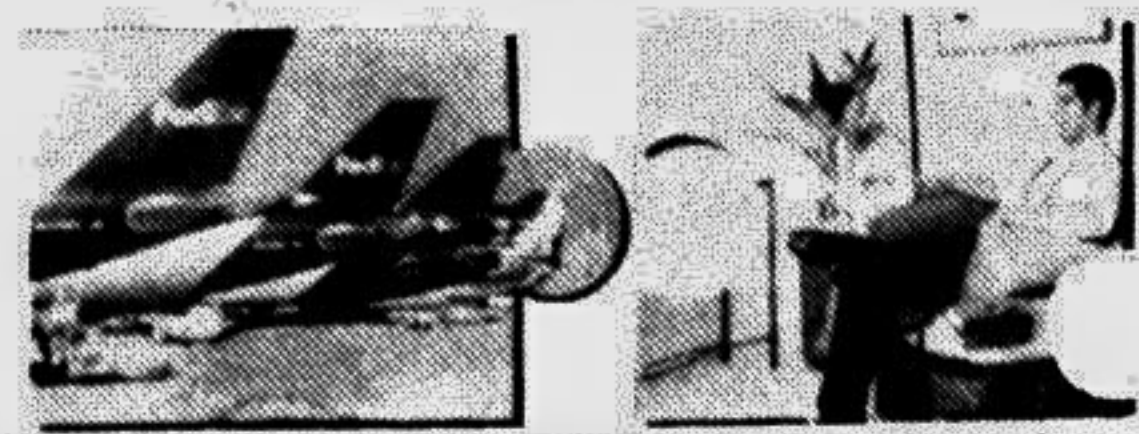


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PHILIPS

76 cases filed against 28 BNP MPs, JS told

By Staff Correspondent

A total of 76 cases have been filed against 28 BNP lawmakers including Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia since the Awami League came to power two years ago. Home Minister Rafiqul Islam told the House yesterday.

Replying to a question from BNP MP Shahidul Islam, the home minister claimed that no case was filed against the opposition lawmakers just because of their political identity. "The cases against 28 opposition MPs were filed at different times on specific charges against them," he added.

A list produced in the House by the minister showed that the accused BNP legislators also included former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, the then PM's special envoy Morshed Khan and four ministers in the Begum Zia government — Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed, M K Anwar, Sadek Hossain Khoka and Amanullah Aman. The highest number of cases — 16 — were filed against Sadek Hossain Khoka, who is now Convenor of the city unit of BNP.

Corruption charges have been brought in two cases against the former PM and in two cases against the former Speaker while the charges against others are mostly of criminal nature.

According to the home minister, charge sheets have been submitted in 19 out of the 76 cases. Besides, other cases are under investigation. He further said, non-FIR charges have been made in one case and two CR cases against Alamgir Kabir of Naogaon are under trial.

The BNP lawmakers and the Mongla port despatched due to the strike. According to a source in the Mongla Port Authority, 52 barges and cargo launches are lying idle at the port refusing to carry goods to different places of Khulna.

Meanwhile, the Joint Director of Labour has served a notice upon the striking employees to resume duties without any further delay or to face stern action.

Deputy Director of Labour S M Azad Mostafa served a notice on Wednesday on the president and general secretary of the Khulna unit of the Jahaji Sramik Sangha, asking them to call off the strike or to face cancellation of the registration of their union for violation of the rules under the Industrial Relations Act.

He said, both tribals and non-tribals have formed committees to resist activities of the elements against the peace accord as they know that there is no alternative to peace. The home minister said the accord has helped restore peace and harmony among tribals and non-tribals in the area.

He said that the signing of the agreement removed all impediments for anyone to visit any place in the three hill districts.

Replying to a question from Ovi (JP) that authorities are maintaining law and order in the CHT and Army is still there doing its usual duty. He said, both tribals and non-tribals have formed committees to resist activities of the elements against the peace accord as they know that there is no alternative to peace.

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The visiting special envoy of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Senator Akram Zaki called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday.

C'wealth Secy-Gen post

Diplomatic efforts on to win support for Bangladesh's candidature, JS told

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said diplomatic efforts are on to mobilise support for Bangladesh's candidature for Commonwealth Secretary General, reports-UNB.

Replying to a question from Zinnat Hossain (JP) in parliament, he said written requests have been made to the concerned authorities of Commonwealth member states in this regard through Bangladesh missions abroad.

He said, the decision to run for the election was taken in April last and positive response is being received from different countries.

On another question, Azad said the government hoped that the stranded Pakistanis would be sent back to their homeland in the future in phases.

PM: Colombo

From Page 1

mentioned that his government earlier issued statements urging the two countries to restrain from the nuclear race.

The foreign minister said that the prime minister acted as a "peace envoy" and helped defuse the tension in the region arising out of nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

He hoped that the progress of the 3-nation summit held in Dhaka earlier this year would not be affected because of the nuclear race by India and Pakistan.

Responding to another question, Samad Azad said that the four-nation sub-regional grouping comprising Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan was a bond of the four SAARC countries for technical cooperation on different projects.

He also told another questioner that no proposal was received for inclusion of any new member in the SAARC.

Chetia

From Page 1

charges — illegal entry and possessing fake passports, satellite telephones and foreign currency illegally. He was arrested with associates Babul Sharma and Lakhmi Prasad from the city's Mohammadpur area on December 21 last year.

The ULFA leader was permitted to talk to a Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights lawyer, Alina Khan, for five minutes upon a petition submitted by her yesterday.

Chetia denied the charges brought against him. He also told the court that he had been provided with insufficient food and that he had to withdraw his lawyers under 'pressure'.

The state had earlier appointed a defence counsel for Chetia upon a petition filed by him.

JS session prorogued

From Page 1

When the Prime Minister was making the accusation at 9:00 pm, the entire front bench of the opposition BNP was empty.

However, listing 'successes' of her government over the last couple of years, Hasina said that she had inherited a ruined economy from the BNP.

Claiming that her government has already achieved substantial progress in solving the power crisis and controlling law and order, the Prime Minister accused the BNP of acts of sabotage in both the sectors.

Hasina said the Opposition leader could not attend the session as "she was busy in operating the TV Bhaban as told by the Opposition chief whip".

What's the reason of laying siege to the TV Bhaban when the Faruq murder...

From Page 1

Keraniganj police arrested her yesterday morning. The investigating officer of the case said last night that after preliminary investigation they were suspecting the killing may be linked with business transaction.

Family sources claimed that Faruq, a resident of Science Laboratory Road area, married Flora a few months ago. But Flora told police that she had an affair with Faruq but they did not get married.

Police were interrogating Flora who confessed to police that she is the owner of the ash-coloured car in which Faruq's partially decomposed body was found.

Flora also told police that Faruq took her car before leaving her residence a couple of days before he was found dead.

Faruq, an accused in the Raufiq Bhashunia murder case, was elected an MP from Faridpur-5 constituency in the 1986 general election.

Flora is likely to be produced before the CMM's Court today. The body of Faruq was handed over to his family after autopsy at Mitford Hospital morgue Wednesday.

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Minister tells JS

1,599 rape cases filed between July '97 & May '98

Home Minister Rafiqul Islam yesterday informed the parliament that a total of 1,599 rape cases were filed between July, 1997 and May, 1998, reports-UNB.

During the period, he said, a policeman raped a woman in the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) area. One person was arrested in this connection and the case is under investigation.

Replying to Alhaj Advocate Khairul Enam (BNP), the minister said 919 people were arrested in connection with those cases.

He said, during the period 1,095 FIRs were lodged. Of these, 144 charge sheets were given, 360 cases are under investigation and 1066 are under trial.

In a written reply to another question from Moulana Delwar Hossain Sayeedi (Jamaat), he said that since January 1, 1997, the authorities have recorded 4,389 cases of killings, 2,310 of rape, 2484 of snatching and 1376 of dacoity across the country.

Of these incidents, 283 murder, 204 rape, 984 snatching and 96 dacoity cases were recorded in the DMP area.

The one-and-a-half-year tenure of the project expired on June 30," an official said, adding that the project was taken up in January 1997 with a Tk two crore funding from the UNDP.

Sources said the law ministry was not satisfied with the preliminary report and the draft bill submitted by the consultants recently.

"The draft bill is actually the Bangla version of the Village Court Ordinance of 1976 with minor addition," observed a ministry source.

The government has now asked the consultants and its project director to draft a 'comprehensive and welfare-oriented bill' for the Grameen Court.

A joint secretary in the Ministry of Law was made project director and three consultants were appointed with a monthly honorarium of Tk 60,000 each. Besides, two cars and a microbus were also provided for the project.

The project director and the consultants also visited India, the Philippines, Japan and the UK to see the functioning of such courts.

