



Special Powers (Amendment) Bill '94 rejected

A bill brought by NDP leader Salahuddin Qader Chowdhury seeking to amend the Special Powers Act, 1974 was not allowed by the government side to be introduced in Parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Report on judiciary bill

The select committee, constituted in 1991 as per the proposal of the mover of the bill, held 13 meetings and recommended amendment to the Articles 95, 98, 109, 115 and 116 of the Constitution.

Salauddin Yusuf (AL), and other members of the select committee Sudhangshu Shekhar Halder, Mohammad Assaduzzaman (AL), Suranjit Sengupta (GP) and Sheikh Ansar Ali (Jamaat) gave note of dissent to the report.

While giving note of dissent, they observed that such amendments would strike at the very root of the whole question of the independence of the subordinate judiciary and the magistrates exercising judicial functions.

"We have not been able to agree with the amendment proposed in Article 95, and 98, because not only the innovations are contrary to the provisions as originally enacted in the Constitution of 1972, but these would allow greater executive inroads in the independence of supreme judiciary through the modalities of making appointment of the judge," they noted.

Suranjit Sengupta, in his note of dissent, said that the proposed amendments to the draft bill did not provide any sense of direction for the separation of the judiciary from the executives. He suggested that such an objective could be revived only through repealing the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1975.

The Jamaat member Sheikh Ansar Ali expressed his agreement with Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the report but dissented with Section 4 relating to Article 116 of the Constitution. Another member of the committee, Advocate Fazle Rabbi (JP), though dissented with the report, did not submit any separate report to the committee.



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina seen among guests at an iftar party at her Minto Road residence yesterday evening. — Star photo

Proceedings in 3 cases against Ershad adjourned

Proceedings in three separate corruption cases against former President General H M Ershad were adjourned yesterday at the Special Judge's court. It was in deference to the directives of the superior court, reports BSS.

The order of the High Court forbids such proceedings in these cases against General Ershad without ensuring the accused free consultation with his lawyer.

The proceedings were adjourned by the Additional Sessions Judge and President of the Special Court Ansuruddin Sikder.

Doctors on strike

March 10 was fixed for hearing of all the three cases. The Chinese leader referred to the SAARC and lauded the efforts of Bangladesh in promoting good neighbourly and friendly relations.

He expressed the hope that the SAARC countries will on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence and in the spirit of mutual respect and consultation on an equal footing find appropriate solutions to the outstanding problems between them.

Turning to his country, Qian Qichen said China today enjoys economic growth, political stability, national unity and social progress. Yet with a large population and uneven development among regions, China will inevitably encounter more problems and difficulties on the road ahead.

Earlier on arrival on a four-day visit yesterday he said it was the 'set policy' of the Chinese government to strengthen the existing friendly ties with Bangladesh.

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China won't seek hegemony

China, who is accompanied by his wife, was met at the airport by Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and his wife.

Bangladesh Ambassador to China Mustafizur Rahman and Chinese Ambassador in Bangladesh Zhang Zu Jiang were also present.

The Chinese Foreign Minister is currently on a tour of several countries in the region. He flew in here from Pakistan.

"Bangladesh is a very friendly country — we have traditional ties with the mutually beneficial cooperation on the increase," Qian spoke of the Dhaka-Beijing relationship.

The Chinese Foreign Minister said he had been to Dhaka once before and this time he gladly accepted an invitation from his Bangladesh counterpart for a visit again because this would provide him an opportunity to see the progress made here in the mean time.

During his stay here, he is expected to call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

He is also expected to meet leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Sheikh Hasina.

Qian will have official talks with the foreign minister at state guest house Meghna today (Friday) covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations, particularly matters of trade and economic cooperation.

During Qian's current visit, the two countries are expected to sign an agreement for 8.5 million US dollars Chinese credit for Bangladesh.

Qian's itinerary includes a visit to Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge over the river Buriganga, the National Museum and the Jatiya Sangsad.

The Chinese leader will hold a press conference at state guest house Padma on Sunday at 10 am prior to his departure for Bangkok enroute to Colombo and Male.

still better if we can have special and differential market access opportunities as envisaged in the recently concluded Uruguay Round Agreements.

Referring to Bangladesh government's efforts to alleviate poverty, the Foreign Minister said the government was attaching the highest priority to poverty alleviation.

"We are specially focusing on primary education, rural employment generation and primary health care," he added.

In the field of rural development, Bangladesh has achieved major success. BRAC and Grameen Bank are among the most successful NGOs making major contributions in supplementing the determined efforts of the government, he told his Chinese counterpart.

Mostafiz hoped the visit of Qian would be an important landmark in the development of bilateral relations between the two Asian countries.

State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman took the floor to accept the opposition challenge of a discussion on the alleged corruptions in the government. He said, the opposition was also involved in corruptions and the treasury bench was willing to discuss the 'corruption issue' in general. Fazlur Rahman, amidst cheerful thumping of the opposition benches, urged the Speaker to fix a date for a discussion.

Fire breaks out at Ctg port

CHITTAGONG, Feb 24: A fire which broke out in Flotilla shade of Chittagong port this evening gutted huge quantities of various valuable goods, port and fire brigade sources said, reports BSS.

Sources said nine fire units had battled to extinguish the fire that continued for over half an hour in and around the godown of the shade.

The origin of the fire and extent of damage was not ascertained immediately but unofficial sources said the damage was huge.

When contacted, port officials told BSS that a three member enquiry committee has been formed to investigate the incident.

One killed in Sylhet road mishap

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Feb 24: A motorcycle rider was run over by a speeding truck at Islampur on Sylhet-Tamabil road this morning.

The accident occurred at about 11:30 am when the truck hit the motorcycle from behind, witnesses said. The motorcycle rider died on the spot.

