

ACC for arresting

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the ACC Act includes a provision that would allow the commission to continue its operations based on decisions made during its meetings, until the necessary rules are formulated, sources said.

The current ACC Act clearly states that the commission itself would examine and decide whether someone would be asked for his or her wealth statement.

But between the first week of February and February 26, when the three top positions of the commission remained vacant following the resignation of its chairman and two commissioners, ACC Secretary Delwar Hossain issued a notice asking 50 corruption suspects to submit their wealth statements.

The proposed amendment of the ACC Act includes a section that states that the commission can give an ex-post facto approval to the secretary's actions while the three top posts of the commission were vacant.

The amended ACC Act would be considered retrospectively effective from the day ACC Act, 2004 was implemented.

Currently the ACC has 90 investigation officers (IO), but questions

have raised on the efficiency of a many of the IOs and it adds to the effect of manpower shortage in the commission, sources said.

The ACC is also likely to get a boost by increasing the number of IOs to 300 and the total number of ACC staff to 1,200 from around 700, sources said.

The government might empower the commission to confiscate and auction the properties of the 15 listed corruption suspects who missed the deadline to submit their wealth statements, ACC sources said.

During the meeting that lasted for more than an hour, Khoka, also president of Dhaka city unit BNP, discussed with Khaleda the arrest of Tarique Rahman, sources said.

When contacted, Khoka said: "I just went there to meet her and it was a courtesy call...nothing else."

Khoka meets Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka city Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her cantonment residence.

Under the new immigration procedure, the arriving or departing passengers or airlines or travel agencies on the passengers' behalf, have to fill up ED cards in immigration website (www.immi.gov.bd) and in return, will obtain an Immigration Service Code (IS Code).

"A printed ED card from website with IS code reference will ease and quicken the immigration process, as the immigration official at ZIA can crosscheck the information of the passenger swiftly," Shah Alam said.

A lot of time will also be saved through this system, comparing to the traditional one, where the ED cards are filled up manually.

According to the website of Immigration Police, same IS Code will stand valid if basic information like name, passport number, address in Bangladesh etc remains unchanged. A new IS code is not obligatory for change of flight or travel date, it noted.

The Immigration website will also facilitate keeping friends' or relatives' message for any incoming or outgoing passenger and installation of an SMS service is under process to provide arrival or departure information of any individual to his/her friends or relatives (with the consent of the respective passenger), the website noted.

As E-Immigration is capable to store advanced or lost/cancelled/invalid visa or travel

E-immigration

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Under the new immigration procedure, the arriving or departing passengers or airlines or travel agencies on the passengers' behalf, have to fill up ED cards in immigration website (www.immi.gov.bd) and in return, will obtain an Immigration Service Code (IS Code).

"Such information will be displayed automatically when the passenger is in Immigration queue," it added.

The authorities appreciate any observations, suggestions or comments on immigration in general or on E-Immigration in particular, the Immigration police said.

"The death toll has gone up to six," Raj Kanjaria, police chief of eastern West Bengal state, told the news agency, adding that around 50 people were injured of whom six were in critical condition.

"We are keeping a watch on developments, the situation is under control," he said.

The violence was the latest in a series of nationwide protests, mainly by poor villagers, against the government buying up farmland for private industrial parks. The parks are seen as central to India's drive to boost economic growth and lure foreign investment.

Kanjaria said the clashes erupted when residents of Nandigram village -- about 120 kilometers (75 miles) south of the state capital Kolkata -- attacked police with sticks and sharp objects.

"The police had to resort to firing," he said.

Police said they had gone to the village to provide protection to workers who were seeking to repair roads and bridges destroyed by the villagers in an effort to block access to the village.

Meanwhile, the CU authorities yesterday started sending letters to the cancelled LLB certificate holders at their personal addresses.

Other members of the committee are UGC members Prof M Tareque Shamsur Rahman, Prof Ehsanul Haque and Dhaka University Controller of Examination M Bahul Haque Chowdhury, the release said.

Prof Muzaffar Hossain, acting examination controller of the CU, said other actions against the certificate scam such as sending related documents of the persons concerned to Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) would start soon.

Process of publishing a gazette notification of the cancelled certificates of Degree (pass), Subsidiary and B-Eds is also going on, he added.

Sources said the university authorities earlier sent the list of 50 cancelled LLB certificate holders to Chancellor of the university, Bar Council chairman in Dhaka and the law colleges concerned all over the country.

On May 20, 1999, the then government declared 10,465 hectares of land in Cox's Bazar and adjacent areas as 'ecologically critical area' to preserve the bio-diversity and prohibited erecting structures, felling trees and capturing animals in the area.

The plots owned by Hyperion Builders are situated in Zilongia demarcation and trace map shows that all the plots in Zilongia are situated inside the 'ecologically critical area'.

Two separate cases of extortion, arson and looting were filed against Hafiz with the same police station by Abu Taher and Mozammel Hug Bhuiyan -- both local Awami League (AL) leaders.

M Zakir Hussain lodged a murder case with Daulatkhan Police Station accusing Hafiz for the killing of his (Zakir's) father local AL leader M Shahjahan.

Rahima Begum, wife of local AL leader Nurul Islam, lodged a looting, arson and extortion case against Hafiz with the same police station.

A rape case was lodged by Anjoli Rani with Daulatkhan Police Station.

Around 100 local BNP leaders and associates of Hafiz were also accused in the criminal cases.

Titas gas field

FROM PAGE 1

Natural gas with water and petroleum known as hydrocarbon are automatically streaming out through five tube well pumps including a new one with such a great force that it is making a roaring noise. Similar substances are also gushing out through thousands of holes and cracks in and around the villages and Loiska Beel, a vast swamp. The soil of the area is also becoming hard and crusty.

