

Japanese Boat Purchase Case Trial resumes Feb 12

Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Abdul Karim Khandkar, a former planning minister, yesterday appeared before a special judge's court trying deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad in a corruption case to testify as a prosecution witness, reports BSS.

A K Khandkar is one of three ministers named as witnesses in Special Case No 19 of 1993, the trial of which began last year.

Ershad and a Japanese national are accused in this case, better known as the Japanese Relief Boat Purchase Case. Three prosecution witnesses made their depositions yesterday in the court of Zinat Ara, Additional and Sessions Judge (First Court), Dhaka and Special Judge. Former cabinet secretary A H F K Sadek and Deputy Commissioner Rajshahi M A Malek were the other witnesses besides Khandkar.

PW-10 Khandkar, who served as planning minister from August 1986 to March 1990, authenticated the proceedings of the council committee on government purchase dated 11th November 1989 which dealt with the procurement of the boats.

PW-10, who was the convenor of the council committee in late 1989, identified his own signature, earlier marked as an exhibit by the court.

Khandkar, who read out the resolutions of the council committee dated 11-11-89 as asked by public prosecutor Abdul Razzaq Khan, said the meeting was briefed about the purchase of boat under a Japanese debt relief grant and advised the Relief Ministry to execute the directives of the President on the subject.

The case relates to accepting the second lowest bidder - Marubeni Corporation - in procuring boats under a 2.5 billion yen grant in 1989 at the directives of Ershad, ignoring the offer of Kingshu Mataichi, another Japanese firm.

The country suffered a loss to the tune of Taka 33 crore because of Ershad's directives to procure the boats from Marubeni Corporation, the charge said.

Prof M A Matin, a deputy prime minister under Ershad, testified in the case on January 18.

During cross-examination, Khandkar said he has not come across any file which dwelt on the background of the purchase of the boats. He affirmed that the evaluation committee formed by the government had observed that the quotation submitted by Marubeni Corporation was acceptable from the technical point.

He also stated to have seen the report of the Bangladesh ambassador to Tokyo in which the envoy observed that since Kingshu Mataichi has no boat building facility, all boats should be procured from Marubeni.

A H F K Sadek, who was Principal Secretary of the President's Secretariat under Ershad, deposed that he had seen the brief sent to the president.

Matin tells JS
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some 200 foreign delegates who consider Bangladesh as an 'emerging tiger'.

The Home Minister said that about 250 Opposition supporters led by Mattiya Chowdhury and Advocate Sahara Khatun had started picketing on the road between Sonargaon and Bjoy Sarani and obstructed the participants trying to reach the conference venue.

He said that at 11:34 am when the Prime Minister was returning to her office the picketers hurled the bombs which injured an on-duty police official and a constable.

Police swung into action, wielding batons and firing teargas shells to disperse the pickets, the minister said, adding that five people were arrested from the scene.

Matin Chowdhury accused the opposition parties of creating chaos and anarchy by calling hartals which hinder the development of the country.

Terminating the Prime Minister's visits to Malaysia and Japan 'very successful' he said, following the visits foreign investors have shown keen interest to invest in Bangladesh.

The Home Minister said the government of Begum Khaleda Zia is determined to maintain law and order to continue the democratic practice and development process.

Yesterday was the first private members' day of the 18th session which began Monday.

It was a brief session during which two treasury bench members proposed two resolutions - one on the inclusion of the country's junior high schools in the current ADP and the other against the use of bamboo stumps and palm trees in the brick kilns. Both later withdrew their proposals after satisfactory replies from the ministers concerned.

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Fanni, who chaired the session, adjourned it till 6:30 pm Sunday.



Leader of the Opposition in the Sri Lankan parliament Ranil Wickremasinghe called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her hotel suite in Colombo yesterday. — PID photo

TU leaders

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lease of detained industrial workers and withdrawal of all cases against them.

"Tomorrow's convention is most likely to decide upon barricades and strikes for a longer duration than the one just enforced," a top leader of the jute workers told The Daily Star last night.

