

Zardari's bail prayer

Sind HC to defy president's ordn

KARACHI, Dec 15: A Pakistani court defied a presidential curfew of its powers today to keep alive a bail plea by the husband of Opposition Leader Benazir Bhutto, reports Reuters.

The Sind Province High Court agreed to hear arguments by the lawyer for Asif Ali Zardari, despite an ordinance by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan this week that bars high courts from hearing bail applications from those facing trial in special courts for suppression of terrorist activities.

Zardari has been in prison for more than two years facing a string of criminal charges including at least one in the terrorist courts.

The President's ordinance on Monday curtailed the powers of the courts for the first time since the lifting of martial law six years ago.

Legal experts said it was the first such erosion of the powers of the judiciary in Pakistan's 47-year history.

"This is a malafide piece of legislation," Zardari's lawyer Raja Qureshi said after a brief appearance before the court in Karachi, capital of Bhutto's troubled home province of Sind.

"This is done for the first time in the history of Pakistan," he told Reuters. "The whole fabric of criminal jurisprudence has been af-

ected adversely by this ordinance."

Lahore High Court Bar Association President Hamid Khan condemned the ordinance as a serious transgression of fundamental rights and civil liberties and a "fascist" measure to deprive citizens of their basic rights.

The ordinance would adversely affect the independence of the Supreme Court, newspapers quoted Hamid Khan as saying.

Qureshi quoted the Sind court as saying its hands were tied by the presidential decree, but it nevertheless set Sunday to hear arguments on whether it could still grant bail to Zardari.

The court agreed to hear Qureshi and government lawyers, court officials said.

Qureshi said he wanted to argue that the constitutional jurisdiction of the courts to grant bail was still intact.

Lawyers and human rights activists said Zardari was the target of the decree, which Bhutto on Monday called "an insult to the whole judiciary and a blatant use of executive force".

Zardari, a member of the Lower House of Parliament, was arrested in October, 1990 and has been held in jail on seven charges ranging from corruption to murder.

All govts used religion

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ge to three of its teachers murdered in 1971 by the collaborators of the Pakistan army.

Prof Anisuzzaman gave a résumé of why and how religion sneaked into the political agenda of the power-mongers since before the creation of Pakistan and how it affected the socio-political fabric of a people reeling under the onslaught of economic backwardness.

In fine, the Professor pleaded for a turn-back to secularism just the way "we went back to parliamentary democracy".

"Neither the elimination of secularism as one of the fundamentals nor the incorporation of state religion into the Constitution was made to meet popular demand. The rulers wished it and had it done," he reminded.

Involving the April 10, 1971 Paper on Independence that called Bangladesh a sovereign people's republic, Anisuzzaman said that the leaders of the Liberation War repeatedly spoke of a secular state. The leaders included, he said, not only Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed and Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam or Home Minister AHM Kamruzzaman, but also men like Khondoker Mustaque Ahmed, the then Foreign Minister.

The pledge was reiterated by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his speech at the Race Course on the day he returned from captivity in Pakistan, he reminded.

But from 1972 onwards, there had been a tendency to give equal political recognition to all religion, which, Anisuzzaman claimed, was contrary to the Article 12 of the Constitution, and also to the values that secularism stands for.

"We went all for proving that secularism/dharmajapanchayat did not mean being in a state of not having any religion. And that's why milads were arranged in the Bangabhaban or the Ganabhaban."

"Then we saw recitations from the Quran, the Geeta, the Bible, the Tripitaka in the state-run radio and the television."

"This was in no way secularism," Anisuzzaman argued, "this can be called equal treatment to all religion."

All this, he said, was done to pacify critics who said atheism was being followed.

Good times came for the critics in 1975. "Freedom fighter Ziaur Rahman gave the anti-Liberation elements a share in the pie of power" and did away with the Article 12 that barred religion-based politics.

The 1988 amendment, under the patronage of General Ershad, that made Islam the state religion made things worse and virtually violated the rights guaranteed to all the citizens.

"Secularism was done away with brandishing the martial law — people did not really

react. However, when the state religion came, people protested, but did not go too far," Anisuzzaman said.

The Awami League and its allies, the Five-Party combine, the women activists, most cultural and professional bodies took to the streets, but the BNP kept silent, a reminder that the removal of secularism from the Constitution was its act, Anisuzzaman said.

Then, he went on to point accusing fingers at the Awami League, the party he gave credit for making secularism a state principle but criticised for failing to practise it properly, for reacting to the propaganda that "bismillah would be the casualty if the party was voted to power."

"Half the OIC states do not have anything called state religion. Even countries like Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates or Syria do not entertain the idea of a state religion. Turkey is not only a secular state, the few articles of its constitution can never be amended include that of secularism," Anisuzzaman argued.

The trials and tribulations this nation have gone through over the years in the name of religion and the history its people belonging to all religion have written in the process of materialising the dream of an independent Bangladesh provide the rationale for adoption of a secular ideology, Anisuzzaman who teaches at the Bengali Department of Dhaka University said.

Enemies

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independence awards.

"They are in fact playing with the blood of the martyrs... They are distorting history knowing the fact... they do not, in fact, believe in the victory of the nation," Hasina commented.

She said that the dreams and aspirations of the freedom fighters were yet to be realised.

BSS adds: Hasina categorically said that the trial of Prof. Golam Azam and the "killers and collaborators of 1971" would be held in Bangladesh even if certain quarters intended to protect the "war criminals".

Participants at the discussion described Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the architect of Bangladesh and urged the new generation not to be misled by the distortion of history.

The discussion was attended by AL Presidium members Begum Sajeda Chowdhury MP and Amir Hossain Amu as special guests while others by Alamgir Kumkum, Kabir Sarwar, Asaduzzaman Noor, Lutfunnahar Lata, Tarana Halim and Nurul Islam Khan.



Bijoy Mela (Victory Fair) at Bangla Academy in city.

— Star photo

Awards

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veyed her sincere respect to the freedom fighters who were present and those who could not attend the function. "Those who formally received the awards today represent the millions of Bangladeshis who participated in the Liberation War", she said.

Begum Zia said the freedom fighters had fought not for medals and awards but for the independence of the country and freedom of the people. It was with this aim that people from all parts of Bangladesh, including the members of all levels of armed forces, had jumped into the armed struggle, she added.

The Prime Minister mentioned the relentless struggle of the millions, irrespective of caste and creed, which brought about the independence of the country.

"It is an exceptional honour for those who have earned the awards today for their bravery in the War of Independence, because it is an honour given to them by the people of the country," she said.

The Prime Minister recalled with honour the contributions of great leaders Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Ziaur Rahman, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and General MAQ Osmany in the country's liberation.

She also recalled the contributions of the unknown soldiers of the Liberation War and said, "the nation will always remember their sacrifice and bravery with honour and respect".

Begum Zia said the spirit of the Liberation War was to establish an independent, sovereign and prosperous democratic country.

Economic emancipation and democracy were the aims with which the Liberation War was started, she said adding that the nation has progressed towards establishing democracy at all levels.

Plant quarantine desk at ZIA shutdown

By Inam Ahmed

Horticulture in Bangladesh has become susceptible to germs and diseases as the plant quarantine desk has been closed at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) arrival lounge.

According to concerned sources the desk has been closed from November 11 and since then incoming plants had not been checked for diseases or germs harmful to country's flora.

The quarantine desk received plants for checking for the last time on the same date. On the day, the desk received cactus imported from Hong Kong. After that no plants have been sent for quarantine at the ZIA.

The decision to remove the plant quarantine desk was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting in October. The meeting presided over by the Finance Minister observed that "as the real objectives of carrying out quarantine practices are not being fulfilled, the exercise would be stopped".

However, the meeting was not participated by representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) as they were not invited.

Following the closer of the desk, the Agriculture Extension Department had enquired the MOA about the matter. The MOA asked the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MCA) for clarification which in turn asked the Civil Aviation Authorities for explanation regarding the matter, sources said. However, reply is yet to come, according to the same sources.

At the ZIA quarantine desk, there had been 12 quarantine officers and an entomologist. After removal of the desk from the customs lounge, the team

is now examining only agricultural cargo goods and issuing Phytosanitary Export Certificate on vegetables.

During 1992 alone, the desk checked 64 cases which include 234 plants. Of these 40 cases of contaminations were found with diseases like criconesia, xiphherema, cercospora, dorylamoid, phylosticta, mealy bug and cephaloboid. Plants infected with these diseases were brought from India, Kuwait, Thailand, Greece, UK, Pakistan and Germany.

