

Judge Faizee

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confirmed whether the chief justice has withdrawn Faizee from his bench.

Meanwhile, sources said Faizee has extended his leave for a few more days.
The CU authorities decided to cancel the LLB certificates of 70 people including Faizee.
The lawyers have demanded immediate resignation of the HC judge. They want his removal in case he does not stand down voluntarily.

President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) Barrister Amir-UI Islam told The Daily Star that Faizee has lost constitutional qualification to continue as a judge.

Meanwhile, those, who have been calling for Faizee's removal since news of his certificate forgery, have welcomed the CU decision and distributed sweets among themselves.

In 2004, the then BNP-led coalition government appointed 19 additional judges that drew a lot of flak from different quarters including the media and the lawyers.

On October 30 the same year two major national dailies—Prothom Alo and the Bhorer Kagoj—reported that Justice Faizee had tampered with mark sheets of the LLB examinations that he sat at the Chittagong Law College in 1989. They referred to a CU enquiry committee that dug out the fraud.

The HC on March 21, 2005 convicted the editors, publishers and reporters of the two dailies of contempt of court for running the reports.

Faizee had applied for the Bar's enrolment certificate showing a provisional LLB certificate. Even his father Mohammad Faiz who brought the contempt proceedings against the two dailies could not produce his [Faizee's] LLB certificate before the court.

Bangladesh Bar Council in an unprecedented move on April 2005 cancelled Faizee's enrolment certificate for providing false information and his failure to disprove the allegation about his LLB exams result.

Statutory body of the legal practitioners also decided to file a criminal case against him for giving false information in the affidavit he submitted when he had applied for the Bar Council's certificate to practise law.

Faizee filed a case with the HC challenging the Council's decision and obtained a stay on it.

Bar Council Vice-chairman Rakanuddin Mahmud yesterday told reporters that information given by Faizee's father in the contempt case against the dailies has turned out to be false. So, a case should be filed against him too for providing false information in the affidavit.

He said there have long been different allegations against the HC judges appointed during the tenure of the immediate past government.

Rokan, also a former SCBA president, said those should be given proper attention now.

He said stern actions should be taken against those who had tried to protect Faizee that time.

Rab men killing

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Visiting the area yesterday, this correspondent found abandoned blankets, vegetables and other valuables scattered at different brickfields as the workers had fled the area since Rab had started rounding them up indiscriminately following the murders. Although Rab had initially rounded up over 300 people, they later released all but 25.

Members of different intelligence agencies yesterday visited the hut at Tara Mia's brick field and collected evidence, where the two Rab personnel had been dragged before the killers shot them in the head.

A three-member joint probe team comprising members from police, Rab and the Detective Branch, which was formed on Saturday by an order of the inspector general of police, also visited the area, collected evidence, and talked to the detainees.

The committee headed by ASP Motiur Rahman also includes DB Inspector Akhteruzzaman and Rab Sub-inspector Ibrahim.

Police said the two slain members of Rab intelligence wing might have been killed by the goons of Amzad Hossain, a local criminal and a body guard of a local union parishad chairman, whom Rab had arrested on February 28 acting on Phool Mia's information.

Amzad faces several criminal charges including one for the murder of Aminabazar businessman Abdur Rouf last month.

Humayun Kabir and Phool Mia might also have been killed due to their work to track down drug peddlers' syndicates at Aminabazar.
"Since many criminals of Dhaka take refuge in the area fearing arrest and the two Rab officials were carrying out surveillance on them, some of them might have been enraged and got the Rab personnel killed," said a police officer.

Although, Savar police filed a case yesterday, they refused to disclose the content of the FIR (first information report) when reporters visited the police station in the morning.

Police said they collected some evidence from the spot.

Meanwhile, Sakhina, who used to cook for the workers and had been the first to notice the bullet-ridden bodies of the two slain Rab personnel, was arrested by Rab from her house in Salehpur area Saturday night. She is being interrogated in Rab custody.
Rab personnel yesterday recovered the bodies of their slain colleagues on completion of autopsies at Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday noon.

Morgue sources said the killers shot the Rab men in the head point blank. In each of the victims' throats a bullet was found lodged in similar positions. Prior to the killings the victims were tied up.

Investigators suspect that the killers might have sedated the victims before killing them.

Their bodies were taken to the morgue in the early hours of yesterday. According to The Daily Star Commander Masqu Hassan Ahmed, Rab director of its legal and media wing, said yesterday, "We have yet to ascertain the motive and identities of the killers."

