

Arguments at Moscow trial

'CP lifted people to victory over fascists'

MOSCOW, July 7: Pro-Communist lawmakers gave a rousing defense of their banned party, telling a court Tuesday that it had defeated the Nazis in World War II and built the Soviet Union into a "great power heard throughout the world, reports AP.

The opening arguments came in a lawsuit by 37 pro-Communist members of Russia's parliament seeking to overturn President Boris Yeltsin's decree that outlawed the Communist Party and nationalized its property.

Yeltsin's lawyers were expected to try to destroy forever the Communist Party. They will argue before Russia's Constitutional Court that Yeltsin acted legally last fall in banning the party, which they accuse of crimes against the people.

Legislator Viktor Zorkaltsev, representing the Communists, told the 13-judge panel that the party "lifted the people to victory over the fascists" in World War II, when more than 20 million Soviets were killed.

"More than 3 million Communists gave their lives in the victory for freedom and independence of the motherland," Zorkaltsev said.

"No one can deny that in the course of just 70 years — 20 of which were spent coping with the destruction from the aggression of world capitalism, our country moved into second place in the world and first place in Europe in industrial production," he said.

The Soviet Union, Zorkaltsev argued, "was a mighty power that achieved great heights in science, culture and education, and the voice of that great power was heard throughout the world."

His arguments were echoed by several other lawmakers who also defended the party before the 13 black-robed judges who sat in front of Russia's white, blue and red flag.

They must rule on the constitutionality of Yeltsin's decree, issued in the aftermath of the August 1991 coup against former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev by hard-liners in the party, armed forces and KGB.

Zorkaltsev contended that Yeltsin, as president, did not have the legal authority to ban the party or nationalize its property, and had usurped legislative and judicial powers.

Yeltsin "created a precedent for expropriating the property of other political parties, farmers, businessmen, commodities exchanges and foreign investors," he said.

Zorkaltsev, the former party boss in the Siberian city of Tomsk, said that although the party had made "mistakes," including Josef Stalin's reign of terror, it had reformed itself and made positive changes in society.

He said the party did not, as a whole, support the coup. "During those August days, I was in the Russian White House and personally know that among its defenders were many Communists," he said.

Much of the morning was spent on procedural issues, including the order in which the judges will hear arguments.

Lawyers for the Communists want Yeltsin, himself a former member of the party's ruling Politburo, to testify. Yeltsin's lawyers said the president doesn't plan to give evidence unless the court orders him to do so.

Yeltsin was not at the hearing. The most prominent figure in the courtroom was Yegor Ligachev, the party's former ideology secretary under Gorbachev.

Asked if he considered it a show trial like those of the Stalin era, Ligachev said outside court that "there are parallels. What was done then was all illegal, and I think what is happening now is all illegal."



Regional Representative of Asia-Pacific region of FAO AZM Obaidullah Khan called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. Story on Page 6 — PID photo

Blasts in AJM area: Cop hurt

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, July 7: A police constable was injured today during indiscriminate bomb blasts in the Adamjee Jute Mills area although the authorities had tightened security deploying paramilitary BDR forces.

Blasts were heard twice from Kadamtali and Shimulpara areas closest to the mills late Monday and early Tuesday, witnesses said adding that at least 50 bombs were blasted.

The injured constable was identified as Tara Mia deployed in the area.

It was not clear who was responsible for the blasts.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Baju area, the centre of rivalry, has remained in the control of the activists of BNP's labour wing since Saturday following a bloody clash. One person was killed and 50 others were injured in Saturday's clash.

Rival leader Siddique Sarder could not return home until Tuesday. But police were guarding his house.

An uneasy calm continues to prevail in the mills area with security personnel reportedly preparing to raid the troubled areas.

UZ abolition thru' Ordinance undemocratic: Ishtiaq

Arguing further in the appeal case against the Upazila Dissolution Ordinance, Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Tuesday said the abolition of the system through an ordinance was not democratic, reports ISS.

Making his submission before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Barrister Ahmed said the step was contradictory to the 12th Amendment of the Constitution.

The hearing of the appeal petition against the verdict of the High Court Division on the promulgation for dissolution of the Upazila Parishad continued Tuesday for the seventh day before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Barrister Ahmed said only a people's representative can propose imposition of taxes. A non-elected person of the local government can not have the right to impose taxes. When a non-elected person of the local government imposes tax, his function becomes unconstitutional, the counsel argued.

Petitioner's counsel Ahmed further said the repeal ordinance promulgated for abolishing the Upazila Parishad, however, allowed the functioning of the upazila to be run by a person who is not elected.

This is a violation of Article 59 and 60 of the Constitution, he held.

The hearing resumes today. Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Barrister Amir-ul Islam and Advocate Zakir Ahmed appeared for the petitioners.

Attorney General Aminul Huq and Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan appeared for the state.

2 killed, 25 hurt as bus turns turtle

COMILLA, July 7: Two people were killed and 25 injured when a bus skidded off the Comilla-Brahmanbaria road and turned turtle on Monday, reports UNB.

The dead, both passengers, were identified as Abu Naser Sarker (30) and Majid Mia (35).

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at Shalchar in Debidwar thana when driver of the Comilla-bound bus lost control.

The injured were given first aid at Debidwar Hospital.

Flood situation in Sylhet remains unchanged

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, July 7: Flood situation in Sylhet has remained steady during the last 24 hours as flood water from the hills of India is flowing in at a declining rate.

River Surma was flowing 51 cm above danger level at Kanaighat while it was flowing only 2 cm above at Sylhet town at 6 pm today.

The rivers of Kushiara and Amalait of Zakiganj are flowing at the danger level.

Meanwhile, erosion caused by the flood has increased at places.

JP

From Page 1 Col 8 He also urged everyone to take lessons from all the wrongs committed by the JP in the past and advised them to move forward. Accusing the BNP, he said that some of the bad things of the past were being repeated.

In reply to Mizan Chowdhury, the Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury said that Mizan's realization today would be welcome if it came nine years ago.

Prof Chowdhury, retorting the accusations of Mizan Chowdhury that JP workers and supporters were being harassed, narrated the story of how he was beaten up by police and other incidents of violence against the Opposition during JP rule.

Prof. Chowdhury said that if the JP had risen above vindictiveness, then Dr. Milton's mother would not have shed tears and Nur Hossain would not have been killed.

Contesting Mizan Chowdhury's comparison of Ershad's present situation with that of Sikh extremist Beant Singh, Prof. Chowdhury said that in the case of Beant Singh the trial was not stayed.

NCL: BB advice

From Page 1 Col 5 NCL showed that there had been a total of 47 loan disbursements from the investment company.

The ministry is also inquiring whether this is the statement of total loans disbursed by NCL.

Sources said the Finance Ministry is also studying the viability of non-banking investment companies in the country. The said the ministry will take decision whether permissions will be given to more such investment companies in the future.

NCL had applied for permission to turn the company into a commercial bank in the first week of May this year. The move came following a scandal that hit NCL and Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI), another investment company now suspended.

Matin: JS

From Page 1 Col 5 are taking necessary preparations for sending them back." Chowdhury told independent member Nurul Islam Moni and Awami League MP Rahmat Ali that the latest figure of the Myanmar Muslim refugees was 2,70,829. The influx has declined to 20 to 25 people a day from 3,000 to 5,000.

The Home Minister didn't agree with Dipankar Talukder (AL) that many refugees had left camps and mingled with the local people in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

In reply to Dr AKM Aszad of Jamaat-e-Islami, Matin Chowdhury said the Bangladesh representative had handed over lists of 20,246 refugees to Myanmar authorities in six meetings so far held between the two countries for repatriation.

The Myanmar representative has given clearance certificates to 9,000 refugees out of the listed figure.

As per the Dhaka-Yangon accord reached during ministerial-level talks here late April, the much-delayed repatriation was to start on May 15.

UP bill

From Page 1 Col 8 running the local level governments by the elected representatives of the people, and proposed bill contradicted the constitutional provision.

He then requested the Deputy Minister for Local Government Abdul Hye to withdraw the bill and thus show honour to the Constitution of the country.

The Law Minister Mirza Gohar Hafiz at this stage readily stood up and supported Suranjit's view saying that the sub-clause of the proposed bill would definitely offend the Article 59 of the Constitution. The minister concerned should withdraw the bill, the Law Minister added.

The Deputy Minister then withdrew the bill amidst thumping of benches from both the government and Opposition sides.

The Midnight File

Russian diplomat in Delhi missing

NEW DELHI, July 7: A Russian diplomat in New Delhi has gone missing and police say he may have been kidnapped, the United News of India (UNI) said today. The UNI quoted a police official as not ruling out "any possibilities, including kidnapping behind the disappearance" of Alexander Gaintsh, First Secretary in the New Delhi embassy. It said the police have mounted a massive manhunt for Gaintsh, reports Reuter.

Ghali, Carrington meet tomorrow

MUNICH, July 7: The European Community mediator on Yugoslavia, Lord Carrington, will have talks in New York on Thursday with UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said today. Hurd said Carrington, who has sought in vain to broker peace between the warring factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was keen to coordinate all international efforts to end the fighting, reports Reuter.

From the Gallery

From Page 1 Col 8 might as well have pleaded to the walls or ceiling, as peace refused to reign on the floor. "They call me behuda (goblet), Mr Speaker", a highly charged Huda complained, to roars of laughter from the Opposition.

"I am the last person to be pressurised by dirty noise...I will not withdraw," the Minister retorted in a rage before sitting down and staying down.

The Speaker then proceeded to delete all unparliamentary words like bakkol, unmad, etc. That have been uttered, mostly by Nazmul Huda, from the proceedings of the House.

A word about the voice vote. The Treasury Bench wins them all, by virtue of sheer numbers. But Niamatullah Sabu of Savar proved yesterday that he was capable of handing a voice-vote victory to Khaleda Zia all by himself.

After Education Minister Zamiruddin Sircar had sought permission to table the Private University Bill, Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni decided to put it to vote. But barely had he said, "All those..." when an ear-splitting "Haa", belled out of the throat of the giant-sized Sabu loud enough to out-holler anything the Opposition could have offered Panni had to go through the process again, with the slightly embarrassed Sabu letting his colleagues do the shouting this time.

Indian truckers call off strike

NEW DELHI, July 07: Truckers called off their 7-day-old strike Tuesday after government appealed to them to return to work to save millions of people from distress and some farmers from financial ruins, reports AP.

The decision triggered cheers across the country where fruit, vegetables and eggs were in short supply and many people were forced to change their diets.

The strike had impaired farms, industries, mines and ports, and raised prices shoppers pay because the country's 1.5 million trucks carry nearly 90 per cent of the goods transported. Even chickens in poultry farms were starving because the trucks that usually deliver their feed were off the roads.

"I am glad that the strike is over," Jagdish Tytler, Minister for Surface Transport, told a news conference.

Private university

From Page 1 Col 7 be approved by the university grants commission.

b) It must have at least two faculties to begin with.

c) Each faculty should have the teachers as enunciated by the grants commission.

d) A reserved fund of minimum Tk one crore with any nationalised bank.

e) Syllabus has to be approved by the grants commission.

f) Five per cent seats are to be reserved for poor but meritorious students who will be given facilities to study free of tuition fees.

g) Pay scale of teachers and fees of students are to be clearly stated.

Earlier, opposing the bill Mohammad Nasim expressed the doubt that proposed private university would serve the purpose of party and individuals.

He noted with regret that the existing universities were in the grip of terrorists and dominated by certain political parties.

Nasim demanded that the campus should be freed from anarchy, terrorism and domination of parties.

The second bill, the Inland Water Transport Workers (employment regulation) Bill, introduced by Labour Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan seeks to provide terms and conditions of employment of the workers.

It will replace the Inland Water Transport (regulation of employment) Act 1985.

G-7: UN force

From Page 1 Col 5 gets through.

Safety at Soviet-designed nuclear reactors was being considered at the summit, and US officials played down reports of a dispute over how to organize a planned \$700 million programme of first aid to disaster-prone nuclear plants.

The United States, Japan and Britain favoured direct deals to improve safety at the reactors, which the other European countries favoured a multilateral approach.

Trade and other economic issues, including Third World aid and environmentally sound growth, were also strong on the summit agenda. The seven countries exhibit mostly slow growth or recessions, and they are warring sometimes contradictory economic weapons to deal with their problems.

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French riot police breaks open the door of a driverless French truck blocking a road in Saint-Fons near Lyon on Monday. Military and riot police moved into several places in France to break up the blockade which has lasted for over one week already, bringing chaos to the main highways in France. — AFP photo

French truckers may call off strike

PARIS, July 7: Truckers' unions reached a tentative agreement early Tuesday that could lead to the dismantling of their roadblocks, which have caused havoc throughout vacation-minded Europe, reports AP.

The accord was reached after police and soldiers used helicopters and tanks on Monday to dismantle 16 of the roadblocks, which stranded hundreds of thousands of travelers and caused fuel and food shortages.

At least 45 people were arrested.

The truckers, angered by new rules that give penalty points for driving violations, continued to maintain more than 100 roadblocks that cut access between Paris and provincial cities in the north-west and south.

Union leaders were to discuss the agreement with rank-and-file members Tuesday.

Transportation Minister Jean-Louis Bianco negotiated with truckers union representatives to reach what he called an "unprecedented accord" before dawn Tuesday.

The interim agreement included lowering truckers' work hours from 42 hours a week to 41, and a provision that employers must give drivers who have their licenses suspended or revoked a replacement job for that duration.

BCCI fraud: Saudi banker resigns

JIDDAH, July 7: The chief operating officer of Saudi Arabia's biggest bank resigned Tuesday as a result of his indictment last week in the United States on fraud charges in the BCCI bank scandal, reports AP.

Sheik Khalid bin Mahfouz and an associate, Haroon Kahlon of London, were charged in New York with defrauding customers of the collapsed Bank of Credit and Commerce International of \$300 million.

An announcement said Mahfouz's duties at National Commercial Bank would be taken on by his elder brother, Sheik Mohammed bin Mahfouz, chairman of the bank's managing committee.

The bank said Mahfouz resigned to devote his time to fighting "the unwarranted charges brought against him in New York."

"We are fully confident of Sheik Khalid's innocence and God willing he will be vindicated," the bank said.

The statement did not say whether Mahfouz, whose personal fortune has been estimated at \$1 billion, planned to surrender to face the charges in New York.

Robert Morgenthau, the New York city prosecutor, said last week that there was little chance of extraditing Mahfouz. But he said the 44-year-old Sheik has millions of dollars of property in New York, Texas and Florida that could be confiscated.

Afghan PM spends first day in office

KABUL, July 7: Prime Minister Ustad Abdul Saboor Farzed spent his first day in office Tuesday trying to figure out what to do with hundreds of armed rebels who accompanied him to the capital, reports AP.

Farzed, a 40-year-old former school teacher, rode into Kabul on Monday evening escorted by about 500 armed supporters in armored vehicles, trucks and motorcycles and took his seat in the Islamic interim government.

His arrival, greeted by thousands of well-wishers shouting "God is Great" and "Down with Communism," ended a two-month boycott by the radical Hezb-e-Islami faction that had once threatened to destroy the city and seize power.

Farzed wanted to enter the city with 2,000 armed Mujahideen, or Islamic warriors. But the interim President Burhanuddin Rabbani vetoed the plan, saying the government was trying to rid the unpoliced streets and government buildings of armed gunmen who overran the city in late April.

AFP adds: The Afghan leadership council adopted a new, more Islamic national flag Monday.

State television said the council had adopted a new red, white and black flag to replace the old black, green and red one.

Santiago barred from leaving Philippines

MANILA, July 7: Populist leader Miriam Santiago, barred from leaving the Philippines on graft charges after losing to Fidel Ramos in the May presidential polls, vowed today to fight her way out, reports AFP.

Santiago, facing arraignment on charges filed by employees she sacked as immigration chief three years ago, said in a statement she would ask the Supreme Court Wednesday to lift a "hold-departure" order issued by a Judge.

The 47-year-old Santiago, who accused Ramos of robbing her of victory in the May 11 polls, said she must be a Harvard University by July 11 or lose a fellowship offered by the leading US university.

She promised to return to Manila for arraignment on charges that she violated the law by using proceeds from an amnesty programme for illegal aliens to provide incentive pay to selected employees.

Santiago, who has denounced the charges as harassment, branded the hold order issued by an anti-graft court in Manila as "unconstitutional" and "precipitate."

Ramos beat Santiago and five other aspirants in the May 11 polls with a winning margin of about 900,000 votes.

Fighting in Moldova claims 22

MOSCOW, July 7: Overnight fighting killed at least 22 people in the separatist Trans-Dniester region of Moldova, Parliament on Tuesday called for peacekeepers from neighboring countries to form a buffer zone in the combat zone, reports AP.

In Georgia, national guardsmen launched an artillery attack on the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali, killing two people and wounding five, the Itar-Tass news agency said Tuesday.

Azerbaijani forces, meanwhile, have regained control of two towns captured by Armenian forces over the weekend, an Azerbaizani news agency reported.

Moldova's parliament voted 225-3 on Tuesday to invite peacekeepers from Russia, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, and Bulgaria to form a buffer zone between Moldovan loyalists and Slav separatists.

President Mircea Snegur, endorsing the peacekeeping plan, told legislators that "no one can accept any further loss of life."

Parliament's appeal came after a night of intensified fighting killed 22 people, many of them civilians, and wounded 48, spokesmen for the two sides said.

More than 600 people have died since March in fighting between Moldovan loyalists and Slav separatists in Trans-Dniester. The separatists want to secede from Moldova, which is dominated by ethnic Romanians.

Words expunged

From Page 1 Col 7 the members who were breaking the silence in the House and obstructing others to speak.

At this stage, the Speaker intervened saying that "I have given you the floor to withdraw comments, not for anything else."

Hearing the Speaker make such a comment, the Opposition benches became noisy and started shouting. They, however, did not enjoy the comment of the Minister.

The shouts of the Opposition apparently made Huda angry and he commented "I am the last person to be pressurised by dirty noise." He then sat down.

Immediately after this, Tofael Ahmed, citing an Urdu poem, compared Huda's performance in the House to "something", later expunged. He also referred to the other words used by Huda July 6.

As it became clear that Huda was not going to withdraw his words, Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House stood up and requested the Speaker to expunge all the unparliamentary words used in the course of events.

The Speaker then announced his decision of expunction.

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