

Hafizuddin's statement his own: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), in a statement yesterday, stated that it has no connection with the statement made by its former chairman M Hafizuddin Khan at a discussion of Nagorik Oikya in the capital on Saturday.

"M Hafizuddin's statement was his personal opinion," read the TIB statement.

Hafizuddin had said, "If we can have in the next parliament at least 50 to 60 honest and patriotic representatives under a third party platform, we will be able to put pressure on the two major parties to work for people's welfare."

Hafizuddin, in yesterday's TIB press release, said, "I did not attend the discussion as a representative of TIB. I expressed my opinion as a citizen of the country. It will not be logical to link TIB with it."



Severe traffic congestion on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital. The photo was taken at Farmgate around 12:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

DRAFT WILDLIFE, FOREST ACTS Submit objections to NHRC

Mizanur asks stakeholders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman yesterday urged stakeholders concerned of the country's forests to submit their objections on the draft amendment to the Forest Act, 1927 and the draft of Wildlife (Preservation) Act, 2010 to the commission.

"I myself will forward the objections, alongside the commission's recommendations on removing the inconsistencies, to the speaker, standing committee on forest and even to the prime minister," he said.

Mizanur was addressing a views exchanging meeting jointly organised by Bangladesh Indigenous Network, Parbatya Chattagram Forest and Land Rights Protection Movement and Malaya Foundation in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

He also urged people to compel the government to listen to their rational demands.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu urged the government to withdraw its plan to build a coal-based thermal power plant adjacent to the Sundarbans considering the negative impacts it might have on the forest and its inhabitants.

He also urged the government to consult the stakeholders concerned on their objections before enacting the drafts.

Chakma Raja Barrister Devasish Roy said the government was enacting the two drafts without going through related laws in other countries and this would cause the people of the forest regions to lose their rights.

Parbatya Chattagram Forest and Land Rights Protection Movement Chairperson Gautom Dewan presided over the meeting where Information Commissioner Dr Sadeka Halim and Bela Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan also spoke.

Do not hold Buet students 'hostage'

Nahid asks agitating teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid in parliament yesterday called upon agitating teachers of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) not to hold students 'hostage' by halting academic activities of the public university.

The minister assured agitating teachers of meeting all their 'valid demands' gradually.

"We have already met some demands of Buet Teachers' Association including forming an enquiry committee to find out irregularities in the university and removing the pro-vice chancellor from the head of selection committee," Nahid said while passage of a bill in parliament.

In absence of the BNP-led opposition, the bill, which was passed, will meet another demand of the Buet teachers. The bill will bring uniformity in the retirement age of public university teachers.

At present, the retirement age of teachers of universities of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Jahangirnagar is 65 years. But the retirement age of teachers of the remaining 29 public universities is 60 years.

Earlier, independent MP Fazlul Azim

sharply criticised Nahid for the government's failure to end the standoff situation in Buet centring teachers' various demands including removal of the vice-chancellor.

Azim said the government has politicised different public universities by appointing VCs and pro-VCs there on political consideration.

In reply, Nahid outright rejected the allegation saying after coming to power in 2009, his government did not remove any VC or pro-VC.

On appointment of Dhaka University Prof Anwar Hossain as VC of Jahangirnagar University, Nahid said it was the best solution to bring an end to the deadlock situation at JU.

"He [Prof Anwar] has moved to elect a VC from JU teachers according to the university ordinance," Nahid added. Buet Teachers' Association had boycotted all academic activities from April 7 to May 5 demanding resignation of the institution's VC Prof Nazrul Islam and Pro-VC Prof M Habibur Rahman bringing allegations of irregularities against them.

Their protest programme, which was postponed following assurance by the prime minister to look into the matter, resumed again a month later on review of the overall campus

Return to JS

Speaker urges BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday urged the BNP-led opposition lawmakers to return to parliament and play their role.

