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Ershad's lawyers protest rejection of adjournment

Lawyers defending the former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad in the Japanese Boat Purchase Case yesterday boycotted the court as their prayer for adjournment of the proceedings were not entertained, reports BSS.

The proceedings of the special judge's court however was carried out despite the absence of the former general's defence counsels.

Divisional Special Judge Anwaruddin Sikder who is the Presiding Judge in the one-man court rejected a prayer submitted by Yusuf Hossain Humayun, Ershad's lawyer to adjourn the proceedings enabling the defence to go into the volume of documents related to the case.

As the court was to start in taking up the deposition of the first prosecution witness in the case, nearly a dozen lawyers of the former ruler led by Humayun left the court. Before leaving the court, Humayun said since their prayer was not accepted, they would leave the court.

Yesterday was the date earlier fixed for the deposition of the witness in this case whose charge was framed for the second time on April 11. The first charge-framing done late last year in the absence of Ershad's lawyer had to be dropped following an order of the High Court in view of defence petition.

A K M Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh who is the PW-1, while deposing before the court read out the *ezhar* (first information report) which was filed with Ramna thana on 22.7.1991. Hossain who was Deputy Director, Bureau of Anti Corruption at the time of filing the FIR, testified the *ezhar*, which has been exhibited in the court.

The case relates to accepting the second lowest bidder in the procurement of emergency rescue boats from Japan under a Japanese debt relief grant by violating set rules thereby causing the state to sustain a loss amounting to Tk 33 crore. Ershad violated the rules either to derive benefit for himself or to give favour to others, the charge said.

Besides Ershad, K Inoyama, a Japanese national and an employee of Marubeni Corporation, Japan, the company which was the lowest bidder in the procurement case were also indicted.

The Divisional Judge enquired from Humayun, since they need the document so badly, why they did not approach him or the prosecution during the last one month. This is a plea to kill time, Sikder told the defence coun-

sel. Public Prosecutor Ashraf-uddin Ahmed informed the court that during the period since the charge was framed, none of the defence approached him to see the documents. He said now the witness has come all the way from a remote place, the defence has come out with a flimsy ground.

Ahmed requested the chair not to entertain any defence request for adjournment, he said let the deposition start and offered defence to adjourn the proceedings allowing them to see documents before cross examinations.

Besides Humayun, Nital Roy Chowdhury and Sudhir Kumar Hazra demanded adjournment of the proceedings and stated ground why they could not make the prayer earlier. After hearing two sides, the judge ordered the deposition to begin and fixed May 28 as the next date.

When the defence lawyers left the court, the judge recalled an observation of the High Court which relates to abandoning clients by the counsel.

After the deposition of Hossain, Judge Sikder was about to take two other cases which was fixed for yesterday. But he could not do it since there was no defence lawyer.

Sikder said the defence lawyers came with preconceived ideas, otherwise they should have been present in other cases. "Professional ethics demand that they (lawyers) should be present during trial", the judge said.

Bosnia seeks

From Page 1 Col 5 appeared the key issues—mainly, the question of territory—would be as unmanageable as ever.

"What is the instrument of enforcement of any decision?" Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said, speaking to reporters. "That is the key question."

"What is their commitment, what are they prepared to do?" he asked. Many other initiatives have failed for lack of commitment and enforcement.

Silajdzic said he posed those questions to US Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Saturday and was told that the United States, its European allies and Russia were working on the question.

Western diplomats were vague on how they might try to enforce the agreement, but held out the prospect of unspecified tougher measures if the talks remain stalled.

Agricultural subsidy

From Page 1 Col 3 of poverty in Bangladesh can only be mainstreaming the poor in the overall economic process. Participants in the dialogue agreed that this can be achieved by giving more priority to agriculture. The major recommendations in this respect were reintroduction of subsidy, more investment in agriculture and introduction of subsidised credit.

Saifur Rahman has not indicated how, if at all, he is going to accommodate these recommendations in the next budget. The central theme of the recommendations is that there should be more government presence in agriculture. This would mean moving the clock back. There is no guarantee, however, that the poor will benefit from it. The benefit of subsidised inputs and credit will not all go to small and marginal farmers. It will not go at all to the landless. And, the budgeting cost of agricultural subsidies will have to be borne by the rural households themselves—at least to a significant extent.

In fact, the experience of the last few years suggest that the farmers are better-off if they do not have to rely upon the government for supply of input. They need infrastructure support like rural roads,

surface irrigation etc. The government has not been all too successful in meeting this need—not because of lack of money, but because the Irrigation and Agriculture Ministries which keep on claiming more and more resources in the name of poverty alleviation through rural development are one of the most inefficient users of such resources.

