

ATP case against Ershad

Rule issued on govt

A High Court division bench Monday issued rule upon the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka, to show cause as to why the proceedings against Hussain Mohammad Ershad in special case no 33 of 1991 pending before the Special Judge Court, Dhaka should not be quashed, reports BSS.

The bench comprised Justice Anwarul Huq Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Abdul Karim.

The court also issued rule on the petition of former minister Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu in the same case. The court fixed the date for hearing on April 20.

The fact in brief is that a case instituted by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption against former President H M Ershad, former minister Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu and two others alleging that the accused persons acting in collusion with each other purchased the ATP aircraft for Bangladesh Biman from British Aerospace at a price higher than the prevalent market price with intent to make financial gain for themselves or to others and thereby causing a total loss of Tk 22,43,72,559.00 to Bangladesh Biman and the Bangladesh Government.

Moudud Ahmed and Kazi Shahadat Hossain appeared on behalf of the former President H M Ershad.

Rokonuddin Mahmood appeared on behalf of Ziauddin

Ahmed Bablu.

Attorney General Aminul Huq, Deputy Attorney General A F M Shahid and Assistant Attorney General A K M Shamsul Karim appeared for the state.

Another report adds: A High Court division bench Monday issued rule upon the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka, to show cause why the proceedings against Hussain Mohammad Ershad in special case No 2 of 1992 pending before the Special Judge Court, Dhaka should not be quashed.

The court fixed the date for hearing on April 20. The case in brief former President H M Ershad as the President of Bangladesh from the year 1988-90 by way of misusing his power illegally allotted 49 plots to five ministers, 13 government officials and 31 non government persons in the residential areas of Gulshan, Baridhara and Uttara on receiving applications himself and directing the RAJUK to allot such plots.

He has misused the power for his own gain or for the gain of others by violating section 13(A) of the Town Improvement Act 1953.

Moudud Ahmed, Kazi Shahadat Hossain and Shaikh Rezaul Karim appeared for the petitioner.

Deputy Attorney General A F M Shahid appeared for the state.

Pahela Baishakh

From Page 1 Col 8

The trading community will open 'Halkhata' or new ledger books. It will serve clients with sweets. Some of them will also arrange milad mahfil seeking divine blessing for economic prosperity.

The culture-conscious urban populace of the country will wear traditional Bengali attire on the day. People will have good meals on the first day of the new year.

A colourful parade organised by the students of the Institute of Fine Arts will start from the institute premises at about 8 in the morning. The marchers will follow the road near Shahbagh Crossing, Engineers' Institute, High court, the road in front of the Doyel Chattar ending at the institute premises.

The Baishakhi Mela 1399, organised by the Design Centre of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) will begin at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will open the seven-day fair at 4 pm.

Handicrafts and cottage industry products from Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions will be put on display at the Baishakhi fair.

Different traditional amusements like lathikela, gazirgan, baul gan, bhawaya, palki dance and gambhira will be presented on different days during the Baishakhi Mela.

The Design Centre of BSCIC will also present awards to 20 craftsmen adjudged the best skilled for the Bengali year 1398.

The fair will remain open from 3pm till 8pm every day. The Prime Minister will also open a week-long book fair organised by the Jatiya Grantha Kendro beginning from today across the country at the Omani memorial auditorium at 4-30pm.

Seen From The Gallery

From Page 1 Col 4
Hasina could cool down the situation became volatile again.

This time it was on a comment made by Sheikh Ansar Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami. Shahjahan Straj raised a point of order and asked for a ruling from the Speaker.

Shahjahan Straj was joined by others from the Opposition. The Speaker, in a bid to soothe, gave his sermons on democracy but for some moments the spirit of democracy was lost.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury also joined the race to neutralise his rivals by proposing measures to the Speaker. But the Speaker stuck to his point and refused to give a ruling. He remained the members to be careful so that the objective of the general discussion was not frustrated.

The words of the Speaker were not enough. Suranjit

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and BRAC have jointly organised a fortnight long exhibition of 'nakshi kantha', the country's traditional embroidered quilt, to celebrate the Bangla new year.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali will inaugurate the exhibition at the Academy gallery at 9am. Renowned poet of the country Shamsur Rahman will attend the inaugural function as the special guest.

A cultural programme, 'Sambhasan', will be performed at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium the same day.

Bangla Academy will hold a week-long folk festival and book bazaar to mark the day.

Nazrul Academy will hold a cultural soiree at the academy auditorium at 6-30 pm in observance of the Bangla new year.

