

ACC to quiz Gen Harun on Nov 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission will interrogate Destiny Group President Lt Gen (retd) Harun-Ar-Rashid on November 4 in connection with two money laundering cases.

The commission's Chairman Ghulam Rahman said this to journalists while leaving his office at Segunbagicha yesterday afternoon.

Former army chief Harun was released on October 19, a day after the High Court granted him conditional bail for two months in the cases.

The ACC filed the cases with Kalabagan Police Station on July 31 against 22 top officials of the controversial group on charges of laundering Tk 3,285.26 crore.

Meanwhile, the ACC has set November 4 for quizzing Mashirul Rahman, the prime minister's economic affairs adviser, over corruption allegations in the Padma bridge project.

The ACC yesterday fixed the date in response to a request by Mashirul, said sources at the commission, an anti-graft watchdog.

Earlier on Monday, the ACC issued a notice asking Mashirul to appear at its Segunbagicha head office on November 6 for the interrogation.

In September, Mashirul was sent on leave to fulfil part of a condition imposed by the World Bank for reviving its funding for the Padma bridge project.

The ACC has so far interrogated 29 people, including former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain, in relation to the graft allegations.

The WB cancelled its \$1.2 billion credit for the project on June 29, on the grounds that it had proof of a corruption conspiracy involving senior Bangladeshi government officials and executives of a Canadian firm.

The global lender, however, decided to revive its loan on September 21 after the Bangladesh government agreed to its terms and conditions.

BNP

FROM PAGE 1 connect its north-eastern region with its other regions. "Therefore, we can demand a portion of the premium and that was exactly what we wanted to say."

However, Khaleda at a rally in Dhaka on November 7 demanded cancellation of the "transit deal" with India, saying no foreign vehicles would be allowed into Bangladeshi territory.

She also said she would resist the government's anti-state activities even if it cost her life.

During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India early 2010, Dhaka and New Delhi signed three agreements on fighting terrorism and organised crime, and mutual transfer of convicted prisoners.

Besides, according to the joint communiqué issued after the tour, Bangladesh will allow the use of Mongla and Chittagong sea ports for transport of goods to and from India. Nepal and Bhutan too would be given access to the sea ports.

BBC Bangla service observes that the BNP chairperson has moved away from her years-long position against Bangladesh giving transit to India and the proposed Tipaimukh dam over the Barak river in Manipur state of the neighbouring country.

Shamsher Momin Chowdhury, a vice-chairman of the main opposition, told BBC last night that at the talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Khaleda had suggested forming a sub-committee comprised of credible experts under the joint river commission to assess the impact of the dam on Bangladesh.

The party earlier staged a number of protests in and outside the capital against the dam.

Shamsher are in the delegation accompanying Khaleda Zia on her India visit.

Abducted boy rescued 3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday rescued the minor son of a rickshaw-puller from Feni, six days after his abduction from Chittagong.

The victim was Md Mehedi Hasan Al-Amin, 5, son of Md Mizu Ahmed of Chowdhury Nagar area under Bayezid Police Station in the port city.

Police also detained the abductors -- Sohagh Hossain, 20, and Md Sanullah, 28, from Chittagong on Tuesday night and Saiful Islam, 18, from Feni early yesterday.

Sohagh planned the incident, and in collusion with the other detainees, abducted Al-Amin from in front of his residence at Chowdhury Nagar around 2:30pm on October 25, said Officer-in-Charge (OC) Sheikh Md Nasir Uddin of Bayezid Police Station.

After the abduction, they demanded Tk 1 lakh as ransom from Mizu Ahmed over mobile phone on October 27, the eid day, said the OC.

Mizu, a rickshaw-puller, gave Sohagh Tk 3,000 on that day, OC Nasir said.

"As instructed by Sohagh, I kept Tk 3,000 at a place in Chandra Nagar area under Bayezid Police Station," said the father. "But Sohagh demanded at least Tk 12,000 more to get my boy back," Mizu said, "or they would kill Al-Amin."

Later, Mizu filed a case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with the police station on October 28, said the OC.

After receiving information, police detained the trio from different areas, the OC said. On information from the detainees, the law enforcers rescued the boy around 6:00am yesterday from the custody of detained Saiful at Rogunhuiyan village in Daganbhuiyan upazila of Feni.

Asked about the motive behind the abduction, Sohagh, the mastermind, told the Daily Star that they abducted the minor boy only for money.

Cops in ammo

FROM PAGE 1

Metropolitan Police said, "After the arrest of the policemen and seizure of more arms and ammunition from their possession, the process of counting all the arms and ammunitions has begun."

"We are trying to root out the ring for the sake of the country," he said, adding, "None will be spared and the entire police department cannot take responsibility for such illicit acts of a few of its members."

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police authorities on Sunday formed a six-member committee led by Joint Commissioner Maruf Hasan, also chief of detective police.

According to police sources, Detective Branch of Police on Sunday arrested constable Masud Miah and on Tuesday night Sub-Inspector Mohammad Zahid Hossain and constable Abu Sayem with the bullets, cartridges, a revolver and the money.

The three were deployed at Rajaibagh Police Lines armoury while Prem and Jannal were deployed at the reserve storage of the armoury at the Public Order Management unit of the police department at Mirpur in the capital.

Jannal and Prem yesterday made their confessional statements before Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mohammad Adnan on the fifth day of their six-day remand.

long time and constable Masud had been supplying those to them.

Jannal and Prem said they had been supplying arms to anti-CHT Peace Accord groups since 1997.

Sources claimed that Jannal and Prem were members of a guerrilla group of the "Shanti Bahini" in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. After the CHT Peace Accord was signed on December 2, 1997, they surrendered their arms.

In 1998, they joined the police department.

Arrested Zahid, of Sugondhiya of Jhalakathi, and constable Sayem, of Char Subadi of Dumki in Patuakhali, were each placed on a seven-day remand yesterday.

DB Sub-Inspector Mohammad Hanif filed a case with Paltan Police Station on Tuesday night. In the case statement, the complainant said detained Zahid and Sayem had been supplying illegal arms and ammunition to criminals for a long time.

Masud, arrested Sunday, is on a five-day remand.

19 lakh

FROM PAGE 20

Of the total school and madrasa examinees from 27,642 institutions, about 1,72,684 are irregular. This year the number of total examinees is 47,252 more than that of last year, said Nahid.

The number of female students is higher than male examinees in all the boards. Overall, 53 percent students are girls.

The fear of public examinations among students has been reduced and the drop-out rate has also fallen after JSC and JDC exams were introduced in 2010 and 2011, the minister said.

"Our students now take the exams in a festive mood. They are more confident and encouraged as they get a certificate after the examinations."

Nahid also said the examinations would be held on uniform question papers.

Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Fahima Khutun said the government was considering introducing uniform question paper at Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate exams as well.

Except for Bangla second paper, English first and second papers and mathematics, JSC and JDC exams will be held under creative question-answer method. Physically challenged students will get 20 minutes extra for the exams.

Dhaka board has the highest 4.95 lakh examinees while Barisal board has the lowest 85,398.

The examinations will end on November 15. The results will be published in graded areas.

The education minister said he hoped to get the results published before December.

Rab talks

FROM PAGE 1

1:00pm with his maternal uncle Nawsher Roman, who had filed the case over the double murder committed on February 11.

Megh's another uncle Nawshad Alam told The Daily Star that the investigation officer asked Megh questions about the murders and that fatal night.

Megh was not interested in answering those questions as he was busy playing, he added.

On February 11, Sagar, a news editor at Maasanga television, and his wife Meherun Rumi, an ATN Bangla reporter, were killed at their flat at Rajabazar in the capital. Megh was at home then.

Sri Lanka storm exposes Tigers' heavy weaponry

AFP, Colombo

A storm surge in Sri Lanka's northeast has exposed buried artillery guns of Tamil Tiger rebels in a region where the final battles of the country's 37-year conflict were fought, the army said yesterday.

The education minister said he hoped to get the results published before December.

Khaleda in Jaipur

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, now in India on a weeklong official tour, reached Jaipur yesterday.

She will offer special prayers at the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer Sharif today.

Maruf Kamal Khan, press secretary of the chairperson, told UNB over phone "She (Khaleda Zia) left New Delhi for Jaipur in the morning and will be staying overnight there."

Khaleda along with her entourage left Hotel Taj Palace at 10:30am (Indian time) and started for the capital of Rajasthan State by road with special security arrangements.

Officials received Khaleda and her entourage when they reached the city around 2:30pm. They were staying at Rambagh Palace.

The BNP chairperson attended a dinner hosted by the Commerce Minister of Rajasthan Rajendra Prakhar last night.

She is expected to return to New Delhi tonight.