Actually, the farmers and the rural poor will be better-off if more attention is given in areas other than agriculture. The huge loss that is suffered on account of state owned enterprises is too high cost for sheltered employment of a few. The banking system is carrying a large part of this loss in their books which is one of the factors preventing a decline in the real interest rate. Every year the budget has to absorb a large part of the loss and hence the government's revenue need has to be met—by taxing diesel and natural gas for example. In fact, if the agriculture sector is viewed in its relationship with the rest of the economy the picture that emerges is that of a shock absorber for failures in other sectors. Agricultural subsidy is a costly, inappropriate and unsustainable means of the unfavourable impact of this asymmetry on the rural poor.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over a meeting of the National Economic Council at the NEC auditorium in the city yesterday. —PID photo

ADP projects

From Page 1 Col 4 conditions before undertaking projects," the Prime Minister told the meeting.

She reminded that her government was pledge-bound to the people for ensuring accountability in development activities. "We are making untiring efforts for fulfilling this commitment."

Endorsing the meeting's deliberations and recommendations, the Prime Minister urged all to be more active in implementing her government's policies and programmes for economic uplift of the country through optimum utilisation of the limited resources. "Our efforts towards poverty alleviation must be made a success."

Referring to the prioritisation in her government's development programme, Begum Zia said development planning meant specific action plan. Implementation of the plan brings development, progress and prosperity.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to complete work properly by various ministries and departments, the Prime Minister said.

Foreign jails

From Page 1 Col 8 people became the victims of some unscrupulous brokers who had no contract with any foreign agencies. The government has been trying hard to get them released and provide them with jobs, Bhuiyan added.

The labour minister said, the authorities have started a publicity campaign to create awareness about the so-called manpower agents and also about the procedures required to be followed in getting jobs abroad so that innocent people do not suffer.

At the same time, stern actions have been taken against some manpower agencies who are accused of deceiving the clients.

Recently, the licences of 16 recruiting agencies have been cancelled and 10 agents suspended for malpractices, he added.

The minister urged the people to be cautious before entering into any financial deal with any agent. Only 355 licensed agencies can recruit and send people abroad legally, the minister added.

12 massacred in Johannesburg

JOHANNESBURG, May 14: Gunmen massacred 12 people in Johannesburg's volatile east rand township of Tokoza, scene of past clashes between rival ANC and Inkatha factions, police said today, reports Reuters.

Police said there was no indication so far of a motive for the killing, the worst single incident of violence since South Africa elected its first black majority government, led by Nelson Mandela's ANC, at the end of April.

Bomb depot explosion

MOSCOW, May 14: A depot stocking bombs for Russian Pacific fleet warplanes blew up today, about 100 kms (60 miles) north of Vladivostok in far-eastern Russia, Itar-Tass News Agency reported, says AFP. The blasts at 3:40 pm (0440 GMT) near the village of Novotrojino shook Vladivostok, witnesses said in the agency report.

Hasina's Japan tour fruitful, says Kibria

A top Awami League advisor yesterday claimed that Sheikh Hasina's visit to Japan was a 'great success'.

"Sheikh Hasina's Japan visit was not only eventful but also significant and fruitful," Awami League Advisory Council member S A M S Kibria, who had accompanied the party chief to Tokyo, told UNB yesterday.

Hasina, who was in Tokyo to attend a 2-day meeting of the Socialist International, had talks with Japanese Prime Minister, Tsutomu Hata and Foreign Minister Kaka Jawa on bilateral matters, especially on economic cooperation.

The Awami League leader also met with leading industrialists of Japan including representatives of the Mitsubishi company and discussed with them the possibility of increasing Japanese investment in Bangladesh.

Kibria, a former foreign

secretary, said the Socialist International conference was hosted by Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Democratic Socialist Party of Japan (DSPJ). They were included in the Hosokawa coalition government. The present Hata government also has SDP support and it expects to get the support of DSPJ.

Kibria said Hasina had discussions with leaders of these two important parties on different aspects of Bangladesh-Japan relations.

Replying to a question, Kibria said although the Awami League is not a member of the Socialist International, it attended the council as a guest party. He said the Socialist International stood by the people of Bangladesh in 1971 and Awami League's participation in the conference is a mark of respect and friendship for the organisation.

Int'l Day of Families today

The first "International Day of the Families" will be observed in the country today, as elsewhere in the world, reports UNB.

Elaborate programmes have been chalked out to observe the day. The Ministry of Social Welfare will arrange programmes in the capital and district and thana levels.

Highlighting the importance of the day, President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia have given separate messages.

In the capital, the day will start with a colourful rally from Bangladesh Shishu Academy ending at Osmani Memorial Hall premises. President Abdur Rahman Biswas will address the opening ceremony at Osmani Memorial Hall.

A seminar on "Families in Bangladesh and practices of Democracy in Families" will be held in Dhaka.

Striking teachers

From Page 1 Col 8 on June 2. Besides, the striking teachers will collect relief materials and distribute those among the cyclone-affected people of Cox's Bazar from May 28 to June 8.

The new phase of agitation by the teachers, what the organisers called the final phase, was announced 26 days after the non-government teachers belonging to six different organisations grouped under the Liaison Committee began an indefinite strike across the country. The agitating teachers are demanding implementation of the national pay-scale and other financial benefits for them.

The day-long conference yesterday was attended by the striking teachers' representatives from different areas of the country. During the closed-door first session, representatives of 19 greater districts and six from the capital submitted reports stating the strike situation in their respective areas and suggesting future course of action. Quamruzzaman chaired the first session.

The second session with Dr M Akhteruzzaman in the chair,

discussed the proposals for fresh action and finalised those.

The concluding session adopted the new action programmes and a declaration. Chaired by Sheikh Amanullah, the session was addressed by Quazi Faruk Ahmed and Mansurur Rahman announced the programmes.

In a resolution, the conference made it compulsory for the striking teachers to sign their attendance registers to ensure teachers' participation in the on-going agitation. It reiterated that the striking teachers would not examine answer scripts of the SSC examinees. Addressing the conference, the Liaison Committee leaders resented the government's rigid attitude as regards the teachers' demands and stopping government grants for the striking teachers and employees. They also described the plight of the striking teachers due to non-payment of their salaries, while the Eid-ul-Azha is only days away.

Liaison Committee coordinator Quazi Faruk Ahmed appealed to the affluent teachers to help their needy colleagues.

ROK new market

From Page 1 Col 7 200,000 workers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, the Philippines and Nepal in the next two years.

To encourage the recruiting agents, the authorities have declared 13, of the 355 agency owners, as Commercially Important Persons (CIP), the labour minister said adding for workers "we also introduced the bank loan service."

Some 1000 people have availed of the bank loan facilities, he added. The minister said, Bangladesh has sent a huge number of workers to Malaysia. In 1993 alone, some 70,000 people got jobs in that country. "We have sent 200 female garment workers to the Maldives which may be a good market," Mannan Bhuiyan said. The labour minister said the government has also explored the possibilities of sending manpower to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mauritius, the Maldives, and Brunei.

Efforts are also on to explore more such labour markets around the world, the ministry added.

Contracts for JMB

From Page 1 Col 4 of Bangladesh and Japan was signed during the recent visit of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to Japan. The co-financiers are providing 200 million US dollars each for the project.

Yesterday's signing of the contracts marked the completion of all necessary preparations for implementation of the project.

Speaking on the occasion, the JMB Executive Director expressed his satisfaction over the progress made so far and the concrete steps taken for the implementation of this project of national importance.

He thanked the co-financiers, all the government ministries and agencies, consultants, the three contractors and all the officials of JMB for their cooperation and hard work in finalising the arrangements for implementation of the project.

He requested the contractors to start work at the sites as early as possible so that the project could be completed in time. It is scheduled by November 1997.

The Midnight File

Ceasefire in Georgia

MOSCOW, May 14: Georgia and Abkhazian separatists signed a cease-fire agreement Saturday that clears the way for the deployment of peacekeeping troops from other ex-Soviet republics, the ITAR-Tass news agency said. Russia hailed the signing in Moscow as an important step toward settling the two-year-old conflict, one of the worst flashpoints of the former Soviet Union, reports AP.

S Yemeni leaders urge Arab world to help end war

SANAA, May 14: Southern leaders appealed to the Arab world today for help in ending Yemen's 10-day-old civil war after troops loyal to Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh seized the strategic town of Daleh. Thousands of people mainly women, children and the elderly, demonstrated in Aden, calling for an immediate end to the fighting, an AFP correspondent reported.

Mostafiz

From Page 1 Col 5 Mostafiz returned home from Pretoria Friday night after attending the swear-in ceremony of President Nelson Mandela.

The Foreign Minister led a three-member Bangladesh delegation to the glorious ceremony of inauguration of the first black President of South Africa. The historic festival on May 10 was attended by delegations from 180 countries, including some heads of state and government.

Briefing newsmen about the visit, Mostafiz said about 100 Bangladeshi doctors and some teachers and accountants were now working in different towns of South Africa.

Termining South Africa as a potential economic superpower in the sub-continent, he said there were good prospects of Bangladesh exports like readymade garments, jute products, leather and tea in markets in the region.

"Bangladesh will endeavour to follow a policy of intensification of relations with South Africa in political, economic and other issues," the Foreign Minister told reporters.

Mostafiz reiterated the government decision to open diplomatic mission in Pretoria as soon as possible, with a "hope that South Africa reciprocate it".

He said president Mandela had accepted the invitation to visit Bangladesh and expressed his desire to visit Dhaka at a convenient time.

Myanmar keen

From Page 1 Col 5 Trade said his country was ready to take back the Rohingya refugees staying in Bangladesh and rehabilitate them so that they could start new life there.

Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister A N M Eusuf, Commerce Secretary A H Mofazzal Karim, and Myanmar ambassador to Bangladesh Hla Myint Oo were present.

UNB adds: General Tun Kyi in a meeting with Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam yesterday discussed various aspects of a border trade agreement between the two countries.

Survey for oil

From Page 1 Col 5 Petrobangla experts will be present during exploratory trips as per agreement with the government.

The foreign companies will initially conduct an extensive seismic survey. They will also use local trawlers, tugs and barges as their escort and supply vessels.

Under the agreement, the oil companies will invest at least US dollar 2.1 million for survey for three years. They will invest another 10 million dollars for drilling two wells in the next four years.

Another foreign company, American Snyber, will assist the two companies in the exploration.

Their exploration area of a total of 821 sq km includes a 242 sq km Karubdia gas field.



স্বদেশে স্বরমুখী যাত্রীদের বিশেষ টেন

ঈদ পালনে স্বরমুখী যাত্রীদের জন্যে বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে ১৯, ২০ এবং ২১ মে কয়েকটি গন্তব্যে বিশেষ টেন চলাবার ব্যবস্থা করেছে।

- ✓ চট্টগ্রাম-চাঁদপুর-চট্টগ্রাম এর মধ্যে এক-জোড়া বিশেষ টেন ১৯ এবং ২০ মে চলাচল করবে। ট্রেনটি চট্টগ্রাম হতে বিকেল ৪ টায় এবং চাঁদপুর হতে রাত ১০ টায় ছাড়বে।
- ✓ ঢাকা-চট্টগ্রাম, ঢাকা-নোয়াখালী, চট্টগ্রাম-ঢাকা এবং চট্টগ্রাম-মৌলভীবাজার বিশেষ টেনগুলি ১৯, ২০ এবং ২১ মে প্রতিদিন যথাক্রমে ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম হতে রাত ৯-১০ টায় ছাড়বে।
- ✓ ঢাকা-দিনাজপুরের একটি বিশেষ টেন ১৯ মে ঢাকা হতে রাত ৯-৪০ মিনিট দিনাজপুরের উদ্দেশ্যে ছাড়বে।
- ✓ ঢাকা-নোয়াখালী-ঢাকার মধ্যে এক জোড়া অতিরিক্ত উপকূল আন্তঃনগর টেন ২০ এবং ২১ মে চলাচল করবে। ট্রেনটি ঢাকা হতে সকাল ১০-৫০ মিনিট এবং নোয়াখালী হতে বিকেল ৫-২০ মিনিট ছাড়বে।
- ✓ ১৬ মে হতে ২১ মে এবং ২৪ মে হতে ২৭ মে সাপ্তাহিক বকেন দিনও সকল আন্তঃনগর টেন চলাচল করবে।
- ✓ ঈদের দিন কোন আন্তঃনগর টেন চলাবে না। এছাড়াও ঈদের দিন ১ ঢাকা, ২ চট্টগ্রাম মেইল, ৭/৮ উত্তরবঙ্গ মেইল, ৯/১০ সুরমা মেইল, ১১ ঢাকা, ১২ নোয়াখালী এক্সপ্রেস, ১৩/১৪ জালালাবাদ এক্সপ্রেস, ১৭/১৮ কুমিল্লা এক্সপ্রেস এবং ১৯/২০ বতকা এক্সপ্রেস ছাড়া অন্য কোন মেইল ও এক্সপ্রেস টেন চলাচল করবে না। ১৬ মহানদী ঈদরতী পর্বত চলাবে।
- ✓ ঈদের পরের দিন কয়েকটি আন্তঃনগর এবং মেইল ও এক্সপ্রেস টেন চলাচল করবে না।

বিভিন্ন গন্তব্যে যাত্রীদের জন্যে ঈদের টেনে মালবাহী সাথে যোগাযোগ করার অনুমতি করা হচ্ছে।

বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে
আপনার আশ্বাস আমাদের অনুপ্রেরণা