

ACC can use DGFI

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acquired properties before a case is filed, the ACC, with permission from the Special Judges Court, can freeze or 'attach' the suspect's properties.

In addition to the new ACC rules, under the current Emergency Power Rules, 2007, the government has the power to confiscate both moveable and immovable properties before a case is filed.

The new ACC rules also state that if someone sells or transfers the illegally acquired property, be it movable or immovable, it would be considered illegal.

Meanwhile, ACC has prepared documents to file cases against seven arrested former ministers and lawmakers from the BNP or other parties belonging to the BNP-led four-party coalition, sources said.

The seven are Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, former parliamentary affairs adviser to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, Mirza Abbas, former housing and public works minister, Mosaddak Ali Fala, former lawmaker and political secretary to the former prime minister, Nasser Rahman, former lawmaker and son of former finance minister M. Saifur Rahman, Mufti Shahidul Islam, a former lawmaker and alleged militant patron, Salauddin Ahmed, former lawmaker, and Manzurul Ahsan Munshi, former lawmaker.

MEET WITH DISTRICT OFFICIALS

ACC officials would have to shed past habits of not doing work or doing 'ill-motivated' work, that made the ACC ineffective in the past, ACC Chairman Mashhud said in the first meeting with district-level anti-corruption officers since the reconstitution of ACC in late February.

There is no scope for ACC officials to indulge in corruption showing 'inadequate salaries' as excuse, he said.

"The ACC image must be kept clean and ACC officials have to be re-energised," he said, adding that the ACC officials must prove that they are efficient as well as incorruptible.

They should work remaining unaffected by the thought of their political past, who appointed them or who would come to power in future, he said.

"If any ACC official finds it difficult to work in the changed atmosphere that has recently developed, he can apply for early retirement and we will make arrangement for it within seven days," the ACC chief said.

He asked them to prepare flawless cases against the corrupt so they cannot get off the hook easily.

Inquiry, investigations and first information reports are the ACC's fundamental duties, ACC commissioner Manzoor Mannan said in the meeting.

Officials should also act preemptively against corruption and remain alert about corrupt activities, he said.

Referring to some inadequacies that he found while working on the high-profile cases in the last month, the commissioner told the officers that more attention to the details would improve the merit of the cases.

Stressing the need for proper inquiry, another Commissioner Habibur Rahman asked 'inexperienced and less experienced' investigators to seek assistance from more experienced ones so that no case fails due to faults in investigations.

ACC RULES
The ACC rules had not been approved since the commission's formation in 2004, although it is

required as per the ACC Act.

The newly recast commission led by Mashhud stepped up efforts in this regard and the president yesterday approved the ACC Rules, 2007 to make the ACC properly functional in their investigations.

These rules have been formulated to set out the guidelines for inquiry, FIR, charge sheet and prosecution. They are outlined in 8 chapters containing 25 sections.

The anti-corruption committee to oversee corruption within the commission, will be headed by ACC chairman and include the ACC secretary and director general of Law and Prosecution Section as members.

The committee would also look into any act of harassment by ACC officials.

In case of any complaints against the two members of the committee, the ACC chairman or a commissioner assigned by him would probe the matter.

However, there is no mention in the rules in case there are allegations against the ACC chairman and his two commissioners.

The rules mention rewards for outstanding performances against corruption by an official.

The new rules also empower the ACC to set up 'trap cases' to catch people involved with corruption red-handed.

ACC officers involved with inquiries and investigations are also to submit a monthly report on the progress of each case.

Investigation officers would receive a highest of 30 days to finish an inquiry and a highest of 60 days to complete an investigation, according to the new rules.

The new rules also state that anyone ordered to submit their wealth statements would have to do so within seven days, but upon application for an extension, they would receive an additional seven working days.

MORE GRAFT CASES READY
Of the seven prepared files of arrested high-profile corruption suspects, only the case against Manzurul Ahsan Munshi has so far got approval of the commission, ACC sources said.

The cases against six others are yet to be approved by the commission.

