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Law to protect whistleblowers on the cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has initiated enactment of a law to protect people who will provide the appropriate authorities with information on corruption in different offices, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said yesterday.

The proposed law to be titled "Whistleblower Protection Law" will encourage people to give information on corruption, irregularities and bribery, he said.

Identities of the informers will be kept a secret but those giving false information will be punished as per the new law, Shafique said.

The minister was briefing journalists after a meeting with legal experts and officials concerned at his ministry.

He hoped that the new law would help combat graft and

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10 minutes' shock at JS

AL, BNP lawmakers trade vulgar words, come close to fist-fight over remarks on Mujib, Zia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of Awami League and BNP lawmakers in parliament yesterday leaped out of their chairs and rushed towards each other gesturing aggressively throwing the sitting into chaos for around 10 minutes.

Without microphones, the lawmakers, particularly the ones elected to reserved seats, were seen shouting loudly and exchanging extremely indecent and vulgar words on the floor, most of which are unprintable. The chaos erupted following derogatory remarks made against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and BNP founder late Ziaur Rahman.

Later, Awami League lawmaker Tarana Halim on a point of order said the opposition lawmakers during the chaos even used some sexually expletives.

Deputy Speaker Col (retd) Shawkat Ali, who was presiding over the sitting at that time, appeared all at sea. Use of indecent words by legislators had been going on in the House during the

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Kazi Selim, a seriously ill patient whom Barisal Medical College Hospital referred to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, has been waiting since pre-dawn to be admitted. The photo was taken at the BSMU outdoor yesterday around 8:30am.

80,000 unfit cars running in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 80,000 cars with expired fitness certificates are plying the city streets ignoring the law, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain told the parliament yesterday.

"The BRTA [Bangladesh Road Transport Authority] are running two mobile courts led by two executive magistrates to take actions against cars without fitness certificates and expired fitness certificates," the minister said in a scripted answer to a lawmaker's query.

Each car is given a fitness certificate during its registration and owners of the cars have to renew the certificate on its expiry, he said, adding that using cars without fitness certificates is illegal.

"There are around 79,245 cars that are running without

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Border force takes oath for discipline

Pledges to be reborn on strength of unity at special Darbar after carnage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam has expressed the hope that the border guards will emerge as a disciplined force in a year through necessary reforms.

"There is no alternative to making our force a disciplined one," he emphasised yesterday while addressing 850 officers and soldiers at a Special Darbar on the occasion of BDR Week 2010.

The DG said he was taken by surprise at evidence of indiscipline among some soldiers even after the bloody mutiny on February 25-26 last year.

"No unethical activities will be allowed," he said citing an example of gambling by the soldiers.

"If anyone does any unethical deed, they would not only go home [after losing job] but also land in jail," Gen Mainul warned the soldiers at the Darbar arranged in participation of fewer soldiers compared to traditional Darbar in BDR weeks.

"We have to take a fresh oath which will be 'Amra notun, amra ek, amra bolian' [we are new, we are united, we are strong]," he told the Darbar at Pilkhana Headquarters in the capital. Since the mutiny, BDR has regained peo-

ple's confidence, which is the main achievement of the force, he observed.

The paramilitary force arranged a seven-day colourful and gorgeous programme on the occasion of BDR week in February last year. Like the previous years, the Pilkhana HQ wore a festive mood and was decorated with colourful flags and lights. The prime minister, ministers, different dignitary guests and diplomats were invited at different programmes including the BDR parade last year.

Unlike its long-standing tradition, this year the BDR made very simple arrangements for one day with only a few lanes near the place of Darbar decorated by colourful flags.

No parade, no party, no cultural programmes were arranged. Only the Darbar was the big event of the week.

Special food items were served at soldiers' mess and special prayers were held at the BDR hostels in the evening.

The Darbar was not held at BDR Darbar Hall as a special court has been set up there to try the accused mutineers.

Besides soldiers, all civil and military officers of BDR, including JCOs and NCOs in Pilkhana, were present at the special Darbar

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PHOTO: STAR

BDR jawans attend the special Darbar at Pilkhana BDR headquarters in the capital yesterday.

PM irked

Says projects being finalised, not implemented; spurs govt officials to deliver

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed government officials to implement development projects as fast as possible with the spirit of patriotism and love for the common people.

Unhappy with a slow pace in public works, she said development projects are not being implemented in keeping with the nation and government's aspirations.

"Development is not taking place at such pace as we want. The pace of development is slow to a large extent. But why?" The premier questioned at a function of development cadres.

Indicating a shift in the national development strategy, she said the present government wants to go back to Five-Year Plan from the present PRSP.

The PM came up with the observations and future development-planning methodology at the opening function of the silver-jubilee celebrations of the National Academy for Planning and Development (NAPD) at the city's Osmani auditorium.

Hasina in her inaugural speech also informed that the government is going to formulate Civil Service Act with a focus on training for government officials for their skill building in keeping with the present-day national development priorities and needs.

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5,000 NGOs apply for climate funds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 5,000 non-government organisations have applied for fund to the government to fight adverse impacts of climate change, a parliamentary body disclosed yesterday.

At a discussion over the usage of the climate change fund, the parliamentary standing committee on environment and forest ministry formed a five-member sub-committee to oversee the utilisation of the fund by NGOs.

The government has decided to sanction Tk 100 crore for NGO initiatives from its Tk 400 crore climate change fund, Abdul Momin Talukder, chief of the parliamentary body told reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The ministries concerned would use the remaining fund, he added.

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Muhith missing project funding

Funds for technical studies aplenty, he says at meeting of multi-donor trust for environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith was critical about disbursement of Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds yesterday, saying the funds are more available for technical studies and planning, but not for projects requiring big scale investments.

"We need substantial investment to adequately take care of the effluents and solid waste," he said, addressing the inaugural ceremony of the South Asian Constituency meeting of GEF, in Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel of the capital.

The government sought funds from development partners for setting up effluent treatment plants, he said.

"Unfortunately for large effluent disposal plants and waste dumps we could not garner any support from any development partner," the minister went on adding that funds were however available for technical studies and planning for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Representatives of development partners, and government officials of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bhutan -- the six countries under the South Asia Constituency are participating in the two-day meeting to lobby for GEF funds for their environmental projects ahead of the fifth five year cycle that will start in July this year.

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Daily Prothom Alo
27.02.2010



21 workers die in electrical short circuit at Gazipur garments factory

"Save your valuable life & property from electrical accident"

A Great Concern

Be aware that some unscrupulous businessmen and cable manufacturing companies are manufacturing cables from scrap and very low quality copper. But selling those low quality and risky cables at the same price of genuine cables. The honorable customers are being cheated in price. The low quality Cables are responsible for causing severe electrical accidents leading to death and damage to properties.



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