

# ACC chief urges people to form anti-graft body at grassroots level

HASAN JAHD TUSHER, back from northern region

Vowing to tackle corruption in the country within six months, the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday called upon people to form anti-graft committees at grassroots level.

"It is the right time to go against corruption and to resist it," he said while exchanging views with a cross section of people in Kurigram district headquarters.

As part of his countrywide tour to create mass awareness against corruption, Mashhud visited four northern districts--Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Gaibandha--yesterday and held meetings with the local administration, people including members of the civil society, journalists, lawyers, teachers and students, businessmen and field-level ACC officials.

They urged the ACC chairman as well as the caretaker government to take stern actions against the corrupt politicians, businessman and government officials.

Teachers and students' representative at the four districts recommended banning teacher-student politics in order to have corruption-free educational institutions across the country.

The ACC chairman urged all to form anti-graft committees at grassroots level with the slogan "I will not be involved with corruption or allow anyone to be involved with corruption".

"Good days for principles will come soon and by that time we will have to smash corruption's good days," he said. Mashhud said as the time has come to root out corruption, pressure has to be created on the corrupt people and institutions so that Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) cannot hold us in the 20 most corrupt nations list.

The anti-graft body chief said it is not possible to curb corruption by nabbing and bringing to justice a few corrupt people. Mass awareness against corruption in remote areas could help curb corruption in the country, said Mashhud adding that the ACC as well as the government will assist any forum or committee that will work for preventing and curbing corruption.

Terming corruption a problem, a

## Ramna blast

FROM PAGE 1

quizzed about his role in the attack. "We are verifying the information that Mufti Hannan gave about his 10 associates and a move to haul them in is on," said a CID official seeking anonymity.

The investigators still find it difficult to identify the attackers, as Hannan did not specify many things in his statement, said sources.

According to the statement, the militant kingpin and his fellows hatched the plot at a house in Mohammadpur, but the investigators have yet to locate the holding number given by him.

Two Dhaka College students--Hasan and Omar Faruq--executed the plan but Hannan did not give their fathers' names and their department or academic year.

Sources close to the investigation said the job was hampered due to frequent changes in the probe procedure. The investigation officer (IO) was changed for as many as seven times, supervising officer five times while the investigation itself was moved thrice to different departments.

CID Inspector Abu Hena Yusuf who is now investigating the case is the eighth IO.

The first five months since filing of the case went quite all right but the progress was undone soon after the BNP-led four-party alliance came to power in October 2001.

The BNP-led government did not take long to dismiss the militants' involvement in the blast and instead blamed it all on the then main opposition Awami League (AL).

According to Mufti Hannan, he held several meetings with Sheikh Farid of Khulna, Moulana Abdul Hai of Narayanganj, Moulana Akbar of Siddhirganj and Moulana Abdur Rouf at the Mohammadpur house to plot the attack.

On his instructions, Sabbir and Jahangir made several powerful bombs applying the methods used by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Taher, Hasan and Faruq planted one of those bombs at the site of Chhayanaut's traditional cultural programme.

Hannan also said they had planned to carry out frequent attacks across the country to trouble the then AL government.

Police captured 12 people in connection with the attack. Of them, Akbar gave confessional statement.

But the arrestees were freed on bail thanks to a 'fake' post mortem report, court sources said.

The confessional statement by Mufti Hannan in September last year gave the investigation a much-needed jump-start, said CID investigators.

Special Superintendent of Police (CID) Kawsar Ahmed Haidari who heads the three-member taskforce, yesterday told The Daily Star, "We are now hopeful that we will soon be able to find out those involved in the bomb blast."

He, however declined to elaborate on how much progress has been made or when the charge sheet would be made out.

### ACC to glean info

FROM PAGE 1

"We will collect information (about Hasina)," Manzoor Mannan said when journalists referred to the extortion case and asked him whether the ACC will investigate Hasina's alleged involvement in corruption.

"I will not answer any other question in this regard," he said when asked if the ACC would also collect similar information about Khaleda.

Replying to another question in this regard, Mannan said, "You are repeatedly asking what we are doing about high profile persons. We will collect information about them, about their wealth and then we will proceed following the process that we apply for others."

He said to reach the benefit of good governance to the common people the system of punishing criminals and rewarding achievers should be introduced.

He pointed out that the Bangladesh government do not have the capability to impose too many reforms programme at a time.

