

## DISMISSAL OF HAROON HABIB Supreme Court rejects BSS appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The appellate division of the Supreme Court on Monday upheld a High Court verdict declaring illegal the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) authorities' action of dismissing MD Haroon Habib as its managing director.

A full bench of the appellate division headed by Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim passed the verdict rejecting an appeal filed by BSS, the state-run news agency, against the HC judgment.

The BSS authorities dismissed Haroon Habib as its managing director on October 31, 2001. Later, he filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of the dismissal order.

On August 20 in 2007, the High Court delivered its verdict declaring illegal the dismissal of Haroon Habib.

The court also directed BSS to reinstate Haroon within 30 days and pay him all salary arrears and benefits within 60 days.

On December 31, 2007, the appellate division of the Supreme Court stayed the HC verdict following an application filed by the BSS authorities.

The Supreme Court also asked BSS to file a regular leave to appeal against the HC judgment.

After the hearing of the case, the appellate division yesterday rejected the BSS authorities' appeal.

Barrister M Amir-UI Islam and Barrister Tania Amir appeared for Haroon Habib while advocate M Asaduzzaman moved for the BSS.



A winner of a poster competition organised by UNFPA receives her prize from actress Mousumi at a prize giving ceremony in the city recently. UNFPA Representative Arthur Erken and Prof Mostafizul Haq were also present.

## Declare local govt polls schedule before national election

Bangladesh Upazila Chairman Association demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Bangladesh Upazila Chairman Association have demanded declaration of the local government election schedule before the national election.

At a press conference at the National Press Club in the city on Monday, they hailed the caretaker government for its initiative to hold

the local government polls.

The speakers expressed their apprehension that the upcoming elected government also will not hold the local government election as the last three elected governments failed to hold the polls.

They denounced the leaders of three main political parties to oppose the local government election.

They said although they tried several times during the party governments in last 16 years for holding the local government polls but the leaders discouraged them in different ways.

The Association members urged the government to arrange the local government election as early as possible because it will help revive and strengthen democracy at grassroots level.

They said upazila parishad administration system was introduced during an autocratic government in 1985 but it was later dissolved by a partisan government in 1991.

Besides reducing people's tendency for rushing to cities and bureaucratic tussle, a lot of new roads, bridges, culverts and employments were created under that local government system, said Association Convener and Chairman of Srinagar upazila of Munshiganj district Azizul Haque Lebu Kazi in a paper at the press conference.

The speakers said as the High Court has ordered the government to arrange the local government election, it cannot disobey its verdict.

Besides, nowhere in the constitution it has been mentioned that the caretaker government cannot hold the local government election, they added.

Joint Convener and Association President Afzal Hossain Kaiser, Firoj Kabir from Savar, Mohammad Shamsul Karim from Bandar upazila and Mohammad Jasim from Gajaria upazila also addressed the press conference.

## COMMUNITY CLINICS

### Steps underway to outsource management

Health experts protest move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A programme is underway to outsource the management of 342 community clinics and 130 union health and family welfare centres and hospitals to the private sector, Finance Adviser ABM Mirza Azizul Islam said on Monday.

It is part of the government's efforts to encourage the increased involvement of private organisations in the health sector, he said in the budget speech.

But the health experts sharply reacted to this government's decision, terming it a process of commercialisation of the health sector.

Around 11,000 community clinics were set up to provide primary healthcare service to the people free of cost during the tenure of Awami League government,

but the BNP-led four party alliance government stopped the activity of the clinics.

Members of the National Health Rights Movement on Monday said the government should take care of the primary healthcare service for the poor.

Prof Dr Rashid E Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said the community people even donated their land for these community clinics in the hope that they would receive free treatment. As the government is now transferring the clinics to the private sector, the people would now have to pay for their treatment, he added.

Rather, the clinics should be given to the local government after strengthening it and ensuring its accountability, the experts said.



Australian High Commissioner Douglas Foskett and IOM Regional Representative for South Asia Rabab Fatima sign an agreement on a project in the city yesterday.

## Get-together of Dhaka College '63-65 batch July 5

A get-together of the students of 1963-1965 batch of Dhaka College will be held on July 5 in the city.

