

SC decides ETV's fate today

UNB, Dhaka

The fate of ETV will be decided in the Supreme Court this morning.

Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury told both parties yesterday that they would listen to arguments for two hours today "before disposing of the petition".

Earlier, the High Court had declared ETV's licence illegal.

Attorney General AF Hassan Arif told the court that the "government is in the crossfire. One party has been accusing the government for granting licence to ETV with terrestrial facility while the other party is for granting licence by abusing and misusing executive power."

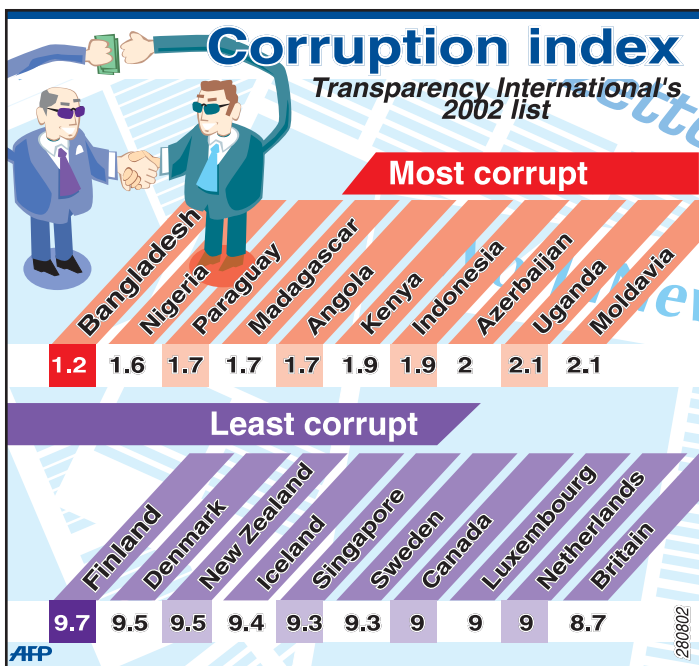
Arif, who stood for the government, submitted, "We have not filed any affidavit in this case. We are not a party."

He contended that the Supreme Court had given the complete judgement. The opponents could not specify "error of law on the judgement, which is the affirmation of the High Court verdict".

The attorney general submitted that consideration of ETV's petition would be tantamount to allowing the government machinery to continue abusing and misusing the authority of power.

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Most corrupt nation, again



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Once again, Bangladesh has been ranked as the most corrupt nation in the world.

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2002, released at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday by Transparency International (TI), Bangladesh tops the list of 102 countries drawn on the survey. The index ranked 102 countries in terms of the degree of corruption perceived among public officials and politicians.

The corruption survey failed to include every country. Afghanistan was omitted as well as almost any country from the Middle East or North Africa in the absence of sufficient data.

"The CPI focuses in the public sector and defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain," clarified Prof. Mozaffer

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2 more die of dengue in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people died while 72 more people were hospitalised for dengue treatment in different city hospitals in the last 48 hours.

The dead was identified as Motiur Rahman, 32, who died from Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever in Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Tuesday evening.

Another victim, S C Saha, a banker by profession, died of Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) at BIRDEM yesterday morning.

With the latest death from Dengue, the total number of death this year stands at 39 and the total number of dengue patients hospitalised so far are 3414.

DU probe report further delayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The one member judicial commission formed to investigate the incidents of Shamsunnahar hall of Dhaka University failed to submit its probe report to the Home Ministry yesterday.

The probe report was scheduled to be submitted on August-26. Due to a technical problem in the computer of the committee head Justice M Tafazzul Islam, some parts of the report was permanently deleted and technicians failed to restore them.

Sources said, some parts of the report had to be retyped from the hard copies and personal notes.

However, the commission is making all efforts to submit the report by today. One informed source said if necessary the commission would work overnight at its makeshift office at National Academy of Education and Research (NAEM) to finalise the report.

MBBS question paper leakage rumour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rumour that some questions of the upcoming MBBS examinations have leaked out has given rise to serious misgivings among examinees and their guardians.

Several thousand medical students from both public and private medical colleges will appear at the examinations that are scheduled to begin on September 1. But the rumour of leakage has unnerved examinees, some of whom alleged that a section of unscrupulous teachers are involved in it.

A number of examinees from Bangladesh Medical College, a private medical school, alleged that questions of at least two papers including surgery and gynaecology have somehow leaked out from Sir Salimullah Medical College (SSMC).

They alleged that some politically influential teachers, who are members of the question selection committee, distributed the questions for those two papers among the SSMC students. They called upon the relevant authorities to investigate the matter before the examinations begin.

Dr. Mohammad Abdullah, principal of the SSMC, however brushed aside the allegation as baseless.

"It is possible that some students are reluctant to take the exams due to inadequate preparation and are trying to spread the rumour in order to foil the examinations," he said, adding that a section of students was planning to launch a campaign to that effect.

