

JS told 242,849 get overseas jobs during '97-98

A total of 242,849 people got overseas employment in fiscal 1997-98. Parliament was told yesterday, reports UNB.

GEF invites nominations for Global Environment Award

The Washington-based Global Environment Facility (GEF) has invited nominations for the second annual Global Environment Leadership Award, reports UNB.

Transport operators' appeal to political parties

"Don't call hartal just on the plea that there were hartals in the past... although there were hartals in the past, we'll not enforce hartal in the interest of the country; adoption of such a policy will have more public support," reports UNB.

Govt has no plan to sell rice under OMS

The government has no plan for open market sale of rice as the market is stable. Food Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury told parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

One gets 10-yr RI for keeping illegal arms in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Nov 18: The Additional District and Sessions Judge Ali Mansur today sentenced one Nousha Mia to ten years rigorous imprisonment for keeping unauthorised arms and ammunition, reports BSS.

Four rounded up in Jessore

JESSORE, Nov 18: Police rounded up four men for their alleged involvement in making forged currency in the town on Monday.

Speakers tell workshop Separation of judiciary a must for fair trial

Speakers at a workshop reached a consensus on separation of judiciary from the executive as it is one of the core problems in dispensing proper justice and holding of fair trial, reports BSS.



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleida Zia beside the body of slain BNP activist Noor Nabi which was brought to her Minto road residence yesterday.

Terrorists kill farmer in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Nov 18: A farmer was killed by some armed terrorists at a village in Bagha thana of the district on Tuesday, reports APB.

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More organisations welcome PM's 'no-hartal' call

More organisations yesterday welcomed the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's unambiguous announcement that "Awami League will call no hartal even if returned to the opposition," reports BSS.

second session. The discussants suggested that the number of magistrates, judges as well as courts should be sufficiently increased for disposing of the pending cases speedily.

They stressed the need for introducing a skilled and experienced prosecution cadre or service.

They also observed that corruption in courts is also a problem in the way of proper trial. A comprehensive effort should be made to free the court from corruption, they said.

People from legal professions, judiciary, magistracy and police department and representatives from NGO participated in the workshop.

Chairman of the Law Commission Justice Kemaluddin Hossain and Law Commission member Justice Naimuddin Ahmed were present.

Govt urged to formulate nat'l public exams policy

Bangladesh College Teachers' Association (BCTA) has urged the government to formulate a national public examinations policy for stoppage of malpractices and holding of the examinations smoothly, reports BSS.

The appeal was made at a special extended meeting of the National Executive Committee of BCTA. The meeting adopted a resolution to invite Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as the chief guest to inaugurate the forthcoming triennial conference of the BCTA to be held in February, 1999, a press release said here.

The association has decided to establish a national library for teachers next year with the help of UNESCO and other international organisations.

The meeting, held recently with BCTA president Prof AKM Zahidul Karim, principal of Abujar Ghaffar College, in the chair, also called upon the government to expedite the promotion of college teachers to the posts of associate professors and professors, to change the staff-pattern in colleges in line with the international standard of teacher-student ratio and release of the government portion of the salaries of the principals remained withheld.

The meeting was attended, among others, by principal Quazi Faruque Ahmed, General Secretary of BCTA, Principal Mafeela Khatun, Prof Mahmudul Hasan and Prof Deedarul Islam - vice-president, Principal Kazi Ataur Rahman, Prof Syedur Rahman, Prof Asadul Huq and Pradeep Narayan Saha - Joint secretaries and Vice-Principal Abdur Rob Mia, Office Secretary.

Unani Medical Assoc team meets Hasina

An eight-member delegation of Bangladesh Unani Medical Association led by its president Hakim Hafez Azizul Islam called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday morning, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister lauded the role of the association in mitigating the sufferings of the people through indigenous herbal medicines. She also urged them to further expand their activities for the welfare of the people.

Sheikh Hasina thanked the association members for rendering services to the flood-affected people during the recent floods.

Among others, Health Secretary MA Reza and Secretary to the Prime Minister Zakia Akhtar Chowdhury were present.

Rampage in jewellery shops protested in Feni

FENI, Nov 18: Jewellers Association here on Sunday brought out a protest procession and submitted memorandum to SP, DC and local MP protesting the rampages in the two jewellery shops and looting of ornaments worth about Tk 40 lakh, reports UNB.

The memorandum mentioning the attack, damages and looting of ornaments by the miscreants at the Al Amin Jewellers and Shirin Jewellers at the town market in the evening of Saturday demanded the security of traders and exemplary punishment to those responsible for the incident.

Besides, the members of the association observed a token strike by closing their respective shops from 6 am to noon on the day expressing anger at vandalism of the terrorists.

It may be mentioned here that Al Amin Jewellers is owned by Kamal Hazari, the brother of Joyal Hazari MP.

A case was also registered with the police station.

Obituary

By Staff Correspondent Renowned educationist, researcher and former principal of Dhaka College, Dr Al-Ahmed died following a cardiac operation in Calcutta yesterday evening.

He was 69, says a press release. His body will arrive in the city this afternoon and his namaj-e-janaza will be held at the Madhubazar Jame Mosque after Magrib prayers today.

Dr Ahmed worked in various reputed institutions including the erstwhile Pakistan Administrative Staff College at Lahore and Bangladesh Staff College. He was also a teacher at Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University and Islamic University.

Author of a number of books, Dr Ahmed was also a columnist.

He will be buried at the Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard.

S M Nurul Islam, a former member of BCS (Information) cadre, died of a heart attack at Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday morning. He was 63, reports BSS.

Islam was also the director (Public Relations) of Parliament. He hailed from the Shingwria village under the Ghatatali thana of Tangail district. Islam left behind his wife, two sons, five daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

Five-member NHRC planned

By Nurul Kabir

The National Human Rights Commission will be a five-member body headed by a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, says the draft.

Members of the proposed Commission will be appointed from among persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights. "At least one member should be woman."

The proposed composition might, however, practically be affected as a clause of the draft law says: "No act or proceedings of the Commission shall be questioned or shall be invalidated merely on the ground of existence of any vacancy or defect in the constitution of the Commission."

However, the President will be the appointing authority of the Commission. The President, while making the appointments, has to consult a four-member committee comprising Prime Minister, Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Chief Justice of Bangladesh, says the draft.

The government sources hinted that the Chief Justice might eventually be dropped from the panel.

An Executive Director will be there who "shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission and shall exercise such powers and discharge such functions of the Commission as it may delegate to him."

The Commission will be an independent body - separate from any party, government, administration, or any other functionary or body directly or indirectly representing interests of any such entity, draft says.

The Commission and every member of its staff shall function without political or other bias or interference.

The Commission will enjoy the right to make rules to carry out the provisions of the Human Rights Act.

The Chairperson and members of the Commission will hold office for a term of five years "from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier."

If age-limit permits, members of the Commission shall be eligible for re-appointment for another term of five years.

On ceasing to hold office, a Chairperson or a member shall be ineligible for further employment under the Government of Bangladesh.

The members as well as the officers of the Commission shall be deemed to be public servants.

Chairperson or any other member of the Commission shall only be removed from his office by order of the President on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.

The functions of the Commission will include inquiring, suo moto or on a petition presented to it by a victim or any

person on his behalf, into complaints of

(a) violation of human rights or abetment thereof, or negligence in the prevention of such violation by a public servant

(b) intervention in any proceedings involving any allegation of violation of human rights pending before a court with the approval of such court.

(c) visiting any jail or any other institution under the control of the Government, where persons are detained or lodged for purposes of treatment, reformation, protection or welfare with a view to studying the living conditions of the inmates. After the visits, the Commission will make recommendations to the government or the authorities concerned.

(d) reviewing the constitutional and legal safeguards for the protection of human rights. The Commission would also recommend adoption of new legislation, amendment to the existing ones and propose administrative measures necessary for their effective implementation.

(e) examining draft bills and proposals for new legislations to make sure that they are being legislated in conformity with international human rights instruments.

(f) encouraging ratification of international human rights instruments, or accession to those instruments, and ensure their implementations.

(g) spreading human rights literacy among various sections of society and promote awareness of the safeguards available for the protection of these rights through publications, media, seminars and other available means.

(h) issuing commissions for the examination of witness or documents.

(i) receiving evidence on affidavits

(j) requiring any public record or copy thereof from any court or office, and

(k) issuing commissions for the examination of witness or documents.

The Commission will have the power to summon any person to furnish information on such points or matters as may be useful or relevant to the subject matter of the inquiry. Any person so required shall be deemed to be legally bound to furnish such information.

However, no statement made by a person in the course of

giving evidence before the Commission shall subject him to, or be used against him in any civil or criminal proceeding - except a prosecution for giving false evidence by such statement.

The Commission, or any other officer not below the rank of a Gazetted Officer authorised by it, may enter any building or place where the Commission has reason to believe that some documents relating to the subject of inquiry may be found there. The Commission or its officers would also enjoy the right to seize any such document or take extracts or copies from the place.

The Commission shall have its own investigation agency to probe or human rights, which may utilise the services of any officer or investigation agency of the Government.

While conducting the investigation, an officer concerned would enjoy the right to

(a) summon and enforce the attendance of any person and examine him

(b) require the discovery and production of any document, and

(c) requisition any public record or copy thereof from any office.

The Commission will not have any right to punish the violators of human rights, although it would enjoy the rights of a Civil Court trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure while inquiring into the allegations.

The steps it would be able to take on completion of an investigation include:

1. Making recommendations to the government for "initiation of proceedings for prosecutions" or any other action against the human rights violator.

2. Approaching towards the High Court for such orders or filing writ petitions.

3. Making recommendations to the government or other authorities concerned for the grant of immediate interim relief to the victim or the members of his family.

Annual and special reports of the Commission

The Commission has to submit an annual report to the Government. If necessary, it would also submit special reports.

The government has to place the reports in Parliament in 90 days from the date of their submission. Besides, the government has to place a memorandum of action taken or proposed to be taken on recommendations of the Commission.

The government has also to show reasons for non-acceptance of the recommendations, if any.

But still there is no obligation on the part of the government to allow a discussion in the House on the human rights reports.

Salaries and Trust Fund

The salaries and allowances of the members of the Commission shall be determined by the parliament and shall be charged in the Human Rights Commission Trust Fund to be created.

The Fund will be created, in addition to the money to be appropriated by parliament, through donation or contribution as well as accumulating to it "from any source".

The Comptroller and auditor General of the state shall audit the accounts of the Commission.

The headquarters of the Commission shall be at Dhaka while it "may establish offices at other places in Bangladesh".

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BUET team wins ICPC contest

A team from Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET) won the first position in the ACM/International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) held at NSU on Tuesday, says a press release.

The programme was inaugurated by Professor Hafiz G A Siddiqi, Pro Vice Chancellor of NSU. Dr C J Hwang, the Asian Regional Director of ACM and Dr Abul L Haque, Chairman, Computer Science Department were also present. ICPC is the worldwide computer-programming contest and NSU is one of the four sites in Asia.

The winner - Team F of BUET - will participate in the contest finals to be held in the Netherlands on April 8-12.

BCL sweeps Khulna Govt Women's College election

KHULNA, Nov 18: Ruling party-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) swept a landslide victory in students' union election at Khulna Government Women's College held Tuesday, reports APB.

Out of the total 29 executive posts of the student union, BCL won 24. BNP-supported Jatiyatadab Chhatra Dal captured the rest five, according to official result.

Kazi Sakinur Setu has been elected vice president (VP) while Israt Jahar Poley and Shammi Akhter have obtained general secretary (GS) and assistant general secretary (AGS) posts.