

GRAFT CASE
HC accepts
Khaleda Zia's
bail petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday accepted a bail petition for hearing from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case -- in which she has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by a lower court.

The HC bench of Justice Farid Ahmed and Justice ASM Abdul Mobin, however, did not set any date for hearing the bail petition.

The bench is expected to hold hearing on the bail petition any day this week, Barrister Kayser Kamal, a lawyer for Khaleda, told The Daily Star.

Earlier in the day, Khaleda's lawyers Advocate Zainul Abedin, Barrister AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon and Barrister Kayser Kamal placed the bail petition before the HC bench.

Khaleda on September 3 submitted the petition to the HC seeking bail for the second time in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case, saying that she is seriously ill and is now hospitalised, as she has

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Govt mulling uniform
admission test in all public
universities: Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said she is hopeful that all public universities will introduce a uniform admission test system by next year.

Seven public agricultural universities are going to introduce the uniform admission test this year, which will be held on November 30, she informed the parliament.

"The implementation work for uniform admission system is continuing. We hope that all public universities will introduce the system by 2020," the minister said while replying a starred question of BNP MP Harunur Rashid.

The government has been trying to introduce a uniform admission test for public universities for the last nine years to ease the hassle of admission seekers and their guardians.

The education ministry in 2010 decided on principle to introduce the cluster system, in order to relieve admission seekers and the pressure they face while preparing for separate tests for separate universities.

Officials said that Bangladesh Agricultural University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Sylhet Agricultural University, Khulna Agricultural University, Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, and Patuakhali Science and Technology University will introduce the cluster

admission system this year.

Under the system, admission seekers would be enrolled at public universities based on the merit list prepared from one single test for each discipline.

For example, students interested in engineering and technology would take one uniform test that covers all public universities in this field, while students interested in agriculture would take a separate test for this discipline.

This would relieve admission seekers from the wasted time, extra cost and travels required to take separate admission tests for different public universities. Currently, only medical colleges have a uniform entrance test.

There are 45 public universities in the country.

The other 38 public universities will hold separate admission tests this year, said officials of the education ministry and the University Grants Commission (UGC).

President Abdul Hamid, also chancellor of all public universities, in February last year asked all universities to form a uniform admission system.

However, the decision has not yet been implemented fully.

Education ministry officials said that some public universities have been opposing the idea of the "cluster system" from the beginning, as its implementation would cut the income from sale of admission forms, invigilation and checking answer scripts.

CLIMATE BUDGET

Form joint taskforce to monitor
disbursement: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said a taskforce should be formed to monitor disbursement of the government's climate budget.

The joint monitoring taskforce can be comprised of different ministries, government and non-government organisations, civil society, academics and journalists, they said.

ActionAid Bangladesh and International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) jointly arranged the roundtable on "Bangladesh Climate Budget FY2019-2020: A CSO Analysis and Reflection" at The Daily Star Centre.

For 2019-20 fiscal, the government has allocated Tk 23,748.53 crore as "climate budget" for 25 ministries and divisions, according to a handout provided at the roundtable.

This climate budget is 7.81 percent of total allocation for the ministries and divisions, which received a cumulative allocation of 58.11 percent of the national budget, says the handout, referring to data from the government's "Climate Financing for Sustainable Development: Budget Report 2019-20".

In 2015-16 fiscal, the government allocated Tk 12,163.36 crore as "climate budget", it says.

Addressing the roundtable, ICCCAD Director Saleemul Huq said the taskforce can generate feedback



Discussants at the roundtable held in The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

each year. In doing so, it can play an important role in making future climate budgets more transparent.

It can also help increase the country's capability in understanding climate change and its impacts, he said, adding those who are involved in preparing the government's climate budget need to understand climate change in-depth.

"Not everything is about climate change," he said, adding that sea-level rise and saline intrusion are impacts of climate change.

On the other hand, disasters like

cyclone, flood and drought are natural phenomena but can intensify and occur more frequently due to climate change, he further said.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said besides the government's climate budget, there is a need to know how much the non-government sector spends on climate change-related initiatives each year.

A paper can be produced to this end, she said, moderating the session.

The government's investment on infrastructure development should be

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

PRABIR DAS



LIVELIHOOD ON WHEELS... When you have to support a family of six including four schoolgoing children, a conventional business model may not be enough. That is why Delwar has decided to take his small shoe shop mobile, instead of sitting at one place. He says he earns Tk 600-800 per day, which helps him sustain his family. The photo was taken from New Market area.

2 more die from dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two patients infected with dengue disease died in Dhaka and Khulna yesterday.

Of the deceased, Nasima Akter, 48, a resident of the capital's Shewrapara, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 9:30am.

She was diagnosed with dengue fever five days back and got admitted to the hospital early yesterday, said Dr Nasiruddin, assistant director (admin) of DMCH.

In Khulna, Ashikuzzaman, 37, died at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) around 11:30am.

According to KMCH sources, Ashikuzzaman from Shalika upazila of Magura, was admitted to the hospital around 5am. He had been suffering from dengue for the last couple of days.

Partha Protim Debnath, assistant registrar (medicine) at KMCH, told The Daily Star that Ashikuzzaman died due to dengue shock syndrome.

Atiar Rahman Sheikh, assistant civil surgeon of Khulna, said so far 10 people, including six women, died of dengue in Khulna. Of them, eight died in KMCH.

Around 77 patients infected with the mosquito-borne disease are now undergoing treatment in Khulna district, he added.

The number of dengue cases was 52,636 last month -- the highest in a single month ever. Though 700-900 patients are being admitted every day to different hospitals since last week, the number of patients are going down gradually.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 76,514 people were hospitalised with dengue across the country since the beginning of this year. Of them, 3,226 are now undergoing treatment.

Since January, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) received information about 197 dengue-related deaths. So far, it has reviewed 101 cases and confirmed 60 deaths.

The first outbreak of dengue was in 2000, when 93 people died and 5,551 patients were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka, according to the DGHS.

ANTI-NARCOTICS DRIVES

Home ministry
against inclusion
of Ansar members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday opposed a proposal to include Ansar members in anti-narcotics drives, saying that the force is not a "law enforcement agency".

The ministry came up with the objection at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Home Affairs at parliament complex.

The ministry made the objection through a report as the parliamentary committee in the last meeting on July 27 recommended to include Ansar battalion in the anti-drug operations, said meeting insiders.

At yesterday's meeting, the home ministry also informed the standing committee that they have urged all ministries to make dope test compulsory during the process of recruitment in public service.

It also said a Tk 102 crore project has been taken to formulate rules for making the dope test compulsory.

Among others, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, committee members M Habibar Rahman, Shamsul Alam Dudu, Kujendra Lal Tripura, M Faridul Haque

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Students protest 'illegal
enrolment' of 8 Ducsu,
hall union leaders

DU CORRESPONDENT

A section of Dhaka University (DU) students yesterday protested the "illegal enrolment" of 34 former and incumbent Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders into a specific department of the Faculty of Business Studies.

The protesters, at a human chain, demanded resignation of DU Vice-Chancellor and the concerned faculty dean as they allegedly helped the BCL leaders to get admission into Master of Accountancy in Taxation, a two-year evening masters course under the faculty.

They held a protest rally at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture at DU, following a media report which unveiled that all those BCL leaders got enrolled into the university ahead of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) election without any admission test or viva voce.

Eight of them were elected in Ducsu and hall unions.

Speaking at the human chain, Hasan Al Mamun, convener of Bangladesh Shadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad -- a platform that spearheaded the quota reform protest last year -- said, "Enrolment in DU requires an admission test. But before the Ducsu polls, the VC along with the concerned Dean Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam facilitated the leaders of a particular student body by signing a piece of paper instead of holding admission test."

"What they have done is clearly unethical. We are demanding resignation of both [VC and dean], and re-election to the posts by vacating those where the Chhatra League leaders were earlier elected," Mamun added.

Around 50 students of DU joined to express solidarity with the protesters.

After the announcement of the Ducsu and hall union polls schedule was made on February 11, these former and current leaders of BCL got enrolled under MTM to carry on their studentship; the admission test was held on November 30, 2018, according to the media report.

The two-year programme was launched in mid-2017. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra Union condemned the role of VC and concerned dean and demanded exemplary punishment of the involved.

"We have been saying that those who were elected through vote robbery and rigging cannot be the representatives of students. What can be expected from Ducsu whose seven members do not have studentship? We hope the university authorities will identify the main culprit through proper investigation," read a press statement of Chhatra Union.

Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, also brought out a torch procession demanding dissolution of the "illegal Ducsu".

Installation cost higher as Bangladesh
new in implementing such project

Yeafesh Osman says about Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Science and Technology Affairs Minister Yeafesh Osman yesterday said that the installation cost of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP) is higher compared to that in India, as Bangladesh is new in implementing such project.

He also mentioned a number of reasons behind the high cost of the power plant compared to Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in India.

The minister made the statement while responding to a tabled starred question from BNP MP Rumeen Farhana in the parliament. In her

question, Rumeen said that the capital expenditure of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant is Tk 45,000 crore higher than that of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in India.

Yeafesh said the infrastructural expenditure of nuclear power plant in Bangladesh is higher than that in India as the country is new in setting up nuclear power plant.

"India has been operating and managing nuclear power plants for more than 50 years. As a result, they are self-sufficient in setting up these power plants," he said.

He mentioned that currently 22 nuclear reactors are operating in India.

The minister said that cost of each nuclear power plant depends on project site and location, type of reactor technology, project management approach and contractual obligation, fund and financing scheme of the project, national infrastructure to support nuclear power plant and licensing and legal aspects.

He also said that it was tough to compare a nuclear power plant with another due to differences of above-mentioned matters.

He also mentioned that the soil condition of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project area was made usable for

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Law enforcers have stepped up vigilance at the entry points of the capital, to ensure security ahead of Ashura, to be observed tomorrow. A group of policemen check the bag of a motorcyclist at Gabtoli yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DHAKA TODAY

FESTIVAL
Fuchka Festival - 2019
Organiser: Festivity Events
Venue: Sayeedana Community Center, Dhanmondi
Time: 10am-10pm

Venue: Kala Kendra, Mohammadpur
Time: 7pm-11:30pm

ART EXHIBITION
Orchestration of Colors by Uttam Kumar Basak
Venue: Abinta Gallery of Fine Arts, AJ Heights
Time: 11am-7pm

DEBATE
The Social Norms Theory
Organiser: Department of Media Studies and Journalism, Ulab
Venue: National Art Plaza, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Time: 3:30pm

ART EXHIBITION
Secretive Works of an Outsider by Wazuddin Mamun



Petition challenges
appointments of 70
DAGs, 105 AAGs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, challenging the legality of appointments of 70 deputy attorney generals (DAGs) and 105 assistant attorney generals (AAGs).

The government appointed 70 SC lawyers as new DAGs and 105 as new AAGs on July 21 and July 7 respectively for representing the state in cases before the SC's Appellate and HC divisions.

Yesterday, Advocate Farhad Uddin Ahmed Bhuiyan submitted the petition, saying that few of the DAGs don't have experience in practicing law for at least 10 years and some of the AAGs for at least five years before the Appellate and HC divisions.

According to Bangladesh Law Officers Act, 2001, a lawyer has to have experience of practicing law for at least 10 years before the HC in order to be appointed as a DAG. At the same time, a lawyer has to have experience of practicing law for at least five years before the HC in order to be appointed as an AAG, he told The Daily Star.

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