

# No pension

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Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said briefing newsmen after the meeting.

Regimes of Khandker Mushtaq Ahmed, Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem and Gen Ziaur Rahman were declared illegal and unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in its judgment on the fifth constitutional amendment while Ershad's takeover was declared illegal and unconstitutional by the High Court in its verdict on the seventh constitutional amendment in 2010.

The existing "President's Pension Ordinance of 1979", amended in and effective from 1988, will be replaced by the new law.

The new law, however, would be effective since the birth of the country and the presidents would be entitled to pension and other benefits since 1971 and their nominees or heirs may receive pension money if it was not received before.

Since the military regimes after the assassination of the father of the nation were declared illegal, the ordinances promulgated during those regimes must also be illegal. That's why the HC directed the government to turn those ordinances into laws and this law has been drafted in line with that HC directive, a senior secretary

said seeking anonymity.

There are 172 ordinances, of which 91 were promulgated during the period from Aug 20, 1975 to April 9, 1979 and 81 ordinances from March 24, 1982 to November 10, 1986 under martial regimes.

Replying to a query, Musharraf said former presidents Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, both of whose presidencies were declared illegal in separate High Court rulings, have not received pension as former presidents; they rather receive pension from the defense ministry as former military personnel.

Besides, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has not received any pension as former president of Bangladesh, added the cabinet secretary.

At the meeting, Public Administration Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam proposed that a new law should be enacted to give pension allowances to the members of parliament. The PM, however, did not respond to Ashraf's proposal immediately, cabinet sources told The Daily Star.

The cabinet also approved the draft of the "The Bangladesh Coinage (amendment) Act-2015", according to which the government would issue metal coins and paper notes of five denominations.



Passengers head for their destinations on foot at Kanchpur on Dhaka-Chittagong highway yesterday as owners and drivers of three-wheelers block it protesting a ban on three-wheelers on highways.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Marooned for weeks

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management, land grabbing and unplanned housing were the main reasons behind the waterlogging. "This is a common picture here in the rainy season."

Around 10 lakh people in the area suffer from shortage of pure water and other problems during the rainy season every year, he said.

"Skin disease is common among the residents of the dam area."

Children cannot go to schools as the roads remain under knee-deep water, added Nasir.

Abdul Jobbar, sub-divisional engineer at DND Pump House of Water Development Board, said the dam was built on 7,000 hectares of land under Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra project in 1962-1968 primarily to protect Dhaka and Narayanganj cities from flood and facilitate irrigation in the area.

Later, many houses and other structures were built in an unplanned way, he said.

Jobbar said though 2,000 to 2,500

cusecs of water were needed to be removed per second from the dam in the rainy season, they could drain off 512 cusecs per second by four pumps. "We need 16 more pumps to do the task properly."

Romicha Begum, who has been living in the area for 27 years, said the area got waterlogged since the start of Ramadan, and the situation got worse due to heavy rainfall in the last couple of weeks.

"My husband and I are suffering from fungal infections in feet. My two daughters cannot go to school as we remain stranded inside the dam," she said.

Seeking anonymity, a dweller said the whole area was inundated as all channels to drain away water were blocked by land grabbers.

A middle-aged woman alleged that ahead of every election, local politicians make pledges to solve the problem of waterlogging but never keep

# Mother sees bullet-hit baby

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emotional after seeing their daughter at the NICU.

"This was the first time Nazma got a clear view of her daughter after the birth of the baby at Magura General Hospital on July 23 following a two-hour-long Caesarean section conducted to save the mother and the child," he added.

Doctors kept the mother away from the daughter for health safety of the new born child.

Nazma and her unborn daughter were injured when she was shot in the abdomen during a clash between two Jubo League factions in Magura that left one killed and another injured.

The newborn, whose condition was very critical, was sent to the DMCH on July 26 without her mother. Following doctors' sugges-

tion, Nazma was later taken to the hospital to breastfeed her daughter on Thursday.

Director of DMCH Brigadier General Mizanur Rahman said health of the newborn was improving but still she was not out of danger.

She was taking 10 ml breast-milk every two hours which was initially 2 ml every three hours and her jaundice and edema had declined, he added.

