

## Lawyers face off over court boycott today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawyers are heading for a face-off at the Supreme Court today over a nationwide court boycott that one group is enforcing and another led by several lawyer ministers opposing.

The lawyers under the banner of Six-point Implementation Council called the boycott demanding independence of the judiciary, withdrawal of the rule on compulsory filing of income tax returns and trade licences, transparency in appointment of judges and recruitment of efficient judges, among other issues.

Earlier, the anti-boycott group under the banner of Ainjibi Oikya Parishad, spearheaded by three lawyer ministers, urged all lawyers to resist the boycott. The group

branded the boycotting lawyers as Awami League-aligned and accused them of politicising the Bangladesh Bar Council.

The two opposing stances have touched off tension at the Supreme Court premises over the last two weeks, as both groups have been holding meetings and staging rallies almost every day.

Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda yesterday went to the Supreme Court and held a press conference at the Supreme Court Bar Association hall, urging all to resist the boycott.

"If somebody does not come to court, it's his personal matter. But if anyone tries to bar others from going to court, the lawyers will resist the move," said Huda, also convener of the Ainjibi Oikya Parishad.

Huda said the government backed on its decision on submission of lawyers' income tax returns. "So there is no justification for any boycott. The boycott will only create anarchy in court," he said. He described other demands by the boycotting lawyers as purely political.

Former law minister of Awami League Abdul Matin Khasru last night said Huda's press conference in the Bar hall room was unauthorised. "Since he has become a minister, he no longer holds the voting right at the Bar association. Then what did he do over there?" Khasru asked.

Leaders of the boycotting lawyers yesterday intensified their countrywide campaign to drum up support from the 65 Bar associations.

Convener of the Six-point Implementation Council and Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council Barrister Amir-Ul Islam said, "We will not force anyone to boycott court, but we appeal to their conscience. We received tremendous response from across the country and we believe our programme will be a success."

Most senior and prominent lawyers including Dr Kamal Hossain, Shawkat Ali, Mahbub-e-Alam and Abdul Baset Majumder are supporting the boycott.

By contrast, the Ainjibi Oikya Parishad with lawyers leaning to the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Jatiya Party and Islami Oikya Jote components of the coalition government -- believes most lawyers are against the boycott.

## Talks on TIFA with US official tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Assistant United States Trade Representative Ashley Wills arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day visit to negotiate the proposed Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has decided to start dialogue with the US on TIFA in a bid to enhance bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade and investment.

Commerce ministry officials will meet with Wills tomorrow at the ministry's conference room. Representatives from the foreign ministry will also attend it.

Both the public and private sectors at a recent meeting extended their unqualified support to TIFA, proposed by the US early this year, sources said.

A joint council to look into economic issues would be set up under TIFA if it was signed, sources in the commerce ministry said.

The US has so far signed TIFA with Morocco, South Africa, Ghana, Egypt, Tunisia, Nigeria, West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Algeria, Bahrain, Sri Lanka and recently with Pakistan.

## Private universities Too many students, too few teachers

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

Only a handful of private universities have permanent teaching staff and enough space to ensure adequate educational standards.

There are over 40,000 students in the country's 44 private universities, but less than 1,000 teachers. Dhaka University, the country's biggest public university, has about 1,500 teachers for some 30,000 students.

Few private universities meet the University Grants Commission (UGC) criterion that every faculty should have four permanent members, including a full professor.

Some universities offer six courses at graduate and postgraduate level with only a few faculty members. Others have heads of department but no permanent faculty members. Some operate entirely with part-time teachers

from public universities.

The three main sources of freelance lecturers at private universities are Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Jahangirnagar University.

"It is unwise to expect quality education from hired teachers who deliver lectures at three to four universities every day," one educationalist told The Daily Star. "The practice has been hindering quality of education in both public and private universities."

Critics say that teaching quality in all institutions of higher learning is falling because new talent is discouraged by low salaries and political interference in appointments, and because many teachers spend time earning money as consultants to businesses and NGOs.

