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Toxic ships to sail in smoothly

Ship-breakers now to produce toxic free certificates as import policy changed; HC directive ignored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bypassing the court's clear directives to ensure import of toxin-free ships, the government yesterday altered an import policy order, which will help ship-breakers import toxic ships.

Without considering the country's environmental aspects and workers' safety, a certain quarter within the government allegedly changed the policy order in a way that exporters themselves will now certify their ships as not toxic.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan told reporters that the change in the import policy order for ships to be scrapped was decided at an inter-ministerial meeting considering the development of the country.

Following a High Court directive dated March 17, 2009, the commerce ministry incorporated a condition in its Import Policy Order 2009-2012 that an exporter has to submit a pre-cleaning certificate from a state agency of its

country saying the ship is cleaned before export. The importer will have to submit that certificate to the authorities here.

But now the company that sells the ships will provide this certificate saying all toxic substances are cleaned, Faruk said.

Shipyard owners were reluctant to go by the old policy since pre-cleaning of toxic substances including asbestos involves huge cost and reduces their profit.

They allegedly lobbied with some high officials and ministers for changing the policy.

Before the policy was formulated, the exporter still had to provide this clearance certificate, but that was not legally binding and no one could be sued for providing false information.

The High Court in its directive ordered the government to make the policy as per the Basel Convention 1989, which says no country can export or import toxic waste or ships containing toxic substances.

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A ship-breaking yard in Sitakunda. Every year a number of toxic ships are dismantled without proper safety measures here, posing health risk for the workers and causing widespread environmental pollution.

PHOTO: FILE

51 BDR men indicted for mutiny

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Special Court-2 of Bangladesh Rifles yesterday framed charges against 51 accused from the 20 Rifle Battalion in a BDR mutiny case. Forty-four of them confessed to their involvement yesterday and begged for mercy.

BDR Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam led the court proceedings, at 20 Rifle Battalion headquarters in Thakurgaon, around 9:30am.

Prosecutor of the case and Commanding Officer of 20 Rifle Battalion Lt Col Mahfuz Alam said after two months and four days of investigation,

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CORRUPTION AT BANGABANDHU MEDICAL Take action against 2 former pro-VCs

JS body also wants lawsuit against top officials on receiving probe report

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary committee yesterday suggested taking legal actions against two former pro-VCs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and other top officials finding their involvement in corruption and irregularities.

The parliamentary body also recommended realising Tk 7.84 crore from BSMMU former pro-VCs Prof MA Mannan and Prof Mohammad Tahir, its deputy registrar Dr Kazi

Ebadullah, controller of examinations Moshleh Alam Chowdhury and others involved in purchasing medical equipments.

The sub-committee No 2, formed on June, 2009 to probe corruption and irregularities of BSMMU during 2001-08, yesterday placed its report before the parliamentary body on health ministry.

With parliamentary committee chairman Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim in the chair, the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban

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KHOKA'S REMARK Court finds elements of sedition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court in its order yesterday said it found elements of sedition in Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka's remarks that late president Ziaur Rahman is the proclaimer of independence and the first president of Bangladesh.

Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Emdadul Haque directed the officer-in-charge of Paltan Police Station to submit a report by June 6 stating if the sedition case filed against the mayor had

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BCL goes berserk

Beats up RU proctor, provost, house tutors to 'protest' hall raid

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University unit Chhatra League cadres on Wednesday night beat up its proctor and his two assistants, a hall provost and two house tutors while police raided Shaheed Samsuzzoha Hall.

BCL cadres also vandalised the proctor office and an office room and the guest room of the hall.

Resident students of the hall said police along with the help of hall authorities and the proctorial body raided the hall around 11.30 pm on Wednesday night to pick up illegal residents.

Hearing the news of raid, BCL workers led by its president Awal Kabir Joy rushed to the hall. Joy asked hall provost Dr Mortuza Khaled as to they conducted the raid without his permission.

At one stage, they drove Mortuza out of the hall by holding his neck and beat up him and his two house tutors in front of police, resident students said.

They said BCL cadres also beat up Proctor Prof Chowdhury Zakaria and his two assistants while they were trying to resist the attack.

Later, they vandalised proctor office and the hall rooms.

