

Plan to bar corrupt

FROM PAGE 1
Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif also said the fate of other corruption cases under the EPR hinges on the HC verdict on Sheikh Hasina's writ petition.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday Justice Ghulam Rabbani said it is a simple rule of law that a criminal offence or the procedure to try the offence has no retrospective effect. "I wonder why this basic simple procedural law was forgotten by the persons in the authority who are supposed to have basic knowledge," said the former judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

According to Article 66 of the constitution, a person shall be disqualified for election as or for being a member of parliament who has been, on conviction for a criminal offence involving moral turpitude, sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years, unless a period of five years has elapsed since his release.

Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad contested the polls and became an MP by appealing against a trial court verdict that convicted him on charge of corruption. Ershad's membership to the seventh parliament fell vacant when the SC finally rejected his

appeal against the trial court verdict.

Legal experts also said once the detained politicians are tried under the ordinary laws, they have to be allowed to seek bail.

Separate cases were filed against the detained politicians under the EPR that blocked their right to seeking bail.

A few detainees have already been convicted under the EPR for offences committed before the promulgation of the EPR.

Referring to the constitutional provision, six legal experts appointed as the amicus curiae in the hearing of the extortion case against Hasina submitted their opinion to the HC on Wednesday, saying the trial of a crime committed before the promulgation of the Emergency Power Ordinance cannot be held under the ambit of the EPR.

Article 35 of the constitution says no person shall be convicted of any offences except for violation of a law in force at the time of the commission of the act charged as an offence, nor be subjected to a penalty greater than, or different from that which might have been inflicted under the law in force at the time of the commission of the offence.

HC verdict

FROM PAGE 1
On lifting emergency, he said it is being relaxed in phases. "The January 10 like situation no longer exists. The implications and application have reduced. The council of advisers would take the decision regarding its withdrawal," he added.

On holding general elections within 90 days of dissolution of the parliament, Hassan Arif said it is the responsibility of the Election Commission (EC).

He, however, hastened to add that no timeframe has been fixed for the caretaker government to hand over power to an elected government. "The caretaker government's duty is to assist the Election Commission in holding free, fair and neutral elections."

On whether the government is responsible for the delay in holding the polls, the law adviser said that there is no allegation that the government created obstruction in EC's work.

The government is working towards creating a level playing field so that honest candidates are not kept away by muscle power and black money. "Since corruption begets black money and muscle power, the government has launched anti-corruption operations."

Hassan Arif observed that the situation is much better now than January 10, 2007.

Asked about criticism regarding legality of giving status of minister to a special assistant to the chief adviser, he declined to make any comment. "The government has definitely consulted laws."

Commenting on allegations of torture in custody, the law adviser said the home ministry had already cautioned the agencies concerned about it. If there is specific allegation, the government will look into it, he added.

"The court has power, and it can give direction if it feels necessary," Hassan Arif said.

Asked what he will do as a rights

Bird flu

FROM PAGE 20
Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for the Ministry of Livestock Manik Lal Samaddar were present.

Sources said the meeting was told that an isolation unit will be set up at each sadar hospital in 64 districts for treatment of any suspected Avian Influenza affected people.

The meeting was informed that 823 suspected patients were examined at the Institute of Epidemiology Diseases Control and Research (IEDCR) but no virus was detected.

Blackout at ZIA

FROM PAGE 1
Air Commodore Sakib Khan Majlish, chairman of CAAB.

Representatives from Poly Cables, the supplier of the cable, visited the scene and offered replacement of all the cables they supplied to ZIA, said CAAB sources.

There are 17 or 18 high-voltage (11 thousand volts each) cable lines at ZIA and a stretch of four to five inches of one of the cables burned out, causing the Desco line to trip, a member of the probe committee told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

Though ZIA was established long time ago in 1979, most of its electrical equipment did not undergo any renovation, claimed another probe committee member of CAAB.

In an unprecedented incident on Sunday night, ZIA ground to a virtual standstill, raising alarms over the security of the airport.

Chinese dumplings trigger food scare in Japan

AFP, Tokyo

China and Japan scrambled to ease public alarm Thursday as hundreds of Japanese reported feeling ill from eating Chinese-made dumplings, triggering an emergency cabinet session in Tokyo.

The cabinet met to discuss a response as television networks broadcast the stories of people who said they vomited, passed out and felt near death after eating the frozen meat dumplings.

China -- Japan's largest trading partner -- said pre-export tests had found no pesticides in the product, but still ordered the companies which made them to halt production and recall similar items from Japan.

Meanwhile South Korea's food and drug administration ordered checks on all dumplings from China, although officials said none of the brands at the centre of the Japan scare appeared to have been imported there.

Whatever the origin, the health scare is another public relations blow for China, whose rapid growth is linked to its status as the world's manufacturing hub.

Scandals over a range of Chinese-made goods, including pet food, toothpaste, toys and other products have led to boycott calls in the United States.

Japan is heavily dependent on food imports, with China its second biggest supplier after the United States.

MK Anwar

FROM PAGE 20
policemen between December 2005 and January 2006.

"MK Anwar implicated me in the cases being incensed by a series of reports I made against his evildoing," the Inqilab reporter alleged.

Salauddin was sentenced to 34 years and three months imprisonment in 11 of the 30 cases on September 8, 2006. He came out on bail on January 14 this year after serving 16 months in jail.

Besides, the plaintiff also said the associates of MK Anwar, at his residence, ransacked it and looted valuables worth over Tk 2 lakh on August 3, 2005.

"Anwar's associates also assaulted my mother and sisters when they came forward to resist them," the reporter stated in the case statement.

The 12 other accused are BNP Comilla (north) unit vice president M Jahirul Islam, former Muradnagar ASP Humayan Kabir, former Homna OC Mohiuddin and sub-inspector Rafiqul Islam, former Daudkandi OC Jalaluddin Ahmed, former OC of Meghna Police Station Nirmalendu Bikash Chakraborty, former sub-inspectors of Daudkandi Police Station Rafiqul Islam Selim, Murtaza Ali and Shahid and ASI Mijanur Rahman and constable Shamsu, and former sub-inspector of Homna Police Station Mujibur Rahman.

Sircar

FROM PAGE 20
About the rift within BNP, Sircar said theirs is a big political party and it is quite natural that there might be some dispute. "You'll see us united under Khaleda Zia by the time is announced an election schedule," he added.

Replying to a query, he said, "Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain is in favour of unity and so is Major (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed."

Referring to a recent statement of Hafiz, acting secretary general appointed by the standing committee, he said, "I think Hafiz himself is in doubt if he really is the secretary general as he leaves the issue for the court to decide."

Responding to another query, he said, "Only the people will decide who will form the next government. They are going through a suffocating situation. They do not own this government as it does not represent them."

He asked those attending the milad to pray for release of Khaleda, her sons Tarique Rahman and Arifat Rahman Koco.

Khandakar Delwar Hossain, Nazrul Islam Khan, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Selima Rahman, Mohammad Shahjahan and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed were among hundreds of BNP leaders and activists present at the special prayers.

Chinese dumplings trigger food scare in Japan

AFP, Tokyo

China and Japan scrambled to ease public alarm Thursday as hundreds of Japanese reported feeling ill from eating Chinese-made dumplings, triggering an emergency cabinet session in Tokyo.

The cabinet met to discuss a response as television networks broadcast the stories of people who said they vomited, passed out and felt near death after eating the frozen meat dumplings.

China -- Japan's largest trading partner -- said pre-export tests had found no pesticides in the product, but still ordered the companies which made them to halt production and recall similar items from Japan.

Meanwhile South Korea's food and drug administration ordered checks on all dumplings from China, although officials said none of the brands at the centre of the Japan scare appeared to have been imported there.

Whatever the origin, the health scare is another public relations blow for China, whose rapid growth is linked to its status as the world's manufacturing hub.

Scandals over a range of Chinese-made goods, including pet food, toothpaste, toys and other products have led to boycott calls in the United States.

Japan is heavily dependent on food imports, with China its second biggest supplier after the United States.

MK Anwar

FROM PAGE 20
policemen between December 2005 and January 2006.

"MK Anwar implicated me in the cases being incensed by a series of reports I made against his evildoing," the Inqilab reporter alleged.

Salauddin was sentenced to 34 years and three months imprisonment in 11 of the 30 cases on September 8, 2006. He came out on bail on January 14 this year after serving 16 months in jail.

Besides, the plaintiff also said the associates of MK Anwar, at his residence, ransacked it and looted valuables worth over Tk 2 lakh on August 3, 2005.

