

Defence ends cross-examining IO in Khaleda's absence

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Counsel for BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday concluded cross-examining the investigation officer and the last witness of the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case in her absence.

Advocate Abdur Rezak Khan yesterday for the 4th day cross-examined Harunur Rashid, deputy director of the Anti Corruption Commission and also the IO of the case, for over three hours.

The lawyer asked the IO different questions about this investigation into the case.

Khaleda could not appear before the court due to her physical illness, said her another lawyer Sanaullah Miah.

With this, Khaleda had skipped trial proceedings in the case for 18 consecutive dates on different excuses.

She appeared before the court on September 10 last year. Later on September 16 last year, she left for London for treatment and returned on November 21.

Judge Abu Ahmed Jomadar of the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka recorded statement of the witness and fixed February 11 for the next hearing. On that day, lawyers for two other accused will cross-examine the IO.

The court also accepted non-appearance of Khaleda yesterday.

Earlier the court recorded statements of 32 prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case.

The ACC on August 8, 2011 filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station, accusing four persons, including Khaleda, of abusing power to raise fund in the name of Zia Charitable Trust.

Exhibition of diversified jute goods begins today

UNB, Dhaka

A three-day exhibition on jute products will begin at the capital's Drik Gallery today.

Care Bangladesh's Jute Value Chain Project is organising the exhibition -- Switch to Jute-under a project to promote diversification of the jute products.

The project, better known as SWITCH Asia - Jute Value Chain Project, is working from the bottom to top level of the jute value chain where activities start from cultivation and production of jute diversified products and ends with linkage with the export market, according to a press statement.

The overall objective of this project is to contribute to pro-poor economic growth through social business promotion, it said.



Citizen members of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) take an anti-corruption oath, administered by Chairperson Sultana Kamal and Executive Director Md Iftekharuzzaman, inset, during the "Sonak-Yes Jatiyo Sommelen 2016", the eighth national conference of TIB's citizen members, at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Speak up against corruption

TIB citizen group conference urges people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People should get united and speak up against unfair practices and corruption to build a society in line with the core values of independence, a conference of Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB) citizen group was told yesterday.

"People can't do anything alone. When we are united, we can enrich ourselves," said rights activist Sultana Kamal, adding it was the responsibility of every citizen to create and uphold moral and ethical values in society.

She made the remarks at the inaugural session of the "Sonak-Yes Jatiyo Sommelen 2016", the eighth national conference of TIB's citizen members, who work towards good governance in their localities.

Sultana, chairperson of TIB, talked about the lack of accountability existing in the country.

"Murders of children, extrajudicial killings, grabbing of other people's property are going on unabated as the criminals know that they will not be held accountable for these crimes," she said.

Even the organisations, responsible for bringing these criminals to book, do not carry out their duty responsibly and sincerely, she alleged.

About 3,000 members of the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC), Youth Engagement Support (YES), Shojon, and YES Friends, all working for TIB, from all over the country joined the daylong conference at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Noted writer Selina Hossain, also general secretary of the trustee board of TIB, called upon people to create a social movement against corruption in education and health sectors.

She said any blow against the country's culture and tradition includ-

ing the Ekushey book fair should be resisted.

"We must resist together those who are killing our bloggers and daring to attack our writers."

In his welcome speech, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said criticisms from powerful quarters must be considered part of the profession.

"A powerful quarter tried to give us a political stripe recently; we have been even compared to ISIS, but we must ignore these and continue to work towards our goal of fighting corruption," he said.

At an open discussion on the theme of the conference "Jagrotto Bibek, Durjoy Tarunya Durniti Rukhbei" (conscience and the invincible youth will resist corruption), the citizen members said TIB should introduce the "honesty" prize to award less-corrupt individuals and organisations.

25 shops gutted in Narayanganj

BSS, Narayanganj

At least 25 shops were gutted in a devastating fire at Don Chamber furniture market in Narayanganj yesterday morning.

The fire originated from a shop around 6:00am and soon engulfed the other adjacent shops, senior station master of Narayanganj fire service and civil defense Belal Uddin said.

Being informed, five units of fire services from Narayanganj and Hajiganj rushed to the spot and doused the blaze with the help of locals, he added.

The reason behind the fire could not be known immediately.

AHSANULLAH MASTER MURDER CASE HC starts hearing on death reference, pleas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has started hearing on the death reference and appeals in the case filed for assassinating Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master in Tongi on May, 2004.

The bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice Krishna Deb Nath began the hearing on January 21 and continued the proceedings yesterday for third day and fixed February 11 for its resuming, Deputy Attorney General Rona Nahrin told The Daily Star.

DAG Nahrin said she is now reading out the paper book of the case before the HC and will continue doing so for the next few days then the HC will start hearing arguments from the defence counsels.

Led by pro-Jatiya Party Jatiya Chhatra Samaj leader Nurul Islam Dipu, gunmen shot and killed Ahsanullah, also the president of Jatiya Sramik League, and Omar Faruq Ratan, a young man, and wounded 17 others in a staccato burst of fire at a biennial conference of Awami Shechhasebak League in Noagaon near the legislator's house in Tongi.

