

HC asks for traffic report

Wants monthly update on installation of speed control device on vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday came forward to end reckless driving in the country by directing the government to submit within a month a report on the progress in implementing traffic laws and rules through controlling automobile speeds.

The HC move was prompted by the recent killing of kindergarten student Hamim Sheikh by reckless driving of a bus driver in the capital.

In a suo moto rule, the HC directed the government authorities to submit monthly reports to the court elaborating on the steps taken to install speed governor seals in all automobiles as per the court's earlier verdict.

The HC on June 22 last year directed Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to conduct a research on a new device developed by NITS Services Private Limited, an organisation of Nitol Motors Limited, to control automobile speeds in order to prevent road accidents.

BRTA officials the same day told the court that speed governor seals could not be installed in all automobiles, as the mechanism was only available for diesel-run vehicles.

However, other manufacturers of speed controlling devices later came up with their own solutions.

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Commuters face suffocating dust while travelling by the worn out road at the entrance to second Buriganga Bridge in Keraniganj area every day. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Air pollution in city takes alarming turn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air pollution in the capital has taken an alarming turn, posing serious health problems for city dwellers.

Things get worse in dry season as air, thick with particulates, becomes a prevalent cause of chest and respiratory diseases, say health experts.

According to some sources of Department of Environment (DoE), the density of airborne particulate matter (PM) has reached 247 micrograms per cubic meter (mcm) in Dhaka which is nearly five times the acceptable level of 50 PM per mcm set by the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) of Bangladesh.

Although there is no definite study, doctors suggest exposure to such a volume of air pollution may cause premature deaths and also various diseases including pulmonary, respiratory and neurological illnesses.

This air pollutant also has an adverse effect on all other

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Govt seeks stay on HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday filed a petition with the Supreme Court seeking stay on a High Court verdict that declared the existing Warrant of Precedence illegal and void.

The HC on February 4 in a verdict directed the government to issue a new Warrant of Precedence for the republic's officers, giving district judges and equivalent judicial officers precedence over the chiefs of armed forces and government secretaries.

The attorney general's office filed the petition with the Chamber Judge's Court of the Appellate Division on behalf of the government.

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WARRANT OF PRECEDENCE Court ruling sparks mixed reactions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recent High Court verdict brought the Warrant of Precedence into the centre of discussion as its longstanding practice would be changed if the government revises the current precedent following the court verdict.

The HC verdict, which declared the existing Warrant of Precedence illegal and void on Thursday, sparked mixed reaction among people in the judicial arena and administration.

In its verdict, the HC bench said, "As the constitution is the Supreme Law of the land, all constitutional office-holders are to be placed first in order of priority in the table of the new Warrant of Precedence."

The directives came following a writ petition filed by a district judge in 2006.

The complete judgment was not available yet, but what drew attention of most is that

district judges will get priority over secretaries and the chiefs of the three forces. According to the existing Warrant of Precedence, district judges' position is just one step above deputy secretaries almost at the bottom of the list.

Despite the issue being discussed in every corner of the administration, none of the serving bureaucrats is willing to make any comment on the record.

A few top-level bureaucrats only told The Daily Star that they are observing everything and want to wait until the case is disposed in the Supreme Court.

Attorney General Mahubub Alam yesterday appealed with the SC against the HC directives for revising the Warrant of Precedence.

He told The Daily Star that an unstable situation might arise in all sections of the government because of the HC verdict. The existing continuity

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CTG ARMS HAUL CASE Finger pointed at top agency men

Key accused Hafiz reiterates in confessional statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Md Hafizur Rahman, the prime accused in Chittagong Arms case, in a confessional statement here Saturday night hinted at involvement of the same high officials of intelligence agencies and leaders of United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa), as mentioned in his previous confessional statement.

He made the statement under section-164 in the arms smuggling case filed under the section-25/B of Special Powers Act, one of the two cases filed in connection with the seizure of the deadly consignment.

Hafiz took eight hours since 5:00pm to make the confessional statement before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mahabubur Rahman, who recorded the confession in 43 pages, said the sources.

Hafiz made his previous confessional statement under

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SC judges should make their wealth statements public

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Judges of the Supreme Court divisions should publish their wealth statements in the interest of a transparent judiciary, chief justice-designate Mohammad Fazlul Karim yesterday said.

