

HC VERDICT ON TAC YET TO BE RELEASED ACC waits for legal advice on corrupt suspects

ASHUTOSH SARKAR
The attorney general's office could not decide whether legal action can be taken against 452 self-declared corrupt people, as the copy of the High Court (HC) verdict on the Truth and Accountability Commission (TAC) has not yet been released.

In a letter on February 4, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) requested the attorney general to give legal advice on whether it can start legal proceedings against the 452 people who had disclosed their illegal assets to TAC and sought clemency during the military-backed caretaker government, sources said.

Asked about the ACC's request, Attorney General Mahbub Alam told The Daily Star recently that his office cannot give any legal opinion without going through the full text of the HC

verdict on TAC.

In November 2008, the HC upon a writ petition declared illegal and unconstitutional the Voluntary Disclosure of Information Ordinance-2008 through which the caretaker government had formed the TAC.

Under the ordinance, 452 people had sought clemency and pledged to pay Tk 36 crore they earned through illegal means. Of the amount, Tk 34 crore has been realised by TAC, sources said.

However, ACC counsel Khurshid Alam Khan said there is no bar on ACC taking legal action against these corrupt people, as they were not tried for their individual offences.

Advocate Asaduzzaman, a lawyer for the petitioners who filed the writ challenging the TAC ordinance, said the corruption suspects, who returned their ill-gotten money to the TAC, should be subjected to prosecution under the laws and

rules of the ACC.

On August 25 in 2008, Awami League leader Dipu Moni, now foreign minister, SC lawyer Adilur Rahman Khan, Ubinig Executive Director Farida Akhter and Odhikar's acting director Nasiruddin Elan filed the writ petition as public interest litigation (PIL).

On November 13, 2008, an HC bench of Justice Mir Hasmat Ali and Justice Shamim Hasnain declared illegal and unconstitutional the Voluntary Disclosure of Information Ordinance-2008.

But the copy of the judgement has not been released yet, Advocate Asaduzzaman said on Thursday.

On August 3, 2008, the caretaker government formed TAC under the ordinance promulgated by the then president on June 8 the same year. The tenure of the commission expired on January 2 last year.



Islami Andolon Bangladesh holds a rally in protest against the proposed education policy at Muktangan in the city yesterday, blocking the roads in the area, which caused immense suffering to the passengers as well as pedestrians.

Indian home minister to visit Dhaka soon

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi
Indian Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram has accepted an invitation to visit Bangladesh in the shortest possible time.

Chidambaram accepted the invitation in principle after Home Minister Sahara Khatun on Tuesday invited him to visit Bangladesh, Minister (Press) in Bangladesh High Commission in India Enamul Haq Choudhury said Wednesday.

Bangladesh High Commissioner Tariq Ahmed Karim called on Chidambaram and handed over the invitation on behalf of Sahara, he said.

Choudhury said Chidambaram has expressed keenness to visit Bangladesh as early as possible and date would be worked out through the diplomatic channel.

According to indications, the visit may take place after the budget session of Indian Parliament, which resumes yesterday and ends next month.

If materialises, this will be the first visit by Chidambaram to Bangladesh as the home minister.

During the 15-minute meeting between Karim and Chidambaram at the North Block, the two discussed different bilateral issues particularly cooperation in security matters and terrorism.

Pro-BNP, Jamaat lawyers threaten to resist trial of war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Pro-BNP and Jamaat lawyers at a seminar yesterday threatened to resist the trial of war criminals if it is carried out with 'political motive'.

They also said there is no need to hold such a trial as the main offenders -- 195 Pakistani soldiers -- had been released after the liberation war.

They termed the International War Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 a 'black' law and asked the government to bring necessary changes to the law to meet international standards.

They also demanded reconstitution of the tribunal and the prosecution team.

The National Forum for Protection of Human Rights, a pro-Jamaat platform, organised the seminar titled 'Legality of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973' at a city hotel.

Justice Abdur Rouf presided over the seminar while BNP chairperson's advisory council member Justice TH Khan and BNP standing committee member Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar attended the seminar as the chief guest and special guest respectively.

A huge number of BNP and Jamaat-backed lawyers were present.

Justice Abdur Rouf said, "There will be chaos if a farcical trial is held and you [government] will not be spared for that."

"Don't do anything that will put you on the dock," he told the tribunal formed to try war crimes.

Justice TH Khan said it would be a farce in the name of justice if the trial is held under the International Crimes (Tribunals) act 1973 as

Building on river bank collapses during storm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A one-storey building on the bank of river Buriganga in the city's Kamrangirchar area collapsed in the early hours of yesterday.

However, no casualty was reported as the building remained abandoned for a long time.

Locals said the building at Nababcherar collapsed into the river during a nor'wester, as its foundation became weak due to illegal lifting of sand by sand traders.

However, sand traders claimed that the building collapsed due to the nor'wester.

The building was built seven years ago but it remained abandoned due to a land dispute.

Punishment to stalkers, safety of girl students demanded

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj
The residents of Gobra union formed a human chain yesterday protesting stalking and demanding safety of girl students.

Hundreds of people, including school and college students, carrying banners and placards took part in the programme at Ghonapara intersection on Dhaka-Khulna highway.

The participants held a meeting and submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner in this connection.

There is an allegation that a number of youths of Sonakur village stalked some girls of Gobra village who came to visit Chaitra Sangkranti fair at Hathkula Primary School on last Wednesday.

After this incident, youths of the two villages had a conflict, injuring at least 20 people.

Of them, the three injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital and Gopalganj Hospital.

Some college students said there are some youths who always disturb girl students by stopping their vans on their way to schools or colleges.

The youths use motorbikes to follow them, they added.

Monir Ahmed Chowdhury, former chairman of Gobra union, and Arifuzzaman Tutul, incumbent chairman, said they have got relief of robbery, but now some stalkers from Sunakur have made their life miserable.

Women and girls cannot move alone, they even cannot have baths in the river or ponds as the youths move around the area and disturb them.

Additional Police Super Md Rokanuzzaman Sardar said police are patrolling the area to avoid any untoward incident.

2 killed in Gazipur road accident

UNB, Gazipur
The driver and the helper of a pick-up van were killed and a banana trader was injured as the van plunged into a roadside ditch being hit by a bus at Botghar in Kaliakair upazila yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as van driver Ibrahim Khalil, 30, and its helper Julhas Uddin, 28.

The injured was rushed to a local hospital in a critical condition.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Today is the 81st death anniversary of Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury, one of the founders of Dhaka University and the first Muslim minister of undivided Bengal, says a press release.

Born in 1863 at Dhanbari in Tangail, he was also an educationist, litterateur and social worker.

On the occasion of his death anniversary, a discussion will be held today at 4:00pm at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban, Dhaka University.

The National Committee to Observe Birth and Death Anniversaries of Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury has organised a month-long programme, including milad mahfil and discussion at Dhanbari.

Lt Col Abdul Qadir

METRO DESK
Today is the 39th death anniversary of Shaheed Lt Col Mohammad Abdul Qadir, the senior-most army officer who embraced martyrdom on this day in 1971.

Lt Col Qadir was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers in 1949.

Qadirabad Cantonment in Natore was named after him in recognition of his active role in the country's independence.

The government also issued a postal stamp of Lt Col Qadir as one of the martyred intellectuals.

His grave was found in Chittagangin 2007 by his elder son after a long search, but the grave has not been protected so far.

His family sought blessings of all for salvation of the departed soul.

Shabnam Huq

METRO DESK
Today is the 10th death anniversary of Shabnam Huq, wife of Arham Masudul Huq, executive vice-president and company secretary, Dhaka Bank Limited, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwan and doa mahfil will be held at Rahmat-e-Alam Islam Mission Orphanage at Tejgaon in Dhaka.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Justice TH Khan speaks at a seminar titled 'Legality of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973' at a city hotel yesterday. On his left is Justice Abdur Rouf and on his right are Khandaker Mahub Hossain and Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Noakhali and Comilla in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country, it added.

