

Land selection to expand city on the cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Selection of land at Ruhitpur in Keraniganj, Tongi in Gazipur and Vakurta in Savar to build new cities for expansion of Dhaka city is under process.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan said this to the House yesterday while replying to lawmakers' queries.

Mannan said the government plans to stop requisition of farmland in Dhaka metropolitan and its adjacent areas for ensuring food security.

"Detailed area plan is being prepared for the areas under Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan. Building of all kinds of structures on water bodies and farmland has been banned in the plan," he said.

He said the government has planned to construct as many as 1,806 flats in Dhaka city for class III and IV government employees.

In reply to another query, the state minister said the ministry will cancel allocation of plots in Purbachal and Uttara and other areas under Rajuk if anybody provides false information in affidavits claiming that he/she does not have land in the Dhaka city.

Interview of 3 batches to appoint new DCs soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Establishment will soon interview some 270 officers from the three batches of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) to make them deputy commissioner.

The Cabinet Division has already prepared a list of the officers to this end, sources in the ministry said.

The list includes 22 officers from the 84 batch while 148 from 85 batch and 100 from 86 batch of the BCS.

The ministry is now inquiring whether any disciplinary action was taken against any of the officers in the list or there is any allegation of corruption against them.

The Awami League government after assuming the office in January last year changed the DCs in a reshuffle in administration.

The government is going to bring more changes in district administration appointing efficient officers in the DC posts, said the sources.

"The change may come next week," said an official of the ministry.

JS committee recommends salary hike of judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary sub-committee yesterday proposed increase in the gross amount of salaries and allowances of the judges of Supreme Court and lower courts.

The sub-committee formed by the parliamentary standing committee on law ministry in its report recommended for increasing the salary of chief justice to Tk 1.52 lakh from Tk 43,050.

It also recommended for increasing salaries of judges of the Appellate Division to Tk 1.23 lakh from Tk 36,900 and Tk 1.08 lakh for a judge of the High Court Division from Tk 34,050.

The sub-committee, formed in May last year, placed its partial report to the parliamentary body in a meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

In the report, the sub-committee also proposed for increasing of house rent, telephone allowance and transport facilities of the judges.

Sources said the parliamentary body started discussion on the sub-committee's report.

Awami League lawmaker and committee member advocate Rahmat Ali said at the meeting that the salaries of judges could be increased.

Members of the committee also discussed the issue of examining draft bills and legislative proposals at the committee according to the article 76 of the constitution.

PM orders stern action to stop graft, malpractice in Biman

Inaugurates airline's new logo for fresh start

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday ordered stern action to stop corruption and irregularities in Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited.

"You have to curb all sorts of corruption and irregularities with an iron hand," she said in her clear direction for the authorities concerned as the Biman is now poised for a fresh takeoff with a new look.

Hasina issued the directive while inaugurating a new logo and livery of the recently-converted aviation company, Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited, at the VVIP Terminal of Dhaka International Airport.

She also asked the Biman officials to restart the Dhaka-New York flight as soon as possible after consulting the US counterpart.

She emphasised the resumption of all suspended Biman routes to destinations wherein a good number of Bangladeshi expatriates live.

She lauded the move of Biman authorities for switching over to e-ticketing as this would help stop the cumulative irregularities involving ticket booking.

Hasina asked the authorities to increase the on-flight

services to attract more passengers.

A new journey of the Biman started yesterday with new logo and livery and inclusion of new-generation Boeing 777-200ER and Boeing 737-800NG airplanes in its fleet.

The PM also cut the logo embedded cake and got on board the new-generation aircraft.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader also spoke on the occasion.

Hasina received models of 777 and 737 aircraft from Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited Board of Directors Chairman Jamal Uddin Ahmed and Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Zakul Islam.

Hasina deplored that after 2001, Biman was turned a haven of looting and irregularities. "They tried to destroy the Biman permanently," she told her audience about the alleged mismanagement under the subsequent government.