"We may also opt for other forms of agitation, such as demanding resignation of the BNP government because we believe this government will never fulfill our legitimate demands," he said, preferring anonymity.

When contacted over telephone last night, president of the Patkol Srani Karmachari Sangram Parishad, Abul Bashar, confirmed likely adoption of plans for fresh agitation at today's convention. The new programmes would be enforced during the month of Ramadan, he said.

The inflexible attitude of the government is compelling us to go for a greater movement," said Bashar, chief of Workers' Party. Replying to a question, Bashar said the leaders of major opposition parties would be consulted before the finalisation of any new agitation.

When his attention was drawn by this correspondent to the controversy regarding implementation of the government-declared wages commission in the private sector, the veteran labour leader pointed out that industrial workers in both the public and private sectors enjoyed similar wages and benefits in the pre-independence and post-independence era until the Khaleda Zia government came to power.

"It is only the present government which is trying to snatch the rights of the private sector labourers," he remarked.

Referring to the trade unions' demand for a halt to the government's privatisation move, he claimed the unions were not opposed to privatization as such. But, he added, the industrial units already disinvested had faced closure due to the authorities' wrong policy. As a result, he said, such moves were destroying the country's industries and not at all helping those to flourish.

Joint communiqué

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struct the officials concerned to work out the formalities. The two sides agreed on the need for frequent exchanges of visits at all levels to provide greater momentum to bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest. It said.

In view of the liberalisation of economies in the two countries, the two leaders agreed on the desirability of cooperation between their respective private sectors and of advancing this process by all possible means including the establishment of joint ventures.

They also agreed to take necessary measures for effective implementation of the decisions of the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission which is scheduled to meet in the first half of this year.

The two sides, according to the communiqué, expressed the hope that the existing cultural cooperation between the two friendly countries, linked by their common cultural heritage, would be further strengthened.

They welcomed the signing of the Annual Executive Programme for cultural cooperation between the two countries for the year 1995, 1996 and 1997. They also decided to encourage the exchange of cultural troupes between the two countries.

The two leaders reviewed the progress made by SAARC following the Seventh Summit in Dhaka. They noted with satisfaction the progress made under the Integrated Programme of Action as well as the establishment of the SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk in Sri Lanka and the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre in Bangladesh.

They also noted with satisfaction that due emphasis had been given to the core areas of poverty alleviation and trade liberalisation and agreed that other related economic issues should not be addressed.

Exchanging views on trade liberalisation in the region, the Bangladesh Prime Minister and SAARC Chairperson has agreed with the view of the Sri Lankan side that the first round of negotiations under the SAARC Preferential Trade Arrangements (SAPTA) should be expedited.

The two leaders hoped that all formalities such as negotiations on tariff concessions would be completed in time to operationalise SAPTA on schedule.

They also held discussion on cooperative arrangements already established between SAARC and other regional and international organisations and agreed on the need for further expansion of such cooperation.

Focusing on international situation, the two sides expressed satisfaction at the encouraging developments in the Middle East with the signing of the peace agreements between the PLO and Israel and between Jordan and Israel and hoped that it would enable the Palestinians to achieve their, inalienable right to a homeland and help reach a comprehensive settlement of the problem.

Expressing deep concern at the deteriorating tragic situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the two sides stressed the need for a negotiated settlement of the problem under the UN efforts.

Reviewing the current global economic situation, the two sides noted with concern that 'ever widening gap between the rich North and the poor South remained the major challenges facing the international community.'

They also expressed concern at the dangers of the degradation of the global environment and underlined the need for greater international cooperation to address the root causes of the problems.

Hasina and ruling party MPs," she said and added, "But the government did not give us any chance to discuss these issues in the House."

Hasina, who led the December 28 Opposition resignation, demanded formation of a special committee to investigate the allegations of corruption against ministers/MPs and to estimate the wealth they made during the time of the present government.

'Khaleda a remarkable leader'

COLOMBO, Jan 26: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga today described Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia as a 'remarkable leader' of this region, reports BSS.

The commendation came when the Sri Lankan President Kumaratunga made a farewell call on Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the latter's hotel suite at Hilton here.

