

SC adjourns hearing on appeal of Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned till today the hearing on an appeal filed by BNP leader Tarique Rahman against a High Court verdict over filing a money laundering case against him.

The HC on September 29 last year rejected a writ petition filed by Tarique, senior vice-chairman of BNP, challenging the proceedings of the case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (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.

An Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque yesterday passed the adjournment order after holding hearing on the leave-to-appeal petition filed by Tarique against the HC verdict.

The next hearing on the appeal will be held on February 9 if the SC does not sit today and tomorrow due to countrywide hartal called by BNP, and Saraswati Puja, Advocate Khursid Alam Khan, a lawyer for ACC, told The Daily Star.

Cut army officer-soldier gap

Asks prime minister



PHOTO: PMO

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the Forces Formation Commanders' conference at the Army Headquarters yesterday.

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the officers of Bangladesh Army to take all necessary measures to reduce the existing gap in their relations with soldiers.

"Still there is a huge gap in the relations between Army officers and soldiers. You'll have to take all kinds of steps to reduce such gap," she said while addressing the Forces Formation Commanders' conference at the Army Headquarters yesterday morning.

Hasina said maintaining the chain of command within the force is a must for every member of the army.

"You must ensure chain of command. All subordinates must abide by orders of the senior officers and at the same time, the commanders must look into the matters of the subordinates."

The prime minister gave two more direc-

tives in order to create more cohesive relations among the officers and soldiers.

She said all seniors must remain highly watchful so that no disparity is created among the officers of different ranks and soldiers.

"Some disparities still exist in case of housing, medical service, food, education facilities and punishment for violation of discipline in the force. Instead of viewing such disparities as minor issues, you have to be particularly attentive in this regard," she told the formation commanders.

Besides, Hasina said every member of the army will have to give due attention to training.

"Internal discipline, unity, sympathy and empathy in the army will have to be maintained well and thus you have to unitedly foil any conspiracy against the mother-

land," she said.

Regarding promotion in jobs, she said honest, qualified and talented officers will have to be given promotions, and new officers and soldiers appointed on the basis of efficiency.

Hasina said massive tasks are going on in the army in the light of proposed "Forces Goal 2030" for organisational reform and incorporating modern war equipment and specialised unit in the force.

She asked the officers to build the force with the spirit of the 1971 liberation war as the force emerged through the nation's struggle for liberation.

The prime minister observed that in the past a vested quarter in collaboration with the defeated force was active in distorting the nation's history of independence.

In this regard, she mentioned that Father

of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman in his speech at the 1st BMA Course concluding function had said his dream was to build a highly skilled modern army for independent Bangladesh.

She said the members of Bangladesh Army would have to remain firmly committed to safeguarding democracy at any cost.

"You have to work as the fearless soldier in establishing rule of law and ensuring welfare of the masses. You have to be respectful to democracy and to act as sentinel of the Constitution," Hasina told the army officers.

She said the members of the Army will have to remain prepared to make supreme sacrifice to protect the country's independence and sovereignty. "You've to stand against militancy and terrorism with your highest strength and thus strengthen the nation as a whole."

The PM also told the formation commanders to convey her messages to the members of all levels in the army.

She also appreciated the Military Operations other than war programmes under which the members of the army are participating in the government's various pro-people activities.

She said the main objective of the government is attainment of rapid economic development of people maintaining internal stability in the country.

Earlier, on her arrival at the Army Headquarters, the prime minister was received by the Defence Adviser to the PM Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and Army Chief General Mohammad Abdul Mubeen.

Principal Staff Officer (PSO) Lt Gen Abdul Wadud, DGFI Director General Lt Gen Mollah Fazle Akbar, and PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad were, among others, present.

Talks begin to form South Asian Forum

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign secretaries of the eight South Asian countries yesterday began discussion on setting up of a South Asia Forum.

The 38th session of the Saarc standing committee, comprises by the foreign secretaries of the member countries -- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- began a two-day long meeting in Thimphu to prepare a report about progress achieved since the 16th summit held last year in Bhutan.

They will also finalise agenda for Saasc countries foreign ministers' meeting beginning on February 8. Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes is leading Bangladesh at the standing committee meeting.

According to the officials, the heads of states and governments of Saarc countries at the 16th Saarc summit held in Bhutan in April 2010 adopted a proposal regarding formation of a South Asia Forum such as the Association of South East Nations and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

They said the setting up of this forum will be discussed in detail both at the Saarc standing committee and council of ministers meeting.



Feast of Saint Anthony celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The feast of Saint Anthony was celebrated at Nagori Church in Kaliganj on Friday, says a press release.

The programme began with a procession, leading to offering and prayer with religious songs. The 30,000 attendants prayed to Saint Anthony for blessing.

Archbishop Paulus Costa offered the mass (prayer) participated by 50 priests.

Next Archbishop of Dhaka Archbishop Patrick D'Rozario, Bishop Garvas Rozario and Theolinus Gomes and Priest in Charge of Nagori Church Father Prosanto Rozario were also present, added the press release.

Today's US visa interviews Feb 14

METRO DESK

Immigration and diversity visa applicants of the US embassy's consular section who may fail to attend their scheduled visa interviews today due to hartal should come on February 14 at 8:00am, says a press release.

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SSC EXAMS

2 centres get separate question sets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two examination centres under Dhaka Education Board received separate question sets on the third day of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations yesterday.

The examinees under Keraniganj and Netrakona centres discovered that they received another question set when they compared theirs with other centres, said some students of the centres.

Both the sets have only 10 marks in common, said the examinees sitting for English First Paper examination.

All centres under Dhaka Board are supposed to have uniform question paper.

Admitting the fact, Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Fahima Khatun told The Daily Star yesterday that they prepared a show cause notice for the upazila nirbahi officers of the two upazilas, since they are responsible, asking to inform about the matter.

"They will receive the notice tomorrow

(today)," she said, adding that they will take action against those responsible after getting their feedback.

"We will hold a meeting tomorrow (today) to take a decision," added Prof Fahima.

Meanwhile, 69 students and three teachers were expelled for adopting unfair means while a total of 5,725 candidates were absent in yesterday's examination.

The number of expelled students is high so far. Among them, 43 are from Technical Board; nine from Madrasa Board; eight from Dhaka Board; two each from Comilla, Jessor, Chittagong and Barisal Boards; and one from Rajshahi Board; according to the education ministry control room.

The control room could not name the three expelled invigilators of Technical Board.

The absentees are: 2,994 under Madrasa Board; 763 under Dhaka; 555 under Jessor; 406 under Technical; 238 under Rajshahi; 221 under Comilla; 184 under Dinajpur; 142 under Chittagong; 133 under Barisal; and 89 under Sylhet board.

"They will receive the notice tomorrow

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