

For Morceli, it's just a piece of cake



LONDON, July 27: Noureddine Morceli resembles a highly specialised chef who can cook only six items, reports Reuters.

But the secret of his success is that he cooks them better than anybody else in the world.

"World record in the mile, sir? Certainly, that'll be with you in 3 minutes 44.39 seconds..."

"World record in the 1,500 metres? No trouble, we'll knock that off for you in 3 minutes 27.37 seconds... and we can do you a very appetising 3,000 in 7:25.11. The 2,000's a bit quicker at 4:47.88. Will that be all?"

Morceli has been serving up world records now for four years since breaking the world indoor 1,500 metres mark in 1991.

Of more relevance to next month's proceedings in Göttenburg, he added the outdoor 1,500 in 1992, broke that again two weeks ago in Nice, set the mile record in 1993, the 3,000 in 1994 and the 2,000 this month.

His assault on his own world 1,500 record failed by just 15-100th of a second in Monte Carlo on Tuesday night but he already has his sights set on Sebastian Coe's longstanding 800 and 1,000 metres records both of which date back to the summer of 1981.

"If everything is right for me then I can break every record between 800 and 10,000 metres before I finish my career," the 25-year-old Algerian said in Nice earlier this month.

"Really, I feel extraordinary and I have no doubt that I can do this."

Morceli himself has often said that he wants to be remembered as the greatest middle-distance runner of all time and the way he has bit ten such huge chunks off the records he has broken shows that he could well earn that accolade.

Like most good chefs, Morceli has an almost insatiable appetite. And if the ingredients are just right he can devour many more world titles and world records.

Benazir for more economic cooperation with Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD, July 27: Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto stressed on further expansion of cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan in the economic and commercial fields specially at the private sector level, reports BSS.

Benazir was exchanging views with the visiting Bangladesh Minister for Commerce and Information M Shamsul Islam when he called on her on Wednesday.

The Pakistan Prime Minister appreciated the present tempo of economic development and population programme in Bangladesh and expressed hope for more cooperation between the two countries in combating population problem in her country.

She commended the Bangladesh programme for women's uplift and women's education which she observed giving more strong position for the women in society.

Benazir recalled the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister to her country and conveyed her best wishes to Begum Khaleida Zia. She said the visit had helped increase cooperation between the two brotherly countries in the field of trade, commerce and industry.

Shamsul Islam said that Bangladesh was keen to further strengthen the relations with Pakistan through exchange of mutually agreed programme in trade and commerce.

He underscored the need for creating an investment climate through private entrepreneurs of both the countries and said that a long-term arrangement between the two countries to promote trade of jute, jute goods, rice and cotton could be made.

Justice Latif

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democracy?" he questioned adding "are we not forgetting the true spirit of democracy?"

He said "we are all interested in building a better country for us and for our children."

Regarding the functions of Parliament, the Executive branch and the Supreme Court, Justice Rahman said "the actions of these two organs of the government namely the Parliament and the Executive are to be watched by the Supreme Court as the guardian of the Constitution."

He said that the Parliament in the name of making legislation cannot infringe the Constitution at all. Similar is the case of the Executive, who is to act within the four corners of the Constitution and law.

Justice Rahman also said that in performing the function, the court must also restrain itself and cannot do anything not permitted by the Constitution and laws. "As if every organ is in chains," he added.

Giving his opinion in favour of replying to the presidential reference, he said "I do not think here is any scope of conflict with the Parliament if the reference is answered."

Writ rejected

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Amirul Islam's prayer for certificate to appeal to the Appellate Division.

Petitioner's lawyer Barrister Amirul Islam was assisted by M Saleem Ullah, M K Rahman, Barrister Tania Amir and Advocate Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury while Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khanaker appeared for the government and was assisted by Deputy Attorney General Kaiser Uddin Ahmed.

OIC envoys

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The foreign secretary said government of Bangladesh maintains that the situation is largely the result of inaction by the United Nations and Bangladesh continues to strongly urge that United Nations forces must effectively protect the UN-designated "safe areas" in Bosnia that have been placed under UN protection.

"The United Nations must not abdicate this role and the UNPROFOR must be given a clear mandate to strike in retaliation and fight the aggressors," he said.

Sobhan said massive air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions throughout Bosnia must take place immediately with preemptive air strikes on massive scale on Serb positions in Pale and in the pockets of Bihać, Sarajevo and Gorazde. This request has already been communicated to Washington, London and Paris for urgent action, he said.

'Adjustment policies of WB, IMF have failed to reduce poverty'

A British economist yesterday said the adjustment policies of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) created adverse effects on the poor and failed to reduce poverty, reports UNB.