Lauding the leadership of Begum Zia, the Sri Lankan President said she is playing a pioneering role to institutionalise democracy in Bangladesh.

The Sri Lankan President extended her heartfelt thanks to Begum Khaleda Zia for her official visit to this island state as the first head of the government since Kumaratunga-led People's Alliance came to power in Sri Lanka.

Extending her best wishes to the Bangladesh Prime Minister and the people of Bangladesh, Kumaratunga urged Begum Zia to pay visit here with a longer stay in future.

Reciprocating the gestures of the Sri Lankan President, the Bangladesh Prime Minister thanked Chandrika for the warm and cordial reception and hospitality extended to her and the members of Bangladesh delegation.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar were among others present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike today highly commended Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's commitment for strengthening seven-nation SAARC.

The elderly Sri Lankan Prime Minister called on Begum Zia at the latter's suite at Hotel Hilton here this morning.

PM returns

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Mohammad Shahta Zarab, the acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka C Ramesh Jayasinghe received the Prime Minister at Zia International Airport.

Earlier, the Prime Minister was given a hearty send-off at Colombo Katunayake International Airport at the end of her official visit.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar and Minister for Transport, Environment and Women Affairs, Srimani Athulathmudali bade Begum Zia good-bye at the gangway.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister inspected the ceremonial guard of honour of the Sri Lankan army and took the salute. The army saluting battery fired 19-gun salute marking the departure ceremony at the airport. The national anthems of the two countries were played.

Sri Lankan Speaker, cabinet ministers, leader of the opposition, governor and chief minister of the western province, diplomats, high civil and military officials were also present at the airport to send off the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

Writs referred

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on the applications of the three opposition leaders, submissions were made by Barrister Moudud Ahmed himself, Barrister K S Nabi on behalf of Sheikh Hasina and Barrister Abdur Razzak for Matru Rahman Nizami. The court also sought the opinion of the Attorney General, Aminul Huq, on the matter.

Appearing before the court, the Attorney General said that it was the discretion of the court to refer the writs to the Chief Justice for constituting a special or larger bench for hearing. He, however, maintained that the constitution of such a larger bench is now less important since anyone aggrieved by the verdict of the High Court division can easily go to the Appellate Division.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed, in his submission, said that they were seeking a larger bench since the writs involve important constitutional matters. He urged an expeditious disposal of the case, saying it has already been delayed.

Barrister K S Nabi said other than Article 67 (2), many more articles of the Constitution are involved with the writs pending. Therefore, it should be heard by a larger bench," he argued.

The Midnight File

Blasts mar Republic Day parade in Jammu: 7 killed

JAMMU, India, Jan 26: Seven people were killed and 46 injured when three bombs exploded at a packed stadium in the capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir today as the state's governor delivered a speech to mark India's National Day, police said.

The Governor, K V Krishna Rao, a former Indian army chief, was unhurt in the blasts which ripped through the Maulana Azad Stadium, sparking panic among the more than 35,000 people attending the celebration, police said - AFP.

Bank murder JS by-polls

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Two teams of the investigators raided places in and outside the capital last night to nab the suspects.

Azizur Rahman, 38, was found murdered in the bank at WAPDA Bhaban at Motijheel January 14 morning when a cleaning woman opened the door of a bathroom adjacent to the Assistant General Manager's chamber in the bank. Aziz was believed to have been murdered between Thursday evening and Saturday morning when the bank was closed. He was strangled to death.

The criminals tried to break open the bank's vault containing some 35 lakh taka with a drilling machine, but failed.

The DB took up the case and launched a massive manhunt for the runaway killers. Earlier, police arrested a 30-year-old woman and a 22-year-old man and sent them to jail after interrogation. Police also questioned several other street prostitutes, shopkeepers and night guards of the area.

The three persons arrested yesterday are likely to be produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) court today.

James P Grant

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countries, the release said. James P Grant also visited Bangladesh several times, most recently in February 1994.

On this visit he received an award on behalf of UNICEF from the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on the occasion of 25th anniversary of the discovery of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS).

