

DG shipping accused of violating law

RAFIQ HASAN

A shipping department magistrate has formally accused the department's head of misusing authority for illicit gains, violating judicial and civil service norms and obstructing the magistrate's judicial duties.

Munir Chowdhury, special magistrate of Department of

Shipping (DoS), made the accusation against DoS Director General (DG) Captain AKM Ahsanul Azim in a written complaint lodged with the chief metropolitan magistrate's court on January 21.

Munir alleged the DoS DG created various obstacles in conducting a special drive against rule-defying vessels, which began on August 7 last year after the disaster of MV Nasreen-1 in which more

than 600 passengers were drowned.

According to sources, Azim also did not provide logistical support for the magistrate in the drive. On the contrary, he allegedly even instigated launch owners against the magistrate, who during the drive fined and detained around 650 passenger launches and cargo vessels for violating maritime rules

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Govt unleashing criminals: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the government of terrorising people by unleashing criminals on them.

"People are passing their days in panic spread by the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition loyalists and they are also in fear of government-backed criminals," Hasina told a discussion in the city's Paltan Maidan organised by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the AL, marking its 56th founding anniversary.

"The nature of a democratic government is that it will always be in fear of losing people's confidence if it does anything against public interest," Hasina observed. "The entire country is now a valley of killings where common people as well as political opponents, journalists, women, children and minorities are being tortured by ruling alliance loyalists."

Referring to the 15-point charter

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

A procession taken out by a civic committee to prevent oppression on women and children marches down a road in the capital yesterday demanding direct election to the reserved seats for women in parliament.

1 killed as gang sprays bullets on Rangamati villagers

UNB, Rangamati

Armed miscreants yesterday sprayed bullets on a group of villagers killing an indigenous man and injuring two others at Pukurchhari village in Rangamati.

A 15-strong gang opened fire on the villagers who refused to pay toll on their way to Kutukchhari Bazar under Naniarchar upazila, local sources said.

Tarit Chakma, 25, died on the spot while Mohini Mohan Chakma, 22, and Shyamal Chakma, 28, were wounded in the attack, police said.

A team of army and police went to the spot and recovered Tarit's body and sent the injured to Chittagong for medical assistance, locals said.

Meanwhile, the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), an anti-CHT peace accord group, held a rally at Kutukchhari Bazar and blamed Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the pro-peace accord organisation, for the 'barbarous shooting on innocent villagers'.

Protesting the armed assault, the UPDF also announced to block the Rangamati-Khagrachhari and Rangamati-Naniarchar highways today.

Prayer Timings		
January 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-45	6-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-47	5-53
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

B Chy to float political body next month

UNB, Dhaka

Former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury would announce his political 'platform' next month to introduce 'alternative stream of politics' for purging corruption and terrorism and establishing good governance.

The 'platform' will be followed by a new political party 'very soon', in keeping with the people's aspiration, Chowdhury said, divulging his plans during an online interview with expatriate Bangladeshis in the morning yesterday.

The platform, drawing 'neutral and honest' personalities into it from various strata of society, would be launched in February, a historic month for the Bengali nation on account of the Language

Movement, said Chowdhury, adding that the announcement might come before February 21.

Responding to a question, the former president said he wants to get 'responsibility, not power', by people's vote to resolve the nagging problems facing the nation. "If you call it 'power', then one can get it by means of corruption and terrorism, but I want 'responsibility' through people's vote."

Internet website www.kobitaagaan.com in its chat room of Paltan, formed a panel with Shamim Ahmad, chief of correspondents of UNB, Saiful Alam, chief reporter of Jugantar, and Mesbah Ahmed, chief reporter of A j k e r

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Joint drive in Khulna soon to cut crime

SHEIKH NAZRUL ISLAM, Khulna

Effective and decisive joint drive across the southwestern region of the country will be carried on in the wake of erupting violence.

The decision came at a law and order meeting at Khulna Zila Parishad conference room chaired by State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday.

The meeting directed law enforcers to ask people from all strata of life to come forward with information about criminals.

Babar told the meeting that necessary steps have been taken to nab the killers of New Age correspondent Manik Saha and punish the murderers of other journalists in the region.

On the cases regarding killings of journalists, he said two were disposed of, of which the accused in one were acquitted, four are under trial, two under investigation,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

CHILD TRAFFICKING

Bangladesh, Nepal top South Asian table

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers at a meeting yesterday said trafficking of children from Bangladesh and Nepal is highest among the South Asian countries.

Disclosing this, speakers at a opinion sharing meeting on 'Coun-

ter-Trafficking Campaign among School Children in Dhaka' also said children, mostly school going ones, were the victims of trafficking.

The Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS), a research organisation, arranged the meeting at Biam Auditorium.

Urging to create greater awareness among people, speakers said Dhaka is one of the most 'child trafficking prone' areas in this region.