She mentioned that the caretaker government, during their two-year rule, tried to pull up the organisation from its ramshackle state.

"But that was just to make the organisation a little bit better from its about-to-die condition," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina looks at a model of a plane of Bangladesh Airlines Limited after inaugurating the new logo and livery at Dhaka International Airport yesterday.

Hasina said that after assuming power her government took quick steps to modernise the Biman, including reconstituting its board of directors.

She congratulated Biman officials on making profit in this fiscal year in a turnaround. The aviation company earned

a profit of Tk 35 crore in the first while Tk 83 crore in the second quarter of the fiscal year.

She was very much happy to know that the Dhaka-New York flight would be resumed very soon.

She mentioned that Bangladeshi people around

the world are very much interested to fly Biman. "They put Biman as their first choice. You have to utilise this opportunity," she said.

The premier proposed to convert the age-old aircraft of Biman to cargo planes in the reform process.

WORLD CANCER DAY TODAY

80pc cases not diagnosed at early stage

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Most types of cancer can be cured if diagnosed and treated early, but 80 percent of cases in the country remain undiagnosed at early stage due to lack of healthcare facilities at grassroots level.

The World Cancer Day will be observed today with the slogan 'Cancer can be prevented too'.

According to health experts, around two lakh cancer patients are diagnosed and 1.5 lakh cancer patients die a year. To control the disease, the government in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) formulated a strategy in 2008, which has been lying unimplemented.

The strategy includes vision, goals, principles, objectives and indicators to guide present and future courses of action to control cancer.

Its main objectives are to raise awareness about

tobacco-related cancer and ensure early clinical diagnosis of oral, cervical, breast and other cancers through screening and motivation.

Other objectives include extending laboratory diagnostic support through medical university and college hospitals, introducing minimal therapy for early stage of cancer and widening the coverage of palliative care by providing human resource and supplying necessary drugs and equipments to the district level in collaboration with NGOs.

Implementation of the strategy is imperative in a country like Bangladesh where the number of cancer patients has been increasing day by day, experts said.

Prevention of cancer and its proper treatment should be a priority issue of the government, because it is found that the patients suffering from cancer are mostly aged between 30 and

66 years.

As the people of this age group are the main workforce, it causes a huge economic loss to the country when they lose their ability to work, said Prof Syed Mohammad Akram Hussain, chairman of the department of Oncology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

As a WHO member state, the country must implement the strategy for the betterment of the nation, he added.

The shortage of resources and manpower can be overcome by proper planning and coordination, the health experts said.

"Globally cancer is the second leading cause of death. So, cancer control needs special attention," said Prof ABMF Karim, prof emeritus, Verije University of Netherlands.

In 2008, a Cancer Control Taskforce was formed with the Director General of the

Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) as its head, which was supposed to meet every three months. But no meeting took place in the last one year. Even District Cancer Control Committees headed by the civil surgeons and hospital-based cancer control committees remain inactive.

When asked about the implementation of the National Cancer Control Strategy, Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) Prof Shah Monir Hossain said awareness campaign is going on to some extent.

"But it is true that the meeting of Cancer Control Taskforce is not taking place regularly. However, we will activate it soon," he said, adding that implementation of the strategy is imperative to raise awareness in society for prevention of risk factors and early detection of cancer.

BANGABANDHU MURDER

Noor's extradition depends on talks

Says Canadian MP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extradition of fugitive major (ret'd) Noor Chowdhury, one of the 12 convicted in the assassination case of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will depend on the negotiations between the governments of Bangladesh and Canada, a Canadian MP said yesterday.

The opposition Liberal Party MP Maria Minna said Noor Chowdhury has appealed to a Canadian court to obtain refugee status and it will depend on the court whether he gets the status or not.

"If the court denies the status, he will have chances to again appeal to the higher court," she said at a press briefing organised by a Canada-based Bangla magazine Deshe Bideshe at the National Press Club in the capital.

Asked what happens if the highest court of Canada denies Noor Chowdhury's appeal for asylum status, Minna said it would depend on the negotiations between the two countries.

