

CA asks officials to restore admin's non-partisan image

UNB, Barisal

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday asked the government officials to discharge their duties neutrally to restore the non-partisan image of the administration.

He told them to be guided by their conscience and intelligence, ignoring fear and intimidation, party influence or political opinion.

The chief adviser made the call while addressing civil and military officers of Barisal division at the local circuit house. This was his second meeting with the officials outside the capital after a similar meeting in Chittagong on February 27.

Fakhruddin said time and opportunity have now come to restore the tradition of the government officials as the employees of the republic. He assured them that they would not face any problem in carrying out their duties neutrally.

He said whatever be the reasons, employees of the republic

had become controversial in the past. "The employees of the republic are the public servants whose main objective is to serve the people."

About holding the general elections, the chief adviser said the government has been implementing some reforms like reconstitution of the Election Commission and Anti-Corruption Commission to create a congenial atmosphere for free, fair and credible polls so that honest and competent persons feel encouraged to participate in the elections.

The reforms being implemented are aimed at keeping up the economic activities smoothly for the benefit of the common people, he told the officials.

About the current anti-corruption drive, Fakhruddin said the government is committed to curb corruption and its main task is to eliminate or reduce the level of corruption. He sought cooperation from all government officials to carry forward the drive.

Fakhruddin said corruption is

not confined to any specific sector or any specific group of the population; rather it has spread to many areas affecting the common people's life.

About commodity price hike, he said the government wants to keep the prices of commodities at a tolerable level, which is now urgent.

He, however, said the government does not control the prices of commodities, as it is done in many other countries. But the government has to take steps to keep the prices stable at a certain level.

Fakhruddin said running business by the government is difficult and the government cannot benefit out of it, rather it incurs losses.

He said the government officials and law enforcement agencies have to remain alert so the honest businessmen are not subject to unnecessary harassment.

About recovery of government land from illegal possessions and demolition of illegal establishments, the chief adviser urged the officials to take care so that people

do not suffer or are not harassed during the drive.

He also urged the officials to work out a plan for best utilisation of the recovered land so that these cannot be grabbed again.

The chief adviser emphasised that all government offices, particularly the utility service providers, should function as the people's service centers.

About power crisis, he said some issues like electricity might cause temporary problem but action will have to be taken to keep it at an acceptable level.

Fakhruddin also urged the officials, particularly the field level officials, to inform people of the problems as well as the government's action for their remedy.

He said shortage of food due to fertiliser crisis should not be allowed to take place in the country. There should be anticipatory measures for proper distribution of fertiliser among farmers, maintaining coordination at all concerned levels.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

3 ex-MPs, Babar's APS asked to report wealth

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Three former lawmakers and an assistant personal secretary (APS) and two close relatives of former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar yesterday received notices from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours.

Besides, seven political leaders and their families in the district were served the same notice.

They are -- LDP presidium member and former lawmaker Abdul Karim Abbasi, former lawmaker Mohammad Ali, his wife Principal Rabeya Ali, former lawmaker Abu

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Six Indian militants held

Arms, ammo seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police confirmed the identities of the six Indian citizens, arrested at Nalitabari border in Sherpur on Thursday, as members of Indian militant organisation National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) of Assam.

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel arrested the six and a Bangladeshi indigenous man at Burunga of Nalitabari upazila early Thursday. They also recovered firearms, ammunition, and bomb-making materials from their possession.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

GULSHAN-JATRABARI FLYOVER

Graft cry gets stronger

RASHIDUL HASAN

Fresh questions are being raised about the controversial Gulshan-Jatrabari flyover as allegations are levelled that the cost of the project was inflated by Tk 200 crore through document manipulation.

The contract to build and run the flyover was allegedly awarded against consultant's recommendations to an inexperienced company linked with the scandal ridden Orion Group.

The Daily Star has obtained two feasibility assessment reports on the project by the same consultant, contradicting each other in recommending the Belhassa-Accom and

Associates Ltd, which won the contract.

Many officials of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) who were involved with the project alleged that the documents were manipulated to get Belhassa the job. But the project director of the flyover said somebody faked the documents to put Belhassa in trouble.

Whatever the case, many officials now feel that the flyover awarding process should be thoroughly investigated to find out if any misdeeds had taken place.

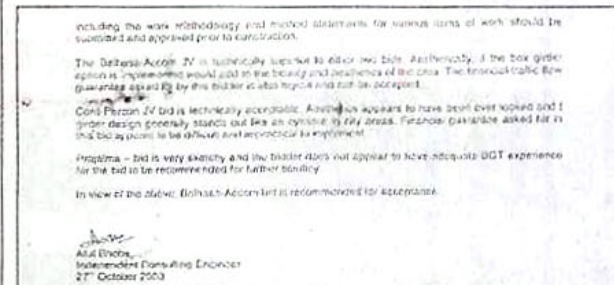
The joint venture of the UAE-based construction firm Belhassa International LLC and Accom Engineering Company Ltd is

chaired by Orion Group owner M Obaidul Karim, who is now in hiding after being implicated as the key man behind embezzling Tk 596.44 crore from Oriental Bank.

Belhassa-Accom and Associates allegedly "managed" senior officials concerned of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in order to gain the contract through "mutual understanding", claim DCC staff. This was despite the company's bid being "criticised" by an independent consultant brought in to evaluate the competing bids.

The Jatrabari-Gulshan Flyover is an 8-km stretch of mainly elevated highway aimed at easing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



The Daily Star obtained two contradictory feasibility assessment reports for the Jatrabari-Gulshan flyover where Atul Bhobe, an independent consulting engineer, recommends two different companies for the flyover's construction.

Voguish cars turn thorny

RASHIDUL HASAN

Luxurious cars were a symbol of high status for many former ministers and lawmakers of BNP even a few months ago. But the situation has changed and now they are trying to hide their cars which, many believe, are the evidence of their corruption.

Many influential politicians, who once used to drive expensive cars proudly on city streets, are now keeping them in possession of their acquaintances or on display at showrooms, and trying to sell them at low prices.

The joint forces seized luxurious cars of a number of former

ministers, lawmakers and leaders of BNP in the last few days. The law enforcers believe that the owners of such lavish cars are involved in corrupt practices and that most of these cars were purchased with illegally earned money.

The law enforcement agencies are trying to unearth the sources of money of these political leaders and many other queries about them.

There are allegations that a few former MPs bought others luxurious cars under the tax-free scheme in exchange for financial benefit from them.

In the last couple of days, the

joint forces seized cars of at least four former BNP MPs, including one former minister, former parliamentary affairs adviser, and political secretary to the immediate past prime minister.

In a latest drive, the law enforcers seized three luxurious cars, their blue books and other relevant documents from former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury's Dhanmondi residence.

Dhanmondi police filed a general diary (GD) in this connection.

Listed corruption suspects of the BNP got panic-stricken

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Dhanmondi Police Station in the capital turns into a mini parking lot of expensive cars as seized vehicles of three high-ranking BNP leaders are kept there.

Judge Faizee skips office

Celebration over cancellation of his LLB certificate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Controversial High Court (HC) Judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee did not attend his court yesterday, a day after the Chittagong University (CU) syndicate cancelled his LLB certificate.

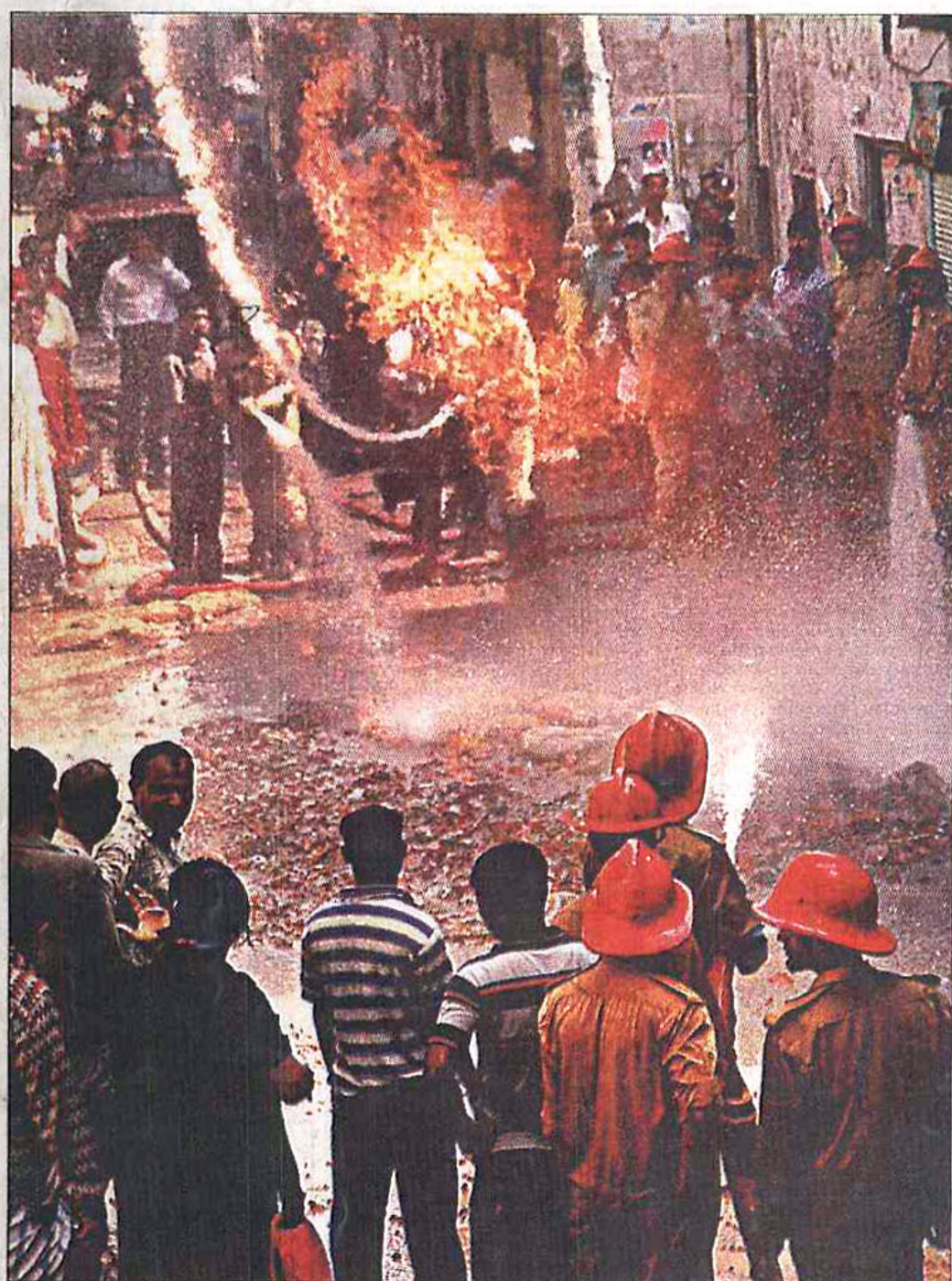
Sources said he might not sit on his bench today as well. Faizee phoned Mahfuzul Karim Akhand, deputy registrar of the

Supreme Court (SC) and also secretary to the chief justice, at around 9:00am and said he was going to have the day off but did not explain the reason, sources added.

Later, the apex court authorities issued a notice saying that Faizee would not take part in the day's business yesterday.

It, however, could not be confirmed whether the chief justice

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Firefighters try to douse the flame after a fire ignites at a broken gas pipe at Posta in Lalbagh in the capital yesterday.

Road to election to be lit in 2-3 weeks

EC plans to introduce voter ID cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has plans to introduce voter identification cards for the next parliamentary election while the chief election commissioner (CEC) yesterday said the commission's roadmap for the poll will be disclosed within two or three weeks.

In response to a High Court (HC) ruling suspending all polls for three months since Jan 29, the date of the ruling, the EC will inform a HC division bench today about its plans to introduce voter ID cards, sources said adding that the EC Secretariat yesterday sent to the attorney general's office a written statement to be placed before the court this morning.

CECATM Shamsul Huda yesterday afternoon told a BNP delegation that the EC plans to inform the nation about its roadmap for the

next parliamentary election, BNP Vice-chairman MK Anwar, who led the four-member delegation, told reporters after their meeting with the CEC and other two election commissioners.

The BNP delegation asked the EC to initiate steps for holding the stalled ninth parliamentary election within six months since the formation of the caretaker government on January 12.

"Our expectation is that the next parliamentary election will be held by July 11. The chief election commissioner informed us that they will inform the nation in the next two or three weeks about a roadmap for holding the parliamentary election," MK Anwar said.

The BNP delegation met the CEC three days after a high-powered Awami League delegation had met him demanding holding

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

CORRUPTION SUSPECTS ACC to start filing cases in a day or two

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is preparing to file cases in a day or two against the corrupt suspects who were earlier asked to submit their wealth statements.

"The job of collecting information is going on... Cases will be filed within a day or two after completion of the information gathering," ACC Commissioner Habibur Rahman told reporters yesterday afternoon.

Asked whether the commission is preparing to file cases against those 15 individuals who did not submit their wealth statements

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Ex-AL lawmaker held in Magura

Property of ex-MP Mohiuddin seized; more relief goods recovered

STAR REPORT

Joint forces yesterday arrested a former Awami League lawmaker in Magura, recovered over 200 pieces of corrugated iron (CI) sheets for state relief from different parts of the country and 1,700 litres of diesel stockpiled at houses of two ex-UP members in Sakhira.

Joint forces arrested former member of parliament (MP) and district vice-president of Awami League (AL) advocate Beeren Sikder from his residence in the

town.

Beeren was arrested in a case filed on March 3 by Abdur Rashid against 19 persons including the former MP and his brother, reports our correspondent.

Police sources said, in October 2004, residents of Natopara village in Kaliganj upazila beat up Abdur Rashid and gouged both of his eyes out.

Police produced Beeren before a magistrate's court where magistrate Shibani Bhattacharya

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

VoIP licence for all operators

Committee recommends govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A high-powered government committee on legalising voice over internet protocol (VoIP) yesterday recommended allowing VoIP licence to all operators, including the providers of mobile, land phone and internet services.

The committee proposed four government common platforms for overseas telephony gateway, committee member and Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board

(BTB) General Manager (security and surveillance) Lt Col Zia Saifur told reporters.

Briefing newsmen at his office after submitting the recommendations to the government, he said the committee also recommended allowing private operators, especially the local companies, to develop more common platforms.

The seven-member technical committee headed by Saiful Islam, professor of electrical and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

SUPERCRETE CEMENT

WE BUILD YOUR DREAM

Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

A MEMBER OF LAFARGE GROUP

