

Next graft suspect list by end March

ACC wants to plug legal loopholes before filing cases

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

A new list of corruption suspects might be released by the end of March after the government brings amendments to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) Act and formulates necessary ACC rules.

Sources said the ACC also wants to quickly plug the legal loopholes and resolve complications before cases can be filed against already listed 50 corruption suspects.

During separate meetings between the three-member ACC and the chief adviser (CA), law adviser and communication adviser on Monday, the anti-graft commission members stressed the importance of closing the legal gaps that might jeopardise actions against corruption suspects.

Currently, there is no ACC rule although the ACC Act states that the commission must have a set of rules, approved by the president, guiding its activities. Since its formation in 2004, the ACC has not been able to finalise the rules.

Sources said the ACC will not take any major step, such as publishing a new list or filing cases against the 'big fishes' of corruption, until ACC Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury returns from an overseas trip on March 11.

"Although the ACC Act does not prevent the two ACC commissioners from taking major decisions in absence of their chairman, the commissioners will wait for his return given the importance of the new list of corruption suspects and legal actions against the already listed 50," said a source.

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ACC gets Mir Nasir's house prices assessed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Instructed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on February 22, the Public Works Department (PWD) yesterday started assessing the price of two houses of arrested former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Nasiruddin in Chittagong.

The ACC wants to start working on new lists of corruption suspects only after the inquiries into the listed 50 are completed, said the sources.

The new list might also include fewer than 50 names, as probing 50 big names simultaneously has proven to be too cumbersome, the sources added. The government currently has a list of 420 corruption suspects, which will be released in phases.

Questions have already been raised regarding whether the ACC secretary went beyond his jurisdiction by ordering the listed 50 suspects to submit their wealth

Executive Engineer (Electrical and Mechanical) of PWD, Chittagong Nurul Islam said they might need four or five days to finalise the assessment.

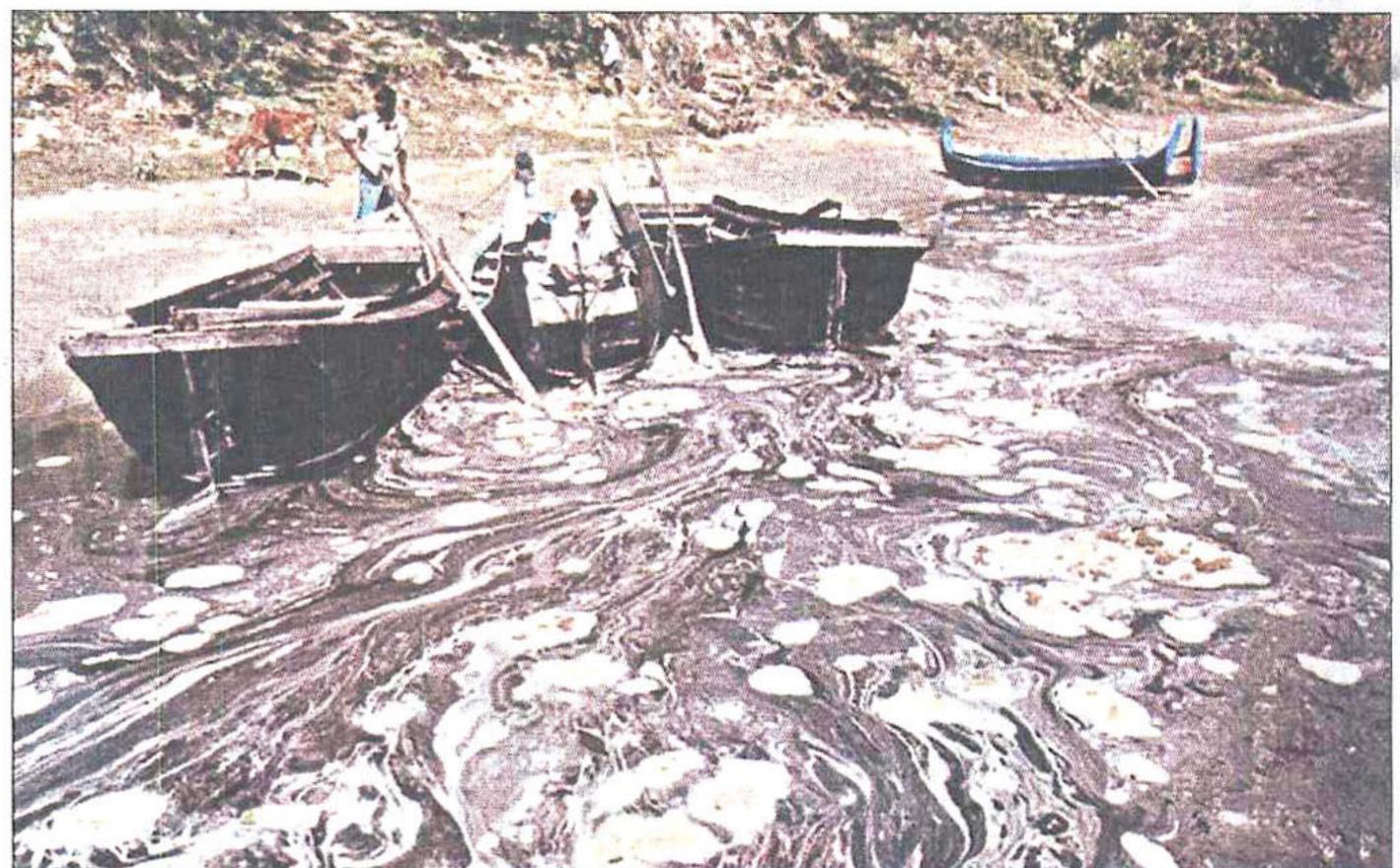


PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Tonnes of chemical waste are dumped into the Karnaphuli river every day from Karnaphuli Paper Mills at Chandraghona in Chittagong polluting the river water.

Harris Chy's driver, relative on remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed the driver and one of the brothers-in-law of Harris Chowdhury on a three-day remand each.

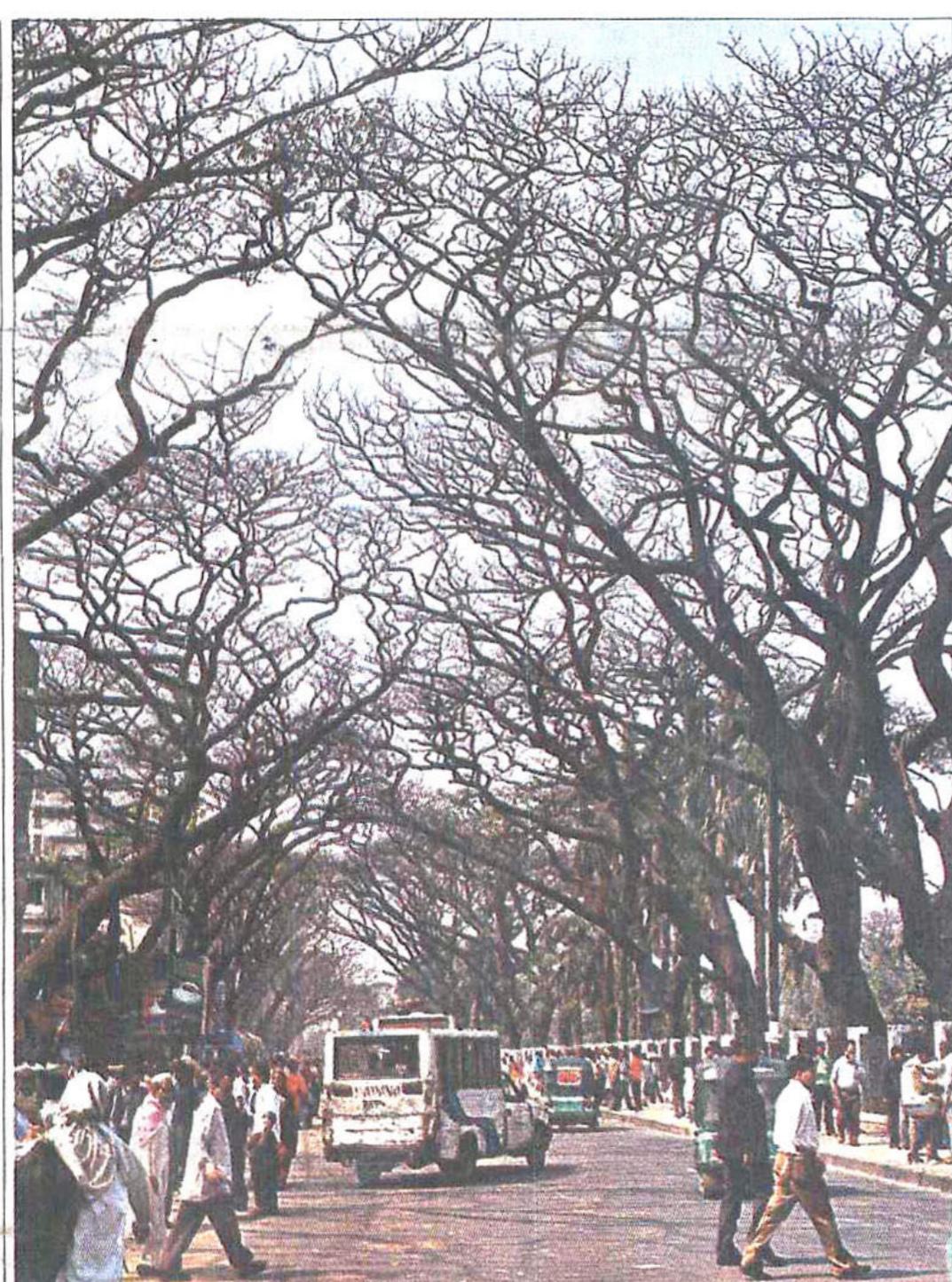
Harris Chowdhury's driver Abdus Salam and brother-in-law Mohammad Masum were arrested under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and produced before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Jagannath Das Khokan with prayers for seven-days' remand for each for interrogation.

