

Writ against JS boycott

Appeal for larger bench to be heard Sunday

An application for constituting a larger bench for hearing the writ petition regarding the boycott of Parliament by the Opposition will be heard on December 4, reports BSS.

While resuming hearing on the writ yesterday, the counsel for Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, K S Nabi, said "We made our submission on the question of maintainability. We want the court to give its decision first on the issue of maintainability and then only, if necessary, we shall argue on the merit of the case. Since the court has not given any decision on maintainability, we shall file an application before this court to refer the matter to the Chief Justice for constituting a larger bench."

Moudud Ahmed, one of the defendants, filed an application for constituting a larger bench. He also said that his counsel, Rafiqul Haq, is ill and will argue the matter as soon as he recovers.

Jamaat leader, Moulana Muttur Rahman Nizami's counsel, Abdur Razzaq said he had prepared an application for a larger bench but the swearing

HC bench

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Rafiqul Haq, Bar at Law, appeared for Moudud Ahmed and Moinul Haq appeared for Abul Khair Litu.

Attorney General Aminul Haq, Deputy Attorney General Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Assistant Attorney General Mir Hasmat Ali appeared for the state.

More family support needed for preventing AIDS

Government leaders, donors and experts at a discussion on AIDS in Dhaka yesterday stressed the need for more family support to provide nursing to AIDS victims and for prevention of the incurable disease, reports UNB.

They said the persons with AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) need more family support for good living as families are the major care-providers for the victims of the killer disease.

"Preventive measures and proper nursing for the HIV-AIDS infected people must be ensured in the family," Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf told the discussion.

He said the only weapon for control and prevention of the disease is changing behaviour through information and knowledge.

National AIDS Prevention and Control Programme of the Health Services Directorate organised the discussion at the Sasakawa auditorium of the ICDDR,B marking the inauguration of the World AIDS Day programmes in Dhaka.

The day is being observed across the country with the theme "AIDS and the Family: Families Take Care" with a call for raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic. The United Nations had earlier declared 1994 as the International Year of the Family.

The cumulative number of HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus) infections to date exceeds 17 million worldwide and if the present trend

BNP-Opposition meet with

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to name their representatives to the moot. But Salman Rahman said he was expecting the names today.

It is likely that the BNP would nominate Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury to head its team as the Awami League is learnt to have put a condition that the ruling party's representation has to be at par with that of it.

Earlier on November 22, an emergency meeting of the FBCCI executive committee decided to invite the political parties to apprise them of the impact of the political uncertainties on the national economy after the collapse of the Commonwealth-brokered dialogue.

The FBCCI president yesterday also had a meeting with a group of ambassadors, including those of the important donor countries. Rahman said the envoys lent their support to the FBCCI initiative in bringing together the two sides.

Addressing the function, arranged by the Bangladesh Rubber Industries Association in connection with its AGM, Salman Rahman categorically said the business community would maintain complete neutrality while sitting with the political parties.

The Rubber Association's

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressed a huge public meeting at Kalmakanda in Netrakona district yesterday. —PID photo

Seoul confce calls to strengthen democracy for development

From Chapal Bashar

SEOUL, Dec 1: A two-day conference of the Forum of Democratic Leaders in the Asia-Pacific (FDL-AP) began here this morning, with a call to strengthen democracy for ensuring sustainable development.

Some 500 statesmen, parliamentarians, academicians, journalists and officials of international organisations from 30 countries including South Korea gathered here to discuss the state of democracy in the Asia-Pacific region.

Former Philippines president Corazon C Aquino and South Korea's human rights activist Kim Dae-Jung, chairman of a foundation bearing his name, are jointly hosting the conference, first of its kind in the region.

In her welcome address, Corazon Aquino said that democracy has now emerged as the original and natural state of human society. But she added that this fact has been ignored by "left-wing dictators or the right-wing self-styled authoritarians".

She pointed out that contrary to the belief of some, democracy was already practised in Asia as far back as 2500 years before Christ.

Corazon Aquino, 61, who was installed in power after the success of the military-backed civilian uprising in the Philippines, said: "The peo-

ple's power was invincible because it was not just put together by philosophies but by a faith in the universal equality of man."

