

SC Bar polls begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day election of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) begins today with tough competition between two politically divided panels.

Thirty-five candidates from three panels are contesting for 14 posts.

The panels are Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Panel, Sammilita Ainjibi Samonnoy Parishad, and Bikalpadhara Bangladesh O Swadhin Samana Ainjibi Parishad.

The Jatiyatabadi panel comprises pro-government lawyers, the Sammilita panel pro-Awami League lawyers, and the Bikalpadhara panel consists of lawyers belonging to other political parties.

From the Jatiyatabadi panel, former speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali and Abdullah Al-Mamun are contesting for the post of president and secretary respectively, from the Sammilita panel, Mahbub-e-Alam and M Inayetur Rahim for president and secretary, while from the Bikalpadhara panel SM Zillul Haq and M Salim Ullah are contesting for the post of president and secretary respectively.

The voting will be held from 10.00am to 5.00pm with a break for lunch and prayer from 1.00pm to 2.00pm everyday. Some 1,547 voters are expected to exercise their franchise. Meanwhile, a writ petition over the voters' list remains pending in the High Court (HC).

A division bench of the court yesterday adjourned for two weeks the hearing on the writ petition challenging the validity of 493 members of the SCBA.

Member-candidates of Jatiyatabadi panel Abu Shams Khaliquzzaman and Nasrin Aktar filed the petition.

The HC rejected the petitioners' plea for stay on the election.

The court also asked the attorney general to submit a report after scrutinising the voters' list of the SCBA within two weeks.

Senior lawyers of the Supreme Court said election to SCBA will be held under the existing voters' list. Attorney General AF Hasan Arif who is also the chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council told the reporters that the HC will take the decision on the irregularities in the voters' list two weeks later.

"As per the court's order, there is no restriction in holding the election. The SCBA is the largest lawyers' organisation in the country. Any division among the lawyers with the voters' list is not expected. As the chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, I sought adjournment of hearing on the case and the court granted my submission," he said.

Advocate TH Khan and Advocate Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed moved for the petitioner while Barrister M Amir-ul-Islam for the SCBA.

LEASE OF LAND BFDC secy, chairman, 9 others sued

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A criminal case against secretary, chairman and nine others of Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation (BFDC) was filed with a Dhaka court yesterday for alleged embezzlement of Tk 30 lakh.

Kabir Ahmed, managing director (MD) of M/S Shuvo Food Processing Industries LTD, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against the accused.

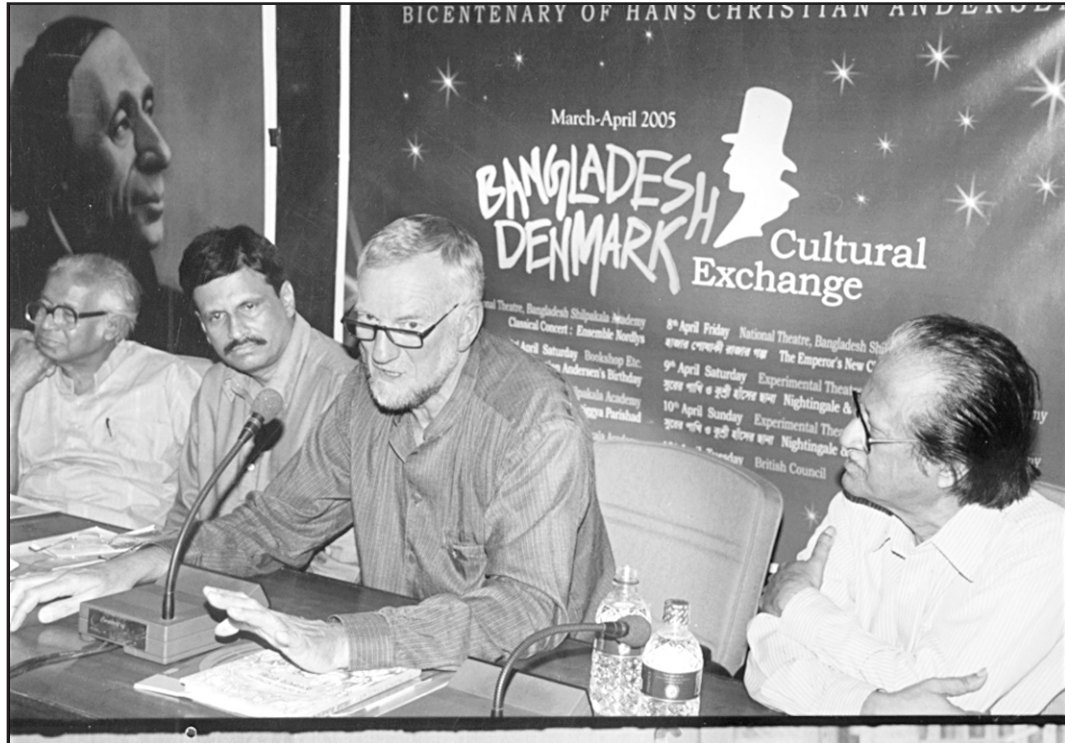
The accused are secretary Sheikh Monjurul Haq, chairman Mohammad Abdul Haq, manager (Implementation Department) MM Islam, executive engineer (Implementation Department) MA Hannan, manager (Buying and Sale Department) Mohammad Ishaq, marketing officer (Implementation Department) Hosneara Akhter Khanam, assistant audit (Control) MA Kadir, manager (Buying and Sale Department) Mohammad Delwar Hossain, manager (Marketing Department) AR Hassan, MA Haye and manager (Marketing Centre), Narayanganj Shahidul Hossain Biswas.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullah Baqui fixed today for order on the issue.

