

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

HASAN JAHID 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 Kusgram 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 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 BNPL-led party alliance came to power in October 2001.

The BNPL-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 Siddhiganj and Moulana Abdur Rouf at the Mohammadpur house to plot the attack.

On his instructions, Sabir 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, Akbargave 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.

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 Kamru 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 Kafal 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 man 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 Chiora village under Choudhogram upazila of the district 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 Shipi.

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

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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, rekindling 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 Hu, Dr. Mushtaq Khan, executive director of Manusher Jonno Shaheen Anam, Afsan Chowdhury, Asif Nazrul and Quzzi Moshabuddin 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.

Hua Hu 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.

The ACC has so far received 10,000 complaints from people and selected around 1,100 of those for its consideration, Mannan said.

Khaleda stares down the barrel

FROM PAGE 1
Coronation 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 Zia, hinting that those might be used to make her leave the party.

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 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.

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 corrupt leaders 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.

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Charge-framing

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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 on February 4.

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 Dhammton 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.

Alam has been charged with 18 counts of corruption, including 12 counts of extorting money from contractors.

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