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TRANSFORMER ELECTRONICS

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Reappointment of 10 judges stayed by SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for three weeks the High Court (HC) judgment that directed the government to reappoint with seniority 10 additional judges not confirmed during the BNP-Jamaat coalition government's rule.

A five-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin passed the order following two petitions filed by the government and another by 19 HC judges.

The apex court asked the petitioners to file regular appeals with it within this time.

It also permitted advocate Ashraf-uz Zaman, a pro-Jamaat-Islami lawyer, to file a leave to appeal as public interest appeal with the SC against the HC verdict following his application dated July 23.

Moving the government petitions, Attorney General Salauddin Ahmed yesterday told the court that the government filed the

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HC DIRECTIVE TO EC FOR AUG 4 POLLS

Bar candidates providing false or incomplete info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the Election Commission (EC) to bar the candidates, who have given false or incomplete personal information in affidavits, from the August 4 polls.

In response to a writ petition, the HC bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Masuque Hossain Ahmed also ordered the EC to probe the allegations of contestants giving false information or keeping something back.

Besides, it issued a rule on the chief election commissioner (CEC) and secretary to the EC to explain within two weeks why they should not be directed to take necessary measures including cancellation of candidatures of those who have given false or partial information in affidavits submitted with their application forms.

Earlier in the day, Shamsil

Arefin, a lawyer from Dhaka judge courts, filed the writ petition as a public interest litigation.

He argued that contenders in the next week's elections to four city corporations and nine municipalities are legally bound to come up with seven types of personal information that include educational qualifications, profession, sources of income, assets and liabilities, and criminal records if they have any.

"Earlier, the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission to collect and publish the personal information of prospective candidates to help voters choose right persons as their representatives," he added.

Besides, the new city corporation and municipal polls laws provide for cancellation of candidature of a contestant for failing to give complete information in all seven categories.

"But according to media reports, many candidates have provided false information while some have concealed information from the commission. Even the CEC has been reported to have expressed disappointment at the practices," he observed.

Tajul Islam, counsel for the petitioner, told the court that the polls chief should not confine himself to expressing frustration over the situation. He must move to take action against the violators of electoral laws and rules.

The present caretaker government had begun the anti-corruption campaign to facilitate conduct of free, fair and neutral elections, he continued.

"Now if corrupt people are elected to city corporations and municipalities, those anti-graft efforts will prove futile and deal a blow to the morale of honest and competent candidates."

CEC warns of 'invisible malpractices' in campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday urged voters to be aware of "invisible malpractices" during election campaigns, saying the Election Commission (EC) can only prevent the visible ill practices.

The media's allegations of buying votes at night during the election campaigns for city corporation polls are such invisible things which the EC cannot do anything about, Shamsul said at a luncheon meeting of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

"In our code of conduct, we stopped show-downs, multi-colour posters and other visible things, but there are invisible things and voters need to be aware of them," he said speaking as the guest of honour.

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Law Commission wobbles with no chief for 7 months

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Law Commission can hardly function properly as most of the positions including that of the chairman and a member have been left unfilled for more than seven months.

Aside from the two key positions, ten out of thirteen official positions of the commission have been vacant, worsening the situation, said sources.

The chairman position has been vacant since December 5 of 2007 when the term of then chairman Justice Mustafa Kamal expired.

The term of one of the two members of the commission expired on February 22 this year and that position has not been filled either.

The commission's lone remaining member Justice Md Sirajul Islam is currently running the functions of the commission as its acting chairman.

For the past seven months, no one was appointed for the vacant

posts of a chief research officer, two senior research officers and two translation officers.

When The Daily Star contacted the commission's Acting Chairman Justice Md Sirajul Islam for his observation on the situation, he declined to make any comment.

Former High Court judge AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury said the government should immediately take steps to appoint chairman, member and other officials for the Law Commission to make it more active and functional.

"Law commissions in different countries across the world including Britain and India are highly dignified and powerful since they have huge manpower and financial and logistic support. In England, the judges in the House of Lords discharge functions of the Law Commission to update and modify existing laws and to prepare drafts of new laws," he said adding.

"The 100 to 150 year-old laws of

Bangladesh, enacted by the British rulers, should also be updated."

"Even though a more active and functional commission is crucial for updating some important laws of the country, it appears that the government isn't at all concerned about the issues within The Law Commission," Justice Chowdhury said.