In his complaint, Kabir said the secretary and chairman in connivance with others gave a tender notice in the Daily Bhorer Gajog and the Daily Janakantha inviting a lease of 137 acres of land at Fatullah in Narayanganj district on July 4, 1998. Following the tender, the company communicated with the accused to take the land for lease. The accused and the company signed a contract for the lease for 20 years and the company paid Tk 15 lakh in cash for security bond and Tk 15 lakh for bank guarantee on July 29, 1999.

After taking the lease, the company on March 29, 2003 got approval from the Fisheries Directorate for exporting frozen shrimp and other fishes to the European Union countries. The company then spent Tk 23.37 crore for production.

But the Bangladesh Inland Shipping Authority (BISA) informed the company that the land which they took in lease is not owner of the BFDC, the complainant added.



Danish Ambassador Niels Severin Munk speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday on Bangladesh-Denmark Cultural festival beginning in the city on April 2.

ROUNDTABLE ON GARMENT INDUSTRY 'Develop compliance with labour law, ILO Conventions'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for developing compliance with the labour laws and ILO Conventions in the readymade garment sector for the survival of the factories in the competitive global market.

The roundtable on 'Compliance development in the garment industry in Bangladesh' was organised by the Nari Uddug Kendra (NUK) and sponsored by the Asia Foundation.

Most garment factories in the country fail in the compliance rating and do not get direct business order from the buyers, said Mashuda Khatun Shefali, executive director of NUK, in her presentation.

Only 500 to 600 factories, out of 4,000, are found compliant, she added.

Abolition of child labour and forced labour, elimination of discrimination, safe working environment and reasonable working hours are a must to ensure compliance, she said.

She also placed some recommendations including raising

awareness about current market requirements, improving relations between workers and management and enforcing the new labour code.

Dr Wazedul Islam Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Trade union Centre, said employers, workers and buyers all are equally responsible for ensuring social compliance.

"But in most cases, the employers in our country do not take them in confidence," he said.

Fazlul Haque, president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, M Kamal Akhter, general manager of Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ), Haroon Rashid, director, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association, Iftekhar Ahmed, senior research fellow of Bangladesh Enterprise Institution, and Kim McQuay, representative of the Asia Foundation, also spoke.

PM regrets poor media coverage of dev efforts

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said there is two divergent streams of politics in the country one of development and production which is pro-people while the other just running counter to people's interest.

"People are aware of the development efforts of the government," she said regretting low coverage given by the media.

Khaleda was talking to a delegation of Zia Parishad at the PMO on the occasion of their 18th founding anniversary.

She thanked the Parishad for carrying forward late President Ziaur Rahman's ideology of 'politics of development and production'.

The delegation appreciated development during the last three years, particularly in the field of education, curbing crime and controlling law and order.

They also lauded other government measures, including formation of independent anti-corruption commission and banning smoking in public.

PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury was present.

Land tax to increase in CHT soon

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Land tax will be increased in the hill tracts soon for the first time in over 100 years.

The government will increase tax in the area through regional council in consultation with the local people's representatives.

It was decided at a meeting of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry and the representatives of the regional council and hill districts council on Monday.

Regional council chairman Jotirindyo Bodhipriyo Lama alias Shantu Larma, member of the council Goutam Chakma, Rupayan Dewan, Rangamati district council chairman Dr. Maniklal Dewan and Khagrachhari district council chairman Nakshatra Lal Deb Barman were present on the occasion.

Deputy minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan presided over the meeting.

