

Chief justice cancels annual vacation of SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain has cancelled the next scheduled annual vacations of the Supreme Court. The SC administration issued a notification to this effect on Tuesday night.

Both the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court were scheduled to remain on annual vacations from September 1 to October 5 and from December 20 to December 31.

The chief justice cancelled the vacations as per the decision taken in a full court meeting of the judges on August 6.

Most of the judges, who joined the virtual full court meeting through video conferencing, have proposed to curtail the next vacation of the court to recover the gaps caused due to the ongoing Covid-19, according to sources present at the meeting.

Syed Mahmud Hossain at the meeting decided to run both regular and virtual proceedings of the High Court from August 12 for the interest of lawyers and litigant.

The lawyers, who prefer the physical court, will move cases before the physical HC benches, while others will move cases before virtual HC benches.



With Ma o Shishu Hospital in port city's Agrabad area inundated due to Tuesday's rainfall and tidal surge, this attendee had to carry a patient on a wheelchair to see a physician at the hospital. The important business district of the port city is one of the worst-affected due to waterlogging, in a testament to the extent of the problem. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

MITIGATING WATERLOGGING IN PORT CITY Tk 1,375cr spent, yet no respite in sight

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Cg

Port city residents hoped to rid themselves of waterlogging when CDA (Chattogram Development Authority) took up a mega project in 2017 with a promise to end the perennial crisis within three years.

The project tenure ended in June this year but the waterlogging woes did not. As of now, half of the project has been completed, spending around Tk 1,375 crore, according to CDA sources.

The three-year project -- titled canal re-excavation, renovation and expansion to eradicate waterlogging of Chittagong worth Tk 5,616 crore -- was approved by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) in August 2017.

This month, its tenure has been extended to June 2022.

Meanwhile, city dwellers continue to suffer immensely since most low-lying areas go under knee- to waist-deep water every time it rains. For residents of Bakallia, Chawkbazar, Bahaddarhat, Muradpur, Sholoshahar Gate No 2, Badurtala, Kapasgola, Agrabad, Port Connecting Road, Halishahar, Shulakbahar, Chandgaon, DC Road, KB Aman Ali Road, Khatunganj and Prabartak Intersection, waterlogging has become a never-ending crisis.

In the last two days, port city has seen the country's one of the largest wholesale markets of essentials, hospitals, institutions, businesses, roads and residences inundated following light to moderate rain. In addition, rain coupled with tidal surge make the matter worse for people living in the areas prone to waterlogging.

Thirty-four Engineering Brigade of Bangladesh Army has been tasked with implementing the project.

Rehena Begum Ranu, a rights activist and former councillor of Agrabad Residential Area, said her area suffers the most due to

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BRIBERY CASE

Trial of ex-DIG Mizan, ACC director Basir begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Trial of the bribery case against suspended deputy inspector general (DIG) of Police Mizanur Rahman and suspended Anti-Corruption Commission director Khandaker Enamul Basir began yesterday at a Dhaka court with deposition of the complainant.

Judge Shaik Nazmul Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka recorded the statement of complainant Sheikh Mohammad Fanafilya, director of ACC.

On completion of the deposition, the defence sought time to cross-examine the witness. The court fixed September 2 for the next hearing.

The same court on March 18 this year framed charges against the duo.

In his statement, the witness said the ACC in May 2018 launched an enquiry against ex-DIG Mizan on charges of accumulating illegal wealth. The commission assigned Basir to carry out the enquiry on October 25 the same year. He took over the charge of inquiry on October 29.

Basir took Tk 40 lakh as bribe from Mizan in two instalments.

On January 15 last year, Basir took Tk 25 lakh at Shahjahanpur and February 25 last year 15 lakh at Shantinagar with promises of exonerating Mizan of the charges.

Mizan later brought allegations in media on June 9 last year that Basir took bribe from him, and produced audio clips of conversation between them.

