

Energy Regulatory Commission Bill passed

UNB, Sangsad Bhaban

Parliament yesterday passed the Energy Regulatory Commission (Amendment) Bill 2010 specifying academic qualifications for the posts of chairman and member of the watchdog body on the country's potential sector.

According to the Bill, the chairman and members of the commission will be graduate engineers in the subjects of mine and mineral resources, electrical, chemical, mechanical or petroleum.

Or they will have to be postgraduates from recognised universities in geological science, geology and mineral studies, law, economics, accounting, business administration, management, finance, banking, marketing, public administration, chemistry, physics or applied physics.

Besides, they will have to have practical experience of minimum 15 years.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Enamul Huq piloted the Bill that was passed by voice vote.

Opposition BNP members Barrister Mahub Uddin Khokon, Zafrul Islam Chowdhury and Nazimuddin Ahmad and Jamaat member Hamidur Rahman Azad moved motions for eliciting public opinion to make the bill "transparent".

The opposition motions were rejected by voice vote.

HC issues rule on Qazi Faruque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule asking ousted chairman of Proshika Qazi Faruque Ahmed and two others to explain within two weeks why punitive action should not be taken against them for misinterpreting its verdict.

The two others are former directors of Proshika Nargis Zahan Banu and Khaze Alam.

The single HC bench of Justice Shamim Hasnain issued the rule upon a petition filed by Chief Executive of Proshika Mahubul Karim.

He stated in the petition that the HC in a verdict on August 11, 2009 directed that the present committee, headed by Mahubul Karim, will run Proshika, but Qazi Faruque Ahmed could enter into the Proshika office as its former chairman.

The Supreme Court (SC) on September 2, 2009 in an order deleted the word 'former' following a petition filed by Qazi Faruque, but he (Faruque) and two other contemptors issued letters to different organizations, including media offices, claiming that Qazi Faruque is the chairman of Proshika, the petitioner said.

He also said Qazi Faruque has been misinterpreting the HC verdict, which is similar to contempt of court.

Advocate Anisul Huq assisted by Barrister Maniruzzaman Asad appeared for the petitioner.

BDR CARNAGE CASE Pintu granted ad-interim bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to former BNP lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu for three months in the Pikhana carnage case.

An HC bench of Justice Sheikh Rezowan Ali and Justice Syed Abu Kowser Md Dabirush-shan also issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why Pintu should not be granted regular bail in this case.

Pintu's lawyer Advocate Khandaker Mahabub Hossain told The Daily Star that there is now no bar to his client's release from jail following the HC order.

The police filed the case in connection with the carnage at BDR headquarters on February 28, 2009. Pintu was shown arrested in this case.

Pintu, who was arrested on June 1, 2009, filed the bail petition with the HC in August last year.

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq appeared for Pintu, while Advocate Anisul Huq and additional attorney general AKM Zahirul Hoque argued for the government.

Accountability of three organs of state a must to run country

PM tells lawyers

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government wants to establish accountability in all spheres, including the executive, the judiciary and the legislature, for a smooth run of the country towards progress.

She also called upon lawyers and judges to work in a way so that people can get justice without hassles.

The premier was addressing the foundation stone laying function of the multi-storey building of Dhaka Bar Association on Dhaka Judge Court premises.

Hasina informed her audience that appointing some 100 judges is under process for quick disposal of the pending cases.

"We are working to establish transparency and accountability in the executive body and, likewise, we want to establish transparency and accountability in the legislative and the judiciary also," she told the function.

The PM observed that a nation cannot step forward if the three organs of the state--legislative, judiciary and executive--do not work properly and harmoniously.

Hasina made it clear that her government would not allow injustice in the country and would try all injustices that had taken place in the past.

"We will try all anti-state activities, including the August 21 grenade attack, ten-truck arms case. We shall also try the November 3, 1975 killings."

She said that her government wants to eradicate terrorism and militancy from the country to give a safe place to the people to live in.

Referring to the development of the rural areas, she said, "We have to provide a strong economic base in the rural areas for development of the whole of the country."