Harris Chowdhury is one of the 50 corruption suspects listed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

On Wednesday, Rapid Action Battalion had seized a luxury sport utility vehicle (SUV) owned by Harris Chowdhury, former political secretary to immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia, and arrested his two brothers-in-law along with the driver of the car.

In the forwarding report, police said the arrestees produced before

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Although it is springtime, the huge trees along the street from Farmgate to Manik Mia Avenue in the capital are yet to come into leaf.

80,000kg formalin fish enter country every day

No policy for fish import yet

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

At least 80,000kg of formalin-treated fishes daily enter the country from Myanmar, posing serious health hazards to millions of consumers.

Neither the Department of Fisheries nor the Directorate of Health, not even the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) has any policy for import of fish.

Although fisheries department strictly controls the quality of the fishes they export under Fish and Fish Product (Inspection and Quality Control) Law '97, there is no provision or instruction or regulation to inspect or test the quality of imported fishes.

The BSTI Ordinance 1985 (amended into an act in 2003) gives instructions to test standards of 145 food products but fish and fish products are not included in the list.

BSTI officials said they had to depend on the City Corporation Food Ordinance 1959, Pure Food Rules 1967 and DCC Ordinance 1985 (amended in 2005) during their recent drives in the fish markets to punish the traders selling fishes treated with toxic chemicals including formalin.

They have to go outside their jurisdiction to conduct drives against toxic fish. BSTI officials said, adding that the rules should be more strict.

Fisheries department officials said the government does not want to recognise import of fish into the country fearing that the country might lose its right to tax holiday, which it enjoys as an exporter of fish to Europe and America.

"Bangladesh gets tax holiday for exporting fish to Europe and America. Any country importing fish from other countries are not allowed to get such facility," said a

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Govt makes formalin test of fish mandatory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to make formalin test mandatory for imported fish that will come into effect with the test of formalin presence in fish at Teknaf land port from today.

A team comprising officials of the Department of Environment in

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NBR asks banks to suspend transactions with 53 people

They include 50 graft suspects on ACC list, ex-minister AKM Mosharraf, ex-MP Dewan Salahuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday asked all commercial banks to suspend immediately all transactions of accounts of the 50 graft suspects listed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, and three others.

The NBR also asked the banks to inform it after suspending transactions with them.

The three others are former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain, former lawmaker from Savar Dr Dewan Mohammad Salahuddin and businessman Niaz Rahman.

The NBR directive to the banks attached with it a list containing the names and addresses of the 53 persons, their tax identification numbers (TIN) and names of their family

members.

The list mentions Niaz as son of Advocate Mokhlesur Rahman, and his address 219/220, Shantibagh, Dhaka.

Niaz is an 'ordinary businessman' and he is not on the ACC list of corruption suspects, NBR sources said.

The directive from the NBR said as the issue of tax evasion by these 53 persons is under investigation by different government agencies, all kinds of bank transactions with them and their family members will remain suspended until further notice.

The banks have to suspend all kinds of transactions including cash withdrawal from their accounts or transfer to other accounts or their joint accounts.



An employee of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works measuring former minister Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin's mansion Dalia Kunja at Chatteswari in Chittagong yesterday.

SHOP LOOTING CASE
HC asks Amini to surrender in 2 weeks

UNB, Dhaka

Turning down the plea for anticipatory bail in a shop looting case, the High Court (HC) yesterday asked Fazlul Huq Amini, chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IO), to

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New CJ for restoring discipline in judiciary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Chief Justice (CJ) Mohammad Ruhul Amin in his maiden speech yesterday stressed the need for restoring discipline in the Supreme Court.

"Let us take the vow for restoring discipline at all levels of the institution and also of being mutually respectful," he said addressing a reception accorded by the Supreme Court Bar Association.

Describing the people's confidence particularly that of the litigants as the 'soul' of the apex court, he said, "Unfortunately for some time past the people in general, particularly the litigants are whispering about integrity and impartiality of the institution. I am sure the same is not correct."

"But unfortunate part is that there is certainly some lapses on the part of

BNP terms news on Khaleda's house baseless

BSS, Dhaka

all of us associated with the institution from the path followed by our predecessors, who added dignity and honour to this institution."

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Mohammad Ruhul Amin

EC drafts poll reform plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has drafted a set of electoral reform proposals including those for barring civil or military bureaucrats from contesting the parliamentary election within three years since retirement and stringent provisions against the loan defaulters.

The EC will soon take part in an inter-ministerial meeting and sit with the political parties seeking their opinion about the proposals, the acting secretary to the EC said yesterday.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda and two election commissioners - Sohul Hossain and Brigadier General (retired) M. Sakhawat Hossain - yesterday apprised Chief Adviser

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