Professionals from private companies, such as information technology experts and journalists, are also often hired to run courses.

Hasib Chowdhury of BUET's electrical engineering department is among the critics of staffing policies.

"Private universities are just a place to sell certificates," he said. They had failed to produce research or develop school of thought, he charged.

Lack of permanent teachers has been hindering the private universities from delivering quality education and so supplementing the public universities. Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk admitted while inaugurating the Eastern University recently.

The minister called on the university authorities to appoint permanent faculty members to ensure

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## Cops, JCD men attack BCL workers seeking return to DU campus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police clubbed and activists of ruling BNP's student front stoned Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) demonstrators in an anti-rally resistance that left at least 10 BCL men injured yesterday.

Police and Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists resisted the BCL adherents who were trying to reach the Central Shaheed Minar in the afternoon to hold a scheduled rally for on-campus political activities.

During the one-and-a-half-hour skirmish beginning shortly before 3:00pm, the activists of the BCL, the student chapter of the main opposition party Awami League, damaged at least six cars while escaping police clubbing through Bangabazar area.

About 200 BCL leaders and activists gathered at the High Court Mazar entry to Dhaka University (DU) to reach the Shaheed Minar that was already occupied by about 40 JCD workers since 2:00pm under the banner of Jatiyabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha, the cultural front of the BNP.

The forces of a BCL indefinite strike at DU on Monday scheduled the rally at the Shaheed Minar for a 3:00pm start, demanding access of all progressive organisations for campus-based political activities.

To coincide with the BCL rally, the JCD leaders hurriedly made a decision yesterday noon to hold a programme on the death anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore at the same venue.

Police put up a roadblock at the High Court Mazar entry to the campus at about 3:00pm to resist the BCL move, with JCD workers of Fazul Haq Hall and Shahidullah Hall roaming behind with bamboo sticks in search of their rivals.

The JCD men beat up a group of BCL workers in front of Shishu Academy at about 4:00pm, leaving one injured.

The general secretary of the Badrunnesa College BCL, Mukti, was assaulted by the JCD men near the Shaheed Minar at 6:00pm when she was crossing the area by rickshaw.

Earlier in the day, the JCD men beat up Zahurul Islam Johnny, law

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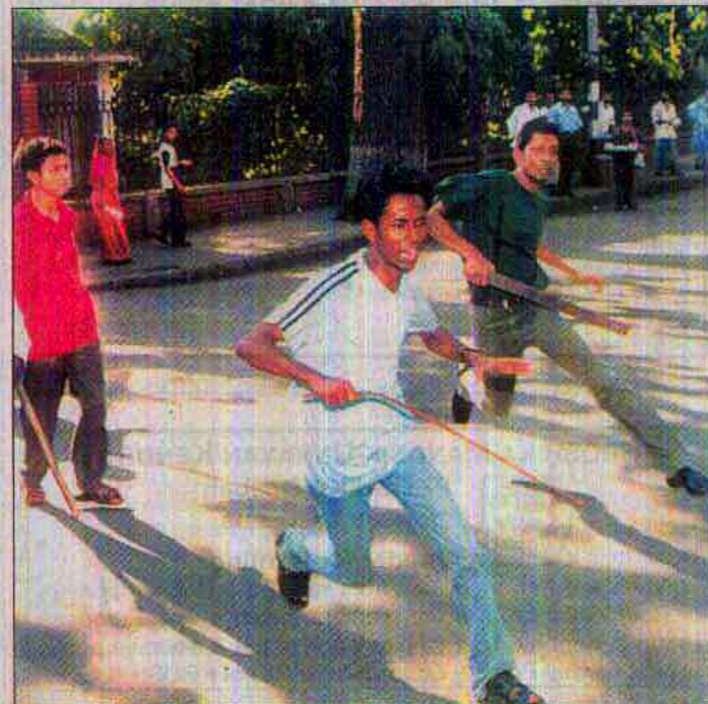


PHOTO: STAR

Riot police resist Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists rallying towards the Central Shaheed Minar from the High Court entry, left. Armed with sticks, Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal workers guard an entry to Dhaka University in police presence, right, and later attack a group of BCL workers, bottom, in front of Shishu Academy.

## Shell's quit spills slick on investment climate

SHARIEF KHAN

NEWS ANALYSIS

Oil giant Shell's withdrawal from Bangladesh would leave a deep stain in the country's international profile. Shell is a major global energy player and its winding up will surely raise serious questions about Bangladesh's ability to attract and keep foreign direct investment (FDI).

When Shell Oil entered Bangladesh through the Second Round Block Bidding in 1997, it did not just bank on a government decision on gas export to see a bigger investment opportunity. It saw an emerging economy with mini-

mum 5 to 6 per cent GDP growth that would be complemented with aggressive expansion of commercial and industrial growth and gas sector infrastructure expansion.

Back then, the energy sector was bustling with hopes. Gas discoveries seemed easy and working in the gas sector attractive. And with the first discovery of gas in 1996 in the Bay of Bengal by British company Cairn within two years of signing a Production Sharing Contract (PSC), Bangladesh became an interna-

tional hype in the oil industry.

And this prediction was reflected in Shell's first independent proposal to the government to invest over \$2 billion in the country's energy sector. Shell made such a huge proposal because a company of its proportion needed to invest in large scale to ensure large returns. Shell officials said this to The Daily Star on many occasions.

Shell's high hopes are also evident in its proposals for the Second Round Block Bidding in which it not only submitted plans for six different blocks, but also qualified in these blocks as the best bidder in the

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## Dhaka agrees peacekeepers to Liberia

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Monday agreed to a UN request for sending peacekeepers to war-torn Liberia.

The dispatch of troops will however await passing of a new resolution in the United Nations Security Council, which is expected to authorise anew the formation of a multinational peacekeeping contingent to stave off fighting between rival Liberian factions.

Although the exact number and composition of forces are being worked out, Bangladesh might send about 800 troops, according to a defence source.

An Inter Services Public Relations spokesperson said any Bangladeshi participation would

require approval from the cabinet too.

A total of 3,802 Bangladeshi troops are already on assignment in 24 countries; 1,276 of them recently moved to Congo.

"Only the foreign ministry is involved in the current negotiation," said a source in the ministry. The Daily Star has learnt that the Armed Forces Division (AFD) is yet to receive any instruction for mobilisation.

Bangladeshi troops earlier participated in a number of missions in Africa, including Sierra Leon, Congo, Western Sahara and Ethiopia-Eritrea.

Dhaka's consent comes hard on the heel of Liberian President

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## Man resembling 'Tokai Sagar' held in Dhamrai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police last night arrested a man suspecting him to be top criminal Anamur Rasul Sagar, notoriously known as 'Tokai Sagar', in Dhamrai bridge in Dhaka.

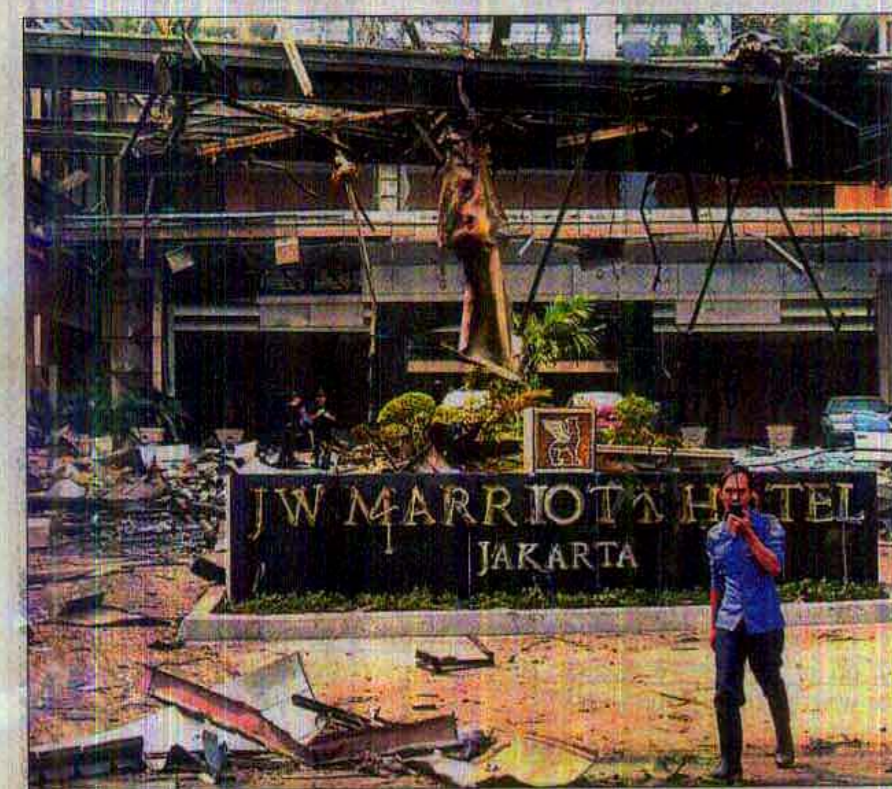
Policemen stationed at the checkpoint near Dhamrai bridge, who were briefed about physical features and movement of the absconding top criminal, arrested the man aged about 40. They also recovered eight bags from him.

Top police officials including Superintendent of Police (SP) of Dhaka Motiur Rahman dashed to Dhamrai to check out identity of the arrestee.

"Police have arrested one man who looks like 'Tokai Sagar', but we are yet to be sure of his identity," the SP told The Daily Star on phone last night.

Son of Abu Bakar Siddiq of Bauria in Sandwip, Chittagong, 'Tokai Sagar' is facing charges in seven

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An Indonesian firefighter walks past the blast-damaged JW Marriott Hotel in Jakarta yesterday. An explosion tearing through the hotel and several surrounding buildings in Jakarta's main business district on Tuesday killed 14 people and wounded nearly 149 in what an official said was a likely suicide attack.

PHOTO: AFP

## Jakarta hotel blast kills 14 Suicide attack suspected

AP, Jakarta

A powerful car bomb exploded outside the Marriott hotel in downtown Jakarta yesterday, killing 14 people and wounding nearly 149 in what an official said was likely a suicide attack. A Dutch citizen was reportedly among the dead and two Americans were believed hurt.

Shattered glass and puddles of blood covered the ground for two blocks around the hotel, located in the business district near many embassies and a popular place for foreigners to stay.

"People were screaming, panicking," said Sodiq, a man who goes by one name who was having lunch on the 27th floor of an adjacent building. "I thought it was an earthquake."

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing. But since last year's bombings in Bali, which killed 202 people, authorities have warned that more attacks were likely in Indonesia - possibly by Jemaah Islamiyah, the Southeast Asian terror group linked to al-Qaeda.

The Indonesian Red Cross put the death toll at 14, adding that 149

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**STANDARD BANK LIMITED**  
122-124, Motijheel C/A, 3rd Floor, Dhaka-1000.

Standard Bank Limited announces with great pleasure that over Tk. 156 Crore have been received against subscription for public issue of shares for Tk. 22.00 crore which was closed on 30th July, 2003.

The Board of Directors and the Management take this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the valued investors for their overwhelming support and confidence reposed on the Company.

The Board of Directors and the Management also gratefully acknowledge the co-operation extended and services rendered by:

Securities & Exchange Commission, Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd., Chittagong Stock Exchange Ltd., Bankers to the issue, Underwriters Register of Joint Stock Companies & Firms.

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