

SC orders 9 officials

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in conformity with the 12 directives of the Supreme Court.

The petitioner also suggested the new formulations the Law Commission will make sent back to court in six weeks for implementation.

Barrister Amir-UI Islam submitted to the court two documents containing recommendations and opinions made by Bangladesh Administrative Service Association and the establishment ministry on these separation.

The court also ordered Attorney General AF Hassan Arif in writing to inform it whether the draft rules prepared and sent for presidential approval are in line with Supreme Court directives.

The attorney general submitted a copy of the draft rules and relevant papers sent by the establishment ministry to the Prime Minister's Office for presidential approval, which it had asked for Sunday.

'NAME THEM'
The court asked TH Khan to divulge the identity of the person who directed Senior Assistant Secretary of the establishment ministry Khalilur Rahman to convene the November 1 meeting.

"Those can be found in the documents that I have already submitted to

the court," Khan said, without disclosing the name. "Moreover, you (court) did not give any written order for this. Please order me in writing," he added.

The court later decided to issue the written order.

OFFICIALS KEPT STANDING

At one stage of the hearing, Khan told the court, "For the last three days, you have kept them (government officials) standing. I expected you to ask them to take seats."

"There are joint secretaries among my clients whose ranks are equivalent to the High Court judges," he remarked.

The court reacted sharply to the remarks and ordered the counsel to furnish the warrant of precedence.

Barrister Amir-UI Islam protested at the remarks and observed no such comparison should be drawn.

Khan later apologised for his comments.

WRONGDOING ADMITTED

The counsel for the government officials admitted that his clients committed wrong by distorting the Supreme Court draft rules.

"The draft you made did not reach my clients, they got the one the law ministry prepared," he said.

Shibir men lock Ctg medical college again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The deadlock at Chittagong Medical College (CMC) continued yesterday, the second day of an indefinite strike enforced by the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS).

The ICS enforced the strike on Monday demanding cancellation of the students' union election scheduled for December 30 and punishment to the JCD men involved in the Friday's JCD-ICS clash that left ten activists of both the student bodies injured.

During the strike on Monday, the ICS activists locked the academic and administrative buildings and blocked the roads leading to the campus.

Though police broke the locks of the academic and administrative buildings Monday afternoon, the Shibir activists again locked those yesterday morning.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner Amzad Hossain yesterday held a meeting with the JCD and Shibir leaders at his office, but the meeting yielded no fruitful results. CMC Principal Professor Chowdhury B Mahmud and BMA Chittagong unit leaders and other administrative officers of the CMC were also present at the meeting.

Some JCD leaders present at the meeting said the ICS leaders proposed for sharing seats in the students' union instead of going for the voting, which they (JCD leaders) refused outright. The Shibir leaders however denied it.

"Sending female workers to Dubai is completely banned since 1997," Quamrul Islam said. The government allows sending them only to Saudi Arabia under strict rules and regulations, he mentioned.

Govt weighs

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and she was tortured by the family she lived with as a house help.

Robbed of her possessions on return to Dhaka recently, Jamila was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The Daily Star yesterday ran a report on her ordeal.

The expatriate welfare ministry sent an official to the DMCH on the day to know about Jamila and people linked to the illegal sending of women abroad. The official however did not find the girl as she had already left for home with her mother.

State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Quamrul Islam asked the local authorities to track down the brokers and others who had sent Jamila to Dubai.

He also talked with local lawmaker and State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim, and Minister for Commerce Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, also in-charge of Narayanganj district, about possible actions against the gang involved in women trafficking in the district.

Expatriate welfare ministry sources said a notorious gang is very active in Narayanganj, sending people abroad illegally. They often traffic women and children to the Middle East countries.

Jamila had told The Daily Star there were a number of Bangladeshi female workers in the locality she lived in. One of them was Sufia, aged around 15, whom she had seen in the same house but she was not allowed to talk to her.

"Sending female workers to Dubai is completely banned since 1997," Quamrul Islam said. The government allows sending them only to Saudi Arabia under strict rules and regulations, he mentioned.

Jamila does not know the name or

address of her employer in Dubai. The letters she used to send to her parents bore the address: Jamila, C/O Md Ibrahim, PO Box 6177, RAK, UAE.

The girl said she used to give the letters to one Hammud to send that for her.

