

HC asks govt

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Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim came up with the verdict after hearing a writ petition jointly filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) and Nijera Kori -- two rights organisations.

It further ordered the authorities concerned to make sure no unscrupulous shrimp farmers can force anybody to have salt water in their private lands for shrimp farming. If any such shrimp farmer is found, he should be brought to justice.

Though shrimp is one of the major export items of the country and many people are employed in this sector, the agricultural and forest lands are inadequate; and therefore, a balance should be brought in this regard, the court observed.

The rights bodies filed the writ petition on January 10 in 2010 seeking directives from the court to stop shrimp farming in the agricultural and forest lands of the coastal districts of Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Noakhali and also in Chakaria and Sonadia islands and in some mangrove areas of the Sundarbans for saving those lands from salinity and protecting the environment.

The court on February 15 in the same year issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to protect the agricultural and forest lands from salinity and why blocking salt water for shrimp farming in those lands should not be declared illegal.

The Department of Environment (DoE), the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) have recently filed separate replies with the court in this regard.

Bela lawyers said the DoE in its report has pointed out that a total of 15,000 hectares of agricultural land is lost every year in Khulna alone due to shrimp farming.

The DoA report mentioned that such farming is like a curse for the people rather than being their hope.

The BWDB noted that the salt water of the shrimp farms has been damaging the coastal dams. Besides, the farms have severely affected the biodiversity in the coastal areas.

Lawyers Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Iqbal Kabir Lytton appeared for the petitioners, while advocate Manzill Murshid, Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain and advocate Delwar Hossain Samaddar argued for the government.

Magistrate

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In the case statement, Fatema said police gunned down her husband without any provocation as Mridha was passing Hasan Ali High School playground at the time of the incident, reports our correspondent in Chandpur.

Officers-in-charge of Sadar Police Station Zakir Hossain and Alamgir Hossain Majumder (OC investigation) are among the policemen sued by Fatema.

Chandpur police filed two cases that day accusing at least 6,000 BNP and Jamaat activists of attacking on-duty policemen and using explosives during their demonstrations.

KHALEDA TO VISIT CHANDPUR, LAXMIPUR
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will visit Chandpur and Laxmipur soon to express her sympathy to the family members of her party activists killed on Sunday.

Before the chairperson's visit, the party has decided to send its two joint secretaries general Mohammad Shahjahan and Barkat Ullah Zia to Chandpur and Laxmipur to console the grief-stricken family members, reports our staff correspondent.

Barkat Ullah Bulu yesterday said the party chairperson will visit Chandpur this month while the date of her visit to Laxmipur will be fixed today.

During the visit, the chairperson may address protest rallies in both the districts, said party sources.

Star begins

FROM PAGE 1
competition that has been introduced in around 50 other countries so far.

In Bangladesh, it has been introduced by Champs21.com with The Daily Star. It is sponsored by Horlicks.

Participants will have to register themselves online or through their mobile phones by sending SMS.

For SMS registration, a student should type SB and send it to 16252.

The first round of the contest will continue till March 10, 2012. Students may play the game as many times as they wish. Only the best score will be considered.

Top spellers from the first round will be selected and moved to a division level round.

From the division level round, all over the nation, the top 72 spellers will move to a TV based round.

Students may get word clues and help from The Daily Star. It will have a special section for Spelling Bee

from where the daily words for the game will come.

Interested students who do not have access to PCs may access the competition by going online through their mobile phones, as the website has a convenient mobile application.

A Spelling Bee team has been preparing the ground for the contest from January 16 by visiting 450 top schools in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna.

While holding meetings with English teachers, head teachers, and principals the team explained the competition format, modalities and training of students for the competition.

Teachers overwhelmingly appreciated the concept and thanked the initiators for introducing the programme.

A card based word game called "Spellato" has also been introduced to guide the students with types of words that might come up in the competition. The card game is available in book stores for purchase.

Bangla in Arabic

FROM PAGE 1
Pakistan, stayed back in India.

In the second, of course, came the trauma of those who moved to Pakistan and of the tens of thousands of Hindus and Sikhs who made their way out of their ancestral homes in the newly carved country to independent India. Murder and mayhem compounded the issue.

In the aftermath of partition, the matter of what language Pakistan would adopt as its lingua franca gathered increasing importance.