Emerging from the meeting, Shantu Larma said we exchanged views on overall development of hill tracts.

He said that they discussed the effectiveness of regional council and district council law, formulation of procedure of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry and implementation of

the peace agreement.

Moni Swapan said differences of opinion arise when the regional council and district council work with district administration together. The meeting was organised to resolve these problems through better coordination.

He said that everyone welcomed the proposal by Dr Manik Lal Dewan for increasing land tax. The proposal will be implemented soon on the basis of the opinions of headmen, karbari (village chief), union parishad chairmen and chiefs of Chakma, Bomang and Mong circles.

The ministry sources said land tax was imposed on the hill tracts through CHT Regulation Act, 1900 during the colonial rule. People have been paying this nominal tax to the government for the last over 100 years.

People believe that the increase in land tax at a reasonable level will help to boost the price of land in the hill tracts. Consequently, poor peasants will also get bank loan easily.

The hill tracts at the southeastern region of the country is situated on 54 thousands acres of land where nearly 15 lakh people reside.

56 shops gutted in city fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-six shops were gutted in a devastating fire at Khilgaon kitchen market of the city in the early hours of yesterday.

Motijheel police and witnesses said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at about 3.15am, and soon engulfed the entire area.

On information, 11 fire fighting units reached the spot and brought the fire under control after two hours.

The local people alleged that the fire brigade vehicles reached the spot lately, an allegation which fire brigade officials denied.

According to a preliminary estimate, properties worth about Tk 3.50 crore have been damaged. Nobody was injured.

Housing and Public Works Minister and local lawmaker Mirza Abbas visited the spot and assured the victims of necessary government help.

Obituary

BDNEWS, Dhaka

ABM Golam Majid, Jhenidah district Awami League president and a valiant freedom fighter, died at the Birdem Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 75.

He was also the president of Jhenidah Bar and vice-president of Supreme Court Bar.

He is survived by his wife, four sons and four daughters.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at the New DOHS mosque yesterday.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in a statement expressed deep shock at the death of Majid.

She prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

MA Berek

BSS, Barisal

MA Berek, freedom fighter and former lawmaker died of a cardiac arrest Sunday night at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital at the age of 66.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter to mourn his death.

Berek was elected member of parliament from Jatiya Party ticket from Hizla-Muladi constituency in 1986.

His namaz-e-janaza was held on Aswini Kumar Town Hall premises here.

He was buried at the Muslim graveyard at the Gurstan Road of the city with due state honour.

Amjad Hossain

BSS, Rajshahi

Amjad Hossain, an Executive Engineer of Barind Multipurpose Development Authorities (BMDA), died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) following a cardiac arrest yesterday afternoon at the age of 52.

He left behind his wife, one son and a daughter to mourn his death.

Principal Ibrahim Khan's death anniversary today



Today is the 27th death anniversary of litterateur and educationist Principal Ibrahim Khan, says a press release.

On the occasion, A discussion will be held at the Ibrahim Khan University College at Bhupur in Tangail at 4.00pm today. Besides, a day-long doa and milad mahfil will be organised at the local madrasa.

Principal Ibrahim Khan Foundation and Bhupur Upazila Kalyan Samity will organise a discussion on the life of Principal Ibrahim Khan at the Poet Sufia Kamal auditorium at the National Museum in the city at 4.30pm on April 2. A doa mahfil will also be held at the Sobhanbagh Masjid after Asr prayers.

Farah Amena Rashid



Today is the fifth death anniversary of Farah Amena Rashid, daughter of Engineer Mamun Rashid, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at the Wapda Orphanage at Motijheel in the city. Foods will also be distributed among the destitute.

ATTACK ON THE LANDLESS IN SATKHIRA 'Bring land grabbers to book'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights organisations yesterday demanded that the government bring the land grabbers to book, who attacked the landless people in Kaliganj and Ashashuni upazilas in Satkhira in a bid to evict them from Khas land.

They also called on the government to rehabilitate the 200 affected families and ensure security for them.

Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (Blast), Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Action Aid Bangladesh, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Centre for Disability and Development (CDD) placed the demands at a press conference at the National Press Club.

The rights groups alleged that the attackers, backed by a local Union Parishad chairman, set fire to the houses of the families and also raped a woman on February 27.

Equipped with sharp weapons, the attackers swooped on the landless people, killing Chabiran Bibi, a 50-year-old woman, the rights groups said in a probe report on the incident.