Minna, also chairperson of Canada-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship

Group, said she couldn't raise the issue in the parliament, considering the fact that it is a confidential matter and is being dealt in the court.

She said Canada stopped capital punishment and prefers to deal with the countries supporting ban on death sentence.

"But of course, we cannot impose our law on the citizens of other countries," said Maria Minna, former minister of International Cooperation.

Earlier in November last year, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said there would be no barrier if Canada rejects Noor Chowdhury's appeal.

Minna is elected from Ontario, Toronto where a large number of Canadian Bangladeshis are residing.

Deshe Bideshe Chief Editor Nazrul Minto said Minna was one of the Canadian MPs who strongly support the causes of the Bangladeshis Canadians and of Bangladesh as well.

Minna is on a private visit to Bangladesh and is scheduled to meet prime minister and some other ministers and will discuss a range of issues on governance and development.

Govt extends FFs' retirement age by two years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed a bill extending the service age of the freedom-fighter officials and employees by two years as public servant.

From now on, a freedom fighter will retire from the government service on the completion of 59 years of age, instead of 57.

In doing so, the House ratified an ordinance promulgated by the president on December 13 last year by increasing the service age of freedom fighters.

If a public servant, who is also a freedom fighter, is on leave preparatory retirement immediately before the commencement of the new provision, such leave shall be terminated and he shall be re-employed in the service in such a manner as if he never had retired, said a provision of the bill.

LGRD Minister Syed Asharaful Islam, who is also

in charge of parliamentary business for the establishment ministry, said freedom fighters have long been subjected to repression, humiliation and even many of them were killed.

"If the service age of public servants, who are not freedom fighters, are increased by two years, then the service age of the freedom fighters will be increased by another two years," said Ashraf, who proposed the passage of the bill in the parliament.

In line with the recommendation of the parliamentary standing committee on establishment ministry, the House incorporated a provision in the bill empowering the government to verify the identity of freedom fighters.

However a public servant who entered the service as a freedom fighter, shall be exempted from such verification, said the provision.

28 top cops sent to retirement after promotion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recently sent 11 police officials to retirement after promoting them to the rank of Inspector General (IGP), 11 others to the rank of additional IGP and six to deputy inspector general retrospective from 2002 as per a court order.

Home ministry officials said the government ensures normal retirement of some 56 police officials who had been sent to retirement forcibly during the BNP-Jamaat coalition government tenure.

Talking to The Daily Star Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder said those

police officials framed charges in the court and got judgement in their favour.

Following the court verdict they had been reinstated to the police department and sent to retirement normally with the latest benefits.

In their charges, the police officials mentioned that they would become IGP, additional IGP and DIG if they were allowed to continue their job.

As the court passed judgement in line with their claim, the government had given them retrospective promotion and sent to retirement normally, added the home secretary.

3 secretaries-in-charge

BSS, Dhaka

Three additional secretaries were made secretaries-in-charge to different ministries, an official hand out said in the city yesterday.

Additional Secretary of home ministry Md Golam Hossain was appointed secretary-in-

charge of the commerce ministry while Additional Secretary Riti Ibrahim was made acting member of the Planning Commission.

Besides, Additional Secretary Khandkar Sajjaduzzaman was appointed the secretary-in-charge to the defence ministry.

VANDALISM ON SC PREMISES

Lawyers acquitted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday acquitted two Supreme Court lawyers in connection with a seditious case filed against them on charges of vandalism on the SC premises on November 30, 2006.

The acquitted -- Subrata Chowdhury and Sheikh Awsfar Rahman -- were present during the delivery of judgment.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order.

The judge said the incidents of vandalizing on the SC premises were serious but the prosecution failed to prove the charges.

Twenty prosecution witnesses, including complainant, SC officials and two barristers, had given their statements before court saying that they saw no vandalism on the SC premises on November 30, 2006. So, the two lawyers were acquitted of the seditious charges, the judge said.

