

Perform well or risk losing job

PM renews warning to ministers; 6-month evaluation to decide their fate

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned her cabinet colleagues of getting dropped from the cabinet unless they show satisfactory performance within the next couple of months.

"Your honeymoon period is over. You have got enough time to learn about your business and the time has come for you to perform. So work seriously..." Hasina told her colleagues at a regular cabinet meeting at the Cabinet Division of the Secretariat.

Hasina, also president of Awami League (AL), said she would evaluate the performance of each ministry in the first six months.

"The ministers, who fail to perform, might lose their jobs," Hasina was quoted as saying by a minister.

Sources said the premier was not happy about the performance of many



ministers and the current pace of administrative activities.

"She has directed us to work seriously saying she will evaluate our performance in the first six months," Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque told The Daily Star after the meeting.

Sources said Hasina will visit each ministry one after another to see

whether the ministers and bureaucrats are working properly. She recently made a surprise visit to the ministries of industries, and power and energy.

Apart from the agriculture, communications, commerce, and food and disaster management ministries, most other ministries have not yet gained pace in their activities since the new government assumed power four months ago.

Hasina, who chaired the meeting, asked the ministers, state ministers and advisers to bring dynamism to the administration and discharge their responsibilities efficiently.

Several ministers told the premier that many bureaucrats appointed by the previous BNP-Jamaat coalition government are not performing their duties properly as they are loyal to BNP and Jamaat.

Hasina asked them to get tough on those bureaucrats and implement the development projects quickly.

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FIFTH AMENDMENT Delwar gets HC permission to appeal against verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday permitted BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain to file a leave-to-appeal petition with the SC against the High Court (HC) judgment declaring the fifth amendment to the constitution illegal that endorsed take-over of late president Ziaur Rahman and all his acts since August 15, 1975.

The seven-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin also permitted three SC lawyers - Munshi Ahsan Kabir, Tajul Islam and Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan -- to file a similar petition with the SC.

The apex court asked Delwar and the lawyers to file separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the SC against the HC judgment within four weeks.

The court also said the government prayers for withdrawal of the pending leave-to-appeal petitions filed in

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Killer pesticides

Mindless use in Dhamrai farmlands causes death of 3 kids in a month; many others ill

PINAKI ROY

Excessive use of pesticides on farmlands in two villages of Dhamrai upazila caused death of at least three children last month.

It also killed a number of calves, dogs and fowls.

Besides, 13 more children, all aged below seven, were hospitalised, while some farmers fell sick during the same period.

A committee formed by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) under the health ministry reveals this in a primary investigation report.

Talking about reasons behind the recent deaths in Dhamrai's Malancha and Naogakaith villages, IEDCR

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

One of the children that survived the over use of pesticides on cropland at Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka.

CTG ARMS HAUL Ex-NSI boss remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Arrested former director (security) of National Security Intelligence (NSI) Sahab Uddin was yesterday placed on a three-day remand in connection with the sensational Chittagong arms haul case.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Abu Hannan sanctioned the remand when police produced Sahab Uddin before it with a prayer for a five-day remand.

Public Prosecutor Kamal Uddin moved the remand petition on behalf of Investigation Officer Muniruzzaman Chowdhury.

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Per capita income rises to \$690

Growth rate decreases due to global recession, says BBS

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Per capita income in Bangladesh shot up to \$690 this fiscal year (FY) from the previous year's \$608 demonstrating the country's overall income significantly increased though GDP growth fell.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) calculated per capita income in the current FY, based on its estimate of population at 14.42 crore. The estimated population last year was 14.24 crore.

In terms of local currency, per capita income this year is Tk 47,373 compared to Tk 41,728 last year, the BBS said.

GDP growth decreased by 0.31 percentage

point due to the global recession and would stand at 5.88 per cent.

Meanwhile, a World Bank (WB) report says poverty may increase by 0.3 percentage point due to the fall in GDP growth.

According to the BBS estimate, agricultural growth this FY is 4.81 per cent, which was 2.93 percent last year.

A high official of Bangladesh Bank (BB) said farm sector growth greatly contributed to the increase of income. Increased growth in many sections of the service sector also added to this. Besides, remittance inflow is still on the rise, and it is a major cause of the income hike.

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PILKHANA CARNAGE 5 more BDR men confess to guilt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five more Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawans yesterday confessed to their involvement in the BDR headquarters carnage.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) also interrogated 75 BDR personnel at Pilkhana yesterday as part of their investigation into the carnage that left 74 people dead, including 57 army officers.

Nayek Hatem Ali, Sepoys Saifuzzaman, Abdur Rahman, Nazrul Islam and Neon Marma made their confessional

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ACC act to be reviewed

Amendments likely to make the anti-graft body more effective

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday decided to review the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Act, 2004 and bring four longstanding proposed amendments to strengthen the law and make it more effective.

ACC Secretary Khandaker M Asaduzzaman confirmed The Daily Star about the cabinet decisions.

However, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed at his secretariat office said the government would not bring basic changes to the Act.

Sources say the cabinet had earlier instructed the anti-graft watchdog to scrutinise its Act and forward a list of recommendations.

The law minister said the cabinet agreed to most of the proposals, which would be tabled as bills before parliament and

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Criminal killed in shootout with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A wanted criminal was killed while a Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-4) personnel sustained injury during a crossfire between Rab and the criminal's accomplices in Savar in the early hours yesterday.

Rab recovered one pistol, four rounds of bullets, two machetes and two bottles of empty phenisidyl from the spot after the shootout.

The dead man was identified as Totamia, 35, son of late Tilam Uddin of Maniknagar village under Singrai upazila in Manikganj.

Rab sources said that acting on a tip off, a team of

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10 injured as extortionists attack slum

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 slum dwellers, including females, were injured in an armed attack by extortionists in Baganpara slum of Rajshahi city yesterday.

Sources said, the extortionists beat up and assaulted the slum dwellers including females and looted their valuables.

Local sources said a gang of extortionists has been collecting toll from the slum people in the name of community policing for a long time as it is known as a den of drugs.

On Sunday night, the hoodlums led by Shafiqul and Nazir demanded a toll of Tk 10,000 from the slum dwellers in the name of continuing the policing system but they refused to

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Fire-fighters try to put out the blaze engulfing an oil lorry of Amam Enterprise near a CNG refuelling station at Mohakhali in the capital.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

8 vehicles burnt as filling station catches fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A devastating fire swept through a city refuelling station yesterday afternoon, burning at least eight vehicles including an octane-laden lorry and injuring two people.

The flames that rose up to 200 feet in the sky created severe panic among the commuters and eventually caused huge traffic congestion in the area. Reports of traffic jam came from Mohakhali and airport road when the report was being filed at 9:30 last night.

Eleven units of firefighters fought for around one and a half hours in life risk and doused the flames, which could be seen from distant localities.

Refuelling station Amam Enterprise on Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani near Mohakhali inter-district bus terminal caught fire around 5:00pm when the octane-laden lorry was unloading fuel to the underground reserved tank.

The cause of the fire could not be known immediately as the lorry driver fled the scene.

Eyewitness Zobayer Hossain, manager of the station, told The Daily Star, "When octane was being unloaded from the lorry, I suddenly saw a fire in the pipeline and within seconds it engulfed the lorry."

He said the lorry was loaded with 9,000 litres of octane, while there were 8,000 litres of diesel and around 3,000 litres of octane in the reserved tank.

Another witness Meer Akbar Hossain, owner of affected Akbar Motors-Workshops, said, "When the fire started someone drove the lorry away from the reserved tank. Fuel was still spewing from the lorry which spread in the area as the vehicle moved."

"As the lorry was quickly driven away, the leaked fuel mainly fell on the road and flowed towards the slope," he added.

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VIOLATION OF MINORITIES' RIGHTS Bangladesh dropped from US watch list

REZAUL KARIM

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a US Congressional panel, dropped Bangladesh from its Watch List of countries deemed to violate minorities' right to religious freedom.

The absence of measures to promote minority voting rights and the failure of the government to investigate the severe anti-minority violence of 2001 were among the reasons for which Bangladesh was placed in the Watch List

from 2005 to 2008.

However, in light of the positive developments witnessed during the December 29, 2008 general elections, the commission removed Bangladesh from its Watch List of 2009.

Bangladesh government welcomed the US Congressional panel's decision.

The USCIRF places a number of countries across the world in three categories.

1. Countries of Particular Concern: Burma, North Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan,

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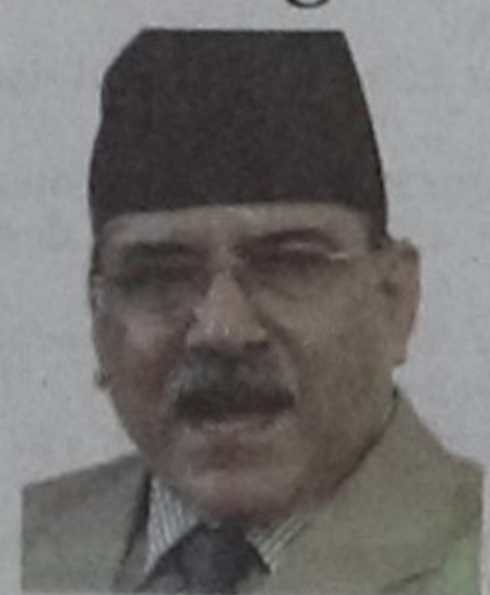
Nepali PM quits President blocks sacking of army chief

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Prime Minister Prachanda announced his resignation Monday after an attempt by his Maoist government to sack the head of the army was blocked by the president.

"I have resigned from the post of prime minister from today for the protection of democracy and peace," Prachanda said in a televised address to the nation.

Nepal's Maoist government fired General Rookmangud Katawal for refusing to integrate former Maoist rebel soldiers into the regular army under the terms of a 2006 peace deal that



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OnlinePoll ✓

Do you agree with the PM's comment that 4-party ministers and MPs patronise militants?

Yes (59.37%)
 No (37.25%)
 No Comments (3.38%)

Total votes: 859

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Khaleda's comment that militancy doesn't exist in the country at present since all militants were arrested and brought under trial during BNP's rule?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

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