

PURBACHAL, UTTARA PLOTS Rajuk to verify information

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha is going to verify whether the plot winners of Uttara model town (third phase) and Purbachal new town projects gave any false information in their applications.

"We will take help of NBR [National Board of Revenue] while verifying the applications submitted by the plot winners," said Nurul Huda, chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk).

"Around 1.67 lakh people submitted their applications and we have been able to refund money to 60,000 applicants," said Nurul Huda. He added they would start the process of verification after the other one lakh get the refunds.

On a Prothom Alo report about submission of false halfnama (affidavit) by 18 lawmakers, the Rajuk boss said not only the lawmakers' applications but also those of the winners would be verified.

"After the verification, we will take action as per the rules against those who had submitted false statements," he said.

Nurul Huda said they were yet to issue allotment letter to any of the winners. They would start it from March on completion of reviewing all the applications.

The Rajuk has announced the names of winners of 5042 Purbachal and 582 Uttara (third phase) plots recently in stages.

Responding to the question why the deposited money have not been refunded to the applicants even after two months, Nurul Huda said everyone should get his or her money back within a month of submitting the application. Those who have not been refunded yet can complain directly to the chairman.

The Rajuk chairman said some 100 employees are working twelve hours a day, even on Fridays, to return the money as soon as possible.

GRAFT CASE Engr Mosharraf, 8 others cleared of charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday submitted final report clearing former housing and public works minister Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, former Rajuk Chairman Azizul Haq and seven others of a corruption case filed against them in September 2002.

ACC Assistant Director Amirul Islam, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the final report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka saying that the charges brought against them were not proved.

The other accused in the case are former Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) officials Khan Mohammad Enayet Hossain, Mohammad Momtazuddin, Abdul Awal Chowdhury, Abdullah Al Mamun, Mohammad Nurul Haq, Mohammad Faruque Ahmed and Humayun Khan.

Gulam Shahriar Chowdhury, an official of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, filed the case against them on September 16 in 2002 with Motijheel Police Station on charges of cancellation of applications of a large number of people in allotment of plots in Banani and Gulshan areas in the city violating the rules and regulations.

2ND CIRDAP MINISTERIAL MEETING INAUGURATED

Face adverse impacts of climate change unitedly: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the Cirdap member countries to work unitedly in facing the adverse impact of the climate change, as this could adversely affect not only livelihood but also national and regional stability.

She noted that climate change and its consequences on socio-economic conditions of large population of rural areas in this region adversely affect not only livelihood but also national and regional stability.

"Now it is time to address these issues immediately, otherwise rural development and poverty reduction programmes will not produce any lasting effects."

Hasina said this while inaugurating the 2nd ministerial meeting of Cirdap on 'Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific' organised by LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry in collaboration with the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (Cirdap) at a city hotel.



Representatives of Cirdap countries pose for photograph with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the second Cirdap ministerial meeting in the city yesterday.

She said though the member countries have diverse socio-economic, political, cultural and technological backgrounds, all of them are facing many identical problems and challenges.

The prime minister underscored the need to identify the emerging challenges and opportunities of globalisation

in the regional context. She said the threats of climatic changes on low-lying countries have already been identified. To face globalisation, investment and export of commodities should be increased. In the wake of increasing natural calamities and global economic recession, food security of the poor-

est people is seriously at stake. "We need to use our collective endeavour and wisdom to find out workable solutions to these common problems."

The premier noted that a huge portion of the world population is living in this region, but they possess very limited resources compared to the developed world. Besides, a

number of challenges the region is facing are identical among the member countries.

Hasina said the region as a whole, and certain countries, including Bangladesh in particular, have been suffering from the huge burden of over population. Besides, the countries are facing increasing threats of terrorism.

Police pick up man for making up kidnapping story

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi origin Australian citizen allegedly cooked up a story of being kidnapped to avoid paying back a loan of 60,000 dollars he took from a bank in Australia.