Meanwhile, two more, accused of the Magura shooting, have been arrested in Narayanganj. Six people have so far been arrested in connection with the shooting as of yesterday.

Detective Branch (DB) of Magura police with the assistance of local law enforcers arrested Sagor, 23, and Bappi, 20, at Signboard in Narayanganj yesterday afternoon,

said Imanul Haque, officer-in-charge of DB Magura.

Earlier on Sunday, Rapid Action Battalion-4 arrested Magura district Chhatra League Vice-president Sen Suman at Kalyanpur in the capital and DB police held Nazrul Islam at Sreepur in Magura.

Imanul said Sen Suman, Sagor and Bappi would be taken to Magura.

A Magura court yesterday put two other accused Suman Hossain and Abdus Sobhan, arrested on July 26, on one-day remand.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu has meanwhile visited the mother and the daughter at DMCH and asked journalists to prepare report with caution after being certain if the shooting was an infighting of a political party or a social conflict.

# Climate a 'key challenge' of our time: Obama

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama framed climate change as the toughest and most pressing challenge of our time, as he yesterday unveiled the first ever limits on US power plant emissions.

"No challenge poses a greater threat to our future and future generations than a change in climate," Obama said, warning: "There is such a thing as being too late."

"This is one of those rare issues, because of its magnitude, because of its scope, that if we don't get it right, we may not be able to reverse," he said, at the White House.

"We may not be able to adapt sufficiently."



At least 50 houses on the bank of the Sangu river were eroded till yesterday afternoon. More than 1,000 dwellings on the river bank in Bandarban town are now at the risk of being devoured. The photo was taken at Barisal para in the town yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

TALKS WITH BSF

# BGB to raise Felani murder issue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) is expected to take up the issue of fresh trial for Felani murder at the meeting with the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) that began here yesterday.

Young Felani was shot dead on the border in 2011 allegedly by a BSF trooper. After the fresh trial, a BSF court in Cooch Behar acquitted the accused, triggering outrage in Bangladesh.

This is the first official Bangladesh team to arrive in New Delhi after the implementation of the Land Boundary Agreement under which the two countries exchanged 162 former enclaves.

It is understood that the issues of border management and redrawn maps came up for discussion yesterday. "The emerging border scenario after the LBA was discussed," said a senior BSF official.

BSF has said the two sides are expected to discuss issues related to trans-border crimes including instances of cattle smuggling, illegal movement of

fake Indian currency, activities of Indian insurgent groups based in Bangladesh, Bangladeshi criminals taking shelter in India, prevention of illegal migration, joint efforts for effective implementation of common agenda programmes and host of other confidence-building measures.

Over the next three days, the two sides will also discuss long-term issues related to border management, activities of insurgents and smugglers along the 4,096km border the two neighbours share.

They will sign a joint declaration on Thursday, a day before the Bangladesh delegation returns to Dhaka.

A 22-member BGB delegation arrived in the Indian capital yesterday to join the four-day meeting with the BSF on a host of border issues.

BGB Director General Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed was accorded a guard of honour by BSF before the start of the biannual DG-level talks at the BSF headquarters. BSF DG Devendra K Pathak received the Bangladesh delegation at the Indira Gandhi

# Mr Commission stays untouched

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after they had opened accounts.

BB reports mentioned that the bank board had sanctioned loans before the branches concerned sent the proposals to the head office.

"Nobody dared to reject proposals that involved Panna. In fact, some officials were competing with each other to serve him first," said a senior BASIC bank official on condition of anonymity.

Some BASIC Bank officials said Panna, who owns a computer accessories shop in the capital, maintained a group of customers through some middlemen, took upfront fees, helped them get loans with forged papers and pocketed huge sums.

Many of the clients are now in deep financial crisis, as they have to pay interests on amounts much higher than they had actually got.

"Panna took at least 15-20 percent commission on the loans he had arranged. It went up to 50 percent when he helped customers get inflated loans with fake documents," said another senior BASIC Bank official, who saw the issues closely between

2009 and 2013.

In most cases, he took cash in "consultancy fees" from borrowers, while in some cases he took money in pay orders against his name and his business concern BM Computers Technology.