Rabirang, a renowned cultural organisation, will hold a function to welcome the Pahela Baishakh at 7-30 am at the Suhrawardy Uddyan, opposite the Bangla Academy.

Chander Hat, a national juvenile and youth organisation of the country, will hold a colourful procession beginning from in front of the Jatiya Press Club at 8 am today.

Swarashriti, a cultural organisation, will organise a poetry recital session on the TSC road island of the Dhaka University at 4 pm today.

Anandam Sangeet Academy will hold a cultural session at 4-30 pm at the open-air theatre of the Shishu Academy today.

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel will arrange traditional Bengali food festival at the Bithika restaurant during lunch and dinner time today.

The hotel chefs will prepare a wide range of delicious traditional Bangladesh foods in keeping with the Baishakhi celebrations, a press release of the hotel said.

Sengupta, Sudhangsu Shekhar Halder and A S M Firoz all continued their argument.

The Chief Whip, Khandaker Dewar Hossain also requested the members not to spoil the general discussion. Finally, as Ansar Ali regretted his comment it cooled off.

Again when Mir Shawkat Ali of the BNP took the floor to take part in the discussion points of personal clarification were raised by Shawkat Ali and Akhtaruzzaman Babu of the Awami League. This time it centred around the bone of contention between the BNP and the AL — Who declared independent?

Another 30 minutes were lost in the process. A restive Khandaker Dewar Hossain then stood up to the rescue of visitors, journalists and members. Even with the time limit set by the Speaker to discuss the issue of Golam Azam the House was adjourned again to the dismay of many.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over a cabinet meeting at Bangabhaban yesterday. — PID photo.

JS discussion on Azam continues

From Page 1 Col 4

sion, Sajeda Choudhury of the Awami League (AL) demanded formation of a special tribunal to try Golam Azam.

Saying that a mass upsurge in the country has already begun demanding Azam's trial, the AL General Secretary called upon the Government to pay heed to the matter.

Sajeda Choudhury viewed the democratic government should honour the people's opinion.

About the legitimacy of the public trial, the AL leader asked the chair, "What was the legitimacy of forcing Ershad to resign on the basis of people's verdict reflected through the nine-year-long anti-Ershad movement?"

The Jatiya Sangsad can facilitate the trial of Golam Azam by enacting necessary laws, she opined.

Sajeda quoted from different books to prove Azam's role in genocide, rape and other anti-humanity crimes during the country's War of Liberation.

She justified the Golam Azam issue to be the most biting problem for the nation saying the matter was related to the existence of the nation.

Sajeda conferred her 'heartiest thanks' to Col. (ret'd) Akbar of the Treasury Bench whose anti-Jamaat deliberations was widely supported by the AL MPs on Sunday.

"Wherever they stay, all the freedom fighters are now united on the question of Rajakars, al-Badr and al-Shams who waged genocide in 1971," she remarked.

Shahjahan Straj MP while deliberating on the issue demanded of the Government that 'Golam Azam be hanged for the offence he committed against humanity in 1971' and said 'body of Golam Azam has to be sent to Pakistan for burying it beside Nurul Amin'.

Nurul Amin was the chief minister of erstwhile East Pakistan during the Language Movement of 1952 and he opted for Pakistan during the country's War of Independence in 1971. He died and was buried in Karachi of Pakistan.

Referring to the stance of a section of BNP leaders that deliberation on Golam Azam issue would be subjective Shahjahan Straj said, 'High Court dekhabeen na (don't try to hoodwink us)' adding 'we have given birth to this country through ignoring different judgements of Pakistan High Court and Supreme Court.'

Charged with emotion Straj

said, 'Both the High Court and the Supreme Court of the country will have nothing to do if we, the Parliament Members, take a decision here in the House against Golam Azam.'

Lt General (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali MP of the ruling BNP in his speech said 'as a Sector Commander of the country's Liberation War I feel elated to hear the demand for Golam Azam's trial, even 21 years after the struggle.'

He said that in the long history of the struggle for independence the people of the country had to made the biggest sacrifice in 1971.

He was very critical of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for granting amnesty to those who actively opposed the War of Independence and let the 195 military officials of Pakistani occupation army return home untried.

Mir Shawkat also claimed that no AL leader was available on March 26, 1971 at the Kalurghat Radio Station where late Ziaur Rahman called upon the people to start arms struggle against Pakistan army for the country's independence.

"It was only on 27 March when some AL leaders appeared there and requested Zia to rebroadcast the announcement in the name of Mujib and Zia did not hesitate for a moment to do so for the political impact of the announcement."

Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali and Akhtaruzzaman Babu of AL, however, protested BNP leader's version.

All opposition MPs excepting those belonging to the Jatiya Party and Jamaat stood on their feet when Jamaat leader Sheikh Ansar Ali commented that Golam Azam and others had been stripped of citizenship through an illegal order in 1973.

During his deliberations, Ansar Ali was interrupted by repeated shouts by the AL members.

The Jamaat leader also termed Golam Azam's detention as illegal.

Interrupting Ansar Ali, Shahjahan Straj of the JSD drew the attention of the chair, standing on a point of order, that calling the 1973 ordinance illegal amounted to challenging the country's sovereignty.

Soon after, AL leader Sheikh Selim also stood on a point of order and demanded apology from the Jamaat leader for his comment.

However, Ansar Ali got the floor again after the situation

Mandelas

From Page 1 Col 5

The strong-willed Mrs. Mandela is a leader in her own right, with a following among the more radical elements of the ANC. She has sometimes rebuked the movement's moderate stance and has a reputation for provocative statements.

While Mandela did not give any details on the differences with his wife, the two have clashed publicly on such subjects as the role of women. But the main cause is thought to be incompatibility after he spent 27 year in jail before his release in 1990.

The couple has been married for 34 years. Underlining the political seriousness of the announcement, Mandela was flanked by the two other top ANC leaders, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu.

Looking very tired and under great strain, Mandela said, "My love for her remains undiminished." He refused to answer questions, simply reading a prepared statement. He praised his wife's role in the struggle against apartheid, saying she played a major role. "I hope you appreciate the pain I have experienced," he said before leaving the room.

Mandela referred to his wife throughout as 'Comrade Nomzamo,' one of her given African names.

Earlier Monday, Mrs. Mandela denied accusations from one of her co-defendants that she viciously beat four young men, one of whom was later found dead.

In a statement released by her lawyer, she said the allegations by her former driver, John Morgan, were false.

Speaker

From Page 1 Col 4

does not belittle the prestige of the House.

Once Prof Chowdhury finished his explanation, Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition stood up and tried to define democratic norms. He advised the Speaker to expunge the comment.

The Speaker finally observed that what he had said was provided in the Rules of Procedure.

Sheikh Razaque Ali emphasized the point that the way the Leader of the Opposition stood up was not approved by the Rules of Procedure and that the Parliament must be run by the set rules.

But he added that he wanted to go by rules and what he said was not meant to offend anyone.

Aid plea

From Page 1 Col 3

competition in winning external aid, ERD officials say.

Slow utilisation of aid has also created a negative impact for Bangladesh, said an official who is a member of the Government delegation that leaves Dhaka for Paris in a day or two to attend the Consortium meeting.

Cabinet approves environment policy

The Cabinet has approved the National Environment Policy and the Action Plan for implementation of the policy Monday, says a PID handout.

The approval was given at the regular weekly meeting of the Cabinet held at Bangabhaban yesterday with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Trial body charts wider programme

By Staff Correspondent

'Ektattor Ghatok Dalal Niramul Committee' (or public trial committee) will start its countrywide campaign to gain popular support in favour of the people's court verdict on Golam Azam, committee members said Monday.

The first regional meeting will be held at Rajshahi Thursday and will be followed by one at Joypurhat on Friday, at Mymensingh on April 23 and at Khulna on April 24. Jahanara Imam, convenor of the committee told reporters at a briefing at the JSD (Inu) office.

She said that the committee would announce its next course of action on April 26, the deadline set for the government to execute the public trial verdict.

"We are looking for a result in the Jatiya Sangsad," Imam said refusing to answer any questions of the newsmen.

Kinnock

From Page 1 Col 8

came from behind in opinion polls to win Thursday's national election.

Kinnock's deputy, Roy Hattersley, will also quit, he said.

"I will not be seeking re-election for the leadership of the Labour Party," Kinnock said in a prepared statement read in his office at the House of Commons.

"The action I am taking is an essential act of leadership," he added.

Weatherman

From Page 1 Col 7

Dhaka Meteorological Office told the Daily Star.

"It is neither a meteorological drought, nor a agricultural drought or hydrological or economic drought," the official preferring anonymity said adding that "it is simply a dry spell."

He said that "if rain is well below the normal in a given rainfall season then it can be considered as drought."

In the month of January 36 millimetre (mm) rainfall was recorded over the country which was more than normal.

In February the rainfall was nearly four times higher than normal. A total of 217 mm rainfall was recorded in four divisions in that month.

The official however, said that the fall was very low in March which was only 14.2 mm against 154 mm of the month's normal.

This month (April) normal rainfall expected in the country is 330 mm of which 44 mm were already recorded in Sylhet region in three days.

He said that it is not a agricultural drought too as the Boro crops season is completely dependent on irrigation and not on rainfall.

"When the crops suffer from bad distribution of rain water then we can call it a agricultural drought," he defined.

The weather official, however, admitted that the 'Aus' and 'Aman' sowing season would be delayed because of the current dry spell.

About the sweltering heat he said that "the month of April and May are the hottest months of the year."

"The highest temperature is always recorded in these months," he pointed out adding that "this year also the temperature may rise upto 45 degrees Celsius in April or May in country's northern parts."

The Midnight File

Libya to cut international links for 24 hours

TRIPOLI, Apr 13: Libya vowed to cut itself off from the world for 24 hours on Tuesday as it braced for UN sanctions due to take effect the next day over its alleged links to airline bombings. International communications will be suspended and local and foreign firms will be unable to conduct air, maritime and land traffic from Tuesday midnight (2200 GMT Monday) to Wednesday midnight (2200 GMT Tuesday) on a day of mourning marking a 1986 US air raid on Tripoli and Benghazi. But the measures also come a day before the United Nations is to impose an air traffic and arms embargo on Tripoli, reports AFP.

Princess Anne files for divorce

LONDON, Apr 13: Princess Anne, one of the most popular members of the royal family, filed Monday for divorce from her husband Mark Phillips more than 2 and a half years after they legally separated. Buckingham Palace, which made the announcement, would not comment on whether the 41-year-old daughter of Queen Elizabeth II would remarry. This was entirely a personal and private matter for her, it said, reports AP.

Benazir accuses govt of 'state terror'

KARACHI, Apr 13: Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto accused the government today of "state terror" against political opponents. Bhutto made the charge in a statement after a so-called anti-terrorist court began trying one of her close aides, Salaman Taseer, over an "objectionable" speech made three years ago. "Our partymen are being intimidated through trials in terrorist courts," said Bhutto, who leads the Pakistan People's Party, reports Reuter.

Drought worsens

From Page 1 Col 7

Jamuna Brahmaputra, Teesta, and Dharla have recorded a sharp fall in their water levels in recent weeks.

The subtropical water level has also receded and in some places it has fallen by as much as 10 to 12 feet.

The Agriculture Extension Directorate Monday advised farmers to use the 'deep-set' or the 'double lifting' technique to lift water with shallow tubewells if the underground water level receded.

According to an Agricultural Extension Directorate official, the cost of production for the farmers with standing crops in the fields is also increasing as nearly double the amount of water is being required for irrigation because of the dry spell.

He said that about 3,000 shallow tubewells had to be reset by digging the ground because of the fall in the underground water level in the greater Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Kushtia districts.

Pollination of the boro crop will be hampered during the growing stage. Sowing of aus and jute has totally stopped in the region due to the lack of adequate water, he added. By this time last year about 10 per cent of the crops were already sowed.

The agricultural ministry has asked the extension directorate to ensure water for the IRRI-boro crop under irrigation on an emergency basis.

According to official

sources, some 16 lakh acres of land was targeted to be brought under boro cultivation in the 16 northern districts this season, but the achievement till date stands at about 14.5 lakh acres.

The ongoing fuel crisis has worsened the situation. Consumption for irrigation has increased. An estimated 3.4 crore litres of diesel were consumed in the northern region during the month of March compared to 2.7 crore litres during the same period last year.

Thousands of people in these districts are standing in long queues everyday to procure fuel as farmers scamper to save their field crops.

Farmers in Kurigram and Bogra towns have staged demonstrations demanding fuel to save their standing crops.

Taking advantage of the situation some traders are charging more than double the retail price for diesel and kerosene in the region.

District administration officials said that the shortage of fuel supply is due to the low navigability in the rivers Jamuna and Brahmaputra at the Baghabari and Chilmari depots respectively.

Temporary dislocation of the supply was also caused due to the Eid holidays as most transportation stayed off the roads.

Prices of rice and wheat have recorded a sudden rise in some of the northern districts.

আমাদের গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের জানাই

নব্ব্বের শভেচ্ছা

ইউনাইটেড ইনসিওরেন্স কোম্পানী লিঃ

নির্দিষ্ট নিরাপত্তা

প্রধান কার্যালয় : হাদী ম্যানশন, ২ দিলখুশা বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা ১০০০

শাখা : ঢাকা, মৌলভীবাজার, বংশাল, কাওরান বাজার, সদরঘাট, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, চট্টগ্রাম, খাতুনগঞ্জ, কুমিল্লা, খুলনা, বগুড়া ও রাজশাহী।