The cases against the seven high-profile corruption suspects contain charges centring mismatch between their submitted wealth statements and their legal income.

Mosaddak Ali Fala has shown seven houses in his wealth statements while investigators have already found that at least two of them are too expensive to be built/bought with the income Fala showed in his tax return at the time of purchase.

The charge against Mirza Abbas is that he cheaply sold off 18 government houses. The sources of money shown by Salauddin Quader Chowdhury to buy three cars were also found to be incorrect.

The ACC has also found that properties owned by Nasser Rahman and his wife are far beyond their known income.

The current charges against the seven will increase in the future as more cases could be filed in separate corruption charges against them, said ACC sources.

CA for hunger-free

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and sacrificing personal comfort in greater interest of the nation, he said.

Fakhruddin was addressing the function on the occasion of distribution of the Independence Award 2007, the highest national award, on the eve of the Independence and National Day.

Bangladesh Army for its exceptional role at national level and leading NGO Brac for its pioneering role in socioeconomic development received the prestigious award.

On behalf of Bangladesh Army, its chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed and Corporal Md Ohiduzzaman Mollah Bir Protik while on behalf Brac its founder and Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed received the Independence Award from the chief adviser.

"This time around, our struggle is the struggle for realising people's aspirations and dreams. The struggle is for materialising the ideals of the Liberation War and freedom fighters. This struggle is a struggle for building a real public welfare-oriented democratic modern Bangladesh," he told the function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Terming the year 2007 significant for Bangladesh, the chief adviser said good beginning of the present caretaker government with mass support to bring about real democracy and keep the nation free from corruption and the administration free from greed and evil political influence is an epoch-making event.

While paying rich tribute to the valiant freedom fighters for their supreme sacrifice at the Liberation War, the chief adviser asked for soul searching, on this occasion, as to what has been done for the freedom fighters who have lost their capability to maintain normal life?

Speaking at the function to express his feelings, Army Chief Gen Moeen observed that after independence Bangladesh army's activity got multiple dimensions, apart from safeguarding country's sovereignty.

"The army has aided the civil administration in improving law and order situation at different times to give democracy an institutional shape," he said.

"After promulgation of the state of emergency in 2007, army is cooperating in restoration of normalcy in the country," the army chief told the function.

The army chief declared that the one-lakh taka received as proceeds from the Independence Award would be donated for the welfare of the disabled.

Brac Chairperson Fazle Hasan Abed also spoke at the function.

Seminar calls

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have to face punishment for corruption of any sort. This only can curb corruption effectively, the speakers added.

In the seminar on 'Corruption and Economics: The Crippling Truth', the speakers spoke on reasons of corruption, its effects on society, politics, economics and other relevant sectors.

Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to the Iajuddin Ahmed-led caretaker government, said: "Here corruption is pervasive, unpredictable and hardly any punishment goes against the corrupt. Taking this chance corruption had reached its peak."

The seminar was organised by the Young Economists' Forum (YEF), a student body in NSU, in the university auditorium.

M Hafizuddin Khan, treasurer of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), blamed the devious political practice in the country for creating scopes for corruption.

Security beefed

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capital to strengthen security.

Additional police forces have been deployed to protect important buildings and sensitive places, the DMP chief said.

DB sources said five teams of the DB conducted several raids in 20 different slums in the capital from dawn till dusk yesterday and arrested 20 suspected militants.

2,800 kg Jatka

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seized the jatka after searching six anchored launches that had arrived from Barisal, Chandpur, Potuakhali and Bhola.

Out of the 21 arrested, four people were fish traders while the rest were crew of the vessels.

The court in a spot trial handed down one year's imprisonment and Tk 5,000 in fine to each of the 21 arrestees.

The court also issued arrest warrants against the ten jatka suppliers and put the seized fish on sale under Fish Conservation and Protection Act 1950 (amendment 2002). A total of Tk 2,79,000 was collected from the sale.

Later in the evening, the same mobile court unearthed a fake drink mix manufacturing factory at Mir Hazirbag under Shyampur thana in the city.

Copycats of renowned drink mix Tang was being produced at the factory under the name of 'Ting' using low grade raw materials, artificial colour and harmful chemicals.

The court arrested three of the four owners of the factory. They are Abu Bakar, Siddique and Mizanur Rahman.

The court sentenced the three to 18 months' imprisonment along with Tk 50,000 fines each under BSTI Ordinance. The court also jailed the same three accused for another 20 months and fined another Tk 2,00,000 each under Pure Food Ordinance.

The court also issued arrest warrant against the factory's absconding co-owner Lalu Mia.

A friend of a nation

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role in the war of independence for Bangladesh turning the place of worship into a shelter and hospital for the freedom fighters.

He used to device ways to dissuade the invading Pakistani military from attacking the villagers.

Soon after the war had descended on the people of the erstwhile East Pakistan, most of the foreign Christian missionaries went back to their homelands but Father Rigon refused to budge from his place of work and engaged himself in the fight against the Pakistani military for the independence of Bangladesh.

As The Daily Star was interviewing Father Rigon in Dhaka on the eve of his departure for Italy for a surgery on the anniversary of Victory Day on December 16, 2006, he suddenly took a long pause and said, "So much blood and repression... I don't want to remember!"

Father Marino Rigon was born in Italy on February 5, 1925. The eldest among the eight children of a farmer and actor Richard and Italia Monica, he decided to become a priest quite early in his childhood.

With the mission of preaching religion, he arrived in the erstwhile East Pakistan on January 7, 1953. Since then he has been serving as a Catholic priest for the last 54 years in different dioceses in Bangladesh.

During the liberation war, Rigon founded a hospital on his Baniarchar church ground where a sympathetic doctor treated many wounded freedom fighters during those uncertain nights.

He also used to organise the villagers in secret for resisting the attacks of the Pakistani military.

"The Pakistani military used to target a different village each day and used to ransack the village in the dark of night," he murmured during his interview adding, "The children were usually so horrified that they could not even cry, they might have had perceived that the

time was not right for crying."

The military attempted several times to attack the church but every time Father Rigon stopped them by pleading with them and by offering cigarettes and food as bribe.

However, in the dark of night the ambience inside the church used to take a 180-degree turn morphing the place of worship into a hospital for wounded freedom fighters.

"Fortunately we had a doctor, a dispensary, an X-ray machine and a generator in the hospital on the church ground, enabling us to carry out critical surgeries successfully like the one on the face of Hemayet Uddin Bir Bikram, who was wounded during a battle with the Pakistanis in Faridpur."

Father Rigon also used to send food to the camps of the freedom fighters and provided shelter and food to the villagers irrespective of their class and religion.

When he visited his home village in Venice, Italy two or three years after the liberation, he asked his mother, "How would you feel if I came back during the war?" His mother replied, "A thorn would pierce my heart for good!"

Father Rigon currently works as a priest in Shelabunia Mission Palli in Mongla.

In addition to his duties as a Catholic priest, his days consist of supervising the activities of several schools and a cottage industry founded by him for development of education in the area and for improving the situation of economically disadvantaged women.

Father Rigon will return to Bangladesh from Italy soon and continue his mission for the mankind.

He expressed to The Daily Star his feelings for Bangladesh, before leaving the country for treatment, reciting the following lines from a poem by Jibonnanda Das, "I will come back again on the banks of Bangla..."

Bird flu found

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department, said 9,000 chickens of the three Jamalpur poultry farms had been sold already before the lab report came.

The senior officials however did not give any detail about the three poultry farms as Fisheries and Livestock Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman interrupted them. A minute before, the secretary said, "Samples from Naryanganj and Jamalpur were sent to Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute for tests and results will be known today."

Livestock Adviser CS Karim yesterday in an interview with the Bangla Service of BBC Radio said, "At 4:00pm today, we received information regarding apprehension of Bird Flu in Jamalpur. But it has not been confirmed yet."

"A team will visit the farms in Jamalpur. The team will confirm us about the apprehension and if the virus is detected there, it will initiate measures for culling," the advisers said.

