



An attendant takes a baby patient back to Central Hospital in the city's Green Road around 3:00pm yesterday, some one and a half hours after a fire broke out at the hospital's basement. Panic-stricken patients and their attendants evacuated the hospital soon after the fire started. Seven firefighting units doused the blaze and no injury was reported. Right, firemen inspect the damage at the basement.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

APPELLATE DIVISION Govt moves to appoint 3 judges

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government has taken an initiative to promote three High Court judges to the Appellate Division, as the apex court has been going through a shortage of judges for more than two years.

"A proposal has been sent to the president for appointing three judges to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, and the appointments will be made after getting approval from the president," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, the minister refused to disclose the names of the judges who will be promoted to the apex court.

Requesting anonymity, a high official of the law ministry told this correspondent that the ministry on February 2 sent a note to the president through the Prime Minister's Office, saying some judges need to be appointed to the Appellate Division, as their posts have remained vacant.

In 2009, the then president Zillur Rahman had raised the number of judges at the Appellate Division from seven to 11 prior to the disposal of some important cases linked with the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the fifth constitutional amendment, among others. But there are now six judges, including the chief justice, at this court, he said citing the note.

The official also said President Md Abdul Hamid may give approval for recruiting the judges for the apex court from the High Court Division after consulting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Law Minister Anisul Huq.

The president's approval may come to the law ministry next week, he added.

Five out of 11 judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court have retired since 2013, but no new appointments have yet been made.

The Supreme Court Bar Association has long been demanding appointment of judges to the vacant posts for quick disposal of pending cases.

According to the SC reports, 13,361 cases were pending with the Appellate Division as of December 31 last year. The number was 15,346 on December 31, 2014.

The Appellate Division settled 9,992 cases last year while 5,911 in 2014, 5,035 in 2013, 2,905 in 2012 and 1,359 in 2011, according to the reports published in January this year and February last year.

The last time the SC saw the new appointments was in March 2013 when four judges were appointed to the Appellate Division from the HC.

10 soldiers feared dead in Himalayan avalanche

AFP, Srinagar

The Indian army said yesterday there was little chance of finding alive any of the 10 soldiers buried in an avalanche at Siachen Glacier in the remote Himalayas, as the rescue effort continued.

The soldiers were on duty at an army post on a glacier at an altitude of 5,900 metres when it was hit by a massive avalanche early Wednesday.

Specialist army and air force teams searched for a second day at the site, near the de facto border with Pakistan.

"It is with deepest regrets that we have to state that chances of finding any survivors are now very remote," General D S Hooda said in a statement.

Stellar growth

FROM PAGE 1

Basu's visit coincided with the prime minister's inauguration of the construction work of Padma bridge for which the WB promised \$1.2 billion in credit but later cancelled it over allegations of corruption conspiracy in the project.

He said it was unimaginable 10 years ago that Bangladesh could undertake a project of this scale. But the country now has the means and capacity to pull off such an ambitious project.

At a programme in the capital on Wednesday, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said poverty rate has fallen sharply in the country, with 130 million of 160 million people now living above the poverty line.

"This was possible because of domestic demand. It has also helped keep the pace of economic growth over six percent despite a tumultuous global scenario," he said.

According to planning ministry data, around 25 million people graduated from the poverty line since 2000.

Rice production has trebled since 1980, from 12.3 million tonnes to 37.6 million tonnes.

The manufacturing sector, led by apparel, has been the single largest contributor to growth, with its share in GDP reaching 17 percent last year from

13 percent in 1981.

In 1972-73, war-torn Bangladesh's export was \$348 million only. In the last fiscal year, it stood at \$31.2 billion.

Exports, which account for around 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product, rose to a record high of \$3.2 billion in a single month in December last year, while other regional economies reported continued decline in exports.

"Over the medium-to-long term, we are bullish on the growth prospects of Bangladesh's industrial and export sectors," Raphael Mok, Asia analyst of BMI Research, a company of credit rating agency Fitch Group.

During the Awami League government's tenure in 1996-2001, the country's foreign reserves fell below \$1 billion. But the country now has more than \$27 billion in reserves, enough to meet its import bills for seven months.

Remittance sent by migrant workers stood at \$15.27 billion last year, which was only \$781.54 million in 1990. Remittance income grew faster after 2008-09 on the back of a significant rise in manpower exports.

According to the government's latest economic census, the number of economic units doubled between 2003 and 2013, thanks to fast expanding non-farm activities across Bangladesh.

Economic units have increased 71

percent since 1986. Though still at a low level, the number of female-headed households increased five times since 2003 to 5.63 lakh in 2013.

Noted economist Wahiduddin Mahmud said it is clear that micro, small and medium enterprises are the main forces of the economy.

Rural families are no longer engaged in farm-based economic activities alone. More non-farm jobs have been created in rural areas compared to urban settings, he said.

