

Brac boss

FROM PAGE 1
is the second person in his family to be knighted.
In 1913 his great uncle, Justice Nawab Sir Syed Shamsul Huda also received a knighthood.

When the Queen's New Year's Honours List was announced yesterday, Abed said, "I am humbled by the honour conferred on me."

"I thank my colleagues in Brac, who are at the forefront of the struggle to eradicate poverty in Bangladesh and abroad."

Prof Yunus, the founder and managing director of Grameen Bank, congratulated Abed saying, "This is a matter of tremendous honour for Bangladeshis here and around the world."

"It is testament to your untiring efforts to fight poverty and injustice through the work of BRAC."

Abed was born in 1936 in Baniachong of Habiganj district and he attended Pabna Zilla School and Dhaka College before studying Naval Architecture at Glasgow University.

When he returned to Bangladesh he joined the Shell Oil Company, but when the cyclone of 1970 killed 300,000 people, the course of his life changed.

He established the relief and rehabilitation organisation HELP, but was forced to flee Bangladesh when the Liberation War broke out in 1971.

Whilst in England he set up Action Bangladesh to lobby for independence and when he returned home after the war, he used the funds he had generated from selling his flat in London to set up Brac.

Within 30 years Brac has

Ministers

FROM PAGE 1
Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) Rector Delwar Hossain in the chair.

"Only efforts from the Anti-Corruption Commission will not reduce corruption. Everyone including ministers must be honest in their thinking and activities. If ministers and government high-ups pledge to be honest, subordinates will definitely follow them," said Ghulam Rahman.

Urging all to practice honesty in workplaces, he said the government must have a strong commitment to this end.

A total of 50 ACC officials were given the certificates after they completed intermediate level training course and basic training course, jointly organised by Asian Development Bank, BPATC and ACC.

Corruption inflicts a huge loss that ranges from 1.5 percent to 2 percent of annual GDP said Ghulam adding, "The present status of our country is the result of widespread corruption."

The ACC chief suggested the government hasten the process of disposing corruption cases.

"If corruption cases remain pending for years, it will encourage the corrupt people. If at least 100 cases can be disposed of annually and this trend continues for a couple of years, nobody will dare to indulge in corruption," he said.

He urged the government for making the young generation aware of the issue so that they can fight against corruption.

Ship-breaker

FROM PAGE 1
the vessel were "not free from dangerous petroleum vapour" and not safe for human entry and heat-generating work.

Diamond Steel Products Co (Pvt) Ltd bought the ship from Bestrank Pte Ltd of Singapore and JF (Bangladesh) Ltd requested the Department of Explosives to test it.

The first certificate was issued on October 10 when the tanker was at the outer anchorage and the second one on October 19 when the ship arrived at Madambibirhat in Sitakunda.

The first certificate mentioned that all tanks and rooms on the ship should be cleaned, washed, freed from gas and tested by the Department of Explosives before scrapping.

The second certificate, however, omitted the warning, just saying the six tanks are not safe for human entry.

Nazrul Islam, one of the injured workers undergoing treatment at the Burn Unit of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, yesterday told The Daily Star, "I do not know the name of the tank that exploded. The operator was cutting the ship and suddenly I heard an explosion and found fire around me."

become the largest development organisation in the world.

It currently operates in more than 69,000 villages and provides assistance to around 110 million people.

Brac provides free primary education, essential healthcare, agricultural support, legal services to promote human rights, as well as microfinance and enterprise development.

In 2002 Brac extended its projects to an international scale by initiating development projects in Afghanistan, and it currently operates in eight countries across Asia and Africa.

Brac received international recognition when it was awarded the Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize in 2008 as well as the Swadhinata Puroshkar in 2007.

Abed's contributions to social welfare have been recognised on several other occasions.

He received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 1980, the Unicef Maurice Pate Award in 1992, the Olof Palme Prize in 2001, the UNDP Mahbub ul Haq Award for Outstanding Contribution in Human Development in 2004 and the Inaugural Clinton Global Citizen Award in 2007.

Abed has also received several honorary degrees from Yale, Columbia University and Oxford University.

He is also a founding member of Ashoka's prestigious Global Academy for Social Entrepreneurship.

