

Milon murder trial

I am not eyewitness, says Mostaq

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Mostaq Hossain, plaintiff in Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon murder case, Tuesday said in the court that he was not an eye-witness to the murder and accused six persons of the murder on an information from the others.

Dr Mostaq was giving deposition in the court of M (small Mia, the second additional session judge, Dhaka.

The plaintiff said that he heard the names of the accused persons from Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Abdullahi Kayum Mohsin and the late student leader Mahubb.

The six persons charged with the murder in the first

information report (FIR) with Ramna police station were Sanaul Haque Niru, Golam Faruq Ovi, Sajal, Mirza Mahmud and retired Habikler Alauddin.

Dr Mostaq also said that he lodged the case on the direction from Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, the wife, mother and brother of late Dr Milon. Public Prosecutor (PP) Abdur Razzak Khan took the deposition of the plaintiff while the defence lawyers Strajul Haq, Ramzan Ali, Khorsheed Alam and M. Borhanuddin cross examined Dr Mostaq.

The judge adjourned the court till 11 am on Wednesday.



Libyan Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah (centre) is escorted by security officers to the Supreme Court in Tripoli yesterday to appear for a hearing in connection with the December 1988 bombing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, Scotland that killed 270 people. —AFP photo

Opposition regrets 'failure'

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tating to Golam Azam's formal taking over as chief of Jamaat-e-Islami came up on January 8. The discussion resumed on January 12 when the Home Minister made a statement saying that the citizenship of Golam Azam had not been restored and the government was studying the legal implications on Azam's becoming chief of Jamaat.

On the next day, January 13, the House took up a regular business—discussion on president's address.

The just concluded session has achieved two major goals in consolidating parliamentary democracy—decision to establish a parliament secretariat and amendment to the Rules of Procedure.

The parliament passed twelve bills relating to the repeal of the upazila system, extension of the tenure of four city corporations, the Code of Criminal Procedure, prevention of corruption, Supreme Court judges remuneration and privileges and remuneration and privileges of President, Prime Minister, Ministers, Ministers of State, Deputy Ministers and Members of Parliament.

The Foreign Minister made a statement on the border situation with Myanmar on January 15 and a general discussion on the situation was held on February 3 at the insistence of the Opposition.

The concluding day of the session was not a happy occasion for the Treasury Bench. The introduction of a bill seeking to introduce death sentence for the terrorists failed to receive support of the House and it was referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Parliamentary Affairs.

Reviewing the session Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, the Deputy Leader of the House told The Daily Star that many important jobs have been done. Since the introduction of parliamentary system this session was most significant, he added.

Prof Chowdhury claimed the system was being practised effectively for the first time. This is the teething period and naturally there will be some problems, he added.

Terming the Parliament 'most balanced' Prof Chowdhury said except for very minor lapses the members are responding positively.

Commenting on the role of the Opposition Prof Chowdhury said it was only natural that the Opposition had very specific way of responding. They have the role of criticising which might not be liked by the government. But in this system we expect to achieve understanding through meeting in different committees and in lobbies.

Referring to different crises, Prof Chowdhury said they would meet crisis and whatever were the lapses were because of the fact that we are not accustomed to parliamentary democracy.

Expressing his sentiments, Tofael Ahmed of Awami League said that during the session they had wanted to raise issues of national importance. We tried to identify the problems on a priority basis and had the government been more re-

sponsive we could have solved the problems, he added.

Tofael Ahmed, pointing to future, said, "We should try to identify the problems and it is our joint responsibility". But he alleged there was not enough reciprocity from the government and said "the country belongs to people, not to any party".

Maudud Ahmed, leader of the Jatiya Party, said it was an ordinary session despite many expectations. People want the Parliament to deal with basic issues facing the country and the current session has not done anything in that direction, he added.

Maudud Ahmed further said to make the Parliament effective it would take time and was dependent on the strength of democratic institutions.

He said, there are two principal parties in the house who play dominant role, the ruling party and the major opposition. Despite the democratic institutions "We have to examine whether, despite their weakness, have played their due role," said Maudud.

"If we analyse, they did not play their role," he added.

Maudud said that from the performances he was personally shocked to find that the Opposition could not create a situation where the government could be available full time. Though it is still in embryonic state it could be made more interesting, he commented.

Matiur Rahman Nizami, leader of Jamaat parliamentary party, told The Daily Star that no meaningful business was done during the fourth session. Basic issues were not discussed, he added.

The Leader of the House has a responsibility and it was not felt, he said. Commenting on the role of the Opposition, Nizami said it could not perform the role of constructive and responsible opposition. "We (Opposition) did not show any statesman like behaviour," he added.

