The Daily Star

Rule of law exists, says Mirza Golam Hafiz

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz yesterday said complete rule of law was existing in the country and the government had established a transparent judiciary to implement the rule of law, reports BSS.

He said it was now the responsibilities of the judges, the lawyers and the people at large to work for complete establishment of rule of law.

The Law Minister was speaking as chief guest at a discussion on the 'Role of the Intellectuals in Rule of Law and Expression of Opinion in the Present Democratic Social System' held at the Dhaka Bar Library Hall.

Organised by the Dhaka unit of the Jatiyatabadi 'Ainjibi Forum, the discussion was addressed, among others, by Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Food Minister Lt. General (Retd) Mir Shawkat Ali, State Minister for Finance Majibur Rahman, State Minister for Establishment Barrister Aminul Huq, Convenor of the central committee of the forum Justice T H Khan and member-secretary Abdul Wadud Khandaker, acting editor of the Dainik Dinkal Syed Zafar, president of the Dhaka Bar Association T M Akbar, and general secretary M Abdul Ahad Mia, member secretary of the Dhaka unit of the forum M Sanaullah Mia and former president of the Dhaka Bar Association M Idris.

Convenor of Dhaka unit of the Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum M Fazlur Rahman Khan presided.

The Law Minister said that to establish the rule of law the image of the judiciary should be upheld and the lawyers should be brave to protect the rights of the people.

He said the judiciary was a complete, independent institution in Bangladesh and independence of the judiciary had no link with individual corruption. The government was taking action against any allegation of corruption to uphold the image of the judiciary, he added.

He said that the government had established judges's courts in 33 out of the 42 new districts and 10 new High Court judges were appointed in a short period.

Referring to the improvement of the standards of the bars he said that the government was allocating funds to enrich the stocks of the bar libraries and to introduce professional training for them.

Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia said the intellectuals should see if the supporters of a convicted leader, who came to power undemocratically and destroyed the democratic institutions, had any right to ask his release under the rule of law and launch agitation against a democratically elected government.

Majibur Rahman said the people in the villages should be informed about who wants to destroy democracy and the rule of law, otherwise, they might be misled by the propaganda of those who want to create anarchy.

Barrister Aminul Huq alleged that there was a section of motivated intellectuals who disregard the rule of law and their actions were against the interests of the country and the nation. He emphasised the need for breaking this coterie and urged the silent majority to stand against them before they could cause irreparable harm to the country and the nation.

Justice T H Khan said rule of law and democracy go hand in hand and it was not the responsibility of the government alone to ensure rule of law. He urged the judges and lawyers to rise and uphold the rule of law.

He said that the press also had an important role to uphold rule of law.

He expressed surprise how a section of reputed lawyers could support formation of the *'Gano Adalat'* which was a "contempt of court and against the rule of law and the Constitution."

He criticised a section of intellectuals who were destroying the image of the nation abroad and trying to harm national interest.

ALCWC sits today

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the issue of banning the Jamaat.

He declined to elaborate, but hinted that there was a tremendous pressure from the party rank and file on the issue.

On the question of the Anti-Terrorism Act, the AL would continue to oppose it and press for its repeal, sources said. The AL high command feels that the whole party has been exposed to repression under this particular 'black' law. The CWC is likely to suggest a fresh package of agitations demanding repeal of the law.

On the issue of the parliamentary probe body, the meeting is likely to opt for mounting pressure on the committee members to expedite the investigation.

The 15-member JS body, headed by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, is yet to begin the investigations because the members of the committee have so far failed to agree on the terms of reference for the body.

The committee has had seven meetings since its formation in July last.

The CWC meeting is also likely to scrutinise the organisational activities of the party. According to insiders, AL chief Sheikh Hasina is not satisfied with the existing mobility of the party organs throughout the country. She is likely to call for increased organisational activities with a view to ensuring victory in the next parliamentary polls, sources said.

A senior AL office-bearer said, the CWC is likely to discuss the party's position on the already surfaced demand for holding the next national-level elections under a care-taker government. Although the party is yet to officially decide on the issue, Hasina clearly observed last week that no elections under the ruling BNP could be neutral.

Meanwhile, the AL is planning to make the November 10 agitations in front of the Secretariat, announced earlier, a big success with a view to showing both national and international communities that the government does not enjoy the confidence of a large section of the people.

The Working Committee meeting is also likely to discuss the next possible course of action against the government, an AL legislator told The Daily Star last night, adding: "The party would continuously propagate against the BNP's misrule, nepotism and its lack of commitment to democracy."

Ten killed as rival Somali factions clash

MOGADISHU, Oct 25: Heavy fighting between gunmen loyal to rival warlords killed up to 10 Somalis and wounded many others in Mogadishu today, a UN military spokesman said, reports AFP.

Gunbattles erupted when militiamen loyal to warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed erected barricades to stop supporters of his enemy self-styled interim President Ali Mahdi Mohammed gathering for a planned 'peace march' across the Green line dividing Mogadishu.

It was the first major battle in Mogadishu between the two factions since March last year, before foreign troops landed, when an artillery war that reduced much of central Mogadishu to rubble petered out and the two warlords agreed to an uneasy UN-brokered truce.

Aideed militiamen had warned Ali Mahdi supporters that they would fire if the marchers tried to cross the line dividing Aideed's south Mogadishu stronghold from Ali Mahdi's northern enclave.

Pakistani peacekeepers caught in exchanges of small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades near the gutted parliament building fired warning shots.

BRTWF strike in Ctg Oct 28

CHITTAGONG, Oct 25: The Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation (BRTWF) has called for a dawn-to-dusk strike in greater Chittagong district on October 28 to press home its 16-point demands, reports UNB.

Giving the strike call at a press conference in the evening the BRTWF leaders also urged the government to meet their demands by October 27.

The charter of demands include withdrawal of false cases against some of their leaders and workers under the Anti-Terrorism Act, immediate release of the arrested leaders, issuing of appointment letters to the transport workers, proper measures against dacoities in Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway.

Juba Dal clash in Pabna

PABNA, Oct 25: Two factions of a youth organisation fought a street battle with guns and bombs here today, injuring at least 10 people, three seriously, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said 30 rounds of gunshots were fired and 10 handbombs exploded during the fighting between Ekram and Botu groups of the Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal on the bypass road in the town at noon.

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman addressing a public meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday on the occasion of party's 'Demonstration Day'. —Star photo

AL programmes

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Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Akhtarul Alam and Advocate Kamrul Islam.

Zillur Rahman said the BNP government has resorted to terrorism because it had failed to fulfil the pre-election pledges causing disappointment to the people. "Now the people do not want this government," he said. "But to stay in the power, the BNP government has passed the Anti-Terrorism Act."

He said, "So far, the courts have passed verdict in 302 cases under the Anti-Terrorism Act and surprisingly they were all against the Awami League and Chhatra League activists. This reflects the attitude of the government."

The AL GS alleged that the police had been instructed not to receive any case against the activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Demanding a probe into campus violence by a judicial body, Amir Hossain Amu said: "The Awami League is ready to accept the findings of such a probe body. We have told the government many times. If BCL activists are blamed for the violence, we shall accept that. But the government is least bothered about forming such a body."

Abdur Razzak said the law enforcing agencies of the country, alongwith the BNP, Jamaat-Shibir, Freedom Party and Jubo Command 'musclemen', have been assigned to kill opposition activists.

He alleged that Anisur Rahman was killed by the musclemen of the BNP and the police during a demonstration in Kaliganj thana of Lalmonirhat a few weeks ago.

The AL leaders also criticised the government for failing to resolve the water-sharing issue.

Myanmar returns two trawlers

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 25: The Myanmar border security force 'NASAKA' returned two fishing trawlers which were taken by them forcibly from the Bangladesh territorial waters on December 10, last year, official sources said here today.

The two trawlers were handed over to the Bangladeshi owner in presence of BDR personnel on the Naaf river Saturday.

Officials here said the handing over of the trawlers followed the decision taken at the Director General-level border talks held between the two neighbouring countries at Yangon September 23 to 27.

Doctors' strike

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failing to contain widespread violence.

Announcing the programmes, the BMA secretary general Dr Gazi Abdul Haque warned that they would go for an allout agitation if the government failed to arrest and punish the terrorists.

In his written speech, Dr Haque reiterated the BMA demands for compensation for the families of all, killed or injured, in the Chittagong incident of October 18.

Painting a gloomy picture of the country's law and order situation, he regretted that police failed to nab the terrorists, including the killers of Dr Mizan.

The doctors have lost confidence in the law enforcing agencies and are feeling insecure following the murders of Dr Rafiq and Dr Mizan this year and attacks on the BMA office in the city and assault on Dr Rabiul Hussain's chamber in Chittagong last year, he said.

None of the culprits involved in these incidents had been arrested, he added.

The BMA leader also called upon the political leaders, professionals and others concerned to work together for resisting terrorism.

BMA president Dr MA Majed, joint secretary Dr Rafique Choudhury, Dr Fakhrul Islam Chowdhury, Dr Mushtaq Hossain, Dr Shakhawat Hossain Jibon and other were present at the news conference.

Hearing of charge against Ershad begins

The hearing of a corruption charge against former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad began here yesterday in the Divisional Special Judge's court, reports BSS.

Divisional Special Judge Mohammad Ali Khan heard the prosecution charge brought against the deposed president accusing him of misuse of power and indulging in corrupt practices thereby causing loss to the exchequer.

The charge relates to procurement of an ENG (electronic news gathering) unit and its subsequent installation at the then President's Secretariat for prompt coverage of Ershad and his wife which involved an expenditure of Taka 2.98 crore including Taka 1.65 crore in foreign exchange.

The prosecution mentioned that such procurement was not at all necessary.

As soon as Abdut Tawheed, the Divisional Special Public Prosecutor, read out the proposed charge Ershad, who was in the dock, stood up and asked to know what the charge was all about. He also said he needed briefing from his lawyers on the matter.

Khandkar Mahbub Hossain, chief defence counsel for Ershad, wanted an explanation from the court about a number of matters including the present status of the ENG unit, the contract document for the purchase of the camera and accessories. Hossain further wanted to know whether the electronic devices have been seized and whether those were being used by someone now?

Fazle Rabbee, a former minister and another defence lawyer for Ershad, while reading out the charge-sheet, mentioned that from the document it appears that the estimate for procuring the ENG equipment was duly approved. He said had the devices been used for Ershad's personal use, "We would have not opposed this case, but it was used for the state."

Ershad took the cue from his lawyer and said the equipment was procured on the advice of his Press Secretary and others. "Such charges were too much", a visibly annoyed and agitated Ershad commented.

Responding to the defence statements, Tawheed stated that the ENG was procured when it was not needed, thereby causing financial loss to the exchequer.

After hearing both sides, Judge Khan fixed November 21 as the next date for this case.

Besides Khandkar Mahbub and Fazlee Rabbee, the other lawyers who appeared on behalf of Ershad included Sudhir Kumar Hazra, Shahidul Islam Khan and Khaleda Bilquis.

Sec 144 in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Oct 25: Awami League backed Chhatra League (M-I) today brought out a procession in the town protesting the imposition of Section 144 at the Bagabayeed area, reports UNB.

The Hindu goddess Durga being immersed in the river Buriganga on the last day of the five-day Durga Puja festival in the city yesterday. —Star photo

Bijoya Dashami celebrated

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 25: Bijoya dashami, the ending ceremony of the five-day Durga Puja, was celebrated here today with immersion of the images of Durga in the rivers Shitalakhya, Brahmaputra and Meghna this evening with enthusiasm and grandeur, reports BSS.

According to official sources, hundreds of Hindu devotees male, female and children in processions carrying the images of the Goddess Durga gathered on the banks of the rivers and immersed.

In the town immersion took place in the river Shitalakhya at BIWTA ghat No. 5.

Diarrhoea

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diate treatment to survive.

A doctor in the Health Directorate yesterday said the symptoms of this type of diarrhoea are yet to be completely known.

He said, "This is not a season for diarrhoea yet it is rapidly spreading in the northern part of the country".

The newly-affected districts are Bogra, Tangail, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Narsingdi, Faridpur and Gaibandha while Habiganj, Comilla, Kishoreganj, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj, Feni, Brahmanbaria, Netrakona, Dhaka, Chittagong, Bandarban, Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Sirajganj were included in the previous list.

Feni BCL secy arrested

FENI, Oct 25: Police today arrested district Chhatra League (M-I) general secretary Hiron Kiron on charge of his involvement in the October 11 attack on Whip Mahbubul Alam Tara, reports UNB.

Some 10 people, including the Whip and three policemen, were injured in the attack on his vehicle.

Earlier, two other Awami League supporters — BCL former district unit president Kafiluddin Swapon and Awami League president of the Masterpara Ward in the town Shah Alam Majumder — have been arrested on the same charge.

Meanwhile, an alliance of the district transport owners, workers and businessmen decided to put off its 12-hour hartal scheduled for tomorrow in the town and 24-hour shutdown throughout the district and blockade of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway on Thursday following assurance by the DC of arresting those involved in the violence after the October 17 election to the Feni Pourasava.

The 'Oikya Parishad' announced the programmes to protest the rowdy rampage in the GA Academy, Sultanpur, Shibpur and Birinchi areas following the municipal polls.

In this connection, police have arrested six pro-JSD (Rab) Chhatra League activists from the Feni Polytechnic Institute in the last three days.

Canadians go to polls

ST JOHN'S (Canada), Oct 25: Some voters in Newfoundland braved snow today to be among Canada's first voters in the nation's 35th general election, reports AFP.

Airbus hijack

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Nigeria Airways said the flight, hijacked early today after it left Lagos for the Nigerian federal capital Abuja, had 137 passengers and 13 crew members aboard.

Abdouleye indicated that Niger security officials were negotiating with the four, who threatened to set fire to the plane if their demands were not met within 72 hours. Three armed people were seen spilling fuel on the plane.

The plane was immobilised at the end of a runway and the airport was closed as security forces turned out in strength, the official said.

The chief of the hijackers, calling himself Akbar, broadcast his demands by radio in the name of a pro-democracy group, calling for the resignation of the unelected Nigerian government of Ernest Shonekan.

They wanted an immediate end to the activities of the Nigerian transitional government 'to invest democratically elected authorities', he said, in apparent reference to Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of a presidential poll held in June.

Sher-e-Bangla

From Page 1 Col 8

Smrity Sangsad and Bangladesh Baktitya Gabeshana Kendra have jointly organised Quran Khwani, milad mahfil and a discussion at the mazar premises. They will also place wreaths at the mazar of Sher-e-Bangla. The programmes of the two organisations will begin at 7 am.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rouf will attend the discussion meeting as chief guest while Justice Ruhul Islam will preside.

Bangladesh Jatiya Sahitya Sangsad, Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Pathagar, Nazrul Jatiya Smriti Sangsad and Nazrul Jatiya Sangskritik Academy will unitedly place wreaths and offer fateha at the mazar of Sher-e-Bangla in the morning. A discussion and recitation will also be held at the office of Nazrul Jatiya Smrity Sangsad at 5 pm.

To observe the birth anniversary of the late leader, who was Chief Minister of the undivided Bangla, the Sher-e-Bangla Smriti Forum will place wreaths and organise milad mahfil at his mazar premises.

Sher-e-Bangla Parishad men will offer fateha and hold milad

Dhaka-Tehran jt commission meets today

Iranian Rural Development and Reconstruction Minister G R Forouzesh yesterday described the Bangladesh-Iran relationship as an excellent one and said the political, economic, trade, investment and cultural relationship between the two brotherly Muslim countries would be strengthened further, reports BSS.

The Iranian minister, who arrived here in the afternoon on a three-day official visit leading an 18-member Iranian delegation to the two-day first session of the Bangladesh-Iran Joint Commission scheduled to begin this morning, was exchanging greetings with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman at the Zia International Airport.

The Midnight File

12 Pak politicians begin hunger strike

KARACHI, Oct 25: A dozen Pakistanis from 12 political parties began an indefinite hunger strike today to protest against the 11-day old siege by Indian soldiers of Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine, police said. The hunger strikers also demanded the release of Kashmiri leader Amanullah Khan, who was arrested in Belgium last week, reports Reuter.

Shalikashvili sworn in as joint chiefs of staff

WASHINGTON, Oct 25: Army General John Shalikashvili was sworn in by Defence Secretary Les Aspin today as Chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, the nation's top military officer. Shalikashvili, 57, replaces general Colin Powell, who recently retired from the army. The new chairman, who served until last week as allied commander of NATO forces in Europe based in Mons, Belgium, was sworn in at a private ceremony in Aspin's office, reports Reuter.

BJP blames Muslims

From Page 1 Col 8

the Himalayan region, blamed Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's minority government for indecision that has cost at least 13,000 lives in three years.

"It is ... the government's own sense of defeatism and lack of political will that outside forces such as the Organisation of Islamic Countries and the United States government have felt encouraged to pressure India into yielding ground to secessionists," the BJP said in an election manifesto.

The BJP is due to take on Rao's Congress party in five states assembly elections next month which it says will be a verdict on his 28-month-old government.

Washington regards Kashmir as a disputed region whose future should be discussed in talks between its mostly Muslim population, India and Pakistan.

A 10-day-old standoff between the militants and the government over an army siege of Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine has raised fresh tensions between the two countries.

There were no signs of a breakthrough in negotiations.

The government and army denied Indian press reports of a rift between them on how to end the standoff at Srinagar's Hazratbal Mosque which began at midnight on October 15.

The reports said the army was particularly angered by a government decision to allow food prepared by local people to be sent into the shrine on Sunday.

Rao told Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto last week he wanted early talks with her to resolve the disputed region, considered a rare gesture from New Delhi which usually regards the state as an integral part of India.

"It is the BJP which has been consistent in opposing this drift and demanding stern action in preserving the unity and integrity of India," the BJP declared in its manifesto for what it said were India's 'mini-general elections next month.

Ganges water

From Page 1 Col 4

of the material basis of the environment and ecology are, therefore, fundamental to production of necessary quantity of food for the years to come.

"It is also the question of sustainability of all living things, not only human beings. We often forget and take actions to increase 'productivity' at the cost of killing other living beings," the Environment Minister added.

Farhad Mazhar called for evolving a 'Naya Krishi', or an ecology-based 'new agriculture' for the country so that both production and preservation of nature were possible.

Abdul Matin, a noted peasant leader, said we have to find alternatives to the present methods of production which increases yield at the cost of environment.

He referred to instances of indiscriminate use of fertiliser and pesticide in the country's agriculture and said these had caused devastating effects on productivity of the soil, making the farmers' lives miserable.

Khushi Kabir described the relationship between people and development and called for banning import of all kinds of toxic fertiliser.

Savar poura polls: Token hunger strike today

SAVAR, Oct 25: Demonstrators brought out a huge procession and gheraoed the municipal office today in protest against the postponement of Savar pourashava election which was scheduled for October 16, reports UNB.

The protesters will observe a token hunger strike tomorrow and form a human-chain on Wednesday.

Led by Ashraf Uddin Khan Emu, a chairman candidate, the protesters demonstrated in front of the poura bhaban for two hours.

District courts

From Page 1 Col 4

ter the hearing of the cases was completed, the sources said.

It was also found that in some cases, both in the magistrate and judge's courts, witnesses in criminal cases — primarily government witnesses — were not being presented in court.

It is learnt that the Supreme Court is likely to recommend the transfer of about five judges in the district courts that were inspected recently.

The sources added that the Supreme Court judges observed during the inspection that the inexperienced judicial officers appointed by the government and acute shortage of infrastructural facilities are also hindering the smooth functioning of the district courts and causing unnecessary delays in the judicial process.

Adhoc appointments were given to inexperienced and untrained assistant judges and judicial magistrates by the previous government when courts were set up in all erstwhile upazilas.

During the Ershad regime, the number of munsifs or assistant judges was increased to 400 from 121 and the number of district judges was expanded from 19 to 61 district and sessions judges. Similarly, the number of judicial magistrates was nearly quadrupled.

The already acute shortage of courtrooms in the district courts was compounded when the present government ordered all the thana courts to be shifted back to the district headquarters. As an example, the sources pointed out, the Tangail district courts have only five courtrooms (*ejlas*) although there are a total of 11 benches.

PARJATAN MONTH '93

Attractive Variety Show

Date: 26-10-93
Tuesday
Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Waterfront Restaurant
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