Hua Du said the ADB would consider the suggestion made by the report while taking projects for good governance.

There is a gap between policy makers and the need of the people. The governance report would help in bridging the gap, said Shaheen Anam.

The survey disclosed that only five point five per cent expressed strong optimism about the future of the country.

On the other hand, eighty one per cent respondents were worried over price hike of essentials and 43 per cent were worried about poverty and 36 per cent on the question of corruption and 34 per cent for unemployment.

Dr. Mushtaq Khan pointed out that not a single country in the world introduced good governance first then achieved development. The development achieved due to dynamic action on some 'critical things' which is different from one country to another.

The most important task of the leadership of a country is to find out the 'critical things' through cross country study which would bring development for that particular country, he observed.

## 3 close aides to Mamun held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested three close aides to Giasuddin Al Mamun, business partner of detained BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, with a pistol in the city's Gulshan area early yesterday.

The arrestees are Obaidullah Khondaker alias Sohel, Kamruzzaman alias Kamrul and Monirul Islam alias Liton.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a house at Gulshan Avenue at around 3:15am and arrested them. They also seized a .22 bore pistol and eight bullets from their possession.

Police sources said the arrestees under the patronage of Mamun were involved in collecting tolls from Gulshan and Kafur areas. Cases were filed against Mamun and his three aides on charges of extortion with the police stations concerned, they added.

An arms case was filed against the three with Gulshan Police Station. Police yesterday produced the three in a Dhaka court that placed them on a three-day remand.

## 4 of a family burned to death

UNB, Comilla

Four members of a family, including two children, were burnt alive in a fire at their house at Chiara village under Choudhagram upazila of the district early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Ali Noor, 35, his wife Rozina Akhter, 24, their son Shanta, 10, and one and half-year-old daughter Shilpi.

Locals said the fire broke out in the tin-roofed house of Ali Noor at about 3:00am and burned him and his family members to death, as they were asleep.

The reason behind the fire could not be known as of 5:00pm yesterday.

## Army, Rab

FROM PAGE 20

per cent respondent termed RAB as most trusted institutions.

Sixty four villages 30 secondary towns 10 districts and two metropolitan centres came under the survey.

The Bangladesh Governance Report' 2007 also presented a nine point strategic agenda before the government for ensuring good governance in the country.

The agenda are breaking the culture of impunity, fostering quality institutions, improving quality of political process, promoting champions or drivers, a local government approach to decentralisation, focus on micro-governance window, re-kindling public ethics, informal flow and annual outcome monitoring.

The report titled 'unbundling governance' was formally launched yesterday through a ceremony at the auditorium of local government and rural development (LGRD) at Sher-Bangla Nagar.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan, Prof Rehman Sobhan, country director of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Hua Du, Dr. Mushtaq Khan, executive director of Manusher Jonno Shaheen Anam, Afsan Chowdhury, Asif Nazrul and Quzi Mesbahuddin Ahmed took part in the discussion.

Chairman of PPRC and editor of the report Hossain Zillur Rahman presented the highlights of the important findings in the report.

Participating in the discussion Akbar Ali Khan observed that the country is in a paradox that the governance index went down but the economic indicators were going up. He pointed out that the World Bank and donor agencies are always on the process of governance instead of benefit of the governance.

He said to reach the benefit of good governance to the common people the system of punishing criminals and rewarding achievers should be introduced.

He pointed out that the Bangladesh government do not have the capability to impose too many reforms programme at a time.

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The most important task of the leadership of a country is to find out the 'critical things' through cross country study which would bring development for that particular country, he observed.

## Khaleda stares down the barrel

FROM PAGE 1

Corordination Committee, MA Matin, however ruled out the possibility of any such move by the government.

But intelligence sources confirmed they have started to gather information about corruption and misuse of power against Khaleda, hinting that those might be used to make her leave the country.

Khaleda is reportedly under strict surveillance and has been asked by the 'authorities' to refrain from meeting any party colleague; at the same time party leaders have also been asked not to visit her cantonment residence.

Even regular guests trying to visit her at her residence have also been reportedly turned away by the security personnel posted in front of the house.

Sources said a severe intra-party conflict surfaced within BNP on Tuesday as a group of party leaders sent a statement to newspapers using the name of Khaleda Zia, which in her name urged the armed forces to keep themselves above any controversy.