Jamila could not also say why her employer sent her back home suddenly. A member of the family only said, "We don't need you anymore."

It was Hammud who on Wednesday asked her to get into a car and took her to his house. The next day, she was taken to airport for a Bangladesh-bound flight.

When contacted, Mostafa, who brokered Jamila's going to Dubai, said he does not know the address of Jamila's employer. "I am just a mediator for a Dubai-based agent and my job is only to supply manpower. I do not know for whom Jamila worked."

Mostafa claimed himself as a 'floating broker' without any office and refused to name the local agency he works for.

Jamila's father showed a photocopy of an 'entry permit' issued against his daughter. It bore the name of one Laila Kulsom Mortaj (Emirates), of 050.5143547, PO Box-3125, as her sponsor in Dubai.

The Ministry of Interior of United Arab Emirates had issued the permit-2527378/201/2003, Jan 1, 2003, Dubai.

A source at Bangladesh Consulate in Dubai yesterday confirmed that Jamila no longer works there.

But when a source in Dubai contacted Jamila's employer's house over telephone, one Ayesha said Jamila was still working for them.

Declining to let the caller speak to Jamila, Ayesha said, "We don't let Jamila speak to anyone except her parents."

5 Bangladeshis drowned in India boat capsized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Five Bangladeshis are feared drowned after an Indian engine boat capsized in the Malancha river adjacent to the Sundarbans at midnight on Monday.

The incident occurred when the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) chased the boat laden with smuggled Indian goods being carried by 15 Bangladeshis.

According to some fishermen, the Bangladeshis smugglers were proceeding towards the Sundarbans by the boat through the Malancha river part of which falls in Indian territorial waters.

Ten others rescued from the capsized boat were detained by the BSF.

Admitting the incident, Shyamnagar police said the Bangladeshis smugglers were carrying ten drums of diesel in the engine boat.

Outlaw killed, 2 cops hurt in shootout

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushiya

A cadre of outlawed Janajuddho faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) was killed and two policemen were injured in shootout between law enforcers and outlawed cadres in Jhenidah early yesterday.

District Detective Branch (DB) arrested Abu Bakkar, an accused in seven cases including three of murders and a cadre of Janajuddho from Jhenidah bus stand area on Sunday night, police said.

Following Bakkar's confession, police started for the village Talsarpur of the upazila to seize hidden firearms but they came under fire by Janajuddho cadres at Alokdia village near Talsarpur.

The law enforcers returned fire, triggering shootout for hours. Trying to escape from the police van, Bakkar got caught in the crossfire and died on the spot, police said.

SI Hazrat Ali and a constable were injured in the incident.

Police seized a rifle and three bullets from the spot.

The body was sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Pinochet indicted for murder, kidnapping

REUTERS, Santiago

A Chilean judge on Monday formally charged Augusto Pinochet with homicide and kidnapping in one of many pending cases related to human rights abuses committed during his 17-year rule, and ordered house arrest for the former dictator.

But Pinochet, 89, remained free after his lawyers filed an immediate injunction at the Santiago Appeals Court against the charges and against the house arrest order.

"General Pinochet was declared mentally fit to stand trial in Chile," Special Judge Juan Guzman told reporters. Pinochet's defence lawyers have argued he is not mentally competent to face the charges.

In an earlier human rights case, Pinochet's defence lawyers successfully kept him from being tried when the Supreme Court ruled that his mild dementia made him mentally incompetent.

ACC's clarification

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of the Anti-Corruption Commission has written a letter addressed to the cabinet secretary and the establishment secretary requesting for a notification regarding major general (Retd) MA Matin's appointment as director general of the ACC, which was as per rule.

Mitford interns

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Kamrul Islam, president of the association. He apprehended 'political support' behind Bashir that instigated him to attack Dr Elina.

"We demand his immediate punishment," the newly elected president told the Daily Star last night. He said the interns will submit memorandum to the principal of the college, and JCD Dhaka (South) leaders, demanding punishment of the attackers.

Meanwhile, treatment services at the hospital are about to collapse as more than 160 intern doctors abstained from duties from 4:30pm yesterday. Only a handful of resident surgeons, registrars and emergency medical officers are now dealing with the patients.