There were those who suggested that with the new country comprising five provinces -- East Bengal, Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province -- each of which had its own language, it made sense for Urdu to be adopted as a language that would bring the country together. Apart from this line of reasoning, there was the conviction, rather misplaced in many, that Urdu was the language of the Muslims and since

Pakistan had been created as a homeland for Muslims, it was only natural that Urdu be spoken across the country.

Neither of the two arguments was acceptable to the Bangalees, who were beginning to see in the Urdu question a clear move aimed at doing away with their cultural heritage, indeed the very secular nature of their societal existence.

What was even more alarming was the suggestion by non-Bangalee scholars as well as politicians that the Arabic script be employed in writing Bangla. It was a well-calculated move, one that sought to bring into Bangla elements of Islam through a replacement of its Sanskrit roots which diehard Pakistanis saw as being symbolic of Hinduism. Predictably, the Bangalee elite were ready to send such a thoughtpacking.

The early signs of a crisis over the language Pakistanis would speak at the state level loomed.

Thoughts decoded

FROM PAGE 20
resonance imaging to track blood flow in the brain has shown promise for identifying which words or ideas someone may be thinking about.

By studying patterns of blood flow related to particular images, Jack Gallant's group at the University of California Berkeley showed in September that patterns can be used to guess images being thought of -- recreating "movies in the mind".

Now, Brian Pasley of the University of California, Berkeley and a team of colleagues have taken that "stimulus reconstruction" work one step further.

The team focused on an area of the brain called the superior temporal gyrus, or STG. This broad region is not just part of the hearing apparatus but one of the "higher-order" brain regions that help us make linguistic sense of the sounds we hear.

The team monitored the STG brain waves of 15 patients who were undergoing surgery for epilepsy or tumours, while playing audio of a number of different speakers reciting words and sentences.

The trick is disentangling the chaos of electrical signals that the audio brought about in the patients' STG regions.

To do that, the team employed a computer model that helped map out which parts of the brain were firing at what rate, when different frequencies of sound were played.

With the help of that model, when patients were presented with words to think about, the team was able to guess which word the participants had chosen.

They were even able to reconstruct some of the words, turning the brain waves they saw back into sound on the basis of what the computer model suggested those waves meant.

"There's a two-pronged nature of this work -- one is the basic science of how the

brain does things," said Robert Knight of UC Berkeley, senior author of the study.

The authors caution that the thought-translation idea is still to be vastly improved before such prosthetics become a reality.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20
"She will appear before the Senior Special Judge's Court to file a petition seeking extension of her bail in the case," her counsel Advocate Sanaullah Miah told The Daily Star yesterday.

Later, Khaleda will appear before the Special Judge's Court-3 to attend the hearing on charge framing against her and six others in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

The court on December 1 last year, fixed the date following a time petition seeking adjournment of the hearing of the case.

ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST GRAFT CASE

In her first ever appearance before the High Court as an accused, the BNP chairperson secured anticipatory bail for eight weeks in the case, on December 8 last year.

On January 17, Khaleda submitted her bail bond with two guarantors before a Dhaka court in connection with the case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), on August 8 last year, filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station against Khaleda and three others accusing them of abusing power in setting up a charitable trust named after the late president Ziaur Rahman.

ZIA ORPHANAGE TRUST GRAFT CASE

The ACC filed another case against Khaleda, her son Tarique Rahman and five others with Ramna Police Station on July 3, 2009, for embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming the "fake" organisation Zia Orphanage Trust.

Pranab

FROM PAGE 1
He will be visiting at the invitation of his Bangladesh counterpart Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, who extended an invitation to the Indian veteran during a ceremony on January 21 at Petrapole.

The invitation letter was sent to India through the foreign ministry on Tuesday, said official sources.

The invitation was extended aiming to review agreements and decisions reached after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in January 2010.

Officials said during the visit Pranab would hold a meeting with his counterpart and call on the prime minister.

Officials are working on the date and programme schedules of the Indian finance minister's visit. They hinted that the visit might take place in the third week of this month.

Train to link

FROM PAGE 20
The new train would benefit the passengers from the south-western and south-central districts including Jessore, Narail, Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Barisal, Patuakhali, Pirojpur and Barguna.

Railway officials said the journey from Khulna to Benapole takes less than two hours. The Bongaon station in India is only eight kilometres from Benapole. From there, Kolkata is only 79 km.

Experts however have pointed out that the proposed train service would be popular only if the authorities expedite the immigration and customs formalities on the border.

Launched on April 14 in 2008, the Maitree Express on Dhaka-Kolkata route could not gain popularity due to tedious customs and immigration formalities on the border -- Darsana in Bangladesh and Gede in India.

Its passengers are made to wait for about five hours for immigration and customs clearance. The total 538-km journey -- 418 km in Bangladesh and 120 km in India -- takes about 11 hours.

The authorities later reduced the capacity of the train to 234 from 400 due to dwindling demands from the passengers. But still the train, running twice a week, could only carry 103 passengers per trip on an average.

On November 20 last year, prime minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Dr Mashiur Rahman chaired a meeting on enhancing the sub-regional cooperation. It discussed extension of the existing Khulna-Benapole route up to Kolkata via Bongaon.

BSF

FROM PAGE 20
offer almost immediately and said they would send a batch of their children on a study tour on February 5.

It came as much of a relief at a time when several recent incidents of killings and excesses by the BSF along the border left scars in the bilateral relations.

Joyal Hossain, Benapole Check Post BGB camp commander, told The Daily Star that the meeting was held in a friendly atmosphere between the two border forces.

The meeting mooted issues concerning border peace, mutual progress, education, and many other common problems in the bordering areas.

Nonetheless, the BGB's offer for the BSF wards' study tour in Bangladesh changed the whole mood of the discussion with a positive vibe.

BSF's 36 Battalion Staff Officer in Kolkata JSND Prasad, BSF local Commanding Officer AK Sinha, Subhashis Biswas and other senior officials attended the meeting.

On behalf of Bangladesh, Dhaka 44 Battalion Commanding Officer Lt Col Zakir Hossain, 22 Battalion Commanding Officer Lt Col Dewan Ali Akbar, Maj Galib and 26 Battalion's Maj Wahid and Deputy Assistant Director Nazrul Islam were present.

Businesses warn

FROM PAGE 1
Muhith said an expansionary policy last year buoyed private sector credit growth. "It raised expectation. Don't expect too much this time," he said adding that 18 to 19 percent credit growth in the private sector will be good for the economy.

He also admitted that a problem of lack of confidence has emerged. Muhith however said the crisis is not as acute as the way it is being portrayed by the media and the civil society.

Muhith made the remark in response to the entrepreneurs' fear of an economic slowdown.

The discussion on the overall situation of the economy was organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) in its office.

Some economists also spoke at the discussion.

"The economy is now facing a crisis. Banks are not providing loans. Even if they provide, they are charging up to 21.5 percent interest. With this high interest, none will dare to invest," said FBCCI President AK Azad.

How the entrepreneurs will use the electricity added to the national grid through rental power plants, if they cannot even invest due to the rising cost of doing business, Azad said.

"If we are asked to swim after being bound, how can

we swim?" he questioned fearing that the rising cost of doing business will hurt competitiveness on the global market, and negatively affect domestic market oriented small and medium enterprises.

Chairman of the National Board of Revenue Nasiruddin Ahmed tried to dispel the fears and said the government's revenue collection will be higher than the target this year.

Lawmaker Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder, also chairman of Pubali Bank Ltd, said although the government has control on the banking sector, still for reasons unknown the sector seems uncontrolled.

"Banks are not playing a responsible role," he said, suggesting reintroduction of caps on interest rates on loans and deposits.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin said the global recession has slowed down the growth of apparel export.

He said prices of apparels have dropped due to a fall in demand. But cost has increased due to taxes, and hikes in wages and utility costs, he added.

Policy Research Institute Executive Director Ahsan H Mansur said imposition of a cap on the interest rate on loans by the central bank earlier was a wrong decision.

Low interest rates resulted in bubbles in the stock and real estate markets, he said favouring a tightened credit growth in the private sector.

It appears that there is a lack of confidence, although the real economy is in a good shape, said Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

He said when inflation is at double digit mark people will not deposit in banks at 12 to 13 percent interest rates, so the banks have increased interest rates on deposits which in turn has pushed up the interest rates on loans.

