

ACC TEAM TALKS TO CTG CUSTOMS, CPA OFFICIALS, STAKEHOLDERS

# Corruption, irregularities have come down

Claims Anti-Corruption Commission chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

As part of drive against the reported corruption, an Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) team led by its Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan yesterday separately met the stakeholders and officials of Chittagong Customs and Chittagong Port Authority.

The team talked directly to all the parties concerned with a view to working out ways and means to fight out the reported problems and corruption in handling export and import cargoes at Chittagong port.

Following meeting with the stakeholders including representatives of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, shipping agents, Clearing and Forwarding

agents, the team talked to the officials of Chittagong customs and Chittagong port in separate meetings.

The corruption and irregularities at Chittagong port came down significantly after the ACC took some steps at the port and customs house, Justice Sultan told a press briefing in the afternoon.

"We want to root out the corruptions and irregularities," he said, adding that improvement of internal systems to overcome the existing loopholes and action measures against the corruptions and irregularities are needed for it.

The ACC will monitor the activities at Chittagong port through a vigilance team while intelligence members will keep a close watch

round the clock to check the corruption and irregularities, the ACC chairman said.

ACC intends to improve the system in coordination with all the parties concerned to check corruption automatically and take instant action against any corruption, ACC Commissioner Moniruddin Ahmed, who is also a member of the team, told the briefing.

The stakeholders and the customs and port officials stressed introduction of automation system at Chittagong port to check corruption and irregularities for which the parties blamed each other, meeting sources said.

Disregarding the Pre-Shipment Inspection (PSI) reports, customs officials harassed the users con-

cerned in different ways, the stakeholders said in the meeting with ACC team.

They had to bribe even for berthing of a vessel at Chittagong port, they added.

They demanded for either proper implementation or withdrawal of PSI system.

The stakeholders, however, admitted that businessmen or port users too are not always honest.

At the meeting Chittagong chamber leaders protested the move to relocate the Licence Measuring Department outside the port.

At the meetings with officials of Chittagong customs and port, the ACC team members advised them to sit with the port users to solve the problems.

## Rising fundamentalism obstacle to ensuring HR

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rising fundamentalism is the main obstacle to ensuring human rights and it has started to influence people's thought processes, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

They also identified the present political trend and social inequality as hindrances to human rights, saying that both the major political parties have been using religion to achieve political gains.

They called on all to stamp out fundamentalism at every level immediately as it endangers personal freedom and the right to freedom of opinion.



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Ayesha Khanam speaks at a seminar at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On her left is Parishad President Hena Das.

fundamentalism.

Prof Muntasir Mamun, chairman of the history department at Dhaka University, said fundamentalism has been influencing people's thinking for a long time. As a result, people have lost their power of free thinking, he added.

"Both the BNP and Jamaat are the followers of same ideology and they have already changed the people's mindset towards fundamentalism. They have even brought changes to textbooks," he said, adding that they are manipulating the people's thinking through media.

Prof Muntasir appreciated the role of journalists who are trying to help protect human rights in such adverse condition.

Prof Geeti Ara Nasrin of mass communication and journalism department, DU, said space should be created for open thoughts and the mass media can play an important role in this regard.

"A culture of fear has been created in the country through violence in the name of religion, which is making people inactive," she said, urging the politicians to protect the countrymen from such situation.

President of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Hena Das, General Secretary Ayesha Khanam, Selina Khalek and representatives of different rights organisations attended the seminar.

## Policy a must to modernise legal framework

Says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday stressed the need for formulating a policy to modernise the country's legal framework and institutions.

Such a policy, which will be formulated within the next three to five years, will set out the vision of what kind of legal and judiciary system the country needs, he said at the inaugural session of a workshop on 'Policy Development'.

The colonial-era jail code must also be reformed, he added.

The Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and the

Legal Reform Project: Part-A' of Canadian International Development Agency (Cida) jointly organised the workshop at Sheraton Hotel in the city.

The minister suggested arranging training for judges of all levels, saying that only going by books will not help them deliver judgement.

He also called for changes to the investigation process under criminal justice system.

Presided over by Md Alauddin Sarder, secretary of law ministry, the inaugural session was also addressed by Syed Md Harun Osmani and Leonel Labon, project director of Cida.

## Obituary

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Elderly Awami League leader and former lawmaker Alhaj Aminul Islam Danesh breathed his last yesterday at the Birdeem Hospital in the city at the age of 65.

Danesh, also a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and AL national council member, was born at Kabirajkandi village of Jajira Upazila in Shariatpur district in 1920.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in a condolence message expressed deep shock at the death of Danesh.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak MP also condoled the death.

Shamsun Nahar Begum



Shamsun Nahar Begum, mother of The Dhaka Mercantile Cooperative Bank Ltd Chairman Group Captain (Retd) Abu Zafar Chowdhury, passed away at her Dhaka Cantonment residence yesterday, says a press release.

First namaz-e-janaza of Shamsun Nahar, wife of late Ali Ahmed Chowdhury, was held at the Convent Central Jame Masjid in the city yesterday.

She will be buried at her family graveyard after second janaza at her residence in Chittagong at 10:00am today.

Tipu Sultan Khan



Tipu Sultan Khan, founder president of Bangladesh Roof Gardening Association, passed away due to cardiac arrest at Makkah in Saudi Arabia yesterday after performing Hajj, says a press release.

He was 57 years old. He left behind his wife and four daughters.

Ram Gopal Banik

Ram Gopal Banik, a businessman of Dhamrai, passed away due to old age complications on January 11 at the age of 90, says a press release.

His Shuddha will be held at 'Sadhuwan' at Dhamrai on Thursday.

Farah Amena Rashid



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Farah Amena Rashid, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwan and



Non-government teachers and employees march towards the PM's office yesterday to submit a memorandum to press home their 17-point demand.

Non-govt teachers submit memo to PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Shikkhak Karmachari Oikya Parishad, an organisation of non-government teachers and employees, submitted a memorandum to the prime minister yesterday to press home its 17-point demand, including payment of full basic salary by the government.

The other demands include increased medical allowance, house rent and festival bonus equivalent to what the government teachers and employees receive.

A procession of around 100 teachers converged on the Central Shaheed Minar and started marching towards the PM's office to submit the memorandum, but police intercepted them at Shahbagh intersection where they had a brief rally.

Later, four leaders went to the PM's office and submitted the memorandum.

Speaking at the rally, the Parishad leaders criticised the government for not fulfilling its election pledge to meet the teachers' demand.

The government did not pay heed to their demands during its four-year rule, they said.

"We have been pressing for our demands since 2003 and now we are compelled to take to the streets as the government remains indifferent," said MA Awal Siddique, convenor of the Parishad.

He also said they will hold a grand rally at Paltan Maidan on February 26 if the demands go unheeded.

Mizan Chy still in coma

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Veteran politician and former Prime Minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury is still in a coma. Doctors continued their efforts to keep him alive with artificial respiratory system at ICU of the Birdeem.

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina visited Mizan Chowdhury at the Birdeem Hospital yesterday.

During her 25 minutes visit AL presidium member Abdur Razzak, party lawmaker Nure Alam Chowdhury and Chandpur district AL vice-president Abu Taher Liton accompanied Hasina.

Mizan Chowdhury's eldest son Raju Chowdhury and the physicians apprised Hasina of Chowdhury's overall health condition.

Doctors told Hasina that though his condition turned critical on Friday, later, on Saturday he kept his eyes open for sometime after an impromptu treatment.

Mizan Chowdhury was undergoing treatment for old age related diseases at home and abroad.

He is now being treated under the supervision of Dr Omar Faruq at the Birdeem Hospital.

