

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 Huq, is ill and will argue the matter as soon as he recovers.

Jamaat leader Moulana Matur 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 Huq, Bar at Law, appeared for Moudud Ahmed and Moinul Huq appeared for Abul Karim.

Attorney General Aminul Huq, 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, doctors 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 meet. 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

affidavit could not be completed and the same would be submitted on the next date of hearing.

The petitioner's counsel, Mohammad Ali, said that a copy of the application for a larger bench was supplied to him on November 17 last but it has not been filed in court so far although attention of the respondents' counsel was drawn to the fact before the court. Therefore, there was nothing left on merit, he argued.

Counsel Mohammad Ali further said that the submission on the question of maintainability on behalf of all the respondents (Sheikh Hasina, Moudud Ahmed and Moulana Nizami) had already been completed.

He further said that in the writ petition, it is an admitted fact that they are members of Parliament, they are abstaining continuously from Parliament and they have taken no leave from Parliament. So there is nothing left on merit.

The court comprising Justice Kazi Shafuddin and Justice Kazi A T Monwar Uddin, after hearing both sides ordered that the application for constituting a larger bench would be heard Sunday next.

Asrarul Hossain, Mohammad Ali, Abu Baker Siddique and Humayun Kabir Bulbul appeared for the petitioner.

K S Nabi, Moudud Ahmed and Abdur Razzaq appeared for the respondents.

Seoul confce calls to strengthen democracy for development

From Chapal Bashir

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 people

continues, the figure will be more than double to reach 30-40 million by the year 2000.

The official figure of AIDS positive is one million worldwide while the unofficial over four million.

In every single day, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate, over 6,000 people are being infected by HIV that ultimately develops into AIDS.

Delivering key-note speech, Chairman of Technical Committee of the National AIDS Committee (NAC) Major General (retd) M R Khan said more than 300,000 people have so far been tested in Bangladesh and 33 of them were identified HIV-positive.

He, however, said the actual number of HIV positive is over 20,000 in the country. "In Bangladesh, an epidemic has started," said the renowned physician.

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Two cases had been filed against the proprietor of SS Enterprise Shahidul Alam for evading tax on imported glass sheets by preparing false in voices 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.

We have to rise above political beliefs of our own, otherwise the initiative will fail," he said.

Rahman also appealed to the political parties to reach a settlement for the sake of national economy.

"I believe all political problems could be overcome if economic problems are resolved ... but nothing would proceed in the economic front if the present political uncertainty continues any further."

Salman Rahman told the cheering audience that he, in keeping with his election pledge to strengthen the FBCCI secretariat, has already received commitment of a fund of Tk 2 crore for the federation from local business men.

Foreign donors and agencies also expressed their readiness to contribute to the fund, he said.

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.

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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 member's day.

In fact, Farida Rahman did enter the House yesterday, but left immediately before her name was called by Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni 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.

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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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, Matir Rahman Nizami and Sheikh Ansar Ali of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury of NDP and Obaidul Haq of the IOJ.

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.

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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 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 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 Carlson and many more leaders.

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

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 people

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.

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 Fakhrulddin Ahmed, and former secretary Hedayat Ahmed, representing the UNICEF, UNDP, Caritas, British Council and the UNESCO, are participating in the conference.

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 Majlis 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.

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.

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 this 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 along with 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 favourable to him.