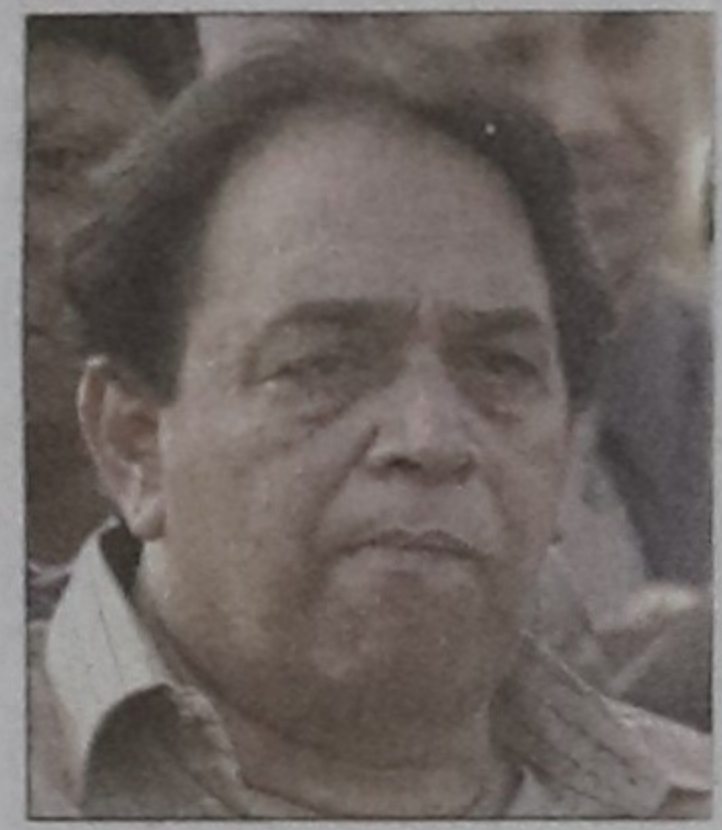
As per section 5 of the Law Commission Act, 1996, the commission consists of a chairman and two members. Under the law, the government has the power to increase the number of its members once deemed necessary.

The chairman and members of the commission hold their respective offices for a term of three years from the date of their appointments.

According to the law, the government may reappoint the chairman or a member on expiry of their term.

The officials of the commission

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Ziaul Haq Zia gets 13yrs for graft

Wife, son jailed too

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday sentenced former state minister for LGRD and cooperatives Ziaul Haq Zia to 13 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for amassing wealth illegally and hiding information in his wealth statement.

Judge M Sirajul Islam of Special Court 7, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, also fined the BNP leader Tk 10 lakh, defaulting on which will earn him one more year in jail.

His co-accused wife Nasima Haq and son Mushfiqul Haq Joy were given three years rigorous imprisonment and fined Tk 1 lakh each, failing which to pay will translate into six months behind bars.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against Zia with Ramna Police Station on November 22 last year, on charges of making a fortune of over Tk 12.81

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Graft suspects still reign supreme

ACC, taskforces probing into the hospital of corruption; 15 cases may be filed

CORRUPTION INVESTIGATION 2

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and EMRAN HOSSAIN

An ironic situation prevails at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) as graft suspects identified by several probe bodies survive despite efforts even from the government's top level to rid the institution of corruption.

The officials involved in investigations into corruption at the university are struck dumb with amazement, as no-one knows how and when action will be taken against the graft suspects.

Meanwhile, the latest probe body formed by the university has failed to make any headway in the last few months. Instead, there are allegations of corruption against BSMMU Deputy Registrar Kazi Ebadullah, who has been appointed as its member secretary.

Sources say another committee led by the vice-chancellor to scrutinise graft in appointments also includes persons who have been identified as corrupt suspects.

The faculty members apprehend the committee comprised of controversial figures is likely to protect the accused instead of suggesting action against them.

Committee Chairman AJE

Nahar Rahman refused to comment on the issue. He however said, "As soon as we began the investigation, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) took away all documents and papers. We could not carry out our duty till now and it's not possible to do anything until we get the documents back."

The BSMMU has so far formed four committees during the tenure of the military-backed caretaker government.

The committee headed by Prof Md Nazrul Islam has been formed to probe the corruption allegations, another headed by former DG (health) Shajahan Bishwas to review the corruption, the third to take steps regarding graft allegations after scrutinising led by AJE Nahar Rahman and another committee headed by VC Prof Md Tahir to take action regarding graft in appointments.

The probes were initiated following direct instructions from the Chief Adviser's Office, the Army Headquarters and the Ministry of Health. During investigations, it was revealed that financial corruption in purchase and graft in appointment and promotion of teachers and staffs were rampant, sources say.

