

CASE AGAINST SAYEDEE Hearing adjourned till July 6

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned till July 6 the hearing on charge framing against detained Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayedee in connection with a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Mozammel Hossain of the Special Judge's Court-3 passed the order after Sayedee's lawyer submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the hearing.

Sayedee was produced before the court during the hearing.

In the petition, his lawyer Abdur Razzak said they earlier filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the legality of the case, following which the HC issued a rule upon the government to explain why the case proceedings should not be declared illegal.

The hearing on the rule is still pending. So, they requested for adjournment of yesterday's hearing, said the lawyer.

Last August 19, Deputy Tax Commissioner Masuma Kahtun of the National Board of Revenue filed a case against the Jamaat leader for dodging income tax of around Tk 56.45 lakh for the fiscal years from 2005-2006 to 2009-2010.

The former Jamaat lawmaker also repeatedly provided false information about his income and expenditure, said the case statement filed with the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka.

Last June 29, Sayedee was arrested in a case filed for hurting religious sentiments of Muslims. Later, he was shown arrested in a number of criminal cases including three for allegedly killing people during the liberation war in 1971.



Dhaka University Campus and Bird Club jointly brings out a procession from in front of Teacher Student Centre of Dhaka University yesterday calling to save birds and turtles of Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR



Procession

Communist Party of Bangladesh will hold a protest procession; Venue: its central office, Topekhana; Time: 3:30pm.

Seminar

Alternative Medical Society Bangladesh will organise a seminar; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Manosh and Daffodil International University will hold a discussion; Venue: the university auditorium; Time: 11:00am.

Seminar

National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh will hold a seminar; Venue: the foundation auditorium; Time: 9:00am.

Human chain

National Garment Workers Federation will organise a human chain; Venue: in front of Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

Rally

Nirapad Development Foundation will

DRAFT SIXTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN Dev of silk, tourism in Rajshahi region urged

Demand for capital dredging of Padma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers at a discussion here yesterday said proper strategies for reducing corruption and bureaucratic tangles as well as for establishing rule of law must be adopted in the sixth five year plan to achieve desired development.

They suggested political unity for development and continuation of development programmes, more financial relations with neighbouring countries, and controlling population growth.

They also demanded of the government more budgetary allocation in education and steps to cut regional disparity, funds for capital dredging of Padma river in Rajshahi, development of silk and tourism sectors and preservation of archaeological sites in the

region.

Rajshahi University (RU) teachers, administrative officials from different districts, political and business leaders, industrialists and media personnel spoke at the Rajshahi divisional participatory discussion on the draft of sixth five-year plan at Nanking Darbar Hall in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Rajshahi City Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton said development is being hampered due to excessive growth of population.

"Due to lack of effective birth control measures, poor people are taking maximum children based on the notion that they will look after them in their old ages, but their children finally do not take care them due to financial con-

straints."

He put emphasis on capital dredging of Padma river in Rajshahi and building more business relations with neighbouring Indian states.

Industrialist Sadar Ali said silk industry is now in disarray due to wrong policies of the Silk Federation, Sericulture Board and Silk Research Institute. He suggested a uniform policy to revive the silk industry to generate employment in rural areas and reduce pressure on urban areas.

RU teacher Dilip Kumar said the country will have to relocate some seven crore of its population from the coastal areas if those areas are submerged within 2050 as per scientific calculations. He suggested imposing taxes on population growth.

Jahir Raihan, additional district magistrate of Sirajganj, said no target of development could be achieved without ensuring rule of law.

Pointed out various development programmes in power and information technology sector, RU teacher Moazzem Hossain Khan said much of the government's successes in the programmes are being spoiled for bureaucratic tangles and corruption.

Joypurhat DC Ashok Kumar Biswas stressed the need for more allocation for checking environmental pollution as all sugar mills of the country are polluting rivers and water bodies due to avoidance of waste disposal expenses.

Planning Commission member Dr Shamsul Alam chaired the

discussion and said the sixth five-year plan include strategies for establishing good governance, environmental preservation, industrialisation in Rajshahi region as well as development of agriculture and rural economy and social security.

He said the draft plan has targeted for attaining GDP at 7.3 percent every year and at 8 percent at the end of the plan. He said the plan has targeted to reducing poverty rate to 22 percent from current 31.5 percent.

Lawmaker Dr Akram Hossain Chowdhury of Naogaon, Rajshahi divisional commissioner Abdul Mannan, RU Economics department teacher Sanat Kumar Saha, and politician Mohammad Ali Kamal among others spoke.

30 police officers get promotion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten police officers were promoted to additional deputy inspector general of police while twenty officers of additional superintendent rank were promoted to SP yesterday.

The officers promoted to additional deputy inspector general are Abu Musa Mohammad Faqurul Islam Khan, Mohammad Shamsuddin, Biswas Afzal Hossain, Mohammad Shahab Uddin Kureshi, Shoibal Kanti Chowdhury, Mohammad Lutfur Rahman Mondal, Sheikh Mohammad Maruf Hassan, Chowdhury Abdullah Almamun, Barrister Mahbubur Rahman, Mohammad Ibrahim Fatemy, says a Police Headquarter press release.

Newly promoted SPs are Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan, Mohammad Masud Karim, Khandaker Nazmul Hasan, Mohammad Azad Mian, Mohammad Ashfaquq Alam, Hasan Mohammad Shawkat Ali, Begum Atika Islam, Habibur Rahman Khan, Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Basudev Babnik, Ezaz Ahmed, Mozzammel Huq, Mohammad Rafiqul Hasan Gani, Mahfuzur Rahman, Aminul Islam, Mohammad Rezaul Huq, Mohammad Monir Hossain, Mohammad Moniruzzaman, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman and Mohammad Monibur Rahman.

Shrimp farming deals major

FROM PAGE 1

won't be able to resume the business easily with most of the farmers waging resistance against resumption of such a devastating occupation, which multiplied the impact of the cyclone on their lives.

Salinity, caused by growing shrimp cultivation over the last three and a half decades, damaged the soil fertility of more than one million hectares of coastal arable land that could yield 2.5 million tonnes of rice, enough to meet the country's annual food deficit, according to the government's Soil Resources Development Institute.

A recent SRDI study says about three quarters of the land cannot grow rice due to high salt content in the country's coastal districts, mainly in Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat.

"Shrimp cultivation has deep relation with the increased salinity," said ecology and biodiversity researcher Pavel Partha.

"Salt water staying in shrimp enclosure for long time causes gradual salt sedimentation in the land, which destroys fundamental element of the soil, and thus its basic composition," he added.

Almost a half of the total saline affected land falls in the three southwestern districts of Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat. Shrimp cultivation has taken more than 77 percent of the region's agricultural land.

"We are not interested in shrimp cultivation anymore. We used to produce 12 to 15 maunds of rice per bigha before the business came. Now it has come down to less than 2 maunds," said Ganesh Chandra Mandal, a farmer of Bonloubudub in Khulna.

Unlike Gazi, Ganesh was compelled to get into shrimp cultivation in his little piece of arable land as rice production declined due to saline water in nearby shrimp beds.

Ganesh still considers him lucky to be able to stay in his village. He had the little piece

of land to start shrimp cultivation. But many landless farmers who worked as farm workers had to leave their villages in search of jobs in other parts of the country.

"Shrimp cultivation has also hit the landless people hard," said Ganesh.

As he talked to this correspondent, Ganesh pointed to a nearby area where three canals gave way to a dam that used to reserve saline water for shrimp cultivation.

Shrimp cultivation is also blamed for causing salinity in groundwater, and withering of trees.

Villagers need to travel miles to collect fresh water.

"It takes four hours to bring water. We leave in the afternoon and return with water late in the evening, as we have to travel up to the border of the next union for water," Ganesh's wife said.

The water crisis has become acute in 80 percent of the three southwestern districts where even deep tube wells pump out saline water, and rain water turns saline once it falls on the salt-affected ground.

Increased salinity also has affected homestead vegetation. Pasture land is disappearing affecting the livestock in the area.

"It is beyond doubt that nothing but shrimp business is the main cause behind the increasing salinity and damage of the environment in the coastal area. But you cannot always tell the truth, especially when it earns foreign currencies," said an SRDI top official when asked why the institute's study does not focus on the cause of the problem.

BEGINNING OF A DISASTER

Shrimp cultivation first began in Munsiganj of Satkhira in 1972, outside the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) embankment, which was built in the 1960s along the coastline to save land from saline water.

International market and short-term benefits brought

influential people into the business. There are allegations that these people forced poor farmers to give their land for shrimp cultivation. Big land owners also joined hands with the businessmen, as they were not involved in cultivating their lands.

Gradually the cultivation rolled inside the embankment and engulfed villages after villages and then districts, making thousands of farmers jobless. Shrimp cultivation reached Khulna and Bagerhat around 1980.

A study found that by 1990 the protection embankment was breached at 1,100 places for shrimp cultivation, making the region vulnerable to natural disasters. As the coastal land was mono-crop, where only rice could be cultivated during rainy season, soon shrimp business became a round-the-year activity.

Researchers found complete disappearance of several aquatic plants, weeds, and local fish species since the start of shrimp cultivation.

Salinity is having its toll on the region's environment. Gazi has only four dying coconut trees now in his homestead, down from 276 trees of 20 varieties of fruits in the garden surrounding his house.

This rapid fall in greenery occurred all over the 2,700 hectares of Gabura turning the entire area of land arid with hundreds of thousands of cracks on the ground.

A study by Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) found shrimp cultivation blocked 105 canals in the coastal area. Only in Shaheed Abad in Khulna 64 ponds were destroyed by shrimp cultivation.

Nowadays the shrimp business itself has become less profitable due to irregular and uncontrolled use of pesticides and fertiliser in the enclosures.

A frustrated Gazi said, "There is no way I can rebuild what I've lost. It takes care and love of an entire life to make such a home."



Bangladesh Gram Police Karmachari Union stages a protest rally at Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city yesterday demanding, among others, a raise in salary.

PHOTO: STAR

Yunus worried about GB future

FROM PAGE 1

Yunus' comments underline a common concern that Grameen Bank would flounder without Yunus at the helm.

His resignation came after he lost final appeals in the Supreme Court against his dismissal by Bangladesh Bank citing violation of the bank's retirement rules.

The government should listen to the demands of its 83 lakh borrowers who effectively own 96.5 percent of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organisation if it really wants to change the ordinance, Yunus said.

During the interview, the 70-year-old banker to the poor contested a series of misconceptions about the

organisation he established three decades ago.

"Some think that Prof Yunus owns this bank and is earning a lot of money out of it. I say no, I do not own a single share in the bank. I am just an employee."

Prof Yunus rubbished the government's claim that Grameen is a government bank.

"To call it a government bank, it has to be owned by the government as the majority shareholder. Even in private banks, the government may have some shares. It does not make a private bank a government bank," he said.

Yunus criticised the review committee for not visiting the Grameen Bank

headquarters or meeting its staff or members before making such a report.

"During the review, the committee members did not visit Grameen Bank. They did not visit branches of Grameen Bank to see what Grameen Bank is. They did not meet the borrowers of Grameen Bank. Maybe some of them individually met some borrowers in the past," Yunus said.

"They did not talk to the staff of Grameen Bank. The committee talked to me for an hour when I went to them and answered a few questions. Additionally, they talked to the deputy managing director for a few minutes," he said.

Yunus said the committee members had preconceived notions and perceptions about the bank.

"Based on their perceptions they made the recommendations. It was very unkind to give such a big task to them. It is extremely unkind for Grameen Bank to receive those recommendations. After all, we should not take Grameen Bank so lightly."

The microfinance pioneer said the committee has insulted the board by branding it as a rubber-stamp body. "The nine directors sitting on the board are elected in a four-tier process. Each of them has to be an outstanding person."

BNP wants

FROM PAGE 1

Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury, a member of her entourage, told UNB over phone that Khaleda delivered a statement on democracy, governance and economic development of Bangladesh at the council.

The former prime minister said that the unresolved issues between Dhaka and New Delhi will have to be resolved in a win-win situation respecting each other's independence and sovereignty.

Khaleda said the outstanding issues will have to be worked out through discussions.

If India wants durable solutions to the long running problems, they should discuss the issues with all the political parties of Bangladesh, she said.

Replying to another question, the BNP chief said that practice and process of democracy inside her party has already started with the councils took place from grassroots to divisional levels.

On governance, Khaleda said without good governance, rule of law can not be established. She observed that complete independence of the judiciary and the Election Commission is essential to ensure the rule of law.

The opposition leader said the administration should be kept out of politics at all levels, and recruitment, promotion everything should be done on the basis of merit. The administration should work as servant of the Republic.

On socio-economic development, Khaleda said there should be a growth in private sector, and this sector should have its role particularly in education and health sectors. The NGOs will also have a role.

US Congressmen, a representative of vice-president Joe Biden, academics, researchers and BNP leaders Osman Farruk, Abdul Awal Minto and Khaleda's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan were present at the function.

The Atlantic Council, a think tank outfit, stimulates dialogue and discussion about critical international issues to enrich public debate and promote consensus on appropriate responses in the Administration, the Congress, the corporate and non-profit sectors, and the media in the US and among leaders in Europe, Asia and the Americas