The adverse effects could have been avoided, but the two international financial institutions (IFIs) didn't do much to this end, said Dr Frances Stewart, Director of Queen Elizabeth House at the University of Oxford.

Dr Stewart, now on a visit to Bangladesh, was delivering a lecture on "Poverty and Adjustment: Options and Choices" organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies at its conference room in the city.

She cited the adjustment policies of the IMF and World Bank, being carried out by different countries, specially in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in favour of her contention.

The Oxford economist said though the Fund and the Bank are not primarily responsible for the adverse development for the poor in many countries, they did little or nothing to avoid that. "Claiming innocence because of lack of responsibility for the initial causes is, in this context, akin to claiming no responsibility for not putting out a forest fire in vicinity, or failing to call in the fire brigade, on the grounds that someone else started it."

While admitting that poverty has also worsened in countries without World Bank/IMF programmes, she said the developments that

necessitated adjustment were not tackled by these institutions. The major developments were falling commodity prices and exorbitant debt servicing.

These events were taken as constraints to be accepted rather than challenged, Dr Stewart said, adding that the policies of the institutions 'probably made these exogenous development worse'.

Encouragement of adjusting countries to promote expanded production of primary commodities contributed to worsening of the commodity price situation.

Flows of finance from the IFIs, which were given on the condition that the countries respected their debt obligations, tightened the debt straitjacket and delayed serious consideration of debt write-off.

Dr Stewart said the conventional stabilisation or adjustment package with heavy emphasis on expenditure cuts and deflation, together with abolition or reduction of food subsidies and introduction of user charges, directly contributed to the adverse development at macro and meso levels.

Most of the countries which avoided the adverse effects adopted unconventional packages, sometimes with and sometimes without IFI support, involving expansionary adjustment and revenue raising than expenditure cutting, she said.

The British economist said despite acknowledging the consideration to be given to the poor, IMF scarcely changed its policy while the

Bank has made two major changes: reviews of public expenditure promoting reallocation to priority areas and the introduction of social fund.

But, she pointed out, the Bank has not accepted that there is any need to redesign the macro-package to protect the poor, nor to review the 'meso-policies' systematically. While adverse meso policies are mainly responsible for the worsening social deprivation, adverse macro developments are primarily responsible for the worsening income poverty, she observed.

Dr Stewart said expansionary macro-policies should be considered for a growth through adjustment while the meso-policies should be reviewed and reformed.

She suggested that food subsidies received by the poor should be maintained, emergency support policies like employment schemes, pensions and nutrition interventions introduced and condition of the poor monitored during the stabilisation programme.

Addressing the lecture session, State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan appeared highly critical of the adjustment and reform programmes that called for reducing state support.

He said about 95 per cent of the population, both in rural and urban areas of Bangladesh, really need support from the state as two-thirds of the people still depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Opposition reaction

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Daily Star last night that the issue of opposition MPs' boycott of Parliament proceedings and their resignation could have been settled on the floor of the House had the Speaker followed the Constitution.

Had the Speaker followed the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure, Zillur said, he (Speaker) would have informed the House about the opposition MPs' 90-day absence from Parliament.

"Now, good senses will prevail upon the government to dissolve parliament for immediate holding of a fresh general polls under a neutral

Arms recovered from train passengers

By Staff Correspondent

Railway police recovered three revolvers and 16 bullets and arrested three passengers from a Sylhet-Chittagong mail train early yesterday.

The passengers were identified as Abdul Barek, Abdur Rahman and Abul Hossain.

The passengers were held at Laksham at about 5:15 am. They were going to Chittagong from Sylhet, police sources said.

World splits into 2 camps

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the situation," he said during a visit to the northern France.

There are some 24,000 UN troops stationed in Bosnia with France providing 4,500 troops and Britain 3,400, the two largest contingents.

Russia meanwhile said the Senate vote was "particularly unwelcome" and described scrapping the embargo as a "disastrous military option."

"We are against the lifting of the embargo because there are too many weapons already, a new flow of weapons will be, to my mind, tantamount to fueling an already burning fire." Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said on a trip to Hanou.

NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes joined the chorus of disapproval, saying he opposed lifting the embargo on arms to Bosnian government troops, fearing that this would cause the war to spread in the Balkans over the coming months.

"Can the American Senate give me guarantees that in a few months we will not face a general Balkan war if the embargo is lifted and UNPROFOR withdraws?" Claes asked.

But Islamic nations around the world flocked to the Muslim cause, throwing their weight behind a lifting of the embargo while considering providing weapons to the government in Sarajevo.

In Brunet's Bander Seri Begawan, Indonesia and Malaysia backed the US Senate vote.