Flare test complete

Occidental starts downing rig at Bibiana-I

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, July 9: With the flare test of gas in the well completed, US company Occidental started 'downing the rig' at its exploratory well 'Bibiana-I' on Monday.

Sources close to the Company told this correspondent it will take at least two weeks to complete the process.

The company is considering Bibiana well as its first success in the country as it had struck four gas zones within a depth of 3905 metres almost without any difficulty, the sources added.

Gas pressure in all these zones were considered good and company officials are very optimistic about the reserve in the structure. They had already hinted about existence of much more quantity of gas in the structure, than it had earlier expected depending on the seismic survey. Before starting drilling the well, the company had said the approximate reserve in Bibiana structure would be about one trillion CFT.

Occidental had started drilling the well in the first week of January this year and completed it by the end of May. However, the company maintained top secrecy and informed none when it started drilling at the remote village, the sources said. Extra care was taken in drilling the well. Cementing was done after every 100 metres. The well is located in the Block-14, PSC for which is yet to be renewed. The PSC with the Petrobangla was signed on January 11, 1995, for blocks 13 and 14.

The rig 'T-75' used in drilling the well at the remote village Dighalbak in Nabiganj thana under Habiganj district would now be sent to the company's new location in Kalaichhara area in Srimangal thana, where a new exploratory well will be drilled. However, it will take at least six weeks to resume transportation of dismantled parts of the rig. The drilling sub-contractor — Deutag — a German company engaged by Occidental, was entrusted with the task.

Child murder
Nargis may give confessional statement today
By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch (DB) of police is likely to record the confessional statement of Nargis who allegedly slaughtered her son Naim, today.

Nargis, who is now under treatment at the intensive care unit (ICU) of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), allegedly killed her seven-year-old son and then tried to commit suicide inside her flat at North Kamalapur on July 2.

The on-duty doctor at the ICU told The Daily Star last night that the condition of Nargis was stable.

DB sources said she could communicate with others by means of writing. They are expecting to record her written statement today under Section 161 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the sources added.

Meanwhile, investigators were still looking for further information on the case till yesterday.

HIV

From Page 1

people about the need for controlled sexual life through preaching after prayers.

He also called upon all to be guided by religious doctrines to avoid sexual diseases.

Professor Nurul Islam underscored the need for launching a mosque-based education and treatment system so that the rural people can get first-aid promptly.

World Cup

From Page 1

gallo. He thinks the French will offer fewer problems than the Dutch, who took Brazil to a shootout before succumbing.

"France plays offensively. It's the team that has shot more than any in the Cup. So it pays a price on defence," Zagallo said.

Barringer Croatia, he added. "They haven't faced a team with a strong attack."

Zico, the team's coordinator, also was not overwhelmed by France's performance.

"They didn't play well against Croatia. The Dutch were better," he said. "They're a dangerous team but not intimidating and certainly not unbeatable."

Zico thinks the French will miss Blanc's leadership though he urges caution with playmaker Zinedine Zidane and versatile defender Lilian Thuram, who scored both goals against Croatia.

Still, Brazilians know how a home crowd can pick up a team. On Sunday, 80,000 spectators will pack Stade de France, and for once Brazil's yellow jerseys won't set the tone.

"Fans are important in big games," Zagallo said. "The best we can do is not to antagonise them."

A winner of four Cups as player, coach or coordinator, Zagallo understands the significance of the moment.

"This is the biggest sporting event of the century," he said. "We're in the capital of the world, the owners of the house are in the final and will try for their first title against the four-time champions. And every team outdoes itself against Brazil."

Still, it's hard to match the Brazilian jersey.

"We have a history in World Cups," said midfielder Leonardo. "And that gives us a lot of support."

SAARC: Regional conflicts

From Page 1

clear situation in South Asia was delicate, Akram Zaki said that Pakistan seriously wanted to stabilize the situation.

To restore stability in the sub-continent, the government of Pakistan has offered unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests, resumption of foreign secretary level talks, expressed its intention to sign a non-aggression pact and had declared that it would not transfer nuclear technology.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, who attended the dialogue, said, "The next SAARC summit in Colombo would be critical and important."

He said a nuclear scenario will not give any scope for winners. "SAARC members must push for a dialogue between the India and Pakistan."

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Advertisement for 'WE MOURN' for Mr. Habibur Rahman Chowdhury, including details of his funeral and the company Uttara Motors Limited.

Advertisement for Uttara Motors Limited, featuring a car and details about the company and its services.