Even the army-led task force and ACC were actively involved in investigations but they are not concerned with the appointment graft.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



A CNG-run minibus burns at Farmgate in the capital yesterday morning after its gas cylinder exploded.

36 RHD staff sued for toll embezzlement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed two cases against 36 officials and staffs of Roads and Highways Department (RHD) in connection with embezzling Tk 185.91 crore collected as toll on Tongi-Ashulia highway and Meghna and Meghna-Gumti bridges.

ACC Assistant Director Abdul Aziz Bhuiyan filed the cases with Ashulia and Sonargaon police stations.

Of the amount embezzled, Tk 174.35 crore was collected at Meghna and Meghna-Gumti toll booths during 2002-06 while Tk 11.56 crore on Tongi-Ashulia highway between 2005 and 2006.

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BANGLADESH WORKERS AGITATE OVER POOR PAY 15 hurt, 60 arrested in Kuwaiti police action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 Bangladeshi workers were injured while 60 others were arrested as Kuwait police dispersed the workers protesting against low wages, bad working conditions and other exploitations by cleaning companies in Kuwait on Monday.

Kuwait's Cabinet Minister Faisal Al-Hajji, meanwhile, said the workers had agreed to return to work after the government said it would ensure their rights and warned that "anyone participating in riots would be deported", the Kuwait Times reported yesterday.

The Arab Times reported that several Kuwaiti MPs slammed a lack of government's control over cleaning service companies that have been defaulting on payment of workers' salaries.

After a cabinet meeting Commerce and Industry Minister Ahmad Baqer said, "If any injustice happened to the workers, they should go to the relevant authorities, the Ministry of Social Affairs and labour courts. I have no doubts that they will get their rights."

More than 500 Asian cleaners and workers staged street demonstrations on Monday until police

dispersed them in the evening by using tear gas and batons and arrested several workers in Mabhoola and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh areas.

The Arab Times reported quoting workers that in Mabhoola six cleaners' representatives were beaten up by a large number of workers for allegedly colluding with their respective companies, thereby harming their interests.

The workers said four representatives were assaulted at a camp in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and many workers' representatives had gone

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Govt walking on tight rope Says Hossain Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A key adviser to the military backed caretaker government said yesterday that the ongoing process for 'qualitative transition' through political reforms and meaningful elections has been a 'walk on a tightrope'.

"Implementing our declared qualitative transition by holding the election by December and by having dialogues with political parties has hardly been a bed of roses. It has rather been a walk on a tightrope," Commerce and Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman told reporters in Bangladesh Secretariat in the capital.

He made the comment after

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The Daily Star

EID FASHION ALBUM 2008

ATTENTION
Designers, Boutique and Fashion Houses

As Eid approaches, The Daily Star prepares itself for the big occasion. This year The Daily Star Fashion Catalogue 2008 will feature dresses, sari, punjabi, kids wear, footwear, jewellery, etc plus write-ups describing the creative thinking behind the fashion wears and their creators. The designers, boutique and fashion houses are invited to participate in this fashion extravaganza.

For information regarding participation and placing advertisement, please contact:
Sher Ali,
Advertisement Manager, The Daily Star, Phone: 9144332 (direct)
For design or dress submission please contact:
Syeed Ahmed Chowdhury, Phone: 01711-623905

Participation Criteria:

1. The dresses, sari, punjabi, kids wear, footwear, jewellery or any other apparel items should express the mood of the festival.
2. Materials used for the dresses or other items should be locally produced.
3. Design should be original and fabrics should suit the weather and environment.
4. The dresses and other items sent for the album are returnable.
5. The dresses and other items must be handed over to The Daily Star by 04/08/08 (4th August).
6. Per entry fee Tk 200/- (minimum 3 entry for each participating house).

Food procurement drive almost halted Negotiation with rice millers yet to produce fruit

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

With the caretaker government's food procurement drive almost halted, it has started negotiating with the country's rice millers to achieve its target, changing its previous tough stance of not listening to the millers' demands.

A committee headed by the director (admin) of the food directorate was also formed on Monday following a meeting between Food and Disaster Management Adviser AMM Shawkat Ali and a group of rice mill association leaders.

But officials said the government might fall short of achieving its procurement target as the rice

millers started declining to sell rice to the government at the rate fixed by the latter, since rice prices had gone up on the market early this month.

The first meeting between the food secretary and the leaders of rice millers, that was held on Sunday in the food ministry, ended inconclusively as the secretary asked the millers to provide rice to the government at the rate of Tk 28 a kilogram (kg), while the millers demanded incentives for selling rice to the government at a rate lesser than market prices.

To reach an understanding and to expedite the procurement

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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