Corruption case against Mizan

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) has filed a case with Gulshan thana against former Prime Minister Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury for accumulating wealth beyond his known sources of income through abuse of power and corruption while in power, reports BSS.

The BAC investigations revealed that Mizan, a Prime Minister of Ershad government obtain a plot of 14.15 katha in Gulshan Model Town and constructed a two-storey house investing a total amount of Taka 27,69,604.

Of the total amount Taka 3,95,105 was paid for the purchase of Plot number 1/A, Road 79, Block NE (D) from Rajuk, while the rest was for the construction of the house. Mizan took only Taka 2,10 lakh as loan from HBFC, showing his personal investment at Taka 25,59,604.

He could not, it has been alleged, give a satisfactory statement regarding the sources of income of the said amount.

The BAC has filed a case under the Anti-Corruption Act (Act No-26) of 1957 with Gulshan thana in this connection.

Bus strike on Ctg-Cox's Bazar road continues

COX'S BAZAR, July 27: The bus strike on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar road for the third consecutive day today caused sufferings to the people, reports BSS.

All buses stayed off Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway since Tuesday following an unpleasant incident between some students of the Cox's Bazar College and staff of a passenger bus in front of the college.

According to official sources, the supporters of strike put barricades at some points of the road.

A tripartite meeting is likely to be held tomorrow, the sources said.

GCO calls strike at DU protesting admission rule

By DU Correspondent

The Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) yesterday called for a two-day strike at the Dhaka University (DU) demanding repeal of the 'discriminatory' admission rule of the university.

Addressing a rally in front of the Aparajeyo Bangla on the campus in the morning the GCO leaders said they would enforce the strikes on August 13 and 14.

They also threatened indefinite strike at the Dhaka University if the wards of the teachers, officials and employees are admitted under the 'discriminatory' rule. As per this rule the wards of the teachers and the officials of the DU have to sit for the admission test only, but do not necessarily require to pass the test for admission.

The Midnight File

Rao opposes common marriage laws

NEW DELHI, July 27: Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao Thursday opposed a uniform civil code and marriage laws that would apply to all religions and sects in India. "We are not going to interfere in the personal laws of any community," Rao told a group of Muslim scholars in Bareilly.

Supreme Court opinion

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served. "Having regard to the questions of law raised and the nature and context of the Reference and particularly our anxiety to keep the court aloof from political controversies that are raging outside for long, we decided to keep the hearing confined to the representative section of and constitutional experts at the Bar."

He further added: "In order that the court may not be held responsible for prolonging and thereby adding to the political crisis by consuming a long time over the hearing, we decided to hear the matter with all expedition."

The Chief Justice said there is nothing in the Reference which may be construed as encroaching upon the exclusive preserve of Parliament. However, while acknowledging that the questions referred to the court could have been decided by the Speaker in Parliament, he added that the court cannot assume that the Speaker had abdicated his authority or that anything had happened which was beyond the Speaker's authority.

The questions referred to us relate to an interpretation of few words which are in connection with the Parliament, including Article 67(1) (b), but it thereby does not become an exclusive business of the Parliament to disentitle this court to pronounce upon the questions or to return the Reference on the ground of judicial self-restraint," he said in discarding the argument in favour of sending the Reference unanswered. "We do not think that the submissions are cogent enough to permit us to return the Reference unanswered."

The Chief Justice, however, made it clear that none of the questions required the court to make any determination of facts, namely, whether the seats of the Opposition members have fallen vacant due to their absence by walk-out or boycott and whether 90 consecutive sitting days have already elapsed.

In discarding the argument as to why the physical absence of the members of the Opposition should not be construed as absence within the meaning of Article 67(1)(b) and be regarded as "presence", the court countered strongly.

"For what good reason and for whose benefit such a distorted meaning should be put on the word 'absent' so as to exclude walkout and boycott by them? Does it enhance the cause of constitutionalism or the cause of an effective parliament by constraining their absence as presence?" the Chief Justice asked. "We are confident that it does not. Rather, it subverts both," he said, adding that the scheme of the Constitution is that if a member is absent for 90 consecutive sitting days without leave of the Parliament, he or she would go so at the pain of vacating his or her seats.

"The philosophy behind this is that his or their constituencies cannot be left unrepresented in the Parliament for an indefinite period. There must be by-election in those seats for electing new members in their places to represent the people. This is the democratic and constitutional process," he reasoned.

The Chief Justice further observed: "In our view, walkout, it subverts both," he said, adding that the scheme of the Constitution is that if a member is absent for 90 consecutive sitting days without leave of the Parliament, he or she would go so at the pain of vacating his or her seats.

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Poura employees, businessmen clash in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, July 27: At least five people were injured in a clash between the employees of the Barisal Pouroshava and businessmen of Chawkbazar area in the town during an eviction drive against the illegal occupants along the roadside this morning.

Three trucks of the pourashava were also damaged during the clash after which the eviction drive was stopped. Some 40 poura employees and a magistrate took part in the drive.

Of the injured, Jahangir Mollah and Wazed Ali were admitted to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Later, talking to newsmen at the Barisal Press Club in the evening, pourashava Chairman Ahsan Habib Kamal said the municipality would continue its drive to evict illegal occupants.

out, consequent period of the non-return and boycott, call it by whatever epithet, mean the same thing, i.e., 'absent' as provided in Article 67 (1) (b) and would result in vacation of seat in the Parliament if the other conditions are present, namely, being without the leave of Parliament, for ninety consecutive sitting days."

As regards question number 3, the court noted that none of the counsels, except Asrarul Hossain, had any doubt that in computing 90 consecutive sitting days the period between two sessions intervened by prorogation of Parliament should be excluded. The government counsel had argued that the prorogation period should be included because the member who is remaining absent between sessions remains absent on the day when the House is prorogued and also on the day when the House is next summoned, and further because the word "consecutive" means "continuous".

On question number 4, the court noted the complete unanimity among the counsels that the Speaker is the authority to compute and determine the period of absence.

In his observation, Justice Kamal noted that 89 consecutive sitting days of absence is the permissible limit upto which the leave of Parliament is not necessary for any kind of parliamentary and unparliamentary behaviour.

However, he pointed out that Article 67 (1) (b) is an "automation" clause with defined role of the Speaker and the Secretary of Parliament. "Parliament, therefore, has no constitutional power to declare the seats of absentee members to be vacant."

Referring to the appeal against an earlier judgement of the High Court on the continuous boycott of Parliament by the Opposition MPs pending before the Appellate Division, Justice Kamal said: "An advisory opinion prejudices nobody."

In his observation, Justice Rahman said that although the internal proceedings of Parliament are beyond the purview of the constitutional court, but while acting in the name of internal proceedings, if any violation of the constitutional provisions takes place, then this court is certainly competent to interfere.

The 54-page report containing the opinion also incorporated detailed references from constitutions and judgements of different countries and submissions on the presidential reference by the legal experts before the court.

The court appreciated the role of the amicus curiae and the other legal experts, including their juniors, in the hearing of the Reference. As a token of appreciation, the court directed the government to pay Tk 2,000 as remuneration to each of the learned counsels, except Asrarul Hossain, who is already on government account. Late Aminal Huq and the interveners.

UN rapporteur

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rights with credibility when one is confronted with the lack of consistency and courage displayed by the international community and its leaders."

"Human rights violations continue blatantly" and "the response of the international community has been slow and ineffectual," he said.

"The very stability of international order and the principle of civilization is at stake over the question of Bosnia," he declared.

6 more girls

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Salma Ali clarified to journalists.

Salma Ali took the four other teenagers to Dhaka for rehabilitation, leaving Hashi and Nazu back in police custody. She said that a lawyer would be sent tomorrow to take care of them.

"There are many other teenagers in the 'red light' area. We have seen them. But they escaped somewhere seeing us," Salma Ali said.

Meanwhile the Narayan-ganj Sadar Thana Magistrate's court granted an interim bail to Shilpi till September 27. She was arrested under the child repression act. The bail was granted on humanitarian grounds since Shilpi is pregnant.

BNP yet to decide

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ter as the court opinion means that more than 140 opposition MPs would vacate their Parliamentary seats because of consecutive 90 days of absence.

The MPs crossed their 90-day Constitutional limit on June 19 during the budget session.

AL urges UN

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the UN and NATO to take immediate and stern action against the Serbs.

Samad Azad said the AL, since the beginning of the Serbian onslaughts, had been protesting against the inhuman atrocities unleashed by the Serbs on the unarmed Bosnian Muslims.

On the present political situation in the country, he said, "The problem was created by the ruling BNP which has established a one-party rule. The rule of one person has become a burden for the nation."

AL leader Abdul Mannan was critical of the United Nations saying that it spoke about human rights, but did nothing when it was violated in Bosnia.

Abdur Razzak said the people of the country were united against the Serbian attack and they were astonished to see the government's indifference in this regard.

Presided over by city Awami League vice-president Reazuddin Ahmed, the rally was addressed, among others, by Momtaz Hossain, Siddiqur Rouf Khan, Salauddin Badal, Kamal Chowdhury, Qamruzzaman Ansari and Barrister Shaukat Ali Khan.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam