

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 corruptions, 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 corruptions 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 remarkably 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-Shipments 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.

Ctg lawyers boycott ADM's court for his 'misbehaviour'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The members of Chittagong District Bar Association boycott the Court of Additional District Magistrate (ADM) today protesting what they said were 'his (ADM) misbehaviour and move to arrest a lawyer yesterday'.

Hundreds of lawyers staged demonstration in ADM Anwarul Haque's chamber and 'freed' Advocate Dipak Das from the police. They also chanted slogans against the ADM.

Lawyers said Magistrate Badrul Haque denied a bail petition which the defence lawyer Dipak had filed yesterday.

"Other lawyers present at the court drew Badrul's attention to the relevant section of the law and requested him to grant bail to the accused, but the magistrate argued that he is not bound to follow the section, whatever the law said," alleged Advocate Monotosh Barua, former general secretary of the Bar association.

"The four other accused in the case got bail and the plaintiff has already made mutual concessions with all the accused," Dipak told journalists. He said he approached the ADM around 1:30pm and submitted a letter in this regard.

"As soon as I came out of his room, the ADM summoned me back into his chamber. He got angry and misbehaved with me. At one stage, he summoned few cops and threatened me with arrest," he said. Later, hundreds of lawyers stormed the ADM's chamber and rescued him from the police.

The ADM left his chamber with police escort around 5:15pm. "The allegations are untrue and I don't know anything about the incident," he said as he left the court premises.

The association leaders in an emergency meeting at its office declared that they would boycott ADM's court till 12:00noon today and said they would announce their next course of action at the association's annual general meeting which will be held at 1:00pm.

Nanak, Haji Selim get bail in criminal case

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to four Awami League leaders, including Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak and former lawmaker Haji Mohammad Selim, in a criminal case filed by the government.

After hearing a bail petition filed by the four accused of the case, a division bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Rashid and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir also issued rule upon the government to show cause as to why the petitioners should not be granted regular bail in this case.

The anticipatory bail for the petitioners will be continued till disposal of the rule.

Clash between the Awami League leaders and workers and the police took place at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital on January 21 when Awami League brought out a pre-bartal procession.

Following the incident, police filed a case with the Paltan Police Station against the four Awami League leaders, including Nanak and Selim, on charge of obstructing the police in discharging duties and attacking the police.

The accused appeared before the High Court for anticipatory bail in the case.

Advocate Abdul Baset Majumder moved for the petitioners before the court.

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 (BMP) organised the seminar titled 'Fundamentalism is the main hindrance to human rights' at the Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Reading out a written speech, Kazi Sufia Akhter, secretary of BMP, demanded restoration of the constitution of 1972, a ban on religion-based political parties and immediate trial of Mufi Hannan and other bomb attackers.

At the same time, the professional organisations have to be more active and raise their voice against fundamentalism, she said, adding that women should be more aware if they are the direct victims

offundamentalism.

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 freethinking, 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.



PHOTO: STAR

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.

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 Leonal Labon, project director of Cida.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion on Zia

Agriculturalists' Association of Bangladesh organises a discussion to mark the death anniversary of late President Ziaur Rahman. Venue: Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council auditorium. Time: 3:30pm.

Workshop on HIV

The inaugural ceremony of a workshop on 'Teacher training manual: Reducing HIV/AIDS vulnerability among students in the school setting' organised by Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco will be held. Venue: Banbels bhaban. Venue: 9:00am.

Seminar on Islam

Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities organises a seminar on 'Islam in the Democratic Matrix' with Dr Syed Anwar Hussain of the Department of History as keynote speaker. Venue: Lecture Theatre, DU. Time: 3:30pm.

Discussion on Kibria

Sonar Bangla Jubo Parishad organises a discussion to mark the first martyred

anniversary of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria with Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil as chief guest. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

FBCCI seminar

The Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) organises a seminar on 'IDB Group Financial Services'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar on healthcare

Chikitschok Sangsad organises a seminar and view exchange meeting on the national health services, healthcare and patient-doctor relationship. Venue: Seminar room of Microbiology department, BSMU (PG Hospital). Time: 11:30am.

Jazz music

Alliance Francaise de Dacca arranges a jazz music evening to be performed by a French group named Eric Lohrer quartette. Venue: Gallery of Alliance Francaise. Time: 8:30pm

Obituary

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Elderly Awami League leader and former lawmaker Alhaj Aminul Islam Danesh breathed his last yesterday at the Birdem 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 president member Abdur Razzaq MP also condoled the death.