Mohammed Farashuddin, former governor of the central bank, said the brighter side of the economy is that rural Bangladesh has healthy growth.

The average income of a village poor is now 10 times higher than that in 1972. "People are working. The country is full of non-farm activities," he said.

Economist Hossain Zillur Rahman said new entrepreneurs are emerging. "Yesterday's full-time workers are opening economic units today. This is one of the pictures showing how the economy is flourishing."

Selim Jahan, director of Human Development Report Office at the United Nations, sees vibrancy and dynamism within the country.

"Everybody is doing something. Somebody is selling fruits, somebody is selling clothes and somebody is doing something else. And that is not

typical of Dhaka, that is typical of other cities as well," said Selim.

As the country moves forward, it needs to focus on both physical and social infrastructure. "By neglecting one, sustainable growth and progress cannot be achieved."

There is a consensus that Bangladesh can do better in terms of economic growth, given its strategic geographic location, vast young population and global connectivity.

To achieve growth rates similar to that of the East Asian stars such as China and South Korea, Bangladesh needs to work on easing the infrastructural and institutional constraints to raise private investment and efficiency of these investments, according to the WB.

Bangladeshis have never given up on their hopes despite a bitter relationship among major political parties, endemic corruption, infrastructure bottlenecks, weak institutions, fragile democracy and global slowdown.

It became evident again in January when an international survey by WIN-Gallup showed that Bangladeshis are the world's most optimistic people about their economic prospects in 2016.

In the survey, 66,040 people were interviewed across 68 countries, and the field work was conducted from September to December last year.

'Raushan and I are perfectly alright'

Says JP chief Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad yesterday claimed that his and his wife Raushan Ershad's relationship was perfectly alright, even though the duo's dispute over appointing GM Quader as the party's co-chairman made the news recently.

"Raushan called me just now [before his speech at a programme] and asked me where I am? I told her that I am attending a reception programme, and then she asked me why I did not bring her here," said Ershad, adding that he told her that he went to the programme rather spontaneously.

The former military dictator, came up with the remarks while speaking at a reception for the newly appointed party co-chairman and secretary general arranged by Jatiya Party's Dhaka City North unit at a city hotel.

Ershad made the comment when the party had been apparently divided over Ershad appointing Quader, also Ershad's younger brother, as its co-chairman on January 17.

Later, the then JP secretary general Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu announced that Raushan, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, was the acting chairman of the party.

Ershad then removed Bablu and replaced him with Ruhul Amin Howlader as the JP secretary general.

In the programme yesterday, Ershad said he had nothing to worry about as he had appointed his brother as his successor.

"I had been carrying a burden for so many days. I had no peace of mind, and smile on my face. I used to be worried over what would be the fate of my child [JP] in my absence," he said.

Ershad urged his party men to get ready to move the party ahead with renewed vigor under the new leadership. "You've been loyal to me. Now you'll also carry out my brother's orders," he said.

Silver jubilee

FROM PAGE 1

President Md Abdul Hamid will inaugurate the celebration programmes as chief guest in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium this morning.

Marking the newspaper's silver jubilee celebrations, there will also be a gala civic reception, followed by dinner, in the evening at the International Convention City Bashundhara.

In the opening session, 24 scholars and one institution will be honoured for their substantial contribution to nation-building. Nineteen visiting editors of some of South and Southeast Asia's most popular newspapers will also grace the morning session.

The Daily Star Publisher and Editor Mahfuz Anam will give a welcome speech while Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Limited, the owning company of The Daily Star, will give a vote of thanks to all the guests.

Nobel laureate and micro-credit pioneer Prof Muhammad Yunus will deliver the silver jubilee lecture at the evening function.

Dignitaries from home and abroad, political leaders, high government and non-government officials, members of diplomatic missions, academics, intellectuals, business leaders, artists, litterateurs, journalists and The Daily Star's well wishers representing different segments of the society are expected to attend the reception.

Tea seller dies of burns

FROM PAGE 1

Ninety percent of his body was burnt as he fell on a kerosene stove after being pushed allegedly by a police informant accompanied by some cops out to pick him up from his roadside tea stall at Gudara Ghat in Mirpur's Shah Ali area around 9:30pm on Wednesday.

He died around 1:30pm yesterday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The victim's wife Lucky Begum said while the police informant, Mohammad Delowar Hossain, was trying to pull Babul out of the tea stall, three to four policemen -- who had come with Delowar in a microbus -- was shoving the 45-year-old tea vendor with batons.

"I was struck in the abdomen with a baton when I tried to save my husband," Lucky said while waiting at Shah Ali Police Station in the early hours of yesterday to register a complaint.

Babul's son Raju alleged that the policemen did not even help him take his critically burnt father to a hospital.

"When I reached the spot, my father was writhing in pain and the policemen were standing idle," Raju told this paper.

"While I was desperately trying to find a way to get him to a hospital, the policemen simply boarded their microbus and left the spot," he added.

Police also purportedly asked the victim's family not to bring any allegation against the cops.

"After I came here [Shah Ali Police Station] to lodge a complaint, they asked me not to tell anyone about anything that goes against police," said



"A citizen has lost his life due to police's illegal activities and arrogance ... A tea seller had to die for failing to pay them ... We don't need such policemen in the country."

RIGHTS BOSS MIZANUR RAHMAN

Lucky Begum.

And eventually, no policeman was accused in the case.

Babul's daughter Rokhsana Akhtar filed the case against seven identified people and two-three unknown drug peddlers of the area for the assault, according to Sub-inspector Md Morsched of the police station.

The named ones are Delowar, and local drug peddlers Paruli, Ayub, Robin, Shankar, Dulal Hawladar and Parvin.

The five cops suspended in connection with the incident are Sub-Inspector (SI) Mominur Rahman, SI Shree Ram Chandra, SI Niazuddin Mollah, Assistant Sub-Inspector Jogendranath and Constable Jashim Uddin of Shah Ali Police Station.

Four of them were withdrawn from duty earlier in the duty.

These policemen were on duty at the police station and in the area where the incident happened, according to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

"They were withdrawn to facilitate fair investigation", said Deputy Commissioner (Media) Maruf Hossain Sorder of the DMP.

The DMP has also formed two committees -- one led by Deputy Commissioner (Discipline) Tutul Chakrabarty and the other by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Mirpur Division) Masud Ahmed -- to probe the incident.

"Investigations are going on and actions will be taken against those responsible based on the report," DMP Deputy Commissioner (Mirpur Division) Kayumuzzaman Khan told The Daily Star.

'AN EXAMPLE OF POLICE'S MORAL BANKRUPTCY'

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman has slammed the policemen involved in the incident for not sending the victim to the hospital immediately after he was burnt.

"They have set a prime example of moral bankruptcy and corruption. The state must ensure justice for this crime," he told the press after visiting Babul's family at the DMCH yesterday.

The NHRC would move the High Court if the policemen involved in the killing were not brought to book, he said.

The audacity of the police had crossed all limits and this should be stopped immediately, the NHRC boss

commented.

"A citizen has lost his life due to police's illegal activities and arrogance ... A tea seller had to die for failing to pay them ... We don't need such policemen in the country"

He urged the home minister to "ensure justice and not let the incident to be misled."

Babul once used to peddle marijuana but had been running the roadside tea-stall for the past few months and living a "clean life", according to his wife Lucky.

She alleged Paruli wanted him back in the business. When Babul refused, Paruli started harassing him using police informant Delowar.

COPS SLAMMED IN JS

A Jatiya Party lawmaker last night demanded in parliament that the home minister make a statement under Section 300 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament on the recent "heinous" incidents involving police.

Referring to the killing of tea vendor Babul, MP Peer Fazlur Rahman sought "exemplary punishment" of the police members involved in the incident.

Lawmakers from both the treasury and the opposition benches welcomed his demand by clapping their hands.

The JP lawmaker also referred to the recent harassments of a Bangladesh Bank official, a Dhaka South City Corporation official and a female private university student by cops.

"Who are these people in the police force? I want to know from the home minister what actions have been taken against those who are committing such heinous acts and tarnishing the image of the force," he said.

ICC scrapping 'Big 3' formula

FROM PAGE 1

as ICC chairman last year.

"I don't agree with the three major countries bullying the ICC," Manohar had said last year.

The ICC said it would seek independent governance by electing a chairman who is not associated with any member board.

"In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest and to follow best practice principles of good governance, the ICC would seek to re-establish, as quickly as possible, the 'independent' position of ICC chairman," ICC said.

That will be done by electing a new chairman in the June 2016 meeting, it said.

"While in the office, the ICC chairman will not be allowed to hold any post with any member board and may be re-elected at the expiry of the term with a maximum limit of three terms."

The ICC said all nominees must be either a past or present ICC Board director and should have the support of at least two Full Member directors.

The permanent positions of "Big Three" in the executive and finance committees are also removed.

"The Board agreed to approve changes to the terms of reference of the Finance & Commercial Affairs Committee and Executive Committee so as to remove the permanent positions for the nominees of India, Australia and England," said the ICC.

Manohar said the ICC was seeking improved governance.

"The decisions taken clearly reflect that we collectively want to improve the governance in a transparent manner, not only of the ICC but also the Member Boards," he said.

"This, in turn, will enhance the image and quality of the sport. No

member of the ICC is bigger than the other."

ICC also announced the constitution of an oversight group to further its fight against corruption in the game, which will also include former Indian great Rahul Dravid.

"The group will meet once a year to review and provide independent input into the strategy adopted by the sport to tackle corruption," the ICC said.

The ICC Board also reinstated Sri Lanka's membership which was suspended after alleged involvement by the government, a breach under ICC's constitution.