"The main problem is inflation. If we can bring down the inflation, we can reduce interest rates on both lending and deposits," he added.

Samiul murder

FROM PAGE 20
was found in a sack near their Naboday Housing residence in Adabar on June 24, 2011.

His mother Ayesha and Arif were arrested after the boy's father filed a case with Adabar Police Station.

According to the counsels of plaintiff KR Azam, father of Samiul, the indictment had earlier been postponed on eight occasions on various grounds.

There is speculation that the boy was killed after he witnessed an intimate moment between his mother and Arif.

Fake doctor by birth!

FROM PAGE 20
Malibagh Chowdhurypara in the capital. He has a son and a daughter who are students of two private universities.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mosharraf said he obtained a master's degree in philosophy from Jagannath College, now Jagannath University, in 1986 and started 'practising' as a doctor.

"Although my father, who died in 2004, had no degree, he practised as a homeopathy doctor. Besides, he was an expert in piles, fistula and anal fissure," he said, adding, "I entered this profession being a successor and follower of my father."

When asked, he admitted that he had been running the business illegally and that it was a huge risk for patients as he operated on them.

A visit to 'Piles Care' set up on the first floor at 21/1

Nababkhatra in Chankharpool revealed at least 15 patients in the waiting room.

The patients said they had gone to Mosharraf seeing his signboard and never suspected that he was a fake doctor.

Mousumi Akhter from Shariatpur, who came to Mosharraf along with her husband, said they first went there on Wednesday and paid Tk 500 as visiting fee, Tk 980 for tests and Tk 300 for medicines.

She said she paid another Tk 500 yesterday as visiting fee and Tk 12,000 for operation costs. "I am not sure whether I will recover. But the doctor has assured me that I will be all right once the operation is done," she added.

Qatar expatriate Abdul Mannan from Gazipur said he paid Tk 8,500 for surgery on Wednesday in addition to other expenditures.

Road tragedy

FROM PAGE 1
Tejgaon College, and Shaheda Sultana Shilpi.

Earlier on February 3, 2010, tragedy of a similar kind occurred before Willes Little Flower School when class-I student Hamim Sheikh was crushed by a bus as his mother looked on in horror.

Shilpi told The Daily Star that around 7:15am she along with her daughter and niece Mosharraf Mostafiz Arifa, also a class-II of the school, got off a bus and began to cross the street in front of Shaheed Police Smrity College in Mirpur-14.

"Holding Paloma with my left hand and Arifa with my right I was crossing the road. As we reached the middle of the road a bicycle showed up out of nowhere.

"As I stepped back a bit, Paloma moved slightly away from me and all of a sudden the bus which was heading towards Mirpur-14 hit Paloma... She fell over and a wheel crushed her," she said with tears rolling down her cheeks.

Eye witness Zobeda Begum, who sells bread on the pavement around 15 feet away, told The Daily Star that the bus stopped at the screams of Paloma's mother and onlookers.

"As I rushed there I saw people were trying to pull her out from under the wheel but they could not. The wheel was on her chest. The driver then reversed a little so that people could get her out but attempted to run away using the back door of the bus," she said.

Paloma died on the spot. Locals caught the driver 50 yards away and gave him a thrashing.

Locals and parents of children going to school blocked the road for 30 minutes and vandalised two human hauliers. They

demanding immediate construction of a speed bump and a foot-bridge at the spot.

Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge of Kafrul Police Station, said police had arrested the driver and seized the staff bus of a company.

At the home of Paloma in Mirpur-1, Shilpi was staring at fish in the aquarium. They were her daughter's pets.

"What will I do with the aquarium? She was my only daughter... she used to stick to me all the time. How am I supposed to live now?" she asked.

Paloma loved to sing and dance. She learnt it while watching TV since the family couldn't afford proper lessons for her.

Shilpi said since Paloma used to always be by her side. "She would insist on going outside to play" after she was done with studying.

She told The Daily Star she was hurrying to school yesterday as the school gate closes at 7:25am. And Paloma never wants to miss school.

A murder case was filed with Kafrul Police Station against the driver.

11 Pak troops killed in rebel attack

AFP, Quetta

Baluch rebels attacked Pakistani security forces overnight, killing at least 11 soldiers and wounding another 12 in clashes that raged for five hours, officials said yesterday.

