

Azam had abandoned this country: AG

Attorney General Aminul Huq yesterday submitted before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court that Golem Azam had made a concerted campaign against the creation of Bangladesh and thereby had abandoned this country, reports BSS.

Placing arguments before the court which resumed for the third day yesterday the hearing of the government's appeal against the verdict of the High Court Division restoring the citizenship of Golem Azam, the Attorney General said that even if Azam had a house in Brahmanbaria or in Maghbaria, he believed it was under the suzerainty of Pakistan.

The court comprising Justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Justice ATM Afzal, Justice Mustafa Kamal and Justice Latifur Rahman heard the Attorney General for nearly three and a half hours.

Attorney General Huq submitted that all the deeds and actions of Golem Azam during 6 public petitions placed in JS

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali accepted and placed six petitions of the member of the public in Parliament yesterday, reports BSS.

The petitions dealt with matters of finance and general subjects.

The petitioners: Sheikh Amanullah, first class government contractor of Khulna who sought enquiry into alleged corruption of railway chief engineer and his associates and punishment of culprits, Syed Abdullah-El-Wafa, managing director, Sherpur Food Industries who prayed for necessary steps against Bangladesh Krishi Bank for destroying his entrepreneurship, Sheikh Gola Mustafa, general secretary, Hardboard Mills Employees Union who appealed for reconsideration of the decision of disinvestment of the mills which had been earning profit since 1977.

The fourth petitioner Habibul Hoq Chuni, proprietor M/s Hoq and company of Jessore sought intervention for awarding work-order in favour of his company being the lowest bidder for filling the Shandhar Khal.

Syed Abdullah Yousuf and nine others of Khulna sought for the release of their only property from requisition by Khulna Development Authority.

AKM Saffuddin of Khan Jahan Ali Road, Khulna, in his petition sought of protection against some anti-social elements who in connivance with local administration are trying to forcibly take possession of shrimp cultivation land leased out to him earlier.

Services under CAA essential

The government has declared the services of all grade of officers and employees of all departments and units of the Civil Aviation Authority most essential. It was officially announced here yesterday, reports BSS.

Private investment

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The Structuring of Private Power Projects, Mark Peterson, senior vice president of CC Pace Resources on the 'Commercial Agreement: Key Elements of the Business Deal' and Roger Wagner, a partner of the McDermott, Will & Emery on the 'Tariffs, Incentives and Permits' in the first session.

Mark Peterson made another presentation on 'The Development Process' at the same session while Chief Editor of The Financial Express Rezauddin Ahmed and Foreign Investors' Chamber President Mahbub Jamil were the discussants.

In the second session, USAID's Jeffrey Humber spoke on the 'Solicitation, Procurement and Award of Private Power Projects', Roger Wagner on the 'Security Package and Financing Agreements', Robert J Fernstrom of the Salomon Brothers presented a paper on the 'Financing Private Power: Private Banking Perspectives'.

The Daily Star editor Mahfuz Anam and President of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Abdur Rob Chowdhury participated in the discussion.

Emphasising the importance of alternative sources of fuel, Rezauddin Ahmed of The Financial Express said, 75 per cent of the country's power generation plants are gas-based and the gas reserve would be dried up by the year 2015.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrai, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.

North's troops capture air base near Aden

SANAA, May 9: Troops loyal to Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh today captured the south's main air base, near its Aden stronghold, a northern military spokesman said, reports AFP.

The spokesman said the base of Al Anad fell in fighting around the southern port city of Aden.

Diplomats in the region had said the base, 50 kilometres (30 miles) North of the city, had been captured on Sunday, but the south later denied the report.

The southern forces of Vice President Ali Salem Al-Baid have a second air base in the Hadramaut, 700 kilometres (420 miles) to the east of Aden.

The south has been counting on its warplanes and Scud missiles to hold off the north since civil war broke out on Thursday, after several months of political feuding between Saleh and Baid.

Two Scud missiles crashed into the Yemeni capital today, without causing any casualties, after the north said its troops were closing in on the southern stronghold of Aden.

Witnesses said the missiles fell in empty lots in the suburbs, causing little damage.

12 hurt as police, mob clash at Netrakona

NETRAKONA, May 9: At least 12 people including a magistrate were injured in a clash between police and mob at Atpara thana here today, police sources said, reports BSS.

The sources said the clash took place in front of an ongoing SSC examinations centre, 12 kms east of here, after the expulsion of some examinees who reported to have adopted unfair means in the examination hall.

They said immediately after the expulsion of the examinees an unruly mob tried to storm the examination hall and attacked the police on guard with sticks and stones.

