

ACC asks bank peon to explain wealth secret

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An office peon of a bank owns a skyscraper, two large houses in Dhaka city and other properties worth several crore taka.

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) conducted an investigation into the wealth and property of Anwar Hossain Belal, a peon of Agrani Bank head office Bhaban-2, and found the above properties in his name.

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Security upped in CEPZ, Ctg RMG units

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

In the wake of widespread ransacking and arson attack on garment units in Dhaka for the last two days, precautionary measures and security were tightened in all the garment factories in the port city including those inside Chittagong Export Processing Zone.

Additional forces of police, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar were deployed in the garment units to

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HEROIN SMUGGLING BD Foods chairman on fresh remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed BD Foods Chairman Badruddoza Chowdhury Momen, arrested on charge of smuggling heroin to the UK, on a fresh five-day remand.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shafique Anwar

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Prayer Timing		
May 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

VIOLENCE IN RMG INDUSTRY

Hasina slates govt for 'creating anarchy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the four-party alliance government of setting fire to garment factories in and around the capital to create anarchy in the Readymade Garment (RMG) sector.

"...They (government) has set garments factories ablaze to create anarchy in the sector and blame it on the Awami League (AL)," said Hasina, also president of the AL.

She was speaking at a discussion titled "Free, Fair and Neutral Election: Prerequisite for Peoples' Empowerment," organised by Peshajibi Samonnay Parishad, a platform of professionals. Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud chaired the discussion at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain presented a paper on 'For empowerment through free, fair and credible elections' at the discussion.

"The problems between garment

factory owners and workers was resolvable but the incumbent government did not take any steps to do that. I think they have an ill motive behind this," Hasina said.

Referring to a neighbouring country's alleged conspiracy to create anarchy in Bangladesh's RMG sector, Hasina asked the prime minister to explain how it can do so by motivating hundreds of workers in the sovereign and independent country.

The AL chief asked why police killed garment workers. She also wanted to know why police and Rab kept silent when, she said, people in black trousers and T-shirts torched many garments factories in the last couple of days.

Hasina called upon the garments owners to give their workers higher wages and pay that regularly. The workers have to realise their legitimate rights through movements, she added.

The former prime minister said this government has completely failed to run the country, and it must step down to solve the ongoing

crises. The AL chief reiterated that the coalition rulers have planned to come back to power through election engineering, and for this it has made a 'fake' voter list.

The AL president thanked the lawyers as the Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld the High Court directives for a revised voter list. She asked the chief election commissioner if he would resign after the SC verdict or if he wants the people to resort to alternative ways to make him step down.

Hasina urged the professional bodies and people of all walks of life to force the government to implement the opposition's reform proposals to ensure a free and fair election.

Other speakers included AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu, Communist Party of Bangladesh President Manjuri Hsain Khan, SC

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PHULBARI COAL MINE Local firm gets \$50m water management job

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asia Energy awarded its first contract of a \$50 million water management programme at its Phulbari coal mine to a Bangladeshi company.

"This drilling and pump installation contract with Falgu Sandhani is in line with our commitment to employ as many local people and contractors as possible

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Jamaat leader accused of leading attack on indigenous community

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Over two hundred people, most of them of the Munda community, held a rally in Sathkira town today protesting an attack on the members of the indigenous community by a local leader of Jamat-e-Islamaami Bangladesh.

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India, Pakistan start talks on glacier troops cut

REUTERS, New Delhi

Nuclear rivals India and Pakistan started a fresh round of talks yesterday over the Siachen glacier in Kashmir, where thousands of troops are holed up in freezing temperatures in a costly standoff.

The two-day talks in New Delhi over the world's highest battlefield follow local media reports in the past few months that the two sides were inching towards a blueprint for a troop pullout, though officials are tightlipped.

Both sides fielded large teams of bureaucrats and military officers, headed by their respective defence secretaries.

The Siachen dialogue -- part of a wide-ranging peace process -- comes a day ahead of a peace conference involving Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and some Kashmiri separatist groups in Srinagar.

Thousands of soldiers have died in Siachen, high in the Himalayas, with more fatalities due to freezing temperatures, high altitude sickness and avalanches than to enemy fire.

Though diplomatic, commercial, sporting and transport links between India and Pakistan have improved since their peace process started in January 2004, they have made little headway over Kashmir, the cause of two of their three wars.

A key sticking point over Siachen is seen to be India's demand that troop positions be marked on the ground and on a map as evidence in case the area is occupied by Pakistan after a pullout deal is reached.

The region has witnessed no fighting since late 2003, when a ceasefire came into place on the militarised Kashmir frontier.

But analysts and Indian military officials say New Delhi's security establishment remains distrustful of the Pakistan army.

They point out that in 1999, Pakistan-backed militant infiltrators occupied the Kargil heights in northern Indian Kashmir, and India lost hundreds of troops before re-occupying the mountains after bitter fighting and a near war.

"Kargil made it very clear that if

you leave any part of your territory undefended, you cannot rule out the possibility of the Pakistanis coming in," former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan G. Parthasarathy told Reuters.

But Pakistani analysts say Islamabad is uneasy about marking positions, fearing it will legitimise India's hold in Siachen.

Hopes of forward movement were raised last year after Singh said he wanted to convert Siachen into a "peace mountain" as both sides tried to push forward their cautious peace process, complicated by militant revolt in Kashmir.

New Delhi says the insurgency is aided by militants from Pakistan, which Islamabad is not doing enough to stop.

Analysts do not expect a breakthrough in the third round of Siachen talks since January 2004 but say dialogue is a good way of building trust over the region.

"If nobody is shooting and killing each other, is that not a gain?" Parthasarathy said.

"These talks help further to stabilise the situation."



PHOTO: STAR

FROM LEFT... A policeman tries to remove a barricade put up by garment workers on Rokeya Sarani at Sheorapara in the capital yesterday; acting BGMEA President Abdus Salam Murshedy speaks at an emergency meeting of the factory owners at the BGMEA office; BGMEA forms a human chain in front of Sonargaon hotel in the capital protesting arson and vandalism at RMG factories and other establishments.

JS body recommends Biman hajj fare at \$1,050 for all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday suggested the government to fix the airfare of Bangladesh Biman for both ballottee (under government management) and non-ballottee hajj pilgrims at US\$1050.

A meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on religious affairs also urged the government to provide equal facilities for both types of pilgrims, committee members said after the meeting held at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"Government should provide same facilities to all to avert regular harassment of thousands of pilgrims," Delawar Hossain Saidee, chairman of the committee told journalists. He expected that about

65,000 pilgrims will perform hajj this year.

A committee member also Awami League (AL) lawmaker Shahjahan Khan blamed the government for harassment of pilgrims during hajj last year. "The government should take proper action to avoid harassment of pilgrims," he said.

He also alleged that State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan and Chairman of Jakat Board Abul Kalam Azad were involved in irregularities regarding disbursement of Tk 1.38 crore of jakat fund.

Meeting sources said the ministry in a report informed the committee that about TK 50 lakh was

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ACC to warn officials, politicians of poll-related graft

Nagorik Committee team meets ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agreeing with the Nagorik Committee demand, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has decided to warn the government officials and politicians of punishment if found guilty of election related corruption.

A delegation of the Nagorik Committee formed as part of the civil society initiative for honest and competent candidates for the next elections and accountable develop-

ment yesterday called on ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan.

They decided to urge the government not to allow further whitening of black money that they termed 'very unethical'. It discourages the genuine businessmen to pay taxes and practise honesty in the transactions, they said.

ACC members Moniruzzaman Mian and Moniruddin Ahmed also took part in the discussion.

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