Mutiny

FROM PAGE 16
The court gave 45 days to the accused to prepare for their defence after prosecutor of the case Lt Col Shamimur Rahman, commanding officer of the zone, read out the charges against them in their presence.

A total of 61 witnesses will give their depositions to the three-member special court led by Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Maj Gen M Mainul Islam.

All the accused jawans were produced before the court that started around 9:40am and continued till 10:40am.

The court started the trial on Wednesday with the prosecutor presenting complaints against the alleged mutineers.

Earlier on Wednesday, the same court adjourned the proceedings against nine mutineers of 12 Rifles Battalion till February 14, the day it is likely to declare the verdict.

A mutiny in Rangamati took place at three of five battalions of the sector following the carnage at BDR Pikhana Headquarters. The three battalions are 12 Rifle Battalion at Rajanagar in Longudu upazila, 9 Rifle Battalion at Marishya in Baghaichhari upazila and 18 Rifle Battalion at Chhotohorina in Barkal upazila.

Matia

FROM PAGE 16
the reason behind the torture in its report," Matia said at the national council of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity at the Jatya Press Club.

"Physical torture is not expected in any situation. We condemned such acts. But there should be a scope for legal actions against those who write false reports," the minister said while speaking as the chief guest.

She hoped that no journalist becomes victim of torture in 2010.

Journalism must not be used for personal gain as it would do injustice to both the profession and the newspaper, the agriculture minister said.

"We hope that the Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity will expand its scope of work and talk about the pain and sufferings of rural people," she said.

Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, former president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, said many newspapers are being launched but the quality of journalism and the living standards of journalists have not improved.

Dhaka Union of Journalists President Shah Alamgir said, "We remain divided because of political reasons but it should not be like this."

General Secretary of Dhaka Reporters' Unity Pathik Saha said journalists must work for the welfare of the nation without being biased to any vested interest.

Sangbadik Samity President Jalal Uddin Ahmed presided over the council attended by about 540 councillors from districts and upazilas.

BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Secretary General Altaf Mahmud, and Sangbadik Samity General Secretary Maniruzzaman Chowdhury were present.

Banglalink sales rep shot dead by muggers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers gunned down a sales representative and injured his colleague while snatching their wallets at Juginagar in city's Sutrapur area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Ali Hossain, 24, while his injured colleague was Zakul Islam, 30. They were the sales representatives of BCC Road branch Banglalink in Wari.

Sales representative Salahuddin, who was with the victims during the incident, told The Daily Star that a gang of four swooped on them as he along with the two colleagues came out of a cellphone outlet at Juginagar after collecting money from it around 4:00pm.

The muggers tried to snatch Ali and Zakul's wallets. As they resisted, the assailants fired shots leaving the two wounded, he said.

Salahuddin added, hearing the gunshots locals thronged the spot and started chasing the muggers. They caught snatcher Zainul and recovered a wallet containing Tk 7,872 and recharge cards and three handmade bombs from his possession. Salahuddin could not ascertain immediately whose wallet it was.

Locals took the injured to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Ali dead.

OC Abdul Halim of Sutrapur Police Station said on information police reached the place where locals handed over Zainul with the handmade bombs and the wallet. He declined to say any further for the sake of investigation.

Pre-primary edn

FROM PAGE 16
as neither the teachers nor students come to schools timely. Moreover, education officials are not doing properly their job of monitoring this. Measures are being taken to improve this situation, he said.

Besides providing tiffin for students of primary schools, the government will give Tk 100-stipend per month to every poor student from this month, the state minister said.

Other speakers at the roundtable said pre-primary education would greatly reduce drop out rate.

Abu Alan Mohammad Shahid Khan, acting secretary of primary and mass education ministry, said they have identified 1,500 villages without primary schools, and schools will be set up there soon.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, urged introducing pre-primary education also at day-care centres.

Dr Shafiqul Islam of Brac education programme presented a paper.

Chaired by Mahbub Hossain of Brac and moderated by Sirajul Islam Abed of Jugantor, the roundtable was also addressed by former vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Moniruzzaman Mia, Shyamol Kanti Ghosh, director general of the Directorate of Primary Education and Mahbub Hasan of Jugantor.

Manpower

FROM PAGE 16
Rezaul Karim said the killers being very influential are still at large in the area and threatening them so that they (complainants) withdraw the murder case.

Following the incident the victim's family filed a case with Keraniganj Police Station accusing fraud manpower agent Iqbal and his accomplices Jonny, son of Taranagar union parishad Chairman Liakat Ali, Hazrat Ali and five to six others, he said.

They later identified another accomplice Rubel, son of Dhaka district Awami League member Abdul Gafur, and included him as an accused, he added.

Under the influence of AL member Gafur and UP chairman Liakat, police are playing a controversial role in apprehending the accused, said Rezaul Karim adding that Gafur recently sent his son Rubel to Japan though they repeatedly requested police to arrest him before he could leave.

"I was addressing a rally on the Victory Day when the news came that my sister was killed by a fraud," said the freedom fighter in a shattered voice.

"I don't want the money anymore. I demand punishment to the killers," he said.

Contacted, Officer-in-charge Asaduzzaman of Keraniganj Police Station said they arrested two of Iqbal's accomplices but they were not accused in the case.

On police's failure to arrest the real culprits he said the accused were all absconding.

BCL leader

FROM PAGE 16

Amirul Islam also rejected his bail prayer in connection with the case filed by the assaulted folklore department teacher Anupam Hera Mondol.

Meanwhile, the RU unit BCL suspended membership of Haque, mass education affairs deputy secretary of the university unit. They also wrote to the central committee for his expulsion terming the attack on a teacher a heinous crime, said Ibrahim Hossain Moon, president of RU unit BCL.

Both police and RU BCL leaders say Suman, another accused in the case, could not be properly identified as his father's name and hometown remained unknown.

RU Proctor Prof Chowdhury Zakaria, meanwhile, served Haque with a show-cause notice asking him to clarify in seven days his position in the matter.

The university authorities served another show-cause notice upon folklore department student Ali Asgar Khokon asking him to explain the reason behind staging agitation over the issue.

Following the authorities' assurance of punishing the culprits, the folklore department teachers and students called off their strike billed for yesterday and joined academic activities wearing black badges.

The teachers, students, and Lalon Charcha Kendra, a folklore students' organisation,

Salute to three drivers

FROM PAGE 1
Despite the undue pressure of the readymade garment exporters, the government kept the sector out of the first stimulus and only included it in the second package with a host of conditions.

Food security was another point of comfort in 2009 with 13 lakh tonnes stock of grains and 17 lakh tonnes import of wheat until December. We had a good boro rice production and an aman too. The preparation for 2010 boro rice cultivation is satisfying too.

However, agriculture will remain a major challenge for 2010.

"How to ensure farmers a fair price to encourage them in production and how to provide consumers food at low price would appear as a matter of policy choice," says Dr Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

The answer lies in agricultural productivity enhancement through research and development. A major effort could be to welcome the second technological frontier where hybrid seeds and technologies would reduce production cost and increase agriculture growth.

"This now looks like the only answer to the riddle," Dr Mustafiz observes.

Despite this, the past year was one of entrepreneurial inactiveness -- businessmen yet had to recover from two years of regimented disciplining coupled with inadequate infrastructure. Also businessmen had yet to get a clear picture of who the real players in policymaking were.

Many would see the past year as a timeline of lost opportunities. This is more so when the government enjoyed an unusual patch of political calm -- there were no hartals, the opposition was too weak to even put up a political protest and the government overwhelmingly strong in parliament.

This all served the perfect recipe to accomplish some thorny and urgent missions. The key recommendations of the defunct Regulatory Reforms Commission and the Better Business Forum (BBF) could be implemented to improve the business environment and thereby jack up confidence of businessmen. Most recommendations remain unimplemented today.

The tax, VAT and business registration process could have been simplified and turned into a one-stop procedure. Time for business registration could have been shortened.

Steps could have been taken to utilise the funds of the much-vaunted public-private partnership (PPP) scheme. Not a single penny of the Tk25 billion fund has been spent and the major reason was saddling the Board of Investment with the task of implementing PPP.

Successful records worldwide show it is the finance ministry that can handle such schemes successfully and Bangladesh could have been no different a case.

"The non-implementation of a promising scheme like PPP to address the crucial need of the economy is disappointing," says Dr Zahid Hossain of the

tion, demand cancellation of Haque's studentship.

According to case documents and statements of the victims, Himanish Biswas, an admission seeker from Khulna, went to the campus on Wednesday as he was called in for admission from waiting list of management department.

As he was filling up the required form, Haque and Suman took him out of the department and demanded Tk 30,000 assuring that they would arrange his admission.

Anupam was passing by the spot near Kajla gate and intervened to rescue Himanish. At this stage, the accused snatched Himanish's cellphone and necessary documents for admission and started beating up Anupam for his intervention.

Witnessing a teacher being beaten up, a group of youths who were playing cricket at nearby field rescued Anupam and caught Haque red-handed. He was later handed over to police.

Both Anupam and Himanish alleged they were receiving threatening calls from unknown people.

Tofazzal Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of Motihar police station, said they are trying to identify Suman.

RU Vice-Chancellor Prof Abdus Sobhan was not available for comments. Assistant Proctor Mustak Ahmed said they are seriously looking into the matter.

World Bank. "This is one project that could have taken the government a long way into solving many crucial infrastructure needs."

The climate change fund remained unutilised while the country was ravaged by repeated cyclones. The glaring plight of the Aila victims could not pry to the government's eyes open -- to motor its machinery into utilising the climate fund for meaningful mitigation of the Aila victims' miseries.

The port surfaced as another secondary point after the initial bustle during the caretaker government and businesses are not at all happy about that.

"But the major challenge for 2010 would be how to translate macroeconomic stability into an accelerated growth rate through higher investment," says Dr Mustafiz.

In absence of a timely Quantum Index of Production (that measures industrial performance), proxy indicators such as capital machinery import, term loan disbursement and industrial use of electricity point to a sloth in investment.

The reasons for the slack are also understandable and a major challenge for 2010. When power supply is uncertain, gas fizzling out and roads and ports inadequate, investors would think twice before flashing out money.

Power was a special area that could have been better handled in the past one year. But the initiative came quite late and 2010 is going to be a victim of the lagged plans.

"Investment which stimulates further investment did not take place leading to the current hesitation of investors," says Dr Mustafiz.

The implementation of the annual development programme (ADP) is another region that requires better handling in 2010. The government planned a big ADP and the implementation so far is good, especially in relation to absolute amount of money spent so far.

But given its importance to crowd in private investment, the pace of implementation has to accelerate in the second half of the fiscal year that begins with the New Year.

"One vulnerability that Bangladesh is now exposed to is the volatility in its major earning sectors -- exports of goods and manpower," says Dr Mustafiz.

Exports posted positive growth and yet it had seen a topsy-turvy flight. The situation is likely to spike in 2010 as major garment export competitors such as India, Vietnam and China had offered stronger stimuli to their economies and gained competitiveness, Dr Mustafiz explains.

When the global economy recovers definitively, these countries would be in a competitive advantage to grab the opportunity of demand increase.

This is exactly why Bangladesh would have to be vigilant on its own competitiveness through aggressive policy instruments.

As the New Year comes, hopes now lie on tackling the quick implementation of a string of promises and plans, strategies and tactics to bring dynamism to the private sector to motor the economy.

229 custodial deaths in 2009

States rights group report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 229 people died in custody of the law enforcers in last one year, says a report of rights group Ain O Salish Kendra.

Of them, 42 were killed in "crossfire" involving Rapid Action Battalion, 58 in "crossfire" involving police, 23 in custody of Rab and police, and two in that of joint forces.

The report unveiled yesterday says 59 army personnel, 11 BDR jawans, six civilians and wives of two army officers were killed in the February 25-26 mutiny at Pikhana headquarters.

Salish Kendra prepared the report on the basis of reports published in 11 national dailies.

It says four journalists were killed in last 12 months. During the time, 19 newsmen received death threats and 84 saw cases filed against them.

Names and workplaces of the four killed however were not mentioned.

Journalists tortured, assaulted, threatened or harassed by criminals, law enforcers, militants and political activists totalled 136.

According to the Kendra report, 58 people died in different jails. Of them, 30 were convicts and 28 under-trial prisoners.

Some 380 incidents of political violence left 42 people killed and 4,629 injured. The administration imposed section 144 for 82 times in six divisions.