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ENTRY RESTRICTIONS AT ABU DHABI

Panic grips expats as Biman cancels flights

RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday cancelled its flight from Dhaka to Abu Dhabi, as the UAE government is not accepting any Bangladeshi passengers carrying employment visas at present.

The development, meanwhile, sparked panic and uncertainty among UAE expatriates currently in Bangladesh.

The national airliner primarily cancelled its Dhaka-Abu Dhabi flight till August 31, Mokabbir Hossain, managing director and CEO of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, told The Daily Star over phone.

Mokabbir, however, said the national flag carrier will operate two flights weekly from Abu Dhabi

to Dhaka.

The Biman MD said, "The UAE government is not giving clearance to Bangladeshi passengers to enter the country, when we issue boarding passes to them."

"In recent days at the Dhaka airport, it happened several times that passengers started hue and cry after they failed to fly to Abu Dhabi despite having visa and other documents, as the UAE government is not allowing any Bangladeshi with having employment visa," said the Biman MD.

As an example, Mokabbir said Biman recently sold 220 tickets to UAE-bound Bangladeshi passengers for a flight. "Of the total passengers, we could issue boarding passes to 40-odd passengers, due to

restrictions by the UAE government.

The rest of the passengers couldn't travel. The matter didn't end here. When the 40 passengers landed at Abu Dhabi airport, the UAE government didn't allow many of them to enter the country," added Mokabbir.

"Considering this, we have decided to cancel the flight from Dhaka to Abu Dhabi."

Biman, on its website, said Bangladeshi passengers with employment visas are not being accepted by Abu Dhabi authorities at present, so it is not possible for Biman Bangladesh Airlines to carry Bangladeshi passengers with an employment visa to Abu Dhabi.

The notice said for the same reason, Biman will operate weekly

two flights instead of six until August 31 for passengers wishing to return to Bangladesh from Abu Dhabi.

"The airline will resume passenger transport from Dhaka if the Abu Dhabi authorities agree to accept employment visa holders in the future," Biman said.

The Biman MD said Biman's flight on Dhaka-Dubai route, however, will continue.

VISA CANCELLATION PANIC GRIPS PASSENGERS

Meanwhile, panic over visa cancellation has gripped Bangladeshis with employment visa to UAE who are currently back home, as a result of the move.

Abul Hossain, an expatriate from

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Md Sumon Mia lost his job as a chauffeur at the start of the coronavirus outbreak. Although his employer had paid him the salary for a few months, Sumon had to struggle to sustain himself in Dhaka. Unable to find work in driving, he resorted to selling toys, trinkets and face masks in Hatirjheel out of a van -- that was previously used to transport schoolchildren but has also become redundant due to closure of schools.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Three held with 20,000 yaba pills in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Detectives arrested three persons with 20,000 yaba pills in Cumilla of Daudkandi on Tuesday afternoon.

The arrestees were identified as Imam Hossain Azgar (32), his wife Sonia (28) and Mahabubur Rahman (28), said police.

The arrest and seizure were made at a toll plaza while the three were coming to Dhaka from Chattogram on a microbus, said Syed Nurul Islam, superintendent of police in Cumilla.

He made the disclosure at a press briefing at his office in the city yesterday morning.

The three were sent to jail after they were produced before a court, Nurul Islam said.

The pills are worth about Tk 60 lakh, added the SP.

ACC sues Al-Arafah official, another over Tk 33.29cr graft

Files three other cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against a senior vice president (SVP) of Al-Arafah Islamic Bank and a businessman for misappropriating about Tk 33.29 crore of the bank.

ACC Deputy Director Jalal Uddin Ahammad filed the case against the SVP Sharif Uddin Pramanik and managing director of Ibrahim Textile Mills Ltd M Fakhruul Alam.

According to the case statement, although Ibrahim Textile had a loan default history, Fakhruul managed to open seven LCs worth Tk 33.29 crore from the bank with the help of Sharif. The LCs were opened for import of cotton to produce yarn. The accused did so and sold the yarn but did not repay the loan. Thus, they misappropriated the money, reads the FIR.

The ACC filed three more cases yesterday. Two were filed against senior data entry operator of state-run Titas Gas Company Hasanur Rahman and a senior supervisor of Titas Tohorul Islam.

ACC Deputy Director Ali Akbar filed the case against Hasanur for amassing about Tk 1.33 crore beyond the known source of income. Tohorul amassed about Tk 1.71 crore beyond known source of income, and concealed information of wealth worth Tk 60 lakh in his wealth statement.

Meanwhile, ACC Assistant Director Md Saiduzzaman sued SK Traders proprietor Manjur Ahmed for amassing about Tk 4.5 crore beyond the known source of income.

Parliament to go into 9th session Sept 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 11th Jatiya Sangsad will go into its ninth session on September 6.

President Abdul Hamid yesterday convened the session as per his power under article 72(1) of the constitution, according to a press release issued by the parliament secretariat.

The session will begin at 11am, the release further added.

Duration of the session is likely to be a short one, sources at the parliament secretariat told The Daily Star.

The eighth session of the current parliament -- the budget session -- was prorogued on July 9 only after nine working days, which was the shortest parliament session in the recent history of Jatiya Sangsad, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Man killed as bus hits bike in Dhaka

Another dies in M'singh

STAR REPORT

A motorcyclist was killed after a bus knocked down his bike in Dhaka's Shanir Akhra area yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Masud Hossain (45), an iron sheet trader.

Masud was on his way to his shop in Dholaipar area from his home in Demra's Konapara. As he reached near Dania College in Shanir Akhra around 10am, a Thikana Paribahan bus hit his motorcycle from behind, leaving him critically injured, said Sub-Inspector Shamsul Alam of Jatrabari Police Station.

Pedestrians took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 11:45am, he said.

Police seized the bus and detained its driver after the accident.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds, a man was killed when a truck ran him over on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Signboard area in Trishal upazila yesterday.

Identity of the deceased could not be known immediately, police said.

Quoting locals, Trishal Police Station OC Sumon Chandra Roy said the accident happened while the man was crossing a road around 9am.

ARMS CASE

Hearing on charge framing against Shahed Aug 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday took cognisance of the charges against Regent Group Chairman Mohammad Shahed in an arms case.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Special Tribunal-1 passed the order after scrutinising case dockets and other relevant documents.

The tribunal fixed August 27 for hearing on charge framing against Shahed and directed the jail authorities to produce him before his court on the scheduled date.

DB Inspector Md Sairul Islam and also the case's investigation officer, on July 30 submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 13 people as prosecution witnesses.

On July 26, Shahed was shown arrested in the case after the IO submitted a petition.

The IO in the charge sheet said the charges brought against Shahed were primarily proved and he should be brought under trial. On July 19, a team of DB found Shahed's private car in front of house no-14, Sector-11, in the city's Itara Paschim area.

DB seized a pistol with one round bullet from the car and later a case under the Arms Act was filed against him.

Shahed was arrested on July 15 from Satkhira while he was trying to leave the country on a boat. Later, he was placed on a 10-day remand in a case filed over issuing fake Covid-19 test results and charging the patients for test and treatment.

On July 26, Shahed was placed on a 38-day remand in five cases including an arms case filed in Satkhira. On expiry of his 10-day remand in that arms case, he was placed on a seven-day remand on August 10 in a case filed for misappropriation of Tk 2.71 crore of Farmers Bank Ltd.



Although the coronavirus has shown no sign of going away, people are starting to resume their lives like normal. For example, traffic jams have become more frequent, as seen here at the capital's Bangla Motor. With the construction work of large-scale projects like the metro rail slowed down due to the pandemic, Dhaka residents may have to deal with these growing pains for quite some time.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON