

## ALCWC

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Ahmed Raju, who was a presidium member, party sources said last night.

Both Abul and Raju have been at the centre of controversies over the last two years -- the former for his alleged involvement in the Padma bridge project graft and the latter for his brother's alleged links to the murder of Narsingdi municipal mayor Lokman Hossain.

Abul was removed first from the communications ministry and then from the cabinet altogether following the World Bank's allegation of corruption against him.

Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, state minister for women and children affairs, would replace him in the central committee, added the sources.

The new committee is likely to be announced today either from the Gono Bhaban or from AL President Sheikh Hasina's political office at Dhanmondi in the capital. The committee was finalised at a meeting at the Gono Bhaban chaired by Hasina, also the prime minister, yesterday.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam, Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Communications Minister Obaidul Quader were present at the meeting that began around 5:00pm, according to party insiders.

Sources close to Hasina said a few others had also been dropped from the committee, including Yusuf Hossain Humayun who was a presidium member and Syeda Zebunnesa who was a central committee member.

Hasan Mahmud, party's forest and environment affairs secretary, has been made publicity secretary.

A few new faces have been included in the committee. They include party MPs Junaid Ahmed Polok and Nasrul Hamid Bipu and prime minister's Special Assistant Abdus Sobhan Golap. Abdus Sobhan hails from Abul Hossain's constituency in Shariatpur.

However, the AL stalwarts known as "reformists" could not make it on the list.

The committee of the Awami League's assistant secretaries was also finalised at yesterday's meeting.

Earlier on December 29 last year, party councillors reelected Sheikh Hasina for a seventh term as president and Syed Ashraf for a second term as general secretary.

Hasina and Ashraf were also empowered by the councillors to form the central committee.

## Four die

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correspondent.

The identity of the other could not yet be known.

Mahbub Morshed, officer-in-charge of Chandpur Model Police Station, told The Daily Star that two of the passengers were still unaccounted for.

Divers recovered four bodies from the boat around 8:30pm.

Asadullah, one of the passengers who managed to swim ashore, said the boat was laden with sand and carrying 50 passengers when it hit the jetty at Harina ferry terminal.

It was heading to Dhaka from Shariatpur.

At least 10 of the passengers who swam to safety were injured. Of them, Abdul Kuddus, 35, and Ratan, 28, were admitted to Chandpur Sadar Hospital.

Ferry services on Chandpur-Shariatpur route have remained suspended since the incident.

In Brahmanbaria, the two speedboats collided near Karim Shah Mazar Ghat at Nabinagar upazila around 7:00pm on Monday, reports our district correspondent.

The collision left one dead and five injured.

The deceased, Montu Kumar Devnath, 50, was an employee of National Life Insurance in Nabinagar. He was returning home at Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila.

The speedboats were carrying around 10 passengers each.

The injured were admitted to Nabinagar upazila health complex. One of them, Zakaria Munshi, was later sent to Pangu Hospital in the capital.

## Hatirjheel opens

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designed to help ground water percolation.

The 302-acre site stretches between Airport Road and Rampura along Tejgaon, Gulshan, Modhubagh, Moghbazar, Badda and Ulan. The project area included 46 acres of Rajuk's land, 34 acres of other government agencies, 81 acres of Court of Wards and 141 acres of private land.

The facilities here also include a theatre, viewing deck, landscaping, and park furniture and a police box. However, construction of the theatre, park and the garden is yet to be finished.

Except for some beautifications and two U-loops, most of the project works have been accomplished.

The U-loops were incorporated in the revised draft project proposal, which is now being implemented in Badda and Rampura to avoid traffic congestion at the Hatirjheel-Rampura intersection.

Commuters from Rampura, Badda, Ulan, Modhubagh, Moghbazar, Gulshan, and Tejgaon would have easy movement in the said areas with the scheme's service roads.

Three bridges have been built across the Hatirjheel Lake along with three viaducts along the peripheral road and four overpasses on the road. Each of them is more than 15 feet high.

An apartment complex with two 15-storey buildings has been developed within the project area to rehabilitate the land owners who had been "genuinely" affected by the scheme.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), Dhaka Wasa and local government engineering department along with an army engineering corps implemented different components of the scheme since 2008. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology was employed as consultant.

Rajuk had to fight a total of 78 land-related cases and 20 contempt charges during implementation period. One major objective of the scheme is to serve with a storm drainage system to prevent floods in the capital.

Iqbal Habib, architectural consultant of the Hatirjheel-Begunbari integrated development

scheme, said the BGMEA building had stood in the way of one of the scheme's main objectives -- draining out storm water of four Wasa zones to save Paribagh, Karwan Bazar and Eskaton from flooding.

"We have informed the prime minister of the building being illegal and how it is harming the project," said Iqbal, adding, "We have tried our best to convince the government."

Professor Mujibur Rahman, who led the technical expert team of the scheme, said the Begunbari canal stretching from airport road to Rampura and beyond is a vital drainage system to prevent urban flooding.

It is unfathomable why the government had kept from pursuing the legal battle to remove the building and free the canal, Prof Rahman added.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) earmarks the Begunbari canal as a natural water body and a designated flood flow zone, prohibiting any change to its character.

The High Court in April 2011 declared the BGMEA building illegal and asked the government to remove it in three months and restore the canal to its earlier state.

In response, the BGMEA appealed with the Supreme Court that stayed the order for six weeks. As final hearing of the case has been pending with the appellate division, the High Court order is considered as stayed.

Shafiul Islam Mohiuddin, president of BGMEA, said, "We will go on with the legal battle to save the building."

Asked what the government has done for the disposal of the appeal, Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda said they had requested the attorney general and hired a private counsel to get the appeal heard.

Various environmental and civic bodies have also time and again demanded that the government take steps to demolish the BGMEA building.

Abdul Mannan Khan, state minister for housing and public works, hoped that the BGMEA authorities would come to senses and take steps to knock the

building down.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her first tenure laid the foundation stone of the BGMEA building in November 1998 while another premier Khaleda Zia inaugurated the building in October 2006.

Rajuk issued land use clearance while Department of Environment environmental clearance and Dhaka Wasa clearance for the building in the canal. Civil Aviation Authorities also issued the height clearance.

BGMEA with various clearances was required to obtain building approval from Rajuk, which it did not do. Rajuk only served a notice on BGMEA in the last eight years of the building's existence.

## Smiles

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primary and secondary schools, Ebtetadai and Dakhil madrasas and technical institutions.

The textbook distribution will continue for the next seven days. So the schools that are yet to start admitting students will have to hand over books to their pupils within this period.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at 11:00am inaugurated the festival at Residential Model School and College in the capital. He handed over books to students from four schools.

It was a cheerful atmosphere inside the school premises. Around 4,000 students sat before a podium wrapped with red and green cloths -- colours of our national flag -- to hear speeches of the minister and other government officials present there. In one hand they were holding a little red flag and in the other colourful textbooks.

Nahid in his speech greeted the students, saying, "Now you [students] concentrate on your studies to get the best possible education and to take the country to its desired height."

"You have to do those things which we could not."

Bangladesh was the only country where such a huge volume of textbooks were distributed for free, the ministers said.

Free textbook distribution reduces the anxiety of parents and students over getting books in time, encourages students to be more attentive and cuts the dropout rate, thus helps improve quality of education as a whole, he said.

He also urged parents to inform the authority if textbooks are found to be sold out.

Presided over by Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, the programme was also addressed by Rashed Khan Menon, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on education ministry; Jahangir Kabir Nanak MP and Prof Mostofa Kamal Uddin, chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

All the children were jubilant after receiving books from the minister. They played drums and waved placards. Parents and teachers too joined the ceremony.

"I am very happy getting new books. I will flip through the pages of these books as I reach home," said SK Abrar Hossain, a class-V student.

"I just saw this year's textbooks. The books are colourful and their quality improved significantly," said a parent whose daughter studies at Gono Bhaban Girls' School.

Meanwhile, Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen distributed books at Kalachandpur Government Primary School in the capital's Gulshan and four other schools in Gazipur.

Home Minister MK Alamgir distributed textbooks at Monipur High School and College.

Elsewhere in the country, textbook distribution was held under the supervision of public representatives, government officials and school authorities.

All the textbooks of primary and secondary grades have been uploaded on the National Curriculum and Textbook Board website: www.nctb.gov.bd.

## SQ Chy's counsel

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Salaudinn threatened the state counsels from the dock too. He said if he got out of jail, the prosecutors would know the consequences of their actions.

The Tribunal-1 yesterday fixed tomorrow for delivering orders on three petitions for retrial of cases against Ghulam Azam, Motiur Rahman Nizami and Delwar Hossain Sayedee.

Yesterday was scheduled for hearing four petitions of Salaudinn, who is facing charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

During the hearing of three petitions, prosecution and defence lawyers shouted at each other.

In the morning session, Salaudinn created commotion in the courtroom for which the tribunal decided not to have him present during the hearing. However, it later recalled its decision on verbal assurance of the defence.

In the afternoon session, the tribunal observed similar commotion when the defence was placing its argument for the contempt of court petition against Law Minister Shafique Ahmed.

Defence lawyers' argument was based on the hacked Skype conversation between former Tribunal-1 chief Justice Md Nizamul Huq and an expatriate legal expert Ahmed Ziauddin that was published by a Bangla daily in December.

The defence argued that the law minister was a party to the "scandalous events" and "abused" the process of the tribunal.

The attorney general countered their claim saying that according to the alleged conversation, the law minister did not give any directive to anyone, rather somebody mentioned his name.

Before Attorney General Mahbubey Alam could go any further, Salaudinn made some comments from the dock to which Assistant

Attorney General MA Kamrul Hasan Khan alias Aslam reacted and yelled "shut up" at Salaudinn.

Enraged, Salaudinn yelled "shut up" at Aslam.

Then all the prosecutors were on their feet and in one voice shouted "shut up" at Salaudinn.

Aslam pointing his finger at Salaudinn said "shut up razakar" a couple of times.

With a provocative body language Kazi Joynal Abedin, Salaudinn's lawyer, then came forward and said, "You shut up Aslam. Won't you go outside? I'll slit your throat. You dare to ask Salaudinn Quader to shut up?"

At this point, Salaudinn said, "Let me get out of jail. You will see."

The war crimes accused later apologised to the tribunal and claimed that he would not do such things in future if he was not provoked.

At the beginning of the second session, tribunal Chairman Justice ATM Fazle Kabir said Salaudinn creates commotion, nuisance and shouts in the courtroom, therefore he would not be produced.

"He does not maintain decorum of the tribunal," Justice Kabir said.

But the defence counsels continuously pleaded the tribunal to bring him in.

Justice Kabir then allowed him in.

In the morning session, Salaudinn's counsel Fakhrul Islam in another petition asked the tribunal to clarify its independence beyond any doubt.

He asked the tribunal to clearly state whether during the period of the proceedings any member or the current chairman of the tribunal is or has been in direct or indirect contact with expatriate legal expert Ahmed Ziauddin, Raihan Rashid or any other people involved in the alleged Skype conversation.

Fakhrul also alleged that the chief justice and Justice SK

Sinha, a senior judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, was also "involved in the Skype scandal".

Tribunal-1 chairman asked Fakhrul how he got the "guts" to seek explanation of the private lives of tribunal judges through petitions.

The attorney general prayed the tribunal to bar the defence counsel and bring contempt of court proceedings against him.

Mahbubey Alam also said Fakhrul was trying to malign the trials and the judicial system.

All this while, Salaudinn shouted and protested the attorney general's prayer while Fakhrul was continuing with his submission and bashing on the table furiously.

Salaudinn in low voice and using a swear word said, "They [the prosecution] are maligning the trial."

The tribunal chairman said, "Do you [the defence counsel] want us to give you a certificate in this regard [about tribunal judges]?"

Seemingly confused Fakhrul instead of giving any straight reply repeated his petition several times.

The Daily Star cannot print the defence submission as they have the contents of the alleged Skype conversation. The International Crimes Tribunal-2 has ordered not to publish or air the alleged conversation.

Salaudinn said it was an innocent petition filed to keep the dignity of the tribunal and judges high.

