

Dhaka-Kolkata Train

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at the MCCI Conference Hall with MCCI President Latifur Rahman in the chair.

About the expansion of multipurpose visa, Chakravarty said if Bangladesh government wanted India could allow Bangladeshi citizens have three to five years' multipurpose visa.

He urged the government to have broader connectivity between the two neighbouring countries for furthering business interests.

"Improved connectivity and dismantling of barriers would enable not only cross-border investment flows and transfer of technologies, but also facilitate market access to a wide range of small and mid-sized businesses. It would reduce transaction cost of doing business," the high commissioner said.

About addressing the trade imbalance issue, he said India has accepted eight million apparel's duty-free access to its market in one calendar year, it will bring forward the scheduled date for reducing duties to zero for least developed countries (LDCs) of South Asia to the end of 2007 from the original date of December 2008, and it agreed to zero-duty import of Bangladeshi cement.

Meanwhile, Bureau of Indian Standards signed a memorandum of agreement with Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) so that its certifications are recognised by the bureau for textile and apparel products exported to India from Bangladesh.

He also emphasised the need for making quick decisions about India's investment proposals that are pending with Bangladesh for a long time.

MCCI President Latifur Rahman in his speech also stressed the need for reducing the trade imbalance between the two countries and suggested more investments including those with "buy-back" arrangements.

Latifur Rahman requested the

Indian high commission to take initiatives to remove a number of the non-tariff barriers, which are posing problems to Bangladesh's exports to India.

He proposed the Indian delegation to invest in labour-intensive sectors like electronic assembly and manufacturing, light engineering, computer software, composite textile, leather, paper and pulp, energy, healthcare, shipping, telecommunication, and in agro-based and agro-supportive industries.

He also sought an early decision on the withdrawal of the ban on Bangladeshi investments in India, as it still remains.

CII mission leader Shreekanth Somany urged both the governments to develop infrastructure at land port customs posts and streamline customs procedures and administration.

Somany proposed Bangladesh businessmen to participate in a proposed investment promotion seminar and suggested the organising of a "Made in Bangladesh Exhibition" in India.

MCCI Vice-president Feroz Rahim and its Secretary General CK Hyder were also present at the meeting.

The Indian high commissioner said the two-way trade has gone over the \$2.5 billion mark this year, compared to \$2.1 billion in the previous year with a growth of around 21 percent.

India is currently Bangladesh's largest export destination in the developing world with exports over \$290 million in 2006-07, he added.

He said exports to India from Bangladesh have gone up by 480 percent in the last five years while its global exports have gone up only 104 percent in the same period.

This is a sign that there is more demand for Bangladeshi products in India and that the Bangladeshi businessmen are increasingly looking towards India, he concluded.

Govt, admin cadre

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On the other hand, the president of the service association, Abu M Moniruzzaman Khan, said: "We'll act according to government instructions."

The association handed over the law adviser a seven-point recommendation that includes removing "discrepancies" in the process of absorption of the judicial and admin cadres into the judicial service, giving them some magistracy power, and deferring the November 1 deadline.

The law adviser didn't agree to meet the demand for postponing the date, a participant of the meeting told The Daily Star asking not to be named.

Surprised by Sunday's sudden outburst of the administrative officials at a seminar, the law adviser called the association leaders to a meeting at his ministry yesterday.

The association leaders regretted some of the officials' "objectionable" statements on Sunday, the law adviser told BBC Bangla Service.

The meeting, however, did not discuss taking punitive action against any of the admin cadres for the statements, Kamal Uddin, Dhaka deputy commissioner, told reporters.

Led by Abu M Moniruzzaman Khan, also director of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, admin cadres placed seven recommendations before the adviser.

Discrimination created between the judicial service and the administrative cadres following the January 16 circular over absorption must be removed, according to a recommendation.

Another reads: "As per rules, administrative officers will have to have satisfactory service records of eight, 12 and 15 years, while judicial officers require four, seven and 10 years' service record for absorption. There is no condition for the service to be satisfactory."

Another recommendation asks the government to give the deputy commissioners and magistrates the power requisite for initiating proceedings, and the power of investigation into cognisable cases.

Power to the DCs to control law and order and run mobile courts in anti-adulteration and eviction drives is also demanded.

"The DCs implement plans of the central government and play the role of a coordinator among different departments. Stripping off their power will hamper these activities," it adds.

The association leaders strongly asked the adviser to ensure separate infrastructure and logistics for the administrative and the judicial service.

Saying that the control of judicial service officials will remain with the law ministry, which is also under the control of the executive, another recommendation says, "Bestowing the control of the judicial service officials on the law ministry goes against the idea of separation of the judiciary and the directives of the Supreme Court."

"All activities regarding their control should be done by the Supreme Court under the direct supervision of the chief justice," it reads.

The delegation demanded amendment to Section 12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to appoint only the executive magistrates as special magistrates.

Land Secretary Moshleuddin, Law Secretary Habibul Awal, Information Secretary Didarul Anwar, Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Ikram Ahmed, and Biam Director General Dr Mohammad Sadique attended the meeting.

"We've discussed in detail the inconsistencies in the four rules and the talks will continue," Abul Hossain, a project director of the women and children affairs minis-

try, told reporters after the meeting. Expressing his hope that a solution can be reached through discussion, he said: "The separation will take place on November 1."

Kamal Uddin, the association's secretary general, said: "Everything will be done for a peaceful solution. We've discussed ways to run the administration properly."

"The date fixed for the separation of the judiciary remains unchanged," he said.

LAWYERS' REACTION
Condemning administrative cadres' Sunday's remarks, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Barrister Amir-Ul Islam said: "They have echoed the mindset of the vested interested quarters of bureaucrats who felt insulted losing their supremacy over the judiciary," reports UNB.

"They have not only violated their service rules but also showed disregard to the Supreme Court judgment in the landmark Masdar Hossain case on separation of the judiciary and also to the constitution, which is tantamount to contempt of court and liable to be prosecuted."

He made the statements while addressing a press conference at the SCBA hall yesterday.

Advocate Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, interim vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, a statutory public body regulating lawyers, also came down heavily on the field-level administrative officers for their Sunday's acts.

He urged the government to take "legal actions" against them. "The court may also issue *suo moto* contempt-of-court proceedings against them for what they've done," he observed.

Hasina

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The officer tasked with the investigation sought instructions from the commission yesterday regarding the legal notice, said the ACC sources.

He enquired if there is any court order staying the investigation and whether he should continue the job.

Fazle Nur Tapash in the legal notice asked the commission to explain why the investigation would not be stopped when the writ petition against the ACC notice asking her to turn in wealth accounts has yet to be disposed of. He also sought explanation as to why the move would not be considered "contempt of court".

Hasina submitted her wealth statement on September 2 after a prolonged debate in the higher courts over legality of the ACC notice.

The Supreme Court on August 27 stayed till November 6 a High Court order that imposed a freeze on operation of the ACC notice. The HC order came on August 7 in response to a writ petition filed by the AL chief.

MEASURES AGAINST FALSE COMPLAINTS

The ACC from now on will take legal steps if anyone files false, made-up, and motivated complaint against anyone with the commission.

Its secretary said, "We won't allow false allegations to waste our valuable time. We will take action against the hoaxers while protecting the good persons."

The decision came after a number of allegations against some persons of high repute turned out to be phony.

The commission also decided to serve notice on a complainant before initiating the investigation. It will first question the complainant to gauge the merit of the complaint.

The commission so far has received around 60,000 corruption allegations.

According to section 511 of the penal code, a person could be sentenced up to seven years in prison for filing false cases and making false depositions.

Task force

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reforms in the city corporations.

Responding to a query, Khoka said he would submit his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission after getting letter from the anti-graft body.

Asked whether he knew any corrupt official, the DCC mayor said, "If there are irregularities in the corporation, we also want those be unveiled. People should know whether any employee, official and even me are involved in corruption."

He said the task force had earlier looked into different DCC projects but this time they will be monitoring activities of the entire city corporation.

"I see the matter positively as facilities for the city dwellers will increase with the intervention of the task force," the mayor added.

Panic gripped the officials and employees as the task force members took position at different key points of the DCC building including its entrance gate.

DCC Secretary Mohammad Golam Mostafa told reporters that they would arrange an office for the task force members on the ground floor of the DCC building.

He said the task force would start its work in full swing within a couple of days.

Dr Iqbal

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Sub-inspector (SI) of Ramna police station Ahsanul Kabir, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, told The Daily Star that they sought his 10-day remand showing him arrested in a robbery case but the court granted his four-day remand.

In the prayer, the case regarding the Malibagh incident and two other murder cases were mentioned, he said.

He said they started interrogating Dulal, who was on the run for a long time, to get information about the killings and recover the gun that he was carrying during the procession, led by then Awami League lawmaker Dr HBM Iqbal, on February 13, 2001.

Rab arrested Dulal on Saturday night and handed him over to Ramna police.

No uncertainty
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judiciary from November 1, reports US-based news agency ENA.

But Moeen quickly added that it would have to take place gradually because a lot of judges will be required and the government plans to train magistrates to fill in the posts.

He said \$129 million dubious or illegally earned money siphoned off overseas has been brought back to Bangladesh and deposited in the central bank. He said another \$72 million has been recovered but is stuck in legal disputes.

Moeen said another \$214 million would be brought to Bangladesh soon using the same process.

"This government is here to reinstate democracy. But everyone has to remember that corruption devours democracy. So, this war against corruption will continue until the corruption levels are brought down to a tolerable limit," he said.

The general said the military sacrificed everything to assist the caretaker government in holding free, fair and credible elections, after they realised the importance of protecting the country from internal and external enemies.

The army chief also cited the caretaker government's achievements, such as recasting and reforming the Election Commission, Anti-corruption Commission, Public Service Commission and the University Grants Commission.

He said government policies have succeeded in reducing the prices of cement, iron rods, and power-line poles, while no relief materials were stolen nor did anyone die from hunger after the floods.

The general also told the audience that the government is trying not to let Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd lose its slot at New York's John F Kennedy Airport.

Biman is scheduled to lose the slot on October 26 if no flights operate on that route.

Moeen told the non-resident Bangladeshis that their only identity should be "Bangladeshi" and they should not divide themselves along Bangladeshi political or regional lines, as this would weaken the community.

He said Bangladeshis overseas should unite under the banner "One flag, One Nation, One Country—Our Bangladesh" idea.

Bank borrowing
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Since then the international market has been witnessing an increasing trend. Per barrel oil price is now around \$88 which was \$70 during the beginning of the current fiscal.

The BPC is currently facing about Tk 300 crore loss a month.

Separation hailed

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due to weak leadership and lack of administrative cooperation.

"Separation of the judiciary is a long-term movement of the lawyers. It is becoming possible due to the government's willingness and the Supreme Court's firmness," read the news release signed by Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, interim vice-chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council.

The release went on to say that it is regrettable that some bureaucrats could not comply with the decision despite being government officials and are apparently opposing it. This goes against the code of conduct of the government officials, it added.

"Some problems may occur while separating the judiciary, but it can be solved as has been done in India," it further read.

Hailing the government move, Sammilita Ainjibi Samonnay Parishad said an identified section is opposing the decision and its behaviour in the end of the process is unwanted.

It urged all to abstain from delivering negative speeches and abide by the constitution and the Supreme Court.

The Parishad also called on the lawyers to observe November 1 as independence and separation of judiciary day.

Sammilita Peshajibi Parishad, an alliance of professional bodies, yesterday at an emergency meeting at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh said the speeches and activities of the BCS (Administration) officials were quite unwarranted.

Welcoming the government's decision, around 70,000 physicians, agriculturists and engineers decided to play a positive role in the implementation of separation of the judiciary.

They also said opposition of the BCS (Admin) cadres has proved that their apathy in separating the judiciary is the main reason for the delay of 37 years. They also urged them not to oppose it any longer for the sake of the nation.

Slatting the BCS (Admin) cadres, Bangladesh Nagorik Samaj said it is nothing but conspiracy of a group of bureaucrats.

It urged the government to take stern action against the group as their speeches and activities are "contempt of court" amidst the state of emergency.

Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Shamannay Committee at a view sharing meeting yesterday said separation of the judiciary from the executive is the demand of democracy. "It is not an issue of inter-cadre relationship."

There is no way to halt imple-

mentation of separation of the judiciary. Rather, it should be investigated why it took so long despite there being clear directives in the constitution, it said.

Expressing surprise and concern over opposition of a section of bureaucrats, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) urged all to move forward the process.

In a press release, CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim said some amendments of the current proposal are needed to ensure real independence of the judiciary.

Bangladesh Civil Service (Agriculture) Association, and Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh also welcomed the decision.

Gulshan Lake

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of Gulshan, is projected to be completed by next year at a cost of Tk 14.5 crore.

The caretaker government has undertaken several schemes including the Banani-Gulshan Bridge to ease traffic congestion in the city, added the adviser hoping that the bridge would be constructed before November 2008 when Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed would inaugurate the bridge.

Addressing the ceremony among others, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, a renowned environmentalist and educationist, said half a million people are settling in Dhaka every year. In order to save the capital, he also emphasised the need to develop a public transportation network and at the same time reduce the number of private cars.

"The services of public transportation will have to be improved. Besides, the government should immediately impose tax on private cars by 500 percent so that people are discouraged to buy and use private cars. Otherwise, it will be difficult to keep the traffic jams under control in the capital," said the professor.

ASM Shahjahan, former adviser to a caretaker government and president of Banani Nagorik Committee, said once the Gulshan-Banani Bridge is completed, the residents of the capital would be able to get multiple benefits from it.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) will construct the bridge and maintain it for the first year before handing it over to Dhaka City Corporation.

Local Government Division (LGD) Secretary Safar Raj Hossain presided over the programme. LGED Chief Engineer Shahidul Hassan and LGD Joint Secretary Mizanur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

AL to take part

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The other members are Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, Advocate Rahmat Ali, Mukul Bose, Saher Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Akhtaruzzaman, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, Abdur Rahman, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, and AKM Jahangir Hossain.

The committee will meet in a day or two to begin preparations for the dialogue. It will work out a set of recommendations to be placed at the talks. The working committee will discuss and finalise the recommendations at a meeting on November 1.

Yesterday's meeting, the second without the party president and general secretary, demanded that the government take urgent steps to free Sheikh Hasina and take back all the "false and fabricated" charges against her. It also called for release of the general secretary and the other leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations.

NBR chief retires
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transfer orders are issued for them, but in my case no one asked me. I did not receive the matter well," Badiur told journalists after handing over the charge to new NBR Chairman Muhammad Abdul Mazid yesterday.

"I may have failed to win the hearts of my masters," he said without specifying anyone.

He said the government did not consider him fit for the post of NBR chairman and Internal Resources Division (IRD) secretary since he was transferred to the food and disaster management ministry as secretary. Similarly the government might consider him unfit for the new post later on, he added.

Badiur was appointed chairman of NBR on January 21 this year and was transferred in a major administrative reshuffle on October 18.

The same day, he applied for voluntary retirement with effect from November 22, as he went on a month-long leave yesterday.

Asked whether he would change his mind if government high-ups requested him, Badiur said his letter has already been received at the establishment ministry and he does not wish to withdraw the

letter.

"I made the decision not overwhelmed with emotions but after careful consideration," he said.

While talking about his nine months at the office, he said he launched drives against tax-dodgers following rules and no one was harassed in the process.

He said he had differences of opinion with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over some policy issues, for example, the IMF pressed for separating the income-tax policy department and the implementation department but he opposed it.

The IMF criticised the NBR's 17 percent revenue-growth projection though it was not their jurisdiction, he said.

CJ to inaugurate
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Registrar Ikhted Ahmed yesterday said, "The newly appointed judicial magistrates have already started joining their respective courts."

Initially, a total of 179 judicial magistrates have been appointed and they have obtained an orientation course prior to taking up their new profession.

BSF kills two Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday gunned down two Bangladeshis cattle traders at Joynagar and Kakkdanga of Kalaroa upazila.

The dead are Zahangir Hossain, 20, son of Enam Hossain of Balkari village and Rabiul Islam, 22, son of Raisalul Islam of Nazimgonj village.

BDR said BSF members of Joynagar Camp fired on Zahangir near Ghona border while he along with other cattle traders was on his way to Bangladesh from India at about 4:00am.

He died on the spot.

In another incident, BSF members of Tarali Camp opened fire on Rabiul near Kakkdanga border at Kalaroa when he was returning to Bangladesh from India with cattle at about 3:30am.

Rabiul died on the scene.

BDR sent two separate letters to BSF protesting the killings and asked them to return the bodies.

RU students

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Sumon Khati Baroi Roni, Sanjiddul Ahmed Shyam, SM Kamrul Islam Raihan, Sarder Ayaz, Knondoker Fahim Ahmed Tamay, Amaullah Roni, Abdullah Al Masud and Anwar Hossain Nipun.

The plaintiff filed the case against 2500 people after rickshaw puller Afzal Hossain was killed and 200 people were injured in clashes between angry students and law enforcers on RU campus following the DU incident.

Newspaper reports said the rickshaw puller received bullets when police entered the RU campus firing shots and were moving towards the VC's residence that came under attack of angry students.

In a press release, Rajshahi police claimed that the rickshaw puller was beaten to death by students. But his autopsy report showed that he was shot dead.

However, SI Rajab Ali prayed to the court for dismissing the charges of murder in the case as police could not identify Afzal's killers.

In another case, sub-inspector Mirza Aminul Islam accused RU BCL General Secretary Ayen Uddin and BCL activist Dipayan Sarkar of arson and damaging properties at the vice-chancellor's house.

RU acting registrar Dr Muhammad Shah filed the case after violent incidents occurred on RU campus in August.

Out of four cases filed in connection with the campus violence, two are under trial.

310 RU teachers were accused in one of the two cases while another case was filed against two teachers and 12 others.

DU dorms

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hoping everything would run normally.

DU teachers, however, disapproved of reopening the university without first securing the release of four of their detained colleagues, eight Rajshahi University teachers and some DU students.

Pro-Awami League teachers' caucus, at a meeting with the VC yesterday, said academic atmosphere at the university might be hampered if the detained teachers and students are not freed beforehand.

"We've told the vice-chancellor that it's painful for teachers to get back to classes keeping their colleagues and students in jail. We clearly maintained that we want to resume academic activities after getting them back among us," Prof Muhammad Samad, acting convener of the Blue Panel, told reporters following the meeting.

Earlier this week, pro-BNP and Jamaat teachers also met the VC on the same demand.

Prof Faiz, the VC, however, disagreed on relating the issue of the teachers' release to reopening the university and said he cannot assure anyone when they will be freed.

He said the university authorities are continuing discussions with the government in this regard and that the administration is very sincere in the matter.

The VC brushed aside the perceived apprehension among the students that law enforcement agencies might harass them once the dorms reopen, saying the authorities got assurance from the government to the contrary.

President leaves
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will leave New Orleans for New York and stay there. The next day (November 7), he will leave New York for Dhaka and arrive in the capital on November 8.

President's wife Anwara Begum, the military secretary and the secretary to the president and officials concerned will accompany the president.

Meanwhile, US Charge d' Affaires Geeta Pasi called on the president at Bangabhaban yesterday and discussed matters of bilateral interest, including his forthcoming visit to the United States.

The US envoy hoped that the president's upcoming visit to the USA would be "very successful" and wished him "a very pleasant stay" over there.

During the meeting, the president said Bangladesh is committed to holding a free, fair and credible general election within the timeframe set by the Election Commission. He invited international observers to observe the polls.

Turkish troops head toward Iraqi border

AP, Sirkak

Dozens of military vehicles headed toward the Iraq border and protesters demanded tough action against Kurdish rebels yesterday, a day after 12 soldiers were killed in an ambush. The attack has pushed Turkey closer to a possible incursion into Iraq to target insurgents hiding there.

An AP Television News cameraman saw a convoy of 50 military vehicles, loaded with soldiers and weapons, heading from the south-eastern town of Sirkak toward Uludere, closer to the border with Iraq.

It was unclear whether the vehicles were being sent to reinforce troops engaged in fighting with rebels on Turkish soil, or were preparing for possible cross-border action. Tens of thousands of Turkish troops are already deployed in the border area.

The pro-Kurdish Firt news agency, based in Belgium, released seven names that it said were those of Turkish soldiers allegedly abducted by separatist fighters in the ambush Sunday. It said an eighth soldier was also captive but did not release his name. Turkey's private NTV television has reported eight soldiers missing, but the government has not confirmed the report.

The guerrilla ambush that killed a dozen soldiers on Sunday outraged an already frustrated public, with nationalists staging demonstrations and opposition leaders calling for an immediate strike against rebel bases in Iraq, despite appeals for restraint from Iraq, the US and European leaders.

About 2,000 protesters in Istanbul, mostly members of an opposition party, denounced the attack and urged the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to resign, the private Dogan news agency reported.

Protesters also gathered in Ankara, the capital, and the Mediterranean port city of Mersin. Some 13,000 school children in Bilecik in eastern Turkey held a

minute of silence while people marched down a main street, waving the Turkish flag, the state-run Anatolia news agency reported.

In Bursa, in northwest Turkey, some protesters walked to a military conscript office and asked to enlist to fight rebels.

Turkey's military said Sunday it had launched an offensive backed by helicopter gunships in retaliation for the attack, shelling rebel positions along the rugged Turkish-Iraqi border. It said 32 rebels had been killed in the offensive so far.

The military convoy included trucks carrying containers full of weapons, around a dozen artillery guns and some 150 soldiers.