The victim, aged about 25, could not be identified immediately. The truck driver fled the scene.

4 die in 72 hrs in Sylhet jail

From Our Correspondent SYLHET, Feb 24: Another under-trial prisoner died in the Sylhet District Jail yesterday.

With this, the number of deaths in the jail during the last 72 hours stood at four, of whom 3 were reportedly mentally retarded.

Anwar Ali, 26, of village Shashyaura under Sylhet sadar thana died of heart attack yesterday morning. Ali, an accused of murdering his wife, had been mentally sick for months.

JS ruling on Sunday

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Mohammad Nasim submitted the newspaper clippings but not the supporting documents.

The Speaker, replying to the opposition Chief Whip, said he was considering rejecting the motions because the opposition had failed to submit the required primary proofs of the alleged corruptions. The chair, however, referring to a specific clause of the JS Rules of Procedure, told the opposition members that they were free to move any motion any time if they could produce any documentary proof.

A disappointed Nasim reacted against the Speaker's observation saying the opposition had at its disposal enough documentary evidence to support the allegations of corruptions and would produce the documents in the House.

At this point, Nasim, making an oblique reference to the Works Minister, said when a minister replaced his three-katha residential plot with a nine-katha piece of land, it was definitely an instance of corruption.

Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Miah at once rose to protest Nasim's remarks but he was not given the floor by the chair. An extremely excited Rafiq though not given the microphone started accusing the opposition members of their involvement in similar corruptions. He said, Tofael Ahmed and Shawkat Ali of the Awami League (AL) and Dr Wajed Ali Miah, husband of the leader of the opposition, Sheikh Hasina, had got bigger plots in violation of rules.

Rafiq, however, did not find anything wrong with the allotments of the plots because 'all of them are distinguished personalities in their respective professions.'

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Rashed Khan Menon, Moudud Ahmed, Tofael Ahmed and Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury of the opposition thanked Fazlur Rahman and requested the Speaker to fix a date at once, as the demand for the debate was unanimous.

Tofael Ahmed, while thanking Fazlur Rahman said it would be interesting to discuss the sources of the wealth of the Prime Minister's son and brother when the late presi-

The Midnight File

Yeltsin warns Russian regions against leaving federation

MOSCOW, Feb 24: President Boris Yeltsin warned Russian regions today against leaving the Russian federation and inflicting economic damage on each other. "Russia is too dear to us to allow its break-up," he said in a state of the nation address that focused on strengthening the federation on the basis of a new constitution adopted in December, reports Reuter.

Kachins sign truce with Yangon

YANGON, Feb 24: Rebels of the Kachin ethnic minority on Thursday signed a ceasefire agreement with the government, formally ending 32 years of armed rebellion. Details of the agreement, negotiated last year, were not immediately available, but Kachin officials previously stated that it is limited to a military ceasefire, reports AP.

OIC urges NATO to extend threat of air strike on Serbs

BRUSSELS, Feb 24: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called on NATO today to extend its threat of air strikes to other regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to secure a ceasefire there, reports AFP.

OIC Secretary General Hamid Algabid warned officials of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance of the "urgent necessity of reopening the airport at Tuzla which province a vital route for the supply of humanitarian aid to the stricken populations," the organisation said in a statement issued here.

NATO has indicated that it would be "premature" to seek to apply the Sarajevo ultimatum — in which besieging Serbs were ordered to withdraw their heavy weapons or face air strikes — to other besieged areas of Bosnia.

The OIC expressed its concern at the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in Sarajevo, the statement said.

It noted that the 51 member nations of the OIC were also willing to send troops to serve with the UN protection force in former Yugoslavia.

Algabid urged NATO to maintain its pressure on the Serbs until they ceased their aggression and a fair peace is established over the whole of

Energy Minister visits fire-hit Satanandi

COMILLA, Feb 24: Police have so far arrested 18 people in connection with the February 19 fire incident at a village in Daudkandi thana that left 19 families homeless, reports UNB.

Energy Minister Dr Khandker Mosharrar Hossain today visited the fire-affected area, which falls within his parliamentary constituency, and instructed the district administration to nab the culprits without fail and award them immediate punishment.

A group of miscreants set fire to the houses of 15 families at Gayenbari in Satanandi village on February 19 night. Forty persons were accused of being involved in the incident.

The minister distributed 15 bundles of CI sheets, 150 pieces of sarees and a cash amount of Tk 7,500 among the affected families.

Mosharrar told a public gathering that some vested political parties were trying to politicise the incident to fulfil their ill-motives.

"These identified political quarters are engaged in a propaganda against the BNP government to cover up their misdeeds and black chapter when they were in power," he said.

FAP authorities

From Page 1 Col 4 FAP implementation, he said.

It was also one of the fundamental tenets of the democratic governance and inspiration to promote equitable environmental order in the country, he added.

The FAP is a massive flood control programme initiated by the government following the severe floods of 1987 and 1988.

The programme aims at charting an integrated national water management policy to control floods in the country permanently.

The FAP is financially and technically supported by the international donors including the US, the UK, France, the Netherlands and Japan.

The initial cost of implementation of the FAP is estimated between 10 and 15 billion US dollars.

At the study level, the FAP is divided into 26 components. Critics of the FAP fear that physical construction of embankments under the programme would cause irreversible environmental hazards, displace an unspecified number of people and, above all, re-mould the lives of millions of people living on the flood plains.

However, the FAP authorities refute the allegations saying these are all just "hunch". They say a mechanism has been evolved in the FAP to involve and ensure the people's participation.

When implemented fully, the FAP will not only bring about a long term solution to the flood problems in the country but also help turn the economic wheel through more scientific use of land and water and other resources, they said.