A total of 446 women were raped, and of them, 62 were killed. Some 285 women were victims of violence over dowry, and 194 were killed by husbands.

Besides, 63 women came under acid attacks. Some 242 women were killed in domestic violence and nine committed suicide.

The ASK said 35 women fell victim to fatwa (religious edicts). Of them, 20 were caned and three forced to get married.

Some 78 maids were tortured, it added.

Severed body recovered in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered a severed body of a youth from two luggage near a bus counter at Mirpur Mazar road in capital's Darussalam yesterday.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Darussalam police, on information, reached the spot around 7:30am and found two luggage left on Mirpur Mazar road.

Sub-inspector Zakir Hossain of Darussalam police station said he, in presence of locals, opened the luggage and found half of the body from abdomen above in one luggage and the lower portion in another.

He added that the legs and hands of the body were tied with ropes.

Later, the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

5 flyovers

FROM PAGE 16
Sources said the proposed Y-shaped Bahadderhat flyover would start from Muradpur Road while one of its two arms would end at the 3rd Karnaphuli Bridge bound highway and the other would meet the Kalurghat Bridge bound road.

At present four intersections, including Bahadderhat, Muradpur, Sholoshahar Gate No. 2 and GEC crossing, are located on the same CDA Avenue, the lone highway that crosses the city.

City dwellers are now facing intolerable sufferings due to the gridlock at all points including these five intersections since the traffic system of the city depends on the lone highway stretching from Kalurghat to Patenga.

Vehicles from different destinations of the southern part of the district including Patiya, Anwara, Banskhal and from Cox's Bazar and Teknaf enter into the city through Bahadderhat intersection creating a serious traffic jam at the point.

It is feared that the situation would be horrible with the launching of the 3rd Karnaphuli Bridge in the middle of this year.

The Bahadderhat flyover project was recommended for approval by the cabinet in the inter-ministerial meeting held at the Housing and Public Works Ministry on December 15, said the sources in CDA.

A tender has already been invited to recruit consultants in this regard.

BANGABANDHU VERDICT

Death warrants to be issued January 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court on January 3, 2010 will issue the death warrants against five detained convicts of Bangabandhu assassination case, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday.

The date was fixed at a meeting of the law minister with the attorney general and some state counsels of this case at the minister's secretariat office in the afternoon.

"The jail authorities will take steps to execute the convicts between 21st and 28th day of receiving the death warrants," the minister told the reporters after the meeting.

He said the decision has already been conveyed to the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's Court.

The documents and a copy of Supreme Court judgment on the case also have been sent to that court, he added.

Earlier, legal complexities arose on which of the District and Sessions Judge's Court and Metropolitan Judge's Court, Dhaka, should issue the death warrants.

Shafique said the five con-

Ship blast

FROM PAGE 1
30, and Nazrul, 30, were shifted to the burn unit of DMCH from Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Hospital sources said Mintu suffered severe burns in the eyes, face and chest and Abu suffered 80 percent burns. Mintu's body was sent to his village home after autopsy yesterday afternoon.

On Wednesday, in another incident at Sonaichhari under Sitakunda upazila, five workers of Unique Traders Ship-breaking Yard owned by SM AL Mamun, son of AL lawmaker Abul Kashem Master, were injured when an iron plate fell on them.

Leopard dies

FROM PAGE 16
leopard in quarantine on Tuesday and it died the following day. They could not identify the disease immediately.

He said, "The leopard died of an unknown disease".

"No animal of the zoo had died in last three months, as we are trying hard to improve the zoo management," Mosaddek claimed.

With the death of the leopard, a total of 22 animals of the zoo died in last one year.

JS body

FROM PAGE 16
committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry yesterday decided to dissuade lawmakers from raising the issue in the upcoming parliament session to prevent the situation from getting worse.

Justice Nozrul said at a meeting on December 19 said, "It is not much difficult to make laws in parliament. Clerks draft the laws and the parliament members pass them with applause without knowing anything about them. Most of them even do not read the drafts."

His remark drew sharp criticism the next day. State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam protested the remark and said he would file complaints with the Supreme Judicial Council against the judge.

He also said a censure motion would be placed in parliament over the matter.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed