

Sue MPs, spare bureaucrats

Proposes cabinet committee upon review of anti-graft law; ACC's reservations ignored; cabinet may weigh recommendations Mar 15

EMRAN HOSSAIN

The cabinet committee formed to review the anti-graft laws has finally proposed immunity only for government officials, making it obligatory for the Anti-Corruption Commission to take permission before filing cases against them.

The committee proposed to include the provision of lodging complaints to the ACC chairman in case policymakers, lawmakers and local body representatives feel aggrieved over ACC proceedings, whereas the commission would have to take permission before initiating cases against government officials.

Ignoring ACC reservations on some points of amendment proposals, the committee has finalised its amendments curbing the commission's mandate to act unilaterally.

The cabinet committee, formed in March last year to review the Anti-Corruption

Commission Act, 2004 and recommend changes necessary to make the anti-graft body more effective and pro-people, finalised the report based on opinions given by other government institutions.

The committee is likely to place its report before the cabinet on March 15.

The report did not include the observations ACC made earlier on February 10 regarding its reservations on six out of 23 points, which the commission said would diminish its independence.

"We requested the cabinet committee to place its report along with our observations so that the cabinet has the chance of considering all the opinions and views before taking a decision whether the anti-corruption commission would remain effective or become non-functional," ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman told The Daily Star.

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Begging days of these women are hopefully being numbered as the government has initiated to create employment opportunities and incentive for beggars. The photo was taken at the capital's Kakrail yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

ROW OVER JOY ISSUE Walkout, noisy protests in JS again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament proceedings were disrupted for five minutes yesterday over the opposition chief whip's allegation that the prime minister's son Sajeeb Wajed Joy is involvement in illegal VoIP business.

And BNP lawmakers staged an hour-long walkout from the House as the opposition chief whip was not allowed to speak beyond his allocated time.

Prior to this, treasury bench lawmakers burst into stormy protests at the allegation against Joy and shouted at the opposition bench.

This forced the deputy speaker to switch off the microphone of Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Faroque, who was speaking even after the 25-minute time allocated for him.

The deputy speaker's action infuriated the opposition lawmakers. They jumped

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Hasina alleges 'slow poisoning' in sub-jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday in parliament alleged that efforts were made to kill her by mixing poison with her food while detained in a sub-jail during the state of emergency.

The "slow poisoning" caused a serious problem to her eyes, Hasina told the House.

"I was held in a dirty house and given shabby mattress and bed. But the opposition leader [Khaleda Zia] was kept in the speaker's residence. She was allowed to keep a domestic help. Her food was brought from outside and cloths washed at laundry," she said.

The prime minister was making the concluding speech on the thanksgiving motion on the president's address.

Hasina's archrival Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia did not take part in the discussion on the thanksgiving motion. She was absent yesterday.

However, the BNP-led opposition lawmakers were present in the House when the premier delivered her speech.

She accused the BNP-Jamaat alliance of hatching a conspiracy to increase prices of essentials "using the money they looted while in power".

The prime minister claimed the BNP-Jamaat alliance has decided not to allow the government run the country smoothly.

"BNP-Jamaat alliance is spending their looted money to increase the prices of essentials. Thousands of crore of taka are

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Govt targets beggars

Goes for survey, plans rehabilitation in 5 years

ALPHA ARZU

The government has initiated a programme to make the country beggar free within five years, by rehabilitating beggars through employment and other incentives.

A core committee for the Beggar Rehabilitation Programme under the social welfare ministry was formed early this month with Gazi Mohammad Nurul Kabir as the committee's chairman.

The committee chairman is also the managing director of National Foundation for Development of Disabled Persons, a government agency which will have involvement in the programme.

The committee is now working out an implementation

strategy for the programme, said Nurul Kabir. The social welfare ministry will conduct a countrywide survey to find out how many beggars there are, and what are their physical conditions are like, as thousands of physically challenged poor people take up begging as a profession, he said.

"We might seek cooperation from the NGOs to conduct the survey which will be completed by the end of June. The Bureau of Statistics will also help us," he said adding that six years ago the country had an estimated 7,00,000 beggars, but the number has increased since then.

"We will also find the causes that drive people into begging, and will find the section of the population who are more susceptible to taking up begging in future," he said.

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BDR proposes joint border management

BSF agrees to stop killing the innocent

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

The border guards of Bangladesh and India yesterday agreed to ensure that no innocent civilians are killed in the boarder guards' fire.

Bangladesh Rifles also proposed joint management of the borders by BDR and Border Security Force of India.

Several shooting incidents between the border guards have been reported from Indo-

Bangla border in Meghalaya during last one month in which civilians were caught in crossfire.

Director General of BDR Maj Gen Mainul Islam said Bangladesh was "upset" over the killing of innocent civilians in the border areas. "We have decided to show utmost restraints in this regard, limiting visits of civilians at the zero line areas," he added.

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More jobs in Qatar assured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said Qatar would soon recruit more skilled and semi-skilled manpower from Bangladesh.

"We have discussed recruitment of human resources from Bangladesh. Qatar assured us of employing more semi-skilled and skilled manpower," Dipu Moni told reporters after her meeting with visiting Qatar minister Khaled Bin Mohamed Al-Attiya at state guest house Meghna.

Al-Attiya, state minister for international cooperation and minister-in-charge of the business and trade ministry, is leading a 20-member delegation here.

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Niko graft case against Hasina quashed

ACC asked to amend rules of filing cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday quashed all proceedings in the Niko corruption case against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina filed by the Anti-corruption Commission during the caretaker government.

The court also directed the ACC chairman to amend its rules regarding filing and proceeding of any case.

It observed in the verdict that the ACC had filed the case against Hasina at the instigation of a vested quarter in order to politically harass her and damage her image and popularity.

The court has not found any criminal offence in the first information report and charge sheet of the case against her, it said.

The HC bench of Justice Md Shamsul Huda and Justice Abu Bakar Siddiquee pronounced the verdict following a writ petition filed by Hasina for quashing the proceedings against her.

Hasina's barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday told The Daily Star that there are five separate cases pending with trial courts.

Separate petitions are pending with the HC challenging proceedings of those cases, and hearing of the petitions will be held soon, he said.

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BARAPUKURIA MINE Compensation formula to be drafted by June

Hunger strike continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to finalise a compensation formula for the affected people of Barapukuria coal mining project area by next June.

Meanwhile, hunger strike by the affected people of Barapukuria passed its second day yesterday.

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OC sued for death in custody

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A case was filed with a Dhaka court yesterday against the officer-in-charge and the sub-inspector of Ramna Police Station on charges of torturing an accused to death in their custody.

Shilpi Begum, wife of victim Zakir, filed the murder case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court

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News analysis NID, SIM cards

Registration act ignored

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The home ministry's decision to make mandatory submission of copies of national identity cards to buy SIM cards runs counter to the national identity registration act.

A rise in cell phone crimes prompted the ministry on Wednesday to impose a restriction on the sale of SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) or Removable User Identity Module cards to anyone under the age of 18. A person of 18 years of age or above must submit a copy of NID card to get registered as a mobile phone subscriber.

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A hawker sells sim cards of different mobile phone operators, inset, to customers in the city's Gullistan area yesterday without going through registration procedures. Filing in a registration form has been made mandatory for everyone who wants to subscribe to mobile phone service, says a government directive. Authorised certificates are required to sell the cards.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Congratulations

On being awarded National Export Trophy (GOLD) 2005-06 and 2007-2008



The Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is handing over the Export trophy (GOLD) to Amrita Makin Islam, Director, Picard Bangladesh Ltd.

All Employees and Workers Picard Bangladesh Limited Kondalbagh, Zirabo, Savar, Dhaka