

FATTENING SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS

HC orders  
sought to stop  
use of steroid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday seeking necessary directives on the government to stop the use of excessive steroids, which are harmful to public health, to make sacrificial animals fatty and healthy ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Rights organisation Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh submitted the petition urging the HC to pass an order on the government to appoint a veterinary doctors' team at every cattle market in Dhaka to examine health of the animals.

The teams will examine the presence of steroids such as Dexamithason, Cortisol, Bitamithason, Hydrocortison as well as Ciproheptadine and Urea, Oradex, Cortan, Adam-33 and Decason in cattle, buffaloes and goats between October 3 and October 8, as their excessive use is harmful to health.

The petitioner pleaded for the deployment of necessary law enforcers at the markets to assist the doctors in examining the animals.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

President gives nod

FROM PAGE 1

remove the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners; chiefs and members of the Public Service Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Human Rights Commission; and the comptroller and auditor general on the same grounds.

The House that regained the power after around four decades, however, will not be able to exercise this until a new law is enacted to make the constitutional changes operational.

The latest amendment stipulates the formulation of a separate law outlining the procedures for investigating allegations against SC judges and removal from office if the allegations are proved.

The president gave his consent to the bill around noon when the BNP-led alliance was observing a country-wide dawn-to-dusk hartal protesting the constitutional amendment.

The BNP at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan office yesterday morning also urged the president not to do this and requested him to send it back to parliament instead.

"People are not supporting the constitutional amendment. As the guardian of the state, please, you [the president] don't give assent to the bill," said BNP Joint Secretary General Mohammad Shajahan.

To protest the amendment, pro-BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami lawyers too boycotted court proceedings across the country yesterday, as announced by Bangladesh Bar Council earlier.

They brought out processions on Bar association premises, demanding cancellation of the constitutional changes.

Parliament officials went to the Bangabhaban, office-cum-residence of the president, seeking his assent to the bill shortly before noon during the hartal hours, sources in the parliament secretariat said.

The constitutional changes, however, have created an unusual situation.

Parliament cannot remove SC judges or any of the aforementioned persons until the relevant law is enacted. According to an earlier statement of the law minister, the government would make the law in three months after the amendment bill was passed.

And having been abolished through the passage of the amendment, the SJC cannot be used to do that either.

Commenting on the bizarre situation, jurist Shahdeen Malik said now no proceedings for misbehaviour and incapacity can be initiated against any SC judges and other individuals appointed to constitutional and some other statutory offices.

Sporadic clashes

FROM PAGE 1

old, who claimed that he was not involved in politics, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The pickets in Sabujbagh also vandalised at least three vehicles, the police officer said seeking anonymity.

Over a hundred members of police, Rapid Action Battalion, Armed Police Battalion, and Detective Branch were on guard around the BNP's Naya Paltan office since morning. They allowed only a few party leaders to enter the office.

The BNP-led opposition combine enforced the 12-hour hartal, first of its kind since the January 5 election, to protest the restoration of parliament's authority to remove Supreme Court judges for misbehaviour or incapability.

Pro-BNP-Jamaat lawyers boycotted the Supreme Court as part of the countrywide protest programme demanding cancellation of the latest constitutional amendment.

They locked the gates of the Supreme Court Bar Association building and held a rally in front of the office.

Life in Dhaka, specially students' education, was disrupted because of the hartal as parents did not send their children to schools and colleges fearing for their safety.

Day labourers and many other low-income groups found it hard to earn their livelihood.

Road communications between Dhaka and the rest of the country were cut off as no long-distance vehicles hit the roads yesterday. However, train communications were as usual, said officials of Kamalapur Railway Station.

In Chittagong city, police baton charged pickets when they tried to put barricades on the road in front of Nasimon Bhaban.

BNP-Jamaat men blocked the Chandpur-Comilla highway for several hours by laying logs at Kumardugi.

Law enforcers detained over 50 BNP and 25 Jamaat activists in different parts of the country for their suspicious movement or involvement in subversive activities or attack on police, reports our Chittagong, Chandpur, Jhenidahr, Satkhira and Gazipur correspondents.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at a post-hartal press conference at the party's Naya Paltan office said 283 party men were detained during the hartal hours while some 32 others injured in police attacks across the country.

Deals signed to build mega power plant

FROM PAGE 1

time after 2019.

Of the two MoUs, one is government-to-government deal and the other is public-private agreement.

Nasrul Hamid, Bangladesh state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, and Samy Vellu, Malaysian prime minister's special envoy on infrastructure to India and South Asia, inked the government to government MoU at Sonargaon Hotel in the capital.

The other MoU was signed at the same venue between Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) and a consortium of Malaysian power companies -- Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) and Powertek Energy Berhad.

Officials present at the ceremony didn't mention the cost of the project, but Bernama, the state-run Malaysian news agency, said it could be about \$1.85 billion.

BPDB, TNB and Powertek will provide 20 to 30 percent of the project cost, while the rest will come from

bidders.

The plant will be a fifty-fifty joint venture between TNB-Powertek and BPDB.

Under the agreement, a joint venture company will be formed by BPDB and TNB-Powertek consortium.

Vellu said the MoU is valid for two years unless extended by mutual agreement or when the parties sign a definitive joint venture or shareholder agreement concerning project development.

"With this MoU, the parties will jointly conduct a project feasibility study and come up with a proper project development programme," he said after the signing ceremony, according to Bernama.

If the parties decide to go ahead with the project after the completion of feasibility study, they will form a joint venture company and conduct international tender to appoint the engineering procurement and commission (EPC) contractor for the pro-

ject.

The TNB-Powertek consortium would provide technical leadership and coordinate the feasibility study of the project while BPDB would provide land for the project, he said.

The project would be developed on a non-recourse financing basis and the JV company would sign a long-term power purchase agreement with BPDB as the sole off-taker of power from the project, Vellu said.

On the project's timeline, he said the feasibility study is likely to be conducted in six to nine months. It would take three to six months to float tender for the EPC contract and nine to 12 months to complete project documentation on financing.

It will require four years to complete the construction work, he added.

The plant will consume 11,000 tonnes of coal a day, and the coal might be sourced from Indonesia, South Africa, Australia and Mozambique.

Driven by strong economic growth, Bangladesh's power demand is growing sharply and is expected to rise further, prompting the government to diversify electricity generation.

The government plans to produce 40,000MW of electricity by 2030, half of which will be generated from coal.

The government has already signed a number of deals with India and Japan to set up coal-based power plants in the country.

According to the government's plan, Maheshkhali Island is set to become the country's energy hub. It will have coal-based power plants capable of generating 10,000MW of power, a major liquid natural gas (LNG)-based power plant, and an LNG terminal. The government has acquired 5,000 acres of land for the projects.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said Bangladesh would have to choose

coal to produce electricity, as it is the cheapest source of energy next to gas and is available on the international market.

Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the prime minister, urged all parties involved to expedite the process so that the plant starts operation before the time limit.

Vellu said the agreement would pave the way for meeting Bangladesh's growing energy needs.

The bidder would be selected through an open tender, Power Secretary Monowar Islam told The Daily Star.

Power from this plant might cost between Tk 6 and 7 per kilowatt-hour, almost similar to the power production cost at nearby Matarbari coal-based power plant to be financed by Japan.

The final price will be known after the feasibility study.

BPDB Chairman Abduhu Ruhullah, TNB Vice President Nazri

Shahrudin and Powertek Chief Executive Officer Ong Peng Su signed the other MoU on behalf of their companies.

Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Norlin binti Othman also spoke on the occasion.

TNB is the largest electricity utility company in Malaysia and a leading utility firm in Asia. Though the Malaysian government owns the majority of shares, the rest are publicly traded on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

It serves an estimated 8.3 million customers in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Labuan.

Powertek owns and operates nine power plants, and has investments in power plants across six countries -- Malaysia, Egypt, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates -- with a net generation capacity of 3,981MW, according to the company's website.

Hearing adjourned

FROM PAGE 16

about that case, they failed to give an answer.

The tribunal then adjourned the hearing.

"Please come up with adequate preparations and satisfy us," it observed.

Earlier, Mohammad Ali had claimed they had enough evidence to prove the six charges against the fugitive suspect. During his one-hour submission of the evidence, he described the charges brought against Hassan.

JABBAR'S CASE

A martyr's wife yesterday described how an auxiliary force to the Pakistani occupation army had shot her husband dead under the instruction of war crimes accused Abdul Jabbar in Phuljhuri of Pirojpur district during the Liberation War.

Nurjahan Begum, 70, also the seventh prosecution witness in the case, told the three-member tribunal that Jabbar had ordered Razakars to catch her husband Abdur Razzak Biswas and another freedom fighter Motaleb Sharif dead or alive on May 16, 1971.

Several Razakars had cordoned their house off around 4:00pm that day, she said. "Motaleb Sharif tried to escape but Razakars shot him dead. The Razakars shot below her husband's navel after catching him from another house where he had taken shelter," she said.

Nurjahan had taken shelter at another house with her severely injured husband while Motaleb's body was lying on the ground of his house.

The Razakars set fire to Motaleb's house the next day and his body burned in the fire, she further said.

"I took my husband to the Rayenda village in Bagerhat where he succumbed to his injury three days later. I buried him at our house after another three days," she added.

"Jabbar is responsible for my husband's killing. I want his punishment," Nurjahan said.

Jabbar, a former lawmaker of the Jatiya Party, was the chairman of Mathbaria Peace Committee in Pirojpur in 1971. He faces five charges for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the war.

Graft trial begins in Khaleda's absence

FROM PAGE 1

The trial began in the absence of Khaleda and Tarique. Four other accused were present in the court while three have been absconding since filing of the cases.

The special judge's court-3 opened the trial by recording the deposition of complainant Harun-ur-Rashid, deputy director of ACC, six months after the indictment of the accused in the cases.

The court framed charges on March 19, but could not start the trial as Khaleda filed four petitions with the Supreme Court challenging the appointment of the judge and legality of the indictment.

Her two petitions challenging the appointment of Bashudeb Roy as the judge to hold the trial were rejected conclusively by the Supreme Court recently. Two other petitions of the former premier are still pending with the SC.

Yesterday, the court granted two petitions filed by the defence seeking Khaleda's non-appearance before it for the day on security grounds.

The judge, however, rejected four other petitions submitted to him on

behalf of Khaleda seeking adjournment of the hearing in the cases.

Later, Khaleda's counsels filed two more petitions expressing no-confidence in the judge, but the court kept the prayers in the case files without passing any order on those.

Four counsels of the BNP chief were present at the makeshift court in the capital's Bakshibazar yesterday when pro-BNP lawyers were boycotting courts across the country protesting the 16th constitutional amendment.

Former BNP MP Kazi Saleemul Haque Kamal, businessman Sharfuddin Ahmed and two other accused were present in the court yesterday.

The court fixed October 13 for the next hearing in the two cases and asked Khaleda and four others to appear before it on that day.

Two accused in the Zia orphanage case, Kamaluddin Siddiqui, the then principal secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, and Momenur Rahman, nephew of Zia, are on the run.

An accused in Zia Charitable Trust case, Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to then prime minister Khaleda,

also remains a fugitive.

Senior vice-chairman of BNP, Tarique was accused in the Zia orphanage case. He has been on bail and the court allowed him to represent himself by lawyers.

Khaleda along with several other BNP and Jamaat leaders has also been facing three more graft cases. The trials of the cases were earlier stayed following orders by the Supreme Court.

ZIA ORPHANAGE CASE

The ACC on July 3, 2008 had sued Khaleda, Tarique and four others in the case. The other accused are former BNP lawmaker Kazi Saleemul Haque, businessman Sharfuddin Ahmed, Khaleda's former principal secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and Momenur Rahman.

The case statement said a grant of \$1,255,000 (then around Tk 4.45 crore) was transferred from the United Saudi Commercial Bank to the Prime Minister's Orphanage Fund created by the then premier Khaleda shortly before the money was transferred on June 9, 1991.

It was done as part of a planned embezzlement, and only Khaleda administered the fund, said the com-

plainant.

The ACC pressed charges against the accused on August 5, 2009 as the charges brought against them were primarily proved.

ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST CASE

During the tenure of the four-party alliance government, Khaleda and three others abused power to raise fund for Zia Charitable Trust, according to the ACC that filed the case on August 8, 2011.

The other accused in the case are Harris Chowdhury, Ziaul Islam Munna, assistant private secretary to Harris, and Monirul Islam Khan, APS to Sadeque Hossain Khoka, mayor of the erstwhile Dhaka City Corporation.

The money was collected from different sources by using the influence of the PMO in 2005. An amount of Tk 7.8 crore was deposited in the trust account in a week starting from January 13 that year, complained the ACC.

Khaleda, as the first managing trustee of the charity, opened the account with the PMO branch of Sonali Bank on January 1.

Of the total fund, Tk 6.19 crore came from the BNP and the rest from unknown sources.

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BB asks for account

FROM PAGE 16

A separate letter issued by the BB seeks account information of the following firms: GSA Cargo Ltd (Bangladeshi agent of Ittehad Crystal Cargo), Speed Air Cargo Net Private Ltd (Sri Lankan agent of Ittehad Crystal Cargo), All Port UK, Speed Mark Transportation BD Ltd (Bangladesh agent of Singapore Airlines) and United Aviation Enterprise Ltd (General Sales Agent of Singapore Airlines).

The list was sent by the central bank's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), which deals with money laundering, financing criminal activities and suspicious transactions.

The banks have been asked to send all

past and present information of the individual and the firms. They have also been instructed to provide information of all bank accounts in the name of Stamford University Bangladesh since January 2012.

BB has already asked the banks for account information about 13 people including that of Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad's son Rahgir Al Mahi Ershad and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's son Arafat Rahman Koko.

Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya's son Sajeul Haque Chowdhury (Dipu) was also on the list.

them not to overload their launches. And now, if we put pressure on them for the discount too, it will surely be a burden on them."

Yesterday's meeting also decided no sand-laden watercraft would be allowed in the rivers for the five days ahead of Eid.

Law enforcers would also be deployed to ensure safety of passengers in terminals and to stop extortion on the river routes.

Officials of different government bodies concerned and stakeholders, among others, attended the meeting yesterday.

Owners press

FROM PAGE 16

In yesterday's meeting, the launch owners also demanded they be allowed to carry passengers on the rooftops of the launches during the Eid. However, the BIWTA chairman disapproved it.

In the previous years, the launch owners gave a 10 percent discount to the passengers travelling on the deck during Eids. But they are not making the offer this year.

Defending the launch owners' move, the BIWTA chairman said, "We are pressurising