Death anniversary

Today is the third death anniversary of Saleha Huq, wife of Syed Nurul Huq, director (Retd) of Power Development Board, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held after Zohr prayers at Railway Hafizia Sunnia Dakhil Madrasa at North Sahajahanpur on January 28.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for the departed soul.

Farah Amena Rashid

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## 20 hurt in clash at Opsonin factory

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between the hired goons of the authorities and the factory workers of Opsonin Chemical Industries Ltd in Barisal yesterday over realisation of the workers' demands.

Sources said the three-hour long clashes, chase and counter chase between the two parties that started around 11:30am, turned Bogra Road area into a battlefield.

More than 2,200 workers of Opsonin, a leading pharmaceutical company and medical items producer of the country, have been agitating to fulfil their 11-point demand that include proper appointment letters, increase in wages and fixed minimum monthly wages for a long time.

The authority assured them of considering the demands after Eid-ul-Azha, but allegedly refused to fulfil them during a recent meeting between the authorities and the workers that made the workers call a strike in the factory.

The agitating workers brought out a procession and held demonstrations inside the Opsonin Chemical Industries factory on Bogra Road yesterday morning demanding removal of the logistics manager of the company.

Workers alleged that at one point, the management brought in a group of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres led by Zahid and Munna, who beat up several workers and fired blank shots and

exploded bombs. In retaliation, the workers threw hundreds of bottles from the rooftop of the factory forcing the goons to retreat.

Among the injured workers, Rafiq, Yusuf, Anwar, Basir, Siddik, Salam, Kabir, Amin, Shishir, Alamgir, Humayun, Khorshed, Ripon, Azad, Badsha, Afzal, Yunus and Abu Jafar were admitted to different medical centres.

Md Ali Jasim, a photojournalist of local daily Barisal Barter, was injured when he was assaulted by the workers while taking photographs.

Hundred of workers from other four Opsonin factories of Bogra and Rupnagar area also brought out processions and held demonstrations after they received the news of the attack on the chemical factory workers, causing a two-hour long trafficjam.

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) reinforcements managed to bring the situation under control at about 2:00pm.

Workers declared that they will continue the strike till Rukh Khan, one of the directors and the representative of the owners from Dhaka, sits with them for negotiations.

Logistic manager of Opsonin Group Abid Hossain Babu, however, denied the allegation of any attack on the workers from management side, claiming that workers ransacked the factory. They would shut their factories down if this situation continues, he added.

They are Engineer Sheikh Abdur Rahman, Assistant Director Abul Kalam, Office Assistant Sadek Ali and Storekeeper Masum.

Sources said five transformers were sent to Tongi workshop from Fatulla for repair in last month, but they were lost.

Each transformer costs around Tk500,000.

Engineer SM Shahidul Islam took charge of Fatulla Desa office yesterday.

DU admission test date shifted

Admission test under 'Ka' unit of Dhaka University will be held on February 17 instead of February 3, says a press release.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the university dean's committee considering the 'Swarnoot Poja' of Hindu community on February 3.

Publication ceremony of 'Sangadsade Ja Bolechi' today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Sangadsade Ja Bolechi' (My speeches in the parliament) by Moudud Ahmed, minister for law, justice and parliamentary affairs, will be held at Cirdap auditorium in the city at 3:00pm today.

The ceremony organised by University Press Limited (UPL) will be attended by Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju MP, AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta MP, Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali MP, Col (Retd) Faruk Khan MP, GM Quader MP, Prof Dr Emajuddin Ahmed, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, former minister Mizanur Rahman Shelley, editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam and economist Debapriya Bhattacharya as guest speakers.

Earlier, UPL published four books of Moudud, all written in English, which focused on politics, economics, democracy and development in South Asia. All the books were later rendered in Bangla.

The current composition of 314 pages brings together 50 of Moudud's parliamentary speeches delivered during his tenure in the Jatiya Sangsads from 1979 to 2004.

## Mass Upsurge Day today