A CWCS newsletter said 2,405 Bangladeshi children including

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Policemen take away banners from members of Dhaka District Autorickshaw Workers Union planning to form a human chain at Muktangan yesterday to blast the communications minister over the alleged CNG autorickshaw sleaze.

Mystery disease claims 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mysterious disease that broke out mainly in Rajbari a few weeks ago has left 15 people, mostly children under 13, dead in its wake as health officials grappled with the problem of diagnosis of the fatal virus, medical sources said yesterday.

Three of the children, two from Goalondo in Rajbari, died Saturday while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the city.

A team of experts visiting Goalondo has so far been unable to find any valuable clue to the mysterious disease except that it's most likely viral.

There have been reports of entire families fleeing the affected villages of Kumrakandi, Joran (Mollah Para) and Poura Bazar in Rajbari, while many others who stayed back have sent their children away to relatives in other districts.

The health directorate has designated additional doctors and nurses

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Outgoing CJ accents on Bar, bench trust

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judiciary cannot work effectively without mutual trust between the Bar and the bench, said KM Hasan, who retires from the Supreme Court as chief justice today.

"I grew to appreciate more the value and relevance of some lessons I had learnt previously. The first ... is the value of trust in the Bar," said Justice Hasan, accorded farewell by the Supreme Court Bar Association and the Attorney General's Office yesterday.

The law gives hope to those left out of the right to complain to court against their grievances, the outgoing chief justice said, terming the legal profession noble and advising lawyers to go ahead with their work to protect the interest of all.

"The law provides the basis for our freedom and rights," said

Hasan, appointed chief justice on June 22 last year, superseding two judges of the Appellate Division in a breach of seniority convention.

Before leaving office, Justice Hasan will submit to President Iajuddin Ahmed a report of the Supreme Judicial Council, tasked with dealing with an allegation of bail fix against a High Court additional judge.

Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain is likely to be the next chief justice in another probable breach of seniority convention in the Appellate Division where Justice M Ruhul Amin is next in terms of seniority, followed by Justice Fazlul Karim.

At yesterday's event, Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud accused the government of p o l i t i c i s

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

1 killed in ansars fire during clash over land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

One person was killed and 12 others were injured when ansars opened fire during clashes between two rival groups over a disputed land in the city yesterday.

Police and witnesses said clashes erupted when one of the feuding groups backed allegedly by ansars attempted to forcibly occupy land at Mohammad Nagar under Bayezid thana at around 8:00am.

As the group led by one Solaiman started demolishing the boundary wall and thatched house on the land under the possession of Muhammad Nagar Housing Society, local people resisted them, giving way to clashes, said Sarwar Jahan Jamail, a resident of the locality.

Around two hours after police brought the situation under control, the feuding groups clashed again at around 11:00am, he added.

At one stage, ansars hired by Solaiman opened fire on the rival

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Crane lifter crashes, killing 2 workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two construction workers fell about 60 feet to death when the lifter of a crane they were on broke loose from the chain and crashed at the Bangladesh Bank's head office yesterday.

The dead are Lokman, 20, and Abdul Karim, 17. Their colleague Monu Mia, 18, who was also on the lifter sustained injury and is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Monu told The Daily Star that they were climbing to the roof of the building on the lifter at 5:15pm.

"We were about to reach the rooftop when the chain snapped," Monu said.

The lifter fell on the roof of the building's extended two-storey part and Lokman died on the spot. Karim died later at 6:00pm.

KUSHTIA BY-POLLS EC finalises candidate list

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday announced the list of nine candidates for the Kushtia-1 by-polls.

Out of 11 nomination papers, the EC rejected candidature of Rezaul Haq of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) and Mohammad Sadek of Krishok Dal (KD) for failing to fulfil the EC criteria.

The candidates for the February 29 election are Reza Ahmed Bachechu (BNP), M Korban Ali (JP Najiur-Firoj), Abdul Halim (JP-Monju), Azibur Rahman (JSD-Rob), Shahir Uddin (JSD-Inu), Abdul Khaleq (Freedom Party), Nazrul Islam (Muslim League), Nazrul Islam (NAP-Bhashani) and Shahidul Islam (independent).

Take steps to bring down essentials price

MP urges Khosru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A ruling coalition lawmaker yesterday demanded immediate steps to deal with the unabated price hike of essentials, claiming that commerce minister knew well about the unscrupulous traders who are behind the artificial crisis.

"There is no dearth of commodities

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

ADP fund for metro, circular road sought

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh sought assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to implement two major transport projects conceived for removing traffic congestion from the capital.

The projects to be undertaken are construction of a circular ring road and installation of underground railroads in the city.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda yesterday made the

request at a meeting with the visiting high-powered consultation mission of the ADB at the ministry.

He also urged the ADB to take a leading role in financing construction of the Padma Bridge that will set up direct communications network between the capital and southwestern region of the country.

The 10-member ADB delegation

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3