DU Arts Faculty bldg ransacked

A group of unruly students of the Dhaka University yesterday ransacked some window panes of the arts faculty building demanding shifting of the MA final examinations scheduled to begin from May 15, reports UNB.

The rampaging students numbering about 15 brought out an angry procession on the campus and ransacked the window panes of the faculty at about 11:30 am. They also blasted at least four cocktails.

Panicked students, including freshers, ran helter-skelter for safety, witnesses said.

Prokrichi

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"We hope the donors would make the future assistance to Bangladesh conditional on administrative reforms", said Dr M A Majed, Convenor of the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council, an umbrella organisation of some 70 thousand professionals of the country.

Chaired by Abul Kashem, the rally was addressed by the Council Secretary General M A Hena, Ibrahim Mia, Dr Gazi Abdul Huq, Javed Iqbal, Ruhul Matin, Abu Yusuf, Ahsanul Huq, Dr Z A Matin Al-Helal, Mesbahur Rahman Tutul, Saleh Ahmed, and A T M Salahuddin Ahmad Chowdhury.

ANH Akhter Hossain, M A K Azad and Dr Mushtaq Hossain were also present. The Prokrichi leaders at the rally urged the government to implement their 17-point charter of demands.

Otherwise, they would launch a greater movement, the leaders cautioned.

The present bureaucracy was the only impediment to development and an accountable democratic government, Dr Majed told the rally, organised by the Dhaka City Unit of the Action Council.

The people would never forgive the government if it failed to bring about the desired reform in the administration, he warned.

M A Hena said democracy would be at a stake if the Bureaucracy was not re-structured immediately.

Ruhul Matin pointed out that the government had 'miserably failed' in honouring its promise to the professionals. "We are now back on the streets only because of the unprecedented breach of words by the government," he said.

Javed Iqbal called upon the country's professionals to join the work abstention on June 14, 15 and 16.

The 17 point charter of demands include separation of the judiciary from the administration, removing service anomalies created by the Matin Committee, formulation of the Rules of Precedence, and handing over the executive power of the ministries to the public representatives.



South African President-elect Nelson Mandela sits next to his estranged wife Winnie for a brief moment during the inaugural sitting of South Africa's first all-race parliament in Cape Town yesterday. — AFP photo

He embraced many but Winnie!

CAPE TOWN, May 9: Nelson Mandela and his estranged wife, Winnie, took the parliamentary oath together yesterday, but the president-elect never acknowledged her presence, even when she sat next to him, reports AP.

His refusal to even look her away showed the extent of her exclusion from the inner circle of top African National Congress leaders, despite her popularity among militant youths.

Wearing a black and green outfit with a green turban, Mrs Mandela joined her husband and eight others in the first group to be sworn in as members of the new National Assembly. He never looked at her.

His coldness contrasted with his joyful demeanor with others during the proceedings. Several times, he stood up to embrace leaders of opposition parties and others.

The couple separated in 1992, after Mrs Mandela was convicted on a charge of kidnapping and linked to an extramarital affair.

She expressed hope in recent weeks of reuniting with her husband, but he rejected it immediately. Mrs Mandela was not even invited to the main party after Mandela's inauguration Tuesday. His two daughters with Winnie — Zindzi and Zenani — will escort him.

The Midnight File

Al Gore, Hillary arrive in Johannesburg

JOHANNESBURG, May 9: US Vice-President Al Gore and First Lady Hillary Clinton arrived here today to attend the official inauguration Tuesday of president-elect Nelson Mandela. Gore told reporters at Jan Smuts Airport that he hoped Mandela's inauguration would herald a new start in relations between the two countries, reports AFP.

Serbs shell UN armoured car

TUZLA, Bosnia, May 9: Bosnian Serbs shelled a UN armoured car on peacekeeping patrol near Tuzla in north Bosnia today killing two local civilians walking along the road, a UN military spokesman said. He said two civilians were wounded in the attack in the hamlet of Gornji Rainci some 20 km east of Tuzla, one of six UN-designated safe areas largely enclosed by Serbs. The UN vehicle was not hit and no UN personnel were injured, reports Reuters.

Hasina seeks help

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astation by the cyclonic storm and gave a detailed account of the loss of life and property. "Because of resource constraint, Bangladesh is not in a position to face the aftermath of the severe cyclone storm," she said and appealed for international help in mitigating the sufferings of the hapless people.

