

Tax waiver for freedom fighters

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Moheshpur Municipal Chairman Shafiqul Azam Chanchal yesterday waived holding tax for freedom fighters in the municipal area.

The announcement was made at a function organisaed by the district unit of Freedom Fighters Council, held at its office.

The municipal chairman was the chief guest at the function, chaired by freedom fighter Faizur Rahman. It was addressed by, among others, freedom fighters Abdur Razzak, Rafi Uddin, Dr. Ataur Rahman Sheikh and Nizam Uddin.

The speakers called for building a new Bangladesh by upholding the spirit of the Liberation War. They urged the people to launch campaign against corruption at all levels, that is eating up all development efforts.

The freedom fighters also urged honest people to come to politics to materialise the dreams of the martyrs. People want honest leadership and will elect such people in the next general election, they said.

Manikganj FFs boycott programmes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Freedom fighters boycotted Independence Day programmes at Shahid Miraj Tapan Stadium in Manikganj, organised by the district administration, allegedly because there was no sitting arrangements for them among the guests.

They told newsmen at Manikganj Press Club that they went to attend the programme but there was no arrangement for them to sit. They boycotted the function.

"We felt disgraced and left the function", said freedom fighter Lokman Hossain.

Diagnostic centre closed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Joint forces closed one diagnostic centre and fined four clinics and two diagnostic centres at Gaibandha on Sunday.

Led by Magistrate Kiron Chandro Roy, joint force closed Kali Diagonistic Center and Blood Bank due to lack of valid documents in support of its registration. It also arrested its employee Rubel Mia.

The joint force realised a fine of Tk 65,000 from Pulse Clinic, Oishi Clinic, Gaibandha Clinic and Rabeya Clinic for running those without trained doctors, nurses and proper equipment

It also realised a fine of Tk 20,000 from Doctor's Pathology and Khandker Pathology for irregularities.

UGC detects Tk 1.29cr irregularities in PSTU

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has submitted to the education ministry its probe report on alleged financial irregularities during the tenure of former Vice-Chancellor of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) Prof Dr Wahid-uz-Zaman, recommending action against him.

A three-member probe body led by UGC Chairman Prof Dr Asaduzzaman submitted the report on March 10. A copy of the report reached PSTU on March 19, sources there said.

The UGC team visited PSTU on September 10 last year.

Prof Wahid-uz-Zaman was removed on charge of corruption and financial irregularities on August 27 last year.

The probe team detected financial irregularities amounting to Tk 1.29 crore during the 16 months' tenure of Prof Wahid-Uz-Zaman as VC from May 8, 2004 to August 27 last year, according to the report.

The irregularities included purchase of four cars for the university at a cost Tk 70, 89, 580. Those were bought without approval of finance committee and formation of purchase committee.

The former VC also approved payment of five bills amounting to Tk 1, 22, 160 for 2004-05 fiscal year (FY) for repair of three cars and another 21 bills amounting to Tk 4, 63, 830 in 2005-06 FY for the same purpose, the report said.

He also approved three bills involving Tk 1, 58, 390 on September 8, 2005, allegedly for repair of the same cars.

An amount of Tk 1.13 lakh was paid as helicopter fair for bringing PSTU Regent Board members from Dhaka for a meeting at the university.

Besides, Tk 8.02 lakh was paid in excess as house rent, Tk 3.30 lakh for purchase of mobile sets, Tk 2.88 lakh in excess as festival bonus, Tk 24.90 lakh as advance payments, Tk 34,353 as VAT and Tk 1.14 lakh in the name of 'responsibilities allowance'. The probe team also

detected payment of Tk 4.73 lakh without any vouture.

The former VC received Tk 2, 48, 373 in excess as fuel cost allowance during his period. He took 552 litres of fuel on an average every month from the university against the official allotment of 200 litres, the report said.

The probe committee recommended refund of all the money taken in excess', PSTU sources said.

The education ministry sent the report to Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), the sources said.

The high powered UGC team's visit followed submission of an audit objection. Earlier, an audit team submitted a 9-point audit objection involving Tk 53, 90, 414 to the UGC.

A two-member audit team headed by Pabitrashor Roy examined 15 months' accounts from March 2004 to June 30, 2005 and submitted a report to the UGC.

After receiving the audit report, the UGC removed Wahid-uz-Zaman on August 27 last year and appointed the then PSTU Treasurer

Prof Dr. Abdul Latif Masum as VC on the same day.