Meanwhile, scientists and agricultural experts feel that if the quarantine system is not imposed strictly, country's agriculture may face a great danger in the long run as foreign diseases will attack crops. They cited the example of Sri Lanka where "coffee rust" has endangered the coffee export of that country.

They further apprehended that Bangladesh's export may also suffer if the foreign countries come to know that quarantine law is not being properly enforced here.

It can be recalled that speakers at a workshop on Plant Quarantine Regulations of Bangladesh held in collaboration with Danida and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) in April last year stressed the need for strengthening the quarantine system.

At present, there are in all eight quarantine stations at ZIA, Chittagong and Sylhet airports, Chittagong and Mongla Ports, Benapal, Darsana borders check posts and Narayanjan River Port.

There is also a plan to set up stations at Hilli and Patgram borders land entry points.



Leftwing women scream "shoot the BJP" while converging near the headquarters of the Hindu fundamentalist party yesterday.

— AFP photo

Three killed in road mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent

At least three persons were killed and 10 others injured in separate road accidents at Mohakhali, Mirpur, Fulbaria and Demra in the capital Tuesday.

A speeding minibus on its way to Satrasa from Mohakhali knocked down several rickshaw and pedestrian leaving one youngman killed on the spot and seven others wounded before it overturned at around 4.15 am Tuesday.

In another accident at Mirpur, Section-10, an unidentified man was killed on the spot.

Shapon, a bus-helper, died on the spot when a minibus ran over him at Fulbaria at around 7 am yesterday.

One shot dead, 7 hurt in clash over fishing

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 15: One person was shot dead and seven others were injured in an incident over fishing in a beel in Companyganj thana of the district today.

According to the report at about 7.30 am one Kala, member of union parishad opened fire on his opponent group who had been trying to catch fish in Charkuri Beel for two weeks after taking lease from the Fisheries Department.

Sobour Ullah, 30, died on the spot and three others received bullet wounds. The injured were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital. They are, Wahab Ullah, Abdur Rahman, Faruque Ahmed and Mounaf.

Rao

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more than 2,100 members of banned fundamentalist groups, with scattered arrests continuing, the government said.

The vast majority of those caught in the roundup which began overnight Sunday were members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the RSS, which supported the drive to build a temple on the mosque site.

PTI says, a special police team has been formed to arrest Abdul Nasser Madani, chief of the banned Islamic Sevak Sangh (ISS), the Kerala DGP, A Subramaniam, said today.

Madani had gone underground after dissolving the ISS following the ban imposed on it and four other organisations by the centre on December 10.

Honorary commission

Five Honorary Lieutenants and 19 Junior Commissioned Officers have been granted Honorary Commission in the rank of Honorary Captain and Honorary Lieutenant respectively in the active list of the Bangladesh Army with effect from today (December 16), according to an ISPR press release in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

Those Granted Honorary Commission in the rank of Honorary Captain are: Honorary Lieutenants Abdur Razzaque, Artillery, Mohd Ali Miah, East Bengal, Abdul Hakim, ASC, M A Hannan, EME and Abdur Rab, AMC.

The 19 recipients of Honorary Commission in the rank of Honorary Lieutenant are: Subedar Majors Abdul Haque, Artillery, Nazrul Islam Bhuiyan, Signals, Shafiq Ullah, Signals, Shamsul Islam, East Bengal, Md Abdus Samad, East Bengal, Md Shamsuddin, East Bengal, Md Abu Tayeb Miah, East Bengal, Md Ashraf Ali Miah, East Bengal, Md Wadud, East Bengal, Md Shafi Ullah, East Bengal, S K Abdul Latif, East Bengal, Abdur Rahman, East Bengal, Syed Ahsan Ullah, East Bengal, M A Baten, East Bengal, Md Obaidul Haque, Ordnance, Md Nurul Haque, EME, Md Nurul Islam, EME, A H M Monoar Hossain, CMP and Subedar Mustafizur Rahman, East Bengal.

BSS adds: Three Honorary Sub Lieutenants have been promoted to the rank of Honorary Lieutenants and seven Master Chief Petty Officers have been granted Honorary Commission in the active list of the Bangladesh Navy on the occasion of Victory Day.

The Honorary Sub Lieutenants promoted to the rank of Honorary Lieutenants are: Honorary Sub Lieutenants M S Ullah (Com) BN, S K Bakhtyar (Com) BN and M A Wahed (Ward Master) BN.

Besides, the Master Chief Petty Officers granted commission and awarded the rank of Honorary Sub Lieutenants are: B A Khan MCPO (X), M M Haque MCPO (X), O Haque MCPO (E), M H Rahman MCPO (E), M Solaiman MCPO (SI), M M A Howlader MCPO (Med) and K A Razzaque MCPO (Mus).

These promotions will come into effect from today (Dec 16).

Hasina

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rated. Soaring prices made life miserable. Landlessness and unemployment are rising unabated... farmers are in deep crises", said the Awami League leader.

She bracketed ruling BNP with Jamant-e-Islami and said progressive democratic and pro-liberation forces should remain vigilant against conspiracies being hatched by the ruling party and its collaborators, forces that were defeated in the Liberation War.

The pro-liberation forces should stand united to institutionalise democracy and reach the fruits of independence to the masses.

Dutchman

From Page 1 Col 5

being informed of the function over telephone this week.

A Director at Bata Shoe, Hai helped Ouderland in supplying intelligence on Pakistan army military operations against the Mukti Bahini. Ouderland used to send his information to Mukti Bahini commanders, including Gen M A G Osmani, the Supreme Commander.

Ouderland also helped the Mukti Bahini materially, especially by supplying shoes to the freedom fighters. Ouderland, in his 70s recently retired from his long career as a Bata executive.

Bir Pratik awards were given to those war heroes who displayed indomitable courage in the battlefield. The other awards were Bir Shrestha, Bir Uttam and Bir Bikram.

The Bir Shrestha awards were given to seven valiant freedom fighters who died in military operations against the Pakistan army that cracked down on Bangladesh on March 25, 1971.

The seven were: Capt. Mohiuddin Jahangir, Lance Nayek Munshi Abdur Rab, Sepoy Hamidur Rahman, Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa, Engineer Artificer Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Ft. Lt. Matur Rahman and Lance Nayek Noor Mohammad.

Though relatives would receive the awards for the seven Bir Shresthas every year, this was for the first time that the government distributed medals to the recipients of Bir Uttam, Bir Bikram and Bir Pratik awards.

The Bir Uttam award of assassinated president Ziaur Rahman was received by his eldest son Tarek Rahman.

An applause from the audience greeted Tarek as he climbed the rostrum to receive the medals from his Prime Minister mother.

The Midnight File

20 children among 39 killed in Russian chopper crash

MOSCOW, Dec 15: Nearly half the 39 people killed when a Russian military helicopter crashed in Georgia were children, officials said Tuesday. The helicopter was hit by a surface-to-air missile on Monday while evacuating refugees from Georgia's breakaway Abkhazia region. It was carrying 20 children ages 3-11, 16 women and three crew members, the Abkhazian Defense Ministry said. No one is known to have survived, reports UNB.

Large convoy of US marines leaves Mogadishu for Baidoha

MOGADISHU, Dec 15: A first large convoy of US marines and French foreign legionaries left the Somali capital today for the famine-ravaged town of Baidoha, military sources said, reports AFP.

AL may boycott President's Victory Day reception

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League is most likely to boycott the Bangabhaban reception to be held today in observance of the 21st anniversary of the nation's Victory Day, sources said.

The Head of the State conventionally hosts the reception for the country's political leaders, intellectuals, elite and foreign diplomats on the Victory Day every year.

Admitting receipt of the President's invitation for attending the reception, an influential Awami League leader told The Daily Star last night that the party was not going to accept the invitation.

Source close to Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament said that the Awami League had decided to boycott the ceremonial function as President Abdur Rahman Biswas failed to play the 'destrable role' during the country's War of Independence in 1971.

PM visits ailing B Chowdhury

Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia visited Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad, at the Suhrawardy Hospital here yesterday evening, reports BSS.

Prof Chowdhury was admitted to the hospital earlier yesterday following heart ailments.

The Prime Minister stayed for some time beside the bed of Prof Chowdhury and enquired about his condition from the attending physicians. She wished him early recovery.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Social Welfare and Womens Affairs Minister Tariqul Islam and chairman of Bangladesh Red-Crescent Society Shahidul Huq Jamal, MP accompanied the Prime Minister during the visit.

The Prime Minister also visited the six Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal workers who have been under treatment at the Eye Ward of the hospital.

DSE

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duction in interest rates in recent months, deposits in recent months, deposits in banks had not declined.

Many a speakers pointed out that apart from low response from investors, meagre supply of potential securities had been another major reason retarding the growth of country's stock market.

There are about 2,000 public limited companies and 17,000 private limited ones registered with the Joint Stock Companies. But only 133 of them have been enlisted with DSE.

Dr Mozibur Rahman of Finance Ministry said equity ratio should be changed so that companies were discouraged to go to banks for finance. Speakers also suggested further cut in bank interest rates to push depositors into risk-taking investment.

Inefficient operations in the Dhaka Stock Exchange were vehemently criticised by many a speakers.

The seminar was told that out of 195 members, only 25-30 were active and, as a result, trading in the DSE had become ineffectual and manipulation of price become easier.

Abu Ahmed proposed a second stock market in the country to make DSE accountable and transparent.

Many a speakers accused Chartered Accountant (CA) firms of resorting to corrupt practice while performing audit, providing chances for price manipulation by companies.

The Controller of Capital Issues (CCI) said the proposed Securities Exchange Commission, a broad-based body to oversee the operations of capital market, was soon coming into being. It, he hoped, would help faster reforms of the capital market.

Maj (Retd) Rafiq BU denies receiving gallantry award

By Staff Correspondent

A number of gallantry award recipients boycotted the Tuesday's award giving ceremony and resented the television announcement that their relations were receiving the medals on behalf of the recipients.

The boycotting recipients or their family members included Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam, Major General (Retd) C R Dutta BU, Major General Manjur BU, Major General (Retd) Shafiqul BU, Kader Siddique BU, Col Taher BU, H M A Gaffar BU, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya Bir Pratik, Mohammad Rumi Bir Bikram and Lt Col Jafar Inam BU.

Major Rafiq, quoting the TV announcement that his son was receiving the award, said that none of his family members were present at the function to receive the award.

"It was false, the announcement deceived the people," Rafiq told The Daily Star over telephone.

It was not clear how many award-recipients were absent at the function as Radio and TV, which broadcast the programme live, read out 676 names at a "lightning" speed.

The viewers and listeners were puzzled with the announcement and it was difficult to distinguish "who is taking whose award."

The authorities, however, did not disclose the number of absentees.

Lt Col Kazi Nuruzzaman and Mahabbat Rab Sadi who earlier rejected Bir Uttam and Bir Pratik award respectively were also absent at the ceremony.

Sadi, however, appreciated holding of the long-awaited ceremony by the present democratically elected government.

PM: Democracy

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of the centuries old Babri Mosque in India, Begum Zia said it had hurt the religious sentiment and values of the Muslims. She noted with satisfaction that the people in Bangladesh remained calm and maintained communal harmony in the face of all provocations.

The government had strongly condemned the demolition of 450-year-old mosque by extremist Hindu fundamentalists, she said. "We have strongly condemned the incident and demanded to the Indian government for reconstruction of the Babri Mosque."

The Prime Minister said that a government accountable to the people had been established in the country. "We must protect democracy achieved through sacrifices. I seek your cooperation in our efforts to stabilise the democracy."

Giving a resume of the achievements of her 21-month-old government, Begum Zia said per capita income had increased to 208 dollars from 170 dollars in 1990. Inflation rate is down to 4.5 per cent. Foreign exchange reserve surpassed all record. Food production set a record this year. Export earning is expected to exceed the target.

She said development works, including construction of the infrastructure, continued unhindered. Extensive programme has been taken up for expansion of the communication system. All these measures are earning confidence of foreign investors. We are preparing to face the challenges of the 21st century.

Begum Zia said her government was going ahead with implementation of the pledges it had given to the people and already achieved a considerable success.

"Parliamentary democracy has been established in the country. Freedom of the press and unfettered right to speech have been ensured. The judiciary is now independent."

The Prime Minister said that appropriate steps had also been taken to free the economy from ruinous, indiscriminate and corruption.

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