

Village courts likely to reduce pressure on regular courts

Says LGRD minister

UNB, Dhaka

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday said the government is likely to form village court to reduce the pressure of a huge backlog of cases on regular courts.

"Thousands of cases have been pending due to an overload of many unnecessary cases in the regular courts. The village court can solve the problem through ending the dispute on family and land issues," he told reporters after a meeting with a European Commission delegation at his office.

Asked about the possibility of using the rural court politically, he said the village court cannot give the judgment on any kind of crime. So the court is not motivated by the political parties.

Ashraf, also Awami League spokesman, said traditionally village-based

court system is operative in the country where local leaders of society usually resolve minor conflicts prevailing in the villages. As a result of such arbitration, regular courts get rid of recording at least one crore cases a year.

"We think these traditional village courts should be incorporated into legal framework to make the system transparent and effective," he said about the thinking of the new government.

About ratification of the Local Government (Upazila Parishad) Ordinance, he said the government sought to ratify the ordinance related to election and finance, promulgated during the immediate-past caretaker government, according to the recommendation of the special committee of parliament.

Replying to a question, he said lawmakers would look into the issues

whether balanced development activities are being conducted locally and would give necessary directions to upazila chairmen on various issues. "It would not create any conflict between the lawmaker and upazila chairman concerned."

EC ambassador Dr Stefan Frowein, who led the delegation, emphasised the need for divesting power to local level for decentralisation of power.

"We want to work with the government at the local level so that local government becomes stronger," said the envoy of European development partners.

He said the EC sought to support on village court to solve smaller problems people have with each other without involving the court or higher level. "We feel that it can make easier to solve problem locally," he said.

2 Bangladeshi cattle traders killed by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down two Bangladeshi cattle traders on Ghojadanga border opposite Bhomra border in Sathkira Sadar upazila on Monday night, according to a report received here from across the border.

But the identity of the victims could not be known, sources said.

The BSF men of Ghojadanga camp opened fire when the cattle traders were trying to cross the border while returning with cattle. BSF men took away the bodies, sources said.

When contacted, Major Shamim, operations officer of 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident but said they could not know the identity of the victims.



President Zillur Rahman places wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday. PHOTO: PID

BNP men demand action against corrupt, reformist leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of BNP workers and supporters staged demonstration in front the party's central office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday demanding stern action against corrupt and reformist leaders.

They took out a procession when six teams led by the party's joint secretary general were exchanging views with the grassroots level leaders to find out the reasons behind the party's humiliating defeat in the parliamentary elections.

The demonstrators also chanted slogans urging the party's high command to bring back Tarique Rahman, elder son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Talking to reporters, the party's joint secretary general Goyeshwar Chandra Ray said, "Tarique is not disconnected from the party, as the party men feel for him in their hearts."

About the demand for action against the reformist leaders, he said the problems would be solved politically. Khaleda herself implemented some reforms in the party in different times.

Another joint secretary general Mirza Abbas, who was convicted in corruption cases but now on bail, said they would recommend taking action against the reformist leaders.

"We have identified the reformist leaders and we will put forward recommendations to the chairperson with a call for action against them as the reformists are still hatching a conspiracy to split the party," he added.

Abbas also said that he was arrested not for corruption but for his loyalty to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.



A BNP activist pushes another activist who is known as a follower of reformist leaders out of the BNP office at Naya Paltan in the city during a demonstration of workers in front of the party office yesterday. PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH DOT COM

Bangladesh Navy Ship to join exercise in Pakistan

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Navy Ship Abu Bakr left Chittagong Port on Monday to join Exercise Aman in Pakistan scheduled to be held on March 5, says an ISPR press release.

Meanwhile, the Navy Ship will pay a goodwill visit to the Port of Colombo in Sri Lanka and Kochin in India during her voyage en route.

The ship is expected to return Chittagong on March 30.

Take measures to ensure CHT food security

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The speakers said there are no ecological studies about the bamboo-rodent phenomena from anywhere in the world. There are scientific publications providing 'snap shot' surveys of rodent outbreaks, but linkages to bamboo flowering are not clear.

Presenting a keynote paper, Dr Steven R Belman of University of Greenwich, the UK he said reports of severe crop losses were first noted in 2007.

There are reliable historical reports of severe famines linked to rodent outbreaks and bamboo flowering, he said, adding that no research or surveillance is being carried out in Bangladesh or Myanmar.

Steven said Bangladesh has well-established network for rodent training, knowledge extension and capacity building. However, research on rodent population, control strategies and socio-economic impact of rat flood are needed.

Training and awareness campaigns, trappings, documentation of event and dam-

age, distribution of free rodenticides, distribution of food aid, promotion of turmeric, jatropha and other crops instead of rice, promoting re-establishment of diversified bamboo species and economic diversification were proposed for pest management.

Other suggestions include cross-cutting strategy with agriculture, health, forestry, environment and education in CHT and replicating and improving the action plan of Mizoram state government.

Rodent-borne diseases are Hantaviruses, murine typhus, leptospirosis, plague, haemorrhagic fevers and increased food and water contamination leading to dysentery among others.

The speakers expressed apprehension about the health impacts if the problem is spread outside CHT.

With Chairman of the department Prof Noor Jahan Sarker in the chair, Emeritus Prof Kazi Zaker Husain, Prof M Shahdat Ali and Prof Sohrab Uddin Sarker also spoke.

SSC EXAMS 3,030 absent, 66 expelled on 2nd day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 3,030 candidates were absent on the second day of SSC, Dakhil and SSC vocational examinations yesterday, while 66 students and three teachers were expelled for adopting unfair means.

English 2nd paper exam was held on the 2nd day of the biggest public examinations under eight general education boards, one madrasa board and one technical education board.

Among the expelled students, 19 were from technical board, 22 from Dhaka board, six from Barisal board, four from Dinajpur board, three each from Jessore and Rajshahi and two each from Comilla and Chittagong boards.

The expelled teachers include two from technical board and one from Jessore board, said a statistics of the combined education board control room.

Among the absentees, 577 in Dhaka board, 177 from Comilla board, 362 from Jessore board, 189 from Rajshahi board, 213 from Chittagong board, 125 from Sylhet board, 217 from Barisal board, 66 from Dinajpur board, 611 from Madrasa board and 493 from technical board.

The month-long SSC, Dakhil and SSC vocational examinations began on

February 15. Some 10.63 lakh students -- 5.58 lakh boys and 5.05 lakh girls -- from 26,239 schools are taking part in the SSC and equivalents.

Around 50,000 more candidates are taking part in this year's SSC and equivalent exams, though the dropout rate remains high at 42 percent.

50 YRS IN BANGLADESH Alliance Francaise's celebration begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alliance Francaise de Dacca will celebrate its 50 years in Bangladesh amid different programmes throughout the year.

Salih Lefevre, director of Alliance Francaise de Dacca, announced this at a press conference yesterday.

The celebration will be started tomorrow through a photography exhibition by two artists -- Bruno Valenkin and Julien Pannet -- who tried to capture Dhaka city in their frames.

France Ambassador in Bangladesh Charley Causeret will inaugurate the programme as the chief guest.

The yearlong programmes include exhibition of photography and jewellery, musical programme and concert, film festival, and theatre festival.

Pak envoy's comment on trial of war criminals protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971 yesterday condemned the statement of the special emissary to Pakistani president Zia Ispahani on the issue of the trial of war criminals.

Leaders of the forum in a statement said after his meeting with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, the envoy told journalists that it is not the right time to discuss the trial of war criminals and it should not be the main issue.

Protesting the remark of Zia, special emissary to Pak

President Asif Zardari, they also said the genocide that carried out by the Pakistani occupation forces with the help of the local collaborators in 1971 is known to all.

Trial of the war criminals is now internationally recognised. The present government came to the power as it had committed to try the criminals. A proposal was also adopted in the parliament to begin the trial process soon, the statement said.

The government has every right to try the war criminals and Pakistan should cooperate with Bangladesh in this regard to maintain a sustainable friendly relation, it added.

The leaders said it is expected that Pakistan would provide all-out support to Bangladesh for the sake of establishing justice and human rights, rather than taking the side of war criminals.

The civil society of Pakistan also wants to bring the war criminals to trial and the Pak government should respect the opinion of its people as well as those of Bangladesh, they mentioned.

Signatories to the statement include Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Shahriar Kabir and Kazi Mukul.

UGC Officers' Assoc executives

METRO DESK

Md Khaled, secretary of University Grants Commission (UGC), and Md Shah Alam, assistant director of the UGC, were elected president and general secretary of the executive committee of the UGC Officers' Association, says a press release yesterday.

Other office bearers are: vice-presidents -- Md Mokhlesur Rahman and Kh Hamidur Rahman; treasurer -- Md Gias Uddin; joint secretary -- Jalal Ahmed; organising and publicity secretary -- Md Mohibul Ahsan; and sports and cultural secretary -- Md Ziaur Rahman.

Executive members are Md Jamal Uddin, Md Mustafizur Rahman and Md Atower Rahman.



The daily Ittefaq Editor Rahat Khan unveils the cover of a book titled 'Aamar Jeeban Aamar Katha' written by Nadira Mallik, right, at Nazrul Mancha on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday. Poet Aslam Sani, left, was present on the occasion. PHOTO: STAR

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