She said although the values of democracy are universal and timeless, there is a time that the peoples of the world should unite to promote those values.

"Indeed, let us not say it is time for democracy, for democracy is timeless. Let us say, rather it is time to act as one for the return of democracy to all Asia and the world," Corazon noted.

During the inaugural session, messages from world leaders paying tribute to democracy were read out.

In a message, wishing success of the conference, Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said, "The end of Cold War has opened up opportunities for all the nations to establish and strengthen democratic governance. In Bangladesh, democracy is beginning to take roots. We are now seeking to institutionalise and promote democratic values and processes reflecting wishes of the people. We believe democracy and development are interlinked and our commitment to develop both is total."

United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali,

in his message, said democracy is essential for peace and development, two primary concerns of our time.

"Democracy is thus a global issue, and the relation between democracy within nations and democracy among nations is increasingly recognised. As Secretary General, I am committed to advancing the United Nations' new role in democratising international relations," Ghali said.

Other congratulatory messages read out at the opening session came from former US president Jimmy Carter, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Philippines President Fidel Ramos, Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and many more leaders.

During discussions at the working sessions today, the Myanmar situation figured prominently. A special resolution on Myanmar is likely to be adopted tomorrow.

From Bangladesh former foreign minister Dr Kamal Hossain, former foreign secretary Fakhruddin Ahmed, and former secretary Hedayet Ahmed, representing the UNESCO, are participating in the conference.

Corruption cases

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tired deputy director of the Directorate of Shipping, Abdus Shukur alleges that in July 1979 the accused hired bogus freedom fighters on Bangladesh Shipping Corporation vessels instead of employing 17 genuine freedom fighters, thereby deriving personal gain by forgery and misuse of his powers.

Two cases had been filed against the proprietor of SS Enterprise Shahidul Alam for evading tax on imported glass sheets by preparing false invoices which deprived the government an income of Tk 4.66 lakh.

The anti-corruption bureau also charged Shahidul Alam of evading Tk 3.54 lakh in taxes. Charges were also brought against the clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents and customs officials who connived with Alam.

A similar case has been lodged with the Kotwali thana against sheet glass importer Didarul Alam of Messers Brothers Associates for evading a Tk 6.03 lakh tax with the help of some C&F agent and Chittagong port customs officials.

Finance ministry

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six crore voters of the country.

The high-level meeting followed the passage of the Representation of People's Amendment Bill, 1994 on Wednesday empowering the EC with the authority of issuing identity cards for the voters.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice Md Abdur Rauf, Finance and Planning secretaries, members of the Planning Commission and election commissioners attended the meeting at the Finance Ministry.

The finance minister requested the CEC to start the concerned procedures and direct his ministry to release necessary fund to meet the initial expenditures for issuing identity cards.

The finance minister directed the Economic Relations Division (ERD) to seek technical assistance for the computerised systems involved in the process.

The meeting was also informed of the Election Commission's plan to recruit six lakh volunteers to collect correct data and information about the estimated six crore voters.

Sangsad adjourned till Sunday

By Staff Correspondent

Ruling party legislator Farida Rahman failed to appear in Parliament once again yesterday to seek the Chair's permission for moving her Bill seeking certain amendments to the Muslim Family Law Ordinance.

The lady MP was also absent on the previous private members' day.

In fact, Farida Rahman did enter the House yesterday, but left immediately before her name was called by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panri asking her to move the Bill for 'immediate consideration' by the Jatiya Sangsad (JS).

A top ranking leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) later informed The Daily Star, on condition of anonymity, that Farida Rahman had been advised by party stalwarts not to assert her case in the House.

According to them, the Bill, although a progressive one, would eventually affect the party's popularity among the menfolk living in the rural areas.

Farida Rahman, however, could not be reached for any comment last night.

In the proposed Bill, Farida Rahman sought replacement of the Union Council chairman with an assistant judge as the head of the arbitration council in dealing with family disputes such as divorce.

Meanwhile, eight out of ten treasury bench MPs who had moved separate resolutions in the House were also absent yesterday.

Two MPs who did move their resolutions eventually withdrew them at the request of the ministers concerned.

There was no question-answer session yesterday.