"Anwar's associates also assaulted my mother and sisters when they came forward to resist them," the reporter stated in the case statement.

The 12 other accused are BNP Comilla (north) unit vice president M Jahirul Islam, former Muradnagar ASP Humayan Kabir, former Homna OC Mohiuddin and sub-inspector Rafiqul Islam, former Daudkandi OC Jalaluddin Ahmed, former OC of Meghna Police Station Nirmalendu Bikash Chakraborty, former sub-inspectors of Daudkandi Police Station Rafiqul Islam Selim, Murtaza Ali and Shahid and ASI Mijanur Rahman and constable Shamsu, and former sub-inspector of Homna Police Station Mujibur Rahman.

Munshi Anwar

FROM PAGE 1
approval of the establishment ministry.

Anti-Corruption Commission Assistant Director SM Shahidur Rahman filed the case with Gulshan police station against Anwarul on June 26, 2006.

Charges were pressed against him on October 30 last year.

RMG worker

FROM PAGE 1
Wednesday.

He said they came out late as they had to go to toilet. All their fellow workers had already left the factory by then, he added.

Mirpur police said several officials and security guards of the factory beat them up suspecting their link with the theft of Tk 22,000 on Wednesday.

The security guards called the high-ups after capturing them. "Later, they took us to upper floor and started beating us mercilessly," Malek said adding that although they were seriously injured the garment officials did not take them to hospital immediately.

Security guard Mosharrif Hossain said about 2:15am yesterday took Khokon to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Khokon's body was sent to his ancestral home in Panchagarh last night.

The garment workers came to the factory yesterday morning but found it closed. The authorities asked them to return home saying that the factory had to be closed due to power disruption.

Hearing the news of death of their fellow worker, a group of 60 workers gathered in front of the factory at about 11:00am and tried to stage demonstration. But police foiled it.

A case was filed with Mirpur Police Station.

A large number of policemen had been deployed at the factory to avert any untoward incident.

Ekushey Book Fair

FROM PAGE 1
festoons and placards, upholding the spirit of Amur Ekushey. The entire venue is free from smoking and polythene.

The fair management committee led by Fazlur Rahim, director (institutional planning and training department) of the academy, has completed all preparations including allocating stalls and taking tight security measures to avert any untoward incident.

A total of 362 stalls consisting of up to maximum three units have been allocated to 236 institutions and publishing houses this year. A few stalls have been allotted to different socio-cultural, non-governmental and voluntary organisations.

The fair will remain open for all from 3:00pm to 9:00pm every day. On holidays, however, the fair will start at 11:00am and have a two-hour break from 12:00noon.

On February 21, the International Mother Language Day, the fair will start at 8:00am and continue up to 10:00pm without any break.

There will be two entrances to the fair with six archways, two each of which will be reserved for women and children. The middle gate of the academy leads the exit from the fair.

February 21 commemorates the Language Movement, protesting the then Pakistan government's decision to establish Urdu as the only state language of the country although Bengalees were majority.

Rafiq, Salam, Jabbar, Barkat, Shafiq and many unknown others sacrificed their lives on that day in 1952 as the law enforcers fired on processions demanding recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages.

In 1997, the UN declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day.

Bangla Academy has been organising the book fair since 1972 and in 1984 it was named Amar Ekushey Book Fair.

7 JMB men

FROM PAGE 1
Shahkawat Hossain Ziad, Abdullah Al Mamun Nasim, Hafez Ali Akbar Riaz, Shafulah Shahid and Hafizur Rahman Dalim. The last two are in hiding.

JMB kingpin Shaikh Abdur Rahman, second-in-command Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai and Abdul Awal were also accused in the case, but their names were dropped since they were executed last year.

The militants started chanting religious slogans after the verdict and attacked the two journalists as they were taken out of the court to jail.

Tufan, a bomb expert and trainer, hit Zahid Hasan of Banglavis television channel as the latter was taking video footage of the militants. He damaged Zahid's camera. Minutes later the militant, although tied with a rope, knocked journalist Abdullah Iqbal to the ground, also damaging his camera.

Tufan shouted, "We did not do anything wrong. It's you (journalists) who are the real culprits. You thwarted all our plans, everything..." The militants tried to break out of police cordon five times and threw their sandals at the newsmen.

Court inspector Mahbul Kuddus Siddiqui told reporters that the militants got hold of the two newsmen because they got too near them.

JMB militants rocked the country with synchronised bombings on August 17 three years ago. One man succumbed to his injuries in the attack.

Gangs active again

FROM PAGE 1
business establishments issuing similar threats over phone.

In some cases in Mirpur and Pallabi they had even shot people refused to pay the demanded money, leaving them injured or even killed.

Law enforcers say they are facing serious problems in tracking down the callers because the SIM cards they use were sold earlier without verifying the subscribers' addresses.

"If we receive any allegation, we collect callers' list immediately from the operators concerned and launch an investigation. But finally we find that the SIM card was drawn using the address of a rice shop and so on," says Anwar Hossain, deputy commissioner of DMP, Mirpur Zone.

Most of the times one of the petty criminals calls a target and hands over the set to another saying: "Now talk to Subrata Bain." The gangs also use the names of two other top criminals.

The second man waiting nearby introduces him as Subrata, Khandaker Tanveer Islam Joy or Shahadat -- who are now believed to be hiding in India -- and asks for toll and threatens with dire consequences for refusal.

Asked about such crimes, Officer-in-Charge of Mohammadpur Police Station

Tarique

FROM PAGE 1
Deputy Inspector General of Police (Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told The Daily Star: "The other VIP prisoners will be taken back to the jail gradually."

He said Tarique was taken to the hospital by a prison van at about 1:30pm as he has been suffering from waist and neck pain for some days.

"He has been given Cabin 18 of Ward 1 where doctors of the hospital's orthopaedic department will treat him."

Earlier on January 29, the medical board headed by Prof Sirajuddin Ahmed, chairman of BSMMU orthopaedic department, was formed to check up his health.

After medical checkups, the board asked the jail authorities to shift him to a well-equipped hospital where all types of healthcare facilities would be available.

The joint force arrested Tarique at their cantonment residence on March 8 on charge of corruption, as a countryside purge went in the interim period. He was sent to jail on March 12 when he was hauled before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

At least 19 VIP prisoners were staying at the prison cells for a long time to enjoy better facilities apparently by convincing some doctors. The jail authorities decided to take them back and asked the BSMMU authorities to immediately discharge them.

The hospital authorities also decided to verify their physical conditions and send those back who are not much sick.

16 doctors

FROM PAGE 20

incentives, deputation allowances, earmarked residences and other facilities. If the facilities are not increased, their number may further decrease."

He however said they have submitted proposals to the home ministry, which is carrying out an enquiry into it.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG-Prisons) Maj Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said: "The hospitals without doctors have paramedics, while the jails which have no hospitals have single rooms for sick prisoners."

Inspector General of Police (Prisons) Brig Gen Zakir Hassan said: "It's really tough to bring the doctors on deputation. Of the 16 existing doctors, five have already applied for transfer."

"We have submitted a proposal to the government to appoint the required doctors, increase the numbers of posts and enhance treatment facilities. But it seems that it would take not less than five years."

"The TOE [table of organisation and equipment] does not include nurses so there is no possibility to appoint any. So, nursing would be carried out by the convicts as usual."

The sources said the Dhaka jail has a 172-bed hospital always crowded with 250-300 sick prisoners.

They added that many of the prisoners get hospitalised to enjoy better facilities and pay the doctor concerned and some jail officials to that end.

The high-profile prisoners receive treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) prison cells. Showing the cause of inadequate treatment facilities, at present 15 detained bigwigs are staying at the BSMMU.

A number of other bigwigs have also been admitted to different private and posh hospitals at their own cost.

Detained Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil is now undergoing treatment at private Labaid Hospital. BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury was admitted to Birdem and Mirza Abbato Apollo Hospitals.

Home adviser

FROM PAGE 20
He directed them to prepare lists of sensational cases and send those to the Home Ministry Monitoring Cell for quick disposal.

Matin claimed that the country has now got rid of extremism and terrorism completely. Besides, remarkable success has been achieved in checking corruption.

Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil chaired the meeting attended by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Chittagong Shahidul Huda, Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner M Akber Ali, Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Shamim, Superintendent of Police Quamrul Ahsan, other high officials of police and the district administration.

Top al-Qaeda

FROM PAGE 20
But security officials in Pakistan said yesterday that a clutch of al-Qaeda militants, including seven Arabs and six Central Asians, were killed this week when a suspected US missile hit their hideout in Pakistan.