According to the sources a group of BNP leaders and former officials of the Prime Minister's Office prepared the statement and sent it to different newspapers from the office of a newspaper owned by Tarique Rahman. But senior leaders of BNP including Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan told The Daily Star that they did not know anything about the statement.

Expressing deep concern and dissatisfaction regarding the statement the BNP leaders said the incident caught them by surprise as they 'do not even know who is running the party now a days' and how the BNP chairperson's statement was issued from the office of a newspaper.

"The statement is nothing but a conspiracy against BNP and Khaleda Zia... although a group of party leaders and some former officials of the Prime Minister's Office are involved in it," a BNP leader said.

Meanwhile, many BNP leaders are planning to challenge Khaleda Zia's leadership in the party thinking it will not be able to survive with her at the helm in the face of the allegations of astronomical corruption against her family members.

Sources said the leaders are considering calling an emergency council of the party when the interim government will withdraw the ban on

politics, as they want to expel Khaleda, Tarique and other suspected corrupt leaders in the process of reorganising the party.

Some leaders believe that their move against party chief Khaleda Zia and her family members will help them to avoid the axe of the interim government.

Khaleda Zia also heard about the initiative and expressed her resentment against the leaders on whom she no longer has any control, the sources said adding that the rebel leaders are now trying to put pressure on Khaleda to expel suspected corrupt leaders as soon as possible.

But, Khaleda told them that she will take actions against the suspected corruptionists only if they are proven guilty through proper trials.

The sources said a group of senior and mid-level leaders along with some former lawmakers are trying to organise themselves to establish their control over the party. They will go into action as soon as the government will withdraw the ban on indoor politics.

Meanwhile, majority of the party activists and leaders are in the dark, as they are not getting any direction from the party high command regarding how to face the present political crisis. They are in a debilitating uncertainty regarding whether the party will be able to stand up on its feet again.

According to the sources, mid-level leaders and former lawmakers are regularly visiting the residence of the party secretary general but he is not agreeing to discuss the present crisis with them.

"The party leadership should clear their position on whether they want to work for the party or only for their family members and their own interests," a former lawmaker from BNP told The Daily Star on Monday.

The sources said most of the leaders who were ministers in the last five years are now trying to avoid contact with party Chairperson Khaleda Zia, as they believe that her family members are responsible for the current predicament. They are especially unwilling to defend Tarique Rahman and other suspected corrupt leaders.

A group of party leaders recently held an indoor meeting and discussed the latest situation following two or three similar meetings in a residence of a former minister.

## Charge-framing

FROM PAGE 20

Khaleda Zia, will be attached in connection with a graft case filed against him by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The same court also fixed April 15 for hearing on charge framing against BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman's close friend and controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun in connection with the graft case filed against him.

Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka passed the order in presence of Mamun while Harris was absent during the hearing of the cases.

On April 5, ACC Deputy Director Abu Sayeed filed the case against Harris and the commission's Assistant Director SMM Akhter Hamid Bhuiyan lodged the case against Mamun for not submitting their wealth statements to the commission within the stipulated time.

Following the cases, the Sessions Judge's Court issued arrest warrants against them and directed the authorities concerned to send a copy of the arrest warrants to the police stations concerned.

On February 18, the ACC had directed Harris and Mamun to submit their wealth statements within 72 hours, but neither they nor any representatives on their behalf submitted the statements. The anti-graft body at a meeting on March 29 gave approval for filing of the cases, sources said.

ARMS CASE AGAINST HUDA

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMMT's) Court yesterday transferred the arms case filed against detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda to the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court for trial.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Amirul Islam of Dhanmondi Police Station, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of Huda's case, submitted the charge

sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on Tuesday showing 17 people as prosecution witnesses.

The joint forces seized a revolver, 14 bullets, a huge amount of local and foreign currencies, four passports and a mobile phone set from Huda's Dhanmondi residence and arrested him on February 4.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that the seized revolver and bullets were in illegal possession, as he (Huda) did not renew the validity of the firearm and ammunition.

The case was filed under the Arms Act on March 8.

SI AKM Monzurul Haq Akand filed another case on February 15 under the Money Laundering Act for illegally possessing a huge amount of foreign and local currencies.

The seized currencies include Tk 18,68,470 and 1,796 Singapore dollars, 1,350 pounds, 300 euros and 18 dinars.

CASE AGAINST CHOWDHURY ALAM

Another Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charge sheet against Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ward Commissioner Chowdhury Alam in the extortion of Tk 50 lakh in October 2005.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Mir Ali Reza passed the order and took up the case for trial.

The IO Sub-Inspector Amzad Hossain submitted the charge sheet against Alam on April 10, showing 12 people as prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, Alam took Tk 50 lakh as extortion from a DCC listed contractor on October 26, 2005.

## Local scientists

FROM PAGE 20

Describing the launching of the vaccine as a milestone event, the experts said researches since 1985 reveal that once taken the vaccine acts as a shield for the body against any further attack of the two bacteria at least for two years.

In 1985, scientists of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh, (ICDDR,B) began testing the safety and efficacy of the vaccine at the institute's Dhaka hospital popularly known as Cholera Hospital.

ICDDR,B senior scientists Dr Firdousi Qadri, Dr Mohammad Yunus, Dr Abdus Salam, and Executive Director Dr David A Sack conducted the successful trials. Based on the results of their trials, the vaccine is now registered in over 50 countries. The vaccine was registered in Bangladesh in 2006.

The availability of the vaccine brand-name 'Dukoral' may eventually save greater number of lives of especially children, the most common victims of the water-borne diseases, researchers said.

Already approved by the World Health Organisation and the country's Drug Administration, the vaccine is now popular among travellers as it

prevents even the most severe attacks of the water-borne diseases.

Bangladesh is the only South Asian country where the vaccine has been registered as a therapeutic product.

The vaccine--to be taken in two doses 14 days apart--stops toxic agents released by attacking germs from entering intestine cells and thus averting diarrhoea trigger.

Dr Sack said, "I view the launching of the vaccine as an important event since it is being introduced for the first time in Bangladesh."

"Although its price is high, I am sure one day the vaccine will be within the reach of the general population like the oral saline," he added.

The vaccine, manufactured by Swedish pharmaceutical company SBL Vaccines, will be available only at approved vaccination centres across the country and one cycle or two doses will cost Tk 2,400. It must be preserved at 2-8 degrees Celsius temperature.

The vaccine is presently recommended for adults and children over two years of age. Recent studies in Bangladesh among infants and younger children show that the vaccine is safe and effective.

## Election by end '08

FROM PAGE 1

Fakhruddin said, "Our aim is fixed. We want to bring the corrupt, abusers of power and serious criminals within the jurisdiction of existing laws as quickly as possible."

"We will show zero-tolerance in this regard," he said.

For the time being, there is no alternative but to be patient for resolving problems in the power sector due to years of accumulated corruption and mismanagement, he said.

In his 22-minute speech, Fakhruddin presented an overview of the government's activities in the last three months since he was sworn in on January 12, including the government's commitment to holding credible elections, ensuring full independence of the EC, reforming the public administration and finance sector, continue deregulation, and zero tolerance for corruption, abuse of power and crimes.

The election laws, rules and procedures would be reformed simultaneously to shorten the period until elections, Fakhruddin said, adding that the EC has already outlined a timeline for preparing a voter list and ID cards with photographs.

"We are deeply committed to establishing a sustainable structure to keep muscle-power, money and undesirable elements from influencing not only the next elections, but all long-term elections to ensure that they are free, fair and credible," he said.

The CA also underlined the government's commitment to handing over power to an elected government by implementing electoral reforms and creating an atmosphere conducive to holding free, fair and acceptable elections.

He said the ongoing electoral reforms would ensure intra-party democracy and the government would take strong steps to encourage honest and competent candidates to take part in elections.

The chief election commissioner on April 5 said no elections would be held before at least 18 months, as that time is required to simultaneously prepare the voter list with photographs and national ID cards.

Senior assistant judges Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed were killed in a suicide bomb attack at Purba Chadkati in Jhalakathi town on November 14, 2005 in the wake of a series of violent militant attacks across the country.

Kabir Ahmed, deputy commissioner (DC) of Jhalakathi, said Hyder Hossain did not agree to accept the security measures proposed to him following the execution of the JMB kingpins.

Six check posts were put up at different points in Barisal city and vehicles and people were being searched and questioned.

UNB adds: The body of Hyder was brought to his home in Jhalakathi town yesterday after autopsy at the Barisal Medical College Hospital. Hyder was laid to rest at the Jhalakathi municipal graveyard after namaj-e-janazas in Jhalakathi town and his Kandarkati village.

