

Find out irregularities in bank loans, evict encroachers from river banks: Hasina

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the finance ministry to find out any irregularities in sanctioning loans in the past, especially in the last seven years, and investigate the causes of default loans in the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs).

The directive came at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) at the NEC conference room in the city.

The prime minister, who presided over the meeting, also asked the authorities to recover illegally occupied land along the river banks in the capital by any means.

She also directed them to ensure installation of solar panels and construction of rainwater reservoirs on top of all high-rise buildings across the country and optimum use of surface water where it is possible.

Planning Secretary Md Habibullah Majumder briefed reporters on the meeting.

He said the prime minister asked for detailed information about loan default-

ers, loans rescheduled through improper procedures and waiving of interests on loans during the period.

The shipping ministry presented a report on the proposed circular waterways around the city.

The prime minister instructed the ministry to evict all illegal occupants from river banks and construct walkways on both sides of rivers so that the lands cannot be occupied again.

"Evict illegal occupants no matter how powerful they might be," she said and asked the authorities to investigate irregularities in the Roads and Highways Department projects and submit the reports to her.

She also instructed them to take actions against the culprits whoever they may be. "If necessary, they'll be black-listed and barred from taking part in the development process," a meeting source quoted the prime minister.

The planning secretary said the Ecneec sent back the Gazipur-Ajmatpur-Itakhola road construction project (revised) involving Tk 222 crore over allegations of corruption.

The prime minister asked the authori-

ties to find out irregularities, take action against the wrongdoers and submit a fresh project proposal.

The Ecneec also approved five projects -- Patuakhali Coast Guard Base Construction Project involving Tk 42 crore, Rajshahi City Water Supply Project involving Tk 83 crore, Rural Water Supply Project in the southwestern region of the country involving Tk 40 crore, Greater Faridpur Rural Infrastructure Development Project involving Tk 553 crore and Construction of Newly Created and River Eroded Upazila Parishad Complex project involving Tk 139 crore.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, Labour and Employment Minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen, Commerce Minister Lt Col (retd) Faruk Khan, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain, Shipping Minister Dr Afsarul Ameen and Advisers HT Imam, Dr Moshir Rahman, Dr Alauddin Ahmed and Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury attended the meeting.



The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam speaks at a roundtable titled "Development of Khulna division: Problems and prospects" organised by The Daily Star at Hotel Royal International in Khulna yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

'Draft nat'l edn policy by July 26'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Education Policy Formulation Committee is expected to finalise the primary draft of the much-awaited national education policy within July 26 and will then start the process of consultation with the organisations and stakeholders concerned for their opinions.

The committee would take one more month to complete the entire task of formulating the policy as it requires some more days to complete the consultation with the stakeholders concerned.

The committee held a meeting yesterday at the National Academy for Educational Management (Naem) in the city where the committee members put their final opinions, said the meeting

sources.

"It is expected to be finalised within July 26 and after that we will start the process of consultation with the organisations and stakeholders concerned in phases for necessary opinions and suggestions," said Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, co-chair of the committee, while talking to The Daily Star in the evening.

He said the committee will submit the draft after the end of the consultations by August.

"Many organisations want to have discussions on the primary draft and so do we. We would complete our task by the end of August," he added.

The government formed a 16-member committee on April 8 to review the report of Shamsul Haque Education Committee

1997 in order to formulate a modern national education policy in line with the report of Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission 1974.

Headed by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, the committee held its first meeting on May 3 and co-opt two more members in the committee.

The committee recommended extending the primary education level up to class VIII, making several subjects mandatory for all mediums of students at the primary level, holding a public examination at the end and introduction of pre-vocational training in class VI, sources said.

They also said they want to formulate a pragmatic policy which will ensure national consensus, social and moral values and the spirit of the liberation war.

TIPAI DAM Hafiz slates Razzak remark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Maj (ret'd) Hafizuddin Ahmed yesterday slammed Abdur Razzak, president of the parliamentary standing committee on water resources ministry, for his remark about BNP's presentation on Tipaimukh dam and said his (Razzak's) statements don't go with national interests.

"He [Razzak] wanted to accuse the opposition of speaking in favour of national interest. But he did not utter a single word against the Indian anti-Bangladesh initiative which is absolutely unfortunate and frustrating," Hafiz, also a former water resources minister, said in a statement issued on behalf of BNP yesterday.

The BNP on Saturday arranged a PowerPoint presentation on the possible impacts of the proposed Tipaimukh dam at a city hotel. Razzak the next day termed the main opposition's initiative "confusing and ill-motivated".

Hafiz said the BNP chairperson in her outstanding speech urged for national unity to stop such "harmful" project like Tipaimukh without criticising the government.

She also assured that the opposition and people will be with the government if it takes bold decision upholding national interests.

"Her [Khaleda] speech was highly appreciated. Even the prime minister welcomed the speech saying that the neighbouring country will gain benefits if the problems are not faced on the basis of unity."

