

ACC files graft case against Khoka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against former mayor of the then Dhaka City Corporation Sadek Hossain Khoka for allocating 138 shops of 10 different markets misusing power.

ACC Deputy Director Mahbubul Alam lodged the case with Shahbagh Police Station after an inquiry.

According to the case statement, 25 percent shops of a market are reserved for freedom fighters, noted personalities and for the physically challenged, but Khoka allocated these arbitrarily to others between 2005 and 2011.

Alam, also plaintiff of the case, stated that the former mayor did this in total misuse of his power.

Meanwhile, the ACC arrested four people from Dinajpur, Barisal and Feni in four separate corruption cases.

A team led by Deputy Director of ACC Abdul Karim arrested owner of Asha Agro Industries Ltd for embezzling about Tk 5 crore of Janata Bank's Dinajpur Branch. The case was lodged against him with Dinajpur Police Station in August 2012.

The ACC arrested former project implementation officer of Monpura of Bhola for pocketing about Tk 1.5 lakh from a project. A case was filed against him with Monpura Police Station in December 2014.

The anti-graft watchdog held two people Belal Hossain and Mir Hossain Bhuiyan for misappropriating about Tk 10 lakh from Sonali Bank's Feni Branch. The case was filed against Belal and Hossain with Feni Model Police Station respectively in 2015 and 2014.

At 103

FROM PAGE 20

grandson Jamal Hussain.

"This is the first time ever that I have voted in, or participated in, the democratic process," said Ali, who was helped by election officials at a polling booth in the district of Cooch Behar.

Last year's pact saw Bangladesh assume sovereignty over 111 Indian enclaves on its side of the border.

India meanwhile took 51 Bangladeshi enclaves on its own side.

Enclaves are small pockets of one country's territory surrounded by the other.

It meant more than 50,000 people who were living in the enclaves could access citizenship benefits such as schools and healthcare that they had lacked since 1947.

"I voted hoping that it would lead to change, some work in our village, in our neighbourhood. Maybe we will get a hospital," said Ali, a former farmer who counts 18 immediate family members.

"All leaders are good. Whoever wins should get work done in our neighbourhood," he added.

The enclaves dated back to ownership arrangements made centuries ago between local princes.

The parcels of land survived partition of the subcontinent in 1947 after British rule and Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence with Pakistan.

The overwhelming majority of people living in Indian enclaves in Bangladesh opted for Bangladeshi citizenship under the deal, rather than resettle across the border in India.

In India, all of those living in the 51 Bangladesh enclaves decided to stay put and take up Indian nationalities.

Counting and results of elections in West Bengal and four other states will be held on May 19.

Rangpur girl

FROM PAGE 20

Mithapukur Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

MA Hamid, registrar of the unit, said right side of her face and right ear were burnt in the attack.

Quoting the victim's family, police said Ritu was studying in her room in Gopinathpur village around 9:30pm and windows of her room were open. The stalkers hurled acid at her through the windows.

Victim's elder brother Rajibul Islam said hearing her sister's screams, they entered her room, rescued Ritu and took her to Mithapukur Upazila Health Complex on that night.

Ritu's mother Lutfun Nessa said some stalkers of Gopinathpur village, including Ashraful Islam, a classmate of her daughter, used to tease Ritu on her way to madrasa.

On Wednesday afternoon, Ashraful also sent an indecent SMS to Ritu's mobile phone, she added.

Lutfun claimed that Ashraful had hurled acid at her daughter and demanded exemplary punishment for Ashraful.

Victim's father Dulu Sarker filed a case with Mithapukur Police Station in this connection.

Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star that police arrested Ashraful at Gopinathpur Bazar yesterday morning.

Ashraful would be interrogated, the police official added.

8 killed as truck

FROM PAGE 20

pointed fingers at reckless driving and plying of unlicensed CNG-run auto-rickshaws on Mymensingh-Netrakona road.

They alleged that law enforcement agencies knew very well about the illegal activity but cared little.

"Hundreds of CNG-run auto-rickshaws have been plying the road for years but there is no control," said Bikash Sarker, secretary of Mymensingh District Transport Owners' Association.

Most of the auto-rickshaws have no documents, he said.

The vehicles are meant as private transport but they ply on the road as public transport without proper documentation, he alleged.

Some 400 auto-rickshaws from different destinations of Netrakona run on Mymensingh-Netrakona road without proper monitoring of the authorities concerned, Bikash said.

Sources preferring not to be named also alleged that there was "nexus" between the auto-rickshaw owners and the traffic police.

"We urged the administration on several occasions to take action against the illegal auto-rickshaws but no action had been taken," said a transport leader.

Shahidul Azam, assistant director of local Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) said auto-rickshaws were not banned on Mymensingh-Netrakona road.

But he admitted that most of the auto-rickshaws were not registered.

The tale of long delay

FROM PAGE 1

Tribunal-1; changes of prosecutors; and the convict's "illness" on the day of verdict delivery, according to two prosecutors and media reports.

The Supreme Court dismissed his petition seeking review of the apex court's order that upheld his death penalty for the crimes he committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Nizami was shown arrested on August 2, 2010, in the war crimes case along with his party colleagues Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Mollah.

As the trial began after their indictment, defence counsels brought an array of time petitions for what the prosecution said was to delay the trial.

Besides, defence counsels remained absent on hartal days citing "security concerns and personal grounds", prompting the tribunal to defer trial proceedings.

The tribunal on several occasion fined defence counsels for not showing up before the court even though it had offered to provide necessary protection for the counsels on hartal days.

Amid the defence failing to show up, the tribunal on November 13, 2013, concluded the case proceedings.

The tribunal, however, allowed the defence to place their closing arguments and the case finally ended on November 20 that year.

The trial suffered another setback when the then chairman of the tribunal Justice ATM Fazle Kabir went on retirement in January, 2014, without delivering the verdict.

Fifty-three days after his retirement, the tribunal was reconstituted on February 23 with a new chairman, Justice M Enayetur Rahim, and the tribunal decided to hear the closing arguments once again.

Big hike in salaries

FROM PAGE 20

The bills also proposed increasing other privileges and allowances for them.

For journey by air, the Speaker shall be provided with annual insurance coverage of Tk 16 lakh instead of the existing Tk 10 lakh at the government's expense.

The deputy speaker, ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers shall be provided with annual insurance coverage of Tk 8 lakh, instead of the existing Tk 5 lakh, for air travel.

The annual discretionary grant for the Speaker shall not exceed Tk 11 lakh, instead of the existing cap of 10 lakh, and for the deputy speaker it would be Tk 10 lakh instead of Tk 8 lakh.

The grant shall not exceed Tk 10 lakh instead of the existing Tk 4 lakh for a minister. For a state minister it is Tk 7.5 lakh instead of Tk 3 lakh and for a deputy minister Tk 5 lakh from the existing Tk 3 lakh, a bill said.

The annual discretionary grant for an MP shall not exceed Tk 5 lakh instead of the existing Tk 3 lakh, said a bill.

The Speaker shall get Tk 13,000 instead of Tk 8,000 as monthly sumptuary allowance, while the deputy speaker shall get Tk 10,000 instead of the current Tk 6,000.

Sumptuary allowance was raised to Tk 10,000 from Tk 6,000 for ministers. It was increased to Tk 7,500 from Tk 4,000 for state ministers and Tk 5,000 from Tk 3,000 for deputy ministers.

"The auto-rickshaw owners run their business from Shambhuganj area, occupying government land that creates regular traffic congestion in the area," said the official.

"We discussed about the illegal running of the CNG's at regional transport committee meetings on various occasions and we will launch mobile court drives against them immediately," the official added.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, traffic inspector of Mymensingh, said, "There were a small number of unregistered CNG-run auto-rickshaws. We conduct drives on regular basis to seize them."

He denied any nexus between traffic police and the CNG-run auto-rickshaw owners.

Soon after the accident yesterday, locals blocked the road for an hour, disrupting traffic. Later, police brought the situation under control.

Kamrul Islam, OC of Mymensingh Police Station, said they sent the bodies for autopsies and seized the truck but the driver, however, fled the scene.

The government in July last year banned CNG-run auto-rickshaws and other slow-moving vehicles on several highways of the country since they pose a risk of accidents on roads where heavy vehicles travel at speed.

Yesterday, three more people were killed and five others were injured on the roads of Sylhet, Mymensingh and Chittagong.

Officials

FROM PAGE 20

Bhuiyan, chairman of Dhaka University's Television and Film Studies department and a member of the committee preparing the draft act, raised the issue of changing the original draft.

He alleged that the ministry officials made the change without informing the committee.

The draft was prepared by the ministry officials. It was then verified with the original one only to learn that the crucial change was made.

Many stakeholders at the meeting said the proposed Broadcasting Commission would not be independent if the licence issuance authority is in the government's hands.

They suggested giving the authority to the commission.

"The prime minister herself said the commission will be independent, but some ministry officials do not want that," a member of the committee told The Daily Star.

Another member said, "We didn't prepare the draft the ministry produced in the meeting for discussion."

The meeting decided that information minister, information secretary and PM's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury would sit soon to resolve the problem.

Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, chief executive officer of Ekushey Television, sought to know how the commission would be independent if it issued licence on government's approval.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar echoed Bulbul's views.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu said the act was being formulated to institutionalise the media.

He said they would discuss the recommendations and proposals that they got from various discussions and also on the website.

No place

FROM PAGE 2

She blasted Khaleda for not appearing before a court in graft cases.

Although the BNP chief addressed a public rally at the city's Suhrawardy Uddyan and held a press conference, she could not appear before the court.

"Khaleda falls ill when a date for holding hearing in the cases comes."

She criticised the BNP and Jatiya Party for patronising the killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Four killers have been living in the US and Pakistan, two in each country. They would be brought back home and executed, the PM said.

Referring to the ongoing war crimes trial, Hasina said Bangladesh was being relived of a curse through holding the trials.

Highlighting various achievements of her government, the leader of the House renewed her pledge to build the country as a middle income nation before 2021.

World running

FROM PAGE 20

"The extent of this crisis all depends on what happens during the upcoming monsoon season. If it goes badly in India and Indonesia and the crops don't get the rain, there could be real trouble ahead."

The monsoon season in India lasts from July to September and supplies up to four-fifths of the country's annual rain.

He continued: "At the moment it looks like the situation won't be as serious as in 2008 but the countries affected must act more rationally this time rather than panicking, and they must learn from the mistakes of the past."

El Nino is a major fluctuation in the Earth's climate system and see changes in the sea-surface temperature of the tropical Pacific Ocean every few years.

During the 2008 crisis in Asia, lower rice output caused by El Nino prompted India to impose a blanket ban on exports and prices hit a record \$1,000 per ton worldwide.

The benchmark price for a ton of rice last month was \$389.50, the strongest since July last year, and rates continue to increase.

Thailand's last major crop haul was around half the peak production from 2013 and output is expected to fall to just 15.8 million tons this year.

Meanwhile, 593,000 acres of paddy fields have been destroyed by recent drought and salination in Vietnam's Mekong Delta region.

The situation has not been helped by the one million wells built in the country since the 1960s, which have worsened the saline problem and contaminated the Vietnamese product.

The Philippines is weighing up whether to import an extra 500,000 tons of rice this year in an effort to boost state reserve stocks in case of a future crisis.

Yemen foes discuss key issues in direct talks: UN

AFP, Kuwait City

Yemen foes yesterday discussed major political and security issues in face-to-face negotiations aimed at bringing an end to 13 months of devastating war, the UN envoy said.

Three joint working groups formed by the United Nations exchanged views on resolving the political and security issues, and the release of prisoners and detainees, said the envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

The teams were formed from members of the warring delegations on Wednesday when direct talks resumed following a three-day interruption after the government delegation walked out in protest against the seizure of an army camp by the rebels.

The talks were entering their third week on Thursday, but there has yet to be a breakthrough with delegations trading accusations of violating the ceasefire that took effect on April 11.

No to Nizami's review

FROM PAGE 1

magistrate in Dhaka. The jail authorities will then ask the condemned war criminal if he would seek presidential clemency within a "reasonable time".

If Nizami, now 73, seeks mercy, his plea would go to the president through the home ministry.

If he refrains from seeking clemency, the jail authorities would take preparations for his execution.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, Law Minister Anisul Huq said the procedures followed in previous cases will be applicable this time as well.

However, it cannot be said for sure how many days it will take to complete all the procedures for the execution.

Jamaat leader Mohammad Kamaruzzaman was executed five days after the dismissal of his review petition while Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed were hanged after three days.

Abdul Quader Mollah was hanged hours after the jail authorities received a short SC order on his review petition.

Jamaat leaders Quader Mollah and Kamaruzzaman, who were executed on December 12, 2013 and April 11 last year respectively, did not seek presidential clemency.

Jamaat leader Mojaheed and BNP's Salauddin were executed on November 22 last year after the president turned down their mercy petitions. However, their families claimed that the duo did not seek mercy.

Nizami was the president of Jamaat's student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha from 1966 to 1969 and April 11 and ex-officio chief of Al-Badr.

He masterminded the formation of the militia that unleashed terror on peace-loving Bangladeshis, killed unarmed civilians, raped women and destroyed properties during the 1971 war.

Towards the end of the war, the Al-Badr Bahini committed "crimes of serious gravity intending to demean the human civilisation", said the Tribunal-1 in its 2014 verdict.

Sensing Pakistan's imminent defeat, the notorious force systematically rounded up, tortured and killed the nation's brightest luminaries to intellectually cripple the soon-to-be independent Bangladesh.

The Jamaat-e-Islami ameer has never repented of the cold-blooded savagery.

Instead of getting punished for the heinous crimes, Nizami was rehabilitated after 1975. He gained immense political clout and even became a minister during the BNP-led government's tenure between 2001 and 2006.

But justice caught up with him in October 2014, when the Tribunal-1 sentenced him to death for the war crimes, and the SC on January 6 this year upheld the death penalty. Nizami filed a petition with the SC, seeking review of his conviction and sentences against him.

The apex court heard Nizami's petition on Monday and fixed yesterday for passing the order.

The four-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha took their seats in the courtroom at 11:31am yesterday amid tight security. Within a minute, the chief justice pronounced "dismissed" and left the courtroom with his colleagues.

Nizami is now in the condemned cell of Kashimpur Central Jail-2. He learned about the ruling from a radio bulletin, reports our Gazipur correspondent. "After hearing the verdict, he seemed restless and worried," Nasir Ahmed, jailer of Kashimpur Jail-2, told The Daily Star.

A few hours after the verdict, Jamaat-e-Islami called a 24-hour countrywide hartal for Sunday for what it said was the government's conspiracy to kill Nizami.

The government has rescheduled the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examina-

Rolling Stones

FROM PAGE 20

himself from Trump, after he had been playing Adele's hit Rolling In The Deep as his "warm-up" music at his rallies.

The singer issued a statement making it clear she had "not given permission for her music to be used for any political campaigning."

Aerosmith have also protested over their music being used in Trump's campaign.

Singer Steven Tyler's lawyers sent a cease-and-desist letter, saying the use of the band's song Dream On "gives a false impression" he endorses Trump's presidential bid.

Tyler, who is a registered Republican, said it was not a "personal" issue but one of permission and copyright.

Prior to that Neil Young demanded that Trump stop using his song Rockin' in the Free World, which the billionaire had used when he announced his candidacy in June last year.

Young demanded that Trump stop using the song and declared his support for Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders.

Michael Stipe from REM issued a strongly worded statement when Trump then used the band's song It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine).

"Do not use our music or my voice for your moronic charade of a campaign," the statement read.

Trump who presented the US Apprentice is now the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, after his last Republican rival John Kasich quit the race on Wednesday.

tions scheduled for Sunday due to the hartal.

Sunday's examinations under the eight general education boards and technical education board will be held on Monday and the tests under madrasa education board on May 22, a top official of Dhaka Education Board told The Daily Star yesterday.

REACTIONS

"We got justice after 45 years of wait. Now we're waiting for his execution," said Johurul Haque, a prosecution witness and also a freedom fighter of Pabna where Nizami committed crimes against humanity in 1971.

Expressing satisfaction over the apex court's decision, Attorney General Mahbubul Alam said, "The nation has been served justice."

After Mojaheed, Nizami would be the second man to walk the gallows for killing the brightest minds of the nation, the attorney general said, adding that it is the government that will fix the execution date.

War crimes tribunal prosecutor Tureen Afroz said, "With today's verdict, a chapter in the trial of the top war criminals of 1971 comes to an end."

She also said, "Truth has been established through the verdict. Now we are waiting for SC's full verdict and Nizami's execution."

Khandker Mahbub Hossain, Nizami's principal lawyer, said his client was tried and sentenced under a law -- International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 -- which was actually meant for trying Pakistani army men who committed crimes in 1971.

The government amended the act with "a specific intention" to try civilians, and his client was tried under the law with "doctored testimonies", he said. "So I have nothing to say about this verdict."

Asked whether Nizami will file a mercy petition, the lawyer said it's the Jamaat leader's personal decision. "I've got nothing to do with this," he told reporters.

The ruling Awami League welcomed the verdict while the BNP kept mum like it did in the past after delivery of judgments in war crimes cases against other Jamaat leaders.

Addressing a press conference at the AL president's Dhanmondi office, HT Imam, prime minister's adviser on political affairs and Awami League Advisory Council member, expressed satisfaction over the verdict.

"People's expectations have been fulfilled through upholding the death sentence of Nizami by the Appellate Division," said HT Imam.

Different socio-political and cultural organisations hailed the verdict and brought out processions in different parts of the country.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International said Bangladeshi authorities should halt the execution of Nizami and impose a moratorium on the death penalty.

"We're dismayed that the Supreme Court has upheld the conviction and death sentence against Motiur Rahman Nizami. The victims of the horrific events of the 1971 Liberation War deserve justice, but the death penalty is not the answer," said Jameen Kaur, Amnesty International's campaigns director for South Asia, in a statement.

"Taking another life will just perpetuate the cycle of violence. We urge the Bangladeshi authorities to halt this execution immediately, and impose a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty with a view to its eventual repeal."