Meantime, the acquitted expressed their satisfaction over the judgment and said the charges were brought against them by the then four-party alliance government to harass them.

Earlier, Awami League and nine other political parties filed writ petitions with the High Court challenging the legality of taking over the charge of chief adviser of the caretaker government by the then president

Professor Dr Iajuddin Ahmed in 2006.

After the hearing, the HC started passing orders on the petitions but the then chief justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain stayed the hearings of the petitions.

Following the incidents, lawyers and litigants were aggrieved and outsiders vandalised on the SC premises.

On December 5, 2006, Rafiqul Islam filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station accusing 200 people, also including noted jurists Dr Kamal Hossain, Amir-Ul Islam, Rakanuddin Mahmud and Tania Amir, of vandalism and tearing off the national flag.

However, the investigation officer submitted charge sheet only against Subrata Chowdhury and Sheikh Awsfar Rahman on January 6 last year.

Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Abu and Additional PP Shah Alam Talukder said they tried to prove the charges but the witnesses saw no vandalism on the SC premises.

Defence counsel SM Rezaul Karim told the reporters that the lawyers including Dr Kamal Hossain, barristers M Amir-Ul Islam and Rakanuddin Mahmud were not involved with the vandalizing on the SC premises, even though SC Keeper Rafiqul Islam as per direction from the four-party alliance government had filed the case against them.

LAW MINISTRY Resentment over new appointments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry has issued a gazette notification giving two additional secretaries the current charge of secretaries at the ministry's two divisions, causing resentment among a section of officers.

Anwarul Haque, who was an additional secretary at the Law and Justice Division, was made the secretary (current charge) of the same division while additional secretary (current charge) of Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division Mohammad Shahidul Haque made secretary (current charge) of the same division.

The gazette notification was issued on Monday.

In December last year, the Supreme Court declared illegal the appointment of Kazi Habibul Awal as law secretary, but a section of officers have been demanding his reinstatement.

These officers are trying to protest the new appointments, said an official.

Meanwhile, the law ministry refuted reports published in a section of the media yesterday that the officials of the law ministry observed work abstention programme on Tuesday to protest the ministry's decision regarding the new appointment.

When contacted, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed told The Daily Star last night that the appointment of two secretaries in current charge were made in accordance with the rules of business and the Supreme Court verdict in the case involving Kazi Habibul Awal.

ZIA ORPHANAGE CASE HC asks parties to dispose of rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed both the parties of Zia Orphanage Trust embezzlement case to take steps as soon as possible to dispose of through hearing the two rules it had issued earlier regarding the proceedings against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman.

In October last year, the HC issued two separate rules upon the government and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to explain why the proceedings against Khaleda and Tarique in this case should not be quashed.

The HC yesterday also ruled that the government and ACC would not oppose Khaleda and Tarique if they pray for adjournment of the proceedings of the case at the trial court.

The HC bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Md Abdur Razaque yesterday came up with the decisions following the submissions made by the counsels for both sides of the case.

A Dhaka court is set to hold charge hearing on March 3 against Khaleda and Tarique in this case.

Death anniversary of AR Mallick

METRO DESK



Today is the 13th death anniversary of Dr AR Mallick, an eminent educationist and the first finance minister, says a press release.

Dr Mallick was the president of the Liberation Council of Intelligentsia in 1971. Representing Bangladesh at the UN, he worked to mobilise world support for the liberation war.

On the occasion of his death anniversary, a discussion and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Rajapur in Dhamrai and on the RKB Mallick School/College/AR Mallick Library premises.

Foods will also be distributed among orphans and underprivileged children at Rampura Deepshikha Centre in Dhaka.

Al-Mamoon Sanaul Huq

METRO DESK



Today is the 17th death anniversary of poet Al-Mamoon Sanaul Huq, former ambassador and secretary, says a press release.

A discussion and milad mahfil will be held at Chaura AM Sanaul Huq High School in Brahmanbaria after Zohr prayers today.