Former students of the batch are requested to get registered by contacting any of Mesbah Uddin Ahmed (01711-564857), Col (ret'd) Khaled (01711-675792), Waliul Islam (8614415), Saifur Rahman Dulal (01731-019855) and Dr Shafiqur Rahman (01711-526084).

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Member REHAB

## Agreement to fight irregular migration

Australian High Commission yesterday signed an agreement with International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for South Asia to continue an extended phase of the project titled 'Enhancing Capacity of the Immigration Officials to Combat Irregular Migration in Bangladesh', says a press release.

Under the deal, IOM will receive an amount of AUD 95,213 (around Tk 61 lakh) under the South Asia Governance Fund 2007-08 of the Australian government to implement the project.

Australian High Commissioner Douglas Foskett and IOM Regional Representative for South Asia Rabab Fatima signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations in the city yesterday.

The agreement was timely in light of the comments in the latest 'Trafficking in Persons Report-2008' that the govern-

ment has yet to comply with the minimum global standards of human trafficking prevention, the release added.

IOM will assist the Bangladesh government through the project to combat irregular migration, including people smuggling and trafficking in persons, and better migration by effective border management.

IOM will provide technical, professional and specialised inputs and also will be the manager of the project.

High Commissioner Douglas Foskett said Australia recognises Bangladesh's continued commitment to be a part of the international effort to address the problem of irregular migration.

## Safe water supply coverage widens to 87pc in rural areas: Adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam on Monday said the supply coverage of safe drinking water in rural areas has widened to 87 percent from 83 percent while such coverage in the urban areas has increased to 60 percent in the current fiscal.

Steps are also being taken to supply safe drinking water through pipelines in 300 villages of arsenic-prone areas and to establish sources of arsenic-free safe drinking water in 200 villages and 5 municipalities," the adviser said in his budget speech.

The government has also achieved 85 percent sanitation coverage in urban areas and 81 percent in rural areas against the goal of providing 100 percent sanitation coverage by 2010, he added.

A comprehensive plan of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is being implemented to construct growth centres, union complexes, markets exclusively for women, roads, bridges and culverts at upazila and union levels, he said.

About the local government institutions, the adviser said a number of bold steps have been taken to make them more dynamic and strong on the basis of a report of a committee formed to formulate recommendations for this purpose.

Ordinances relating to local government institutions such as

municipalities, city corporations, district councils, upazila parishads and union parishads have also been approved, he added.

"These ordinances will consolidate the local government institutions financially, administratively and legally which in turn will trans-

late into reality the ideals of local level administration through local leadership," said the finance adviser.

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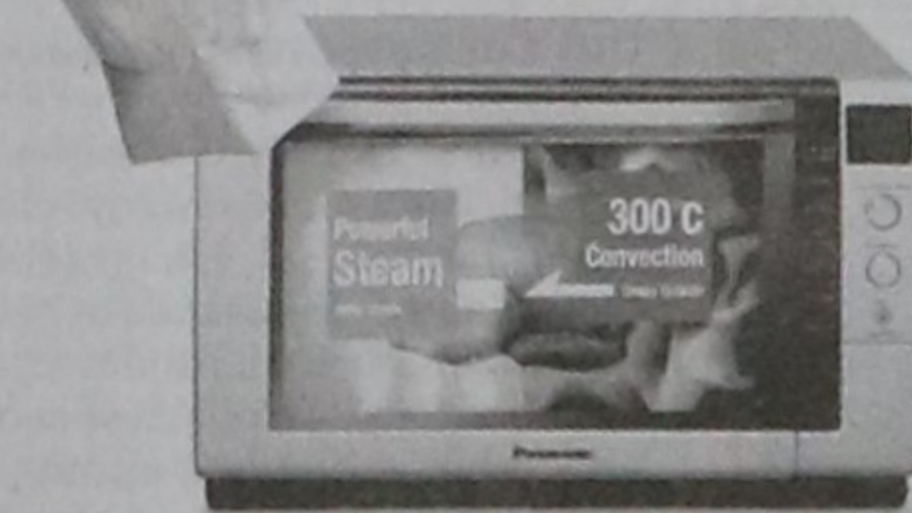
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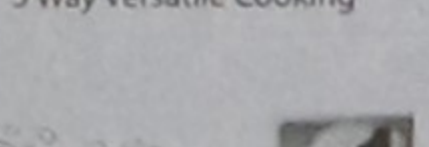
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