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CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Tribunal targets fair trial

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The war crimes tribunal has announced the rules of procedure for probe, prosecution and trial.

Published in a gazette on July 15, the rules say the tribunal will start trying those accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971 once it has formal charges placed before it.

The prosecution will prepare a charge on the basis of reports by the investigation agency, and submit it to the tribunal in the form of a petition.

Shahinur Rahman, registrar of the tribunal, presented the gazette at a press briefing at his office yesterday afternoon.

He said the tribunal can amend or modify the rules if necessary for fair trial.

The rules shall be considered to have taken effect from March 25, the day the government formed the tribunal, prosecution panel and investigation agency for war crimes trial.

The three-member tribunal, instituted under International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973, can try a person in his presence or absence.

The judges will take cognisance of an offence after examining the formal charge, investigation report, documents and evidence submitted by a prosecutor.

They may dismiss a case if they deem the evidence is not authentic or strong enough to warrant a trial.

If an investigation report appears to offer a weak case, the chief prosecutor may initiate further probe or just stop the process.

The rules of procedure, drawn up under section 22 of the international crimes act, have provisions to ensure the defendants' access to counsel.

If an accused is not represented by anyone, the tribunal will appoint a lawyer for his defence at the government's expense.

The tribunal may also allow a foreign counsel for either party, provided that the lawyer has permission from Bangladesh Bar Council.

After taking an offence into account, the judges will issue process or warrant.

"If the process is returned unserved, the tribunal shall make an order to publish a notice in two daily newspapers, one in English and another in Bangla, asking the accused to appear before it," read the rules.

If the accused still fails to show up, the case against him will be tried in absentia.

The investigation officer may obtain a warrant from the tribunal for arrest of a person if he can satisfy the judges that such arrest is necessary for proper investigation.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Tin-shed and concrete structures built after filling up a vast stretch of river Karnaphuli at Bakolia in Chittagong. The photo was taken recently.

Khaleda asks govt to help Manjur work

CCC mayor takes oath

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has urged the government to extend full cooperation to Manjur Alam in running the affairs of Chittagong City Corporation as the new mayor without taking into account his political affiliation.

"He [Manjur Alam] will not act as a BNP leader but a representative of the people of Chittagong," she said at a programme last night at her Gulshan office, where Manjur called on her for the first time after the CCC polls.

The BNP chief urged the government to allocate more money for the port city's

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Mohiuddin sues mayor Manjur for concealing info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former mayor of Chittagong City Corporation ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury filed a case with the Election Tribunal here yesterday against newly elected Mayor M Manjur Alam and six other mayoral candidates in the June 17 CCC polls.

The chief election commissioner was made 'pro-forma defendant' in the case. He does not have to appear before the tribunal.

Mohiuddin, who also was a mayoral candidate, accused Manjur Alam of concealing information in the affidavit submitted to the returning officer (RO) for the CCC elections, and manipulating the polls.

Judge of the tribunal Golam Faruq accepted the case and fixed August 17 for appearance of the accused before the tribunal.

Mohiuddin's son barrister Chowdhury Muhibul Hasan and advocate Mohammed Humayun Akhtar represented the plaintiff in the tribunal for filing the case.

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River grabbers feast on Karnaphuli

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Encroachment still continues on the bank of Karnaphuli, posing a threat to the river upstream towards the fourth bridge on it.

After encroachment of a vast stretch of riverbank in Char Bakolia, illegal occupants in a latest move are now constructing concrete structures and filling up the water bodies.

Several hundred structures sprang up occupying "Khas" land belonging to the district administration along the river in absence of any eviction drive for years.

The land-grabbing also caused further siltation of the river, hindering expansion of city streets and planned growth of the city.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) had earlier taken measures including a capital dredging project to dredge and maintain navigability of the river stretching from the estuary to Sadarghat.

But no technical steps like river training were there to maintain flow in the upstream river, which was beyond control of CPA.

Sources say the encroached riverbank in Char Bakolia was within the site of a river protection and ring road project selected by the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA).

The CDA planned to implement the project titled "River Embankment-cum-Ring Road" stretching from Sadarghat to Kalurghat along the river involving

Tk 340 crore with financial assistance of the Japan Bank of International Corporation (JBIC), sources say.

The JBIC proposed construction of the road after it carried out a study under an agreement with the government for infrastructural development in Chittagong, they add.

But CDA could not advance with the project since the land inside the proposed site remained under illegal occupants, says an executive engineer of CDA preferring anonymity.

However, JBIC is likely to carry out another study soon before coming up with financial assistance for the project.

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Stop Karnaphuli encroachment

HC asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to stop encroachment, earth filling and construction of buildings for three months on the Karnaphuli river in Chittagong.

