

COURT FEE HIKE HC issues rule on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court on Thursday issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why its decision to raise the rates of court fees in the cases of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC) should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Md Abu Tariq issued the rule upon a public interest writ petition filed by ABM Bayezid, a lawyer of the Supreme Court.

Petitioner's lawyer advocate ABM Nurul Islam yesterday told The Daily Star the rates of the court fees were raised four to 25 times by updating the SC's Appellate Division Rules 1988 on April 22, 2008.

Citing an example, he said the highest court fee payable to the SC in any case was Tk 4,000, which has been raised to Tk 1,00,000 as per the updated rules.

Indigenous children lack access to education

Primary edn in mother language stressed

FARHANA URMEE

Most of the indigenous children do not have access to education, as the government is yet to introduce primary education in their mother tongues.

Although the final draft of the National Education Policy 2009 calls for steps to ensure education of the indigenous people in their mother tongues, the government does not have any specific action plan yet for its implementation.

The dropout rate among the indigenous students at the primary level is 50 percent and 33 percent of these cases occur due to language barriers, said a study conducted by Research and Development Collective (RDC).

Among the 2.5 million indigenous people in the country, only 2.3 per-

cent complete higher secondary level while a paltry 11 percent complete secondary education, showed the study.

Researchers have also said that at least seven out of the existing 30 indigenous languages run the risk of extinction due to lack of facilities to practice the languages.

The second Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP-II) included an analysis of the country's overall primary education scenario and set some strategies and action plans for the children of ethnic community.

The PEDP-II focused on four main areas, which include lack of access, poor quality, cultural inappropriateness and lack of local control and involvement; and language was considered as the key factor.

Indigenous leader Sanjeeb Drong

said at least 20 out of the 45 ethnic communities can be taught in their mother tongues as the government is capable of running individual schools for them.

The government can commence the process by appointing teachers from their respective communities in government primary schools to provide the indigenous children with bilingual education.

As there has been no comprehensive move, the government has to have extensive dialogues with the indigenous people for understanding their requirements, he added.

The government has to finalise the National Education Policy and implement it immediately to meet the diverse needs of the country's education sector, said Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government.

Different non-government organisations have been working to provide the indigenous children with pre-primary and primary education in their mother tongues, she said, adding that the government should cash in on the work experience of the NGOs and devise a comprehensive strategy in this regard.

Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan, secretary-in-charge to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, told this correspondent that they are planning to train the teachers to provide the indigenous children with education in their mother tongue and launching books to guide the students under the national curriculum.

It is a matter of regret that in a country where people had sacrificed their lives for the mother tongue, languages are on the verge of extinc-

tion since people do not have access to education in their mother tongues, said educationist Prof Mesbah Kamal.

However, the experience of different non-government organisations shows that it does not require much effort to ensure the long-standing demand but simply the will of the government.

Bracis running 2015 schools across the country to teach the indigenous children in their native languages where the students are supplied the reading materials by the schools themselves.

District Primary Education Officers (DPEO) in Bandarban and Khagrachhari told this correspondent about the schools run by different NGOs but they could not mention of any specific initiative taken by the government.

Father shot dead by son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly person was shot dead allegedly by his son at his residence at west Banikkhamar in Khulna city yesterday afternoon.

Mahub Hossain Manu fired two shots with a single barrel gun at his father Musa Mia, 60, during a quarrel at about 2:30pm, the police said. Manu, a drug addict, went into hiding soon after the incident.

Musa Mia received bullets in the back. He was taken to Khulna Medical college Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

The police recovered two gun shells and seized the gun.

Manu, a listed criminal, has been on bail in connection with an extortion case, said OC Khalilur Rahman.

Manu is the fourth among the six children of Musa, a retired employee of Khulna City corporation.

No case was filed in connection with the killing as of filing of this report.

Congressman lauds democratic progress of Bangladesh

BSS, Washington

US Congressman Chris Van Hollen has lauded the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh, saying that its present progress is very encouraging.

He also expressed satisfaction over the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the United States and hoped that high level regular visits between the two countries will continue.

Hollen, also an assistant of the US Congress Speaker and chairman of the Democratic Congressional Caucus, made the remark during a meeting with Bangladesh Ambassador Akramul Qader at his Capitol Hill office on Thursday.

During the meeting, Ambassador Qader apprised the US congressman of Bangladesh's present situation and sought his cooperation for duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to the US market.

To this end, the US Congressman assured the Bangladesh envoy of full cooperation, saying that it is a logical expectation of Bangladesh.

Hollen described the present trade-related issues in the US Congress as very complicated, saying that he would discuss with other Congressmen in this regard and will work together for duty-free access of products of the countries like Bangladesh.

Expressing hope about Bangladesh's inclusion in Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), he said Bangladesh would be included in the MCC very soon due to its democratic system.



Female garment workers perform a dance number at 'Sramik Mela 2010' at Chittagong MA Aziz Stadium yesterday. BGMEA organised the festival to provide recreation for the workers, one of the key drivers of the country's economy.

