

## No more time

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Judge Mohammad Zohurul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court yesterday passed the order after Koko's lawyer Sanaullah Miah submitted a petition seeking adjournment of the hearing as he had done earlier.

In the petition, the lawyer said the HC on June 9 last year issued a rule upon the government to explain why the proceedings of the case should not be declared illegal after filing of a writ with the HC challenging the legality of the case.

The hearing on the rule is still pending at the HC. So, he prayed for an adjournment of the hearing, the lawyer said.

The court yesterday also told the defence lawyer that it would frame charge against Koko, if they fail to submit any HC order by June 26.

But Additional Public Prosecutor Shah Alam Talukder appealed to the court for framing charge against the accused.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) on March 1 last year filed the case against Koko for evading income tax on his income of Tk 52.39 lakh for fiscal years from 2002-2003 to 2006-2007.

## Prof Yunus

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Last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accused microcredit organisations of sucking the blood of poor, apparently pointing the finger at Grameen Bank.

But in an interview with the BBC's Lesley Curwen, Yunus said, "I would say she has been badly advised. She did not have proper information. If she had, she would not have that idea about Grameen Bank."

The microcredit pioneer wished if he had the time with her to explain and show her what Grameen Bank actually is, the situation would have been completely different since the prime minister is an intelligent person.

The founder of Grameen Bank said he wished he could have a very smooth and pleasant transition. "That is what I was looking for, as it is a huge organisation with 8.3 million clients nationwide and 25,000 staff."

He said nobody wants to do anything that rocks and shakes Grameen Bank, which he has been running for the last 34 years.

Yunus said the sudden resignation could make people very nervous. "This is a bank not like other banks. This is a bank which is based on trust. Everything is done on the basis of trust."

Yunus said the accusation of being a blood sucker created a lot of tension in the country, as the government is very cautious in dealing with Grameen Bank.

He also shrugged off claims that Grameen Bank charges exorbitantly high interest. "The review committee [formed to report on Grameen Bank activities] came with the conclusion that we have the lowest interest among all microfinance institutions in Bangladesh," he said.

## 80 buses

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The minister said the minimum fare will be Tk 5 as opposed to Tk 7 for privately-owned buses.

"The new fare which was set after consulting with the owners will be strictly implemented," he said.

Terming BRTC as a public organisation, he sought everyone's cooperation to ensure smooth operation of the buses.

"Stern actions will be taken against those who won't abide by the rules," he added.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan said mutual understanding between BRTC and private owners has shown further improvement.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Chairman Ayubur Rahman Khan, BRTC Chairman MM Iqbal, Communications Secretary Mozammel Huq Khan, South Korean Ambassador to Dhaka Taiyong Cho and Secretary General of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity Enayeturah were present among others at the inauguration.

When he denied giving

## BNP to revamp Dhaka city unit

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The BNP high-ups have decided to expand the newly formed convening committee of BNP's Dhaka city unit to accommodate more leaders and remove intra party conflict centring the new committee, said party insiders.

They said more leaders will be included as joint convenor of the committee but the decision will be implemented after the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's return from the US as she will finalise the names of new leaders for the committee.

Asked about the possible expansion, the unit convenor Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, also vice-chairman of the party, yesterday said the committee will be expanded in different ways and everything will be done as per direction of the chairperson.

Meanwhile, Khoka took an initiative to minimise gaps with his intra-party rival former mayor Mirza Abbas and his followers. The party activists are considering such initiative a good sign for the crisis-ridden city unit.

The newly appointed city

convenor already talked to Abbas, also a member of party's national standing committee, over phone and visited his ailing mother at a city hospital last week.

During the visit, Abbas congratulated Khoka for being nominated as the chief of city committee, said close aides of both the leaders.

On May 15, the main opposition party announced the 21-member convening committee with Khoka as convenor for the city unit, which was running without any committee since June 2008.

The BNP chairperson could not announce the committee for the last two and a half years due to the internal conflict as the unit was absolutely divided by two factions led by Khoka and Abbas.

There is an allegation that few names had been dropped out from the list after Khaleda's departure on May 14 but pro-Abbas leaders accepted the committee due to firm stance of the chairperson. Even Khaleda enquired from the UK whether any one in the party opposed her decision.

## Projects delayed

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meetings mentioned that in case of some projects, allegations of corruption and fraudulence were raised to the development partners during the tender process.

Corrupt practices of the bidder in collusion with others in the purchase process were proved in the World Bank-funded Clean Air and Sustainable Environment Project, and the ministry concerned had to go for a re-tender.

In the case of Dhaka-Chittagong Roa-d Development Project, allegations of similar practices were raised to the development partner, which resulted in changes to the bid document and floating of a fresh tender.

Besides, complaints were made about fraudulence in the tender process of Emergency 2007 Cyclone (Sidr) Recovery and Restoration Project. A study on the project also took two years.

Finally, allocation of foreign funds for the three projects in the current FY was slashed to 50-66 percent during revision of the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Implementation of projects with faulty designs is also delayed as the designs need changes.

The review meetings identified that lack of knowledge of the officials concerned about Public Procurement Act (PPA) and relevant rules and procurement guidelines also

the money, they informed the DB police of the incident, said Ashraful.

Police also arrested the house owner Rizvi Ahmed, who was an acquaintance of teacher Swapan.

A case was lodged with Kotwali Police Station in Rangpur under Public Examination Act, 1980. The arrestees were sent to Rangpur Central Jail upon their bail rejection by a Rangpur court yesterday.

After contacting the examinees over phone, college teacher Ashraful and his colleague Subol came to Khalea with the 88 answer scripts under their possession, said the SP.

They gathered at least 50 of the 88 examinees at a house in the village and allowed them to rewrite their answer scripts in exchange of Tk 3,500 each, he added.

Asked, Ashraful said many examinees wrote their mobile numbers in the answer scripts during the English 2nd paper board exams on April 12 in the expectation that the examinees might call them with a mercy deal.

He said one local Aminul Islam, who was also arrested, and his friends helped him arrange the accommodation and later demanded Tk 3 lakh for the help.

When he denied giving

## Death penalty

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In response to a petition, the HC also issued a set of directives to the authorities to stop use of harmful chemicals in ripening and preserving fruits and sale of those ripened fruits.

On May 10 last year, the same court passed similar directives following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

The city markets are flooded with various summer fruits, including mangoes, jackfruits, litchis, pineapples, watermelons, papayas and bananas, many of which are artificially ripened with toxic chemicals.

Experts say, multiple health complexities including problems in the kidneys, heart and liver could develop and diseases like ulcer and gastric can form if people eat fruits ripened by carbide, ethylene oxide.

Expressing concern, the court yesterday came up with the directives following a supplementary petition to the original writ petition filed by the same organisation.

Citing newspaper reports, the new petition prayed to the court to revive its last year's directives to stop the use of harmful chemicals in fruits. It said the use of harmful chemicals stopped last year after the HC directives but those directives are not being properly enforced now.

A mobile court reportedly recovered a huge quantity of contaminated fruits from a market in the capital and destroyed those a few days ago, it said.

An HC bench yesterday ordered Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (Bsti) and Rapid Action Battalion to continuously monitor fruit depots in Dhaka so that contaminated fruits cannot be stored or sold.

The bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore asked for everyday tests of fruits at wholesale depots in the capital.

It also ordered the chairman of the National Board of Revenue to take immediate steps to monitor spots through which fruits are imported in the country.

It directed the police inspector general of police in Rajshahi to deploy police forces in the commercial mango orchards to stop the use of chemicals for ripening mangoes.

It asked the food and home secretaries to form a committee comprising representatives of those ministries to make recommendations for the government in this connection. It asked the secretaries to report to the court within 15 days.

The secretaries were also asked to constitute vigilance teams to monitor the fruit markets.

Furthermore, the HC directed the inspector general of police to take steps for filing cases against people responsible for the use of chemicals in fruits and asked him to report to the court within 15 days.

On May 10 last year, the HC also issued a rule upon the government to explain as to why it should not be directed to take effective measures to protect public health by stopping the use of chemicals on fruits and why their inaction in this regard should not be declared illegal.

The rule is, however, still pending with the HC, petitioner's counsel Manzill Mursid told The Daily Star yesterday.

During the hearing yesterday, Manzill told the court that fruits such as apples, mangoes, grapes, bananas and papayas play an important role in maintaining good health of citizens. But some corrupt and dishonest traders are using chemicals like carbide to ripen them and formaldehyde to elongate their shelf-life.

He said the mangoes are reportedly being artificially ripened with chemicals.

On June 1, 2008, the HC in a verdict directed the government to set up a food court in every district and appoint sufficient food analysts and inspectors in all districts within two years to prevent food contamination.

The court had also directed the government to inform the court by July 1, 2010, about its progress in complying with the directives.

The government has not implemented the HC verdict till date, Manzill said.

## Toxic ships

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Coast. The same year its Greek owner changed the name to Gulf Jash.

The Gulf Jash with an IMO (International Maritime Organisation) number of 8309816, now off Vietnam, is believed to be carrying toxic chemicals, including mercaptans that attack the respiratory system, hydrogen sulphide that damage the central nervous system and caustic soda having a wide range of health effects on humans.

Global Marketing System (GMS), a US company specialised in brokering of vessels for demolition, has confirmed the sale of Gulf Jash but refused to disclose its final destination.

The NGO Platform on Shipbreaking, a global coalition of human rights, environmental and labour rights groups, raised a worldwide alarm on May 24, saying the ship contains tonnes of hazardous asbestos, PCBs, toxic paints, fuel and chemical residues.

Jenssen Ingvild, coordinator of the platform, said Probo Koala contains toxic substances dangerous to environment and Bangladeshi workers who work without protective measures.

The vessel is the symbol of illegal toxic trade throughout the world and Bangladesh must say no to it, she added.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela),

told The Daily Star over the phone from China yesterday that following a tip-off from international watchdogs, her office has warned the Bangladesh authorities about the sale of Gulf Jash to an unspecified Bangladeshi

company.

As land facilities did not allow, Trafigura decided to carry out the dangerous operation on board the vessel.

The gunmen fled the area right away, he added.

Critically injured Rahman was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 11:30pm.

Two pedestrians -- Biplob Hossain, 32, and Sadhan Kumar Liton, 38 -- were also injured in the attack. They were admitted to DMCH.

The gas caused by the release of these chemicals is blamed by the UN and the government of Ivory Coast for the 2006 health crisis.

## Empower women

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(Unesco) at its Paris headquarters.

The global partnership on Girls' and Women's Education, themed "Better Life, Better Future", focuses on reaching out to literate or semi-literate adolescent girls and improving women's literacy programmes. Some of the projects have already started in Africa and Asia.

Unesco Director-General Irina Bokova welcomed the participants to the event, followed by opening remarks from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addressed the function as special guest. Prime Minister of Mali Cisse Mariam Kaidama Sidibe, the Aga Khan, founder and chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network Foundation, and representatives of several corporate guests attended the event.

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She said Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in the enrolment of primary education, and now in secondary education girls are even surpassing boys.

The Asian University for Women has also been established to offer higher education opportunities, she said.

On women's health, latest results of the Maternal Mortality Rate Survey of 2010 show that Bangladesh's maternal mortality rate has dropped by 66 percent.

**BNP-JAMAT**

**PATRONISED MILITANTS'**

Earlier in Paris, Hasina addressed at a mass reception accorded to her at Hotel Inter Continental by the Awami League leaders living in France Wednesday night.

Speaking on the occasion, she alleged that the BNP-led alliance govern-

ment had supported militants to blast bombs in some 500 spots across the country during their rule.

"I won't accept the charge sheet if it's not revised and names of the masterminds behind killing are not incorporated," Asma Kibria, widow of the slain AL leader, said yesterday.

She reiterated her call on the government to take assistance from foreign experts to identify the actual culprits.

Talking about the delay in submitting the charge sheet, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder said it will be submitted soon.

IO Rafiqul Islam could not be reached over the phone despite repeated attempts for comment.

Sources say he was called to Dhaka by the "higher authorities who were embarrassed" following Asma Kibria's statement denouncing the charge sheet.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was to submit the charge sheet in the sensational murder case on

Wednesday.

The dead are Sujan, 12, son of Julashuddin and Naosher, 13, son of Rustom Ali of Kuichkhira village under Shandhanpur union.

The incident happened around 6:00pm near the field firing range during an army training when the dead and the injured entered the restricted area, said Mominul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ghatai Police Station.

The injured were taken to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) at Ghatai.

An Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release said the explosion occurred as the boys tried to break some abandoned parts of some bullets they collected from the firing range for "financial gain".

They entered the "danger area" paying no heed to the warning signs, it added.

The army administration gave assurance of bearing the treatment cost of the injured and providing other financial assistance.

Speaking on the occasion, she alleged that the BNP-led alliance govern-

## Hijacker gangs

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As the consignment