Later, the UGC team led by its chairman Prof Dr Asaduzzaman visited the PSTU on September 10 last year and found the allegations against Wahid-Uz-Zaman true.

The appointment of Prof. Abdul Latif Masum as VC also violated PSTU rules, some sources claimed. According to Section 10 of Patuakhali Science & Technology University Act of 2001, which was passed by the Jatiya Sangsad on July 12, 2001, the VC should be a 'specialist on science and technology'. Prof. Abdul Latif completed Masters degree in political science from Dhaka University.

When contacted, VC Prof Abdul Latif Masum declined to comment but said facilities for the VC including house rent are yet to be finalised by the Regent Board. The Board recently formed a committee to finalise VC's facilities, he said.



A fire gutted a slum at Dingadoha in Rajshahi city yesterday, rendering over 50 families homeless. PHOTO: STAR

Revolver missing from Gazipur police camp

BSS, Gazipur

A revolver with 10 bullets has been missing from a highway police outpost in the district.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Gazipur thana inspector Rafiqul Islam said he filed a case yesterday as the arms and ammunition had been missing for about a week since the transfer of the in-charge of the Chandana crossing highway police outpost.

Holder of the arms and ammunition sub-inspector Jahangir Alam duly deposited those with the outpost before leaving the outpost the Gazipur OC said adding that investigating is going on.

Rakub recovers Tk 12 cr a week

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank (RAKUB) is recovering about Tk 12 crore classified loans a week from defaulters.

It recovered Tk Tk 88.16 crore loan till March 15 during the current financial year, a Rakub press release said here yesterday.

Earlier, the bank could not recover loans from defaulters despite taking legal actions. Defaulters are now willingly refunding loans after tight measures taken by the caretaker government, it said.



Children at a painting competition organised by the Rajshahi University Martyred Memorial Archive on its premises in observance of Independence Day. PHOTO: STAR

Power crisis in 21 southwestern districts worsens

240MW supplied on Sunday against demand for 518MW

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Severe power crisis continued to plague the south-western region as five power plants remained inoperative due to technical faults since Sunday afternoon.

As a result, all the districts under the West Zone Power Distribution Company Ltd (WZPDCL) are experiencing load shedding at short intervals despite closure of all shopping centres from 7:30pm as the government pressed a 'load management programme'.

The 110 megawatt power plant in Khulna city went out of order at 5.40 pm Sunday, leading to a decline in power generation to a record low, said a source in WZPDCL.

Authorities could not say anything about how much time they would need to bring the plant back to operation. The plant that became inoperative due to leakage in water wall tube, its officials said.

The 60mw unit in Khulna remained inoperative for last seven months. Same is the condition of the Barge Mounted Power Plant- 2 in Khulna, Barisal Gas Turbine Plant-2 and Bheramara Power Plant-2. These are inoperative for technical faults, aggravating the crisis. Sources here said they can not say when these will be back to operation to give a respite to the nagging power crisis.

According to WZPDCL sources, only 240 megawatt were supplied on Sunday against the demand for 518 megawatt in 16 districts of Khulna and Barisal divisions and five districts of greater Faridpur.

Sources said that power crisis in the 21 districts under West Zone Power Distribution Company might take a serious turn in coming days due to lack of 'effective and positive steps' to ensure proper load management system, intensive monitoring of the current situation and sincere intention to snap illegal electricity connections.

The sever power outages have hit emergency services, industries, hospitals, business centers and also telecommunication exchanges, the sources said.

They said there is 264 megawatt loadshedding on an average everyday in the south-western region including Khulna.

Fifteen out of 19 power units of private owned Khulna Power Company Limited (KPCL) can generate only 90 megawatt electricity.

In addition, one out of three units of Bheramara power plant can supply 15 mw and Barisal power plant supplies 15 mw everyday. One of two barge mounted plants can supply only 11 mw electricity.

The national grid supplies 180 megawatt, said a ZPDCL source.

27 betel leaf gardens gutted in Jhenidah

BSS, Jhenidah

Twenty seven betel leaf gardens worth about taka 50 lakh were gutted at village Bhabanipur under Harinakunda upazila of the district yesterday.

The fire, which broke out at a betel leaf garden at about 12 am soon spread to other gardens on 30 bighas of land.

Local people failed to extinguish the fire at an initial stage. But after an hour of struggle they were able to control it with the cooperation of the fire service.

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