### Arrest warrant

FROM PAGE 20

But Hamzud died on October 29, 2001 and was buried at the Matuail graveyard the same day, family sources said.

The IO claimed that he investigated the case properly and knowing about the disputed person well, he submitted the charge sheet.

Accepting the charge sheet, Metropolitan Magistrate Mamun Al Rashid issued arrest warrant against six accused including the deceased Hamzud and ordered attachment of his properties on April 8.

Hamzud's wife Monowara Begum yesterday told The Daily Star that her husband who died six years ago was implicated in the extortion case and the IO pressed charges against him, without even coming to their residence to know about her husband.

She urged the government to take immediate action against the policemen who submitted charge sheet against her deceased husband.

When contacted, IO Ruhul Amin told The Daily Star that after taking over the charge of investigation into the case, he visited the place of occurrence, recorded statements of witnesses and knowing about Hamzud, he submitted the charge sheet against him and others.

According to the prosecution, Mohammad Taher, an executive engineer of Siddhirganj power station in Narayanganj, filed the case on March 4 accusing Hamzud and five others of extorting a huge amount of money from him on September 14 last year.

### EC

FROM PAGE 20

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will provide the EC with financial assistance for preparing the project proposal.

The EC secretary told the press briefing that they are now finalising a list of civil society groups and personalities for inviting them to discuss proposed electoral reforms. "Dialogue with the civil society will begin this month."

He however could not say when dialogue with political parties will begin.

Earlier on April 5, the CEC at a meeting with the law adviser asked the government to withdraw embargo on indoor politics so that the EC can hold talks with political parties on electoral reforms.

The government took no decision in this regard until yesterday.

The EC is now drafting a set of proposals concerning polls-related code of conduct and it will be finalised next week, the secretary said.

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### Matin

FROM PAGE 1

look into it to ensure justice.

Matin informed that with the consent of the chief adviser he talked to Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil to clear allegations and speculations that the case was conspiratorial and aimed at delaying Hasina's return to Bangladesh.

Replying to a query about sending BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia abroad, he said the government has no decision yet on this matter.

Asked about reported restriction that only four visitors would be allowed to meet Khaleda, the communications adviser said he is not aware of it.

## Iraqi parliament

FROM PAGE 20

people whose cars plummeted off the al-Sarafiya bridge.

Waves lapped against twisted girders, as patrol boats searched for survivors while US helicopters whirled overhead. Scuba divers donned flippers and waded in from the riverbanks.

Farhan al-Sudani, a 34-year-old Shia businessman who lives near the bridge, said the blast woke him at dawn.

"A huge explosion shook our house and I thought it would demolish our house. Me and my wife jumped immediately from our bed, grabbed our three kids and took them outside," he said.

The al-Sarafiya bridge connected two northern Baghdad neighborhoods Waziriyah, a mostly Sunni enclave, and Utaiyah, a Shia area.

Police blamed the attack on a suicide truck bomber, but Associated Press Television News footage showed the bridge broken apart in two places perhaps the result of two blasts.

Cement pilings that support the steel structure were left crumbling. At the base of one lay a charred vehicle engine, believed to be that of the truck bomber.

"We were astonished here when we saw the extent of damage," said Ahmed Abdul-Karim, 45, who also lives near the bridge. "I was standing in my garden and I saw the smoke and flying debris."

Locals said the al-Sarafiya bridge is believed to be at least 75 years old, built by the British in the early part of the 20th century.

"It is one of Baghdad's monuments. This is really damaging for Iraq. We are losing a lot of our history every day," Abdul-Karim said.

The al-Sarafiya bridge has a duplicate in Fallujah that was built later and made infamous in March 2004, when angry mobs hung the charred bodies of US contractors

These 18 months would end in October 2008.

Fakhruddin said years of corruption and mismanagement means there is no alternative but to have patience for resolving the power crisis, even though the government has achieved some success in dealing with the problem by taking significant steps such as closing markets by 7:00pm.

The caretaker chief said the government will continue privatisation of state-owned enterprises where necessary and it has also prioritised financial sector reform and expanding the development of industries, with a close focus on rail communication.

He said the government is mulling the recast of the Public Service Commission as well as widespread reforms to public administration, in addition to the already completed separation of the judiciary from the executive as part of judiciary reforms.

Specially noting the role of the armed forces, Fakhruddin said, they are playing a praiseworthy role in maintaining internal law and order, recovering grabbed land, and in assisting