"We've some information in our hands, which we cannot share with

He also demanded an investigation into why the immediate past chief justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain took a stance in favour of the controversial judges.

The SCBA went for strong movement against Faizee after the newspapers reported on his certificate forgery in 2004.

Since then, they have been boycotting his court and demanding his removal.

Faizee did not sit in the court for long after the SCBA's protest.

The then chief justice Mudassir, however, formed a single bench for Faizee after the HC verdict in the contempt case against the dailies. The SCBA protested formation of the bench.

The government confirmed Faizee as a full HC judge on his completion of two years as an additional judge though Mudassir did not recommend his confirmation.

Many lawyers say alongside the past government a group of people at the Supreme Court had all along been active to protect Faizee. They demanded that actions should be taken against those people now.

In Chittagong, CU teachers and students yesterday expressed satisfactions over the cancellation decision.

Terming it a historic one, CU Vice-chancellor Professor M Badiul Alam said the university authorities would start implementation of the syndicate decision within a week.

"No examinee or employee of the university will be spared in future if found guilty in any sort of fraudulence," the CU VC warned.

Anupam Sen, a sociology professor at CU, thanked journalists for publishing the truth.

AKM Moinuddin, a student of journalism department, said, "As a CU student, it was like a curse for me. But Now I am relieved after the syndicate decision."

CHITTAGONG BAR'S MOVE

Chittagong District Bar Association asked the CU authorities to provide them with the names of those who were engaged in tampering with their LLB certificates so they could take legal actions against them.

"We verbally requested the registrar of the university to give the names," Iftekhar Samiul Chowdhury, general secretary of the bar association, told The Daily Star.

The association also asked the lawyers, whose certificates were cancelled, to quit law practices and not to come in the court premises.

"Legal actions will be taken against who will be found involved in certificate tampering," read a notice of the association.

Ctg port

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independence, Haque said, "We hope that many such reforms will be brought at the port for removing the remaining obstacles."

A series of reforms will be implemented at the port for reducing the underhand expenditure at the port, said sources of the joint forces.

As per the new decision, the total charge of a container handling at the port would be Tk 1200 only.

Earlier, around Tk 4,000-5,000 had to be spent on different segments for handling a container at the port. The system of charging \$ 200-400 against per container as Rate Restoration Charge by the shipping agents to the port users has also been cancelled.

As part of the reform programme, a three shift working system instead of two shifts earlier has been introduced to accelerate the port activities, the source added.

In August last year, Saif Powertec Limited was given the charge of handling four sophisticated gantry cranes at the port.

Now the private company will, in addition to the four gantry cranes, operate eight rubber tyre gantry cranes, 14 tractor trailers, movers and reach the container up to the delivery yard.

As it will make stevedoring services in the port unnecessary, around Tk 100 crore government money will be saved in a year that had to be paid as shore handling charges to around 53 stevedoring agents.

The company may charge additional fees for performing additional duties and the businessmen would be relieved from paying kickbacks at different points.

The decision will stop 'unofficial' expenditure by the port users and this one-stop service would improve the image of the country's premier port, said a high official of the Ministry of Shipping.

The traditional stevedoring system that is mainly responsible for supplying dockworkers and labourers for handling containers has already been dissolved in many modern ports with introduction of automatic container handling system.

BSEC fire

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out how the Dandy Dying on the eighth floor caught fire two hours later when the fire on the first and second floors was already contained.

The industries ministry said a complete assessment of the damage would take some more time.

The enquiry team has made a number of recommendations to stop repeat of such disaster. Those include having an alternative staircase, avoiding setting up stairs and lifts in the middle of a high-rise structure and ensuring the electric ducts are at a safe distance, said sources.

Asked to comment on their failure to pinpoint the cause, head of the probe team Mustaque Hasan told The Daily Star, "We're no specialists in chemical tests. It's the job of the government experts and they are doing that now. We'll be able to know what set off the fire and why it spread so fast only after getting the test results."

He said his committee would give an exact cause of the blaze in a follow-up report to be submitted soon after the laboratory works.

Meantime, ntv that was on the eighth floor of the 11-storey office block has decided to back on air as a trial run-through from 6:00pm today.

They said they have hired the second and third floors of the UTC Building at Karwan Bazar to start the transmission initially for six hours.

The private TV channel will start 24-hour test transmission from the next Friday or, if failed, the next Monday, ntv Executive Director Hasnain Khorshed, told reporters at a city hotel yesterday afternoon.

It will go into full-scale transmission in 15 days.

HC issues suo moto

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A division bench, comprising Justice Syed M Dastagir Husain and Justice Mamnoon Rahman, issued the rule, returnable in two weeks, after perusing recent media reports placed by an advocate.

Among others, principal secretary to the chief adviser, secretaries of the ministries of social welfare, law, justice and parliamentary affairs, home women and children affairs, inspector general of police, were made respondents in the case.

Bibiyana

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develop wells and produce natural gas from the Bibiyana Gas Field.

Through the acquisition of the company Unocal, Chevron also holds interests in three Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) with Bangladesh. Two PSCs cover Blocks 12 (Bibiyana), 13 and 14 (Jalalabad Gas Field and Moulibazar Field), and the third PSC covers Block 7. Chevron is the operator of all four blocks.

In early 2006, Chevron supplied 20 percent of Bangladesh's natural gas demand. Currently, the company is supplying 80-100 mmcf to the national grid from five wells in Moulibazar Gas Field and about 140-150 mmcf from the Jalalabad Gas Field.

Six Indian

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After a two-day interrogation at Mymensingh BDR 45 Rifles Battalion headquarters, the arrestees were handed over to Nalitabari Police Station early Saturday.

The arrested NDFBL members are: Mohishwar, 27, Shombhu, 23, Warao, 21, Hor Kumar, 23, Jiban Kumar, 24, and Thandoi, 22. They hail from different districts of Assam, India.

The arrested Bangladeshi was Imrul Sangma, 22, son of Naoshen Marak of Burunga.

Sub-inspector (SI) Shafiqur Rahman, second officer of Nalitabari Police Station, said acting on a tip off the BDR personnel early Thursday raided the house of Imrul and arrested him along with the six Indian militants.

They arrested Imrul in connection with harbouring the Indian citizens on Bangladesh territory.

After interrogating the arrestees, BDR personnel on Friday night recovered a sub-machinegun (SMG), a barrel of an SMG, 350 bullets of different firearms, seven bomb detonators, 42 electronic circuits for making bombs, four explosive wraps, wires, a large knife, and a map of the forest behind Imrul's house.

BDR filed two cases with Nalitabari Police Station against the arrestees. The magistrate sent the arrestees to jail when Nalitabari police produced them before a Sherpur court Saturday.

Sources said one Sadhon Koch, son of Upendra Koch of Mandharupara of Nalitabari upazila, had been harbouring the NDFBL men in Bangladesh for long. However, he moved the six men to Imrul's house on Wednesday night.

Gas pipe blast

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fire brigade to get the fire under control.

Nurul Haque, assistant director of Fire Brigade and Civil Defence, Dhaka City, said valuables of the Agrani Bank branch were removed fearing the fire might spread.

He said the continuous efforts of the fire service and Titas Gas employees helped to put the flame out without any major damage.

CA asks officials

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Deputy commissioners, police supers, army area commanders and senior civil and military officials were present at the meeting.

MEETING WITH ELITE
The chief adviser later at an opinion-exchange meeting with local elite said his caretaker government wouldn't take any decision that affects the common people but asserted that those who made their fortunes illegally should suffer.

"People's overall welfare is the yardstick of government's activities," he said.

In an oblique reference to corruption and the grabbing of government lands, the head of interim caretaker government questioned how wrongdoings of 20 years could be justified if somebody is up looking for logic behind the government's action.

Responding to the speakers' suggestions, demands, problems and appreciation of government's steps, Fakhruddin said his government would not shy away from taking long-term steps, particularly in economic sector, for welfare of the people.

The CA said the government is making effort relentlessly to establish a democratic social system, the rule of law and corruption-free society. And "our final objective is to hold a free, fair, transparent and credible election".

The local elite at the meeting placed some demands, including construction of Mawa bridge, extension of time for keeping shop open till 8:00pm, and rehabilitation of evicted small traders and slum people.

Among those who spoke at the meeting were city Mayor Mojibur Rahman Sarwar, Barisal Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Ebadul Huq Chand, Vice-chancellor of Patuakhali Science and Technology University Abdul Latif Masum, Barisal Press Club General Secretary Murad Ahmed, freedom fighter Mohiuddin Manik and Rahima Sultana Kajol of an NGO.

Hawa Bhaban

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them to be wholly untrue, without any basis, jurisdiction or excuse.

The notice also mentioned that the statements were published and circulated by the daily with a view to causing and injuring the BNP chief's image, reputation and social status in Bangladesh and abroad.

Our reply

Although it is true that Hawa Bhaban is the BNP chairperson's office, it had of late been used by many vested quarters as the alternative power house to influence various activities as widely reported by different media including The Daily Star. Many of the persons who abused their Hawa Bhaban connection are now in the law enforcers' dragnet. The issuer of the legal notice, an advocate, also used the address of the Hawa Bhaban. It is now an open question whether Hawa Bhaban is also used as chambers by advocates.

Road to election

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of the stalled ninth parliamentary election by June.

Jatiya Party led by HM Ershad is scheduled to meet the CEC this afternoon and the Communist Party of Bangladesh will meet him tomorrow, sources said.

Emerging from the hour long meeting, the BNP delegation chief said holding the parliamentary election as early as possible is within the EC's jurisdiction.

"We hope the reconstituted Election Commission will be able to present a free and fair election. We will extend all cooperation for a free and fair election," MK Anwar, also a former minister, said.
He said the CEC informed them about the EC's initiatives for electoral reforms.

VOTER ID CARDS AND A WRIT PETITION

Following a writ petition, the HC on January 29 issued a ruling directing the EC to explain why the present voter roll shall not be declared inconsistent with the provisions of the electoral rolls ordinance and with the rules and directives passed by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 2006.

The HC also asked the EC to explain why it shall not be ordered to introduce voter identification (ID) cards and to arrange transparent ballot boxes for the national election.

The EC that decided to contest the writ petition yesterday afternoon sent a response to the attorney general's office explaining its position regarding the HC ruling, sources said.

About voter ID cards, the EC in its response said it has planned to introduce the ID cards and will soon take a decision regarding the matter.

The Bangladesh Army last week in a presentation at the EC Secretariat said it can prepare the voter ID cards within 10 to 12 months with a cost of Tk 300 crore.

About introduction of transparent ballot boxes, the EC in its statement said introduction of the new system in the election is within its jurisdiction.

VoIP licence

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electronic engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), submitted the nine-point recommendation to Post and Telecommunications Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam at his ministry office.

As short-term measures to overcome the country's current crisis in overseas telecommunications, the committee suggested continuing VoIP operation through existing data transmission gateway of the BTBT submarine cable network.

It recommended augmenting the capacity of the data transmission gateway by setting some new equipment within next two months.

It also suggested enhancing the BTBT international telephone circuit capacity by introducing 3,000 more circuits in addition to the existing 11,000 circuits within shortest possible time and another 24,000 within next three months to ease the current international call congestions.

The committee recommended formation of a technical committee for monitoring the private traffic records of the private platform in order to assess revenue earning.

Its suggestions also include speeding up the government procurement process with a view to

tion.

The EC however defended the updated voter list prepared for the cancelled January 22 parliamentary election, sources said.

"The election commission updated the voter list of 2000 in accordance with the Supreme Court's judgement," a source said quoting the EC's statement sent to the attorney general's office.

A HC division bench is scheduled to hear the writ petition today.

ACC

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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 within the deadline, he said, "Preparations are on to file cases against all of them (50 individuals)."

Asked if there would be any case for concealing information, Habibur, in-charge of the commission in absence of its Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury, said, "May be".

In reply to a question, he hinted that cases might not be filed at this stage against those who have filed writ petitions with the High Court.

About the days' meeting of the commission chaired by himself, the commissioner said the meeting discussed the information gathering about the corrupt suspects.

He also said the commission decided to conduct the cases through its own lawyers.

Replying to a query about seizing assets of individuals who are on the list, Habibur said he is not aware of this.

quick establishment of the common platforms. The way to establishing common platforms was hampered in two previous bids due to lengthy procurement process.

The committee also suggested identifying and punishing operators involved in illegal VoIP business for the last few years.

It recommended seeking an alternative submarine network link of the existing SEAMEV(4) cable to reduce dependency on the lone international gateway.

Other members of the committee are Satya Prasad Majumder, chairman of electrical and electronic engineering department, Buet, Ashraful Alam, BTBT member (maintenance and operation), Monirul Alam, director (telephone) of post and telecommunications ministry, Rezaul Kadir, director (BTRC) of the same ministry, and Lt Col Gazi Md Salahuddin.

The committee was formed on February 5, 2007 to gather suggestions on how the VoIP licences can be opened and to ease the existing congestion on overseas telecommunications following busting of a good number of illegal VoIP operators across the country recently.

CMC asked

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Sources said that to end the deep crisis that has gripped the mine, the authorities have requested the CMC to resume the operations first.

The energy adviser told the CMC and Chinese embassy officials that suspension of coal production has added to the cash crisis of the BCMCL. After the production is resumed, the government would initiate the process for payment of loan installment and look into other financial matters, he further said.

Though the government has already paid China Tk 662 crore in five installments, CMC has failed to complete the project even eight years after the original schedule. For recent delays, the CMC faults the BCMCL's delay in payment of the fifth installment and non-payment against supply of mining equipment. The BCMCL in recent months resolved much of these issues to bring back the CMC to the mine.

The BCMCL expects to resume coal production from next week.

Big guns warm

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"I will play a part against Bermuda and more so against Australia (in the second warm-up on March 9). It is a gradual process."

Influential batsman Kevin Pietersen will also test his recovery from the rib injury sustained in Australia.

South Africa coach Mickey Arthur insists the team have prepared well for a tournament which has brought them nothing but heartache in the past.

"It is all about peaking at the right time and I think, for us, things have been going nicely this season. We have shown an upward curve so hopefully our planning is coming to fruition," said Arthur.

South Africa defeated Australia at home last year and have also won seven of their last eight matches.

But they were knocked out in the World Cup first round on home soil in 2003 when they misunderstood the rain rules.

Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody believes the 2007 World Cup will be the most open yet.

"This World Cup is really open. I know that's kind of a cliché that has been thrown around for a while now, but actually it's quite true," said Moody, who was in the winning Australian team under Steve Waugh in 1999.

"I believe Sri Lanka has as good a chance as any other team. We just have to knuckle down and take our chances and prove our worth."

Sri Lanka will also play New Zealand in a warm-up on March 9 before heading to Trinidad for their first round matches against India, Bangladesh and Bermuda.

BB asks

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NBR sources said the revenue authority has so far asked commercial banks to attach accounts of 400-500 people, including former ministers, top politicians and so-called business moguls, on suspicion they have evaded huge amounts in taxes.

Attachment means the account holders will only be allowed to deposit money with the account while other operations, including withdrawals and transfers, remain suspended, they said.

Hasina

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bagged by a party is to be considered in case of registration as a political party.

If a free and fair election is held, it would be possible to determine the percentage of the votes got by political parties and the parties getting votes under a minimum percentage should not get registration, she said.

Terming unfortunate 'sweeping criticisms' against politicians, the AL chief said some vested quarters weigh all the politicians on the same scale only to fish in the troubled waters.

The government should prepare a real list of the corrupt and criminals.

Urging the government not to harass innocent people and political leaders, she demanded the release of AL leaders and workers who had been arrested without any case or specific allegation.

Hasina, who is the immediate past leader of the opposition and also a former prime minister, demanded that the caretaker government start inquiry into all the killings, bomb and grenade attacks.

Accusing Jamaat-e-Islami leaders of 'criminal acts, bomb and grenade blasts and patronising militants' she said, "Why are Jamaat leaders not arrested?"

She said the people witnessed widespread corruption, looting of relief materials, misrule, rise of militancy, grenade and bomb attacks, repression and criminal activities during the previous BNP-Jamaat government's rule while the AL during their tenure had achieved the people's trust.

The ALWC meeting urged the caretaker government to take crash programmes for solving fertiliser and power crises and checking price hike of essentials.

Ex-AL lawmaker held

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rejected his bail petition and sent him to jail.

Beeren Shikder told The Daily Star that the case was just a conspiracy against him and he had never been involved with the incident.

MUNSHIGANJ
A task force of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday seized the house and other goods belonging to former AL lawmaker Mohammad Mohiuddin -- one of the 50 ACC listed graft suspects, our correspondent reports.

Mohiuddin had failed to submit his wealth statement to the ACC, Police said.

At around 2:30pm, the task force went to Mohiuddin's residence at Courtgaon that he had inherited from his father and seized all goods therein including seven television sets, 10 refrigerators, 11 beds and 32 other items. Besides, an older model automobile was taken to the nearby police station.

Officer-in-Charge of Courtgaon Police Station