Expressing frustration, Suranjit Sen Gupta said that if Parliament was not made effective there would be no benefit in having more sessions in

future.

We have frustrated the people he said, "people thought Parliament will try to solve their day to day problem but that was not done."

A Parliament has a triangular leadership—the Speaker, the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition—and everyone of them must be equally responsible," said the lone MP from Ganatantrik Party. "But in our situation only the Speaker is trying to develop his institution and others are not doing it properly," he commented.

Rashed Kahn Menon MP of Workers Party while evaluating the winter session of Parliament told The Daily Star that the members had started developing a positive tendency of picking up parliamentary norms and behavioural patterns.

On the performance of the members belonging both to the Treasury Bench and the Opposition, he said, "they need to concentrate on home works on different basic issues to make Parliament more effective."

Menon however said that both the Treasury Bench and the Opposition failed to raise fundamental problems affecting the lives of common people and discuss the issues in the winter session of Parliament.

Ershad's money

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The Prevention of Corruption Act for amassing wealth beyond his known source of income. Special divisional Judge Mohammad Ali Khan, while sentencing Ershad in the Special Court, also ordered that Taka 1,90,81,565 and a Toyota Landcruiser jeep found in his (Ershad's) Senabhaban residence, be seized.

Justice Chowdhury also asked the DC, Dhaka, to show cause why pending disposal of the appeal, the appellant (Ershad) should not be enlarged on bail.

Shab-e-Barat

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Shab-e-Barat, the President said the noble teachings of peace and justice of Islam could only establish real peace in the world. He said the teachings of Islam are aimed at the welfare of the individuals as well as the society.

He hoped that the civic life would be inspired towards a noble values of life by the observance of holy night.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia expressed the hope that the spirit of the Shab-e-Barat would help step up efforts to build a happy and prosperous democratic society based on the ideals of Islamic values and way of life.

The Prime Minister conveyed her greetings to the people on the occasion of the "Night of Fortune."

She sought divine blessings for the continued progress and prosperity of the country as well as peace and solidarity of the Islamic Ummah.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in another message has sought divine blessings for establishing rule of law and justice in the country.

She prayed for freeing the nation from the curse of poverty, disease and unemployment and for a happy, prosperous and exploitation-free society.

Hasina also prayed for unity and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah.

Ministers

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Khaleda Zia, who does not draw her salary, will also not receive the enhanced salary and allowances.

Ministers and State Ministers in charge of ministries and divisions attended the meeting.

UNHCR team, govt talk relief to Rohingyas

By Staff Correspondent

The UN delegation for refugees from Myanmar Tuesday discussed with the government a possible modus operandi to launch relief operations in the camps in the country's frontier districts.

Patric de Souza, the official from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) desk in Geneva, told The Daily Star that on Tuesday they held several rounds of talks with different ministries of the government to chalk out a plan for coordinated relief efforts for the thousands of Myanmar citizens who took refuge in Bangladesh.

The meetings, between the UNHCR team and the Home and Foreign Ministries discussed the overall situation prevailing in the refugee shelters in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts, he said.

Tuesday's meeting focused on the role of the UNHCR in providing food, shelter and medicine to the Myanmar citizens who fled in thousands to Bangladesh to escape ill-treatment in their homeland.

The visiting delegation also spoke on the responsibilities of the Bangladesh government and the role of the NGOs in relief efforts, provided they get government permission.

The UNHCR delegation will brief the representatives of the foreign missions in Dhaka today (Wednesday) about the refugee situation and their need, he said.

Dangerous way

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Given the proliferation of armed criminals, the rise in brutal crimes, and the loopholes in our legal system, there can perhaps be made a case for appropriate laws to respond to the current situation. But the question is at what cost. Are we to surrender our right to protest, to hold demonstrations, to strike so that the government can punish criminals?

The bill as proposed gives blanket power to the administration, which will be implemented by the police, by the bureaucrats and by the local administration whose honesty, efficiency and veracity leaves much to be desired.

It is difficult to understand when our people are so committed and united to putting a stop to terrorism, why the government should propose a bill that is so divisive. What reaction did the government expect for such a bill that empowers it to arrest and detain anybody, and that too without bail during the period of investigation and trial?

The timing is even more bewildering. For an important bill such as this, to be introduced just one day before the scheduled adjournment of the house leaving parliament absolutely no chance to examine and discuss it, is the most curious to say the least.

If the government did not want the bill debated now, then why introduce it?

The ruling party would have been well advised to use the time between now and the next session to prepare a consensus text. If some party had not joined the consensus, then that party, not the BNP, would have looked isolated.

Let it be unambiguously stated that as it stands today, the proposed anti-terrorist bill goes against the spirit and practice of the rule of law and as such works against the process of institutionalising democracy that our Prime Minister so often talks about.

The Midnight File

US-Russia summit date not yet fixed

WASHINGTON, Feb 18: The White House said Tuesday that, contrary to a remark by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, no date has been agreed on for the next US-Russia summit meeting later this year. Yeltsin said in Moscow on Monday that he hoped to be able to announce at a July summit that agreement had been reached on further reductions in both sides long range nuclear arsenals, reports AP.

Number of executions in Iran rise by two-thirds

GENEVA, Feb 18: The number of executions in Iran rose by about two-thirds last year as part of a pattern of consistent human rights violations, according to a new UN report. The report by Reynaldo Galindo Pohl said the situation should remain under international scrutiny, even though Iranian officials have indicated they may no longer cooperate in UN investigations, reports AP.

Shaheed Day

From page 1 Col 8

kind of situation which may arise if Section 144 was broken. But most importantly, they said, the government might use any crisis situation arising out of a violation of Section 144 as an excuse to postpone the general elections scheduled for 1993, and thus damage the overall democratic movement.

Two Jubo League leaders, Oli Ahad and Abdul Matin presented the strongest case in favour of breaking Section 144, with qualified support from Toaha.

Toaha, a disciplined member of the Communist Party, had instructions to go along with majority decision at the meeting in order to maintain the unity of APLAC. Ahad, also a CP member, on the other hand, apparently did not have much time for party discipline and forcefully put the case for breaking Section 144.

The government has imposed 144 in order to destroy our pre-announced, peaceful movement. Therefore, a fitting reply has to be given to the government by breaking 144,"

Oli Ahad said, according to Umar, "There is no room for hesitation here. If we cannot resist the government's oppressive attitude now, then we will not be able to raise even the faintest of protest in the future. It is now or never."

Abdul Matin came up with another point which went against the argument put forward by Shamsul Huq. Abul Hashim and others earlier, Matin said:

"There is no alternative to breaking 144. Besides, the university committee is the parent body of the movement, and that body has already decided to break 144. Whatever decision that has to be taken, will be taken at tomorrow's meeting at the university."

Awami League general secretary Shamsul Huq then proposed to cancel Feb. 21's hartal programme and not break 144.

Matin and Ahad objected vociferously, but lost the ensuing vote 11-4, with Golam Mawla and Ibrahim Taha joining the two rebels in voting against the proposal. Toaha abstained.

Not satisfied, Ahad then told the meeting that whatever their decision might have been, Section 144 was going to be broken next morning.

That night, students at university halls, the Medical College, Jagannath College etc decided that they were not going to allow the government's policy of intimidation go unanswared. Section 144 was going to be broken, and the course of history changed in the process.

Writ challenging Presidential Election Act rejected

By Supreme Court Correspondent

The High Court Division of the Supreme Court has rejected three writ petitions challenging the Presidential Election Act 1991 (Act No. 27 of 1991) and the Rules made there under.

The petitions were filed by Abdus Samad Azad, MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, and Maudud Ahmed, M.P. (J.P). The latter filed two petitions.

The single-judge bench comprising Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury endorsed the decisions made earlier by Justice Fazle Hossain, Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman and Justice Habibur Rahman Khan who had rejected the prayers.

The Chief Justice referred the matters to the single bench for hearing and disposal of the same, following a split verdict by a Division Bench.

The petitions were first heard by a vacation bench comprising Justice Habibur Rahman Khan which had rejected the prayers for ad-interim order staying the holding of the election to the office of the President. The judge after hearing the argument for three days in October rejected the prayer for ad-interim stay.

Later the writ petitions challenging the validity of the

Presidential Election Act, 1991 and the Presidential Election Rules, 1991 were heard by the two judge HC Bench comprising Justice Fazle Hossain, Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman and Justice Abdul Hasib.

The bench gave a split judgement on November 25. Justice FHM Habibur Rahman had rejected the petitions while Justice Abdul Hasib issued rule upon the respondents—the Law Secretary and the Chief Election Commissioner.

The judgement delivered by Mr. Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury on Tuesday was not immediately available for reporting.

While talking to this correspondent the counsels for the petitioners stated that the petitions would prefer an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Amirul Islam with Zakir Ahmed, Basat Majumder, Shireen Akhter Chowdhury appeared for Abdus Samad Azad and Maudud Ahmed appeared in person. Aminul Haque, Attorney General with A.F. Hossain, D.A.G. Obaidur Rahman Mustafa, and Hosne Ara Hossain appeared for the State.

While talking to this correspondent the counsels for the petitioners stated that the petitions would prefer an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Terrorism bill

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were deadily opposed to even referring the bill to any committee and pressed for its withdrawal.

They held that the proposed bill would be worse than the Special Powers Act and designed to curb fundamental rights of the people.

State Minister for Law Aminul Haq, who brought the bill, made a passionate appeal to the opposition to consider the bill which was necessary to deal with terrorism under prevailing realities.

He quoted press reports of horrible incidents of gouging of eyes and gruesome murders and the popular demand for checking such terrorist activities with on iron hand. He also pointed to the inadequacies of the existing laws to deal with terrorism which assumed a different dimension now.

The State Minister appreciated the sentiments of the opposition and suggested that the proposed bill be referred to a Special Committee for further examination.

His proposal ensued a legal debate in which more than half a dozen members including Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Chief Whip Khandokar Delwar Hossain, JP leader Maudud Ahmed, Jamaat leader Matiur Rahman Nizami, CPB MP Shamsuddoha, Ganatantrik Party MP Suranjit Sengupta and Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon took part.

They all expressed the view that the bill proposed by the State Minister was unexpected and designed to curb the rights of the people. They suggested that the bill should be withdrawn.

50 killed in Tamil Nadu stampede

NEW DELHI, Feb 18: A balcony of an old hostel collapsed on multitudes of pilgrims and started a stampede Tuesday, killing at least 50 people in a southern town, news reports said, reports AP.

Govt-teachers talks

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Shahidullah, Dr. Aktaruzzaman, Chowdhury Khurshed Alam, Vice-Chairman of Bangladesh Federation of Teachers Association Prof Kazi Farooq Ahmed, General-Secretary of Bangladesh Teachers Association Mrs Hena Das, President and General-Secretary respectively of Bangladesh Assistant Teachers Association Badruddin Howlader and Habibur Rahman, President of Bangladesh Teachers Association Nurullah, President of Jamiatul Mudaresin Maulana Salam Mrida and President of Employees Association Prof Asadul Haq and Joint Secretary of College University Teachers Association Mrs AN Rasheda, among others, attended the meeting.

US aid

From Page 1 Col 4

cially in rural areas. IARC was working for finding out suitable nutrition alternatives from edibles outside the cereal group to augment nutrition value of food.

"We're working on formulation of an integrated food action plan which will upgrade nutrition standard by drawing from non-cereal food items," he said.

Research in these extra areas has so far been carried out with the financial assistance from the US Project Implementation Letter (PIL)-18.

BBS based its findings on expenditure incurred by rural households for food at a decreased rate of 65 per cent of their income, although it said the calorie intake was rising.

"It's a contradiction of terms," said Director of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science (INFS) of Dhaka University Shah Mohammed Keramat Ali.

The institute assessed the food cost of commonman at 86 per cent of his income and also put the calorie intake at a lower rate.

The scientist said money value had decreased about 250 per cent while food price increased not less than 250 per cent in the last 15 years.

He also apprehended that Food for Works Programme under PL-480 aimed at attaining self-sufficiency and poverty alleviation might be at a stake, if the US aid under PL-480 is held up owing to the BBS statistics.

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**DIRECTOR URBAN HEALTH PROGRAMME**

Gonoshasthaya Kendra is introducing an urban development programme consisting of components in women's development, primary health care, health insurance, basic education and child care services for the urban poor in Dhaka. The programme will initially include the setting up of Eleven community based primary health care centres supported by secondary care hospitals well equipped with X-ray, ECG, Ultra Sonography, Endoscopy, bio-chemical, micro-biological and haematological investigation, OT and other facilities; potable water and sanitation services; and transport services with women drivers for school children and women workers.

A Director is required for the Urban Health Programme who will be responsible for the training of paramedics and community volunteers, hospital management in order to ensure quality health care around the clock, supervision of PHC centres, medical audit, coordination with medical consultants and the Women's Programme Director, who has already been appointed, and to participate in the teaching programme of GK's community-based medical college.

Applicants must be non-smoking qualified medical graduates with at least 10 years experience in community health care and prepared to undergo intensive orientation and training at Gonoshasthaya Kendra, Savar for 6 months. Applicants must know or be prepared to learn how to drive a motor cycle. Experience in epidemiology/nutrition/reproductive health care will be considered as additional qualification. Eligible women applicants will be given preference. Salary negotiable.

A hand written application including cv, 3 references and 1 passport size photograph should reach Gonoshasthaya Kendra, P.O. Nayarhat, Dhaka - 1350 by 29th February, 1992. Interviews will be held on 7th March, 1992.