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3 cops closed over death in custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three policemen were closed here yesterday over the death of a construction worker in police custody on Wednesday.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police took the action against Sub-Inspector (SI) Mohammad Rafiq, Assistant Sub-Inspector Hafizuddin and Habilder Abdul Ahad of Chandgaon Police Station.

The action came after an investigation was launched on the death of an arrestee whose family complained that he died from torture while in police custody.

A petrol team of Chandgaon PS arrested construction worker Habib, 18, with 10 bottles of phenisidyl in his possession from an under-construction building site in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Thailand grants UN access to Rohingya

UNHCR team visits 12 teenage migrants from Myanmar

AFP, Bangkok

The UN refugee agency said yesterday it had visited 12 teenage migrants from Myanmar after Thai authorities finally granted access to some of the Rohingya boat people washing up on its shores.

Thailand has recently been accused of cruelty toward the Muslim-majority group, including beating new arrivals and sending them back to sea with little food and water -- reports the government has denied.

Kitty McKinsey, Asia spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a team of four UN officials interviewed the boys aged between 14 to 17 on Thursday in the southern coastal province of Ranong.

"This was a fact-finding mission just to find out who these boys are, where they came from and what protection issues they have," she told AFP.

"They appeared in good condition... it is really a step forward that we have had this access," she added.

The visit came hours after Thai foreign minister Kasit Piromya said he had agreed "in principle" to allow the UNHCR to see some of the Rohingya.

Boatloads of the Rohingya wash up on Thai shores in rickety vessels each month trying to escape poverty and hardship back home.

A Thai court on Wednesday convicted 66 of 78 Rohingya who arrived on the western coast a day earlier to five days in

detention for illegal entry. The 12 teenagers were too young for trial.

McKinsey said that they were still working out the details for access to 66 adults, four of whom remain in hospital after an arduous journey.

The UNHCR has for weeks been pressing the Thai government for access to the Rohingya, and on Thursday the UN body's representative in Thailand, Raymond Hall, met Kasit.

Hall said he hoped the government would carry out a transparent investigation into reports the Rohingya were mistreated here, and highlighted the plight of the Muslim ethnic group living in Myanmar.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Govt to implement CHT accord fully

Land commission to be recast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to fully implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord which remains shelved for the last seven years during the BNP-Jamaat and caretaker rule.

The accord was signed between Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and the government on December 2, 1997 ending two decades of bush war in the region.

The government's one of the first steps in this regard would be reforming the CHT Land Commission, said sources in the CHT affairs ministry.

State Minister for CHT affairs Dipangkar Talukder after a meeting at the ministry told newsmen: "The government is going to implement the peace accord soon." He however did not mention any specific date.

The CHT Regional Council was formed in 1999 following the peace accord but no other major initiatives came in accordance with the agreement.

Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, popularly known as Santu Larma, chairman of the Council and also chief of PCJSS, was present at the meeting.

He demands that the government implement the peace accord for greater interest of the country and appoint

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Govt body to review cases of 'deprived' officials

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday formed a six-member panel to review the cases of the civil servants who were deprived in different ways, including halt of promotion and forced retirement, between July 2001 and October 2006.

Alauddin Ahmed, adviser to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has been made chairman of the committee.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

MANNA'S DEATH 6 doctors asked to surrender in 8 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed six physicians of United Hospital, accused of negligence in treatment resulting the death of film actor SM Aslam Talukder Manna, to surrender before the trial court within eight weeks.

The accused in the case, Zahiruddin Mahmud Elias, Mohammad Enayet Hossain, Momenuzzaman, Khandaker Mahub Hussain, Fathima and Maimul Islam Majumder

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

One-third posts of govt doctors remain vacant

Health minister tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Almost one third of the government posts for physicians remain vacant, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque informed the House yesterday.

During yesterday's question-answer session, he said 6,931 posts of government physicians are vacant now against a total of 19,243 posts.

The question-answer

More amendment to ACC Act sought

ACC seeks to be a party in bail plea of graft accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has recommended that the government amend the ACC Act 2004 to make the commission a party in petitions filed by graft accused with the High Court (HC) seeking bail or order for staying case proceedings.

ACC officials said the commission's bitter experience last year about the graft accused obtaining bail en masse without allowing the ACC to be a party in their appeals prompted it to make the recommendation.

The government, which was made a party in those appeals, took a while to collect necessary papers from the commission to move against the petition. By then many graft accused had already got released obtaining bail from the court.

In another recommendation, the ACC sought the authority to ask for assistance from any government, non-government or autonomous body if necessary.

After the dissolution of the National Coordination

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

GLOBAL RECESSION 200m workers may become extreme poor, fears ILO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 200 million workers, mostly in developing economies, could be pushed into extreme poverty because of increased unemployment as fallout of global economic recession, said International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The annual ILO report titled Global Employment Trends released from Geneva on Wednesday said global economic crisis is expected to lead to a dramatic increase in the number of people joining the ranks of the unemployed, working poor and those in vulnerable employment.

Based on new developments in the labour market and depending on the timeliness and effectiveness of recovery efforts, the report says global unemployment in 2009 could increase over that in 2007 by a range of 18 million to 30 million workers, and more than 50 million if the situation continues to deteriorate.

"The ILO message is realistic, not alarmist. We are now facing a global jobs crisis. Many governments are aware and acting, but

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Dhaka Wasa sets up a number of these tanks at the Biswa Ijtema ground in Tongi to facilitate ablutions of devotees. The photo was taken yesterday.

Hamas signals readiness to negotiate a deal

UN announces \$613m appeal for Gaza

AP, AFP, Gaza City/Davos

Senior officials in the Islamic group Hamas are indicating a willingness to negotiate a deal for a long-term truce with Israel as long as the borders of Gaza are opened to the rest of the world.

"We want to be part of the international community," Hamas leader Ghazi Hamad told The Associated Press at the Gaza-Egypt border, where he was coordinating Arab aid shipments.

"I think Hamas has no interest now to increase the number of crises in Gaza or to challenge the

world."

The United Nations will launch an appeal for 613 million dollars to help those affected by Israel's 22-day offensive in Gaza, UN chief Ban Ki-Moon said yesterday.

"These needs are massive and multifaceted," he told delegates attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, adding that funds can "help overcome at least some measures of this hardship."

John Holmes, who heads the UN Office for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

EC asks banks not to make NID mandatory for clients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has directed banks and other service oriented organisations not to make National Identity (NID) card mandatory for clients and service seekers while providing their services, including opening a bank account, until distribution of NIDs is fully completed.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Design deal signed for Padma Bridge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday signed an agreement with the New Zealand-based consultant firm Maunsell AECOM Ltd for preparing the design of the Padma Bridge.

The first major contract signed by the Awami League-led government after three weeks of taking office is also a significant step towards fulfilling the long-awaited desire of the people of 19 southwestern districts to get connected with the capital.

The 5.58km long and 25m wide bridge on the Padma will connect the country's southwest with Dhaka at Mawa in Munshiganj and Janjira in Madaripur. The construction of the bridge with four lanes and a railroad in the middle is expected to start in 2011 and complete within 2014.

According to the agreement, Maunsell will start working on the design in 28 days and finish within the next 22 months.

As per experts' estimate Tk 10,161 crore will be spent to build the bridge, of which around Tk 131 crore just to complete the design. Environmental impact of the bridge will be assessed during preparation of the design.

Greg Klamus, director (infrastructure) of Maunsell AECOM, and Md Rafiqul Islam, director of Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, signed the agreement at the office of the Bridge Division. Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain and representatives from World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation were present there.

After the signing ceremony, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain told reporters that the gross domestic product (GDP) of the southwest region will increase by 2 percent once the bridge is constructed and it will add 1.2 percent to the national GDP.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

FEATHERS IN FETTERS

These two pictures were taken on the same day in two different cities but they speak of the indifference we show to wildlife and the law. A Bonelli's Eagle, now rare in Bangladesh, was captured in Chokoria and bought by a so-called herbal medicine seller in Chittagong. He now proudly displays it on the north side of the Karnaphuli Bridge. On the Gulshan Avenue of Dhaka city, a vendor keeps two purple moorhens in fetters for customers on the footpath. Under the Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation Act 1974, such capture of and trade in wildlife are prohibited and punishable offences. But neither the law enforcement agencies nor any other authorities pay any attention to implement the law.

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN/ZORAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

ACC seeks 5 more special courts to try graft cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has recommended the government to set up five more special courts as the number of corruption cases is increasing.

ACC Director General (Admin) Col Hanif Iqbal informed about the decision in a routine press briefing yesterday afternoon.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Prayer Timing		
January 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-35	6-10
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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