The Daily Star has obtained some documents on the transactions made through the BASIC Bank's Gulshan and Shantinagar branches between January 1, 2011, and November 18, 2012.

In December 2013, Amin lodged complaints with chairmen of the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Board of Revenue, the governor of Bangladesh Bank, ex-chairman of BASIC Bank and BASIC Bank branch manager concerned, seeking remedy for fraud. But the authorities are yet to take any step in this regard.

In his letter of complaint, AVIATE owner Nurul Amin said, "When I requested Panna to return my money [Tk 4.8 crore], he said it was given to the bank chairman [his brother Bacchu]. It wasn't possible for him to return the money."

"Do whatever you want. Nothing

will happen to me," Amin quoted Panna as saying.

AVIATE was not the only firm conned by Panna.

He also promised Aristocrat Agro Ltd loans of Tk 40 crore to help it set up an automatic rice mill in Rangpur.

The firm gave Panna "consultancy fees" of Tk 10 crore, but it got Tk 38 crore in loans from BASIC Bank's Karwan Bazar branch.

On paying Panna for arranging loans, one of the firm owners said, "This was the usual way of getting loans from BASIC Bank." The firm spent Tk 92 crore on the factory, but it is now struggling to run it for lack of working capital.

Panna also had BASIC Bank's Shantinagar branch approved Tk 30-crore loans for BD Pipes and Power Ltd. The company gave Panna and his computer firm Tk 4.4 crore in 12 pay orders between 2011 and 2012. Of the amount, Tk 50 lakh was paid in two pay orders against his name.

He also took more than Tk 3 crore in six pay orders from Akhwan Trade International that got Tk 8.5 crore in loans. One of the Akhwan owners said,

"We are in serious trouble. Panna took a huge amount of money, but he didn't keep his promise to arrange further loans for our company."

Panna also took Tk 10 crore from Jamuna Agro Chemical after arranging a loan of Tk 47 crore for it.

He also pocketed crores of taka from several clients whom he helped get loans from BASIC bank's Gulshan branch between 2011 and 2012.

He took "consultancy fees" of Tk 60 lakh in two pay orders from B/S Trading in January 2012 for arranging loans. The firm also gave Panna's BM Computers Tk 45 lakh in pay orders in April that year.

In June 2012, Panna took Tk 1.5 crore from Angel Agro Feed Ltd in two pay orders for helping it get loans.

"He [Panna] has put us in deep trouble. We are yet to recover from it," said one of the owners of Angel Agro Feed Ltd.

The Daily Star repeatedly tried to reach Panna and Bacchu on their cell phones, but found those switched off. Later, this correspondent went to Panna's BM Computers office at Nahar Plaza opposite Eastern Plaza on

Sonargaon Road.

"He [Panna] has not come here after the media reports on BASIC Bank scams," said a senior employee there, on condition of anonymity.

In several inspection reports, the BB mentioned Bacchu's involvement in the loan scams.

In July last year, Bacchu resigned from the bank on Bangladesh Bank's advice.

The central bank then sent the scam case to the ACC for further investigation.

In June this year, Finance Minister AMA Muhith raised the BASIC bank issue in the budget session of parliament.

After a meeting with BASIC Bank officials early this month, the minister told journalists that the loan scam was no less than robbery.

"Massive embezzlement took place in BASIC Bank. Its former chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu was behind it."

Muhith further said there was ample evidence of Bacchu's wrongdoing, and it would be easy to take action against him.

# KIBRIA MURDER CASE BNP leader Gaus denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summarily rejected a bail petition of Golam Kibria Gaus, a BNP leader and Habiganj municipality mayor, in the case filed for the murder of former finance minister SAMS Kibria.

The court passed the rejection order on the ground that a Speedy Trial Tribunal of Sylhet has been running trial proceedings of the case and it might be finished soon, M Masud Rana, a lawyer for Gaus, told The Daily Star.

The lawyer said his client will decide on moving an appeal before the Supreme Court against the HC order after obtaining the copy of full order.

Meanwhile, the Speedy Trial Tribunal of Sylhet deferred till August 10 the hearing on charge framing against Lutfozzaman Babar and suspended mayor of Sylhet City Corporation Ariful Haque Chowdhury in the Kibria murder case, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.