On April 16, 2005, a Dhaka court gave death sentences to 22 people and life terms to six others for killing Ahsanullah and also similar punishments to the same convicts for gunning down Ratan.

DAG Nahrin said the convicts, who are now behind bars, have filed appeals with the HC at different times seeking acquittal. She could not confirm how many convicted accused are now in jail.

TREE MAN Biopsy samples to be sent to US biologist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suspecting it to be epidermodysplasia veruciformis, DMCH doctors are sending blood, tissue and saliva samples of a man with a rare skin disorder to a US molecular biologist next week for a confirmation before starting the treatment.

Researching on the disease's symptoms for over 20 years, W Martin Cast has asked for samples, Dr Samanta Lal Sen, coordinator, Burn & Plastic Surgery Unit, Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will wait till we are sure of it," he added, rejecting the possibility of Abul Bajandar being sent abroad for treatment. The aim is to regain use of his hands and

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Garbage piles up just in front of Monsurabad Abdul Hakim Government Primary School in Chittagong city. This is a testimony that local residents care little about the environment of the very educational institution where they send their children. The same goes for the city corporation, which is supposed to keep the city clean by improving the waste management system. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH



A truck loaded with oil after it was hit by a train on an unguarded level crossing in Chittagong's Kadamtoli area yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Errant owners of vehicles will be Stopping

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there would be no change in the route. Recently, general students of Dhaka University have protested the running of the 20km route (Uttara to Motijheel) through the campus and demanded its shifting elsewhere.

The Tk 22,000 crore (\$2.5 billion)

ambitious project is aimed at easing traffic congestion in the capital through an improved, faster, comfortable and time-bound public transportation service.

The project officials hope that the rail operation would start partially by the end of 2019. Trains will initially run on the 10km stretch between Uttara and Agargaon.

JP lawmaker, son denied bail

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Hormuj Ali on October 1, 2015 hours after the tribunal issued a warrant for the eight. Mohammad Abdus Sattar, Mohammad Fakruzzaman and Khandakar Golam Rabbani are on the run.

PROBE REPORT

Prosecutor Abul Kalam had sought two months to provide the report and submitted one on the probe's progress.

Of the eight, Rezaul Haque alias Akkas

Moulvi, Yunus Ali, his brother AKM Yusuf Alam and Omar Faruk are now in jail. The rest four, Belayet Hossain, Nasir Uddin, Helal Uddin and Kazi Musfir Rahman alias Chand Kazi, are on the run.

The prosecution says the eight were allegedly involved with the Razakar and Al-Badr Bahini, two auxiliary forces of the Pakistani occupation army, and the case's investigation officer already found their "involvement" in crimes including genocide

Rajuk drive frees more parking

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January 18 in a bid to reclaim designated basement car parking spaces being illegally used for commercial purposes, and dismantle illegal ramps built encroaching upon roads.

The Dhanmondi team resumed its second spell of eviction drive on Wednesday while two other teams are waiting for fresh orders and allocation of police force to resume the drive from February 7.

New Turkish envoy meets FM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Devrim Ozturk paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at the foreign ministry yesterday, said a press release.

During the meeting, they discussed various bilateral issues and stressed for enhancing bilateral trade and investment as there is enormous potentials to expand cooperation between the two countries.

The ambassador said there was a scope for cooperation in tourism and construction sectors where Turkey had vast experience and remarkable success.

Apps developing contest launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to raise awareness among youths and engage them in the movement to prevent violence against women, WE CAN (Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jote) and Daffodil International University (DIU) jointly launched an apps developing competition.

Youth aged 16 to 30 are encouraged to form groups of five to participate in the contest.

They can apply for the WE CAN-Daffodil Apps Fellowship-2016 by registering online at <https://goo.gl/kQKJUI> or <https://www.facebook.com/WECANDIU/?fref=ts>, said WE CAN Media and Information Officer Anee Hamid.

The registration will remain open till Sunday and initially 20 groups will be selected and given training on apps development. Finally eight groups will compete for the top positions in March, she added.

Bangladesh envoy to Thailand meets crown prince

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Saida Muna Tasneem met Thai Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn recently at the Ambara Royal Palace in Bangkok.

The ambassador briefed the prince about Bangladesh's developmental successes and the innovative socio-economic initiatives undertaken by the government under the Vision-2021 towards its graduation to a middle income country.

The prince highly praised Bangladesh's successful hometown models to build natural disaster resilience and assured that Thai Royal family would continue to be patron to Bangladeshi Buddhist monasteries.

Confce on Sustainable Dev begins

BSS, Dhaka

A two-day International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD) began yesterday at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) Auditorium in city's Dhanmondi area.

Organised by Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) at the ULAB, the aim of the conference is to identify and share empirical research findings and/or practical, evidence-based solutions that can support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a press release said.