The Deputy Speaker adjourned the session at 7:30 pm to resume again at 6:00 pm Sunday.

Opposition undecided

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ment but also threatened to resist its agitation, at a JCD rally in the city recently.

Nasim further said the bill passed unilaterally by the treasury bench members on strengthening the Election Commission would not ensure fair polls. "A fair poll is only possible under a non-party, neutral caretaker administration."

The bill for strengthening the EC cannot be an alternative to constitutional provisions for elections under a caretaker government, Nasim told the newsmen.

The government-sponsored bill was introduced and passed only to confuse the people and to counter the demand for a caretaker government, he said.

Referring to the Opposition outline for a caretaker government, he said they had also suggested empowering the Election Commission and reforming the election laws.

He said election was free and fair in 1991 with the EC having its existing powers because it was supervised by a caretaker government. But, he added, vote dacoity was committed in the 1986 polls under a party government although

the EC had the same powers.

The meeting was attended by Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Rahmat Ali, S S Haldar, K M Jahangir, Sheikh Harunur Rashid, Prof Abdul Mannan and Khan Tipu Sultan of the Awami League, Moudud Ahmed, and Anwar Hossain Manju of the Jatiya Party, Muttur Rahman Nizami and Sheikh Anwar Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Salahuddin Kader Choudhury of NDP and Obaidul Haq of the IOJ.

The latest American approach centres on a call for an international peace conference that may allow Bosnian Serbs seek changes in the peace plan they repeatedly have rejected. That plan requires them to cut their holdings in Bosnia from 70 per cent to 49 per cent.

However, in an apparent attempt to beef up its air power over Bosnia, NATO has asked Germany to add its warplanes to the allied forces on hand in case air strikes are called against the Serbs.

Sarajevo airport

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diplomacy, not force, is the best way to deal with conflict.

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'68 out of every 1000 children disabled'

By Staff Correspondent

Out of every one thousand children aged two to nine in the country, 68 suffer from different types of disability, according to an estimate by the Bangladesh Protibandhi Foundation.

But most of these children can be trained to overcome their problems. What is needed for this is adequate number of trainers and awareness among the people.

This was stated by renowned paediatrician prof M R Khan yesterday at a press conference on the eve of a three-day regional seminar on childhood disability beginning in the city tomorrow.

The first such regional seminar will bring together some 250 people working for the disabled children from across Bangladesh and 50 others from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Japan, USA and some other countries.

"At least 50 per cent children suffering from different types of disability can be saved if those are monitored before the age of 12 and they can be given adequate training," Prof of Psychology and Chairman of the Department of Special Education of Dhaka University Sultana S Zaman said at the press conference.

She said 80 per cent of the world's total disabled people, an estimated 500 million, belong to the developing countries.

Director of Impact-Bangladesh, a NGO, Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury said about 1.2 million people in the country were totally or partially blind but there were hardly any educational or vocational training facilities for them.

There were only five residential schools which provided primary education to some 300 blinds per year while some 200 blinds were provided high school education at 47 schools around the country, he said. There were only two vocational training centres which trained 130 blinds annually, he added.

The seminar is being organised by the Protibandhi Foundation, Child Development Unit of Dhaka Shishu Hospital and the Department of Special Education of the DU — jointly sponsored by the ODA, UNICEF, Caritas, British Council and the UNESCO.

5 acquitted of attacking minister's car

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 1: Moulana Habibur Rahman, principal, Kazirbazar madrasah, and a leader of the Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish and four other accused persons have been acquitted of the charge of damaging the official car of the Jute Minister.

The District and Sessions Judge, Sylhet, delivered the verdict yesterday. Jute Minister Hannan Shah's car was attacked by some angry people here on July 31 last when a public meeting of the BNP was going on.

A case against 48 teachers and students of Kazirbazar madrasah was lodged with Sylhet Kotwali PS. Police immediately arrested some of the accused and later submitted chargesheets against five, including the principal of the madrasah.

BMA polls

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and Chittagong, were not immediately available.

BMA sources pointed out that the final outcome of the polls would depend on the results of the two centres.

Some 3133 BMA members out of a total of 3835 in Dhaka cast their votes at the BMA central office in the city from 8 am to 5 pm.

While voting was peaceful, the BMA Election Commission caught four persons while they were trying to cast false votes.

According to BMA sources, the over-all voting was between 75 and 85 per cent.

The five presidential candidates alongside their panel members were seen carrying out the last moment campaigning at the BMA central office in the capital for the whole day.

Presidential candidate for the BMA executive council, Dr T A Chowdhury, expressing his satisfaction over the voting said that it had been very spontaneous. He added over telephone at around 9:30 pm last night, that the election results outside Dhaka were favouring them.

Dr Nurul Islam expressed his satisfaction over the polling and added that he was confident about his victory.

The BMA has a total of 11932 voters. The highest number of voters is in Dhaka, followed by Chittagong where the number is 1033. Thus, the voting results of Dhaka was a decisive factor in this biennial election.

The Midnight File

SAARC poll observer group in Maldives

COLOMBO, Dec 1: A seven-member observer group from six South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries are in the Maldives to monitor the parliamentary elections due Friday, the Maldivian High Commission in Colombo announced today. The observer group whose presence in the Maldives is at the invitation of the Maldivian government, comprises two from Bangladesh and one each from Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, reports Xinhua.

Nepal parliament session from Dec 14

KATHMANDU, Dec 1: King of Nepal Birendra has decided to summon the 8th session of the House of Representatives, or the first session of the newly elected lower house, on December 14, according to the parliament secretariat. The new lower house was elected out through the mid-term poll held on November 15 after the former lower house was dissolved on July 12, reports Xinhua.

Poll violence leaves 4 dead in India

HYDERABAD, India, Dec 1: Clashes among rival political groups left at least four persons dead and 20 injured Thursday in two states' legislative polls seen as a test of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao's popularity, reports AP.

The clashes occurred mostly in Andhra Pradesh, the home state of Rao, where left-wing guerrillas called for a boycott of the elections in their northern stronghold to protest successive corrupt governments.

The neighbouring state of Karnataka was peaceful. But one political activist was killed when a mob hurled rocks at him while he tried to mobilize voters.

Polling was considered to be peaceful by Indian standards, where dozens of people have in the past been killed on the day of the balloting. More than half of the 38 million voters cast their ballots across the two states Thursday.

In Andhra Pradesh, police said they also killed three militants of the People's War Group, a rebel group fighting for poor farmers that carried out a series of sabotage incidents in the final weeks of the campaign to disrupt the voting. At

least 29 people were killed in land mine explosions blamed on the group.

Two of the deaths in the state were blamed on explosives hurled during clashes political rivals.

US embassy request to tourist visa applicants

The American embassy in Dhaka yesterday requested the tourist visa applicants who do not need to visit the United States in December to postpone their applications till January in view of the rush in its consular section, reports UNB.

Over the past several years, a USIS press release said, the consular section has seen substantial increase in tourist visa applicants in the month of December.

As a result, visa lines are much longer than usual, and all applicants in line cannot be processed each day. In January, the demand will be less and lines will be shorter.

An applicant has to pay Tk 820 as visa application. This is processing fee and non-refundable.

Angry Ansars revolt

From Page 1 Col 5

control of the militant uniformed sepoy. According to one defiant constable guarding the main entrance, the revolting Ansars were detaining five senior officials inside the compound.

"We will continue to abstain from work until our legitimate demands are met by the authorities," he said while declining to disclose his identity.

When another group of Ansars, standing nearby, were asked how the apparent rebellion had started, they said that the sepoy at the Shaipur camp got angry after the Director General refused to consider their seven-point charter of demands during a visit earlier in the day.

Immediately after he left at around 11 am, the sepoy at Khilgaon added, the Ansars at the camp went on the rampage, breaking office rooms and other facilities and took control of the camp.

According to police sources, another 17 officials were also being held in the camp.

When asked, the sepoy added that there were around six hundred of their colleagues at the Khilgaon headquarters. The sepoy at the main entrance appeared to be in a very militant and defiant mood. A large group was seen guarding the entrance brandishing bamboo sticks while others were seen maintaining vigil atop the walls of the office compound.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: At the Khilgaon Ansars headquarters late last night, this correspondent found the entire compound under the

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