Provost Mortuza Khaled admitted the matter but Proctor Zakaria declined to say anything to the reporters. RU unit BCL president Awal Kabir denied the allegation.

Meanwhile, Provost Council, an association of provosts from sixteen halls, at a meeting yesterday announced their work abstention for Saturday and demanded punishment to the attackers.

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Question of apology has to be decided thru' talks

Says Pak HC

UNB, Dhaka

Pakistani High Commissioner Ashraf Qureshi yesterday said the question of seeking formal apology by Pakistan to Bangladesh for her role in 1971 has to be decided through discussion between the two countries.

The Pakistani envoy made the remark to reporters after a meeting with Commerce

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DCC ELECTION EC insists on May 31 date

Nanak says govt won't interfere

UNB, Dhaka

Elections to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) will be held on May 31, Election Commission Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain said yesterday.

Talking to reporters at the Election Commission Secretariat, Sakhawat said the Commission has taken all necessary preparations to hold the DCC polls in May.

Meanwhile, LGRD State

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Prayer Timing		
April 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation



Army personnel distribute water among residents in the city's Rampura area yesterday afternoon. They started helping Wasa tackle water crisis on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Zardari stripped of vital powers

Pak parliament okays landmark reforms

AFP, INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

Pakistan's national assembly yesterday voted unanimously to approve reforms stripping President Asif Ali Zardari of key powers in a move to bolster parliamentary democracy weakened by military rule.

It also abolished the president's special powers, including the right to dissolve parliament, through an amendment of the constitution, a media report said.

The 18th amendment was approved by 292 votes in favour and no votes against, among those present in the 342-member national assembly, announced lower house speaker Fahmida Mirza.

The bill now needs approval of the senate, or upper house, to become law.

Members of parliament celebrated their approval of the 102-clause bill with a prolonged thumping of the desks in front of their seats in

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AL candidate violating polls code

Alleges BNP on Bhola-3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition BNP alleged that the ruling Awami League candidate for Bhola-3 constituency is violating electoral code of conduct, but the Election Commission and the local administration refrain from taking any steps.

At a press conference at BNP's central office in

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Water crisis cripples life

HELEMUL ALAM

Persistent water crisis accompanied by random power outage has put the citizens of the capital into a real-life endurance test.

Kanchan, a resident of Uttar Para in West Kafrul, was yesterday seen in a long queue since 6:00am for a bucket of water from a Wasa lorry. Around 200 families of the locality are not having supply water for the last one week.

"Buying water from these lorries has become impractical because it takes Wasa three days to provide water if you pay for it today. There is a long queue they have to deal with first," said Kanchan, who finally managed to get two buckets of water after a five-hour wait.

Wasa has started distributing water in lorries twice a day from Wednesday, which is far too little to meet the demand of the area, said Kanchan, adding, "My family is going without bath for the last one week."

The situation at Gulshan-1 to Azad Mosque area is even more severe as they are going without supply water for the last 17 days. These days they are buying drinking water in jars.

"Since Wednesday, we are buying a lorry of water from Wasa for Tk 1,400 which is officially Tk 400. Still that is not getting us any near to having regular supply of water," said Ekram Kabir, a resident of road-29 in Gulshan-1.

He said they have been taking bath at offices, clubs or even at

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Security beefed up at Shahjalal Airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security was beefed up in and around the Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka last night fearing "plane hijack and terrorist attack".

The airport was placed on red alert around 8:40pm following an intelligence report about the subversive acts, a

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Ctg mayor sued by woman councillor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A woman councillor of Chittagong City Corporation yesterday filed a defamation case against Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury here on charge of misbehaving with her at a meeting on

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US, Russia agree to cut nuke arms

AFP, Prague

US President Barack Obama and Russian leader Dmitry Medvedev signed a landmark treaty Thursday committing their nations to major nuclear arms cuts.

Under the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the former Cold War foes will be allowed a maximum of 1,550 deployed warheads, about 30 percent lower than a limit set in 2002.

It also imposes limits on the air and submarine-borne intercontinental ballistic missiles that carry warheads.

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OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think the government has wasted its first year in terms of solving the power crisis?

Yes (42.9%)

No (56.8%)

No Comments (0.3%)

Total votes: 2318

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think if DCC poll is held next month, it may go against the ruling Awami League following the ongoing power, water and gas crises?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net