Our reply to former MP Shahiduzzaman's rejoinder is -- although he did not take allotment of any plot in "Hotel Motel Zone" in Cox's Bazar under his own name, he took the allotment of plot no 42 in the name of his younger sister Zakia's husband Mahbubul Alam.

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Huge unusable

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Several gunnysacks filled with the rusted ammunition, mostly unusable, might have been dumped a few days back in the pond at Saoghat in Rupganj upazila, speculated Sub-Inspector Farid -- a member of the police team that recovered the ammunition.

The present caretaker government decided to cancel the Meghnaghata-3 proposal last month and asked the Power Cell to prepare for an open tender.

Residents of the village are now living with a fear of an explosion at any time at the spot.

A plethora of holes are seen in all parts of the banks of the Titas river near gas field location No 3, through which gas is continuously gushing out. Similar holes are also seen in different crop fields.

Meanwhile, the holes are gradually becoming larger while some have automatically got sealed by streaming sludge of toxic liquid. New holes with gushing gas and sludge are popping up everyday.

Advocates Sayeed Ahmed Gazi, Ashraf Ul Alam, Emdadul Haq Lal, Rafiqul Islam Milon, Abul Kalam Azad, Shahidullah Miah, Prasanta Kumar Karmakar and Chaitanya Chandra Halder moved for the defendants.

As soon as Petrobangla sends instructions the next step will be taken, the MD said.

6 killed in Indian cop firing

AFP, Kolkata

Police opened fire yesterday on a mob protesting the planned building of a Special Economic Zone in eastern India, killing six and injuring around 50, police said.

"The death toll has gone up to six," Raj Kanjaria, police chief of eastern West Bengal state, told the news agency, adding that around 50 people were injured of whom six were in critical condition.

"We are keeping a watch on developments, the situation is under control," he said.

The violence was the latest in a series of nationwide protests, mainly by poor villagers, against the government buying up farmland for private industrial parks. The parks are seen as central to India's drive to boost economic growth and lure foreign investment.

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Sources said the university authorities earlier sent the list of 50 cancelled LLB certificate holders to Chancellor of the university, Bar Council chairman in Dhaka and the law colleges concerned all over the country.

On Saturday, the authorities published a gazette notification cancelling LLB certificates of 50 examinees including that of controversial judge Faisal Mahmud Faizee on charge of tampering with their tabulation sheets and other irregularities.

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Detention of Janakantha editor declared illegal

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government to explain in ten days why the detention of Atiqullah Khan Masud, editor of the daily Janakantha, should not be declared illegal.

The committee started collecting all sorts of information about the local families and their properties to make a list which will become useful if the people there become victims of a large scale disaster.

The DC said they took the initiative to face a possible disaster and its aftermath.

The authorities of Bangladesh Gas Field Company Limited (BGFCL) however informed the DC that there is no possibility of a large scale disaster from the leaks at Sampur and Anandapur villages.

Although the pressure of leaking gas is not decreasing the BGFCL authorities claimed that the pressure remains stable.

Since the volume of natural gas has increased in the air of Sampur and Anandapur villages, the residents are not being able to light fire there.

The district administration has started advising residents through loudspeakers not to use kerosene lamps or lanterns and not to light matches in the area. They are also being advised to use electric torch lights at night.

When contacted, Managing Director (MD) of BGFCL Shahidul Abedin said the qualities of the gas reserve in Titas Gas Field and of the gas that is being leaked through the holes and cracks are of same quality.

An expert said the amount of gas lost through the leaks could be staggering.

The MD of BGFCL said on February 11 a six-member survey committee formed by Petrobangla submitted its report.

As soon as Petrobangla sends instructions the next step will be taken, the MD said.

Inclusion of his name in the list of 41 'big fish' vilified his name, fame and reputation in society, complainant Mahmudur said, adding that the news item was false, fabricated and concocted.

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The report said the law enforcers would disclose the list of the 41 'big fish' who had been hiding since the crackdown began, and ask them to surrender if they were not captured in a couple of days.

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He also said punitive measures would be taken against him as per the service rules.

Meanwhile, our Sylhet correspondent reported that the police would produce SCC Chief Engineer Saiful Islam, arrested on Tuesday

Iran defiant as more UN sanctions loom

AFP, Tehran

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday dismissed the growing threat of more UN sanctions over Iran's nuclear programme, saying it was Western powers that were isolating and not Tehran.

His latest verbal onslaught against the West came as six major world powers prepared to address the full Security Council about a draft resolution that would impose a second set of UN sanctions against Tehran.

The new punitive measures under discussion by the five permanent Security Council members plus Germany involve an arms embargo as well as some financial and trade restrictions that build on the first sanctions imposed in December.

"If you (the West) think that by using the institutions you created and by adopting measures you will oblige the Iranian people to yield, then you are wrong," Ahmadinejad told crowds of supporters in the central city of Yazd.

"They sit down in a circle and swap papers. They say that they want to isolate the Iranian people... But it is the Iranian people who with the help of God have isolated you," he added.

Sections of the Iranian press, the parliament and even former president Mohammad Khatami have urged the conservative government to act with caution to prevent the adoption of a new UN resolution against Iran.

National officials have been fuming that Russia has not fulfilled an agreement to deliver the nuclear fuel by the end of March for its first nuclear power station, hinting at US political pressure is to blame.

"It is deplorable that there has been a delay in launching the Bushehr plant," top nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani was quoted as saying by the ISNA news agency. "The Russians should keep their promises on time."

However Russia has said that the delays to the Bushehr power plant stem purely from financing problems on the Iranian side and there are no political considerations.

Iran's foreign ministry has also started the process for Ahmadinejad to obtain a visa for the United States to attend any crunch meeting of the Security Council in person.