The missile hit a house in the troubled tribal district of North Waziristan late Monday.

Residents had reported that a drone of the type operated by US-led coalition forces based in Afghanistan was seen flying over the area shortly before the strike, near the town of Mir Ali.

White House races

FROM PAGE 20
shine since, limping in third in all the other primaries so far.

He even admitted to getting his "butt kicked" in Nevada, where Clinton triumphed adding to her victories in New Hampshire and Michigan.

A hefty defeat in Florida late Tuesday proved to be the final blow for the former senator, who also lost his 2004 tilt at the White House.

Hillary Clinton coasted to a symbolic victory in Florida with 50 percent, in a boost to her campaign ahead of next week's Super Tuesday when 22 states will vote for their party candidates.

Veteran Democratic strategist Donna Brazile said both remaining candidates could benefit from Edwards's withdrawal. Obama might pick up those backers eager for change to add to his wins in Iowa and South Carolina, while Clinton could grab some of his hefty labour support.

"But long term, the candidate who talks about the plight of the poor, that champions the middle class, that talks about trade and health care... will benefit from the support of John Edwards," Brazile told CNN.

Obama paid tribute to Edwards saying he "has spent a lifetime fighting to give voice to the voiceless and hope to the struggling, even when it wasn't popular to do or covered in the news."

And Clinton said Edwards "ran with compassion and conviction and lifted this campaign with his deep concern for the daily lives of the American people."

Clinton, 60, and Obama, 46, who have fought a bitter battle for voters, will again square off in a Democratic debate scheduled for Thursday in California.

Republican front-runners McCain and Mitt Romney were due to face off in a debate at the Reagan Library outside Los Angeles later Wednesday.

Arizona Senator McCain, who was once given up for lost after

Banks asked

FROM PAGE 20
According to the BB instructions, location and physical structure of a bank must be consistent with those of safety vaults and safety rooms.

The banks should review the existing security system on a regular basis. The security procedures should be well documented and the staff concerned properly trained up.

The central bank instructions say security agencies must give undertaking that if a bank suffers a loss due to vandalism, theft and burglary, they will be liable to make good the losses up to a certain limit to be decided by an individual bank.

According to the directives, in case of any loss due to breakages and damage, the client will be paid immediately by the bank as per the claims within the insurance ceiling.

Later, the bank shall claim the amount from the insurer.

US flauts

FROM PAGE 20
After the 2006 legislative elections that put Democrats in charge of both houses of Congress, a bill restoring Guantanamo prisoners' right to habeas corpus was proposed but has yet to be approved.

HRW said in its report that by announcing in April that a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) prisoner had been transferred to Guantanamo, the Pentagon made it clear there still were US detention facilities around the world.

The rights group said it believed 39 people were being held in US secret detention facilities and recalled that the US government had admitted to holding 100 prisoners in all.

"Under international law those persons remain unlawfully 'disappeared' until the United States can account for them," the report said.

And despite congressional pressure forcing the Pentagon to adopt new rules for prisoner interrogations to preclude torture-like abuses, HRW said the US government continues to justify such techniques in certain cases.

"The CIA contends that it is not bound by these rules, and the (US) administration has gone to great lengths to justify the CIA's continued use of certain techniques banned for use by the military," said the report.

On the domestic front, HRW said 2.2 million people were imprisoned in 2007 in the United States, a 500 percent increase over the past 30 years and equivalent to five times the entire prison population of Britain.

In addition to having the largest prison population in the world, the report added, the United States imprisoned blacks at a rate 6.5 times higher than that of whites.

HRW also found that undocumented foreigners faced greater risk of arrest in the United States, had difficulty in asserting their legal rights in court and were imprisoned under sometimes abusive conditions.

The report also criticised US laws listing people convicted of sexual offences in a national sexual offender registry that turns them into social pariahs with little chance of finding employment or housing, and making them the target of violence.

White House races

FROM PAGE 20
almost running out of money in mid-2007, was celebrating after winning in Florida late Tuesday, to become the clear Republican pacesetter.

McCain, 71, beat former Massachusetts Governor Romney to take 36 percent of the vote, over 29 percent for Romney. Giuliani came in third with 15 percent, and ordained Baptist preacher Mike Huckabee won 13 percent.

Meanwhile, in a move, which could cause shockwaves in the Democratic camp, veteran political activist Ralph Nader said he was mulling a White House bid.