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# The Daily Star

**FOR HOARDING & NEONSIGNS**  
**MODART**  
**PUBLICITY**  
17/6-B, Purana Paltan, Dhaka-1000.  
Tel: 238935, 405898  
12 PAGES: PRICE TAKA 3.00

VOL 1 NO. 196 REGD. NO. DA 781 SHRABAN 24, 1398 BS, DHAKA FRIDAY AUGUST 9, 1991 MOHARRAM 27, 1412 HIJRI

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**ALPB meet tomorrow**

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Awami League Parliamentary Board (ALPB) will be held tomorrow (Saturday) at 10 am at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue's. The members of the body have been asked to attend the meeting.

**Shibir rally today**

Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir will hold an anti-terrorism rally of intellectuals and guardians today at 4 pm at the Dhaka District Kirta Samity auditorium. The rally is part of a fortnight-long anti-terrorism programme Shibir has announced, reports UNB.

It's legally defective, says Deputy Speaker

## Indemnity (Repeal) Bill sent to special body

By Staff Correspondent

The Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill initiated by Mohammad Nasim of Awami League was on Thursday referred to a Special Parliamentary Committee for scrutiny.

The Committee, headed by Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, is to submit its report within a month.

The Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill seeks to undo the Indemnity Ordinance of 1975 which protects killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from trial.

When Mohammad Nasim, who is also the Chief Whip of the Opposition sought leave of the House to introduce the bill, Deputy Speaker Sheikh Ruzzak Ali said the former had already been told that the bill was legally defective.

The Deputy Speaker said if Mohammad Nasim wanted to introduce the bill in its present form, he should propose to refer it to a Select Committee under Rule 246 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament. However, he may also refer the bill to a Special Select Committee under Rule 266 to remove the legal lacunae.

Mohammad Nasim chose the second option and proposed a 15-member Special Committee. Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz supported the proposal. The committee will suggest whether the bill can be introduced in the

House or not. Speaking on the occasion Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz said he had mentioned earlier that the bill was complicated as it had many knots. Earlier the burden of opening the knots was put on him individually. With the formation of the committee his burden would lessen, he said expressing the hope that the complexities could be overcome.

The Law Minister said most of the members of the Special Committee were also in the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitution Amendment Bills which had created an example by presenting an unanimous report. Constitution amendment bills were passed unanimously, he said. The Special Committee, he hoped would be able to simplify the complicated bill.

Mohammad Nasim thanked the Law Minister for supporting his proposal. He expressed his contentment that he got a long-sought-after opportunity to initiate repeal of a black law.

Referring to the unanimous passage of the Constitution Amendment Bills a couple of days ago, he called for upholding the spirit and said, 'We seek justice and protection of law, and we appeal to the nation's conscience.'

Mohammad Nasim said if two political forces could come to an understanding for establishment of parliamentary democracy, 'why shall we not

be able to demand trial of killers of Bangabandhu'. He urged MPs representing all parties and the Prime Minister to create history by deleting the black law.

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz is the chairman of the special parliamentary committee. Other members of the committee are: Dr. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdus Samad Azad, Major General (Retd) Majidul Haq, Sheikh Razzak Ali, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar, Khandakar Delwar Hossain, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Barrister Nazmul Huda, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta, Sudhansu Sekhar Haldar, Mohammad Nasim, Advocate Fazle Rabbi and Sheikh Ansar Ali.

### Hasina's appeal to pass bill

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina congratulated the Speaker, the Leader of the House and all the Members of Parliament for placing the Indemnity (Repeal) Bill in the House.

In a statement Thursday, Sheikh Hasina appealed to all for passing the bill and for creating history like they did in endorsing parliamentary democracy in the country. See Page 12 Col. 8

## Amendment to Constitution needed for repeal of Indemnity Ordinance

By Moinuddin Naser

The Indemnity Ordinance 1975 Repeal Bill notified by the Awami League could not be introduced in the House yesterday due to its legal lacunae.

Parliamentary Secretariat source hinted that it would not be possible to introduce the bill in the current session and it might take a long time to clear it.

The Indemnity Ordinance promulgated on September 26, 1975 gave legal cover to all 'acts and things' done in connection with the change of government on August 15, 1975.

The ordinance was ratified through the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution in 1979 and was made part of the Constitution by incorporating the ordinance in Clause 18 of the Fourth Schedule.

The Special Parliamentary Committee which was formed to scrutinise the bill and was given one month's time to submit a report on how to

correct the bill. But indication is that the time frame may be extended.

Awami League notified the bill as an ordinary bill under the short title 'the act may be called as the Indemnity Ordinance 1975 (Ordinance No. L of 1975) Repeal act 1991.'

But constitutional experts say that the bill should be notified as a Constitution Amendment Bill for further amendment to the Fourth Schedule Clause 18 of the Constitution.

According to the Parliament Secretariat source after submission of the report by the special committee, the bill will have to be reformed accordingly. Then the bill will be sent again to the Private Members Bill Scrutiny Committee for its approval. The Committee, if satisfied with the bill, will send it to the Law Ministry for further approval for its introduction in the Parliament. The whole process will take

a long time and in no way could it be placed before the House during the current session, the sources said.

According to Law Ministry source, the Indemnity Ordinance 1975 which was gazetted on September 26, 1975 was a very complex Ordinance. The Ordinance did not indemnify the jail killing of November 3, 1975, in which four national leaders, Syed Nazrul Islam, Quamruzzaman, Tazuddin Ahmed and Captain Mansur Ali were assassinated.

The Indemnity Ordinance 1975 was the Ordinance No. XIX of 1975, the notification of which was issued on September 26, 1975.

This was an ordinance 'to restrict the taking of any legal or other proceedings in respect of certain acts or things done in connection with or in preparation for or steps necessitating, the historical change and the See Page 12 Col. 7

## Shapour Bakhtiar slain

PARIS, Aug 8: Shapour Bakhtiar, Iran's last Prime Minister before the Islamic Revolution, was assassinated today at his home near Paris, police said, reports Reuter.

They said Bakhtiar, 76, and an aide were stabbed to death. Bakhtiar had been in exile in France since the 1979 revolution. He had escaped an attempt on his life in 1980.

The aide who was killed was not immediately named. Residents said police cordoned off the area around Bakhtiar's home in the suburb of Suresnes.

In the 1980 attempt, a policeman and a neighbour died. A Lebanese, Anis Naccache, was sentenced to prison for life in 1982 for the killing and was released in July

last year. In another Ministry spokesman said it was not yet clear when they were killed.

He said Bakhtiar's son raised the alarm after failing to get a reply on the telephone from his father's home.

The spokesman said Bakhtiar had a permanent escort of four policemen. Further details were not available.

The pardoning of Naccache and four accomplices paved the way for improved Franco-Iranian relations.

Bakhtiar was the fourth in a succession of Prime Ministers appointed by Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in a last desperate bid to save the monarchy.

A former deputy leader of the opposition who studied in

Paris, he was placed in control of a country seething with anti-Shah resentment and support for the revolutionary Islamic leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

But Bakhtiar's liberal Westernism was as unwelcome as the Shah's modern tendencies. He resigned in despair after governing for a stormy five weeks, his compromise policies collapsing as Khomeini swept to power.

Then the former Prime Minister disappeared. He remained in hiding for five-and-a-half months before finally resurfacing in Paris.

An exiled associate of Bakhtiar, Abdel Rahman Boroumand, was stabbed in See Page 12 Col. 7



INSTANT PUNISHMENT FOR BREAKING TRAFFIC RULES: This rickshawpuller was riding his rickshaw on the VIP Road (Old Airport Road), where rickshaws are not allowed to ply. The traffic police on duty near the New Eskaton crossing stopped him and forced him to cross the front-end bars of the rickshaw as a new form of punishment. — Star photo

### Mustafiz leaves for Iran, UAE today

Foreign Minister ASM Mustafiz Rahman leaves here today (Friday) on a four-day official visit to Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), reports UNB.