4 murdered

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house wife Tasnim Abedin. Police said the body of the maid bore marks of torture. Jaina is absconding.

In another incident one Md Hossain, 35, was stabbed to death this afternoon at Mikhanagar, police said. A Jubo League leader of Raazan was kidnapped and shot dead at Boalkhali than area on Wednesday, police sources said. He was identified as Amit Talukder, 23. The Jubo League blamed NDP activists for the killing. But NDP denied it.

Another young man was stabbed to death by his rivals at Jaotala Segun Bagan area here on Wednesday. The victim was identified as Monaf Hossain. Pahartali police arrested three suspects of the murder.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

প্রাথমিক ও গণশিক্ষা বিভাগ

শিশু জরীপ

বাধ্যতামূলক প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার সফল বাস্তবায়নের লক্ষ্যে আগামী ০৪-০২-৯৫ইং তারিখ হইতে ১০-০২-৯৫ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত ১ হইতে ১০ বৎসর পর্যন্ত বয়সী সকল শিশুর জরীপের কাজ সম্পন্ন হইবে।

সরকারী ও রেজিস্ট্রিকৃত বেসরকারী প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষকগণ উক্ত সময়ে বাড়িতে বাড়িতে প্রতিটি পরিবারের সাথে যোগাযোগ করিয়া জরীপের কাজ সম্পাদন করিবেন।

এই সরকারী কাজে জরীপদলকে সর্বাঙ্গিক সহযোগিতা প্রদান করিয়া বাধ্যতামূলক প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা আইন ১৯৯০-এর সফল বাস্তবায়ন নিশ্চিত করিতে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের প্রতি আহবান জানান হইতেছে।

সকল শিশুর শিক্ষা নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে আপনার সহযোগিতা একান্ত কাম্য।

ডিক্রী-১১১-২৬/১
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Unrest may spoil reforms: Saifur

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ter noted. "But to take a stranger (in the cabinet headed by the President) is not permissible under the Constitution. And even to amend the Constitution the Parliament members who resigned have to be recalled and a referendum also has to be held."

"If they (Opposition) agree to allow the members of Parliament to become ministers in the national government then the problem is solved," Rahman asserted.

The logic of the demand to dissolve Parliament after the 147 Opposition MPs resigned en masse was also questioned by the Finance Minister. "If 100 or so Parliament members resign and that is taken as a reason for the dissolution of Parliament then multi-party democracy cannot work," he reasoned.

It is an expression of a 'negative' no-confidence motion against the government after the Opposition earlier failed to muster enough support for a 'positive' no-confidence motion, he said. "What is happening today can also happen tomorrow."

But he concluded by sounding hopeful about a solution to the current political impasse. "But we should not give up hope, we should try to resolve the problem," Rahman said with guarded optimism. "I am trying to persuade my (cabinet) colleagues to go to the maximum extent to resolve this tension-ridden situation."

The Finance Minister, however, reaffirmed his commitment to carrying forward the reform process and identified four key areas where reform is urgently needed: legal, administrative, private enterprises



Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman speaking as the chief guest at a meeting of the members of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) at the Chamber building in the city yesterday. MCCI president Anisuddowla (L) and vice-president Samson H Chowdhury are also seen. — Star photo

and the labour sectors. "I will be the unhappy man if the reform process is not sustained. But I agree there are subtle steps taken to interfere with the reform process, it does even crop up in the policy level. Trade, commerce and industry must protest market distortions," Rahman later said in response to a question by Jamaluddin Ahmed, former president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Agreeing with the MCCI President, Rahman acknowledged that the labour sector is one of the main handicap at the moment. "But it is difficult for the government to face the problem under the present (political) situation," he said.

The Finance Minister also agreed that the telecommunication and energy sectors would be excellent areas for private investment and acknowledged that the government should place more emphasis to improve the living conditions in Dhaka and other major cities.

Earlier, the MCCI President noted that the economy is currently at a very delicate juncture with the macro-stability indicating the potentials while, on the other hand, the political uncertainties constituting a 'cognizable' threat to the future.