"We summoned the students along with their guardians to make sure that they register for the examination," he said.

The matter however could not be confirmed independently.

Rejoinder & our reply

Energy Secretary Khairuzzaman Chowdhury in a rejoinder on Saturday protested a news item under the caption, "Jet fuel will be sent back if conductivity remains high" appeared in The Daily Star on the same day.

In the rejoinder, he denied to have said that "we are under tremendous pressure to accept the fuel, but we won't give in" as appeared in the report quoting him.

"I told them (some journalists) that I was there to attend the dinner and would hold discussion with the BPC officials the next day."

"I had no further discussions with the journalists nor did they ask me any more. I am surprised that your staff correspondent (I wonder if he was at all around there) in Chittagong had reported something which I never said," the secretary

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Crime lords rule Chittagong jail

DIG prisons flee port city in face of death threats

ZAYADUL AHSAN

A deputy inspector general (DIG) of prisons had to leave Chittagong in police escort on Tuesday in the face of death threats from top criminals.

The top prison official, Sardar Abdus Salam, went to the port city to investigate reported irregularities in the Chittagong jail.

His assignment came after a national news daily had reported that some top criminals were leading a life of luxury at the jail.

According to the reports, such notorious criminals as Sajjad and Jasim smuggled in liquor and arranged regular gambling sessions inside their cells in connivance with jail officials.

Sajjad is charged with multiple crimes including the killing of eight in Chittagong and Ward Commissioner Liakat, and Jasim with 11 murders among other criminal activities.

Sajjad was arrested last October with heavy weapons following a

shootout with Chittagong police. Police had earlier announced a Tk 1 lakh reward for his arrest.

On Monday, on the instruction of the inspector general of prisons, Sardar went to Chittagong from Comilla to look into the allegations.

No sooner had he reached the port city, he started receiving phone calls from anonymous sources to go back immediately or face dire consequence.

Unfazed by the threats, Sardar continued with his investigations and found out that the ground reality was worse than what the newspaper had reported.

On Tuesday, he confiscated two truckloads of materials, including foods, liquor, toiletries, luxury items and even knives, which had been smuggled into the jail.

After he came back to the Chittagong Circuit House in the afternoon, he received several telephone calls, threatening him that he would be shot the moment

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Polythene permitted for some products

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to permit temporarily use of polythene in packing some essential goods including pharmaceutical and food products, sources said yesterday.

The permission will remain valid till there is an alternative arrangement for packing such goods.

Thickness of polythene used in packing the essential goods must be 'over one hundred micron.' Any other use of polythene will remain banned as at present, the sources said.

The essential items include flour, biscuit, tea, milk (powder and liquid), vermicelli, chips, chocolate, saline, disposable syringe etc. Polythene could also be used temporarily as liner inside fertiliser and cement bags.

The decision was taken on Saturday in consultation with the forest and environment ministry following requests from businessmen who have been facing difficulties in packing goods due to the ban on use of polythene.

The commerce ministry has informed different trade bodies about the government decision.

Use of polythene was banned in the capital from January 1 this year and across the country from March 1.

Decision on reopening of DU today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Syndicate of Dhaka University (DU) will decide on reopening of the university at a meeting today with acting Vice-chancellor (VC) Prof AFM Yusuf Haider in the chair.

Prof Haider would place before the syndicate recommendations of a series of meetings he had with different bodies concerned on the issue of reopening the university.

The university was closed on July 28 by the then vice-chancellor Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury for an indefinite period amid a volatile situation following police atrocities on students of Shamsunnahar Hall on July 24.

The acting VC held meetings with the deans committee, provosts standing committee, the DU teachers association and different student bodies to discuss the campus situation and know their opinion on reopening the university. All the bodies suggested him to reopen the university soon.

Prof Haider then discussed the issue with the deans of faculties, chairmen of departments and directors of different institutions of

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BUET students' ultimatum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some agitating students of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) threatened to go for a 'fast unto death' if the authorities did not meet their demands by August 31.

Addressing a rally on the BUET campus yesterday, the 'BUET Students Against Atrocities' blamed the BUET authorities for their autocratic rules which ban all kinds of political activities on the campus.

Some students, mostly leaders of different left-leaning political parties, were demonstrating on the campus since the reopening after two months on August 11.

They alleged that by imposing such rules the BUET authorities were punishing the students along with the killers of Sabequn Nahar Sony. Sony was killed in a gunfight between two factions of JCD cadre on the BUET campus on June 8.

They demanded the withdrawal of ban on political activities on campus, expulsion of 12 students, cancellation of the BUET Ordinance 1961 and the punishment of Sony's killers.

A procession of the students also paraded the campus streets to press home the demands.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 29		6-22 pm
Aug 30	5-39 am	

Prayer Timings August 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

PM renews vow to curb corruption, crime

Reps meeting gets under way

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government's first challenge is curb crimes and corruption.

