior and mid-level executives of Agrani Bank, Janata Bank and Sonali Bank.
The members of the local correspondent banking teams of HSBC, Citibank NA and Mashreq Bank also participated in the discussion.
Dewan Masud Qamar, head of Financial Institutions of Standard Chartered Bank, opened the discussion through a presentation on the topic. His presentation was followed by a lively discussion on the possibilities and problems of SWIFT operation in Nationalised Commercial Banks.
AFM Shamsuddoha, DGM of Janata Bank, HKM Altaf Hussain, DGM of Agrani Bank, Fayaz Molla, Unit Head of Citibank NA, Md Shahiduzzaman, manager of HSBC, and Gulam Mustafa, manager of Mashreq Bank, were present.
Ovaltine Family Offer lucky draw ceremony was held at the head office of Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited in Dhaka on Wednesday.
Shykh Seraj, director and head of News of Channel i, picked the name of three lucky winners of the promotion programme through a random lucky draw, says a press release.
Mohammad Khalilur Rahman of Janata Bank won first prize, Polash Khan of Moulvibazar, Dhaka won second while Rumi Akhter of Sitakunda, Chittagong won third prize.
Ashfaque ur Rahman, managing director, M Khairul Anam, executive director, Mushfique Manzoor, Brand Executive of Novartis (Bangladesh) Limited, M Rahman, director of Marketing, H Shameem Iftekar and Zafar Karim, sales managers of Danish Distribution Network Limited, were present.

Ovaltine Family Offer lucky draw held

JOB training on entrepreneurship development
JOBS, a project funded by USAID, recently conducted a week-long Entrepreneurship Development and Business Management (EDBM) training for the potential women entrepreneurs of the Youth Development Department, in its office premises at Naogaoan, says a press release.
The objective of the course was to increase the business planning, business management, financial management and marketing linkage capacity of the participants.

Int'l forum for RMG workers begins today

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The International Solidarity Forum for Garment Workers of Least Developed Countries begins today in Dhaka with a view to highlighting rights of workers and their interest for a secured livelihood.
The two-day event, organised by Bangladesh Garment Workers Protection Alliance (BGWPA), will be held at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM).
Apart from participants from developing and least developed countries (LDCs) including India, Pakistan, Nepal and Cambodia, some delegates from Japan, US and Australia will also participate in the forum.
This was disclosed by Mashuda Khatun Shefali, convener of

BGWPA, a platform of 19 garment workers' associations, at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.
"The objective of the discussion is to create a broader alliance of organisations and workers' groups to protect the rights, interest and livelihood of garment and textile workers of the LDCs," said Shefali, also executive director of Nari Uddog Kendra.
She mentioned that the general objective of the solidarity forum is develop collective strategies to campaign for a development-centered world highlighting concerns of the workers of Bangladesh.
Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury will attend the opening session while former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria will be present at the working ses-

sion of the conference, she added.
The forum agenda at the first working session include globalisation, trade and women and employment, changing pattern of women employment with special focus on readymade garment sector (RMG) in Bangladesh.
The second working session will deal with sustainable development and equitable distribution in the international trade system, labour standards, human rights regimes and adoption of a development plan of action on Dhaka declaration in this respect.
Among others, Wazed Islam, convener, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) and Abul Hossain, president of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Karmachari Federation were present at the press conference.

Chinese president urges more measures to curb joblessness

AFP, Beijing

China's top leaders put a grim face on the country's unemployment situation and urged all levels of government to prioritize job creation and ensuring the living standards of millions of unemployed, state press said Sunday.
"Solving the unemployment and re-employment problem is an arduous and long-term task that will need a far-reaching, creative and active employment development strategy," President Hu Jintao was quoted as telling a national meeting on employment.
"The unemployment and re-employment work is a matter linked to the overall interests of the entire people and is a question fundamental to the stability of our reform and development," the People's Daily quoted him as saying.
Although some progress had been made, Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao told the meeting held Friday and Saturday in Beijing that the economy needed to maintain a brisk pace if an army of job seekers expected to find jobs.
According to the Ministry of

Labor and Social Security, it is projected that the number of China's urban unemployed will stand at 14 million at the end of 2003, exactly the same number as one year earlier.
If the economy grows by seven per cent this year, as targeted by the government, it is possible to create 10 million new jobs.
This will be far from enough to occupy all idle hands as there are 24 million looking for work, the agency said on Friday.
These statistics do not include the labor force, six million who are laid off from state-owned enterprises and eight million unemployed who are registered with government labor agencies.
These statistics do not include "tens of millions" of jobless farmers who go to the cities and compete with urban residents for employment.
Hu urged stronger measures aimed at encouraging enterprises to take on more workers, including fiscal subsidies, tax incentives, insurance subsidies and credit

opportunities.
He also called for the establishment of better unemployment services and government-subsidized training for laid off workers.
In the past the government has admitted only to an unemployment rate of about three per cent, basing that figure exclusively on registered unemployed and not counting laid-off workers.
Laid-off workers usually stay attached to their former companies, receiving a minimum allowance.
Even the jobless figure that includes only registered unemployed and leaves out laid-off workers is going up, according to reports.
Xinhua news agency said it stood at 4.2 per cent nationwide at the end of June, a rise from four per cent at the start of the year.
The figure covers vast regional variations, with Liaoning province, in the middle of China's crumbling northeastern rustbelt, reporting an unemployment rate as high as 7.8 per cent, according to Xinhua.



Labourers unload bananas from a truck at Badamtoli Ghat in Dhaka. The popular fruit is brought to the capital from northern districts. The banana sells between Tk 80 and Tk120 per 80 pieces at wholesale market.