The adviser also said the government will seek cooperation from the international community if the situation spins out of control.

A special meeting of the council of advisers to the caretaker government on March 22 disclosed that Avian Influenza virus, popularly known as Bird Flu, had been detected in a poultry farm in Savar on the outskirts of the capital.

Since the detection of Bird Flu virus in the state-run Biman Poultry Complex, a huge number of chickens of six poultry farms in Savar and Gazipur have been culled.

In the news briefing yesterday, the fisheries and livestock secretary said officials of the livestock department have so far visited 977 poultry farms, which have a total of 17.98 lakh chickens. Till Saturday, a total of 39, 264 Bird Flu affected chickens were culled in six poultry farms in Savar and Gazipur. Also 30,720 eggs have been destroyed in a farm, he said.

"Around 100 Bird Flu affected chickens were culled in Gazipur area today," the secretary added.

He said all the deputy commissioners informed the ministry that they have launched awareness programmes to prevent panic among the people.

About the present situation in Narayanganj, the secretary said the deputy commissioner of the district in a report claimed that 820 chickens died there. "The reasons behind the deaths were not identified," he said.

Before the disclosure by the livestock department, the secretary claimed that the situation is under control and the Bird Flu virus was not detected anywhere else in the country other than Savar and Gazipur.

The secretary however tried to stop the senior officials of the livestock department from talking about the detection of Avian Influenza in Jamalpur.

Our Gazipur correspondent reported that although no farm raised chicken was culled in any poultry farm there, more than a hundred free range chickens were culled in Gazipur yesterday within

Koyes Sami

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and some other present and former officials of the bank for embezzling Tk 504 crore.

Moving the bail petitions, advocate Habibul Islam Bhuiyan argued that his client was not in service during the period when the amount was embezzled while another accused Obaidul Karim had misappropriated the amount of money and gone to Malaysia with his family members.

Moreover, his client had earlier on February 6 surrendered to the High Court seeking anticipatory bail. But turning down the bail petition the court directed his client to surrender to the Sessions Judge's Court within seven weeks. As per direction, his client appeared before the court, the lawyer added.

Opposing the bail petitions, Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmud Hassan prayed for order to send the accused to jail.

After hearing both the sides, the judge turned down the bail petitions and sent Koyes to jail.

Koyes was taken to jail on a prison van at 5:00pm.

According to the FIR (first information report), Tk 488.50 crore was misappropriated through unauthorised issuance of 369 inter-branch debit advices with the assistance of several officials at the Oriental Bank head office, and Bangshal, Nawabpur, Mirpur Road, Karwan Bazar, and Principal branches between 2003 and June 2006.

"Obaidul Karim, who is a close relative of some members of the bank's then board of directors, is the chief beneficiary of the misappropriated money," said the FIR.

In the second case filed with Kotwali Police Station, it was alleged that Koyes and nine others embezzled Tk 15.24 crore from a client's account by copying the client's signature.

SALMAN'S BAIL REJECTED

The same court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Salman F Rahman, vice chairman of Beximco Group, arrested under Section 16 (2) of Emergency Ordinance 2007.

The judge passed the order after his lawyers had earlier filed a criminal appeal to the court against the rejection order of the lower court on February 16.

HUDA'S REMAND HEARING

The hearing on the seven-day remand prayer to interrogate former minister Nazmul Huda in connection with the money laundering case filed against him will be held on March 29.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court had earlier directed the authorities concerned to produce Huda on that day, as the hearing will be held in his presence.

The case was filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on February 14 on the basis of seizure of a huge amount of local and foreign currencies on February 5.

Khaleda

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BNP senior leaders including Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, however, will place wreaths at the National Memorial and offer feteah at late president Ziaur Rahman's grave today.

As the top leader of BNP, Khaleda Zia usually pays homage to the martyrs of Liberation War at the National Memorial and offers Feteah at Ziaur Rahman's grave on Independence Day every year.

Bangla daily Dinkal, mouthpiece of BNP, on Sunday ran a report that said Khaleda Zia would pay homage to the Liberation War martyrs on Independence Day.

Meanwhile, a senior BNP leader told the UNB news agency on condition of anonymity that Khaleda Zia did not get security clearance from the authorities concerned to visit those places.

Rain frustrates

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The weather has been a touch gloomy since Saturday with sudden bursts of drizzle.

Bangladesh kept faith in the same eleven that has played in the first two matches.

Abdur Razzak, the left-arm spinner had a minor groin problem but has come through yesterday's training session at the Queen's Park Oval alright and made the side.

All the players celebrated the 20th birthday of all-rounder Sakib Al Hasan during a team dinner at a local restaurant on Saturday evening.

2 outlaws killed

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Rab sources claimed Nizam Uddin was the regional operations commander of PBPCP Red Flag faction.

Sources said as the Rab team reached Alokdiar Chotakupukuria of Shanthia upazila to raid the hideout of the outlaws, Nizam and Ukil's accomplices opened fire on the Rab team. Rab retaliated triggering a shootout. During the firefight Nazim and Ukil received bullets. After the shoot-out, the PBPCP men managed to flee the area leaving Nizam and Ukil, who died on the spot.

The dead were accused in several criminal cases including six murder cases, Rab sources said. Rab recovered a .9mm pistol, a locally made gun and seven bullets from the spot.

Poultry industry

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suddenly stall the booming poultry sector involving directly around 10 million people. He hoped that both the government and private entrepreneurs will jointly face the situation boldly.

Mashiur expressed satisfaction over the government's readiness to face the challenges, adding that the whole poultry industry will also face up to the challenge.

SCENARIO AT SAVAR AND GAZIPUR

Poultry farmers in Savar and Gazipur, the two main centres of the country's poultry industry, feared a huge investment loss because of the panic created by the detection of bird flu. They also feared a collapse in the marketing chain of eggs and fowls.

The District Livestock Office in Gazipur said there are 7,135 farms for layer birds and 5,336 farms for broiler chicken in five upazilas in the district and the total number of broiler and layer birds is more than 2.71 crore.

In the Bhabanipur, Ganakpara and Jirani areas in Savar, the farmers were seen wearing a glum look.

The government authorities on Friday culled 3,000 fowls of Happy Poultry of Ganakpara, which the government has declared a bird flu affected area.

Proprietor of the farm Abdul Latif is worried about the future. He said his father started the poultry business in 1998 with a small investment and the business—now with two farms—gradually grew bigger and its total liability stood at more than Tk 40 lakh.

"I lost the whole business of one farm as all its fowls had to be dumped at the time of its full production," he said. The marketing activities are also paralysed since the government directed not to sell eggs or fowls until further orders, he added.

Latif said it will be difficult to come back to the full swing in the business again as it takes at least six months after investing to come into production.

Asked about the government's decision to compensate the affected, he said, "We are yet to receive any assurance from the government about compensation. The government officials came and destroyed our produces but said the matter of compensation will be discussed later."

All the farms in the area are

facing huge investment losses.

Bhai Bhai poultry farm in the same area lost its investment as its 3,500 chicks and fowls had to be dumped.

Its proprietor Jasim Uddin submitted an estimated loss of Tk 24 lakh for compensation to the Gazipur District Livestock Officer yesterday.

The panic also resulted in dull business at places outside the infected areas.

Adbur Razzak, a farmer of Bhabanipur, said although his farm is out of the infected areas, the sales of eggs and fowls experienced a drastic fall in the last few days.

He took a loan of Tk 10 lakh from the Ashulia branch of Sonali Bank two years ago to expand his business. His Suma Poultry Farm now has 6,000 chicks and fowls. "I am not worried about bird flu but I am anxious about how I will pay my next bank instalment," said Razzak, who has to pay the bank Tk 40,000 per month against his loans.

"The District Livestock Office instructed us to maintain cleanliness in the farms and report it if any death of chickens occurs," said Mozammel Haque, owner of a poultry farm containing 1,000 broiler chickens.

He said poultry farm owners are constantly communicating with the District Livestock Office and following its instructions.

