

Jubok owes

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The probe report says the government needs to form a commission soon and for a long term--at least for three years--to get the money back to the depositors.

As per the committee's recommendations, the primary task of the proposed commission should be banning the sale of all movable and immovable property of Jubok and its affiliated organisations, and taking possession of the property.

The chairman of the commission may be given the status and benefits of a High Court judge or a government secretary and provided with office, manpower and financial support.

Monir Misir Chowdhury, a Jubok client from Kotbari in Comilla, told The Daily Star that investing in the NGO caused him a great deal of stress over the last few years.

He had used his father's pension and borrowed heavily from his relatives to put money into Jubok's businesses, he added.

However, Monir is now hopeful he would get back the money, as he believes the government is sincerely working to that end.

Jubok started its operation in 1994 by providing micro-credits to its members. Since its registration with the Joint Stock Companies in 1997, it has set up more than 20 business outfits.

By 2006, its tentacles spread to telecommunications, housing and real estate development, tourism, health, ceramics, sea-food, IT, nursery, agrobiotech industry, and capital management.

Around that time, Hossain Al Masum, chairman of Jubok Housing & Real Estate Development Ltd, and Sabih Ul Alam, director of Jubok Ceramic Industries Ltd, joined the IFIC Bank as directors, pur-

chasing a chunk of its shares.

The home ministry and the BB in separate investigations in 2006 found that Jubok has conned its clients out of crores of taka through different projects.

Jubok's shady activities came on the central bank's radar in early 2006. In May that year, the BB served a notice on the NGO, asking it to explain within seven days why its activities such as collecting deposits and borrowing from common people on interest should not be declared illegal.

In July the same year, it asked Jubok to return its entire savings, deposits and other credits to its members and depositors by December 31 that year. The deadline was later extended to March 2007.

Back then, Jubok director Syed Rashedul Huda Chowdhury issued a statement saying they would follow the BB directives, but that did not happen.

The 2006 BB investigation gathered that Jubok and its sister concern Jubo Karmasangsthan Udyog had been collecting deposits through deposit books and disbursing loans to its members and general people. But receiving money from people through deposit books is similar to collecting deposits by banks.

Besides, it found, Jubo Karmasangsthan Udyog had been receiving loans from people on high interest rate through agreements on non-judicial stamps.

As the NGO failed to return the money to its depositors, the BB referred the matter to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in February last year. But the ACC returned it, saying the central bank should take necessary steps in this regard.

Jubok Chairman Masud Al Hossain was arrested in June 2009 on charges of embezzlement. He, however, obtained bail after a few months.

BNP for joining JS

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opposition to return to parliament and raise the issue there.

The International Crimes Tribunal on January 17 directed the jail authorities to keep Salauddin detained until April 19 on war crimes charges.

The tribunal the same day rejected Salauddin's request for allowing him to attend the next parliament session.

Farooque told The Daily Star that the opposition lawmakers want to join the current parliament session with their senior lawmaker SQ Chowdhury.

"I can draw the attention of the home and the law ministers once the opposition lawmakers raise the issue of Salauddin joining the House. Otherwise, I can do little about this matter," Hamid told The Daily Star last night.

"The matter rests with the court. I have no authority to

deal with any matter outside the House," he said.

The Speaker however said he will play his due role if and when the question of cancellation of Salauddin's parliament membership is raised in the House for not being able to join House proceedings for 90 consecutive days.

He said Salauddin had earlier submitted a letter through his son expressing his will to join parliament.

"I told his son that such a letter must be endorsed by the jail authority," he said.

The Speaker told Farroque that he can only discuss the matter with Home Minister Sahara Khatun but cannot ask her to release him.

On December 18, the International Crimes Tribunal issued arrest warrant against him for his links to crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

CJ, many judges

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Some senior lawyers told The Daily Star that it is unprecedented for the CJ to skip the SCBA lunch, and if he does skip, it may deteriorate the relationship between the Bar and the court.

There will be three lunches -- the SCBA will host the first one on February 3 while the association's president and secretary will host two others on February 10 and 17.

SCBA President Khandker Mahub Hossain said they have invited the CJ as per the tradition.

Mahub, a pro-BNP lawyer, said it depends on the chief justice if he will attend those. And if he does not, the relationship between the SCBA and the court will deteriorate.

"We have not done anything bad that the chief justice will refrain from attending our programmes," he said.

He, however, hoped that the CJ along with all the

judges and lawyers will join the annual lunches.

Ruling Awami League-backed lawyers will also skip the lunches, if the pro-BNP faction of the Bar does not apologise to the chief justice, some of them said.

Reacting to this, Mahub said he will not apologise to the CJ. He also said that the pro-AL lawyers gave the statement out of emotion, and they will attend the lunches.

He added that the SCBA dominated by pro-AL lawyers in 2006 had not invited the then Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain.

Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud, who was the SCBA president in 2006, told The Daily Star that Mudassir Husain had accepted their invitation, but did not attend the ceremony.

Attorney General Mahubey Alam and a number of High Court judges may also skip the lunches if the chief justice does not attend those.

Unproductive

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loan administration in banks will be stricter and lapses in the banks lending would be dealt with sternly.

In July, the central bank in its MPS for the first half of FY 2010-11 aimed at bringing down private sector credit growth to 16 percent by next June from 24pc of June last.

But it kept climbing and crossed 27pc.

The new MPS also said there are instances of industrial and SME loans diverted into the overheated asset market.

Recent growth in credit to the private sector is high and well out of line with a likely growth trend in nominal GDP.

It reads it is therefore necessary to get a firmer grip on monetary expansion. Central banks in neighbouring and in the fast growing economies of East Asia are active to curb inflationary pressures from excessive monetary expansion.

The governor said food price in international market increased substantially as climate change affected food production. The prices of fuel and non-food industrial commodities were also on the rise as the rate of growth in the developing countries was high beyond expectation.

The BB forecast that the government might hike fuel price by June this year resulting in increase of non-food inflation alongside food inflation.

BB deputy governors Nazrul Huda, Ziaul Hasan Siddiqui and other high officials were present while the MPS was announced.

Nazrul Huda said they had held one-to-one talks with the banks to cut wasteful and unproductive credit flow.

Ziaul Hasan Siddiqui said if the government does not hike fuel price it will have a pressure on the budget. It will force the government to borrow in turn creating an inflationary pressure.

SC to hear

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the case filed by Anti-Corruption Commission under the Money Laundering Prevention Act.

Tarique later filed a leave to appeal petition with the SC against the HC order.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque passed the adjournment order upon a time prayer moved by barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq, the principal counsel for Tarique.

Barrister Rafique prayed for time from the court due to his personal difficulties.

The ACC filed the case on October 26, 2009 with a Dhaka court against Tarique and his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun on charges of illegally sending Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore between 2003 and 2007.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her elder son Tarique Rahman and four others till March 15 in connection with Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

Judge Mozammel Hossain of the Special Judge's Court-3 passed the order following a time petition filed on behalf of Khaleda and Tarique.

In the petition, the defendants' lawyers said they had earlier filed a writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the case. The HC then issued a rule upon the government to explain why the proceedings of the case should not be declared illegal.

The court also asked the government not to oppose seriously if Khaleda Zia seeks adjournment of the trial court hearing till disposal of the rule, lawyers said.

Khaleda could not appear before the court due to security reasons while advocate Sanallah Miah represented Tarique in his absence.

Two other accused Sharfuddin Ahmed and former BNP lawmaker Kazi Saleemul Haq Kamal were also absent from the court as they were busy with some other work.

The other two accused former principal secretary Dr Kamal Uddin Siddique and late president Ziaur Rahman's nephew Mominur Rahman have been absconding since the filing of the case.

The ACC on August 5 last pressed charges against Khaleda, Tarique and four others.

Good genie vs evil genie

FROM PAGE 1
the poor workers are exposed to all the times. Yet the "good genie" of MoEF remains unmoved.

The ship breaking yards of Sitakundu resemble a battlefield where a devastated army of workers, in bare feet and hands, every day tries to salvage something out of gigantic masses of debris. At any time of the year the water of the Bay by the 100 ship breaking yards is littered with liquid and solid wastes.

The "good genie's" love for the defiant ship breakers could be traced back to its close connection with the industry. According to insiders, some of the "good genie's" family members are involved in the business that has traditionally kept their earnings secret from the public.

Following a High Court order in March 2009, a high powered technical committee was created by the "good genie's" office to formulate rules about ship breaking, and management of hazardous wastes. The court order clearly directed the authorities to include different ministries, experts, and three members of the civil society in the committee.

In one of the committee meetings on February 8 last year at MoEF, most members instantaneously opposed when a representative from the Directorate of Shipping proposed for inclusion of two members from the Bangladesh Ship Breakers Association (BSBA). The same meeting decided to include in the committee a representative from an organisation dealing with welfare of the workers.

But the "good genie" had its own idea. On March 10, another committee meeting was convened, but this time the members, who had opposed the inclusion of BSBA representatives, were not informed about it.

Instead, the committee invited two representatives

from BSBA to that meeting and officially included them in the body. Inclusion of representatives for the workers' welfare was simply set aside. The "good genie" did not seem to realise that the polluters and offenders could greatly destroy the good intentions of the committee formed with a view to streamline the sector in line with proper labour management and environmental protection.

The most interesting part of the "good genie's" activities regarding streamlining the sector probably comes from its office's move to issue environment clearance certificates to 44 ship breaking yards on January 19 this year, a day after four young workers were killed in a huge blast in one of the yards. Only months before that, the "good genie's" office had issued similar certificates to 16 other yards. The certificates could only be issued if the ship breakers met all 56 conditions set by the Department of Environment itself. According to various organisations working in the field, none could meet the 56 conditions in such a short time, and without investing a good chunk of money.

Recently the "good genie's" office gave a go-ahead to scrapping of four ships on the basis of four highly dubious Pre-cleaning Certificates (PCC) issued on the Virgin Islands in the Caribbean.

Copies of the certificates obtained by The Daily Star show three different companies --- Joplin Overseas Investments Ltd, Duke Consulting Ltd, and Anisha Shipping Ltd --- issuing the PCCs. One of the certificates does not even have a stamp. The remaining three certificates bear the signature of the same person, although the corporate stamps are from three separate organisations. So we have a single person working for three

different companies on the Virgin Islands signing three different PCCs for three different types of ships in eight days. According to our sources, pre-cleaning of a ship involves removing of all hazardous materials and substances. When a ship is pre-cleaned for scrapping, it becomes dysfunctional, therefore requires towing to its final destination --- the scrap yard. But all these four ships were beached with engines running.

The "good genie" has supporters abroad too. In a recent meeting at a posh London hotel, international cash buyers and brokers of scrap ships expressed how important it is to keep Bangladesh open for ship breaking. In an interview with a private channel, Dr Nikos Mikelis, senior implementation officer of Marine Environment of the International Maritime Organisation, said it is important to reopen the ship breaking yards in Bangladesh. "It makes sense for these ships [scrap] to have somewhere to go," he said. None was however talking about the conditions under which the estimated 25,000 workers are doing the job and how our marine, land and aerial environments have been put to severe treatment by this crude method of ship breaking.

EVIL GENIE
Our "evil genie", on the other hand, resorted to law of the land at home -- not to courts anywhere in the UK, USA, or France -- for streamlining the highly polluting and reckless ship breaking industry. Had the highest court of justice not intervened following the so-called "evil genie's" pleas for disciplining the sector, the regulatory bodies run by the so-called "good genie" and industrialists in the ship breaking sector would have inflicted much more pain --- that is for sure.

Ijtema ends

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concluding prayers of the first phase of Ijtema on January 23, also participated in yesterday's prayers.

The Dhaka-Mymensingh highway stretch between Mohakhali and Board Bazar was off limits to vehicles from early yesterday morning due to the huge rush of devotees.

Scores of thousands of people from the capital and nearby areas moved towards the Ijtema venue at Tongi to join the Akheri Munajat. Many of them walked 5-15 km.

Devotees who failed to reach the venue took part in the prayers sitting on nearby roads and open spaces. The number of loud speakers used for the prayers was insufficient as in the first phase of the Ijtema. Many devotees raised their hands hearing the munajat over the phone and radio.

A female devotee, Rahima, said, "I have joined the prayers along with my son and relatives after walking around eight km from Mohakhali."

On the other hand, hundreds of people suffered a lot to reach their destinations as movement of vehicles remained suspended for hours.

Abdul Aziz from Demra said he has been attending the Ijtema since 1968. Only around 200 people joined the congregation that year, he recalled.

Many organisations and individuals distributed water and biscuits among devotees walking to and from the Ijtema venue.

Political leaders and foreign diplomats also joined the concluding prayers.

A three-tier security was put in place to ensure peaceful holding of the Ijtema. About 1,000 members of intelligence agencies were deployed at and around the Ijtema venue. Law enforcers also kept a close watch on the venue using closed circuit TVs.