In Saturday's election, Dr Kamrul, Dr Elina and Dr Shahbaz were elected president, secretary general and organising secretary respectively. Kamrul's lone contestant Dr Abdullah Al Mamun lost the election by a huge margin.

The newly elected executives celebrated their victory on Sunday at the doctors' canteen, but Dr Mamun and his supporters refused to accept the election results and formed a self-declared committee headed by Mamun. They hung a list of the members of the so-called committee at the canteen, ripping the list of the elected committee members.

Indo-Pak talks

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They already have a hotline between senior military commanders.

"We have covered some ground. We want to build and expand on this understanding," Khan said.

A second expert-level meeting is scheduled on Wednesday to discuss confidence-building measures in the conventional field.

Trains collide

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the northern state of Punjab.

Housewife Kamla Rani had been doing her chores deep in the Indian countryside when she heard a terrifying bang and raced outside.

Just a short distance away two passenger trains had collided head-on, killing and injuring many people.

"I heard a loud crash, almost a big blast. I ran out of my house to see smoke all around. Men and women from our village rushed to the accident site with ladders to try and get out as many people as possible," said Rani.

She quickly arrived at a horrific scene of twisted metal near this village in the northern state of Punjab.

Blue and cream wagons reared into the air at crazy angles. Inside, passengers screamed for help.

"People were shrieking as they were trapped inside coaches," said Jodha Mal, 40, owner of a nearby shop. He said he heard a huge screeching as the drivers tried desperately to halt the trains before the collision 150 kilometers (90 miles) east of the Sikh holy city of Amritsar.

Rescuers used gas cutters to free passengers screaming for help. Some villagers helped them while thousands more looked on from both sides of the tracks amid a cacophony of curious chatter.

At least four carriages were smashed in the collision between an express train travelling from Jammu in Kashmir to Ahmedabad in western Gujarat state, and a local train heading from Jalandhar to Pathankot.

A long line of bodies covered with white sheets stretched across the ground as workers loaded them into vans to send to hospital morgues.

Soldiers pulled an elderly man from the wreckage, his leg bloodied. Others prodded with long metal rods deep inside the wagons searching for victims.

Many of the dead were badly mutilated, police said.

Railway officials said there appeared to have been a mixup that allowed the local train onto the

single-track main line at the wrong time. But Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav said the cause still had to be determined.

The grisly scenes that played across Indian television screens were all too familiar.

There are around 300 accidents a year, small and big, involving the railway system, which sprawls 108,700 kilometers (66,800 miles) across the nation of a billion-plus people and carries around 13 million people each day.

'Criminal' dies in shootout with police

UNB, Chittagong

A suspected criminal was killed and another injured in a gunfight with a police patrol at Munsipukurpur in the port city's Panchlaish area yesterday evening.

The shootout broke out at about 6:30pm when the cops chased after a gang of four driving past the area in an auto-rickshaw, said witnesses.

A police sub-inspector was also injured during the exchange of fire that lasted about half an hour.

"When the terrorists chased by the policemen opened fire on them, the policemen returned fire," police sources said.

Identity of the suspected terrorist who died on the spot and the other one who got injured could not yet be confirmed, sources said.

Unofficial sources said the two sides exchanged over one hundred rounds of bullets while police claimed they fired only 12 shots.

Police said they recovered a swan-off rifle, a pistol and eight cartridges and seized the CNG-run vehicle from the scene.

Injured Sub-inspector Rafiqul Alam was admitted to the city's Dampara Police Hospital.

All the shops in the area were shut following the gunfight that panicked the locals.

Invest more

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would be the country's largest private sector satellite earth station aimed at facilitating local and overseas data and multimedia communications.

The finance minister observed that, due to lack of infrastructure facilities, the country could not make much progress in information and communication technology (ICT).

But, he expressed the hope, once the country is connected with the information superhighway through submarine cable network by September next year the sector would witness significant growth.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Syed Marghub Murshed was the special guest of the function. Economic Relations Division Secretary Mirza Tasadduq Hussain Beg, Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) Chief Operating Officer (COO) M Fouzul Kabir Khan, Prime Bank Chairman Azam J Chowdhury and Janata Bank Chairman Khandakar Shahidul Islam spoke, among others.

Murshed in his speech appreciated the initiative to build such a satellite earth station and termed it a milestone in the country's ICT sector.

The single largest ICT infrastructure project will be built through a syndicated loan and equity financing from the central bank at the Savar Export Processing Zone.

The total project cost has been estimated at Tk 16.24 crore. Of that the syndicate comprising IDCOL, Janta Bank and Prime Bank will provide Tk 9.74 as loan, the Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund of Bangladesh Bank will provide Tk 3.18 crore as equity and the remaining Tk 3.32 crore will be invested by DNS SatComm.

DNS SatComm Ltd earlier had obtained the licence from the BTRC, the telecom watchdog, to construct the station.

DNS SatComm Ltd COO Atiqul Ahsan said, "Corporate houses, banks and satellite television channels would be our prime prospective clients."

He said, after the earth station is set up, DNS would be able to provide lower bandwidth enabling banks to establish more automated teller machines (ATMs) at remote places with lower cost involvement.

"Once the station is on, we expect to have a boom in use of ATMs and credit cards," he said.

Currently banks use VSAT (very small aperture terminal) for online banking and running remote ATMs. The lowest bandwidth locally available is 64 kbps (kilobytes per second), which is costly.

So, once we are ready, local banks would be able to go online with a lower budget, he quipped.

DNS SatComm Ltd Managing Director Rafael Kabir offered the vote of thanks.

Nation pays homage

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With defeat looming large, the Pakistani occupation army aided by their local collaborators -- Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams -- abducted frontline Bengalee intellectuals and professionals on December 14, 1971 and killed them to cripple the nation intellectually.

The killers dragged renowned academics, teachers, literateurs, doctors, engineers, journalists and other eminent personalities blindfolded out of their houses and killed them before dumping the bodies in Rayerbazar, Mirpur and other killing fields.

Different sociocultural organisations and political parties observed the day through various programmes, including seminars, discussion and silent processions. They hoisted black flag and the national flag at half-mast to commemorate the martyred intellectuals.

Thousands of people, including teachers, students, freedom fighters, party activists, professionals and members of the martyred intellectuals' families, visited the Martyred Intellectuals Mausoleum at Mirpur and Rayerbazar Memorial and placed wreaths to show respect to the martyrs.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar placed wreaths at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals Mausoleum in the morning.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina placed wreath at the mausoleum and later visited the Rayerbazar memorial built on the main killing field.

Projonmo Ekattor and Amra Muktiyoddhar Santan, two organisations of the children of martyred intellectuals and freedom fighters, staged a token hunger strike and held a rally at Rayerbazar memorial in protest against activities that disgraced the mausoleum.

They blamed the government for allowing 'anti-social activities' on the mausoleum premises and the construction of a public toilet adjacent to the killing field.

"The traitors who killed our fathers, brothers and mothers are now the part of the government and they are trying to erase their names from history," said Tajul Islam,

general secretary of Amra Muktiyoddhar Santan.

He alleged the memorial has become a safe haven for some anti-social elements due to lack of security arrangements that seriously damaged the sanctity of the mausoleum. Moreover, no step has been taken to protect it from river erosion.

The children of the real freedom fighters are being deprived of the 30 percent quota in the government jobs, as the government is appointing the children of fake freedom fighters to the posts, said Omar Faruk, son of a freedom fighter.

The children of the freedom fighters who passed a special test to fill up the job quota in the nationalised commercial banks in 2000 did not get the jobs as the government has not yet recruited them, he alleged.

The government initiative to make a revised list of freedom fighters has become a farce, said Shamsul Arefin Khan of Muktiyoddha Sangsad Central Command Council.

Sumon Zahid, Shahin Reza Noor, Zahid Reza Noor, Jobaida Haque Ajanta, Humayun Kabir, Emdadul Haque, Ashrafal Islam Nayan and Rasheduzzaman Shahin, among others, spoke at the rally.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim also placed wreath at Rayerbazar mausoleum.

Newspapers published articles highlighting the significance of the day while Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television aired special programmes on the day.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz led a silent procession of teachers and students and placed wreaths at the graves of the martyrs near the university central mosque.

The DU authorities also placed wreaths at the mausoleum at Mirpur.

BNP Awami League, the 11-party, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party, different factions of Jatiya Party, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Gono Forum, Bangla Academy, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote and other socio-cultural organisations arranged various programmes to mark the day.