She described her government's various activities for the welfare of



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lays the foundation of a multi-storey building of Dhaka Bar Association on Dhaka Judge Court premises yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

the judiciary saying, "We never showed disrespect to the judges."

In this context, she mentioned that the BNP-led four-party alliance government did not make permanent 22 judges of the Supreme Court as they were appointed during Awami League's previous tenure.

"They were sent back. But during our tenure, we did not do that as Awami League knows how to show respects to the judges," she said.

She said that assuming office after the December 29, 2008 election her government appointed more than 200 judges to the lower courts and appointment of another 100 judges is under process.

Hasina urged the lawyers to look after people's cause so that they could get justice in the quickest time.

"One of the major aims of this

government is to provide facility to the poor so that they could get justice," she said.

The PM mentioned that her government has taken initiative to introduce Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system in the country to save time and money of the people.

"You see, general people often lost their all wealth just to carry on with a case on a nominal issue. We want to stop this," she said.

The premier said that after getting the recommendation from the Law Commission, her government would start the ADR system.

Also, her government wants to put the legal aid system on a strong ground.

Hasina praised the lawyers for their bravery and important role

after the 1/11 changeover as they supported her and the party leaders in facing the cases that were filed during the army-backed caretaker regime.

The PM also congratulated the lawyers on their playing a hectic role in ensuring justice in the killings of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members.

She said after the killing of Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975, Ziaur Rahman "grabbed power illegally through violating the constitution and awarded the killers".

"Can you imagine self-confessed killers as ambassadors and high commissioners abroad? What was the reputation of the country then?" she questioned.

Hasina mentioned that at present

her government's prime work is to advance the country and make it a real digital Bangladesh as is stated in her election manifesto.

Regarding the construction of the multi-storeyed Dhaka Bar Association building, the PM said that her government would provide Tk 20 crore as the president of the country pledged to give.

Presided over by the President of the Bar Association Mokhlesur Rahman, the function was also addressed by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmad, State Minister Kamrul Islam and Home Minister Sahara Khatun.

Later, the PM laid the foundation-stone of the multi-storeyed building and inaugurated the website of the Dhaka Bar.



Overhead cables catch fire following an electrical short-circuit at a transformer at Dainik Bangla intersection in the city yesterday evening, damaging electrical and Internet cables.

PHOTO: STAR

Only 3 private varsities have own campuses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only three out of 51 private universities have their own campuses on at least 5 acres of land as per the Private University Act 1992, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told the House yesterday.

According to the Act, a private university will have to establish its own campus and enough infrastructures at least on five acres of land permanently.

In reply to a query of AL lawmaker Mohammad Shah Alam, the minister in a scripted answer said the three universities, which have own campuses, include North South University, International Islamic University, Chittagong and BGC Trust University.

But the two later universities could not show any documents proving ownership of own campuses, although they are claiming the campuses as their permanent ones, he added.

Nahid said 10 other universities claim

that they also have their own campuses, but none of them could show five acres of land in the name of their respective universities.

The universities include Independent University Bangladesh, East West University, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology, Manarat International University, University of Science and Technology, Chittagong, Premier University, Brac University and Gono Biswabidyalaya.

EDUCATION LOAN The education minister said the government has planned to introduce a project to provide education loans to reduce burden of expenditure for higher education.

"The project has yet to get final nod. Therefore, conditions and amount of the loan have not been fixed yet," he in a scripted answer to BNP lawmaker Zafrul Islam Chowdhury.

Historic Dhaka now a city of gridlock

Info minister tells int'l seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The history and heritage of Dhaka is glorious and anyone living in the city could be proud of it, but today its manifold problems have made the citizens' lives quite difficult - it was a sheer grievance of a cabinet minister expressed at a programme commemorating the 400 years of Dhaka city.

"Dhaka was part of all democratic and progressive movements, including that of the language movement and the great liberation war," Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said yesterday.

Dhaka was once famous for its numerous mosques and then for environment-friendly rickshaws, but has now achieved notoriety for overwhelming traffic jam, he said while speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of an international seminar on "The history, heritage and urban issues of capital Dhaka" organised by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (ASB).

The three-day seminar at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University was organised as part of the three-year celebration of 400 years of Dhaka, which witness the rise and fall of political, cultural and economic history.

Academics and researchers from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, India and Bangladesh are participating in the seminar where some 90 papers will be presented.

The papers will reflect on the history of Dhaka city, its society, economy and culture since 1608, its foods, urban aesthetics and images as well as challenges and the ways to address them.

ASB will publish and reprint as many as 19 books both in Bangla and English versions, including Dhaka Bibliography, Women in Dhaka, Plants Wildlife Gardens and Environment of Capital Dhaka, Dhaka in the Liberation War, Dhaka's Food, Language Jokes and Proverbs of Dhaka and A to Z of Dhaka.

The minister said, "Dhaka has a rich heritage of art, culture and architecture, but it has many problems like housing, water crisis, electricity crisis and traffic jam."

However, he said, the government has taken a number of steps to ease traffic jam and will undertake some more that include construction of 32-kilometres elevated expressway, operating circular waterway.

"I hope that the academicians at the seminar will put forward some recommendations to solve those problems," Azad said, adding that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is keen to modernise Dhaka and is making every effort to that end.

Speaking as the special guest, Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said Dhaka has become a centre of secular education and thoughts with the establishment of Dhaka College in 1841 and Dhaka University in 1921.

ASB Senior Fellow Prof Amirul Islam presided over the seminar while ASB General Secretary Prof Mahfuza Khanam and Chief Coordinator of the 400-year celebration of Dhaka Prof Sharif Uddin Ahmed also spoke.

ASB also organised an exhibition of paintings, photographs and artefacts on 'Capital Dhaka' at its Art Gallery the same day. The exhibition will remain open for all from 10:00am to 5:00pm till February 28.

Lawmakers to submit wealth statements in next fiscal

Says minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday said lawmakers and ministers would have to submit their wealth statements from the next fiscal year to ensure accountability and transparency of the government activities.

The ministers and lawmakers must submit wealth statements to provide the proof of transparency and accountability, he said at a seminar at the chief guest.

He also said the government is working towards strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission. "We want that the commission function independently."

The minister also said that anti-corruption issues would be included in the school curriculum.

Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) in association with USAID and Progati organised the seminar on 'Anti-Corruption reform efforts for women entrepreneurs' at a city hotel.

US Ambassador James F Moriarty said corruption compounds the discrimination women experience more broadly throughout society.

"As caregivers, they are confronted with corrupt practices affecting their families' healthcare. As parents, they experience demands for bribe for school enrolment. As jobseekers, they have to pay foremen, supervisors and personnel officers in cash and in kind to get a job. As merchants, they are forced to pay protection money to criminals," he said.

Acting Law Secretary Shahidul Haque said, "Developing internal mechanism in each institution and ensuring implementation of law is the only way to resist corruption."

Women entrepreneurs and representatives from donor agencies, government institutions and banks attended the seminar presided over by President of BWCCI Selima Ahmed.

5 RMG workers injured in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five garment workers were injured in a fire that broke out at a garment factory of Godanail under Siddhirganj in Narayanganj yesterday.

Witnesses said the fire originated from a machine at the finishing section on the ground floor of Knit Concern in the area around 9:30am.

The firefighters doused the flames at 10:00am.

Yeahia Ali Sikdar, senior station officer of Haziganj fire station of Narayanganj, said as the news spread to the seven-storey garment building, workers got panicked and rushed out of the building hurriedly.

Five workers sustained injuries at that time and took treatment from local hospitals and clinics, he added.

Siraj, manager of the finishing section, told firefighters that the fire engulfed some clothes worth around Tk 50 thousand.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mukhlesur Rahman of Siddhirganj Police Station said following the incident, the factory workers tried to stage agitation alleging that the factory, which does not have adequate emergency exits.

Police reached the spot and brought the situation under control, he added.

Kolkata mayor due Feb 26

UNB, Dhaka

Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, mayor of Kolkata in West Bengal State of India, will arrive in Dhaka on February 26 on a three-day visit at the invitation of Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Bikash will be accorded a civic reception in the city.

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