Gunmen attacked two posts in the Margut area, about 60 kilometres east of Quetta, capital of the insurgency-torn southwestern province of Baluchistan. The soldiers were responsible for guarding coal mines, they said.

Stocks

FROM PAGE 1
analysts.

The meeting between the SEC and market stakeholders failed to bring any good news for investors, who hoped that some measures to stabilise the market would come from it.

Among the major sectors, non-bank financial institutions lost 8.03 percent, banks 6.24 percent and the power sector 5.11 percent on the DSE. Pharmaceuticals and telecommunication sectors lost 4.59 percent and 2.83 percent.

"Investors lost their confidence and sold shares following the finance minister's comment on the economic crisis," said Abu Ahmed, professor of economics at Dhaka University.

Political instability and tight monetary policy also dented their confidence, he said.

The central bank should adopt a liberal monetary policy to help increase liquidity flow in the market, Ahmed said.

Akter H Sannamat, a chartered accountant and market analyst, said the liquidity crisis in the market had damaged investors' confidence.

A minimum circuit breaker should be introduced soon to check the continuous fall in the market, said Sannamat.

He said a decline in cash reserve requirement and policy interest rates is necessary for the liquidity flow to rise in the market.

About 1.04 lakh trades were done with a turnover of Tk 269 crore. Of 257 issues, four advanced, 249 declined and four remained unchanged.

The Chittagong Stock Exchange also declined. The Selective Categories Index stood at 7,395.21 after losing 414 points.

Question

FROM PAGE 1
Examinees in several centres across the country complained that question papers for irregular students had been mistakenly given to regular students and vice versa owing to the mismanagement and irresponsibility on the part of the officials concerned.

Investigators learned about the mistake 30-40 minutes after the exam began. In many centres, question papers were then correctly interchanged while in some others student had to answer the wrong question papers.

Mirpur Government Bangla High School and Nawabpur Government High School in Dhaka, Jinjira PM Pilot High School in Keraniganj and many centres in Chandpur, Kurigram, Bhola, Rangpur, Shariatpur and Srimongol have witnessed such a situation.

Sumaiya Sultana of Sher-e-Bangla Girls School and College in Tikatuli, who is taking the SSC exams from Nawabpur Government High School centre, said 35 minutes into the Bangla first paper exam, the invigilators had warned her that she was answering a question paper meant for irregular students of 2011.

The teachers then changed the question paper and extended her examination time by 30 minutes.

In Rangpur, students of around 50 educational institutions, whose exams centre is Rangpur Zila School, had to answer wrong question papers even after repeated requests for change, reports our Rangpur Correspondent.

Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman of Dhaka Education Board, told The Daily Star that in most cases question papers had been changed and students had been given extra time.

"Yet, wherever the problem remains our decision is that the evaluation will be on the basis of the question papers they have answered," she said, adding that they would take a decision which in no way would harm students.

"I don't know how the centre secretaries made the mistake. We would take stern action against the people responsible."

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said necessary actions would be taken against the people responsible.

The education ministry directed the chairmen of all education boards to probe the matter and submit a report soon.

Many examinees in and outside the city, meanwhile, alleged that it had been a big hassle for them to get admit cards. Some got their admit cards one night before the examination while some got them yesterday morning, causing them to be late for the first examination.

Ten education boards including madrasa and technical boards, are conducting the month-long SSC, Dakhil and SSC vocational examinations with around 14.20 lakh participants.

Savar cop sued

FROM PAGE 20
Mohammad Jahangir Khan, manager of Nayeem Enterprise at Shahibagh of Savar, filed the case against ASI Mohammad Kaiser Matbar, yesterday.

After the hearing, Judicial Magistrate Kazi Shahidul Islam recorded the complainant's statement taking into cognizance the charge against the ASI.

He also directed officer-in-charge of Savar Police Station to carry out an investigation into the matter and submit a report as soon as possible.

According to the complainant, on January 30, Kaiser came to Jahangir's office around 3:00pm and demanded Tk 1 lakh from him.

When he refused, the accused policeman blindfolded Jahangir and abducted him.

After a few hours, around 8:00pm, Kaiser gave him a jug of water and told him to wash himself as he would be killed