

**Saeed Eskander gets bail in graft case**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted fresh bail to Major (Retd) Saeed Eskander, younger brother of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, in connection with a corruption case.

Judge AFM Aminul Islam of Special Judge Court-1 granted bail to Saeed Eskander after his lawyer Barrister Mahabub Uddin Khokon submitted a petition seeking bail in the case.

The court also adjourned till June 5 the hearing on charge framing following a time petition submitted by Khokon saying that he was not prepared to take part in the hearing.

Earlier on March 10, another court in Dhaka granted him bail in the case on his surrender to it. But the case was later shifted to the Special Judge Court-1 for its quick disposal.

On February 6, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Director Benazir Ahmed, investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, naming 12 witnesses.

The ACC on April 28 last year filed the case with Ramna Police Station after finding dissimilarities between Eskander's wealth and his wealth statement.

According to the case, Eskander in the wealth statement mentioned he had wealth worth Tk 99,10,266 whereas the ACC found it was worth Tk 5,71,87,074.

**Mustafa new dist governor of Rotary Int'l District-3280**

METRO DESK

Ghulam Mustafa, former president of BAIRA, was elected District Governor of Rotary International District-3280 Bangladesh at its conference held in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

Ghulam, a freedom fighter, is the managing director of Prantik Travels and Tourism, Prantik Express; and director of Hardeo International School, Gramcen Fund, Gramcen Knitwear and Muktijoddha Somobay Samity.

Ghulam, who is also a writer, is associated with Bangladesh Environment Movement, FBCCI Standing Committee and Liberation War Museum.



Sirajuddaula Park

**Sirajuddaula Park: A haven for drug addicts**

HELEMUL ALAM

Sirajuddaula Park still looks comparatively good in the morning, but the atmosphere starts getting worse from afternoon when the park becomes crowded with floating people.

Generally residents of Koshaituli, Jindabazar, Tantibazar, Bashabari Lane, and Syed Awlad Hossain Lane in the city come to the park everyday.

They spend time or do physical exercise and boys often play badminton there. The park has five of its sitting benches specially arranged for women visitors only.

But the recreational place becomes a heaven for drug addicts at night, polluting its ambience and environment, said Mohammad Delowar Hossain of Bongshal area.

Sirajuddaula Park has lost its beauty now. Poor maintenance by the authorities concerned is blamed for the loss.

Delowar said just 15 years ago the park was full of greenery and flower. But lack of proper maintenance damages the ground's earlier look, he added.

There is a walkway around the 0.61-acre park. A signboard there reads "if anyone walks 11 times around the park they will have walked a distance of one mile".

People coming there to do physical exercise everyday formed an organisation named Bhorer Otithi, of which Haji Mohammad Yusuf is the vice-president.

Yusuf said they submitted a prayer to Dhaka City Corporation

(DCC) about one year ago to renovate the park but they did not get any result of it.

He said the fence of the park is broken at different points and five of electric poles out of eight are out of order for long.

Though there is a gardener for the park, one person is not sufficient to maintain it when at least four persons are necessary, according to Haji Yusuf.

He also blamed the nearby bus terminal for destruction of the park environment.

Superintending engineer of DCC (circle-1), Muhammad Abul Hasnath, said, "We took a step to develop the park including the walkway and boundary, but it was not approved by the authorities for which we could not do the work."

Sirajuddaula Park is also adorned with a fountain inside set up during the tenure of former mayor late Mohammad Hanif. It still works, but looks shabby.

Pagla Suruj of Jindabazar area had worked for the DCC for about 30 years. He said six palm trees and two chambal trees have been in the park for over 100 years.

But they could not plant flower trees in the park, as the children coming there destroy the trees, said Suruj, who retired from the DCC two years back.

Sirajuddaula Park was established in memory of Nawab Sirajuddaula, the nabab of Bengal who defeated in the battle of Palashi in 1757.

Nawab Salimullah contributed to the establishment of the park.

**BDR MUTINY TRIAL**

**Four PWs give depositions**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four prosecution witnesses yesterday gave depositions against 49 suspected accused of Border Guard Security Unit (BGSU) who later cross-examined the witnesses at a special court.

Director General (DG) of Boarder Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Maj Gen Md Rafiqul Islam presided over the special court-7, set up at the entertainment centre of 13 Border Guard Battalion to try the 113 alleged mutineers of BGSU.

113 BGB men have been made accused on charge of carrying firearms and taking part in the mutiny, dumping bodies of slain army officers as well as not informing higher authorities of the mutiny.

Meanwhile, 54 suspected accused of 44 Border Guard Battalion cross-examined seven prosecution witnesses following depositions by the witnesses at a special court.

The special court-11, set up at the BGB Darbar Hall, is trying 675 mutineers of 44 Border Guard Battalion. Col Iftekaruddin Mahmud presided over the court.

The allegations against the accused are leaving the Darbar Hall defying the order of the then DG, not informing the higher authorities about the preparations made for the mutiny, helping to break into the magazine and burying the bodies of slain army officers, instigating and compelling other jawans to take part in the mutiny and damaging information system of the intelligence unit.

Both the courts were adjourned till 9:00am of April 5.

Some 74 people, including the then BDR DG and 56 other army officers, were massacred at BGB headquarters in the city that also led a mutiny at other BGB units across the country on February 25-26, 2009.

**Conference on sanitation begins in Colombo today**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Experts from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) countries will begin a five-day dialogue in Colombo of Sri Lanka today to address sanitation challenges of the region needed to achieve UN declared Millennium Development Goals.

Official sources said the 4th biennial South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN IV), themed "Sanitation Enhances Quality of Life", will be attended by around 500 experts and delegates who will also discuss methods to improve sanitation.

According to latest statistics of SACOSAN IV, 2.6 billion people around the world live without proper sanitation, of which, 800 million are in South Asia. India has the lowest sanitation coverage with 31 percent.

Saarc representatives will also review progress of commitments made in the last conference in New Delhi in 2008.

SACOSAN IV will focus on safe disposal of human waste and identify specific objectives for member countries to accelerate progress of provision of sanitation services, enhancing people's quality of life.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) deemed that the absence of hygienic behaviour and lack of access to safe sanitation facilities and services are major causes of diseases worldwide.

**Energy expo begins**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-day long "Power generation equipment and renewable energy expo 2011" began at Engineers' Institute Centre in the port city yesterday.

Inaugurated by Engineer Mohammad Harun, the institute's chairman, and organised by Exponent Exhibition Pvt Ltd, the exposition would be open till April 5 from 10:30am to 8:00pm.

Thirty institutions from Japan, China, Spain, Germany, Turkey, the US, India and Bangladesh are taking part. The companies are Green Investment SL Limited, Panna Group, Power Plus Pte Limited, SPY Security, Metal Plus Limited, Rimso Foundation, Hamco Corporation, IR Bulb Company Limited and Echo Power Company Limited. Akshaya Solar Power (India Pvt Ltd), Price Club (Gen Power), Dana Group (USA), Bestway Powertech, Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy Limited, General Electric-Orient Energy System Limited and Ingen Technology Limited are also present.

**Wahidur made envoy to Kenya**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed Md Wahidur Rahman, director general of the ministry of foreign affairs, as the next high commissioner of Bangladesh to Kenya, says a press release.

Wahid, a career diplomat belonging to the 9th batch of the BCS (Foreign affairs) Cadre, joined the service in 1991.

He has served in various capacities at headquarters and in Bangladesh missions in Riyadh, Singapore, Jeddah and Bonn.



Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding implementation of National Women Policy.

PHOTO: STAR

**BNP to work on public**

FROM PAGE 1

According to sources close to the special parliamentary committee for constitutional amendment, it is almost certain that the bill for amending the constitution will propose deletion of the phrase from the preamble and article 8 of the charter, in line with a landmark Supreme Court (SC) verdict.

The government however has no plan to put a ban on theocratic politics, neither does it have any plan to alter the state religion status of Islam in the constitution, although the same SC verdict does open up the way for both amendments. The government is refraining from making the two moves to avoid any political turmoil in the country.

But the opposition seems not even ready to accept scrapping of the phrase "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah".

"We will not accept the government's move to delete the phrase from the constitution. We will wage agitation in and outside the parliament against it," Moudud Ahmed, a BNP national standing committee member, told The Daily Star yesterday.

When his attention was drawn to the SC verdict that upheld secularism, Moudud, also a former law minister, said it is the government's choice whether it will retain the phrase.

The phrase "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah" was inserted in the constitution by military ruler Ziaur Rahman, also founder of BNP, through a martial law proclamation. In doing so, he deleted the word "secularism", one of the four fundamental state principles in the original constitution of 1972.

The SC recently cancelled the fifth amendment to the constitution that had ratified and validated all changes brought to the country's supreme charter through martial law proclamations during the first martial law regime which had begun on August 15, 1975.

Cancellation of the Fifth Amendment Act paved the way for the government to bring massive changes to the constitution, and the parliamentary special committee for constitutional amendment has been working to prepare proposals to that effect. BNP did not nominate

any of its MPs to work in the special committee formed in July last year.

A bill will be placed in the parliament's next session to be convened at the end of April or early May to amend the constitution in light of the SC verdict.

The updated version of the constitution printed in February this year by the law ministry following the cancellation of the Fifth Amendment Act already dropped the phrase "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah".

BNP-led opposition parties have been strongly criticising the SC for its verdict scrapping the fifth amendment.

"We will not compromise if the government hurts the people's religious sentiment by deleting the phrase," former speaker also BNP MP Jamiruddin Sircar told The Daily Star.

Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said his party always stood against actions which could hurt religious sentiments.

If BNP wages such an agitation, Jamaat-e-Islami, a major

component of BNP-led four party alliance, will join it with enthusiasm, said some Jamaat leaders.

Asked about their position on the matter, Jamaat lawmaker AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad said the party will protest if any change to the constitution hurts "the people's religious sentiment".

Talking to The Daily Star in the last couple of days, some BNP policymakers said their national standing committee did not discuss the government's move at any formal meeting, but the party's senior leaders have been discussing the issue among themselves.

Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, a member of BNP national committee, said they will soon announce their official position regarding the government's move to amend the constitution.

He said BNP is working to make a list of possible "controversial changes" the government might try to bring to the constitution. "We will reach a position on the matter on consultation with the party chief," he added.

A number of other BNP MPs echoed Mosharruf.

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