Iraq abductors mistook Kashem as Egyptian

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi truck driver Abul Kashem Faruk, who was freed by Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI) recently, yesterday told the BBC Bangla Service that kidnappers mistook him as an Egyptian.

"But after learning that I am a Bangladeshi, they no longer misbehaved with me," he said, adding that he said his daily prayers with Iraqi people.

They also mistook his companion, Sri Lankan hostage - as an American or a Kuwaiti, Faruk said.

Berlin-based TI

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plans change in CPI methodology. The UNB report was run by a number of English dailies.

A copy of the letter was sent also to The Daily Star.

In the letter, the TI official said that the Transparency International's Chairman Peter Eigen has had a meeting with Bangladesh's Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman recently to discuss Bangladesh's low score in the CPI as well as Bangladesh government's initiatives to combat corruption.

"As was pointed out with the minister, the CPI is compiled in a very responsible way, using highest quality surveys and based on peer-reviewed academic standards. Contrary to your report, we have no plans to change the methodology of the CPI, nor are we under threats from governments for legal action, or otherwise, regarding the CPI, which this year ranked more than 140 countries based on expert perceptions of corruption," reads the letter.

It also mentioned that at the meeting with Saifur, TI chairman stressed that before expecting Bangladesh's anti-corruption reputation to improve, the government needs to tackle corruption more rigorously, and at the same, to communicate the steps it takes to that end.

The TI welcomed the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission in Bangladesh.

Rice goes

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Economists attribute the situation to the persistent inflation in recent times.

Raju Ahmed, a retailer at the city's Mohammapur Krishi Market, said only a month ago a *maund* *Suvarna* rice would cost Tk 540-Tk560 while now it sells at Tk 630-Tk 640.

About two months ago one *maund* *Minikit* would cost Tk 720-Tk 740, but now it costs Tk 820-Tk 840, Raju added.

In the same period, price for one *maund* *Nazirshail* was around Tk 700 but now it is between Tk 740 and Tk 760. The BR-28 rice, which would sell at Tk 550-Tk 600 a *maund*, now costs Tk 700, said Ruhul Amin, another retailer.

Low-cost coarse rice was priced at Tk 520 a *maund* two months ago, but now it is at Tk 600.

At the retail market, price of one kilo *Nazirshail* rice has upped to Tk 22-Tk 24 from Tk 18-Tk 19. *Suvarna* sells at Tk 18-Tk 20 rising from Tk 15-Tk 16, *Minikit* at Tk 24 from Tk 20-Tk 22, coarse rice at Tk 17 from Tk 14 two months ago, the traders said.

Prices of almost all kinds of rice have shot up by Tk 20-Tk 25 a *maund* over the last one week, they said.

While both the retailers and wholesalers blamed the hike in prices of rice on shortfall in the production due to devastating floods this year, some of the wholesalers said that inadequate supply was also caused by some unscrupulous rice millers who hoard rice for high profit.

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drew salaries without working.

It is not possible to find out the exact amount of money the officials embezzled through irregularities, the report pointed out.

Some government and non-government organisations that hired space at the Jiban Bima Corporation buildings have not paid Tk 5 crore in space rent. Even the Board of Investment owes the corporation Tk 1.64 crore in space rent, the report said.

It blamed corporation officials for failure to collect rent regularly.

The probe report also mentioned there are audit objections involving about Tk 143 crore. There is a discrepancy of Tk 95.62 crore between life fund and investment in the organisation, and Tk 47 crore was shown as premium overstated, said the audit report in 2001.

Officials of the corporation told the parliamentary probe body the authorities already took measures concerning alleged anomalies and against officials involved. Moreover legal action was taken to clear outstanding space rent and recover corporation's land illegally occupied at Narayanganj and at Mouchak in Dhaka.

Rising rice price

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point-to-point inflation rate was only 1.94 percent. It jumped to 5.22 percent in June 2002-03 and to 6.64 percent in June 2003-04.

The general inflation rate shows a similar trend too. The BBS recorded an alarming overall inflation of 7.35 percent in September and 7.92 percent in October.

Back in June 2001-02 that rate was 3.58 percent. It climbed up to 5.03 percent in June 2002-03 and 5.64 in June 2003-04.