The Awami League chief welcomed the conclusion of the Uruguay Round after seven years of arduous negotiations. "It will not only stimulate the Asian economy but also the global economy as a whole," Hasina told the function of socialists who are ideologically opposed to the GATT which envisages open economy.

She, however, called for protecting the interest of the developing countries, particularly the LDCs and LLDCs. "Though free trade is always welcome for increasing productivity and competitiveness which in their wake bring about progress and prosperity, the special socio-economic situation in the Third World countries should be taken into due cognizance."

The Awami League leader said, the world is now going through a historic transition. Though the end of the cold war has greatly reduced the threat of world war, she said, it has not diminished the possibilities of ethnic, religious and territorial conflicts or dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

She said Asia is no exception to these global trends. Stable peace is, and will continue to be, a key to economic development and democratic progress in the Asia-Pacific community, she observed.

"We are encouraged as we see the pursuit of democratisation continuing in every country of Asia. Inalienable human rights such as freedom of thought, of expression, of political activity and of business must be protected and promoted."

Hasina condemned all systems which suppress human rights and control individual ideas. "Such system," she said, "must be rejected."

Referring to the development assistance provided by the developed countries, the Awami League president said such assistance should be augmented to meet the changing needs of aid recipients.

She called for bridging the gap between the poor and the rich countries, protection of natural environment, prevention of civilian aid being put to military ends and the promotion of human rights.

Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed her party's commitment to eliminate poverty, improve health standards and establish systems of universal education in Bangladesh.

She was first to speak on the draft. After the President of the Socialist International had opened discussion, the Bangladesh leader was given the floor.

21 more bodies of foreigners recovered

COX'S BAZAR, May 9: Police today recovered 21 more bodies of Thai fishermen from the cyclone-hit Teknaf coast, pushing the number of foreigners — mostly Thais — killed in the storm to 86.

District administration sources told BSS here tonight that of the bodies, 21 were recovered from Paharchhara of Teknaf.

Boycotting MPs

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signed it.

Each MP is entitled to get an allowance of Taka 200 a day for attending Parliament sittings.

However, the accounts section of the Parliament Secretariat moved a file on May 2 seeking the opinion of the Speaker whether the opposition MPs would get the allowance since they are boycotting the current JS session.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali is learnt to have decided yesterday in favour of disbursing the money.

A top official of the Parliament Secretariat told this correspondent that signing of the attendance register by the MPs amounted to their presence in Parliament because, according to rules, Parliament lobby is an integral part of the main chamber of Jatiya Sangsad. A source, however, pointed out that the issue should not be considered from the legal or technical point of view. The issue is a moral one, he said.

Tk 15b repaid to banks

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measures.

"The inability to implement the ADP projects fully has led to a lower than expected deficit and this shortfall has not been offset by a one-for-one fall in aid disbursement," the report said.

But if the ADP had been implemented as planned in the revised target, the budgetary deficit would have been around Tk 5 billion higher.

On the other hand, the government's borrowing from "non-bank public" grew three times to Tk 11.7 billion in FY '93 from its level the previous year, although it did not need the additional financing. For this borrowing, the government had to bear interest rates of 12.75 to 18 per cent when the commercial banks were paying between five and 11 per cent on fixed-term deposits.

When approached for comments, a spokesman of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) told The Daily Star that by doing such exercises, the government was breaching fiscal discipline and transparency which it had promised since coming to power.

The MCCI spokesman also said, this is a losing exercise in the sense that the indebtedness of the SOEs cannot be minimised without major structural changes mainly through privatisation.

"Such measures involve diversion of development resources to non-productive expenditures," he said adding that in other words, the implementation of the ADP is affected due to resource constraints as funds are diverted elsewhere. "This also has an impact on the money and capital markets in the sense the government has been borrowing from the public at rates higher than that offered by commercial banks."

Similarly, lending to the government at higher interest rates denies the stock market of public savings coming into corporate shares, the MCCI pointed out. This transferring of resources from the private sector to the banking system is "problematic because the banks are unable to recycle these resources into new loans to finance private, productive activities," the World Bank observed.

The lending rates of the banks remained high partly because the high rates paid on savings certificates have precluded a major decline in deposit rates paid by banks. The World Bank felt the government should bring down the interest rates on savings certificates to solve the problems of the banking system.

Weavers' call to accept 17-point demand soon

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Sangikta Tanti Samity has demanded immediate fulfillment of its 17-point demand for 'salvaging the potential handloom sector.'

President of the Samity Anwaruddin Khalifa and general secretary Shamsul Alam Zulfikar in joint statement yesterday, also demanded release of the weavers arrested on charge of defaulting repayment of loans.