Devotees from 31 of the country's 64 districts joined the second phase of the Ijtema and those from 33

districts had participated in the first phase.

The 31 districts are Dhaka, Mujshiganj, Manikganj, Narayanganj, Natragona, Tagail, Jamalpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Comilla, Barahmanbaria, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Chapainabaganj, Noaogon, Pabna, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Bogra, Satkhira, Jhenidah, Magura, Meherpur, Barisal, Pirojpur, and Patuakhali.

Felani killing

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An HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain rejected the petition, saying that the court considered the petition not submitted before it.

The HC said it does not want to interfere with the government's decision regarding the incident.

Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain told the court that the government has protested Felani's killing through diplomatic channel.

The Indian government has expressed sorrow at the death and promised that BSF will use rubber bullets instead of bullets so that nobody gets killed in the border area, he said.

In a informed Bangladesh that two BSF members were suspended in connection with the killing, he added.

Fifteen-year-old Felani was shot dead by BSF on January 7 when she was returning home from India through Anantapur border in Kurigram.

National Forum for Protection of Human Rights filed the petition as a public interest litigation with the HC on January 17 seeking compensation from the government for Felani's family. It also asked to take steps against killings by BSF.

Petitioner's counsel Tajul Islam told The Daily Star that they will move a similar petition with the HC if such incident occurs again.

TIB high-ups

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December 26 last year.

Judicial Magistrate Keshab Chandra Roy set bail at Tk 10,000 each in the case filed by Mujibul Haq, a member of Chittagong District Bar Association.

And Metropolitan Magistrate Mahubur Rahman freed each of them on Tk 500 bail in the case filed by Md Mohiuddin, another member of the association.

The cases were filed in connection with the December 23 TIB survey report which said the judiciary was the most corrupt service sector in Bangladesh.

M Hafizuddin Khan in his reaction yesterday said they are fully respectful to the court. The TIB report was based on information collected from the masses as well as the media, he said.

Iftexharuzzaman said their intention was not to humiliate anybody.

Defence counsel Rehana Begum Ranu said the next date of the hearing is yet to be known.

All measures

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Human Rights of House of Lord Eric Avebury, Amnesty International Director Abbas Fayed and Human Rights watch Director Brad Adams metherather Hotelsuit.

They discussed how people's rights can be protected as well as the issues related to the CHT Peace Accord, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni told journalists after the meeting.

Hasina lauded their roles in building public opinion against BNP-Jamaat led alliance government's torture on people during their tenure.

The right body's leaders appreciated the role of Sheikh Hasina in ensuring good governance and improving human rights situation in Bangladesh.

They assured the premier of providing utmost supports to further improving human rights condition in Bangladesh.

Principal Secretary to the PM Abdul Karim and Bangladesh Ambassador Sayeedur Rahman Khan were present.

Egypt crisis

FROM PAGE 20
"You can call this a revolution, you can call this uprising, you can call it anything," spokesman Essam el-Erian said.

The presence of overtly pious Muslims in the square was conspicuous, suggesting a significant Muslim Brotherhood representation. Hundreds performed the sunset prayers. Veiled women prayed separately.

Gangs of armed men attacked at least four jails across Egypt before dawn, helping to free hundreds of Muslim militants and thousands of other inmates. Gangs of young men with guns and large sticks smashed cars and robbed people in Cairo.

The official death toll from five days of growing crisis stood at 74, with thousands injured.

After a night of violence in many cities across Egypt, the army sent hundreds more troops and armoured vehicles onto the streets starting yesterday morning.

State television showed Defence Minister Hussein Tantawi in green fatigues outside the state TV headquarters in downtown Cairo, speaking with soldiers and civilian onlookers.

Truckloads of hundreds of police poured back into Cairo neighbourhoods in the afternoon and took up positions on the streets.

In some spots, they were jeered by residents who chanted anti-police slogans and demanded that they only be allowed to deploy jointly with the military.

An unprecedented Internet cut-off remained in place for a third day after the country's four primary Internet providers stopped moving data in and out of the country early Friday in an apparent move by authorities to disrupt the organisation of demonstrations.

However, Egyptian mobile networks were back up after days of cut-offs but with text-messaging widely disrupted. The pan-Arab broadcaster Al Jazeera said Egyptian authorities ordered the closure of its Cairo news hub overseeing coverage of the country's massive street protests, denouncing the move as an attempt to "stifle and repress" open reporting.

The Qatar-based network has given nearly round-the-clock coverage to the unprecedented uprising against Hosni Mubarak and had faced criticism by some government supporters and other Arab leaders as a forum to inspire more unrest.

Police could be seen returning to some streets nearly two days after they virtually disappeared, creating a security vacuum only partially filled by the presence of army troops backed by tanks at key sites around this city of 18 million people.

The military has been generally welcomed by demonstrators across Cairo, unlike the widely despised police.

In one part of Tahrir Square, soldiers working with civilian protester volunteers were even checking IDs and bags of people arriving at the square, saying they were searching for weapons and making sure plainclothes police did not enter the square.

"The army is protecting us, they won't let police infiltrators sneak in!" one volunteer shouted.

Brickfield

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the illegal brickfield and its materials," said Dhaka Deputy Commissioner Mohibul Haque.

According to witnesses, 9 lakh bricks, the chimney, a tin-shed house, a television and a DVD player were put on auction.

Last week, a mobile court led by executive magistrate Al Amin forfeited the brickfield and its materials and brick making equipment.

The crackdown came after Rab raided the brickfield and rescued 30 workers who had allegedly been forced to work there. Rab also arrested two employees of the brickfield on charge of torturing the workers, but a court granted them bail.

Local sources said about 150 brickfields operate in Savar and Ashulia.

The DC said mobile courts will continue the drives against illegal brickfields.

Then, minutes before the start of a 4:00pm curfew, at least two jets roared over the Nile and toward Tahrir Square in the heart of Cairo, where thousands of protesters have gathered each day to demand the end of the administration.

The jets made several passes over the square, dropping lower every time and setting off alarms in parked cars.

Some protesters clapped and waved to them while others jeered.

"This is terrorism, they are trying to scare the people with the planes and the tanks. They are trying to make people afraid and leave the square," said Gamal Ahmed, a 40-year-old air-conditioning technician.

Lines of army tanks jammed a road leading into Tahrir, and a military helicopter hovered overhead.

Massive trucks and cranes moved three-foot-high concrete barriers in front of the foreign ministry in central Cairo near the Nile.

Troops in full combat gear and half a dozen armored personnel carriers guarded one of the largest symbols of the government.

Mubarak, 82, perpetuated the overriding role of military men in Egyptian politics by naming his intelligence chief, former army general Omar Suleiman, to the new role of vice president on Saturday.

Ahmed Shafiq, the outgoing civil aviation minister and Mubarak fellow former air force officer, was named prime minister.

State TV Sunday showed images of Mubarak during what it said was a visit to the country's military command centre. The president looked sombre and fatigued in his first public appearance since he addressed the nation late Friday to promise reform and announce the dismissal of his Cabinet.

Egyptian security officials said armed men fired at guards in gun battles that lasted hours at the four prisons including one northwest of Cairo that held hundreds of militants. The prisoners escaped after starting fires and clashing with guards.

Those who fled included 34 members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest and best-organised opposition group.

The security officials said several inmates were killed and wounded, but gave no specific figures.

The officials told The AP that army troops were hunting for the escaped prisoners, in some cases with the help of the police. State television also showed footage of what it said was dozens of prisoners recaptured by the army troops, squatting on dirt while soldiers kept watch over them.

In the southern city of Assiut, officials said riot police stormed the city's main prison to quell a prison riot using tear gas and batons against inmates. An AP reporter saw army tanks were deployed outside the prison, on bridges straddling the Nile and at the police headquarters.

WC cricket

FROM PAGE 1
and 42 construction firms are implementing the Tk 54 crore project, said Col Abu Sayed Mohammad Masud, project director of Hatirjheel development project, yesterday at a press conference at the temporary army camp near Begunbari.

Bangladesh is going to co-host the World Cup Cricket 2011 for the first time. The opening ceremony will be held on February 17 at Bangabandhu National Stadium. Eight matches, including two quarterfinals, will take place in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The project, which also includes road carpeting, footpath repairing, drainage and development of road dividers and beautification of 4.66 lakh square metre road, footpath and median, started on December 26 last year and so far roughly 80 percent of it has been completed, he said.

The full tasks would be completed within next six days.

In total, 27 roads from Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium to Bangabandhu National Stadium brought under the project.