

GRAFT CHARGES

Arrests useless if results do not come: ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said there is no use of nabbing hundreds of people in graft charges if results do not come.

"It's not a point catching these people... we need to show the results," he said while speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of an 'Investigative journalism course on governance and anti-corruption' at the National Institute of Mass Communication at Mirpur in the city.

Citing an example on how the trial is being delayed, Mashhud said, "It is not possible to hold the hearing of 100 people on a single day, I cannot lean on judges to resolve the cases as soon as possible, but there should be some senses of urgency."

Stressing the importance of investigative journalism, Mashhud said investigative journalism and the fight against corruption is mutually inclusive.

"This is not either me or you, but you and me," he remarked on the inseparable relation between the works of investigative journalism and

the drive against anti-corruption. About the Official Secrets Act, he said, "It is some sorts of irritant, but there is way out. It is a hindrance, but not paralysing. The act was made to fight the enemies not the people of the country."

Apart from the current status and activities of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Mashhud spoke about the evolution of the body, which, according to him was not 'pleasant' and 'smooth'.

He also unfolded his visions regarding the anti-corruption drive.

"My idealistic vision is a corruption-free Bangladesh... which is possible but not probable, and the realistic vision is to minimise the corruption staying away from the interference of all including the political parties and foreign agencies," he added.

Mashhud said to bring coordination and speed in the activities of ACC, he has already informed the government about employing 1281 people and reducing the branches from 55 to 22.

He said if a modern communication system can be introduced there is no need to run so many branches.

The 22 branches will co-ordinate works through big database with NBR, Bangladesh Bank and other institutions without running from office to office, he added.

"The anti-corruption commission will be function-based, not area-based. We want to establish individual branch including financial crime, money laundering, crime in business deal and soon," he added.

On ACC's end state, Mashhud said his mission is to continue on deeds not on words.

The ACC chief said he dreams of a day when he would take all the journalists to show a good modern looking office, a user-friendly association and "an independent, credible, well resourced greater outreach to fight corruption."

UN Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessalain termed 2007 a "historic year" for the drive against corruption.

She said the role of journalists was always there to curb corruption, but now the role is even more important.

Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh Einar H. Jensen said the country has been given a clear signal that the interim government has a will

to fight corruption.

Lauding the drive against corruption, he said the initiative shown this time was never seen before.

He also stressed the need for reforms of public service.

Since the public service holders are very much ill paid there should be some provisions for incentive to encourage them fighting corruption, he added.

The envoy also laid emphasis on due process and full respect for human rights in the fight against corruption.

Director General of the National Institute of Mass Communication Syed Mahbubur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

The month-long investigative journalism training on governance and anti-corruption for print and electronic media has been organised by UNDP Anti-Corruption Advocacy Campaign (ACAC).

The training, facilitated by BBC trainer Stephen Hall, will train about 120 journalists from 43 media houses at eight different venues that include in-house training both for print and electronic media.



PHOTO: STAR

Founder of the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) Valerie A Taylor speaks at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. On her right are: Engineer SM Anwar Hossain, Prof Kabir Chowdhury and Ramendu Mojumdar. (Story on Page 16)

CG revives CMC to tackle power crisis

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government yesterday decided to revive the Crisis Management Committee (CMC) formed last year to tackle the then power crisis across the country, as nagging outages seriously affected life and business.

A meeting of the top officials of PDB and chiefs of different entities in power sector, including Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA), Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) and Rural Electrification Board (REB), at the Power Ministry took the decision in view of the exigency.

Power and Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury presided over the meeting, where military help was offered for smooth run of power plants.

Chief of the special taskforce on power and energy Major General Abdul Wadud was also present at the meeting.

As per decision, the CMC, comprising mid-level officials of different power utilities like Power Development Board (PDB), DESA, REB, DESCO and PGCB, will resume function today to meet the problem head on.

The CMC will monitor the power-supply situation and work together in a coordinated manner to tackle the power crisis so that load could be distributed rationally across the country.

Official sources said the meeting was convened against the backdrop of recent fall in power generation following sudden breakdown of different power plants.

Country's power generation hurtled down to about 3,000 megawatts from last month's 3,500 MW as a number of generation units at Ghorasal and Ashuganj stations shutdown.

The officials, however, told the meeting that most of the generation units are very old which now run at 'de-rated capacity' and often face

closure in the hot weather.

The adviser asked them to closely monitor the generation units and take instant measures to repair the faults shortly after their shutdown.

Sources said the taskforce chief offered the armed forces' help for smooth operation of the power plants.

The adviser asked the PDB officials to take special initiative to pursue the captive power producers to sell their electricity to the government to feed the power-hungry national grid.

He also ordered the PDB officials

to investigate into the matters as to why the independent power producer Westmont Company repeatedly failed its deadline to come into production.

After the meeting, the power adviser told reporters that Annual Development Programme (ADP)'s about Tk 3600-crore allocation would be spent on installation of new power plants and maintenance of old ones.

HSC EXAMINEE MURDER

4 muggers to die, 3 get 30 years' RI

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced four muggers to death and three others to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment for killing Intiaj Shafiq Sourav, a HSC examinee from Rajuk Model School on July 21 in 2005.