They held the government responsible for the poor loan recovery from the handloom sector and said the failure of the government in implementing the Weavers' Credit Scheme made the weavers defaulters.

Shrimp beds

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5017 acres.

Our Cox's Bazar Correspondent reported that currently semi-intensive shrimp culture is practised on 580 acres of land while 16,000 acres were under the traditional shrimp farming.

Quoting the Shrimp Farmers Group, the report said that the cyclone damaged shrimp cultivation on 3620 acres in Teknaf Thana, 1550 acres in Ukha Thana, 2250 acres in Cox's Bazar Sadar, 3650 acres in Chakoria, 2510 acres in Maheshkhali and 2500 acres in Kutubdia thana.

Besides, extensive damage was caused to fingerlings and fish feed and fishing gears.

The Shrimp Farmers Group pointed out that the damage could have been much lower if the Prime Minister's instruction for constructing an embankment was carried out in time.

The Prime Minister, on April 29, 1992, gave the instruction which was later okayed by the ECNEC.

Anti-corruption sermons for Ershad in jail

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury told Parliament yesterday that 'maulana shahs' in jail were imparting religious teachings to former president Ershad to discourage him from doing any corruption in future, reports UNB.

Replying to a supplementary from a BNP member, the Home Minister said Ershad who was jailed for 20 years on corruption and various other charges, was being 'corrected' through religious teachings in Dhaka Central Jail.

Sarder Sakawat Hossain Bakul, MP, put the query after the Home Minister had informed the House of the recommendations of Jail Reforms Commission that include, inter alia, religious sermons for the convicts.

Leader of the House Prime Minister Begum Zia and her party MPs were seen smiling at Bakul's question about Ershad and the Home Minister's prompt reply in a tone of humour.

The Home Minister said, 'Ershad usurped power at gunpoint from an elected President (Justice Abdus Sattar). During his rule, he was plagued with corruption. He was sentenced to 20 years in jail. More cases are pending against him.'



Singers performing Tagore songs at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday as part of the 133rd birth anniversary celebrations of the great poet. — Star photo

Probe body fails

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der scrutiny in general. But the treasury bench members asserted that the investigation must concentrate on particular allegations made against the minister. They also pointed out that parliamentary standing committees are there to scrutinise the activities of different ministries on regular basis.

The JS yesterday witnessed passage of two bills, with the Opposition seats empty. The Opposition MPs have been boycotting the session to press home their demand for early general elections under a caretaker government.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golem Hafiz moved the Law and Legal Documents (Amendment) Bill, 1993, seeking replacement of the word 'upazila' by 'thana' in all the legal documents to giving legal basis to thanas following abolition of the upazila system on November 23, 1991.

The bill was passed by voice vote.

Another bill passed yesterday was moved by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Jahanara Begum. The proposed law — the Shilpakala Academy (Amendment) Bill, 1994, sought to empower the government to cancel the nomination of any government-nominated member of the Executive Council of the Shilpakala Academy.

The bill also seeks to upgrade the status of the academy secretary.

The JS yesterday also witnessed the usual one-hour question-answer session, chaired by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panfil.

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia was present during the question-answer session.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali adjourned the session at 7:30 pm and it resumes at 4:30 this afternoon.

Rohingyas

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dited.

On Myanmar side, the number of reception camps would be increased to 3,400 for a week. Meanwhile, more refugees have enrolled their names for repatriation.

Some 2,500 Rohingya Muslims who fled their homes in Arakan since 1991 alleging military persecution, had taken shelter in 17 camps in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban.

The UNHCR country representative, Chan Nguyen-Tang, the deputy representative, George T Chponda, and head of the Cox's Bazar branch office Seefano Severe were present at the press conference.

Werner Blatter lauded the Bangladesh government's steps to tackle the post-cyclone situation.

Responding to a question, Blatter said, the donor countries had pledged another 12 million dollars for the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees.

"The donor community wants to spend money on repatriation rather than on maintaining the refugees at the camps," he said.

Replying to another question, Blatter said the main objective of his visit was to assess the damage caused by the cyclone but he also talked about the MOU. The assessment was not yet completed, he added.

According to UNHCR estimate some 61 refugees were killed in the cyclone, he added.

The UNHCR provided 25,000 US dollars for the cyclone victims, Blatter mentioned.

Our Cox's Bazar Correspondent adds, Werner Blatter visited the Damdania-2 camp in the morning and handed over four trucks of relief materials to the district authorities.

The local authorities informed the UNHCR executive that damage to the camps was estimated at Tk one crore.