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ACC falters on missing regulations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Anti Corruption Commission yesterday failed to take a decision on any of the seven agenda points it adopted since its creation 65 days ago because of missing rules and regulations.
The ACC yesterday also backtracked from appointing a legal consultant, since making such an appointment in the absence of rules and regulations may violate the ACC Act, which requires all decisions to be made in line with an established set of commission rules and regulations.
"We'll write today to the finance ministry to know whether we can appoint a legal consultant before formulation of rules and regulations," ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan said after yesterday's meeting at ACC headquarters at Argagaan.
SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

36 US soldiers killed in chopper crash, attacks in Iraq

Al-Qaeda, others threaten to foil polls; 7 die in car bomb; attacks on polling centres

AGENCIES, Baghdad
Thirty six US soldiers were killed in Iraq yesterday in helicopter crash and attacks amid escalating violence ahead of the landmark election.
Meanwhile, Al-Qaeda and several other extremist groups have threatened to disrupt the Iraq polls and warned the people against taking part in the electoral process.
Thirty one US Marines were killed when a helicopter transporting them crashed in the desert of western Iraq.
Four other US Marines were killed in fighting in Anbar province and another in an attack on a US patrol near the northern town of Duluyah yesterday, the deadliest day for the US forces in Iraq.
Besides, seven other people were killed in a car bomb attack on a police station in Kirkuk.
With only days before the election, guerrillas carried out a string of

2 traders gunned down in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Assailants gunned down two traders in front of their house in Jatrabari last night.
Aminul Islam Johnny, 25, a wholesale timber seller, and his cousin Saiful Islam Sajib, 26, a furniture trader, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) 75 minutes after they were shot in the head.
Witnesses said the two were lying in a pool of blood 25 yards off their grandfather's house at Kalapatti Lane at 9:30pm.
After the two were rushed to the DMCH, doctors declared them dead.
Chhoto, a criminal of Jessore, who was a friend of Johnny's uncle

Cabinet body may review projects next week

ABU SAEED KHAN
The cabinet purchase committee may decide next week the fate of two controversial telecoms projects--Submarine Cable Project and a project for extension of district-level telephone exchanges.
The Cabinet Division recently asked the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT) to explain its position on alleged irregularities in both these projects.
The Cabinet Division had earlier detected gross irregularities in multimillion-dollar telecoms equip-

8 jailed for arson on Mamun's house

UNB, Gazipur
The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Gazipur, yesterday sentenced eight activists of the Awami League (AL) to varying jail terms for ransacking and setting fire to the house of businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun, a friend of Tarique Rahman, after the murder of Ashanullah Master MP last year.
The convicts are Anwar, Rafiq, Sumon, Firoz, Shahidullah, Murad, Touhid and Nahid.
Of them, Anwar and Rafiq were sentenced to five years imprisonment and fined Tk 5,000 each, while Sumon, Firoz, Shahidullah, Murad and Touhid to four years and fined Tk 3,000 each. Nahid was sentenced to serve one year in jail and fined Tk 1,000.
After examining records and witnesses, Judge M Salimullah found the eight guilty and handed down the punishment. The court acquitted 24 others of the charges.
SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Army suspects JMJB used radio-controlled bomb in Jatra attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra
Army experts suspect Shafiqullah arrested on January 17 and his Islamist terrorist outfit Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) used radio-controlled bombs in some of their terrorist acts.
The assumption is based on two facts. First, the chemical seized from him was identified as picric acid, or Trinitrophenol, which is one of the most dangerous chemicals and is primarily used to manufacture explosives. And second, the electric circuit found with him was identified as that of radio.
After testing a sample of the chemical by setting fire to it yesterday, a seven-member army team concluded that it belongs to picric acid category of explosives.
Police arrested Shafiqullah during a raid at Chaksodu village under the Gabtali upazila on January 17 to arrest Joinal, a prime suspect of hurling bombs on a Jatra show at Laxmicola village under Shajahanpur upazila on January 14.
Police suspected Joinal's hand in



Security in the capital has been beefed up ahead of the 13th Saarc summit. Rapid Action Battalion members are seen on patrol in front of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel where some of the foreign delegates will stay.

Saarc LDCs to get EU duty-free access in July

BSS, Dhaka
The European Union (EU) has decided to give duty-free access to readymade garments from the least developed countries of the Saarc region, including Bangladesh, under new GSP facilities to be effective from July this year.
The industry here can use fabrics and raw materials from the Saarc and the Asean countries under new facilities, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Annisul Huq told the BSS yesterday.
He welcomed the EU move, saying it will work as a new booster to the least developed states of the Saarc region to face the post-MFA challenges.
He said a new bill will be tabled simultaneously in the US Congress

Cabinet body okays Janata Bank consultant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The cabinet purchase committee yesterday approved a proposal to hire a consultant for improving the performance of Janata Bank.
As per a condition of the World Bank, the Finance Division had floated a tender under the "Enterprise Growth and Bank Modernisation Project" last year.
It short-listed six companies and finally selected International Development Ireland Ltd. (IDIL) as the lowest bidder. The company has sought \$ 5.07 million for three-year service to improve Janata Bank's performance.
As the cabinet committee okayed the deal, the IDIL will start work immediately after it gets a nod from the prime minister.
The IDIL will now hire eight advisers who will guide it on treasury functions, audit, credit management, recovery, human resources, accounting, information technology, branch management and other areas.