It asked the director general of the Directorate of Land Records and Survey, and the Chittagong deputy commissioner to turn in within six months a report after conducting a survey on the river.

The HC also issued a ruling on the government to explain in three weeks as to why it should not be directed to demolish all structures built on the river to protect it.

An HC bench of justices AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Sheikh Mohammad Zakir Hossain gave the directives following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

The organisation filed the petition as a public interest litigation seeking HC directives

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INT'L CRIMES TRIBUNAL

Appointment of members challenged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition has been filed with the High Court (HC) challenging the appointments of two HC judges to the posts of the chairman and a member of International Crimes Tribunal set up for trying the crimes against humanity.

Nawab Ali, a pro-Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer, and AFM Solaiman Chowdhury, a former secretary, jointly filed the writ petition with the HC on July 11 stating that as per the provision of the constitution, sitting HC judges cannot hold any other office of the republic.

An HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Syeda Afsar Jahan started hearing on the petition yesterday.

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Youth shot dead in city

Woman murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An armed gang shot dead a youth and injured another in the city's Goran while a homemaker was found dead at Basabo last night.

The deceased youth was identified as Setu Reza, 18, a member of ward-25 unit Chhatra league while injured Zafar Ahmed alias Roni, 20, was a fellow activist.

The deceased woman, Mariam Begum, 35, was a resident of East Basabo.

A gang of 15 to 16 youths opened fire at Setu and Reza at South Goran around 9:30pm, said witnesses. The two were

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

This long tailback on the Bijoy Sarani-Shahbagh road yesterday hardly demonstrates any sign of improvement in traffic situation in the capital even after the drive against outdated vehicles.

Arrest of Marak raises question

Family claims he was picked up 3 months back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mystery shrouds the arrest of Pradip Marak, an alleged Bangladeshi aide to detained Ulf leader Ranjan Chowdhury, as Pradip's family members yesterday claimed that unidentified law enforcers picked him up in April from city's Ashkona.

On April 21, an anonymous caller asked Pradip to go to a spot at 10:00am and he went missing after reaching the spot, said Pradip's daughter Prima Chicham.

Following the incident they filed a case with Airport Police Station, she added.

Sub-Inspector Morshed Zaman, also the investigation

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DAILY AMAR DESH

SC clears way for publication

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court order that stayed the government's action cancelling the declaration of Bangla daily Amar Desh.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim passed the order after dismissing a leave-to-appeal petition filed by the government against the HC verdict.

The apex court also vacated its chamber judge's order that stayed the HC order on June 15.

On June 1, the government cancelled the declaration of the daily, citing that it has no authorised publisher.

Following a writ petition filed by acting Chairman of the daily Anwar-un-Nabi, an HC bench on June 10 passed the order and issued a rule upon the government to explain as to why its action closing the publication should not be declared illegal.

The apex court yesterday asked counsels of both sides to prepare for hearing on the HC rule as soon as possible.

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LIBERATION WAR

Govt to honour foreign friends on Independence Day 2011

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to accord honour to distinguished foreign nationals and organisations from the Independence Day next year for their extraordinary contribution in the War of Independence in 1971.

The decision to honour the heads of state and government, philosophers, litterateurs, intellectuals, eminent citizens and organisations of different countries was taken at a meeting of the national committee with its chief Foreign Minister Dipu Moni in the chair yesterday.

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Hasina moves on Ramadan prices

Asks secretaries to keep market stable

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked top bureaucrats to take steps to rein in the prices of essentials during Ramadan and implement power projects on schedule.

She also urged them to work sincerely for full implementation of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the current fiscal year. "Make sure that the deals to install power plants are implemented in time. You must remain alert about artificial price hike of essentials during Ramadan," a senior secretary quoted Hasina as saying after a meeting between the premier and secretaries at the Cabinet Division of the Secretariat.

Hasina said a vested quarter had tried to manipulate prices of essentials ahead of Ramadan in the past.

She asked them to take necessary steps to check the malpractice.

The prime minister directed the Trading Corporation Bangladesh (TCB) to import adequate rice, pulses, chickpea and wheat immediately to keep their prices stable during Ramadan.

It was Hasina's third meeting with top bureaucrats since she assumed office on January 6, 2009.

Expressing satisfaction with the 91 percent implementation of ADP in the outgoing fiscal

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Ashraf slates bureaucrats

Says they are not doing democratic practice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The LGRD and cooperatives minister in parliament yesterday lambasted civil bureaucrats for their "contemptuous attitudes" towards public representatives saying they are still accustomed to customs of military rule, not democratic practice.

"The civil bureaucracy has contempt for elected representatives ranging from MPs to a member of Union Parishad," Syed Ashrafur Islam told the lawmakers. "They have yet to adopt the customs

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