According to the report, the

DHAKA TODAY

Film festival

The inaugural ceremony of Japanese Film Festival 2005 will be held with Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi as chief guest. Venue: Auditorium of the Institute of Modern Languages, Dhaka University. Time: 4.00pm. The inaugural function will be followed by the screening of two films titled 'Tomestone for Fireflies' and 'Sumo Do, Sumo Don'.

Kathak dance

The High Commission of India will present a Kathak dance performance by Pandit Krishna Mohan Mishra and his trainees. Venue: National Museum Auditorium, Shahbagh. Time: 7.00pm.

DU cultural competition

A two-month-long Dhaka University Cultural Competition 2005 will be inaugurated by Education Minister Dr M Osman Faruk as chief guest. Venue: TSC Auditorium. Time: 6.30pm.

Shapla Kuri

Shapla Kuri Competition 2005 will be inaugurated by Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain as chief guest. Venue: Shishu Academy Auditorium. Time: 9.30am.

Art competition

Bangabandhu Shishu Academy organises a children's art competition and cultural function to mark the Independence Day. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar. Time: 5.00pm.

Cultural function

Brac University Cultural Club organises a cultural function to be presented by the artists of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. Venue: Brac Centre Auditorium, Mohakhali. Time: 6.45pm.

BISS seminar

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies organises a seminar titled 'National security of Bangladesh in the new millennium' with Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar as chief guest. Venue: BISS Auditorium, 1/46 Old Elephant Road.

CNRS dialogue

The Centre for National and Regional Studies organises a dialogue on development and good governance. Venue: IDB Bhaban Auditorium, Uttara. Time: 10.00am.

NPC seminar

The National Press Club organises a seminar on 'The advancement in the treatment of heart disease'. Venue: VIP Lounge of the club. Time: 10.00am.

Lecture

Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani Parishad organises a lecture session. Venue: 45, Aziz Market, Shahbagh. Time: 6.00pm.

Meeting

A meeting of the executive committee of Bangladesh-China People's Friendship Association will be held. Venue: 18, Purana Pallan. Time: 5.00pm.

Congress

The three-day seventh congress of Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal will be inaugurated. Venue: Mohanagar Natyamancha, Gulistan. Time: 11.00am.

Rally

Rally of Bangladesh Kishani Sabha will be held. Venue: Muktagong, Ramna. Time: 10.00am.

Rotary meeting

Weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Sonargaon Dhaka will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club, Shahbagh. Time: 5.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Film show

Japanese Embassy will screen two films titled 'Sadako Story' and 'Nodo Jiman'. Venue: Auditorium of the Institute of Modern Languages, Dhaka University. Time: 4.00pm and 7.00pm.

Musical evening

The Srijon, a cultural forum, organises a musical evening. Venue: Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum. Time: 6.30pm.

AUB discussion

Asian University of Bangladesh organises a discussion titled 'Independence: Present situation and future direction' with State Minister for Land Ukil Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan as chief guest. Venue: University Auditorium, Uttara. Time: 10.00am.



GM Siraj speaks at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday. Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association and Bangladesh Transport Samity organised the press conference.

Mali seeks help for rice cultivation

Bangladesh ambassador presents credential to Malian president

UNB, Dhaka

The Malian government sought assistance from Bangladesh to cultivate rice in the African country.

President Amadou Toumani Toure sought the help when Bangladesh Ambassador to Morocco, Mohammad-al-Haroon, was presenting his credentials to him at the President Palace at Bamako recently.

During the meeting, President Amadou Toumani Toure praised Bangladesh's progress in agriculture, industry and trade sectors, and expressed his desire to export cotton to Bangladesh.

He expressed his gratitude to the members of Bangladesh Armed Forces for their services in UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa and conveyed deep condolences on their supreme sacrifices in Congo.

The president hinted that Mali would be implementing Bangladesh's micro-credit experiences for its poverty eradication programme, said a handout.

Ambassador Haroon also met Prime Minister Qusmane Issoufi Maiga and Foreign Minister Moutar Ouane with a view to promoting country's interests in feasible sectors.

Tree fair 2005 begins June 1

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate a 21-day tree fair-2005 on June 1.

This was decided at an inter-ministerial meeting at the Environment and Forest Ministry with its minister Tariqul Islam in the chair.

The meeting discussed various issues relating to "Tree Plantation Movement and Tree Fair-2005".

The meeting finalised the slogan "Plant fruit bearing, medicinal and timber tree -- Boost prosperity" for this year's fair.

It also decided to organise tree fair at divisional, district and upazila levels and also to organise essay writing and art competitions in university, colleges and schools.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Zafrul Islam Chowdhury, Secretary Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury officials of concerned ministries, divisions and organisations were present.