

Implement Vested Properties Return Act

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called for proper implementation of The Vested Properties Return Act 2001 with some amendments to it.

They said despite rulings by apex courts that there is no validity of The Vested Property Act since 1974, land offices from union to district levels are still exploiting the act to harass the people of minority community.

The discussion titled 'The Vested Property Act is a curse for the nation' was organised by Arpita Sampatti Ain Protirodh Andolon Jatiya Committee at Poet Sufia Kamal Bhaban in the capital yesterday.

In a keynote paper, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, member-

secretary of the Committee, said a vested quarter in local administration is active to grab the lands or properties of the minority community whenever these people stay away from their homes for a long time.

He said in the name of The Vested Property Act, influential people across the country are grabbing homes, lands and properties of the minority people making them paupers.

The discussants urged the government to stop such practices which leave the people of minority community in constant fear and anxiety of losing their ancestral land and properties.

They demanded implementation of The Vested Properties Return Act 2001 that allows successors living in the country to inherit the properties left behind

by their ancestors.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon took part in the discussion which was presided over by Committee Convener Advocate Lead-al-Malum.

CU vacation begins today

BSS, Chittagong

Chittagong University (CU) will remain closed from today as the month long vacations for the holy Ramadan, Shab-e-Qadr, Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja begin.

The practical and regular examinations as well as administrative activities will continue till September 27, but the classes will remain suspended for the next one-month from September 16.

Diarrhoea situation remains unchanged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The diarrhoea situation in the capital remains unchanged and shows no sign of improving soon.

A huge number of low-income group people have been thronging at the Dhaka Hospital of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) everyday.

The hospital experienced some 510 diarrhoea patients till 8.00pm from 1.00am yesterday, which were 539 the day before yesterday.

The overall situation worsened in last two to three weeks following the recession of floodwater from the affected areas, the hospital authorities said, adding that more than 600 patients sought treatment at the hospital on an average everyday during this time.

"Normally diarrhoea outbreaks during this post-monsoon season mainly due to water contamination by floods," Chief of the Short Stay Unit of ICDDR,B Dr Azharul Islam told The Daily Star.

LOOTING OF ACI MONEY Police fail to make any headway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police could neither recover the Tk 46 lakh looted from the ACI Group officials nor arrest any of the looters although two days passed yesterday.

Sources said detective branch (DB) police have detained three ACI staffers, who were present during the incident, while the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) picked up two security guards of Niketan in Gulshan for interrogation.

None of the organisations however disclosed it formally.

Sub-inspector Mohammad Forkan of Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station, who is also the investigation officer in the case, said, "Investigation is on. We are trying our best to recover the looted money and arrest the criminals."

Armed muggers looted around Tk 46 lakh in cash and pay orders and cheques worth about Tk 50 lakh from ACI Assistant Manager Biplob Kumar Chakraborty at Gulshan Link Road when he was on the way to deposit the money to a bank at about 11.30am on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the condition of Biplob has improved slightly.

7 Titas, Desa men

FROM PAGE 1 amount of money the staffs confessed to having as ill-gotten wealth.

ACC CASES AND ALLEGATIONS The ACC has formed two separate committees to scrutinise and find out the allegations and cases that should be looked into.

"We have formed two committees to scrutinise allegations and cases pending with the commission based on their importance. The committee, then, will recommend action to be taken regarding the matter," said ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal.

Of the total number, 1,989 allegations, filed between 1989 and 2007, were not disposed of and under inquiry at the commission, while investigation of 1,049 cases, filed by the commission between 1986 and 2007 against government officers and employees, remain pending.

As many as 1,801 allegations were filed during the time of Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) and 113 after the ACC was established in 2004.

Of the total cases, 913 were filed during the time of Bac and 136 by ACC since 2004.

The five cases sent by Tac include four former and incumbent government staffs and wife of one of them. All the five cases were under investigation at ACC.

ACC sources say most of the fresh 15 clemency-seekers are government officials, both retired and incumbent, while three are from other professions.

The government officials are from Desa, revenue office, sub-registrars, Titas officials, and three of their wives.

The sources say the three from other professions are former adviser Justice Fazlul Haque's son Afzal Hossain, son-in-law Tariqul Rahman Prince and one of his employees Abdul Malek.

The ACC has so far sent 61 corruption suspects to Tac following their applications seeking clemency.

As Tariqul Rahman Prince was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment for not submitting wealth statement on August 21, he would be considered ineligible for making voluntary disclosure, the sources add.

"In accordance with the law, the convicted will not be allowed to make voluntary disclosure before Tac," said Tac Chairman Justice Habibul Rahman Khan.



Save the Environment Movement forms a human chain in front of Institute of Fine Arts on Dhaka University campus yesterday demanding withdrawal of MT Enterprise, a Greenpeace-listed toxic ship, from the outer anchorage of Bangladesh. (Story on Page 16)

SC gets new registrar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed district and sessions judge of Mymensingh Abu Bakkar Siddique as registrar of the Supreme Court (SC).

Sources said as per recommendation of the Chief Justice (CJ) MM Ruhul Amin, the law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry yesterday issued the appointment letter asking Abu Bakkar Siddique to join his office immediately.

The office of the SC registrar fell vacant following the transfer of previous registrar Ikhtedat Ahmed on September 1. Ikhtedat joined the office of chairman of the minimum wage board the same day.

Additional registrar of the apex court Ataur Rahman has been discharging as acting registrar after the office fell vacant.

Sources said that CJ recently took interviews of three judicial officials--Mymensingh district and sessions' judge Abu Bakkar Siddique, Dhaka metropolitan sessions' judge Md Azizul Haque and chairman of the administrative appellate tribunal Md Shaukat Hossain for the selection of the registrar.

Nato promises deeper ties with Georgia

AFP, Tbilisi

Nato's chief promised deeper ties with Georgia on Monday as Brussels pledged half a billion euros to help the Western ally rebuild following last month's devastating conflict with Russia.

The commitment from Nato Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer came at the start of a two-day tour of the country that has angered Russia, which went to war with Georgia on August 8 over the breakaway province of South Ossetia.

Russia hates the idea of Nato expansion into ex-Soviet territory, Georgia and Ukraine in particular, and has been accused of using the five-day conflict with Georgia to send out exactly that message.

De Hoop Scheffer said the setting up of a new Nato-Georgia commission would allow "in-depth discussions on the regional security situation and address our wish to further enhance the Nato-Georgia relationship."

Alongside him, Georgian

President Mikheil Saakashvili indicated the commission would "accelerate" Georgia's integration into Nato.

De Hoop Scheffer and ambassadors of all 26 Nato nations were greeted at the steps of their plane by an honour guard of soldiers with Georgian flags flying from their bayonets.

While it remains unclear how exactly last month's conflict with Russia will play out on Tbilisi's Nato ambitions, the two-day trip is seen as a massive show of support for a key Western ally.

Some Nato members are loathe to antagonise a resurgent Russia without good cause and it is highly doubtful Georgia will be awarded a hoped-for "membership action plan" (MAP) in December -- this would make it an official candidate.

Before leaving Brussels, the Nato chief took aim at the European Union-brokered ceasefire that ended the conflict in Georgia, saying it was "difficult to swallow" because it made too many concessions to Russia.

Lalmatia roads promise moon ride

FROM PAGE 1 quality during construction, Imran, a resident Block-C, said the roads which were repaired around three years ago started to give in three months after construction.

He said land developers in the area are also responsible for damaging the roads as they keep constructing materials on the road and grind bricks instead of on the roads, he said.

Commissioner of Ward-45 Atikul Islam Matin said all the roads of Block-A, almost all the roads of Block-B, and a large number of roads in Block-C and D are in wretched condition.

He claimed that before he was

arrested in February, 2007, he had all the roads of Lalmatia repaired but the roads have been damaged as land developers keep construction materials on the roads.

The developers do their grinding and iron rod work on the road which does damage to the roads, he said.

Atikul said he issued letters to them several times in this regard to no avail.

About the allegation of poor road construction, he said engineers of DCC and contractors who did the job are responsible for maintaining quality during construction.

Executive Engineer of Zone-6 Arifur Rahman said they would repair a number of roads under Mohammadpur Police Station

soon. He said the repairs would be done under a World Bank financed project named "Clean Air Sustainable Environment Project".

They have also taken initiative to repair the roads that would not be repaired under the project.

"Initially we will repair 10 roads including a number of roads in Lalmatia. A tender has already been floated which will be opened September 16," he said.

"We have also submitted a proposal to Nagar Bhaban to repair more roads and after getting the approval, we will float tenders for them and the work will be done gradually," he said.

Ostracising Narail couple by 'fatwa' condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karmojibi Nari (KN) yesterday condemned the incident of ostracising a couple by issuing 'fatwa' at Dumurtala village in Narail, says a press release.

In a statement, they demanded proper investigation into the incident and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Quoting a news published in a national daily, Karmojibi Nari said that during an altercation over a family feud, one Hanif Mollah told her wife, "I am leaving you, now you go to your parental home."

When the news spread, a religious leader of the area and the neighbours said that the couple are divorced and without 'hilla marriage' they cannot live together and ostracised them.

The statement was signed by KN President Shirin Akhtar and its General Secretary Sharmin Kabir.

Jasas celebrates Khaleda's release in NY

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US unit of Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (Jasas) celebrated the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her elder son Tarique Rahman by forming human chain and releasing balloons in New York on Sunday, says ANA, a US-based news agency.

Later, they held a milad mahfil at a local hotel and prayed for early recovery of Tarique from illness.

They also demanded withdrawal of the cases against Khaleda and Tarique and lifting state of emergency.

US unit president of BNP Abdul Latif Samrat attended the programme as the chief guest while Gias Ahmed attended as special guest.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Student bodies reject JU decision

DU CORRESPONDENT

Different student organisations yesterday rejected the Jahangirnagar University (JU) decision releasing Prof Sanwar Hossain Sunny of charges of sexual harassment brought against him.

Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote (PCJ), an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, at a demonstration on Dhaka University (DU) campus said the JU authorities released Prof Sunny of the charges in a planned way. They demanded immediate removal of Prof Sunny and formation of an anti-sexual complain cell at the university.

To press home their demand, PCJ brought out a protest procession and held a rally on the DU campus.

A group of female students of Drama and Dramatics department of JU brought allegation of sexual harassment against Prof Sunny, chairman of the department.

In response to the allegation, the university authorities formed several fact-finding committees and finally the JU syndicate released him from the charges on Saturday, as per the recommendations made by the probe bodies.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF), a left-leaning student

organisation, also staged a demonstration on DU campus protesting the syndicate decision.

Meanwhile, students under the banner of 'Jahangirnagar against Harassment' yesterday declared that they would continue their movement demanding removal of Prof Sunny.

They will hold a solidarity rally at the road island of Teachers Students Centre (TSC) at 3:00pm, says a press release.

Terming the syndicate decision motivated, they posed the question, "If he was proven guilty in primary investigation, how can the syndicate find him blameless?"

Besides, the teacher was supposed to be suspended during the period of investigation, but the university granted him three months' leave, they alleged.

The syndicate failed to analyse the speech of the students, teachers, employees and officials who were interviewed, they added.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front demanded re-investigation into the incidents, says a press release.

At a rally on Dhaka University campus yesterday they termed the syndicate's decision as 'biased' and 'ironic' and demanded formulating a policy to resist sexual harassment in the universities.



Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 36.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Bogra and Sylhet and lowest 25.0 degrees Celsius at Srimangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:01pm today and rises at 5:46am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.8	26.7	70	73
Chittagong	33.2	25.6	80	96
Rajshahi	34.2	26.0	84	85
Khulna	34.0	26.4	70	73
Barisal	33.5	26.4	77	75
Sylhet	36.0	26.8	65	54
Cox's Bazar	33.5	26.0	60	80

O, A LEVEL EXAMS 12 Sunbeams students get highest scores

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve students from Sunbeams achieved the highest overall marks in various subjects in the Edexcel's GCE O and A level June examinations to be amongst the top ten worldwide international students, says a press release.

In the GCE O level exams, Faraz Wasiur Rahman got the highest overall marks in accounting, commerce, economics and mathematics; Golam Mohammad Kashif in biology; Amer Azim Hossain in biology and chemistry; Hiya Islam and Nabeelah Mirza in Bengali, Sameer Rabbani in commerce, Nahyan Faisal Azad in economics, Risana Nehreen Malik in geography and Ruman Fozia Choudhury in human biology.

In the GCE A level exams, Dipti Azfar and Malissa Mazumdar got the highest overall marks in accounting; and Syed Athar Bin Amir in mathematics and physics.

Low over west Bay

BSS, Dhaka

The well-marked low in the north west Bay of Bengal and adjoining area continued to persist there and may intensify further, moving in a north westerly direction.

Under its influence squally weather may affect the maritime ports, Met office said in a warning message yesterday.

The maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers in the north Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast, negotiating the rough sea with caution until further notice, the Met warning said.

The possible destination of the low after intensifying into a depression or remaining as a low pressure could be West Bengal or south-western Bangladesh, the Met sources added.

The paucity in monsoon rains was due to another low moving away from the Bay and the country earlier this month without giving much rainfall, the sources added.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Abdul Malek, father of Ataur Rahman, a sub-editor of the daily Amar Desh, passed away yesterday at the age of 60, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, four sons and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Panchagarh.

Sheikh Selim, Abbas, Babar granted bail

FROM PAGE 1

The court also issued separate rulings upon the ACC and government to explain within four weeks why the initiation and continuation of the proceedings against them should not be declared illegal.

Meanwhile yesterday, the Supreme Court (SC) chamber judge rejected three ACC prayers for staying the HC orders granting bails to former lawmakers Mosaddak Ali Fala, Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and Salahuddin Ahmed in separate criminal cases.

Chamber judge Justice Md Joynul Abedin, however, granted ACC prayers for staying the HC orders that earlier stayed the proceedings against them. He also asked the ACC to file regular appeals against the HC's bail orders and fixed October 13 for hearing the appeals before the full bench of the apex court.

The lawyers for the petitioners told the newsmen that following

the SC order, the HC bails to Fala, Pintu and Salahuddin would now remain valid, but trial proceedings against them would continue.

CASE AGAINST SELIM

The ACC on April 23 this year filed a case with Ramna Police Station against former health minister and AL leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim for concealing wealth information and amassing wealth illegally.

According to the case statement, Selim concealed information about his wealth worth over Tk 22.39 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC and amassed wealth worth over Tk 3.38 crore beyond his known sources of income.

Selim submitted his wealth statement on July 22, 2007, declaring Tk 513,98,000 worth of wealth under his name.

CASE AGAINST ABBAS

The ACC on August 16 this year filed a case against now detained

former minister for housing and public works Mirza Abbas and his wife Afroza Abbas in connection with amassing huge wealth through illegal means.

In the case statement filed with Ramna Police Station, ACC Assistant Director Shaful Alam said they found assets worth Tk 33,48,581, that were not mentioned in the wealth statements of Abbas and his wife submitted earlier to the ACC.

On February 25, the joint forces arrested Abbas from the ACC premises at Segunbagicha in the city.

CASE AGAINST BABR The anti-graft body on January 13 this year filed a case against detained former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar for hiding information about his wealth worth around Tk 7.6 crore, which is inconsistent with his known source of income.

The case said Babar submitted a wealth statement showing that he

along with his wife, son and daughter has moveable and immovable property worth about Tk 6.77 crore.

Babar was arrested during a raid on his Gulshan residence on May 28 last year. The army-led joint forces also recovered four firearms -- a shotgun, a rifle, a pistol and a Brazil-made revolver -- two magazines, and 297 rounds of ammunition.

He has already been handed down 17 years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing the arms and ammo illegally.

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Mirza Abbas and Lutfuzzaman Babar recently filed separate writ petitions with the HC challenging the legality of the initiation and continuation of the case proceedings against them.

Barrister Shafique Ahmed appeared for Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim while barrister Ahsanul Karim argued for Mirza Abbas and Lutfuzzaman Babar.

HC stay on 2 cases against Hasina upheld

FROM PAGE 1

by Hasina on September 14 for staying the judicial proceedings against her in the Tk 3 crore extortion case and the MIG-29 warplane purchase graft case.

Hasina's counsel Barrister Shafique Ahmed told reporters yesterday that since the SC did not accept the government petitions, the HC orders staying the proceedings against her in Niko and barge-mounted power plant graft cases will remain in effect.

He said the chamber judge of the apex court did not accept the government petitions because review by the HC of its earlier rulings upon the government for explaining why the proceedings of the cases should not be quashed, is still pending.

Barrister Shafique said the government's move to file appeals with the SC against the HC orders proved that the government is not sincere about Hasina's release.

"The government is, on the one

hand, saying Sheikh Hasina herself will have to take legal initiatives for making her release permanent, while on the other hand it is filing appeals against the HC orders that go in favour of her. All the cases filed against Sheikh Hasina are politically motivated. As her counsel, I think she can't sit with the government for a dialogue while she is still being burdened with the cases against her," he said.

THE CSAES

On September 2 last year, ACC Deputy Director Sabir Hasan filed the barge-mounted power plant corruption case with Tejgaon police station against Hasina and six prominent personalities including former energy secretary Dr Toufik-e-Elahi Chowdhury.

According to the case, Hasina and the other accused through mutual understanding and use of influence helped Wartsila Power Development Ltd Consortium and its two local partners Summit Group and United Group in winning a deal for setting up a 100MW power plant in Khulna, depriving the lowest bidder.

The case statement says a few days before and after the deal, the three companies paid a Tk 3 crore kickback, which was spent for buying a house with some land in Dhanmondi for Bangabandhu Memorial Trust set up and controlled by Hasina.

Sabir Hasan filed another case with Tejgaon police on December 9 last year accusing Hasina and six others of corruption and abuse of power in awarding three 'abandoned' gas fields at Chhata, Kamta and Feni to a Canadian company Niko Resources Ltd during the last Awami League government's regime.

The case statement said the Niko deal caused a loss of Tk 13.6 crore to the state coffers.

Upon separate petitions filed by Hasina, the HC on July 7 this year stayed for two months all proceedings of the cases.

The HC also issued separate rulings asking the government and ACC to explain within four weeks why the cases should not be quashed.

The government filed two leave to appeal petitions with the SC, seeking permission for filing regular appeals against the HC orders, and also prayed for overturning them.

After hearing the government petitions for leave to appeal, on August 13, the SC did not permit the government to file regular appeals against the HC orders.

The apex court directed the government to reply to the HC rulings first before petitioning the SC.

The government then went back to the HC with the replies for hearing.

The HC on August 21 started hearing the government replies, and on August 27 extended the duration of its stay orders till the end of the hearing.