"I hope they [opposition lawmakers] will soon return to parliament and do their duties to the people," the Speaker said in his winding up speech in the budget session.

BNP-led opposition lawmakers boycotted the entire budget session which was prorogued yesterday after 29 sittings.

The budget session began on May 27. The finance minister placed the budget for the current fiscal on June 7 which was passed on June 28.

The House held over 43 hours' discussion on the proposed budget.

"The budget has been more people-oriented following the discussion," the Speaker said in his speech. Over 200 lawmakers of Awami League-led ruling alliance joined the discussion.

Earlier, the Speaker rejected 20 notices submitted by four BNP lawmakers demanding discussion in parliament on various important issues.

The Speaker did not reveal the content of their notices. But he said he could have accepted one or two notices for holding discussion had they attended the House.

Meanwhile, the Speaker informed the House about the resignation of Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj from parliament. "I accepted his resignation as it was submitted to me lawfully," he said.

The parliament secretariat yesterday issued a gazette notification declaring Sohel Taj's parliament seat vacant.

ICT-1 Kashem to be quizzed at safe home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday allowed the prosecution to quiz detained Jamaat leader Mir Kashem Ali in a "safe home" in connection with crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

The prosecution must inform the defence of the interrogation date two days beforehand, said the three-member tribunal, headed by its Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq.

A physician and a defence lawyer must be present during the questioning while provisions provided to other war crimes accused with regard to interrogations at "safe homes" must be present, said Justice Nizamul.

He also asked the prosecution to submit a progress report on the ongoing investigation or the formal charge against Kashem, Jamaat-e-Islami executive council member, at the

tribunal on August 12.

The tribunal passed the order in response to a petition, filed by prosecutor Sultan Mahmud, seeking three days for the interrogation.

The petition stated that Kashem's people were threatening witnesses and Kashem needed to be cross-examined for the sake of a proper and effective investigation.

Opposing the petition, defence lawyer Tajul Islam said the prosecution could not produce any grounds to quiz Kashem and there was no connection between quizzing Kashem and intimidation on witnesses.

Kashem was produced before the tribunal yesterday.

Later, the defence counsel of Delawar Hossain Sayedee yesterday cross-examined the investigation officer of a case filed against Sayedee for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

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MONEY LAUNDERING HC stays ACC notice on Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for three months operation of an Anti-Corruption Commission notice asking BNP leader Moudud Ahmed to appear before the commission in connection with a money laundering allegation.

On July 4, ACC's Deputy Director Monayem Hossain served the notice on Moudud asking him to appear before the commission office at 11:30am on July 11 for hearing and accepting his (Moudud) statement on the allegation of acquiring asset in the UK by the way of money laundering.

The notice said legal action will be taken if Moudud fails to appear before the ACC.

In response to a writ petition filed by Moudud, the HC yesterday also asked the ACC to explain why its notice should not be declared illegal, as the petitioner claimed that the notice was issued to politically harass him.

Khurshid Alam Khan, a counsel of ACC, said they will file an appeal with the Supreme Court against the HC order.

There is no legal bar for ACC to conduct enquiry into the allegation against Moudud following the order, he added.

BNP only wants to loot money: Sajeda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Leader of the Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury yesterday said from the beginning, the BNP only wanted to grab state power to loot money of the people.

"They (BNP) do not care about Bengali nationalism. They are all fakes," Sajeda, also a presidium member of ruling Awami League, said while addressing the conference of Dhaka City (North) unit Awami Jubo League at Kalabagan playground in the capital.

Addressing the conference Jubo League General Secretary Mirza Azam MP said although many leaders of the party had become ministers, state ministers and many were in race to make illegal money after the last general elections, most of the honest leaders and activists got nothing.

AL Presidium Member and Home Minister Shahara Khatun, LGRD State Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak, acting Chairman of Jubo League Omar Faruk Chowdhury and Jubo League North unit President Abul Basar also spoke among others.



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