

Work unitedly with ACC to eliminate corruption

ACC boss urges lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (ret) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said lawyers should work together with the ACC in its anti-corruption drive once the state of emergency is lifted.

"Lawyers should assist the ACC in the prosecution of anti-corruption cases as there might be an adverse situation for the anti-corruption drive with the lifting of the emergency. All lawyers should work unitedly to eliminate corruption and violence," he said.

The ACC chief was speaking as chief guest at a seminar titled 'Role of lawyers in eliminating corruption and violence' organised by Bangladesh Lawyers' Forum (BLF) at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh auditorium in the capital.

"We are now vocal against corruption in a positive situation, but would we be able to speak out against it in an adverse situation is a big challenge," he said.

About the ACC drive against corruption, Mashhud said, "We are not motivated at all in our operations."

He said the worst effect of cor-

ruption is that it insults the nation. "Corruption and violence are supplementary to each other, and lead the society to a vicious circle that undermines our national pride," he added.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said administrative reforms are needed to combat corruption.

"We should reform our administrative system and laws to combat corruption," he said.

"Prevention of corruption is more viable than eliminating it, and we should look for preventing corruption," he added.

Prof Muzaffer said lawyers should engage themselves in eliminating corruption, but they should eliminate it first from the court premises.

He said lengthy prosecution of cases is an impediment to eliminating corruption.

"Good governance can ensure rule of law, but we did not see it in the past 37 years," said Inspector General of Police Nur Muhammad.

"People should speak out against corruption to eliminate it from the society and they have now started speaking against it," he said, adding,

"We can never go back to the situation of pre-1/11."

Vice-chairman of the Supreme Court Bar Council Khandaker Mahabub Hossain urged the ACC chairman to concentrate on the big fishes in the drive against corruption and not the little ones.

He also urged the ACC to let the accused get bail from the court and have confidence in the court.

"The accused should get bail and trial of them is very much possible even if they are freed after getting bail. The ACC should have confidence on the court," he added.

Rab Director General Hasan Mahabub Khandaker said to eliminate corruption, participation of people from all walks of life is needed.

"Removing corruption should not be the headache of only the law enforcers as corruption harms all," he added.

BLF Convener Abu Zahid Sentu presided over the seminar which was also addressed by Prof Dr Tarek MR Chowdhury, dean of arts, social science and law faculty at Asa University, Mansur Habib, additional attorney general, and senior lawyer ABM Nurul Islam.



TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad addresses a seminar titled 'Role of lawyers in eliminating corruption and violence' at Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Lawyers' Forum organised the seminar.

Ganatantrik Front sweeps Baira election

UNB, Dhaka

Sammillito Ganatantrik Front yesterday swept the election to Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), bagging all but one post.

Out of 27 posts on the Baira executive committee, Sammillito Ganatantrik Front won 26 while Sammillito Samannaya Front got only one post.

Talking to UNB, Abdul Alim of Sammillito Samannaya Front confirmed their debacle in the election. The new committee was elected to a two-year term.

A total of 54 candidates from two panels contested the election. The voting started at 9:00am and continued up to 5:00pm without a break.

Amrit Baroi, deputy secretary of commerce ministry, conducted the election.

Uncle throws acid on woman over land dispute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman suffered acid burn at Golapbagh at Tatabari in the city yesterday when her uncle allegedly threw acid on her over a land dispute.

The victim, 45-year-old Monwara Begum, is undergoing treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with injuries in her left neck, chest, abdomen and thigh.

Monwara's husband Yakub Hossain told reporters at the DMCH that his wife's uncle (husband of her mother's sister) Morshed Ali threw acid on her in their bedroom after Magrib prayers.

He said Morshed fled the scene immediately after the incident. Locals rushed to their house hearing screams and took Monwara to the hospital at around 8:00pm.

Police could not arrest Morshed as of 11:20pm.

Int'l Mother's Day today

UNB, Dhaka

International Mother's Day will be observed across the country today as elsewhere in the world, honouring mothers with giving gifts and greetings.

The International Mother's Day has been celebrated on the second Sunday of May every year for the last few years.

The earliest Mother's Day celebrations can be traced back to the spring celebrations of ancient Greece in honour of Rhea, the Mother of the Gods. During the 1600s, England celebrated a day called 'Mothering Sunday'.

In the United States, the Mother's Day started in 1872 by peace activist Julia Ward Howe, who was horrified by the carnage and suffering of the Civil War and wrote a proclamation calling on women to unite and oppose war.

However, more than 40 countries, including Bangladesh, observe the day following American culture that originated from the thought that Anna Jarvis, daughter of Anna Reeves Jarvis, was the power behind the official establishment of Mother's Day in 1905.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson declared the first national Mother's Day, as a day for American citizens to show the flag in honour of those mothers whose sons had died in war.

The day is celebrated in Bangladesh through different programmes in electronic media and according grand reception to mothers of jewels recognising their contribution to family, society and nation.

Protect Rajbari town from erosion of Padma Citizens urge govt

UNB, Dhaka

Citizens of Rajbari town yesterday urged the authorities concerned to protect the town from the threat of erosion by the river Padma.

At a press conference at the National Press Club, the committee for protecting the Rajbari town said if immediate measures are not taken, the mighty Padma would soon devour Rajbari and its adjoining villages within next few years.

"In last few years, the river has advanced close to the town eroding between 300 and 400 meters of land. The river is now about 395 meters from the town," said Brig (ret) Md Azizul Haque, convener of the committee.

He said the government, especially the local administration and the Water Development Board, should come up with an emergency contingency plan to construct barriers and put in place other river training measures to save Rajbari, an important railway town and business centre.

Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly, a former minister for water resources, Mohammad Ali Chowdhury, chairman of Rajbari municipality, and Adv Ganesh Narayan Chowdhury, president of Rajbari Bar Association, were also present at the press conference.



CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan speaks at a dialogue titled 'In search of a future for the jute sector: Constraints, opportunities and policy options' at Brac Centre Inn auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right is Textile and Jute Secretary Abdur Rashid Sarker and on his left is CPD Executive Director Mustafizur Rahman. (Story on Star Business, B3)

PROPER MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION

Monitoring of recruiting agencies, govt instts stressed

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday underscored the need for an effective mechanism for the monitoring of recruiting agencies and relevant government institutions for proper management of migration.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) jointly organised the daylong roundtable titled 'Irregular migration' at a city hotel.

The programme was organised as part of an ongoing USAID Bangladesh-sponsored project 'Counter-trafficking interventions in prevention, protection and prosecution for victims of trafficking in persons in Bangladesh'.

Additional Foreign Secretary MAK Mahmood was the chief guest at the closing session, moderated by Rabab Fatima, regional representative for South Asia, IOM.

Mahmood said well managed migration can be a key contributor to development of Bangladesh. He urged for an effective mechanism for the monitoring of recruiting agencies for proper management of migration.

Mahmood said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign missions abroad can play a pivotal role in this regard.

He said it is important to make sure that the migrant workers receive proper treatment at the destination countries and it will benefit those countries as well.

The additional secretary also said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may co-ordinate with all other ministries and agencies, including

NGOs and civil society, in all matters relating to migration.

Rabab Fatima said irregular migration and trafficking are cross-cutting issues and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a vital role in dealing with the problem.

She observed that the existing Emigration Ordinance 1982 does not have any provision guaranteeing the rights of labour migrants.

Fatima urged for modification of the existing legal framework and having a comprehensive migration policy in place in Bangladesh. She mentioned that the IOM would be pleased to get associated with such a process.

She mentioned that Bangladesh

is at risk to lose its competitive edge and credibility in the labour market due to the ongoing exploitation in the labour migration processes.

A total of 20 officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took part in the roundtable.

Different sessions of the roundtable were conducted by Supradip Chakma, director general, Consular Welfare of the MOFA, Sk. Abdur Rashid, additional secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Kapil Gupta, second secretary, US Embassy in Bangladesh, Naim Ahmed, an advocate of Supreme Court, Mizanur Rahman and Dr Uttam Kumar Das of IOM.

500 RMG workers fall sick after taking lunch

UNB, Savar

Some 500 workers of a garment factory here fell sick yesterday after having lunch at their workplace, witnesses said.

They said the workers of Cosmopolitan Garment Factory, owned by Indian citizen Dinesh Bhirawani, at Khejurbagan started vomiting and fell sick one after another in the afternoon.

The ailing workers were treated at the medical centre of the factory where some 4,000 people work.

Meanwhile, around 200 ailing workers returned home after taking first aid.

The workers alleged that the food "tasted bitter" while having

lunch, as there were "sub-standard" meals on the daily menu.

Senior Executive of the factory Monirul Islam said the situation should have arisen because of the meals turning stale.

Doctors Ashraf Uddin and Shawkat Afrin at the medical centre said the workers' sickness was caused by sub-standard meals and severe hot weather.

After the incident, the authorities of SS Enterprise, who supplied the food, fled the canteen putting it under lock and key.

When contacted, a police official of Ashulia Police Station said, "We have heard about it and are investigating the incident."

Outlawed leader killed in shootout

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A regional leader of outlawed Lal Pataka (red flag), one of the factions of Purbo Bangla Communist Party (PBCP-ML), was killed during a 'shootout' between police and his cohorts at Bhatpara village of Gangni upazila in Meherpur early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Akram Hossain alias Bhasan, 32, son of Abul Kasem, of Gajaria of the same upazila in the district.

Two police constables were also injured during the encounter. Bhasan was leading PBCP Lal Pataka in Kushtia, Chuadanga, Meherpur and Jhenaidah districts for years.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Gangni Police Station, led by Officer-in-Charge (OC) Atiar Rahman, raided at Bhatpara Bridge where a group of Lal Pataka men, led by Bhasan, were holding a meeting at around 3:30am.

Police told the outlaws to surrender, but they fired gunshots instead.

As the police replied with shots, Bhasan was killed on the spot while his accomplices managed to escape.

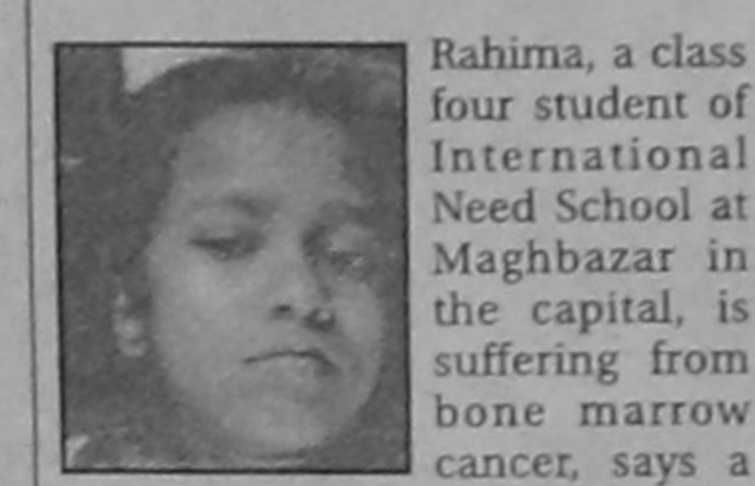
Two police constables -- Manir Hossain and Golaz Hossain -- were also injured during the gunfight. They were given first aid, police said.

Police recovered a shutter gun and three bullets from the spot.

Police said Bhasan was a close accomplice of PBCP Lal Pataka's kingpin Mizanur Rahman Titul. He was involved in criminal activities including robbery, abduction and extortion.

He was also accused in some cases including three murder cases filed with different police stations in Meherpur, Kushtia and Chuadanga.

Appeal for help



Rahima, a class four student of International Need School at Maghbazar in the capital, is suffering from bone marrow cancer, says a

press release.

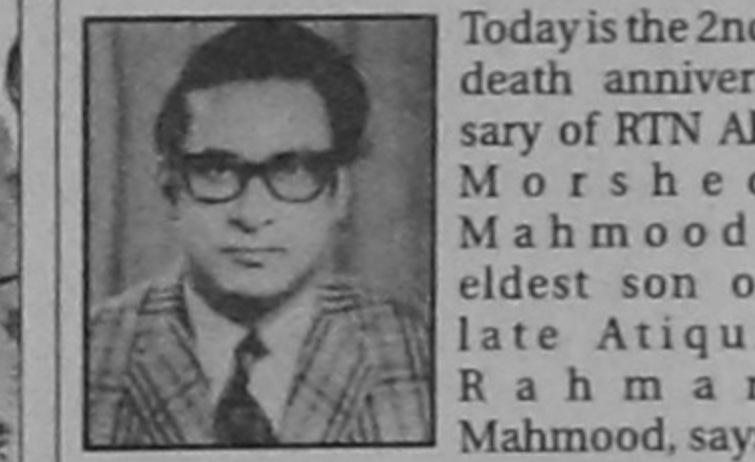
Daughter of an autorickshaw driver Noor Alam and office cleaner Nasima Begum, she is now undergoing treatment at paediatric haematology and oncology department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Her bed no is 1.

Her day-to-day treatment cost is about Tk 3000 which her poor parents cannot afford.

So Rahima has appealed to generous people of the society for financial assistance to save her life.

Contributions can be sent to Savings Account No 20058, Janata Bank, Maghbazar Branch, Dhaka. Interested persons can also contact her over cell phones 01726860415 and 01917349977 (on request).

Death anniversary



Today is the 2nd death anniversary of RTN Ali Mahmood, eldest son of late Atiqur Rahman Mahmood, says a

press release.

On the occasion, foods will be distributed among the orphans.

All have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Khandaker Mahbubuzzaman, a permanent member of Dhaka Club Ltd, will be held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Asar prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the qulkhwani.

Light tremor felt in city

BSS, Dhaka

The met office recorded a light tremor at 11:59am yesterday with a magnitude of 4.4 on the Richter scale.

The epicentre of the tremor was near Itanagar of Arunachal Pradesh in India, 522 km northeast of its seismic observatory at Agargaon in the city, a met office message said.

DU hall provost, house tutors harassed by JCD men

DU CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday formed a three-member probe committee to investigate the harassment of hall provost and five house tutors.

The committee headed by Dr Abu Mohammad Delwar Hossain, a house tutor of the hall, was asked to submit the report within three working days.

The leaders and activists of Jaiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of BNP, surrounded the provost and the house tutors for about half an hour when they went to seal a room in the hall in the early hours of yesterday.

According to sources, JCD activists also ransacked the door and windows of the room while the teachers were surrounded.

After half an hour, some other students rescued the teachers, but when the teachers tried to hold an emergency meeting on the situation, the cadres foiled it and forced them to leave the hall.

The JCD cadres also brought out a procession in the hall corridor and chanted slogans against the hall authorities.

Saiful Islam, a house tutor who is also the chairman of Persian literature department, said, "As the cadres held us hostage, we felt helpless and there was no way but to leave the hall."

Talking to The Daily Star, another house tutor alleged that a number of Shibir cadres also joined the procession and chanted slogans against the hall authorities.

Meanwhile, the hall authorities have sealed the room.

Sources said the JCD activists illegally occupied the room two months back evicting the genuine residents.

Serb voters poised to decide -- Europe or isolation?

AFP, Belgrade

A polarised Serbia yesterday mullied the path it should take -- towards Europe or a likely return to isolation -- on the eve of polls seen as the most important since the fall of Slobodan Milosevic.

In Sunday's general elections, a pro-Western alliance spearheaded by President Boris Tadic's Democratic Party faces an uphill battle to see off ultra-nationalists bolstered by anger about Kosovo's independence.

A total of 6,865,400 people are eligible to vote including more than 115,000 Serbs scattered across Kosovo, the Albanian-majority province which broke away from Serbia almost three months ago.

The snap elections were called when the government -- a wobbly year-old coalition of outgoing Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica's nationalists and Tadic's pro-Europeans -- crumbled in March after most members of the European Union recognised Kosovo.

Running on the ticket 'For a European Serbia,' Tadic's coalition is

neck-and-neck in the latest surveys with the ultra-nationalist Radical Party, with each camp expected to pick up one-third of the vote.

"The May 11 elections are a form of referendum at which citizens will decide on whether or not Serbia ... will be a member of the European Union," Tadic said in a pitch to voters at the end of a spiteful campaign.

The Radicals' formal leader, Vojislav Seselj, is an old Milosevic ally who is being tried for war crimes before the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague.

Its acting president, Tomislav Nikolic, hopes to join forces with Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia which has yet to rule out such an option.

The creation of a nationalist government is certain to end Belgrade's cooperation with the ICTY, thus halting its integration with the European Union and pushing it back into the isolation of the 1990s Milosevic regime.

In a move meant to woo voters disillusioned with the West, the European Union signed last week a pre-membership pact with Serbia.

WEATHER TODAY graphic with sun and cloud icons.

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 38.4 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and Satkhira and lowest 19.0 degrees Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:32pm today and rises at 5:17am tomorrow.

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

Table with 5 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

A minor boy Sumon fell unconscious while waiting in the queue for hours amid hot weather for buying only three kilograms of rice at the BDR-run fair price outlet near Mohakhali Inter-District Bus Terminal yesterday.

Prague zoo sets out to save Indian gharial

AFP, Prague

The Prague zoo has launched a test programme to save the Indian crocodile-like gharial from the brink of extinction with a million-dollar pavilion for the animals to bask, and hopefully reproduce, in.

There are only between 150 and 200 of this species, the Gavialis gangeticus also known as the gharial, living in the wild along India's rivers today. Another 20 or so are in captivity in India, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the United States, according to figures from the Prague zoo.

"All of the conservation plans launched in the world have failed up until now. The gharial is one of the most threatened species on the planet," said Petr Veselsky, in charge of reptiles at the zoo.

The new gharial pavilion -- the first such programme in Europe --

contains three males and four females from a park in Madras in southern India.

They are distinguishable from crocodiles by their especially long and thin jaws, which gives a terrifying appearance despite the fact they are fish-eating and present no threat to humans.

"The final goal is to see these gharials reproduce so as to send their young to other zoos or even to release them into their country of origin," said Veselsky. He predicts it will take another 10 years for this to take place, the time for the tank's new inhabitants to reach sexual maturity.

Previously abundant along the banks of rivers in India, Myanmar and Nepal, gharials have paid a heavy price for the degradation of their habitat due to river pollution, agriculture and increased river traffic.

"Last year, we found hundreds of

dead gharials near the Indian Chambal river. An investigation led by a group of international veterinarians was able to show that they had fed themselves on fish contaminated with toxins," said Veselsky.

Along with his colleagues, he designed the new bamboo-decorated pavilion with deep waters, sandy beaches, waterfalls, and quiet hideaways.

"That's their favourite spot, they love to heat themselves there like in sunshine. They bask there an hour, their skin heats up to 50 degrees, and then they go into the water to cool down."

The Prague zoo shelters 4,600 animals representing some 636 different species it hopes to see grow and multiply. The gharials are not the zoo's first conservation project: its experts played a key role in the survival of the wild Przewalski horse.

DHAKA TODAY Workshop, View exchange meeting, Seminar, FICCI meeting advertisement.