

WEBSITE LAUNCHING

Anti-corruption drive to be widened: Mashhud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said the ongoing anti-corruption drive will be widened, tougher and long-term.

"The ongoing drive against corruption will be firm, widened and long-term and to win the battle people from all walks of life will have to take part in it," said Mashhud while speaking as chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of a website.

Concern for Environmental Development And Research (CEDAR), a non-government organisation, launched the website www.nocorruptionbd.org at the National Press Club in the capital.

Inaugurating the website, the ACC boss said, "We would be able to make our stand against corruption more firm by using more modern technology."

"Using the technology we would be able to reach many people and take their opinions regarding corruption," he said, adding the website, as a raw material, will help project the corruption picture of the country.

Welcoming the effort, Mashhud said the ACC will visit the website regularly.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said incorporation of general people is a must to make the movement against corruption a success and durable.

It is not possible for a single institution to curb corruption, and corruption will be rooted out from the society if the organisations



ACC Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury inaugurates a website at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

ensure transparency and accountability, he said.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman called for incorporating the young generation into the movement as their ideas are important to stamp out corruption.

He hoped that many organisations will come forward with their efforts like CEDAR.

Praising the effort, Mosharrif Hossain Khan, deputy managing director of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), said awareness about corruption will be raised among the mass people if the anti-corruption activities and programmes are put in the website.

He said everyone will have to declare war against corruption as only few institutions cannot eradicate corruption from the country.

He suggested CEDAR to put the corruption-related information carefully in the website so that

innocent people are not harassed.

Mosharrif said allegations were raised against the activities of many non-government organisations recently, but these have been stopped now.

To establish a corruption-free society the alleged corruptions of NGOs should be followed up, he added.

Shafiqul Alam, executive director of CEDAR, said the aim of launching the website is to create social awareness against corruption.

He said the website has a provision for anyone to put their opinion on the ways to stop corruption and people would also be able to affirm their personal commitment against corruption.

Aroma Dutta, executive director of PRIP Trust, and Kazi Sher Mohammad, president of CEDAR, also spoke on the occasion.

Ex-R&H chief engr possesses huge wealth

UNB, Dhaka

Former chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department Fazlul Haque yesterday submitted his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission disclosing that there is huge wealth in his and his wife's names.

According to the wealth statement, Fazlul Haque and his family have 1,002 decimals of land in Gazipur, 146 decimals in Bagerhat and 2.5 decimals in Dhaka city's Badda area.

They have a five-katha plot in Bashundhara and two spacious flats - one in Uttara and another in Banani. There is a six-story building on about five kathas of land in Uttara. They also have two office spaces in Gulshan Avenue.

Fazlul's wife has share certificates of Tk 2.16 crore while he has share certificates of Tk 71.52 lakh. Fazlul also has a fixed deposit of Tk 1.4 crore.

The couple has eight bank accounts with Tk 55.7 lakh. They have also Tk 5.5 lakh cash in hand. He has 30 tolas of gold while his wife 40 tolas.

They have one jeep, furniture and electronic goods worth Tk 4 lakh and one gun.

Alauddin Sarder

Meanwhile, former law secretary Alauddin Sarder submitted his wealth statement to the Commission Tuesday.

In his statement, Alauddin stated that he and his family have 2.75 kathas of land with an under-construction building in Pallabi, five kathas of land in Savar, 28 decimals of land in Jhalakati, 61.4 decimals of land in Barisal, 2.5 kathas of land in Pallabi and portion of a 15.25 decimal land in Dhanmondi.

The family has nine bank accounts with balances of about 4 lakh, saving certificates worth Tk 32 lakh and fixed deposits of about Tk 46.7 lakh. Alauddin has Tk 1 lakh in cash.

Besides, he has 25 tolas of gold while his wife 20 tolas. The family has furniture worth Tk 2.25 lakh and electronic goods worth Tk 3.5 lakh. They also have a rifle.



Eight-year-old Shafiqul and 11-year-old Masud control traffic as an employee (not in picture) cleans rail tracks at Staff Road rail crossing near Radisson Water Garden Hotel yesterday. The two destitute minors who live near the rail signal agreed to a promise of Tk 5-7 for the one and half-hour job without realising the risk.

BARGE-MOUNTED PLANT GRAFT CASE AGAINST HASINA Hearing adjourned until May 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The special court yesterday adjourned charge-framing hearing in the barge-mounted power plant graft case against detained former premier Sheikh Hasina till May 6 after the defence completed arguments on discharge petition submitted for exempting her from the case.

Since submission of the petition on April 3, Hasina's counsel had seven sittings with the court to complete their argument. Hasina, in the meantime, continued complaining about her ill health and physical inability to appear before the court and thrice fell sick inside courtroom.

The Awami League chief yesterday also complained once again the authorities concerned continued resorting to "as many means as possible to harass her" mentally by keeping her in solitary confinement.

Hasina yesterday also expressed concern over the CNG price hike in addition to the government's failure to check price spiralling of essentials.

"My family doctors were excluded much earlier and now the doctors treating me in jail have also been changed," she said.

"This is nothing but putting all kinds of pressure on me. They are undertaking as many means as possible to harass me mentally by keeping me in solitary confinement."

"They have filed cases against me. No problem. Reduce prices of essentials. Save the people. And now they have increased CNG price while the bus owners are benefited taking advantage of this opportunity. And they cannot control this situation."

"The CNG price hike has only one implication that it just adds insult to injury. People's sufferings have increased once again."

"A country is considered below poverty line when it cannot ensure 2,100 calorie food per head daily. The present rate in Bangladesh is 1,800 calorie, while it was 2,300 calorie during my tenure," Hasina added.

Hasina also mentioned that many attempts have been made on her life including the August 21 grenade attack and January 24 attack that killed many people. She mentioned that during the grenade attack she herself witnessed an AL activist dying while trying to save her.

"None can do harm to anyone when Allah wants their survival," Hasina said.

The Special Court-1 sat at around 9:30am and continued the proceedings until noon.

As Hasina's counsel began argument on the petition, Judge Firoz Alam said it is rare that the defence continued hearing on a discharge petition for the seventh consecutive day.

The judge also asked them to finish arguments on the petition

saying that no more time would be given to the defence on this issue. He also mentioned that the next sitting of the court would hold hearing on other accused in the case.

Counsels of Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, another accused in the case, told journalists they would submit another discharge petition in the next date for exempting their client.

After completing argument on the submission, Hasina's chief counsel Barrister Shafiqul Ahmed told the court there are not enough "ingredients" in the documents submitted as evidence of Hasina's offences.

"So my client should be cleared of the charges in accordance with the law," Shafiqul added.

Arguments submitted for exemption

Regarding the trial being held at a time when Hasina does not feel well, the defence argued that in that case she might not be able to even hear the charges brought against her.

The defence argued that the first information report, charge sheet and other documents do not have any "ingredients" to charge her with offences.

They also said the case cannot be brought under the Emergency Power Rules and their client is being deprived of legal, constitutional and fundamental rights.

Duta concerned DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) expressed deep concern over the unexpected incidents occurred on the Dhaka University (DU) campus frequently in the last few days, says a press release.

An executive committee meeting of the association on Monday gave its opinion that a certain quarter has been trying to make the existing congenial atmosphere of the university uneasy.

The meeting expressed concern over the attacks on Sima Islam, a fine arts student, Anu Anwar, university correspondent of the 'Prothom Alo', and Jahedur Arman, university correspondent of the 'Dinkal'.

Sima, also a BCL leader, was beaten up by a group of agitating BCL activists on the central library premises on April 20, while Arman was injured following a factional clash of BCL at the same spot on the same day and Anu was beaten by a group of JCD leaders and activists in front of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall in early hours on April 20 while he was submitting news over mobile phone to his office.

The meeting with Duta President Prof Sadrul Amin in chair also requested students and front organisations to be aware of the activities of the vested quarters and their ongoing provocation.

It also expressed hope that the students of the university will take all-out attempts to keep a congenial atmosphere in their beloved campus.

Besides, the meeting urged the authorities to identify the people involved with violent incidents on the campus in the last few days and give them proper punishment.



Regulatory Reforms Commission Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan speaks at a roundtable at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are NGDO President Aktar Hossain, Social Welfare Ministry Joint Secretary Masuda Bente Quadir and Shamokal Editor Abed Khan.

Make 'State of Disability' report public: Akbar Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Regulatory Reforms Commission (RRC) Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan yesterday said the government should disclose annual 'State of Disability' report publicly for changing general public's attitude towards people with disabilities.

"The government should not take measures for showing sympathy to people with disabilities. Considering the state's own responsibility, the government should take measures for them. Time has come to change our mindset towards them. For this, the government should annually disclose annual 'State of Disability Report'," Akbar Ali said while addressing a roundtable.

Akbar Ali, also a former adviser,

said the government will have to encourage non-government agencies for recruiting people with disabilities.

"For getting job in private sector, the government can declare that income tax will not be paid when an organisation recruits the people with disabilities. Besides, it can also encourage private sectors for providing first six months' salary for the employees with the public exchequer," he said while addressing as chief guest at the roundtable.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD) organised the roundtable on 'Disability Inclusive PRSP: Grassroots Views' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city where participants said the issue of disability should be considered agenda as a crosscutting.

Akbar Ali also said social inclusive is the main obstacle to the people with disabilities for improving their economic and social status.

He also said people with disabilities will have to be incorporated into the mainstream of development because the whole national development is not possible ignoring the two crore people with disabilities.

ADD Advocacy Coordinator Mozammel Haq presented a keynote paper at the roundtable where the Shamokal Editor Abed Khan, Jahangirnagar University Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Bayes, Ranjan Kamraker of Steps Towards Development and Zahurul Alam of Election Network Group also spoke.

DU teachers for release of Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 201 white panel teachers of the Dhaka University (DU) yesterday demanded immediate release of detained former prime minister Khaleda Zia and other political leaders.

In a statement, the pro-BNP Jamaat teachers said: "Reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC), withdrawal of emergency and, above all, holding of the parliamentary election are needed for the welfare of the nation."

The teachers also expressed concern over the present political and economic situation of the country in the statement signed by Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) President Prof Sadrul Amin on behalf of the teachers.

The statement said: "People of the country are facing severe crises due to abnormal price hike of essentials. Thousands of people become workless due to fall in investment and closure of industries."

"The country would face a social disaster as a large number of people are living under the poverty line both at villages and towns," the statement said.

The teachers said: "The people of the country are deprived of freedom of speech and political rights due to long-term imposition of the state of emergency."

They raised the question on the impartiality of the Election Commission (EC) saying: "People are suspicious about the holding of a credible election due to intentional and partial activities of the EC."

Prof Mohammad Aminur Rahman Majumder, Prof Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Prof Tajmer SA Islam, Prof Saidur Rahman, Prof Kamrul Ahsan Chowdhury and Prof GM Chowdhury also gave their statements.

Founding anniversary of Khela Ghar Asar tomorrow

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 56th founding anniversary of the Kendriya Khela Ghar Asar, an organisation that works for the children, will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

To mark the day, a discussion, reminiscence meeting, reunion and cultural function will be held at the Shaheed Tajul Auditorium of Moni Singh - Farhad Memorial Trust in the city.

Noted litterateurs, journalists and intellectuals of the country are expected to attend the programme.

The organisation was established on May 2 in 1952 with a view to giving the children a platform to flourish their talents.

Iftekhar lauds UN chief for setting up food task force

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday lauded UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for setting up the high-level task force on global food crisis, as Dhaka is very pleased that the world body has responded to Bangladesh's 'wake-up call'.

"We are in touch with his office and will provide him fullest support," the foreign adviser said to the media at his office, a day after the UN secretary-general announced the formation of the task force in Berne, Switzerland, in response to his call made in Accra on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDC).

As the current LDC Chair, Iftekhar while presiding over a meeting of LDC ministers during the 12th Unctad Conference in Accra on April 19, appealed to the UN to form a task force to reduce

and stabilise global food prices. Iftekhar also wrote a letter to the secretary-general on April 27, underscoring the need for an urgent action.

He urged the UN chief executive to provide special attention to countries facing the twin shocks of high oil and food prices.

The foreign adviser also proposed that the international community must come forward with additional financial resources to support the least developed countries meet the present challenge.

The LDC appeal resulted in the Berne meeting of heads of key UN agencies, the World Bank and WTO. The UN secretary-general himself will chair the task force.

Ban Ki-moon recognised the need for fully funding the World Food Programme to deliver food to millions of poor people in Asia and Africa.

UZ polls time not finalised in absence of related law

Says EC Sakhawat

UNB, Dhaka

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (Retd) Sakhawat Hussain yesterday said the time for upazila election cannot be finalised in the absence of related law.

He informed that the Local Government (Upazila) Ordinance 2008 had been approved by the Council of Advisers. But the LGRD Ministry has recently decided to bring about further amendments in the ordinance.

"I've heard about some major changes in the ordinance, including the provision of two vice-chairmen. The LGRD ministry will send us the related draft. We'll give

our opinion on that and then the draft will again go to the ministry," he told reporters after a meeting with

the leaders of Union Parishad Oikya Jote (UPO).

From the LGRD ministry, the draft law would be sent to the law ministry and finally placed before the Council of Advisers for approval. Sakhawat said, adding that it would take some more time to finalise the ordinance.

"We've plan to hold the upazila polls as per the election roadmap. We are to go with it on receiving the amended law. But UPO demanded of us to hold the upazila election

under the existing law, which is not possible," he said.

Sakhawat said EC could hold the upazila election long ago if it were to be held under the existing law.

Meanwhile, a five-member delegation led by the UPO convenor Golam Sarwar Milon submitted a letter demanding upazila polls prior to national elections to the Election Commissioner at his office.

The delegation also demanded zila parishad election prior to the national election. "We'll take legal action if the commission doesn't hold upazila election by October," Milon told reporters after the meeting.

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