A fun-filled day for garment workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A daylong workers' fair was organised in the port city of Chittagong yesterday to let ready-made garment (RMG) workers have a brief respite from the regular work-place treadmill and get a mental boost.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) organised the fair titled 'Sramik Mela 2010' with a view to providing fun-filled recreation for the RMG workers, the lifeline of the country's economy.

State Minister for Home Advocate Shamsul Haque Tuku inaugurated the fair as the chief guest at Chittagong MA Aziz Stadium.

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury attended the funfair as the special guest while BGMEA First Vice-President Nasir Uddin Chowdhury presided over it.

Addressing the festival, Tuku called on

the garment owners and workers to work together safeguarding the interests of each other and ensuring economic development.

He directed the law enforcement agencies to discharge their duties remaining above undue influence and ensuring safety as well as security of business people and their activities.

The state minister called on all to remain alert against those trying to create anarchy at educational arena and pose a major threat to regional law and order.

He also urged them to help the government fight poverty and the law enforcers wipe out terrorism and fundamentalism.

Before inaugurating the fair by releasing balloons and pigeons, Tuku along with others observed one minute's silence in remembrance of those who met tragic deaths at a garment factory in Gazipur on Thursday night.

The participants and guests led by the CCC mayor also prayed for the salvation

of the departed souls.

Former first vice-presidents of BGMEA Md Ershad Ullah and SM Abu Tayab, directors Liakat Ali Chowdhury, AM Chowdhury Salim, engineer Md Kafil Uddin Yusuf, Mainuddin Khan Mintu, Mohammad Musa, Md Farhat Abbas, Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Labour ANM Saif Uddin were present.

The BGMEA leaders said there was around 30 percent shortage of workers in the garment sector and sought further cooperation from the government to arrange training to build skilled workforce.

Later, a cultural function was held where workers from different garment factories took part and performed.

At the opening session at 10:00am, painting and maths competition were held with the participation of the children of garment workers.

Process underway to ferry Hajj pilgrims by sea route from Oct

Says shipping minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Process is underway to transport Hajj pilgrims from Chittagong by sea route at an affordable cost from October 1, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan said yesterday.

Preparations have almost been completed to carry greater number of pilgrims by sea routes from the port city of Chittagong to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, he said while talking to reporters after the inaugural ceremony of a free medical camp at Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Hospital.

It might take six to seven days to reach Jeddah by ship, the minister added.

The four-day camp on cleft-lip and palate deformities and other dental and oral diseases was organised by Asmat Ali Khan Research Foundation.

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated the medical camp as the chief guest while the shipping minister presided over the ceremony.

An eight-member team comprising doctors from Kenya, Nepal and Bangladesh will provide free treatment. Dr Mahbubur Rahman, an expatriate living in Kenya, is leading the team.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan also inaugurated the Computerised Hospital Management Systems at the CPA Hospital.

CPA Chairman Commodore RU Ahmed, Dr Mahbubur Rahman and Craniofacial and Reconstructive Surgeon from Kenya Prof Dr Meshak Onguti also spoke at the ceremony.

Mayor Mohiuddin said many patients with cleft-lip and cleft-palate from low income families fail to receive treatment due to huge expenses.

He hoped that a good number of patients from families of the staffs working in Chittagong Port would be benefited from this medical camp.

Dr Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star that they would perform different complex oral, dental and maxillofacial surgeries free of cost in the camp.

POLL OBSERVERS

EC set to scrutinise 590 applications

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission has received a total of 590 applications from different election observer groups to get registered with it for monitoring elections in Bangladesh in next five years.

The last date for applications was set on February 18. The EC will now scrutinise the documents submitted by the organisations with their applications.

After scrutiny, the EC will publish the list of the primarily qualified organisations with their detailed information including names and addresses in daily newspa-

pers. The EC will also seek public opinions to ensure whether or not these organisations have any affiliations for any political party or agency.

If any allegation is found about any election observer group, the EC will hold hearing at its secretariat to settle it.

"If the allegation is proved, the organisation will not be allowed to monitor the elections," EC sources told UNB.

The EC would finally prepare the list of the election observer organisations after considering all aspects so that there is no question of political affiliation against any organisation.

The EC, earlier, issued a notice seeking applications from neutral and non-government election monitoring organisations of the country as per guidelines and rules formulated for registration of the local election 'Observer Organisations.'

The EC has taken the initiatives for fresh registration as the duration of one year registration of the election observer organisations expired in December 2009.

Presently, the EC extended the time of registration to five years. The election observers registered in 2010 will be able to monitor all elections to be held within next five years.



Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding an end to pollution caused by ship breaking yards.

Woman killed by husband in Rajshahi

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered the body of a woman who had allegedly been killed by her husband at Puthia in Rajshahi.

The victim was identified as Mazeda Begum, 35, wife of Siddique Hossain.

Siddique Hossain might have suffocated his wife to death over a family feud, said Officer-in-Charge Abdul Hamid of Puthia Police Station.

Mahidul Islam, son of Siddique found the body of his mother in a nearby garden in the morning and informed the police, said the OC.

Later police recovered the body and sent to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) for autopsy.

Following the incident, Mahidul filed a case accusing four people, including his father with Puthia Police Station.

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