

ACC can now probe money laundering crimes

Advisory Council okays amendment to Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The council of advisers yesterday approved an amendment to the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2002 giving investigation responsibilities to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and empowering special judges to deliver verdicts on money laundering crimes.

Currently only the agencies, authorised by the central bank, can probe money laundering crimes and district judges delivered the verdicts.

Press Secretary to the Chief Adviser Syed Fahim Munain yesterday told a press briefing that the decision was taken in light of the Anti Corruption Commission (amendment) Ordinance, 2007 and the Criminal Law Amendment, 1958.

Due to the amendment, money laundering cases, currently under trial and investigation, will now be transferred to the ACC and special judges will deliver the verdicts.

According to the revised act, if any conflict arises in the provisions of Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2002, ACC Act, 2004 and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Low interest housing loans for middle class

BB okays Tk 300cr scheme

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday approved a Tk 300 crore scheme to provide long-term loans with low interest to the people from low and middle income groups for purchasing or constructing apartments in urban areas.

Any person with a monthly income less than Tk 30,000 will be eligible to receive a maximum of Tk 15 lakh loan from commercial banks and financial institutions either for buying or constructing an apartment of highest 1,250 square feet, the BB rules stated.

The rules also said that the borrower will repay the loan in 20

years at most through monthly instalments and annual interest rate will be not more than 10 percent.

The BB will give the money to different commercial banks and financial institutions for disbursing as loans under the scheme titled 'Reinvestment Scheme in Housing Sector.'

"The banks will give Tk 100 crore loans in each year for next three years under the scheme," a BB official said.

As per the rules, the borrower can utilise the money for buying or constructing apartments in six city corporation areas and municipal areas of Tongi, Gazipur, Savar and

Narayanganj.

However, people working with companies, which have housing loan scheme for their employees, will not get the loan. Besides, the loan is only for those who or their relations (wife/husband and children) do not own any house or apartment in the designated areas.

If a person has already taken housing loans from a bank or financial institution will also not be considered under the scheme.

"Bangladesh Bank will give 67 percent of the loan and rest 33 percent will have to be given by the bank concerned," a BB official said referring to the rules.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

DANIDA OFFICIAL KIDNAPPING

5 NGO activists sent to jail after quizzing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Five persons including three executive directors and two employees of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) based NGOs were sent to jail yesterday after nine days of interrogation in connection with Danida official Hossain Shahid Sumon's abduction from Thanchi under the district.

They are Gabriel Tripura, executive director of TOYMU, Ang Khyang Kheeng, executive director of Hope Bridge, Mong Mong Ching, executive

director of Humanitarian Foundation and employees of the same organisation Sacheet Chakma and Khemajon Tripura.

A first class magistrate sent them to jail while five others are still being quizzed by the Detective Branch (DB) men who are almost sure of the involvement of local NGOs in the abduction, said concerned government sources.

The ten NGO workers were accompanying Hossain Shahid Sumon and Kirti Nishan Chakma,

another Danida official, on the day of Sumon's abduction.

In 2004 Danida reached an agreement with six NGOs led by TOYMU over a three-year project that was aimed at encouraging the indigenous communities to form cooperatives for self-reliance, said a local NGO official on condition of anonymity.

At the end of the project, which was supposed to be over by June 30,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Beggar Nurul Islam makes a quick buck as spectators, amused by his 'art of walking' with two long bamboo poles, extend generous hands. The photo was taken from Bijoynagar in the capital.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Rawshan hints at quitting JP leadership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rawshan Ershad, self-claimed chairman of Jatiya Party (JP), yesterday hinted that she would quit the party leadership.

"I will step aside after passing the leadership baton to the next generation. After lifting of the ban on indoor politics, the council will decide who will be at the helm of the party," Rawshan said at a press conference at her Gulshan residence in the capital.

Earlier on June 26, Rawshan Ershad, a senior presidium member of JP, in a dramatic way proclaimed herself as the acting chief and announced 13-point proposal for intra-party reforms apparently seeking to dethrone the JP Chairman, her husband HM Ershad.

Rawshan also introduced

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

11 killed in Pak suicide car bomb attack

AFP, Miranshah

A suicide car bomber attacked a Pakistani military convoy in a troubled tribal region bordering Afghanistan yesterday, killing 11 people including six soldiers, security officials said. The incident comes after clerics at a radical Islamabad mosque vowed suicide attacks in revenge for clashes with security forces which left 16 people dead including eight Islamist students.

The bomber rammed his explosives-laden vehicle into the convoy near a checkpost at Mir Ali, a town in North Waziristan region, two officials in the area said on condition of anonymity.

"The suicide bomber was blown to pieces and his car was totally destroyed" one of the officials told

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

700 surrender as troops besiege Pak mosque

1,000 hardcore still inside

AFP, Islamabad

More than 700 militant students surrendered yesterday to Pakistani troops besieging a pro-Taliban mosque in Islamabad after clashes that killed 16 people, but a hardcore of 1,000 remained inside.

Soldiers in armoured personnel carriers continued to enforce a shoot on sight curfew around Lal Masjid, or the Red Mosque. They killed a male student and an apparently mentally ill man in the early hours of the day.

Women in black burqas and bearded young men streamed out of the compound and passed

through metal detectors after the government set and then twice extended a deadline for them to give themselves up.

Male students fought gunbattles with security forces on Tuesday in a bloody climax to the mosque's six months of defiance against President Pervez Musharraf, including the abduction last month of seven Chinese nationals.

"Around 700 have come out, more are coming. They were provided with transport facilities to go to their homes," senior Islamabad administration official Chaudhry Mohammad Ali said.

Those holding out were

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Musharraf earlier said each of



Hilsha hoarding, export banned for six months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to ban hoarding and export of hilsha fish for the next six months so that the fish are more available in the local market.

"We took the initiative to increase the availability of hilsha. If the supply is increased, the price would go down in the local market," Fisheries and Agriculture Adviser CS Karim said after an inter-ministerial meeting yesterday.

The decision would be implemented soon, the adviser added.

The government took the decision following recent media reports that Bangladeshi hilsha fish are being exported to India where they are sold in markets at much lower prices than in Bangladesh.

The government has also asked Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard to increase vigilance in sea in a bid to check smuggling of the fish.

Government staff coming with their kids to the day care centre inside Bangladesh Secretariat face an awkward situation yesterday morning as the 4th class employees put the centre under lock and key demanding regularisation of their jobs.

Restriction on Sigma Huda's arrest goes

HC order stayed

UNB, Dhaka

The restriction on Sigma Huda's arrest goes, as the Supreme Court has stayed the High Court order restricting the law enforcers from arresting Sigma who faces a graft case along with her detained husband former minister Nazmul Huda.

After hearing both sides, a vacation bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin, yesterday passed the interim order upon a government petition.

On June 7, the High Court,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

2 new PSC members appointed

UNB, Dhaka

Former ambassador Mirza Samsuzzaman and former joint secretary AYM Mosharraf Hossain have been appointed members of the Public Service Commission (PSC).

President Iajuddin Ahmed appointed them as per "clause 138 (1) of Bangladesh Constitution", said an official announcement yesterday.

On June 21, former acting secretary of Labour and Employment Ministry M Nurunnabi and former principal of Dhaka Home Economics College Suraiya Begum took oath as members of the recast Public Service Commission.

CA delegates his 21 responsibilities to home secretary

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Fakruddin Ahmed

delegated 21 financial and administrative powers to the home secretary in a bid to speed up his ministerial activities.

The chief adviser, who holds the portfolio of the ministry of home affairs, handed over the powers by an office order making it effective from January 11, said a home ministry official.

Maintaining all formalities under the existing rules, the home secre-

tary now can give approval of land acquisition for development works of departments and directorates under the home ministry.

He can also give approval for creating temporary posts and reserving and regularising the posts.

He can now exercise the power of approving contracts for all development works costing up to Tk 10 crore, the official noted.

The home secretary can approve the licences for production and import of acid under

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

BBC journalist Alan Johnston freed in Gaza after 16 weeks

AFP, Gaza City

BBC journalist Alan Johnston was freed yesterday after 16 weeks held hostage by Palestinian extremists in Gaza, looking pale and drawn but delighted that his "terrifying" ordeal was over.

The Briton, by far the longest-held Westerner in the radicalised and impoverished Gaza Strip, was released to the outside world before daybreak clutched by Hamas officials and surrounded by men waving guns in the air.

"It's just the most fantastic thing, to be free," he told BBC television by telephone from the home of sacked Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniyeh in the Shati refugee camp where he was invited for breakfast of hummus and cheese.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BDR to set up 50 more markets by next month

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will launch 50 more makeshift retail markets and six wholesale ones in next one month to check price spiral and make supply lines of essentials smooth.

"These markets will be set up on the unused lands of different government departments and agencies." Local Government Adviser Anwarul Iqbal told newsmen emerging from a meeting with the chief of the paramilitary troops and other officials concerned.

The adviser said Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) under his ministry will also operate similar markets while cooperation will be extended if any other agencies take interest in supplementing the government initiatives.

The paramilitary troops now run 20 "fair price" markets and facilitate marginal traders to operate 25

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing		
July 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation