

Truth Commission

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take the next course of action as per the voluntary disclosure ordinance. It means they will start dealing with the cases from where they left off to forward those to Tac.

As of December 1 last year, Tac received from ACC 291 cases of individuals seeking exemption from prosecution in return for surrender of wealth to the state.

Of those, four including one involving a son and relative of a former judge have been sent back to the anti-graft body for further investigation.

Seventeen of the suspects permitted by the ACC to apply for disclosure did not collect application forms from the truth commission.

Two thirds of the graft suspects who sought clemency from Tac were government officials.

Politicians suspected of graft did not go to Tac as admitting accumulating wealth illegally would bar them from holding public office and contesting polls for the next five years.

An exception was Major (ret) Kamrul Islam, a former BNP state minister accused of bribery and money laundering.

He has been let off after he confessed to owning wealth worth only Tk 30 lakh. An ACC probe found his assets earned illegally valued at around Tk 17.60 crore.

SOME CONFESSIONS
The only one whose confessional statement agreed with the ACC findings is AKM Faizur Rahman, an ex-chief engineer of Roads & Highways Department (RHD).

He confessed to owning wealth worth Tk 97.91.621.27, the same amount ACC found in its investigation.

As no discrepancy was found in his case, he has been relieved from the charges.

A suspended chief engineer of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) and her wife claimed they have wealth worth Tk 4.15 crore against Tk 12.05 crore found by ACC. They too were awarded clemency certificates.

A superintendent of customs, who was accused of dishonestly obtaining property worth Tk 1.22 crore, won his certificate by declaring wealth worth only Tk 1 lakh.

Another assistant SCC engineer swore to Tac that he had assets worth Tk 30 lakh

beyond his known sources of income, whereas ACC found the amount to be Tk 1.55 crore.

Ex-managing director of a private medicine company admitted to having wealth worth Tk 20 lakh against Tk 2.46 crore discovered by ACC.

Another chief assistant engineer of RHD told the commission that he had ill wealth valued at Tk 17.50 lakh against Tk 2.16 crore unearthed by the anti-graft body.

An executive engineer and his wife surrendered assets worth only Tk 3 lakh, though ACC investigation found they had wealth worth Tk 1.11 crore amassed illegally.

Padma Bridge

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taken by the government if any corruption is found in the purchasing process, finance minister AMA Muhith said, government will try to curb corruption at the top level though there is a scope of doing corruption in the process of making proposal on the bridge.

But he said government will try to prepare the papers in the inter-ministerial meetings instead of preparing those in a single ministry to curb the scope for doing corruption.

Muhith said, "Corruption doesn't occur at any particular level, corruption is found at the lowest to the top most level in administration. So, we will try to combat corruption at the top."

The estimated cost for construction of the Padma Bridge is \$ 1800 million. According to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) report, the World Bank has made an initial commitment to provide \$ 300 million, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) \$ 300 million, Asian Development Bank (ADB) \$ 350 million while Japan would provide \$ 200 million.

The total commitment stands at 1150 million US dollars while the financing gap is \$ 650 million.

The proposal for the bridge says after completion of the construction of the bridge, the GDP would be increased by 1.2 per cent while the activities of Benapole and Mongla land ports would be increased further.

CU classes

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report of trouble on the campus.

Agitating activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) brought out a procession on the campus at about 12:30pm and burnt an effigy of CU Vice-chancellor Prof Dr M Badiul Alam in front of the administrative building.

BCL also observed a siege programme for an hour from 1:30pm in front of the VC's residence demanding his resignation, sources said.

The CU authorities accompanied by police unlocked the main gate and those of other administrative buildings early yesterday ending a two-day siege by the BCL. The student wing of Awami League, BCL, locked the main gate and other buildings on Saturday demanding resignation of the VC.

CU unit BCL senior vice-president Abul Mansur Jamshed said they would continue a systematic movement to press home their demand of resignation of the VC.

"We have kept classes and examinations out of our movement to help maintain congenial academic atmosphere on the campus," the BCL leader said.

Mohammad Alamgir, officer-in-charge of Hathazari police station, said a peaceful environment prevailed on the campus and additional police forces were deployed.

DORMITORY RAID
Police last night raided six dormitories of CU.

Over 500 law enforcers conducted searches in every room of the dormitories with the help of CU authorities, campus sources said.

Mohammad Alamgir, officer-in-charge of Hathazari Police Station, said they conducted the raid after the university authorities requested them to do so.

CU VC Prof M Badiul Alam said they decided to conduct the raid following government directives to keep the law and order situation on campus under control.

Academic and administrative activities of the university came to a standstill as activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) locked the main gate and all faculty buildings on campus Saturday. They also laid siege to the VC's residence demanding his resignation.

The agitating Chhatra League men also vandalised windowpanes of the proctor's office and a number of chairs at the Chittagong University Central Students' Union.

BCL unstable

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Internal conflicts in the student organisation could be checked through formation of fresh unit committees and creation of new leadership, said BCL insiders.

Although the two top BCL leaders have been saying they would take initiative to announce new committees soon, no real step has been taken yet.

Preferring anonymity, several central committee leaders said the major problem of BCL is lack of control of its central body over unit committees.

In many cases, unit leaders are senior to the BCL central committee president and general secretary. For instance, the general secretary of Dhaka city unit (north) is older than the BCL central unit general secretary.

The unit committees in many Dhaka University (DU) halls were formed almost seven years back. The unit presidents and secretaries, who are no longer students, have their own factions. A few of them returned to DU dormitories and are now occupying rooms at the halls.

10 secretaries

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general of BCS Administration Academy Mohammad Delwar Hossain land secretary and Planning Commission member Ehsan-ul-Fatah secretary of youth and sports.

Information Secretary Jamil Osman was transferred to Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) affairs ministry while Sheikh Altaf Ali, secretary for CHT Affairs ministry, to health and family welfare ministry.

Youth and sports secretary Dr Mohammad Golam Mostafa Talukdar was made secretary of rural development and cooperatives division while its secretary ATM Fazul Karim transferred to information ministry.

Abdus Sobhan Sikder, acting secretary of the implementation monitoring and evaluation division, has been appointed as secretary of the shipping ministry.

In the joint secretary level change, Tourism Corporation Director Begum Rity Ibrahim has been transferred to agriculture ministry while Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad of land ministry to local government division. Officer on special duty (OSD) under establishment ministry Kaniz Fatema has been sent to planning division while BSCIC director ABM Khorshed Alam to industries ministry and director of National Central Library Nikhil Ranjan Mondol to land ministry.

State lawyers

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Meanwhile, senior lawyers say that the Attorney General has no jurisdiction to ask any law officer to submit their resignation and that this move by him is 'contemptuous'.

According to sources, Mahbubey Alam also told the lawyers that the president would take a final decision on the matter.

When contacted by The Daily Star, the AG refused to comment, saying, "The meeting was an internal matter of his office."

Some Supreme Court (SC) lawyers requesting anonymity said the Attorney General has no jurisdiction to ask any law officer to submit their resignations.

A lawyer said the Attorney General has the power to control his subordinate attorneys, but he cannot take any decision regarding their resignation.

"The Attorney General's asking for the resignation letters of his subordinates is very much contemptuous," he said.

"It's the president of the country who appoints the law officers including the Attorney General on suggestions from the government to move the cases on behalf of the state before the highest judiciary," the lawyer added.

Some deputy attorneys general (DAG) present at the meeting yesterday told The Daily Star that the law officers would be submitting their resignation letters to the Attorney General as per his instruction tomorrow.

Sources said the government has taken initiatives to appoint over 120 new attorneys as part of its reshuffle of the Attorney General's office.

The Attorney General earlier said that he would request the authorities concerned to keep on efficient and honest law officers from among the existing attorneys.

There are now one Additional Attorney General (AAG), 27 Deputy Attorneys General (DAGs) and about 70 Assistant Attorneys General (AAGs) recruited by the immediate past caretaker government for moving cases on behalf of the state.

25 missing

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district, were asleep during the accident after lifting earth from a char in the river in Alurbazar area.

Local divers with the help of two engine-driven boats from Keraniganj started salvage operation at 3pm after 12 hours of the incident but neither the drowned nor the trawler has yet been traced till filing the report at 8:40pm.

Another rescue team from district fire service also rushed in at about 5:00pm.

Diver Jahangir said it is not possible to trace the victims until today (Tuesday) as the depth of water in the spot might be 60 feet and the spot seemed dark at night.

Kanon, a survivor hailing from Pabna district, said "The accident occurred in a flash though his colleague Jamal raised alarm sensing the collision between the two trawlers. Later, many of them jumped into the river and managed to swim ashore but the rest could not come out as they were asleep inside the trawler."

Deputy commissioner (DC) AKM Shahidur Rahman and the Police Super visited the spot. Meantime, BIWTA deputy director Abdus Sattar said they informed the high officials of Dhaka of the matter.

He said two divers along with a tugboat will reach the spot today to join the rescue operation.

ACC to get

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nerstone of sustainable democracy and is important if a country is to prosper.

Asked about Mosharraf's assets in UK, Col Hanif Iqbal, ACC director general (admin), said, "I have no comment."

He however said, "Whoever laundered money, the commission will go into the matter with bilateral or multilateral help of foreign countries if any such cases are detected."

"We (ACC) will not only take help from other countries but also help them in this regard, if they require," Hanif said. "We will also exchange information with foreign countries to fight corruption."

The ACC will work under the UN Convention against Corruption to help find information regarding wealth amassed through illegal means and corruption, and restrain use of that money by identifying the corrupt persons, he said.

UN ready

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strengthen the Human Rights Commission and capacity building of the judiciary to dispose of the cases quickly.

However, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told reporters that they had a talk about strengthening judiciary and quick disposal of cases.

Shakil was found to have even not completed his SSC examination while Atiar Rahman never studied medicine. They were fined Tk 2 lakh each.

In another drive in Mohammadpur area on August 26 last year, a homeopathy doctor, MK Pal, was found to be treating patients presenting himself as an MBBS qualified doctor at Techno Diagnostic Centre at 1/11 Humayun Road. In the same drive Mohammad Anwar was found to be illegally practising as a medicine specialist at Medlab Diagnostic Centres at 2/4 Humayun Road.

Both men were fined.

BSF kills 2

STAR REPORT
Border Security Force (BSF) of India shot dead two Bangladeshi cattle traders on Thakurgaon and Jhenidah borders yesterday.

The dead were identified as Jahangir Miah, 30, son of Zakir Ali of Dangipara village under Haripur upazila of Thakurgaon, and Amanullah, 25, son of Kader Khan of Loraighat village under Moheshpur upazila of Jhenidah.

BDR officials of Dinajpur 2 Battalion quoted villagers as saying that the BSF personnel of Mokorhat camp opened fire on some Bangladeshi cattle traders when they entered the Indian territory through Chapshar border under Haripur upazila of Thakurgaon at around 8:30am, reports our correspondent.

Jahangir received bullets and died instantly while the rest managed to flee.

Soon after the incident, the BSF men took away the body. BDR sent a letter to its Indian counterpart demanding return of the body.

Our Jhenidah correspondent reported that Amanullah was shot dead by Indian border guards at Moheashpur frontier early yesterday.

BDR personnel of Sreenathpur camp said the BSF men of Fatepur camp opened fire on Amanullah while he was returning home with cattle purchased from India.

He died on the spot.

They said the BSF took away the body and did not return it as of 6:30pm yesterday.

When contacted, the company commander of Chuadanga confirmed the incident. He said they sent a letter to the BSF authorities demanding return of the body.

Reporter faces

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to the HC, opposing the HC directive, on behalf of Nasrin Akhter stating that disclosing the sources of any report by any journalist is against the principles of journalism.

If the sources of the report are disclosed, the profession will be affected as sources will not provide any further information to reporters and as a result people will be deprived of the right to information, the affidavit said.

The affidavit also stated that as per provisions of the Press Council Act 1974, no journalist can be forced to disclose the sources of his or her report.

Meanwhile, a lawyer requesting anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday that the HC can draw contempt proceedings against the reporter if she does not comply with its order.

The highest punishment of committing contempt of court is six months' imprisonment.

The HC on December 14 last year directed the reporter of the weekly Shirsho Kagaj to reveal the sources behind a report titled 'A High Court judge whitens black money' by January 19, 2009.

The weekly published the report on January 7 last year.

Fake doctor

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Dr Shamim was released on payment of the fine while Kibria has been taken into Rab-4 custody, as he could not pay the fine.

Magistrate Anwar Pasha also told The Daily Star that Kibra's case is not a lone one but that there are scores of others without medical qualifications practising as doctors in the city.

"We have intelligence reports that at least 150 such 'fake doctors' are practising medicine in the city's different hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres," he said.

There is also a network of brokers active in different hospitals, including Suhrawardi Medical College and Hospital, in the city who direct patients to these fake doctors.

Rab has already conducted several drives against such practises and fined at least five 'fake doctors' so far.

In a drive on December 4, Rab-4 arrested Dr Shakil Ahmed and Dr Atiar Rahman from Mohanagar Medical Service in the city's Mohammadpur who were practising without any qualifications.

Shakil was found to have even not completed his SSC examination while Atiar Rahman never studied medicine. They were fined Tk 2 lakh each.

In another drive in Mohammadpur area on August 26 last year, a homeopathy doctor, MK Pal, was found to be treating patients presenting himself as an MBBS qualified doctor at Techno Diagnostic Centre at 1/11 Humayun Road. In the same drive Mohammad Anwar was found to be illegally practising as a medicine specialist at Medlab Diagnostic Centres at 2/4 Humayun Road.

Both men were fined.

Obama takes office

FROM PAGE 16
ists taking up position across the US capital.

Hollywood royalty including Tom Hanks, Jamie Foxx and Denzel Washington were reciting historical passages interspersed with the all-star musical lineup, to mark the formal countdown to Tuesday's momentous inauguration on Capitol Hill.

In advance of the afternoon party, Obama struck a more somber note as he joined vice president-elect Joseph Biden in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery.

Dressed in black winter coats to guard against the freezing temperatures, Obama and Biden held their hands over their hearts as "Taps," the US military's haunting lament to the fallen, was played by a lonebugler.

Obama and his wife Michelle then climbed into the incoming president's new armoured Cadillac with a blue license plate reading "44" -- his numerical position as the newest, and first African-American, commander-in-chief.

The incoming First Family headed to a raucous reception at the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, Washington's oldest African-American church, and joined in a swaying, emotive recitation of hymns and Biblical passages.

"Let's make sure this election is not the end of what we do to change America, but the beginning," the president-elect said as he trundled towards Washington and his place in history during a day-long train journey Saturday.

Along a railroad from Philadelphia to Washington, a route once traced by his hero, Civil War president Abraham Lincoln, Obama urged Americans to adopt a new "Declaration of Independence" from bigotry, small thinking and ideology.

Aides said those themes will figure large in Obama's inaugural address after he is sworn in at noon Tuesday and takes his place alongside the pantheon of past presidents including Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Rahm Emanuel, the next White House chief of staff, told NBC the speech would declare an end to "the culture of anything goes" and demand a new era of responsibility from government, corporate boardrooms and the American people.

Bangabandhu

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names of Bangabandhu and Sheikh Hasina on the plaques at the both ends of the bridge on January 15 last, sources said.

The leaders and activists of the BNP-led four-party alliance erased the names of Bangabandhu and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from the plaques just after a day the four-party combine took over in 2001.

Meantime, the name of Khaleda Zia was erased from the foundation stone of the bridge at the east end of the bridge.

The then Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone during the construction of the bridge in 1994.

Incoming White House

press secretary Robert Gibbs vied to temper sky-high expectations both worldwide and at home, as the United States grapples with its longest recession since World War II.

"We did not get into the situation overnight. The problems and the challenges that our country face didn't happen all last week. It's going to take us some time," Gibbs said on "Fox News Sunday."