Govt okays

FROM PAGE 1

Hossain Bhuiyan told journalists after the cabinet meeting.

The meeting also decided that equal number or more trees would be planted at suitable places after implementation of the project.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting held at her office.

"It is not possible to expand Joydebpur-Mymensingh highway without removing some trees on both sides of the road. That is why the cabinet has approved the proposal for removing the trees by relaxing a previous policy," said Musharraf.

The cabinet also approved the draft of National Biotechnology Policy, 2012 to increase food production, ensure nutrition for all and reduce poverty. The Ministry of Science and Technology has formulated the draft policy.

Quoting the cabinet secretary, UNB said, "It could be used effectively in curing diseases, ensuring food security, improving the status of health and nutrition and protecting environment."

The priority areas of the policy are agriculture, healthcare, nutrition, afforestation, animal husbandry, preservation of fish and livestock and improvement of the standard of goods and service.

Besides human resources and infrastructure development, research and development and optimum utilisation of capability have been incorporated in the policy, UNB said.

A national taskforce headed by the prime minister, a national executive committee headed by the cabinet secretary and a technical committee headed by the science and technology secretary will work for implementing the policy.

UN hands full police powers to E Timor

AFP, Dili

United Nations peacekeepers in East Timor yesterday handed full responsibility for policing to Asia's youngest nation, Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao announced.

The National Police of East Timor "are assuming full responsibility for maintaining law and order", he said in a statement.

In March last year the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste handed some responsibilities to the Timorese police and has since focused on training instead of frontline duties.

The head of the UN mission, Finn Reske-Nielsen, said that under the peacekeepers' guidance the Timorese police had "made significant progress" in graded areas.

The force provided security during the year's peaceful presidential and general elections.

Brain drain dims

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI), Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI), Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI) and Bangladesh Sericulture Research and Training Institute (BSRTI).

BARI and BRRI are the biggest losers in the brain drain phenomenon as the two institutions together lost nearly 200 scientists in recent years. They (scientists) preferred voluntary retirement and joined research institutions abroad or universities at home where better pay package and other facilities are available.

Bangladeshi scientists' back-to-back successes in plant and fungi-genomics research in recent years made the government upbeat about the country's capability in advance agro-science. On both the occasions -- jute genome decoding in 2010 and fungi genome decoding in September this year -- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina informed the nation about the scientific feats by announcing that in parliament.

But, the agro-scientists' morale remains low due to non-implementation of the promised incentives for them, said a top NARS official, preferring anonymity.

They are frustrated by factors such as retirement at the age of 59, promotion policy based on vacant positions, lack of scope for higher studies in modern agriculture, lack of recognition for achievements and absence of pension benefits and recreation leave.

In neighbouring countries India and Nepal, agro-scientists working in public sector retire at the age of 62 and 60 years respectively compared to 58 years for other public servants. In Pakistan, scientists are given special increments in salary if and when they pursue higher education while in service.

The priority areas of the policy are agriculture, healthcare, nutrition, afforestation, animal husbandry, preservation of fish and livestock and improvement of the standard of goods and service.

According to conditions set by the IMF for it to release the second installment of the \$1 billion credit, the government has to amend the Bank Companies Act, paving the way for the BB to oversee the state-run and specialised banks like all other commercial banks.

Article 46 of the existing act says the BB can remove the chairman, director or any other official of all commercial banks on charges of irregularities except for the government-nominated chairman, director or chief executive.

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In case of irregularities by any government-picked official, the BB can only submit a report to the government for the latter to consider.

The banking division proposed no changes to that provision other than inserting it in Article 47.

The division in its defence says the government as the "owning authority" should retain the power of abolishing the board in Article 47.

On several occasions, Finance Minister AMA Muhith blamed the BB for "acting late"

in identifying the Tk3,547 crore swindle from Sonali Bank by Hall-Mark and five other companies.

Asked to comment on such a justification, a top BB official said, "It is a lame excuse."

If the government exercises this power, owners of private banks can do the same as the "owning authority," added the official, requesting anonymity.

At present, there are four state-owned and four specialised banks in the country. The state-run banks are Janata, Agrani, Sonali and Rupali and the specialised banks are Krishibid Institution, Bangladesh (KIB).

KIB is one of the oldest and largest professional organisations in the country that represents over 20,000 agriculture graduates.

"It's nothing extra that the country's agro-scientists are asking for, rather, we're asking for the minimum incentives including financial support and extension of job tenure."

The board of directors of any state-owned banks or