Salaudinn said, "For 33 years, I have been a lawmaker. You dispense justice. I make laws."

Justice Kabir then again asked Fakhrul what order does he want from the tribunal with the petition. "Can you ask a judge whether he has any relations with anyone?"

The hearing of the petitions would continue tomorrow.

## Celebrations

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Piles of abandoned shoes and clothing could also be seen at the stadium, where soldiers and police were deployed.

The New Year's fireworks, the city's second in two years, had been touted as a symbol of national renewal under President Alassane Ouattara after the violent post-election crisis that tore the country apart from December 2010 to April 2011, killing some 3,000 people.

In Italy, two people were killed by exploding fireworks and 361 were injured as New Year revelry turned deadly.

A 49-year-old builder was killed by a rocket flying into his face and a 51-year-old restaurant owner died when a firecracker went off near his head as he was trying out a firework battery just before midnight, the police said.

In Thailand, a 22-year-old British tourist was shot dead as he danced at a New Year party on one of Thailand's most famous islands after a fight between rival Thai gangs erupted on the beach, police said yesterday.

And in Philippines, celebratory gunfire killed a four-year-old boy and more than 400 others were injured by powerful firecrackers in typically rowdy New Year celebrations.

## Swindlers

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Nakshi respectively. Both were detained earlier in connection with the scam.

"These were not loans," ACC Deputy Director Mir Md Zainul Abedin Shibly told reporters at a press brief in ACC headquarters yesterday. "These were misappropriations through forged documents in collaboration with some bank officials."

He said the swindlers prepared fake documents to open letter of credit and inland bill purchase and drew the money without doing any business.

The cases are dealing with the embezzlement of Tk 350.37 crore funded money or the portion disbursed in cash, Shibly added.

In May last year, a Bangladesh Bank probe revealed serious irregularities at the Sonali Bank branch in sanctioning and disbursing of the Tk 3,547 crore loans.

The ACC on October 4 the same year filed 11 cases against 27 top officials of Sonali Bank and Hall-Mark over a scam involving Tk 1,568 crore. Of the amount, Tk 2,686 crore was disbursed in cash.

Sonali Bank on August 30 suspended 17 of its officials over the fraud.

### THE ACCUSED

The accused in the 26 cases include three officials of the Ruposhi Bangla branch and they are AKM Azizur Rahman, suspended manager now behind bars; AGM Saiful Hasan and executive officer Abdul Matin.

Four accused -- general managers Nani Gopal Nath, Mir Mohidur Rahman and Sabita Siraj and AGM Ashraf Ali Patwari -- are from the bank's GM office in Dhaka while Mehrunnesa Merry, senior executive officer, is from Dhanmondi branch.

The rest of the accused bankers are linked to its head office. They are Humayun Kabir, former managing director and CEO, DMD Mainul Haque, DMD Atiqur Rahman, GM Mashrurul Huda Siraji, DGM Sheikh Altaf Hossain, DGM Safizuddin Ahmad, AGM Kamrul Hossain Khan and DGM Kaniz Fatema Chowdhury.

The 16 officials of the business firms include T & Brothers Chairman Jinath Fatema, Managing Director Touhid Hossain and Director Taslim Hasan, Paragon Managing Director Saiful Islam Raja and Director Abdullah Al Mamun, Mondal Brothers owner Mukul Hossain, Nakshi Knit Chairman Amena Begum, Managing Director Abdul Malek and Director M Jamir Hussain.

DN Sports Chairman Motaher Uddin Chowdhury, Managing Director Shafiqur Rahman John and Director Fahmida Akhter Shikha, Khanjahan Ali Sweater Chairman Tajul Islam, Managing Director Jalil Sheikh, and directors Rafiqul Islam and Mir Mohammad Shawkat Ali are also among the accused.

## State incurred Tk 300cr loss

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and its subsidiaries indulged in irregularities due to lax internal control.

The OCAG audited the Petrobangla and its 14 subsidiaries and projects in 2010 and 2011.

They are Titas Gas Transmission Company Ltd, Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Ltd, Maddhapara Granite Mining Company, Bangladesh Gas Fields Ltd, Bakhrabad Gas System Ltd, Maddhapara Hard Rock Project, Parbatipur, Joypur Limestone Mining and Cement Project, Joypurhat, LP Gas Ltd, Patenga, Chittagong, Barapukuria Coal Mining Company, Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company, Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd and Paschimanchal Gas Company.

The audit found the country lost Tk 149.55 crore as Paschimanchal, Titas, Sylhet Gas, Bangladesh Gas Fields, Barapukuria Mining, Jalalabad, Bapex, Rupantarita Praktik Gas and Bakhrabad distributed a certain percentage of their profits among employees and officials, who get salaries under the national scale and are not entitled to such benefits.

The companies did not take permission from the finance ministry, which is mandatory, for distributing 5 percent of their profits.

The audit report says no labour is working at those companies under the Labour Law. But the companies are misinterpreting the labour laws and distributing crores of taka every year as profit bonus among employees and officials from top to bottom.

Petrobangla and the 14 subsidiaries and projects also distributed more money among employees and officials in payments, incentives and facilities flouting laws and without the permission of the finance ministry. This cost the country Tk 35.43 crore in losses.

The audit report said the Korean company, NAMNAM, was awarded the work in

1994 to mine hard rock in Parbatipur of Dinajpur on turn-key basis. The work was scheduled to be completed in June 2001.

The deadline was first extended till December the same year. The time was again extended until February 2005 after the contractor failed to complete the task.

The two sides decided that if the contractor failed to complete the work by the deadline, Bangladesh will cut every week 0.5 percent on 16 percent of the \$13.40 crore.

NAMNAM again failed to complete the job and in April 2007 another agreement was signed to give the Korean contractor until June the same year to finish the work.

The Maddhapara Granite Mining Company was supposed to cut \$2.19 crore in liquidated damages after the contractor failed to do so.

But the state-run company did not realise the money, although 205 weeks had passed since July 2007 to June 2010, when the audit was completed, the report said.

During the audit inspection, the Bangladesh company said the third agreement would expire in November 2011. The contractor has signed the contract to complete most of the work by the time. So, liquidity damages could not be realised from March 2005.

But the audit report said the response was not satisfactory, adding that the deadline was extended until June 2007 on condition that the liquidity damages would be realised from March 2005.

Among other irregularities, the audit report said Titas Gas did not snap the gas link on time in 2009-10 under the Gas Marketing Policy 2004, causing a loss of Tk 2.99 crore in unpaid bills.

Sylhet Gas Fields incurred a loss of Tk 7.33 crore in 2009-10 after it unnecessarily bought octane boosters for producing octane from motor spirit at the Rashidpur Condensate Fractionation Plant in Sylhet without assessing the demand in the local market. The company did not invite

any international tender for buying the chemical.

Bakhrabad Gas Systems purchased 900 diaframe gas metres in 2009 from a Chinese company, Beijing Zinchuang Combined Gas Metre Company. Subsequent laboratory tests found that the metres' flow capacity is below the flow capacity mentioned in the product specification. As a result, the Bangladeshi company suffered a loss of Tk 95.98 lakh, said the audit report.

In 2009-10, the Petrobangla also breached rules and gave honorarium of Tk 95.50 lakh to employees and officials. The money was part of the production bonus international oil company Chevron gave to Petrobangla.

Chevron deposited Tk 20.43 crore under its production sharing contract with Petrobangla in September 2009 after its Bibiyana gas field reached its gas production target uninterrupted.

The Petrobangla board decided to give honorarium equals to 60 days' basic salaries of the employees, officials and even officials on leave preparatory retirement.

But the Petrobangla did not take permission from the ministry to do so, said the audit report.

## BSF kills 2

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Guard Bangladesh, Dinajpur-2.

Around 4:30am, BSF men of Borra camp opened fire on a group of cattle traders, among whom were the two, when they were returning from India with cattle, he added.

Nur Islam and Moktar died there and then. The others escaped unhurt.

BSF members took the bodies immediately, said Muntasar.

The two forces met in the afternoon at a company commander-level meeting, where the BGB protested at the killings and asked for the bodies.

BSF personnel said they would hand over the bodies on completion of some formalities.