

Minister Latif sued for poll offence

Faces 2-7 years jail term, if guilty; daughter, AL men co-accused; judicial probe ordered

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, Sirajganj

The district election office yesterday sued Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas, his daughter and some local Awami League (AL) leaders for violating the code of conduct in January 22 upazila polls.

Nitish Chandra Dey, Sirajganj district election officer-1, filed the case with the additional chief judicial magistrate's court under section 88 of the conduct of election rules on charges of flouting sections 14 and 15 of the code of conduct for upazila election.

The court ordered a judicial probe into the matter. It also directed the authorities con-



cerned to produce witnesses before it on February 16, 19 and 22.

According to electoral rules, the minister and his co-accused face two to seven years in prison and fine, if convicted of the offence.

The accused include minister's daughter Shoma Biswas, AL-backed chairman candidate at Belkuchi upazila Fazlul Haque, vice-chairman candidate Abdul Hamid Akand, Bhangabari union parishad Chairman Abdul Matin Pramanik and the minister's personal secretary Hilton.

The complainant said Latif Biswas, AL lawmaker from Sirajganj-5, cast his vote at Alhaj

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4-PARTY RULE Name-only newspapers got big chunk of govt ads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The name-only newspapers received a huge chunk of public money allocated for publishing government advertisements and supplementary during the tenure of the last BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad disclosed it in the parliament yesterday while replying to a query of a lawmaker.

The information minister placed a list before the House that showed that the BNP-led government spent over Tk 104 crore during its five-year tenure over the purpose of advertisements in as many as 177 daily newspapers

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Hospital kept at bay

Health ministry yet to get back prime Tejgaon land for hospital from BNP stalwarts

PINAKI ROY and HELEMUL ALAM

The government has been sitting for six months on a probe committee report that recommended cancelling allotment of health ministry land in Tejgaon to a number of media firm owners and BNP loyalists and leaders.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance government distributed plots on at least 14 out of 25 bighas of health ministry land to its loyalists at a cheap rate between 2002 and 2006.

A health ministry probe body was formed during the last caretaker government's era and it recommended taking action against the government officials involved in the process of leasing out land.

The land was originally meant for a hospital and the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone for it in 2001.

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Photo shows the health ministry's land for a hospital at Tejgaon in the capital under illegal occupation of BNP-Jamaat loyalists who erected walls around the plots.

Corrupt, Jamaat downed BNP

Observe grassroots leaders

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Controversial former ministers and lawmakers, dwindling organisational strength and alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami were responsible for BNP's rout in December 29 general election, observed the party's grassroots-level leaders yesterday.

Besides harming the organisation's image, many former ministers and lawmakers were behind the intra-party feuds that cost BNP dear in both parliamentary and upazila elections, they added.

The observations came at the third day's meetings between BNP central teams and upazila level leaders.

Presidents and general secretaries of upazilas in Patuakhali, Brahmanbaria, Moulvibazar, Narail and Pabna took part in the

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Full text of agreement

The trade agreement between Bangladesh and India renewed on March 21, 2006 and signed by the then finance minister M Saifur Rahman and Indian commerce and industry minister Kamal Nath in New Delhi is as follows:

The Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,

Being conscious of the urge of their two peoples to enlarge areas of mutual co-operation;

Desirous of expanding trade and strengthening economic relations between

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Dhaka to renew goods transport deal with Delhi

Deal first signed during Zia's rule in 1980; govt also okays another treaty to boost trade with India

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER and M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government yesterday approved renewal of the bilateral trade agreement between Bangladesh and India under which the countries will use their waterways, roadways and railways for transportation of goods between two places in one country through the territory of the other.

In another major step, a special cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair approved signing of a new treaty--

Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPA)--to boost trade and investment with India.

BIPA seeks to promote and protect investments from either country in the territory of the other with the objective of increasing bilateral investment flows.

With BIPA signed, Bangladesh and India will consider each other as one's most favoured nation (MFN). Bangladesh has MFN status deals with 24 nations while India has BIPA with

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ACC for working ties with govt

Mashhud keen on continuing anti-graft drive; says ACC activities were not politically motivated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said developing a working relationship with the present government is prime responsibility of the commission to continue the ongoing



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Expert bodies formed on water sharing, sea boundary issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed two high-powered expert committees to work out ways and means to resolve the longstanding maritime boundary demarcation disputes with India and Myanmar and the crucial issue of sharing water of 40 common rivers with India.

The committees were formed at a special cabinet meeting at the Cabinet Division in the Secretariat yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

Headed by two lawmakers, the committees have been asked to review the existing

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN
Passengers stranded at Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday after a feud broke out between two groups of contractors over a tender.

SADARGHAT LEASE TENDER Passengers held hostage by feuding contractors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The hustle and bustle at the Sadarghat Terminal came to a halt yesterday for five hours as two feuding groups locked in a clash over the control of handling labourers leaving passengers aboard the launches marooned in misery.

Around 200 launches could neither anchor nor leave the terminal for hours leaving passengers trapped inside while hundred of others had to grapple with the chaos on streets outside the terminal to board the launches to get their destinations.

The clash ensued as the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) invited bidders to drop tenders. As per the tender invitation a contractor Hossain Bepari dropped a tender at the head office of the BIWTA at Motijheel in the capital.

Miffed at the tender dropping by Hossain Bepari, supporters of Dhaka Ghat Shramik League president Mohammad Mahiuddin, the existing lessee of the terminal, went berserk and at one stage two groups swooped on each other.

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No begging after 5 yrs

Says Muhith, seeks NGO help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister AMA Muhith yesterday sought cooperation of the NGOs to eliminate begging from the country within five years.

"Awami League in its election manifesto pledged to eliminate begging within five years but there is no model for achieving the target. So, a model has to be developed and NGOs can help in this regard," he said this while speaking as the chief guest at a cheque distribution ceremony to the small NGOs at CIRDAP auditorium.

He said there is no up-to-date statistics regarding the

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6th Death Anniversary



Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)
Death: 6th February, 2003

This day in 2003, we lost our beloved & honorable Director Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu). We mourn his pre-mature death. With our distressed heart, we pray to Almighty Allah for his eternal peace. May Allah bless him. Ameen.

All Employees

ABUL KHAIR GROUP

In 2003, on this very day, you left us by the will of Almighty Allah The Beneficent. Your pre-mature departure has put us and many of your relations overwhelmed with grief. It is straining that you are not in this mundane world with us. But we are feeling your existence by remembering the tender-aged days of your life.

We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of your departed soul and request all friends, relatives, well-wishers to pray for you from the core of their hearts.

May Allah The Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Bereaved members of the family