"The judges in India place their wealth statements in annual court reports, and I feel that the judges in our country too should do that for transparency," he said.

Justice Karim was talking to reporters at his SC office yesterday afternoon.

Appointed 18th chief justice of the country on February 4, he will take oath at the Bangabhaban at 11:00am today.

Karim said he would examine if there had been any "disaster" in the appointment of higher court judges in the past.

In 2007, the then chief justice Md Ruhul Amin observed that "a great disaster" had taken place in the appointment of judges.

The new chief of the apex court said he would try his best to

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SMILING GOLD: (L-R) Munni Khanom, U Chinu Marma, Jaw U Pru and Moreom Khatun Bipasha show their accolades after the presentation ceremony at the National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur where Bangladesh won four gold in karate yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Hosts' gold rush

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a gold rush for Bangladesh on the tenth day of the 11th South Asian Games yesterday. And believe it or not the ladies picked up more than the men on a day Bangladesh crossed their previous best effort in the regional showpiece event by winning six gold -- an astonishing four in karate, one in taekwondo and the last but not the least -- a dream gold in cricket.

Jaw U Pru led the way of a never-seen-before golden day for Bangladesh by winning the women's individual kata event after defeating India's Sadhya Chandrakar. She also combined with Munni Khanom and U Chinu Marma to lift the team event gold at the National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Moreom Khatun Bipasha then emerged from nowhere to win the Under-45kg category kumite gold at the expense of India's Velenia Valentina.

The men's team of Syed Nuruzzaman, Hasan Khan Sun, Hossain Khan Moon also joined the golden party after defeating their Pakistani counterparts in the gold bout of kata event.

Bangladesh, who had never won four gold in a day in one discipline in the regional gala, hardly stopped there. News spread from the National Sports Council Gymnasium that Shammi Akhter won the second gold in taekwondo in 49kg category.

When the karatekas danced in glory at the Indoor Stadium, a few blocks away at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Bangladesh cricketers were fighting for gold against Sri Lanka. And they also did not deprive the nation. The cricketers won the gold with a six-run win in a nail-biting final.

The gold in cricket improved Bangladesh's collection to 14 gold 19 silver and 44 bronze. Bangladesh's previous best in the Games was 11 gold, also on home soil in 1993.

Runaway leaders India might have lost the battle in the hockey filed against bitter-rivals Pakistan, who won the final 4-3 on penalties after the match had ended 1-1, but they continued to dictate the track and filed events, shooting and swimming. At

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Cricket glory Bangladesh's

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh posted an exciting six-run victory over Sri Lanka to delight the country with a gold in the cricket event of the 11th South Asian Games at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The young Bangladeshi cricketers made history by becoming the first team to win the cricket gold included for the first time in SA Games.

In front of a cheering home crowd the Bangladesh Under-21 team shot their Sri Lankan counterparts out for 151 runs in defence of 157 in the day-night Twenty20 affair.

The victory in gold deciding encounter not only brought the highest honour for the country but also avenged their 28-run defeat against the same opponents in a group match.

Leg-spinner Sabbir Rahman was the hero in the end as his four-wicket haul helped Bangladesh secure the victory while off-spinner Nasir Hossain took two wickets.

Earlier, Bangladesh's innings was built around

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ACC gets JS probe report

Will probe 'graft' by Sircar, Hamid, Delwar; looking into allegations against Mahmudur Rahman, Mainul, Manju

EMRAN HOSSAIN

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is likely to initiate a probe into alleged misappropriation of Tk 2.5 crore by former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, his deputy Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui and former chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain as parliament yesterday forwarded its investigation report to the anti-graft body for further investigation.

The ACC has also initiated separate inquiries against the daily Amar Desh editor Mahmudur Rahman, former caretaker government adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain and former communications minister Anwar Hossain Manju on charges of amassing wealth beyond known sources of income and misuse of power.

On February 5, the commission decided to initiate inquiries against Mahmudur, Mainul and Manju as the anti-graft watchdog in its preliminary

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PM reaches Kuwait

UNB, Kuwait City

A red carpet was rolled out to greet Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina as she landed at Kuwait International Airport yesterday afternoon to begin a three-day state visit to the Gulf country.

Advisor to the Kuwaiti Prime Minister Dr Sheikh Rafah al Sabah al Jaber received Hasina at the tarmac as a special airplane carrying her flew into the airport at 6:00pm (local time).

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