Mild heat wave which is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Rangamati and Patuakhali may also continue.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:21pm today and rises at 5:35am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 37.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 20.0 degrees at Rajshahi.

The highest and lowest temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.2	20.8	58	53
Chittagong	35.0	27.4	65	76
Rajshahi	34.0	20.0	67	73
Khulna	36.5	25.3	76	60
Barisal	35.2	23.1	62	64
Sylhet	34.0	23.1	64	50
Cox's Bazar	34.8	28.1	70	59

YABA TABLETS Another Dhaka jail guard suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Dhaka Central Jail authorities yesterday suspended a jail guard after he was caught red-handed with 68 pieces of stimulating Yaba tablets in his possession.

Senior Jail Superintendent Towhidul Islam told The Daily Star that they suspended jail guard Mir Abul Kalam after other guards at the main gate of the jail found that he was carrying contraband tablets while entering the jail at around 12:30pm.

Abul Kalam, who hails from Barisal, was taking the Yaba tablets into the jail to supply them to one of the addict prisoners, said the senior jail super.

Earlier, chief jail guard Yunus Miah was suspended on December 16 last year after he was caught with about 100 tablets and another jail guard Palash Miah was suspended after he was caught with 49 tablets on April 4.

Senior Jail Super Towhidul Islam said they recently beefed up surveillance in and around the jail to check smuggling of drugs into the jail.

Muggers stab fruit vendor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Unidentified muggers stabbed a fruit vendor and made away with his cash and mobile phone in the city's Doyaganj last night.

The victim, identified as Zakir Hossain, 35, boarded a CNG-run auto-rickshaw with two unknown men on the way to Dholaipar from Paltan.

As Zakir tried to protest the two from snatching away his belongings, they stabbed him indiscriminately and left him on a road at Meer Hajirbagh.

Later, patrol police rescued the fruit vendor and rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

ADB South Asia dept DG due today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Sultan Hafeez Rahman, director general (DG) of South Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), arrives in the city on a five-day official visit today.

During his visit, he will take part in ADB's Country Programming Mission for Bangladesh focusing on the forward-looking assistance covering 2011-2013.

He will also hold discussions with senior government officials where ADB's priority sectors, including power and energy, transport, education, and the financial sectors will be focused.

2 murdered in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira
Two people were killed and another was injured seriously in separate incidents in Tala and Assassuni upazilas in Satkhira on Thursday night.

The deceased were identified as Rabeya Khatun, 28, wife of Rokon Uddin of village Ghona in Tala upazila, and Ashish Kumar Mallik, 35, son of Panchnaon Mallik of village Ramkrishnapur in Dumuria upazila of Khulna.

The injured Rokon was taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital in critical condition, hospital sources said.

Quoting locals, police said a group of miscreants swooped on the couple with sharp weapons at the dead of night while they were sleeping on the veranda of their house, killing Rabeya on the spot and injuring Rokon.

A dispute over a piece of land between Rokon and one Babul Mia might be the reason behind the killing, police suspect.

A case was filed with Tala Police Station, but none was arrested in this connection till yesterday evening.

In the other incident, a gang of criminals strangled Ashish Kumar, a sub-contractor, at his rented house at Budhata Bazar in Assassuni upazila at the dead of night.

A case was filed with Assassuni Police Station in this regard.

Police suspect that the miscreants killed Ashish after he failed to pay them toll.

Timber worth Tk 10 lakh seized, 4 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Members of Coast Guard and Forest Department men in a joint drive yesterday arrested four people and seized Sundari timber worth Tk 10 lakh from the river Meghna in Chandpur.

The arrestees were identified as Aslam, Jahangir Kazi, Idris and Yousuf Ali.



Khetmajur Samity forms a human chain in the city yesterday demanding a comprehensive agricultural labour law.