'Main objective of the visit is to expand bilateral co-operation', said a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

Bangladesh mainly exports manpower, jute goods and tea to the two Gulf countries against import of oil.

About 40,000 Bangladeshis are now working in the UAE and nearly 10,000 including 2,000 doctors in Iran.

Mustafiz, during the trip, will discuss with leaders of the two countries matters relating to employment of more skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshis, the official said.

They will also exchange views on regional and international affairs in the context of the Gulf war and its aftermath. See Page 12 Col. 8

### Shahabuddin's exit may be delayed

By Reazuddin Ahmed

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed is unlikely to return to the Supreme Court as Chief Justice until the third week of October this year.

The Constitution 11th Amendment Act provides that the Acting President will be eligible to resume his duties as Chief Justice after the new President is elected and enters upon his office.

According to Election Commission (EC) sources, the new President will be elected after the referendum required to ratify the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill.

The referendum shall have to be completed by September 25. The Election Commission sources hinted that the EC would try to hold the referendum latest by the middle of September.

The Constitution 12th Amendment Bill states that there shall be a President who

shall be elected by the members of parliament in accordance with law. As per the Amendment Bill there is no specific procedure for holding the presidential election. The original BNP bill proposed the procedure in the fifth schedule of the Constitution which was later dropped due to controversy.

Constitutional experts says, a new law prescribing the election procedure is required. The law can be passed only after the 12th Amendment Bill is validated through a referendum. The law will be passed in the autumn session of the parliament which is likely to be summoned latest by the first week of October. The autumn session will pass the law for presidential election and elect a new President.

The term of the incumbent President expires on October 22 and the new President shall have to enter the office before the expiry of the term.

### CU: Steps to be taken on VC's advice, JS told

Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury Thursday said the government is monitoring the developments in Chittagong University and will take appropriate measures on advice from the Vice-Chancellor, reports UNB.

The assurance from Dr. Chowdhury, who is also in charge of the Education Ministry, came in response to anxious queries from the opposition who said the Vice-Chancellor remained hostage of a section of the armed students for the last three days.

Prof. Chowdhury said the VC was contacted through the Inspector General of Police, but he (VC) suggested not to apply force against his students. The VC will be given all necessary help whenever he asks for it.

The Education Minister denied that all supplies to VC's residence were cut off. The VC is getting everything. Only the telephone has been disconnected by those who kept him confined to his official residence.

He informed the House that all those who had the VC belonged to Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

'I shall certainly resign if the situation demands', the Education Minister said in response to the demand by some opposition members.

The issue was raised in the House by Tofael Ahmed (AL). See Page 12 Col. 7

### Opposition plea to reduce interest on agri loans

By Staff Correspondent

Opposition members of parliament on Thursday made a strong plea for reducing the rate of interest on agricultural loans to seven per cent to help raise agricultural production.

Speaking on a resolution moved by Sharif Uddin Ahmed of AL they said the government should defy recommendations of donor agencies against payment of subsidy to the agriculture sector.

In reply Mujibur Rahman, State minister for Finance requested Sharif Uddin Ahmed to withdraw the resolution which, if implemented, would go against the principles of banking.

Giving of subsidy in the form of reduced interest on loans would be meaningless because the amount to be spent for the purpose would have to be collected by imposing taxes, he said.

A total of 22 opposition members spoke in support to the resolution. Voting on it was not held as the House was adjourned till 11 a.m. on August 11.

Those who spoke in favour of the resolution were: Salahuddin Yusuf, Tofael Ahmed, Asaduzzaman, Azizur Rahman, Principal Nazrul Islam, Sheikh Harunur Rashid, Mustafizur Rahman, Abdus Shahid, Abdul Matin Khasru, Tabibur Rahman Sardar, Rahmat Ali, Khademul Islam, Abul Kalam Azad, and Mosharraf Hossain of Awami League; Matiur Rahman Nazmi and Sheikh Ansar Ali of Jamaat; Kashed Khan Menon of Workers party and Suranjit Sengupta of Ganatantri Party, Abdur Razzak of BKSAL and Abu Lais Mohin Chowdhury of Jatya Party.

### Nepalese held with 25 tolas of gold

By Staff Correspondent

A Nepali national Dig Bahadur Garpuja was arrested with 25 tolas of gold at Zia International Airport on Wednesday midnight, police and customs sources said.

Customs officials recovered the gold worth Taka one lakh 50 thousand from his luggage as he was being checked, the sources said adding he was a passenger of a Kathmandu-bound flight.

Garpuja expressed his ignorance about the prohibition of carrying gold, sources added. Cantonment police took him for two days' remand for interrogation.

Earlier customs officials recovered 31 kg silver worth Taka seven lakh from an incoming passenger of a Middle East flight.

### Uproar disrupts Lok Sabha proceedings

NEW DELHI, Aug 8:

Proceedings of the Indian parliament were disrupted today after MPs from an opposition rightwing Hindu party refused to let debate continue until a federal minister apologised for branding them traitors, reports AFP.

Speaker Shivraj Patil adjourned the legislature's lower house twice as members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) shouted and demonstrated.

Members from the BJP, which has 117 MPs in the 545-seat Lok Sabha or lower house, rose to their feet calling on civil aviation minister Madhavrao Scindia to apologise for calling them traitors.

'Madhavrao apologise,' they chanted as other protesters continued to shout.

Scindia was not present in the house, but the BJP members continued their noisy protest and returned to the lower house when a first adjournment ended after an hour to continue pressing their demands.

On Wednesday they staged a similar walk out from the Lok Sabha where Scindia's ruling Congress (I) Party has 226 MPs.

The federal minister, a former prime, at a recent press conference reportedly accused an unspecified number of BJP MPs of supporting anti-Indian activities in the country.

## British journalist freed in Lebanon after over 5 years

DAMASCUS, Aug 8: British journalist John McCarthy, held hostage in Lebanon since April 1986, was freed Thursday in Beirut and turned over to the British ambassador to Syria, reports AP.

McCarthy, who was whisked from Beirut to Damascus after his release to a UN envoy, choked back emotion as he told a news conference.

'I would like to thank all the people who have done so much on our behalf over the past five years — my family, my friends and colleagues, and all

of those people who supported those campaigns, he said at a brief news conference.

McCarthy, 34, was kidnapped on April 17, 1986, on his way to Beirut airport, after a six-week temporary assignment in the Lebanese capital as a producer for Worldwide Television News.

Thursday marked 1,940 days in captivity for him.

McCarthy was clean-shaven and did not have the gaunt, sickly look of hostages who had been released previously. He beamed at one point as he

talked with reporters. Islamic Jihad, in the statement announcing his release in Beirut, said he was carrying a message for UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

He also hoped for the freedom of the other Western hostages remaining in Lebanon.

'I appeal to all those kind people to keep up their efforts to end the ordeal of my fellow hostages and all those who are held in similar conditions in the region,' McCarthy said.

He said the living conditions of the other hostages are good.

He was flanked by the British Ambassador to Syria, Andrew Fleming Green, and senior Syrian officials.

British Prime Minister John Major welcomed the news. 'I am delighted to see John McCarthy released. We share the joy of his family and friends who have waited for this moment with such courage,' Major said in a statement.

There was no word in the statement about freedom for any other hostage. The release reduced the number of Westerners missing in Lebanon to 12 — six Americans, three Britons, two Germans and an Italian. Most are believed in the hands of pro-Iranian groups.

'I am happy to be able to tell the families of the American hostages Terry Anderson and Tom Sutherland and my fellow Briton Terry Waite that when I left them two days ago they were in good health and good spirits.'

McCarthy said in his one-minute, hand-written statement.

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said Thursday that a second hostage, perhaps an American, might be freed within hours.

Speaking to reporters at the United Nations in New York, the UN chief said: 'I am still hopeful that another hostage will be released today. I hope it will be an American, but I don't know which American.'