JMJB leader sent to jail, cadres go into hiding

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi
A magistrate court yesterday sent Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) Bagmara chief Abdus Sattar to jail after police placed him before the court implicating him in the Awami League (AL) leader Mahub Hossain murder case.
Police also arrested three more people in connection with the Bagmara turbulence.
Meanwhile, JMJB cadres apparently went into hiding following the arrest of the JMJB leader.
Sattar was arrested on Tuesday night after Mahub's father Saber Ali filed a case accusing him and many others of the murder.
Mahub Hossain Dewan, AL publicity secretary of ward no. 9 in Taherpur municipality was bombed to death by JMJB militants while they were fleeing after a foiled attempt on the life of Sripur AL President and Union Council Chairman Mokbul Hossain Mridha.
SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

BHAIRAB BRIDGE COMPENSATION CLAIM Purchase body to seek law ministry views

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
As the British contractor of the Bhairab bridge keeps on claiming an additional payment of £8.6 million, the cabinet purchase committee yesterday decided to seek the law ministry's opinion whether to pay off the claim or go for an international litigation.
The committee members vehemently opposed the payment of compensation to the contractor, Edmund Nuttal, which raised a host of complaints soon after it started constructing the British-funded bridge in November 1999.
The Department for International Development (DFID), UK provided the original fund of Tk 481 crore to construct the bridge over the river Meghna.
By the time the "Bangladesh-UK Friendship Bridge" was opened in late 2002, the company claimed over £14 million as compensation, showing 13 grounds including the delay in getting permission for dredging and topographical data collection, change of the designated piling area and obstacle to work due to hant.
A three-member arbitration board, comprising one from the contractor, one from the govern-

Abandoned mortar shell found again in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
Police on Tuesday night recovered an abandoned mortar shell, the same kind that had killed two people and injured 10 others in a blast on September 6 last year in the north-eastern divisional headquarters.
A cleaner spotted the 10kg piece lying abandoned in front of a scrap metal shop opposite to Nosiba Khatun Girls High School on Station Road on Tuesday, said a police official. Informed by the shop owner, two police Kotwali officers retrieved it at about 9:20pm.
A senior police official identified the shell as that of a mortar but could not immediately say whether it is live. He said they have informed

Appeal for the Tsunami Victims

Large areas in Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Indonesia and the Maldives lie devastated. The enormous human and material cost of the Tsunami is only now being fully registered. Today, we need to recall the numerous natural disasters that have struck Bangladesh over the last 35 years, and the overwhelming support received from the international community, governments and private citizens around the world, which made it possible for us to rebuild the shattered lives of so many.
The devastation caused by the Tsunami and the fact that it has impacted so many of our neighbours has witnessed an unprecedented response from the international community. The Government of Bangladesh has also provided valuable help but more can be done particularly by the people of Bangladesh.
Having been the recipients of international aid for so long, it is important for Bangladesh and civil society in particular to come forward to demonstrate our sense of solidarity with our neighbours in their moment of need by joining the ranks of those who have mobilised funds, resources and technical help to aid the Tsunami victims. We the undersigned therefore call upon the citizens of Bangladesh, in their institutional, business or individual capacity, to come forward and contribute whatever resources lie within their means, to support the Tsunami victims.
To extend this support a Bangladesh Citizen's Fund for Tsunami Victims (BCFTV) is being sponsored by a broad range of well regarded institutions and individuals across Bangladesh. Contributions to the Tsunami Fund may be deposited in any branch of any bank supporting this appeal. All participating banks are expected to open Tsunami accounts in all their branches to facilitate collection of contributions. The accounts will be administered with complete transparency and a number of the leading dailies will publish all contributions received for the BCFTV. This will ensure that all contributions handed over to the Fund will have updated public knowledge of who has contributed how much to the Fund. It is proposed that the funds accumulated under the BCFTV will be disbursed to the Presidents of the Sri Lanka and Maldives and the Prime Minister of India on the occasion of the forthcoming 13th SAARC Summit in Dhaka. Some component of the fund will also be set aside as contributions for Tsunami victims in Indonesia and Thailand. All citizens of Bangladesh are invited to contribute to this effort to stand by our neighbours.

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Prayer Timing
January 27

	Azan	Jamaat
Felr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Davos kicks off festival of power and politics

AFP, Davos
Business, political and social leaders from every continent except Antarctica converged on this plush ski resort Wednesday for the start of the World Economic Forum, an annual brainstorming session on global problems, including poverty and climate change.
In a keynote speech, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who takes over as chairman of the G8 group of industrialised countries this year, was to set an agenda which World Economic Forum organisers said would highlight environmental issues.

Two killed in 'crossfire' Mob lynches 2 outlaws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna
An outlaw leader and a highwayman were killed in 'crossfire' with police yesterday in Khulna and Naogaon.
Angry mobs also killed two outlaws in Bagerhat the same day.
Dipankar Sarker, 35, a listed criminal and a top leader of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) was killed in an encounter with police early yesterday at Wapda sluice gate area of Rangpur union under Dumuria upazila of Khulna district.
He was arrested from Shalna Bazar under the same upazila that night.
Police seized a foreign-made gun, two live cartridges and six used shells of bullets left there by Dipankar's accomplices who tried to snatch him during the encounter.
According to police, Dipankar was one of the most wanted criminals in the South-Western region. He was accused in four criminal cases including one of murder and two of kidnaps recorded with the Dumuria Police Station.
Dipankar, who left the country to evade arrest in the face of ongoing joint operations by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and police, came back from India last month to regroup armed cadres of NBCP, Police said.

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