Shamsun Nahar Begum

Shamsun Nahar Begum, mother of The Dhaka Mercantile Co-operative 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 Contonment 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 Shradha will be held at 'Sadhudham' at Dhamrai on Thursday.



PHOTO: STAR

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 Shikshak 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 Shabbagh intersection where they held a briefly 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, convener 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 Birdem.

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

During her 25 minutes visit AL president member Abdur Razzaq, party lawmaker Nure Alam Chowdhury Liton 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 Birdem 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 Dakhal Madrasa at North Sahjahanpur on January 28.

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

Farah Amena Rashid

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

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and doa mahfil will be held at an orphanage and foods will be distributed among the destitute.

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 Boga Road area into a battlefield.

More than 2,200 workers of Opsonin, a leading pharmaceutical company and medical items producers 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 to call a strike in the factory.

The agitating workers brought out a procession and held demonstrations inside the Opsonin Chemical Industries factory on Boga 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 cadres 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 Barta, was injured when he was assaulted by the workers while taking photographs.

Hundred of workers from other four Opsonin factories of Boga Road and Rupatala 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 traffic jam.

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

Workers declared that they would continue the strike till Rakib 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.

'Anti-terrorist unit to curb opposition movement'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to set up an anti-terrorist unit with the assistance of the United States to curb democratic movements of the opposition, said the leaders of Workers' Party at a press conference yesterday.

They alleged that Khaleda-Nizami coalition is forming the unit in order to stay in power for the next term with the support of the USA.

The press conference was organised by Workers' Party of Bangladesh (WPB) at Shaheed Asad auditorium at Topkhana Road in the city.

In a written statement, WPB General Secretary Bimal Biswas said the US terrorist experts would advise law enforcers and military officials of Bangladesh and provide technical assistance and modern equipment to them.

Though it is not clear whether the proposed anti-terrorist unit will be run by Bangladesh alone or jointly by the two countries, there must be a controlling power of the US in the unit, he added.

Bimal also alleged that the tapping ordinance is being implemented in the country under the direction of the US authorities to harass the opposition parties.

He said what the alliance government has taken so far in the name of arresting religious extremists is nothing but an eyewash as it would use the arrested militants in the next general election.

The government is using the terrorist issue in order to divert people's mind from the present political agitation, he added.

The WPB leader called on people to oust the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government to protect the sovereignty of the country.

He also declared countrywide rally on January 25 to resist the conspiracy of the government.

WPB President Rashed Khan Menon answered different queries of the journalists at the press conference.

WPB Politburo Member Haider Akbar Khan Rano, Nurul Hasan, Anisur Rahman Mollik and Kamrul Ahsan were present on the occasion.

Mass Upsurge Day today

UNB, Dhaka

Mass Upsurge Day commemorating the united movement of students and the mass people against the military rule of Ayub Khan in 1969 will be observed across the country today.

The mass upsurge toppled military dictator General Ayub Khan that later led to the independence of Bangladesh through the War of Liberation in 1971.

Matiur Rahman, a student of Nabakumar Institute, was martyred on the day in 1969.

Various socio-cultural organisations chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion.

A discussion titled 'Shaheed Asad, Mass Upsurge of '69 and National Liberation War', organised by Shaheed Asad Parishad, will be held at Mukangan in the city this evening.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion paying homage to the martyrs of the movement for establishing democracy.

One murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered a body of a young man at Khilkhet in the city yesterday morning.

On information from locals, Khilkhet police recovered the body of the unidentified man aged about 30 from Road No 4 at Nikunja at around 8:00am and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Hospital sources said some bones of the body were broken and the ring finger of his right hand was cut.

Police suspect that criminals might have beaten the man to death or he might have been killed in a road accident.

Executive engr, 3 Fatulla Desa officials suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Executive Engineer and three other officials of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) at Fatulla zone have been suspended for their involvement in the missing of five transformers.

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 'Swaraswati Pooja' of Hindu community on February 3.

Publication ceremony of 'Sangsade Ja Bolechi' today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Sangsade 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 president member Suranjit Sengupta MP, Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali MP, Col (ret'd) Faruq 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 Mahfuza 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 Sangsad from 1979 to 2004.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon speaks at a press conference on fundamentalism at the party office in the city yesterday.