Detective police found and picked up Australian citizen Abdullahi-al-Kafi at Jatrabari on Tuesday. They revealed his story to reporters yesterday.

According to a case filed by his wife Shamima, Kafi was allegedly kidnapped on January 23 on his way to his residence at Khilgaon from Gulshan in the city.

The kidnappers also demanded one lakh Australian dollars as ransom, she said in the case filed with Khilgaon Police Station.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Mollah Nazrul Islam of DB told The Daily Star that the DB police found out Kafi by tracking his mobile phone and picked him up from a bus of Green Line bus service as soon as it reached Jatrabari at about 7:30am from Cox's Bazar.

During a preliminary interrogation, Kafi admitted that he cooked up the story of kidnapping to avoid paying back a loan of 60,000 Australian dollars, the police said.

Kafi, however, denied that he made up the story and told reporters that the kidnappers used sedatives to make him unconscious while he was returning home in an autorickshaw on January 23.

BNP'S CITY UNIT Feud blocks way for new body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intra-party feud in the city unit of BNP persists creating uncertainty about formation of a new committee of the unit.

Both factions of the city BNP yesterday held rallies and brought out processions separately protesting "attacks and torture" on opposition leaders, and the agreements signed between Bangladesh and India during the prime minister's recent visit.

Earlier, the two rival factions had announced their separate programmes.

The city BNP could not hold its council before the party's national council on December 8 last year because of continued internal conflicts.

Against this backdrop, party insiders hinted that high-ups of their party are planning to announce shortly formation of a committee for the city unit that is now going without it.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and former mayor Mirza Abbas are leading the two factions for establishing their respective supremacy in the city BNP, party sources noted.

Supporters of Mirza Abbas alleged that Khoka sided with expelled BNP leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, which was a betrayal to the party.

Abbas is now a member of the BNP standing committee while Khoka is a vice president in the central committee of the party formed after the party's fifth national council.

5TH AMENDMENT HEARING Moudud fears constitutional vacuum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A constitutional vacuum will be created if the Supreme Court upholds the High Court verdict that nullified the fifth amendment to the country's constitution, Barrister Moudud Ahmed told the apex court yesterday.

Late president Ziaur Rahman brought the fifth amendment to the constitution in accordance with law, as the people of the country had given him the mandate for it through a referendum, argued Moudud also a former BNP law minister.

He said the HC judgment practically rewrote the constitution, which it cannot do, adding that the judgment reflects the judges' personal political views.

The fifth amendment legitimised all governments that had been in power following the coup of August 15, 1975 till April 9, 1979, including Ziaur Rahman's ascension to the presidency.

On May 25 last year two leave to appeal petitions were filed with the SC against the HC verdict.

Moudud yesterday placed his arguments on behalf of the three lawyer petitioners before a six-member SC Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam during the fourth day's hearing of the appeals.

The hearing was later adjourned till this morning.

Govt pledges to up overseas jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is continuing diplomatic efforts to persuade the Malaysian government into reissuing call visas to 55,000 Bangladeshi workers, Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told parliament yesterday.

"Signing of memorandums of understanding with Jordan, Mauritius, the Maldives and Bahrain to increase manpower exports under process," he said.

The minister said the government has planned to send manpower to South Korea. It has also planned to send high-powered delegations to different countries to expand Bangladesh's labour market, the minister said.

He said Bangladesh mission in Kuwait is talking to the Kuwaiti government to ensure return of 30,000 Bangladeshi workers without them having to pay fines.

While replying to lawmakers' queries, he said he and the foreign minister earlier discussed the issue of visas with the Malaysian government when they visited the country.

"The Malaysian government has assured us of giving opportunities to Bangladesh workers for getting work permits," Mosharraf said in a scripted answer.

He said 2,600 Bangladeshi workers returned home from Kuwait during the last two years.

"Many Bangladeshi workers keep hiding after expiry of their work permits and work illegally. The Kuwaiti government sometimes legalises those illegal workers' stay and work under general amnesty and allows those, who want to return home, come back without charging them any fines," the minister said.

PM apprises president of her India visit

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on President Zillur Rahman at Banglabhaban and apprised him of the outcome of her visit to India, during which the two countries reached broad accords on a number of major bilateral issues.

During the meeting, the PM informed that she had talks with her Indian counterpart, Dr Manmohan Singh, about different issues.

Describing the India visit as "successful", the president expressed his happiness to the prime minister about its outcome.

PILKHANA CARNAGE CID asked to submit report by March 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit its report in the Pilkhana carnage case by March 10.

Metropolitan Magistrate Dr Abdul Majid passed the order as Police Superintendent of CID Abdul Kahar Akond, also investigation officer (IO) of the case, failed to submit the probe report yesterday.

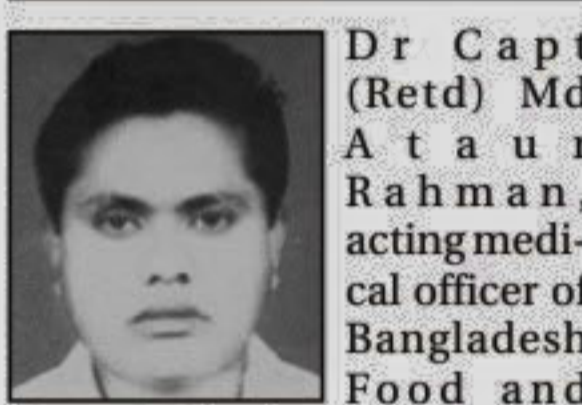
CID so far arrested 2,183 Bangladeshi Rifles (BDR) men and civilians in this connection. Of them, 30 are civilians, including BNP leader Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu and Awami League (AL) leader Torab Ali.

Of the accused, 2,148 have been remanded on charge of their involvement with the February 25-26 BDR mutiny while 521 had given confessional statements to magistrates on different dates.

Meantime, a total of 197 BDR jawans had earlier submitted petitions to different courts to let them retract their confessional statements.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Dr Capt Md A Taur Rahman, acting medical officer of Bangladesh Food and Sugar Industries Corporation, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Birdem Hospital in the city on Tuesday at the age of 55, says a press release.

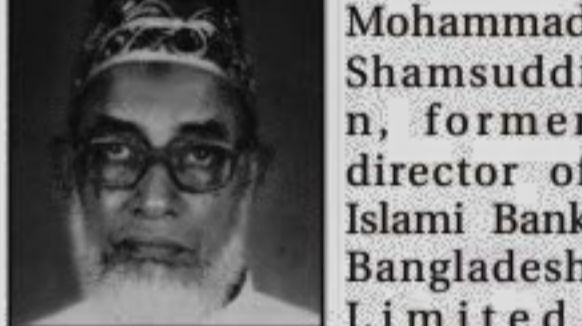
He left behind his wife, one son and three daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His body has been taken to his village home in Tangail for burial after namaz-e-janaza at Corporation's headquarters ChiniShilpa Bhaban in the city yesterday.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Secretary Dewan Zakir Hossain and Corporation Chairman Ranjit Kumar Biswas in separate messages condoled the death and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family. They also prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Maulana Shamsuddin

METRO DESK



Maulana Mohammad Shamsuddin, former director of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Chittagong Metropolitan Hospital on January 26 at the age of 83, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, five daughters and two sons to mourn his death.

He was buried at the Central Graveyard of Chittagong Station Road after namaz-e-janaza at Chittagong Parade Ground yesterday.

Prof Abu Nasser Muhammad Abdus Zaher, chairman of board of directors and M Fariduddin Ahmad, managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, condoled the death. They also prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

WEATHER Temperature may fall UNB, Dhaka Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

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