



PHOTO: PID

Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain administers oath to nine High Court judges at Judges' Lounge of the Supreme Court yesterday morning. The nine judges are M Moazzam Husain, Soumendra Sarker, Abu Bakar Siddique, Md Nuruzzaman, Md Moinul Islam Chowdhury, Obaidul Hassan, M Enayetur Rahim, Naima Haider and Md Rezaul Hasan.

REPRINTED
CONSTITUTION
Few sections challenged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer has filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging few sections of the reprinted constitution, saying that the government has not properly followed the SC verdict in the case over the fifth amendment to the constitution.

Barrister M Abdul Halim filed the petition as public interest litigation saying that the government has inserted the phrase "Bismillah-Rahman-ar-Rahim" in the preamble of the reprinted constitution, although the SC did not allow the government to do it.

He stated that article 38 of the constitution that restricted holding association on the basis of religion is contradictory to the preamble of the reprinted constitution.

The petition said that the word 'Secularism' has to be inserted in the reprinted constitution as per the SC verdict.

The law ministry has reprinted the constitution of the republic on February 10 this year in the light of the SC verdict on fifth amendment to the constitution.

Halim filed the petition on June 2 praying to the HC to direct the government to reprint the constitution in the light of SC verdict.

An HC bench of Justice Farid Ahmed and Justice M Shawkat Hossain yesterday fixed June 13 for hearing the petition.

35 hurt as RMG workers clash with police

A CORRESPONDENT, Savar

At least 35 people including police and locals were injured as workers of a garment factory clashed with police in Aukpara, Kalma and Ashulia yesterday over a nine-point demand including raising salary and suspension of factory officials.

Witnesses said workers of Dynastic Sweater Factory threw stones at police, who retaliated with rubber bullets, tear shells and hot water from water canons.

The workers said the factory authority paid them Tk 72 for a dozen sweaters, a wage structure fixed five years ago, while adjacent factory workers get higher salaries.

Bill passed to protect whistleblowers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House yesterday passed a bill protecting the whistleblowers and encouraging them to disclose information.

The bill would encourage a whistleblower to give the authorities concerned information about activities against public health, security and environment, criminal activities including embezzlement of public money and property, misuse of power and irregularities.

The legislation says the authorities may reward or honour a whistleblower if their information is proved correct in the court.

No criminal, civil or departmental proceedings would be initiated against whistleblowers -- persons disclosing public-interest related information -- and their identities will not be revealed

without their consent.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed related the bill styled "Public Interest Related Information Disclosure (Protection) Act, 2011" in parliament which was passed by voice vote.

The minister said the role of whistleblowers is very important to curb corruption.

"Law to protect whistleblowers is used as a very effective tool to fight corruption in many countries," the minister said in a statement tagged with the bill's copy.

The legislation empowers a person to disclose information on ministries, divisions, departments or any other government offices and all kinds of non-government organisations.

A provision of the bill says if a whistleblower is a government official, no action can be taken to punish him by sending him on forced retire-

ment or demoting or taking any departmental step to harass him, which may damage his social dignity or cause torment.

If someone discloses a whistleblower's identity, he might be punished with a maximum five years' or minimum two years' imprisonment or with fine.

On receiving information from a whistleblower, the authorities concerned will launch investigation or take proper action. Legal actions will be taken under the existing laws if any allegation is proved correct after enquiry.

The legislation also warns that anyone will be punished with maximum five years' or minimum two years' imprisonment or fine if he intentionally provides false information.

If the person in question is a government official, he might face departmental action in addition to jail sentence.

OIL SPILL FROM SUNKEN TANKER Tk 10 lakh fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Department of Environment (DoE) here yesterday realised Tk 10 lakh in fine from Eastern Bunker Services, the owning firm of oil tanker OT Moon, which sank into Karnaphuli River on Saturday, for spilling oil and polluting the river.

DoE also confiscated the tanker, which could not be salvaged till filing of this report around 6:30pm yesterday.

A DoE team led by its Director (Enforcement) Munir Chowdhury during one and a half hour visit on the river till 9:30am yesterday found oil floating on an area around 50,000 square metres, said the team sources.