But Gibbs and other senior aides said Obama would act rapidly to enact his economic revival plans via a mammoth stimulus package worth 825 billion dollars.

And on his first full day in office, the aides said, Obama will also convene his top military brass to map a way out of Iraq and recommit US troops against a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan.

"He will be meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to begin an orderly and responsible withdrawal from Iraq," senior adviser David Axelrod told CNN.

President George W Bush's successor will also "engage early and aggressively with diplomacy all over the world," and hopes a newly declared ceasefire between Israel and Gaza militants will endure, Axelrod said.

After the tumultuous Bush presidency, Obama comes to office with the highest poll ratings since Ronald Reagan in 1981. The New York Times and CBS News said 79 percent of respondents to its poll were optimistic about the next four years.

Scale of destruction

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Obama administration and spare the incoming president the trouble of having to deal with a burning problem in Gaza from his first day, the Israeli officials said.

The guns fell silent around Gaza after Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire and the Islamist Hamas movement and other militant groups called a week-long truce of their own.

Soon after dawn Palestinian witnesses reported naval gunfire near the sea north of Gaza City, but the army did not confirm the report.

Amid the lull, Israel agreed to let nearly 200 trucks loaded with humanitarian aid into Gaza and to supply 400,000 litres of fuel to the territory, a military official said.

Military administration spokesman Major Peter Lerner said 120 lorries would ferry aid through the Kerem Shalom terminal and up to 70 more would enter from Karni.

A total of 40,000 tonnes of food and medicines had been transported into Gaza since the offensive began, Lerner added.

With the halt to fighting, Palestinian ambulance workers were able to dig out the dead from areas, which had been unsafe to enter.

"We have pulled out the bodies of 15 children and women from under their house," said Abed Sharafi, 40.

"They were so badly decomposed that we couldn't distinguish boys from girls. Some had been there for 15 days," along the road north from Gaza City to Beit Lahia.

Nearly 100 bodies were recovered on Sunday as the truce came into effect.

The discoveries brought the overall death toll of Operation Cast Lead to more than 1,300, including more than 400 children, medics said. Another 5,300 were wounded. Israel reported a death toll of 13.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel wants to leave Gaza as quickly as possible. Although much the territory is now in ruins Hamas leader Ismail Haniya claimed a "great victory".

In Tehran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad congratulated Hamas on its "victory," state news agency IRNA reported.

"Today is the beginning of victory, and perseverance will complete the links of victory,"

Iran is a staunch supporter

of the Islamist movement, which seized control of Gaza from forces loyal to moderate Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas in June 2007, and does not recognise its archfoe Israel.

European leaders who had travelled to Israel after attending a summit in Egypt on Sunday urged the Jewish state to follow up the its ceasefire by completely withdrawing troops and opening the territory's border crossings.

Israel and Egypt have sealed Gaza off from all but vital humanitarian aid since Hamas, an Islamist group pledged to Israel's destruction, seized power there in June 2007 by routing forces loyal to moderate Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy called for a major international conference to "allow us to establish peace this year."

Israel's decision to call a unilateral ceasefire in its war on Hamas came after it won pledges from Washington and Cairo to help prevent arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip - a task in which Europe has also pledged to help.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak announced plans to host an international aid conference to help rebuild Gaza.

Cairo has also invited Israeli and Palestinian officials for separate meetings on Thursday to discuss an Egyptian initiative for an extended truce, state news agency MENA reported.

After exchanges of gunfire and an air strike on Sunday punctured what Olmert acknowledged was Israel's "fragile" unilateral ceasefire, Gaza militant groups announced a one-week truce of their own.

"(We) demand that enemy forces withdraw in a week and open all the border crossings to permit the entry of humanitarian aid and basic goods,"

Mussa Abu Marzuk, deputy leader of Hamas's politburo, said in Damascus.

The military confirmed troop withdrawals had begun after witnesses in Gaza City saw soldiers pulling back towards the border fence.

Olmert has warned troops would remain in the strip for the time being and return fire if attacked.