Judge (In Charge) AR Masud of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-2, handed down the sentence at a packed courtroom.

The convicts with death are Masum alias 'Chacha Masum', Shanta, Mohammad Faisal and Mohammad Rashid while Babu alias 'Spike Babu', Jasim and Jewel alias Kabir Jewel were given 30 years in jail.

The court acquitted Sabuj, Mosharrar and Jewel as the charges proved against them were not proved.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 12 prosecution witnesses.

Sourav, 18, an HSC examinee from Rajuk Model School in 2005, was gunned down by a gang of muggers in front of Mascot Plaza at Uttara in the city at about 8.30pm on July 21, 2005.

Following the incident, victim's father Shafiqul Islam filed a case with Uttara Police Station in this connection. The investigation officer pressed charges against 10 muggers on December 12 the same year.

Special Public Prosecutor Mosharrar Hossain Kajol appeared for the state while advocates Mahbub Ahmed and Borhanuddin defended the accused.



PHOTO: STAR

Noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud speaks at a roundtable at the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are former adviser to the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan, Shujan Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, Zafarullah Chowdhury of Gono Swasthya Kendra and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader ASM Abdur Rob. (Story on Page 16)

Huge date-expired, contraband medicines seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court in a drive yesterday recovered huge quantity of date-expired and contraband medicines from a pharmacy in the city's Halishahar area.

The court also held the owner of the pharmacy and awarded him six months of imprisonment in jail.

Sources said the court raided the pharmacy, M/s Heal Medico, at Bandartia area of South Halishahar and seized the medicine worth around Tk 1 lakh.

The medicines included tablet, capsule and injection of different diseases as well as antibiotic and pain-killer. Their expiry dates ended in the years ranging from 2001 to 2006.

Some of these medicines, including contraband ones, were imported from India, Pakistan, Britain, Europe and the middle-eastern countries.

Besides, the pharmacy had no refrigerator to preserve the medicines and running business without obtaining any licence.

The court arrested pharmacy owner MA Mansur, 52, and awarded him six months of imprisonment.

It also realised Tk 50 thousand as fine from the pharmacy before sealing it off. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury led the drive with the help of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and Drug Administration.

DIALOGUE ON ENERGY POLICY

Publish white paper on corruption in power sector

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dialogue yesterday urged the government to publish a white paper on corruption in power sector and bring to book the politicians and bureaucrats who were involved in the shady deals sacrificing interests of the country.

The dialogue titled 'National Interest and Energy Policy', organised by 'National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas-Minerals-Power-Port', was held at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, former chairman of Power Development Board Nuruddin M Kamal said the politicians and bureaucrats who were responsible in signing anti-people agreements should be brought to book.

He also said the government's agreements with the foreign companies, inactive since 1990s under profit sharing, should be cancelled

and those should be put under the jurisdiction of Bapex.

Commenting on the proposed coal policy of the country, he said it was aimed at exporting the coal. Law enforcement agencies should investigate the activities of the bureaucrats, who have been enthusiastic about it, he said.

To end the recent power crises, he suggested that the government should set up power plants, each having a capacity of 20 mega watts, in each of the 70 Pali Biddut Samity in the country under distributed generation policy. These plants can be set up within next two years, he said.

Saying that 85 percent of power plants are situated in the eastern region, Kamal observed that there is discrimination in power distribution between the eastern and western parts of the country.

Prof M Nurul Islam of Institute of Appropriate Technology at Bangladesh University of Science and Technology (BUST) said there seems to be no coordination among the different departments of power

sector.

Saying that Bangladesh has highly qualified world class experts in power sector, he said no foreign adviser or consultant should be appointed while formulating national policy in the energy sector.

Member of the committee Anu Muhammad spoke about the perils of unwisely devised energy policy for a nation. He said existence of huge mineral resources does not guarantee development of a nation, rather it should be properly utilised and that is why a pro-people government is needed.

Convener of the Committee Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah chaired the dialogue while General Secretary of Workers' Party Abbas Ali, leader of Communist Party of Bangladesh Haider Akbar Khan Ranu and Prof Shafiqul Islam of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR

Shaila Rahman, social development adviser of DFID, speaks at a workshop at Brac Centre Inn at Mohakhali in the city yesterday. On her left are Hafizul Islam, Mosharrar Hossain, Kevan Moll and Momena Bandy.

Create more jobs for persons with disabilities

Rokia tells workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday stressed the need for creating more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in a bid to bringing them into the mainstream of the society.

They were speaking at the inaugural session of a three-day workshop titled 'Capacity building of southern disabled people's organisations (DPOs)' at Brac Centre Inn at Mohakhali in the city.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) organised the workshop with the financial assistance of Department for International Development (DFID).

Inaugurating the workshop, former adviser to the caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman said more employment opportunities should be created for the persons with disabilities.

They can be turned into a productive force if trained and given support, she said adding 300 disabled people were appointed as election observers in the last general elections.

She urged the participating countries to exchange their knowledge, success, and experiences to empower the persons with disabilities so that a comprehensive plan of actions can be taken.

ADD Country Representative Mosharrar Hossain said 25 participants from Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Bangladesh are participating in the workshop that aims at contributing to more effective poverty reduction programmes in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The speakers said the MDGs cannot be achieved without addressing the needs and rights of disabled people as 20 percent poorest people of the world are disabled and 90 percent disabled children in the developing countries do not receive schooling.

Shaila Rahman, social development adviser of DFID, Momena Bandy, first secretary of Pakistan, Kevan Moll, consultant and representative of Overseas Development Group, University of East Anglia, UK and Hafizul Islam, additional secretary of Social Welfare Directorate, also spoke in the workshop.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Southwest monsoon, which has advanced up to Teknaf coast, may advance up to Chittagong coast by today, Met Office said.

It also said mild to moderate heat wave condition over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions and the regions of Faridpur, Tangail and Madaripur may reduce gradually.

Highest temperature 37.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and Jessore and lowest 22.0 degree Celsius at Mymensingh.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.43pm today and rises at 5:11am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.2	28.5	72	64
Chittagong	34.0	27.5	75	73
Rajshahi	36.4	29.0	65	61
Khulna	35.7	29.0	76	62
Barisal	35.0	28.2	80	94
Sylhet	29.5	23.9	78	75
Cox's Bazar	34.9	27.8	58	87

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SOCIAL WELFARE DIRECTOR

DU probe body finds him not guilty, ignores opinions of two members

DU CORRESPONDENT

A six-member probe committee of Dhaka University (DU), formed to investigate some allegations against the director of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, finalised its report recently and found the accused not guilty.

However, two members of the committee, DU Teachers' Association (Duta) General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain and Prof Sadeka Halim, did not sign the report on the ground that their 'opinions were not reflected in the report'.

The report will be produced before the syndicate scheduled to be held tomorrow for final decision on the issue.

The committee led by Prof Tazmeri SA Islam was formed by the syndicate, the highest decision making body of the university, on June 19, 2006, after all the teachers of the social welfare institute submitted an application to the vice-chancellor specifying some seven allegations, including corruptions, irregularities and dictatorial attitude in running the institute, against Director Prof ASMA Tiqur Rahman.

Afterwards, the committee held 17 meetings to examine the allegations.

When contacted, Prof Anwar and Prof Sadeka said the committee did not include their opinions in the report nor did it give any explanation that why their views were not incorporated.

Prof Sadeka said she asked the committee to invite an external audit firm to scrutinise the allegations of financial mismanagement, but her proposal was neglected.

On the other hand, Prof Tazmeri refused to talk to the media in this regard saying "I'll not speak about it before the syndicate meeting".

Earlier, Prof Atiqur denied any irregularity or corruption in the institute.

Detainee dies in police custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A detainee committed suicide in custody on the sixth day of his remand in Dakkhinkhan Police Station in the city yesterday evening, police claimed.

On the night of May 27, locals caught Mizanur Rahman, 26, a resident of Khilkhet Tanpara, from the street while he was allegedly fleeing after robbing a house in Dakkhin Azampur area and handed him over to police.

Later, the court granted seven days of remand against him. On the sixth evening of his remand, Mizan went to the washroom and was making unusual delay there.

At one point, police peeped into the washroom and found Mizan hanging from the ventilator. Mizan used his own lungi for hanging himself from the rod of the ventilator.

Police said they did not torture Mizan, rather he was being interrogated regarding his involvement in the robbery. They could not say anything about the case of his robbery.

Road crashes kill five

STAR REPORT

At least five people, including two children, were killed in separate road accidents in Comilla, Lalmonirhat and Thakurgaon yesterday and on Saturday night.

UNB from Comilla adds: Two people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

A man was killed and two others were injured as a bus rammed into an auto-rickshaw at Nowadda on Daudkandi-Matlab road yesterday.

Witnesses said the Gouripur-bound bus hit the auto-rickshaw coming from the opposite direction at about 1.30pm, killing its passenger Abu Taher, 40, on the spot.

Two other auto-rickshaw passengers were injured in the accident. They were rushed to the local thana health complex.

Meanwhile, a man was crushed under the wheels of a covered van on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Police said the covered van ploughed through a CNG-run baby taxi near a CNG filling station at Alekhar Char at about 2:00pm, killing its driver on the spot.

The deceased was identified as Yasin of Noapara village in Sadar upazila.

A Correspondent from Lalmonirhat says: Two children were killed in separate road accidents at Chandon Pat area under Kaliganj upazila on Lalmonirhat-Daikhowa road and at Saptibari area in Lamonirhat-Burimari highway yesterday.

The dead identified as Nadim, 7, son of Asaduzzaman Miah of village Chandon Pat, died in the spot when a Lalmonirhat-bound truck hit him and Mim, 8, daughter of Mazidul Islam at Saptibari village succumbed to her injuries on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. A motorcycle hit Mim near Saptibari High School.

A Correspondent from Thakurgaon reports: An old man was killed in a collision between two tempos on Pirganj-Jaborhat road at Mollikpur under Pirganj upazila in Thakurgaon on Saturday night.

The dead was identified as Mynat, 52, of Paligaon in Pirganj.