Munir said the water samples they collected had an oxygen content of 3.4 milligram per litre, 15 percent less than normal level, while oil and grease were found in concentrations of 25 milligram per litre.

The owners paid the full amount of fine after appearing before the court in the afternoon.

However, Eastern Bunker Services failed to show any document regarding the destination of the 170 tonnes of furnace oil it loaded on Saturday, Munir added.

The 85-feet oil tanker, built in 1998, was illegally plying as its survey certificate expired on May 11, said Munir, adding that most of the inland vessels plying in the jetty area are unfit and have no valid survey certificate.

He also held the system of providing survey certificates to vessels as faulty.

9 fish shops gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine shops were gutted in a fire in the city's Jatrabari Fish Wholesale Market last evening before six fire fighting teams could bring it under control.

Fire Service and Civil Defense officials said the fire originated from welding sparks of an adjacent shop around 7:10pm.

Housewife found dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a housewife, whose cause of death is yet to be confirmed, from her East Hajipara residence in the city last night and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

The deceased Halima Begum, 40, is the wife of Sabur Hossain, an expatriate Bangladeshi worker in Saudi Arabia.

Morgue sources said the body bore a stab mark on the neck.

Officer-in-Charge Sayedur Rahman of Rampura Police Station said Halim committed suicide by hanging herself with a rope.

Enact law to ensure food, employment

NHRC chairman urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) wants the government to enact specific laws to ensure food and employment security for the poor.

"We will place proposal for enacting food security and employment guarantee bills," said NHRC Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman yesterday in a view exchange meeting titled "Dalit Community of Bangladesh: Lives and Struggle" in the city's CIRDP auditorium.

Gram Bikash Kendra, Eco Social Development Organisation, Service Emergency for Rural People and Association for Rural Co-operation organised the meeting.

He said under the employment guarantee

bill, the government would ensure jobs for at least 180 days of the year and provide unemployment allowance for the remaining time.

Deputy Speaker of the parliament Shawkat Alisaid, "People themselves created discrimination among the people like Dalit community and now have to eliminate the discrimination."

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said Dalit community was deprived as they were kept away from the mainstream society, which is a major violation of human rights.

Representatives of Dalit community placed a 21-point demand at the programme.

Harijan Oikya Parishad General Secretary Nirmal Chandra Das and Bangladesh Dalit Forum Convener Kanailal Ravidas also spoke.

CG was never neutral with JP: Ershad

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said the caretaker governments never behaved neutrally with his party in the past.

"As the caretaker government (CG) system is not supplementary to democracy, we stand against this system and demand its removal," he said at the presidium meeting of JP at its Banani office.

Ershad said the appropriateness of the JP's stand proved correct as the Supreme Court declared the provision of caretaker government illegal.

"Our expected elections may be held under an independent Election Commission. After getting assurance of fair elections, JP will take part in the next elections," he told the meeting.

The former president asked his party leaders and workers to prepare the party to contest the next general elections independently.

JP presidium members Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud, ABM Ruhul Amin Hawladar, Dr Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, Abul Quasem, MA Hannan, Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, Prof Delwar Hossain Khan, Jahangir M Adel, Kazi Feroz Rashid and SMM Alam attended the meeting.



National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman hands over "Mother Teresa Gold Award 2011" to Dr Monilal Aich Litu at a discussion in Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Scholars see lacks in English education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is a lack of critical and creative thinking in the country's English education where students are tutored so that they can face Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Secondary School Certificate examinations.

The remark came at the Fulbright Presentation at the American Centre in the city yesterday.

"In the tutoring process, there is a lack of critical and creative thinking something which I have been taught to value as an American," said Olinda Hassan, a Fulbright

fellow from Wellesley College.

"The textbooks have many typos, inconsistencies and inaccuracies in grammar," said Olinda, who worked at the Viquarunnisa Noon School and College as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant.

However, the situation is worse in the rural areas, said Christy Sommers, another Fulbright fellow.

Textbook revisions in the country are overtly political, said Elizabeth Herman.

A total of 12 papers were presented at the programme. The Fulbright Program is an international prestigious awards programme.

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