"We are working together since an outbreak of bird flu in any farm will bring disaster to all of us," said another poultry farm owner in Gazipur municipal area.

Meanwhile, the District Livestock Office said three teams were formed to investigate and monitor the poultry farms in the unaffected areas. The teams surveyed 90,000 birds in 38 farms in the district as of yesterday, it said.

"If any abnormal or massive death of birds is found, we will collect the sample for test, but as of now we did not find any such case," Kafiluddin Bhuiyan, district livestock officer, Gazipur, said.

The officials of the livestock office said poultry birds from Jirani of Gazipur were destroyed earlier as it was inside the one kilometre radius of the affected area in Savar where avian influenza virus was detected on March 22.

UN slaps

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missile programmes.

About a third of those are linked to the Revolutionary Guard, an elite military corps.

"It's a significant international rebuke to Iran and it's a significant tightening of international pressure on Iran," said Nicholas Burns, under-secretary for political affairs at the State Department. If Iran does not comply, "there's no question" that the United States will seek a third and tougher resolution, he added.

In December, the 15-member Security Council ordered all countries to stop supplying Iran with materials and technology that could contribute to its nuclear and missile programmes. It also ordered a freeze on assets of 10 key Iranian companies and 12 individuals related to those programmes. Iran responded by expanding enrichment, a process that can be used to produce nuclear energy or nuclear weapons.

The United States and some of its allies fear Iran's nuclear programme is a cover for producing atomic weapons but Iran insists it is only for energy production.

Mottaki said Iran would return to negotiations over its nuclear programme only if the United States and its European allies dropped the "unfair and unacceptable precondition" that it first suspend uranium enrichment.

But world powers held out hope that Iran would back down before the dispute escalated even further.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, said nations involved in the dispute had tasked him to resume contacts with Iranian negotiator Ali Larjani "to see whether we can find a route to negotiations."

"The door to negotiations is open; I hope we can together find a way to go through it," Solana said in statement.

Burns said that because of a "tumultuous political environment" in Iran "we believe there is a faction inside that government that wishes to accept this offer to negotiate."

He was apparently referring to criticism from some in Iran that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's confrontational rhetoric has deepened the country's isolation.

Ahmadinejad cancelled a planned appearance before the Security Council and sent Mottaki instead, claiming the US failed to deliver his visa in time. The US said it had issued the visa promptly.

Raising tensions, Iran detained 15 British sailors and marines Friday in what it said were Iranian territorial waters near Iraq. The 15 had been on a mission to search for smugglers in Iraqi waters.

The six world powers that drafted the new resolution spent Friday trying to overcome objections from several council members, reflecting concerns that anything short of consensus would weaken efforts to rein in

Iran's nuclear defiance.

There were several minor concessions but no changes to the key sanctions agreed upon last week by the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany.

The new sanctions already a compromise between the stronger measures favoured by the United States and the Europeans and the softer approach advocated by Russian and China are considered modest. The ban on exports is among the harshest measures, but many of Iran's arms sales may not be affected because they are illicitly sent to militant groups like Lebanon's Hezbollah and Shia militias in Iraq.

Still, world powers hoped that approving the resolution quickly and unanimously would signal that Iran will face stricter sanctions each time it ignores a Security Council deadline to suspend uranium enrichment.

"This resolution sends an unambiguous signal to the government and people of Iran ... that the path of nuclear proliferation by Iran is not one that the international community can accept," said British UN Ambassador Emrys Jones Parry.

In Paris, French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said the Security Council gave Iran a clear choice: "Cooperate with the international community or pursue their enrichment and reprocessing activities and worsen, in that way, their isolation."

Mottaki reiterated that Iran's goal was solely the peaceful pursuit of an alternative source of energy.

Top cop Kohinoor

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from Nandail constituency, Md Abdul Matin Bhuiyan, Md Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan, and Golam Haider Khan, present chairman of Nandail municipality.

The witnesses included 14 people including Md Sabuj Miah, polling agent, Prof Arabinda Pal, Kazi Wahiduddin, the then up