

GOVT NOTIFICATION TO TRANSFER CORRUPTION CASES

Fate of 50 high-profile ACC cases uncertain

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The fate of at least 50 high-profile corruption cases, including Niko, Gatco and Barapukuria cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), has become uncertain due to a government notification transferring those cases to other courts.

Some legal experts said the government has no jurisdiction to issue such notification transferring the cases pending with a court to another court.

If any aggrieved person challenges the legality of the notification with the High Court, it (notification) will be held illegal and proceedings of the cases transferred by this notification will be affected, they said.

ACC's lawyer Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman however said the notification transferring the cases is valid and it will not affect the cases.

The government has constituted special courts for dealing with corruption cases by issuing a gazette notification and if the

government transfers the cases by another notification, the cases would not be affected, he added.

On the other hand another ACC counsel Advocate Anisul Huq said if the legality of the notification is challenged, it would be held invalid and the proceedings of the cases will be stayed.

The law ministry on December 22 of last year issued the notification transferring the graft cases from the special courts no 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, set up on Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises, to special courts no 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 at Dhaka judges' court area.

ACC's panel lawyer Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan has told The Daily Star that the government has no jurisdiction to issue such a notification transferring the cases pending with a special court to another special court.

Unless and until the notification is withdrawn by another notification, the proceedings of the cases transferred to other courts may be held illegal and that is why the fate of the cases has become uncertain, he added.

He said all the cases are at the trial stage after framing charges, although proceedings of some cases have been stayed by the High Court.

"I have already informed the ACC authorities to take steps for the withdrawal of the notification by the government," he said.

As per law concerned, only the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge has the jurisdiction to send the cases pending with any special court to another court for its trial, he said, adding that the High Court can order any subordinate court to transfer any case to another court following any petition.

It has been stated in Section 4(3) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) Amendment Act-1958 that only the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge may transfer at any stage of the trial, any case from the court of one special judge to the court of another special judge having jurisdiction within the same territorial limits.

Sharif Mostafa Karim, deputy secretary (Administration) of law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, issued the notification.

Boma Mizan on 7 days' fresh remand for further grilling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zahidul Islam alias 'Boma Mizan', explosives expert of banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), was placed on a seven-day fresh remand yesterday for further questioning.

Mizan, who was earlier quizzed in the Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI) cell on a seven-day remand, gave some important information about top leaders of JMB, its activities, future plans and explosives in his possession.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector Izzatul Islam of Mirpur Police Station produced the militant before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court with a prayer for a 10-day's fresh remand in the case filed for possessing arms and explosives in his residence.

The court, however, granted him only seven days' remand.

In the forwarding report, the IO said he had gathered important information from Mizan during the grilling which is being verified. So, he needs to be remanded further to glean more information about the clues already disclosed by him.

Rab men arrested Mizan in the city on May 14 and acting on his information, the crime busting force seized firearms and huge amount of explosives after raiding his two hired houses.

HC asks govt to allow Aman to go abroad for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to allow former BNP state minister Amanullah Aman to go abroad for medical treatment.

The HC bench of Justice Tariq-ul Hakim and Justice M Azizul Haque also issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why any government action restricting Aman from going abroad for treatment should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by the BNP leader.

In the writ petition, Aman stated that following a recent newspaper report he is apprehending that he might be restricted to leave the country for treatment.

A medical board formed to diagnose his illness has recommended for his treatment abroad.

Earlier, Aman was accused in total 18 cases and he secured bails in all the cases. Barrister Mahub Uddin Khokon appeared for Aman.

Dhaka University Day on July 1

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University Day will be observed on July 1. To celebrate the day amid festivity, the university authorities at meeting yesterday formed the 'Dhaka University Day Celebration Committee' with Treasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman as convener, says a press release.

The committee would chalk out programmes to celebrate the occasion.



An emergency patient-carrying ambulance gets stuck in a tailback ranging from Buriganga 2nd Bridge to Babubazar area in the city yesterday. Traffic jam has become an everyday suffering of the people in the old part of Dhaka.

PHOTO STAR

Early marriage, high dropout rate bar to women's dev

Speakers tell nat'l workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Early marriage and dropout rate of female children are still high in the country which are holding back women to move forward for their development.

Lack of security in education institutions and sexual harassment cause high dropout rate of schoolgirls accompanied by high prices of essentials.

Speakers made the observations at a national workshop on 'Shadow Report for Beijing+15 Assembly' organised by NGO Coalition on Beijing Process (NCBP) at Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) auditorium in the city yesterday.

The workshop aims at gathering recommendations from different stakeholders and the organisations working with women development issues for drafting primary report of the assembly scheduled to be held at UN Headquarters in New York in 2010.

Presenting a keynote paper, Women for Women President Salma Khan said the UN has recently expressed concern over the early marriage and dropout rate in the country as 63 percent girls are becoming victims of early marriage.

"Though the government has taken some initiatives to empower women for increasing their participation in parliament or local government, but here also the women are facing different difficulties," she added.

Termining the initiative of electing 45 lawmakers for women's reserved seats in parliament a significant role in empowering them in political areas, Salma said the female lawmakers from reserved seats have no specific area for work which is another setback in their development.

Raising awareness is a must to way out from different setbacks facing the women in the way of development, she added.

Addressing the workshop as the chief guest, lawmaker Sarah Begum Kabori stressed the need for arranging seminar and symposium more in rural areas to make people aware of the issues related to early marriage, dropout rate of girl child, reproductive health and environment.

Termining education a best tool to fight against all odds in society, she called on all parents to send their children, especially the girl children who are becoming victims of early marriage.

"Integration of public and private efforts is a must in empowering women," Kabori added.

Eight organisations placed their draft reports at the workshop, including 'Violence against women', 'Women in economics', 'Women and environment', 'Women in decision-making', 'Women in education and ICT', 'Women and health', 'Human rights of women' and 'Women in media'.

NCBP Member Secretary Mahmuda Islam conducted the workshop.

BERC chair seeks president's nod to join as ACC boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairman of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) Ghulam Rahman yesterday sent a letter to the president seeking to be relieved of the post for joining the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) as its chief.

"As I have been appointed as ACC chief, I have sought to be relieved of the current position to join the new post," Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday quoting the letter he sent to the president.

In accordance with Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission Act 2003, one has to give a 30-day notification before he or she wants to resign or get relieved of the commission.

"If the president accepts my letter, I hope to join the anti-graft body after a month from now on," said Ghulam Rahman.

"Currently I do not have any clear idea about the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). At first I will try to have a clear idea about its work after having discussion with fellow colleagues," he added.

The government appointed Ghulam Rahman as ACC chief on April 30, 28 days after Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury stepped down from the post.

After a month-long trip to USA Rahman returned to country last week.

While appointing Ghulam Rahman, the government downgraded the status of the ACC chairman to a Supreme Court judge from the status of a minister given during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

Former bureaucrat Ghulam Rahman, who retired as shipping ministry secretary in 2004, was appointed as chairman of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission by the caretaker government.

ACC Commissioner M Habibur Rahman was made acting chairman for the second time in absence of Ghulam Rahman.

Earlier, after the resignation of Hasan Mashhud, Habibur Rahman was made acting chairman of the commission for a month.

Hasan Mashhud resigned all of a sudden on April 28, eight days after the Awami League-led grand alliance assumed power, without showing any reason.

There had been widespread speculations that his resignation followed some awkward situation that created following the formation of the new political government.

FM greets Indian counterpart

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has congratulated SM Krishna on his assumption of office as the new external affairs minister of India.

In a message sent to New Delhi yesterday, the foreign minister said, "Bangladesh attaches the highest importance to her relations with India that is based on our shared history, cultural similarities and intense people-to-people contacts. The support and assistance during our War of Liberation in 1971 and in our post-war reconstruction efforts have further cemented the bond between our two nations."

She also expressed her "deep conviction" that his wisdom and experience "gathered through long political career in different capacities" would contribute towards strengthening bilateral ties between Bangladesh and India.

Dipu Moni looked forward to working closely with SM Krishna in the coming days for the mutual benefit of the friendly people of Bangladesh and India.

She also conveyed her best wishes for Krishna's good health and happiness and for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of India.



Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Dr Abdullah bin Naser Al Bossairy calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

URDU-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Call to rehabilitate them with all basic rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Without proper rehabilitation, members of the Urdu-speaking community (Bihan) should not be evicted from the camps, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They said around 75 percent of people of this community now living in Bangladesh were born here and they deserve all the rights of the mainstream people.

The seminar titled 'Rehabilitation of Urdu-speaking people with dignity' was organised jointly by Urdu-speaking Peoples Youth Rehabilitation Movement (USPYRM) and ActionAid at the National Press Club in the city to mark the first anniversary of their receiving citizenship of Bangladesh.

"The Urdu-speaking community has been deprived of basic rights for long by all the previous governments. Even the NGOs working in the country ignored them. It is now our responsibility to rehabilitate them with all basic rights," said Dr CR Abrar, professor of international relations and coordinator of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) at Dhaka University (DU).

Speaking as chief guest Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice-chancellor of DU, said equal right is the foundation of democracy.

To uphold democracy it is necessary to rehabilitate the Urdu-speaking community with dignity, he added.



Fisheries and Livestock Minister Md Abdul Latif Biswas releases a baby crocodile in a new shed in the Dhaka Zoo yesterday.

3 snatchers held, pistol seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized a pistol and arrested three snatchers, leaving one bullet injured at Hasnabad of South Keraniganj in the city yesterday.

The injured was identified as Russel, 20, of Naria upazila in Shariatpur. He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Flight Lt Humayun Kabir of Rab-10 said in the wake of the recent spate of snatching in the area, several patrol teams of Rab in rickshaws were kept on alert there to nab the muggers.

30 baby crocodiles shifted to new shed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty baby crocodiles were shifted to a new enclosure in the Dhaka Zoo yesterday.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Md Abdul Latif Biswas also released fish fry in two lakes of the zoo to increase the fish production of the lakes.

Madras Crocodile Bank Trust donated 40 sweet water crocodiles in 2005. Among them, five were released in Dhaka Zoo, which gave birth to 30 crocodiles in June 2008. These 30 were shifted to a new shed yesterday.

The fish fry were released in the two lakes where the zoo authorities allow people to fish after buying tickets.

Last year they earned Tk 12.73 lakh through selling tickets and Tk 3 lakh by selling small fish, said a press release.

Latif said they have already taken different steps against irregularities in the zoo and the irregularities that had earlier taken place in different sectors of the zoo are being investigated.

The number of visitors at the zoo has been increasing day by day, he said.

To attract more tourists, they have been negotiating with different countries to increase the number of animals in the zoo, he said.

Lawmakers Aslamul Haque and Ilias Uddin Molla were present on the occasion.

War criminals must be tried

Says Faruk Khan

DU CORRESPONDENT

The trial of the war criminals will certainly be held, Commerce Minister Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan said yesterday.

"The local collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces, who took position against our liberation war and killed thousands of innocent people, repressed women, set houses on fire and looted valuables of innocent people will certainly be tried," he said.

The minister was addressing a discussion organised to celebrate the birth anniversaries of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam at the National Press Club in the city.

Muktijoddha Janatar Sangskritik Mancha, a cultural organisation, held the discussion. He said the government is highly committed

to ensure betterment of the country and its people and to fulfill Bangabandhu's dream of a Sonar Bangla.

The minister said Rabindranath and Nazrul through their works encouraged Bangladeshis to be independent and to sustain the culture and ideology of Bangladeshis.

Intelligence, courage and culture are the three lessons these two great writers taught Bangladeshis through their writings that inspired them to raise their voice to realise their demands, he said.

Faruk Khan urged parents to make their children familiar with the 'Rabindra-Nazrul culture'.

Labour Affairs Secretary of Awami League Mohammad Habibur Rahman Siraj, Ismat Kadir Gama, Dohar Upazila Chairman Mahabubur Rahman and Ashik Mahmud also spoke.

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