"We don't understand why BNP's presentation on the possible damage and public sufferings, if the dam is built, made Razzak aggrieved. Is he loyal to the prime minister or Bangladesh or to anywhere else?" the BNP leader questioned.



Former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam makes a gesture at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday prior to his departure for Delhi. (Story on Page 16)

Ctg editors demand separate wage board

BSS, Dhaka

Editors of major dailies published from the port city of Chittagong demanded lifting of the link between newsprint import and advertisement rates and implementation of the wage board award.

They raised the issue at a meeting with Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday at his secretariat office while discussing major problems that the industry in the port city is suffering from.

Editor of the daily Azadi MA Malek led a six-member group. They said the linking of wage board award with newspaper import or government advertisement rates are not supportive to the growth of newspaper industry.

Even if the government remains committed to wage board award, they said it should offer a separate wage board for newspapers throughout the country.

Newspapers in the districts should have also their in-house advantage of fixing wages for newsmen and employees, they said.

Moreover, their union activities should remain confined to each newspaper, it

should not be intra-industry basis, they said.

The information minister listened to their views and said he would try to take care of their concerns and find solutions of the legitimate demands under the existing rule of law.

He said newspapers can work as an effective bridge between the government and people and the new administration is committed to work with the industry and provide all support to help it grow.

Editor of daily Purbakun Taslim Uddin Chowdhury, editor of daily Karnaphuli Alhaj Absar Uddin Chowdhury, editor of daily Bir Chottagram Manch Syed Omar Faruq, editor of daily Suprobbat Bangladesh Rousseau Mahmud and editor of daily People's View Osman Ghani Mansur were on the team.

FALU'S CONVICTION HC order stayed for six weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) chamber bench yesterday stayed for six weeks a High Court (HC) order suspending the conviction and sentence of former BNP lawmaker Mosaddek Ali Falu in a relief tin scam case.

Judge of the chamber bench Justice Md Abdul Aziz also asked the government to file a regular leave to appeal petition with the SC against the HC order suspending the conviction and sentence of Falu within this period (six weeks).

The judge passed the order upon a stay petition moved by Additional Attorney General AKM Zahurul Haque on behalf of the government.

A special court in Dhaka, on June 2 last year, sentenced Falu to five years' rigorous imprisonment in a relief tin scam case filed by the Ashulia police during the period of the caretaker government in 2007.

On July 16 this year, the HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin upon a petition filed by Falu suspended for six months his conviction and sentence in this case.

Sahara returns home

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Sahara Khatun returned home last night after 20-day medical treatment in Singapore as she suffered waist injuries in a washroom fall.

Sahara, who underwent operation at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, arrived at Zia International Airport in a flight of Singapore Airlines at 11:45pm.

Sahara suffered injuries in the waist as she fell over in the washroom at her official residence on June 29.

She first underwent treatment at the Trauma Centre in the city. Later, she was taken to Singapore for better treatment.

Sahara left for Singapore on July 1 and got admitted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

Security guard killed

Two criminals shot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A security guard of Lotus Kamal Bhaban at Khilkhet in the city was killed as his fellow guard hit him early yesterday.

Security guard Shamim Miah died when another guard Monwar Hossain Shahid punched and beat up him following a dispute while they were on duty on the fourth floor of the building at around 2:00am.

Police arrested Shahid in this connection.

Meanwhile, two alleged extortionists received bullets in a gunfight with police in Sutrapur yesterday afternoon.

The extortionists Zakir and Shambhu were bullet wounded in the gunfight that took place at Farashganj under Sutrapur Police Station at around 3:00pm.

Sutrapur police said the extortionists went to Farashganj to collect Tk 5,000 from the owner of Tangal Sweet.

Sensing the presence of police, they opened fire at policemen who also retaliated with gunshots that left the criminals injured.



Leo Dist Council executives

METRO DESK

Kazi Abdur Razzak Raju of Leo Club of Dhaka and Md Ramzan Khan of Leo Club of Dhaka Deepika have been elected district president and vice district president of Leo District Council 315 A1, Bangladesh respectively for 2009-10, says a press release.

They were elected at the 14th Annual Conference of the Leo District Council, Lions Clubs International, District 315A1, recently.

District Governor Ln Md Mobarak Hossain inaugurated the conference.

DEATH OF HENA DAS CPB to observe mourning day

Condolences continue to pour in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) declared that it will observe mourning day across the country tomorrow to pay tributes to veteran leader of women's rights and leftist movement Hena Das, says a press release.

On the day, CPB leaders and activists would wear black badges and black flags would be hoisted and the party flags be kept at half-mast at its offices. Hena was also the party's central committee member.

On the day, her body would be taken to the CPB central office in the city at 10:00am. Leaders and activists of CPB and other organisations would place wreaths on the coffin of Hena.

Her body then would be taken to the office of Bangladesh Teachers' Association at Segunbagicha and later to Bangladesh Mahila Parishad office. The body would be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar at noon where people from all walks of life would pay their last respects.

Hena Das, one of the organisers of the liberation war, would be given guard of honour there.

Later, she would be taken to Narayanganj for cremation.

Meanwhile, different political, rights and socio-cultural organisations yesterday expressed deep shock at her death.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia expressed her deep condolence at the anti-British movement leader's death.

In a statement, Khaleda said Hena made huge contribution to the development of country's education and women development sector.

Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam yesterday expressed deep sorrow at the death of Hena Das, a leading organiser of the liberation

war, noted woman leader and human rights activist.

She said the nation lost a bold organiser and an open-minded person at the death of Hena Das.

All the members of the Foundation have expressed deep sympathy to bereaved family members and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul, said a press release.

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) also expressed deep shock at the death of Hena Das.

"She was a source of inspiration for all of us in South Asia who was engaged in the movements for social change, democracy and human rights," said Hameeda Hossain, co-chairperson of SAHR, in a statement.

"The leadership of Hena Das in the Nankar Peasants' movement in Sylhet in the fifties and her contribution to Bangladesh's liberation war are still vivid in our memories," said Hameeda.

SAHR joins many others in saluting this courageous fighter and comrade in the collective struggles for human rights, added the statement.

BNP Secretary General Khandker Delwar Hossain, Revolutionary Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Khandaker Ali Abbas and General Secretary Saiful Haque also expressed deep shock at her death.

Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Human Rights Implementation Organisation, Bangladesh Sammayadi Dal, Democratic Revolutionary Party, Gonosanghati Andolon, Bangladesh Trade Union Centre and Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad also condoled her death.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur



Brojen Kumar Saha, former member of Faridpur Chamber of Commerce, passed away

due to cancer at his village home under Faridpur sadar upazila on Monday night at the age of 52.

He left behind his mother, wife, son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He cremation ceremony was held yesterday.

Faridpur Municipality Mayor Sheikh Mahtab Ali Mithu and Faridpur Chamber of Commerce President Awlad Hossain Babar, among others, expressed deep shock at his death.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACKS Hearing on probe petitions begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday started hearing on their petitions seeking further investigation into the August 21 grenade attack cases.

The cases were filed for carrying out grenade attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21 in 2004.

After a hearing for an hour, Judge Masdar Hossain of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 set July 27 for further hearing on the petitions.

Earlier, the lawyers of detained former deputy minister and BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu and several others

completed their arguments saying that the petitions for further investigation were submitted to implicate several other BNP leaders in the cases.

The Criminal Investigation Department, which investigated the cases filed in connection with the sensational incident, submitted charge sheets in June last year, accusing 21 members of Harkatul Jihad Al Islami (Huji), including its top leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and Pintu.

Hannan, Pintu and 12 others, now in jail custody, were produced before the court during yesterday's hearing.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Workshop on computer literacy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A regional workshop on computer literacy programmes was inaugurated at BANBEIS Bhaban in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh Unesco National Commission organised the three-day workshop in association with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Iesco), Tehran, and International Islamic Charity Organisation, Kuwait, says a press release.

A total of 30 participants from Pakistan, Maldives, Afghanistan, Iran, Kuwait and Bangladesh are taking part in the workshop.

Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman attended the programme as the chief guest while Unesco Representative Malama Meleisea as the special guest.

2,083 held in police drive

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 2,083 people on various charges in separate drives in the last 24 hours as of 6:00am yesterday.

Ten firearms and 23 bullets were seized during the countryside drive, said a release of police headquarters.

Three cases were filed under the Arms Act while another under Explosive Act, it said. Besides, 57 motorbikes without valid documents were seized during the drive.

Attack on BNP leader protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandakar Delwar Hossain in a statement condemned the attack on Mamunur Rashid Mamun, office secretary of Kotwali Thana BNP in Faridpur.

Mamun came under attack at West Khabashpur on July 19 by a group of Jubo League cadres led by local leader Enayet, says a press release.

Delwar said AL want to gag the voice of people through muscle power. He demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

'Strengthen Korea-Banglaties'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Korea-Bangladesh Parliamentarians Friendship Association President Chung Howan Kim yesterday pledged to work for strengthening the relationship between Korea and Bangladesh, says a press release.

Stressing on developing trade relation between the two countries, he said they would work for welfare of Bangladeshis living in Korea, especially for the workers.

He was speaking at a reception accorded to the association by Bangladesh Embassy in Korea.

The members of the association, formed with the six members of the Korean parliament, hoped that the bilateral relation between the two countries would be strengthened further through the association.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

BISS organises a discussion on 'The Royingyas: From stateless to refugees'. Venue: BISS conference room. Time: 11:00am.

Debate

The opening ceremony of the 21st National Debate Competition 2009 will be held. Venue: Notre Dame College auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

Roundtable

UBINIG organises a roundtable on draft national health policy and people oriented health services. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Memorial meeting

The memorial meeting of Dr Alauddin Al Azad will be held. Venue: Bangla Academy seminar room. Time: 4:00pm.

View exchange meet

Bangladesh Unani Ayurvedic Society organises a view exchange meeting on the draft national health policy and Unani Ayurvedic system of treatment. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity. Time: 3:00pm.