"We are going ahead with specific plans to eliminate these two septic wounds...we have made it clear that whoever involved in crimes and corruption must face legal action," Khaleda vowed.

Addressing the inaugural session of the Chittagong divisional

representatives meeting of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its front organisations at the Prodhonmontri Bhaban yesterday morning, the BNP chairperson reiterated her warning that even ministers, MPs or party leaders, if found guilty, would not be spared.

She said the situation has improved, but the government is not satisfied with little achievement. "We will be tougher...we will check any conspiracy to mar law and order, unsettle the government

and mislead people," she said.

Khaleda in her written speech promised that the second biggest challenge is to discipline the administration.

The government took some measures, which yielded a positive result and efforts will continue to improve the situation, she said.

Nearly 900 representatives, including ministers, MPs, central office-bearers and leaders from all district, municipal and thana units

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Ctg BNP men blast govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of the Chittagong division unit of BNP yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the 'poor performance' of the government in presence of the party chief, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

In a daylong "representatives' meeting" held at the 'Pradhan Montri's Bhaban,' the grassroots level leaders discussed issues like law and order, price hike of essentials, corruption, intra-party conflict, involvement of leaders and activists in criminal activities, terrorism and extortion across the country, particularly in the Chittagong division.

BNP policymakers and senior ministers were also present during the meeting, marked by stringent security and secrecy. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia delivered her concluding remarks. Details of her speech could not be known till filing this report.

According to sources, each of the speaker was allotted four minutes, but many violated the time limit and went on to discuss myriad of issues plaguing Chittagong as well as the country.

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Owners assoc spins money from permit riddle

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Toll-takers home in on 5,500 two-stroke three-wheelers, which have been allowed to ply city streets until December 31.

Hundreds of auto-rickshaw owners and drivers crowded the office of the owners association at Kamalapur yesterday to fill up forms and pay Tk 1,000 in 'fees'.

Asked, Monowar Hossain, an association leader, said the association's central office will be given Tk 600 and the Kamalapur office Tk 400.

"Our central office directed us to enlist every owner either for route permit or for compensation pack-

age from the government," the leader told The Daily Star.

Afzal Miah, 46, a driver, said, "We have no option but to pay the fees...I have to get a permit and paid Tk 1,000."

Contacted, Alhaj Fazul Huq, president of the Three-wheelers Owners-Drivers Unity Council, has said he does not know anything about the matter.

"We have asked thana committees to take only Tk 100 in membership fees," he said.

He assured that the central committee would instruct the thana committees not to take excess fees.

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WHEATGATE SCAM

Probe body keeps mum but more names leak out

AL forms fact-finding bodies

REAZ AHMAD

The government has decided to go for stern actions against all involved in wheat procurement irregularities as more names linked with the scam surface every day.

Besides, the main opposition Awami League has also formed committees made of the party lawmakers to probe into the irregularities.

Sources in the secretariat probe committee, which submitted an investigation report to the prime minister on Tuesday, revealed to the press that at least five ruling party lawmakers, assistant personal secretary to the food minister, food secretary Abdul Latif Mandal, food directorate DG Abdus Sattar Mia, ADG Entajul Huque, two directors Habibur Rahman and Nasiruddin and regional controllers of food of Dhaka and Rajshahi, and three district controllers of food (DCFs) of Bogra, Pabna and Mymensingh were involved directly and indirectly with the irregularities.

Sources said that the probe body, led by Civil Aviation Secretary in-charge Shaiful Islam, found a strong syndicate of politicians, food ministry officials

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PHOTO: STAR

Drivers of two-stroke three-wheelers which have been allowed to ply until December 31 queue up in front of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority office to collect special route permits. The government has exempted 5,500 vehicles from the September 1 ban.

Chaos, confusion over 'foolproof' stickers

BRTA starts issuing special permits to 5,500 two-stroke auto-rickshaws

MORSHED ALI KHAN and JULHAS RIPON

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and the Malik-Sramik Oikya Parishad Owners Association (AAAMSOP) were charging them up to Tk 2,500 for processing the documents and obtaining 'foolproof' stickers, which are valid up to December 31, 2002.

Representatives of the Association and the BRTA officials said the ongoing registration process would continue until September 1.

three wheelers alleged a nexus of middlemen, BRTA officials and leaders of the Auto-tempo, Auto-rickshaw and Auto-tempo Malik-Sramik Oikya Association (AAAMSOP) were charging them up to Tk 2,500 for processing the documents and obtaining 'foolproof' stickers, which are valid up to December 31, 2002.

Representatives of the Association and the BRTA officials said the ongoing registration process would continue until September 1.

The actual charge for the registration of three wheelers is Tk 45 only, which also includes an issuance of 'foolproof' sticker.

The government took strict measures to phase out two-stroke three wheelers in a bid to reduce air and noise pollution in the city. Although the BRTA says there are nearly 17,000 such auto-rickshaws in the city, police say there are more than 50,000 three-wheelers plying

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